



“We remained at Baroda three days; during which, Makhun Jemadar (prisoner) purchased different articles, clothes, &c., to the amount of about forty rupees. We afterwards proceeded on the Baroach road. For the first four or five days following our departure from Baroda, nothing fell into our hands. We were within seven cose of Baroach when the day of the Hooly festival arrived, which we celebrated with due festivity, making a halt for that purpose. At this place, three travellers, two Mussulmans and a Byragee, passing the place where we were, were seduced into our power, and murdered; but I do not now remember what amount or description of property was found upon them. From thence we struck off the Baroach road, and proceeded upon that of Joanugur and Dwarka; and, leaving the highway, made several stages in the direction of these places, without falling in with any thing; in the course of which, several fordable salt-water inlets crossed our paths, and one which cost us five rupees to be ferried over. As I have just said, four or five stages had been performed without any thing falling into our hands; when one morning, as we arrived at Piblownd, to which town we had been steering our course, some of our spies, who had been absent on the look out, returned with accounts that they had seen four travellers proceeding to Baroda with considerable property; and they calculated that



that they would reach Baroda the same night, from the distance they were when our spies left them. On learning this, twenty-five men, the stoutest and most active of the gang, were selected, and sent in pursuit of them; the rest following as they were able;—and after a long and fatiguing march, the detached party overtook the objects of their pursuit, a short distance from a cantonment belonging to the English; and, after accompanying them a little way, fell upon and murdered them, as they were walking along the road. To the great disappointment and chagrin of us all, no property was found upon them; for they turned out to be common stone-cutters; and their tools, tied in bundles, which they carried over their shoulders, deceived the spies into the supposition that they were carrying treasure.

“ The next day, the principal part of the gang that was behind joined the party detached on this job, when we all took the road for Baroda. At one of our stages, and near where we had stopped for the day, some horse-dealers came with horses, and took up their quarters. At night, we held a consultation to murder them and seize their property; which we were only deterred from doing (though there were fifteen or sixteen, including attendants) by the difficulty of disposing of the bodies of so many men in an open and frequented country, such as it was where we were. In
devising



devising plans to get over this difficulty, so much of the night had passed that we considered it advisable to forego our designs upon this party. The same night, thieves came amongst us, and carried off clothes and other things from Makhun Jemadar (prisoner). From this we proceeded to Baroda; and, after remaining there a day or two, set out on our return to Hindostan. At the distance of about three cose from Baroda, three travellers fell into our hands and were murdered: I do not remember what property was found upon them. Our next stage was to within a short distance of the town of Dubhoy, where four men, Bessaties (pedlars), with three ponies and their packs of wares, whom we had overtaken on the road, were prevailed upon to take up their quarters with us. In the evening, they were murdered and plundered: their wares consisted of various articles of trifling value; amongst which were a quantity of cornelian-stones cut into different forms, serrotes (betel-nut cutters, coarse scissors), &c. &c.; and in money, something about ten or twenty rupees were found upon them. At this place, also, our spies brought three men to our resting-place, whom they had enticed to come and take up their quarters with us; one a Byragee, and the other two having the appearance of Mussulmans. They likewise were murdered; and their bodies stripped of what was upon them, and buried. The next day we left Dubhoy, and met six palanquin-



quin-bearers, who had been in service at Baroda, and were proceeding to their country in Hindostan : with them were two women and two children, in all ten persons. We persuaded them to join us, and they accordingly proceeded along with us. At the first stage they took up their quarters in an old temple in the village, by which circumstance we were then prevented from effecting our purpose upon them : on the way the next morning, in the jungle, it was accomplished : the whole were murdered, and their bodies, after being stripped of every thing, were buried a short distance from the road. On this occasion, more previous arrangement was thought necessary than was usual, where the victims were fewer in number, and as it was resolved to despatch them on the journey while they were walking along in our company : accordingly, some of the most expert hands at the business were fixed upon to despatch them ; and a party, whose business it was in the gang, was sent on before, to prepare graves at a convenient spot for the bodies. A pony, and pony mare, belonging to them, fell into our hands ; also some ornaments of base metal were taken off the legs of the women, with neck and other similar ornaments of small value : besides, other articles were found upon them, which I cannot now specify. From thence we proceeded to our ground on the banks of a river, I think the Mhye ; and encamped, in four separate parties,



parties, near to a village called Futtehpoore. Here it happened, that four Mussulman travellers, from Bombay, on their way to Bhopaul, arrived, and halted near one of our parties (that which had its place under a kurney-tree): communication was immediately opened with the travellers, and an acquaintance soon formed, which terminated in their being murdered in the evening, and their property plundered. They had five minahs in a cage, and four ponies, which, with their clothes and other things, we took possession of.

“ From thence our stage was Oodeypore; where we met a number of hackeries from Mow, laden with opium, and escorted by Telingies (Company's Sepoys). One of the Telingies remarked, on seeing us, that persons of the same description in appearance had been seized at the cantonment: this being made known amongst us, threw us into some apprehension; and we took up our halting-ground at a retired spot in the jungle, near a fountain of water. A party of horsemen from Baroda, with some Sepoys and a Zenana mecana (palanquin), arrived, and took up their quarters for the day in the bazaar, where the prisoner, Makhun Jemadar, happened to be sitting at the time. One of the horsemen, observing him rather attentively, remarked to one of his companions standing by him, that ‘ the Mala (necklace) upon that man,’ pointing to Makhun, appeared to be exactly the same as belonged



belonged to his brother. This so disconcerted Makhun at the time, though the horseman did not follow up his remark by any question, that he immediately slipped off;—and, on hearing from him what had occurred, we were all thrown into such alarm, that early the same night we started, and proceeded many cöse on the Jhabooa road before we thought it safe to halt. We afterwards continued our progress, and arrived at Jhabooa; from whence Oomrao and Ruttyram separated from Makhun, and preceded him a short distance on the Rutlam road. Their first stage, after leaving Jhabooa, was Pitlawud; and Makhun, with his gang, was in their rear a few cöse. The next day they quitted Pitlawud; and Makhun, with our party, halted there. We took up our quarters at a bowlee outside of the town, near which we found a merchant with four attendants preparing their meal. The merchant, from his respectable appearance, his dress, and the ornaments he wore, became the object of our attention and design; but having hastily finished his meal, he and attendants set out, in prosecution of their journey, towards Rutlam, and we saw nothing more of them; but we afterwards found that they had fallen into the hands of Oomrao and Ruttyram. From Pitlawud we proceeded to the vicinity of Rutlam, encamping a little distance from the town. We there met some of the men of the advanced parties, who told us that they



they had despatched the merchant and his attendants a few cose from Rutlam, and that they had proved a rich prize: to which Makhun replied, in a dissatisfied tone, that good luck seemed to attend where the Mussulmans were. From Rutlam we took the Peeplodah road, with the view to avoid Jawrah. Oomrao also deviated a little from the Jawrah road; and met us at Dhodur, the stage on the high road beyond Jawrah; and we afterwards proceeded together. On our way, hereabouts, we were searched once or twice for opium; but none being found upon us, we were allowed to proceed without further molestation. It was at Dhodur that some slight misunderstanding that subsisted between Oomrao and Ruttyram was reconciled, and things went on as usual. Our stage from Dhodur was to a convenient spot, where we halted for the night. We next day passed Mundesore; and, proceeding about four or five cose further, halted near a village, under a large spreading bir-tree, and where there is a Nagora, kept by a Fakeer who resides there. A Mussulman traveller here fell into our hands, and was murdered during the night, in the early part of it; and buried a little distance from the road, on the banks of a nullah. The next morning we resumed our journey; and having proceeded a cose or so, we sat down at a well; where, after some consultation, it was determined to send Ruttyram, with twenty or twenty-five men, by the
most



most direct route, to our country, with the plunder which we had acquired. Rutttyram accordingly here left us; and the next morning we took the Neemuch road. Our stage was about a cose or two on the other side (north side) of the cantonment, where we halted a day. On this day, four travellers were enticed by our spies to rest themselves at the spot where we were; when, an opportunity offering, they were murdered, and their property plundered. A stage or two beyond this, another traveller fell into our hands, and was murdered: and near the village of Sanganeer four shopkeepers were murdered. Of this last act I was informed by my companions; not having been present when it was committed. Nothing further occurred until we arrived at Dekollah; where, as I have already stated, we were arrested."

On cross-examination, this witness said:—

"I know of no other act of murder and robbery committed by the Thugs, besides those I have stated above.

"This is the first time that I have accompanied the Thugs on any of their predatory excursions. Brikbhan persuaded me to do so. I have frequently heard them, since I have been amongst them, talk of the acts committed by them on former excursions, but can only speak of my own knowledge of those I have above detailed. My occupation among them has been to watch at night against theft, and
also



also to keep a look out when murders were being perpetrated. Old men like myself were generally employed in this way: beyond this, I never took any part in the commission of the murders."

Another of these worthies was named Poorun. He was an old Hindoo, of Lohar caste. He deposed as follows:—

"My father was a cultivator in Buraicha and other villages in the neighbourhood; which occupation I also followed; but joined the Thugs when I was about thirty years of age, and have since continued to be more or less connected with them. I have not, however, accompanied them on every excursion they have, since that period, made; but, on the contrary, for intervals of two, three, and even six years, remained at home, and earned a subsistence by the cultivation of land. In short, I have been upon six predatory excursions altogether; four under a leader named Oodey Singh, since dead; and two (the present, and the one preceding it) with Makhun Jemadar (prisoner), to whose gang I belong. During one of the intervals above mentioned (the last) that I remained at home, I was apprehended at Jhalone on information of being a Thug, and was kept some time in confinement; but the proofs which I brought forward, of having for so many years been seen employed in cultivation, was the means of my regaining my liberty.

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This event, however, threw me into embarrassment ; and to get rid of it, I went to Salany to borrow money from Makhun Jemadar, who, I knew, had generally some at command : but he would only agree to relieve my necessities on condition that I brought my family to Salany, and became one of his men ; to which, from the destitute state my family was in, I was forced to agree : and I accordingly joined his gang, and, as I have already stated, accompanied him on the present and preceding excursions. Oodey Singh, my former leader, was beyond the prime of life : when I joined him, he was, however, an active and enterprising man ; but his becoming, in due course, less fit for exertion such as his situation required, and his son Koman having been seized with other Thugs and thrown into confinement at Jubulpore, affected Oodey Singh so much, that he completely renounced the habit of a Thug, and shortly after died.

“ After this, I joined Makhun. It was before the establishment of tranquillity over the country that I served under Oodey Singh ; at which time our excursions were neither carried to so great a distance as they have since been, nor were so lucrative or certain ; for in those days, travellers, particularly with much property, seldom ventured to go from one place to another without being well escorted, or in large parties ; and we feared the Pindaries, and other mounted plunderers, as much



as other classes did, not connected with them. According to my engagement with Makhun, I joined his gang; and set out with him on an excursion to the Deccan, about three months after I had engaged myself to him. His gang, on this occasion, consisted of about forty men; and set out from Bundelcund in the month of Phagoon Sumbut 1883 (about March 1826), proceeding by regular stages; crossed the Nurbudda at the Cheepanair Ghaut, where we fell in with Chotee Jemadar (Brahmin), who joined us with his gang, which was about the same strength as our own. We proceeded towards Mallygaon; and at Jhokur, near that cantonment, celebrated the Hooly: after which we resumed our progress, and reached Mallygaon, where we struck off by the Nassuck road, intending to turn from Nassuck to Poonah and Aurungabad. After proceeding a cose or two on this road, we met a friend belonging to Oomrao and Ruttyram's gangs, a relation of Makhun's; who told us that these two leaders, with their gangs, were close at hand, on the Poonah road, in pursuit of some Augriahs with treasure. It was proposed to Makhun to send a party of his men to join them, in order to be entitled to a share in the spoil: and he thought of going himself; but recollecting that Oomrao and he were not on good terms, he sent twenty-five men with Chotee Jemadar. The next day we received a message from them, that they



had effected the business ; and they were going on with Oomrao and Ruttyram to Bhoranpoor, where they requested we would meet them. We accordingly proceeded to that quarter ; and found Chotee Jemadar with the party at Bhoranpoor, Oomrao and Ruttyram having proceeded to their homes before we arrived. From them we learnt, that the Augriahs were attacked and murdered near Jhokur, where we had celebrated the Hooly ; and that no less a sum than 22,000 rupees was found upon their persons, in gold, bullion, mohurs, and pootlies ; and that, as the share of our two gangs, they had received 6000. This sum was immediately disposed of ; so far, that Makhun received 2000 of it for himself and his gang, and a similar sum was given to Chotee Jemadar for himself and his gang : these two sums was despatched to our homes. That sent by Chotee reached in safety ; but one of Makhun's men, who went in charge of our share, having got drunk at Jansy, blabbed out the secret that he was a Thug, and with others was returning with large amount of plunder ; upon which the Sircar there had him and his comrades seized, and the money taken from them. The remainder of the prize, namely, 2000 rupees, was retained for the expenses of the two gangs. After this disposal of the share of the plunder acquired from the Augriahs (which was allotted by Oomrao and his brother Ruttyram to our two gangs), we left Bhoranpoor, and



and proceeded to Aurungabad; but meeting with little or no success, we returned, by Dhoolia and Bhopaul, to Bundelcund, and arrived at our different homes before the rains set in. About four months or so after the termination of the rainy season, in the beginning of the month of Mah, Makhun's gang having been again assembled, set out on an excursion towards Guzerat, and were accompanied by Oomrao and his brother Ruttyram, with their gangs.

“ Such acts as those above mentioned being of too common occurrence, with people of our habits, to make much impression upon me or any of my associates who had long been familiar with them, or to excite a curiosity among us to inquire into the particular circumstances attending the acquisition of plunder by parties detached from the main body, it therefore cannot be a matter of any surprise if some of the murders and robberies committed may have escaped my recollection, or of which I have no particular knowledge; but I have without reserve stated all that my memory serves me to mention, with every circumstance attending them. I have never, since I have belonged to the Thugs, known one single instance of robbery committed by them without the previous destruction of life, almost invariably by strangulation. This is effected either by means of a roomal, or shred of cloth well twisted and wetted; or merely by the hands: though

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the latter is rarely practised, and only had recourse to from accidental failure in the former and usual mode. On a preconcerted signal being given, the victim or victims are instantly overpowered; and the perpetration, whether by the roomal or hands only, is the business of a moment. In perpetrating murder, it is an invariable point with the Thugs to avoid spilling the blood of their victims, but, if possible, to take their lives by suffocation. This point is attended to with a view to leave no traces of murder, by which suspicion of the deed might be excited in the minds of the people passing the spot, and detection ensue. In the hurry, however, in which it is necessary sometimes to dispose of the bodies, the holes are frequently not dug to such dimensions as to contain them in a whole state, particularly when there is a good number to be disposed of: the bodies are cut into pieces, and closely packed in them. When these holes are near the side of a road, which is generally the case, and especially when in an open and exposed spot, after they are filled up with earth, fires are burnt over them, in order to remove all appearance of the earth being newly turned. Murders, in the manner I have just described, are with equal facility and certainty accomplished, and are as frequently perpetrated, while the victims are walking along the road, as when they have been enticed to our places of encampment for the purpose, and, uncon-

scious



scious of what is to befall them, are sitting amongst us with every thing carefully and leisurely arranged for their destruction. These murders are frequently perpetrated contiguous to villages, where we encamp and have enticed strangers to take up their quarters with us: they take place generally before the twilight is completely over and night has set in; and always while the business is going on, the hand-drum is beat, and singing commenced, to drown any noise that might be made by the victims. The different persons actually engaged, commence their operations simultaneously, and by signal given; which of course is preconcerted, but at the same time quite arbitrary: generally, a common coarse expression is made use of, not likely to strike the attention of the victims, such as, 'Tumbakoo lao' (Bring tobacco). A roomal, or shred of cloth twisted on the occasion, is the only implement which the Thugs use for strangling. I have never seen the phansee, or noose made of cord, used; though I am well aware of the general supposition that it is by such an implement people are strangled by us: but if such an implement had ever been in use, of which I have great doubt, it has long since been laid aside; for the obvious reason, that, on any incidental occasion of being seized, it would inevitably lead to detection.—Oomrao, Makhun, and all the other Jemadars or leaders, keep up a direct understanding with the local authorities in Bundelcund,



cund, in whose limits they and their followers reside; and invariably, on their return from an excursion, conciliate their forbearance and favour by suitable Nuzzeranas. Assistance and support from English Authorities being likewise indispensable, these are, through artifice, also obtained. The Jemadars and leaders have no direct intercourse, themselves, in this instance, but through the medium of emissaries; who, by misrepresentation and falsehood, frequently contrive to extricate them from the difficulties which persons of our habits are constantly liable to be involved in. A relation of Oomrao's, named Motee, and a person named Lala Barber, an inhabitant of Secondra in Cawnpore, render important services in this way. Motee, who was formerly a practical Thug, has discontinued for some years going on predatory excursions. He first brought himself into notice with the gentlemen, by informing against a gang; which, in consequence, was seized and confined at Jubulpore, where I believe the greater part still remains. Motee has ever since advanced in the favour of the gentlemen, making them suppose that he acts as a check upon the Thugs and other plunderers; at least, he makes all this appear to us to be the case; and, in consequence, exercises great influence over us, making us pay well for his connivance, and the good offices he no doubt frequently performs in our behalf. Oomrao, Ruttyram, Heira, Mandun,
and



and their gangs, are those for whom he more especially exerts himself to protect and assist.

“Lala Barber is the patron of Makhun; and by means of representations to different persons of his acquaintance, in the service of the Adawlut at Cawnpore, he renders great assistance to Makhun, in getting him through matters of difficulty. Makhun, when he returned to Bundelcund from the excursion preceding the present one, after ascertaining the mishap that befel the share of plunder he sent from Bhoranpoor, had, as was usual with him in similar cases, recourse to his patron, Lala Barber. Lala lost no time in waiting upon his friend Mahdee Moonshee at Cawnpore; to whom he represented matters in such a light, that the Moon-shee wrote himself, or had an injunction written by his superiors, to the Jhansee Rajah, saying, that it having been made known that he (the Rajah) had seized four travellers passing through his boundaries and plundered them of their property, the persons so treated being of respectable and inoffensive character, he was directed to set them at liberty, and restore to them the property he had taken from them. A day or two before the receipt of this letter of injunction, the Rajah released Makhun's men; having, in the first instance, made them give him an acquittance for money he had taken from them: but now, thinking, that as the matter had come to the knowledge of the English, he should
get



get a bad name with them, and also lose the money, unless he could prove that the men he had taken it from were Thugs and that their true character had been misrepresented, he (the Rajah) sent after them, and had them again apprehended. I do not know what afterwards became of those men of Makhun's, or what was the final result of the business. Besides Lala Barber, who manages matters in his favour through his acquaintances at the Courts and Cutcherries at Cawnpore, Etawah, Hummerpoor, Auria, and Mynpoor, Makhun has a great friend and supporter in the Jhansee Vakeel who resides at Hummeepoorah, named Gunesh Lall. Oomrao may have other patrons besides his relation Motee, who watches over his interests principally at Jubulpore. Makay Sahib, at Kytah, is a great friend of Motee's; and it was from him that he obtained the English pass which Oomrao shewed to the horsemen, when we were apprehended at Dekhola. In passing through a country, so great a number of men together, as our gangs sometimes present, is certainly calculated to excite suspicion; but when this happens to be the case, we are always prepared with some story or explanation, to ward it off. Few of us carry arms: perhaps, among fifteen or twenty persons, two or three swords may be found, but not more.

“When Thugs meet, though strangers, there is something in their manner that soon discovers itself



itself to each other : and to assure the surmise thus excited, one exclaims, 'Ally Khan'; which, on being repeated by the other party, a recognition of each other's habits takes place, but this is never followed by a disclosure of past acts. We do use certain terms to distinguish particular circumstances and events connected with our proceedings, which are known to ourselves alone. These terms are known to all persons of similar habits to ourselves, as well to the Thugs of the Deccan, of the Nagpore country, of Malwa, of Kaunthul and Bagor, &c., as to those of Bundelcund and Gwalior. The numbers apply exclusively to travellers, and are used to communicate the number that fall into the hands of detached parties in pursuit of them. I believe there are few countries that do not produce Thugs: those I have just particularized did, I know, contain them; and do so, I believe, at the present moment. In the Oomrautee quarter there is a gang called Nasir Khan's Karoo or gang, a well-known Thug leader; but whether he is still the leader of it, I cannot exactly say. In Kaunthul and Bagor, Makeema and Dulla were formerly the Thug leaders; but who these are at present I do not know. The names of the leaders of the Malwa Thugs, or of those of the Nagpore country, I am ignorant of.

"In the division of plunder, the Jemadars, or principal leaders, receive seven and a half per cent, besides sharing equally with the rest of the gang;

but



but before any division whatever is made to the leaders or their men, one of the principal of the former alienates a certain part, greater or smaller in proportion to the amount acquired, which is devoted to Bhowany, our tutelar deity. This, however, does not generally apply to clothes, or plunder of that description; indeed, it almost entirely refers to money in gold or silver: for when it consists of diamonds or pearls, the leader draws blood from his hands; and having sprinkled a little of it over them, the sanction of the deity to a division is thereby considered to be obtained, without any other alienation. But the omission of this ceremony, or neglecting, when success attends us, to propitiate a continuance of Bhowany's favour, by laying aside a part of our acquisitions to be appropriated to her service, would, we firmly conceive, bring heavy misfortunes upon us. The office of strangler in these gangs is never allowed to be self-assumed; but is conferred, with due ceremony, after the fitness of the candidate, in point of firmness, bodily strength, and activity, has been ascertained, and a sufficient degree of expertness in the use of the roomal, or long shred of cloth used for the purpose of strangling, has been acquired, by long sham practice of the process among one another.

“ When thus qualified, the person on whom the office is to be conferred proceeds to the fields, conducted by his Gooroo, previously selected, who carries



carries with him the roomal or shred of cloth; and anxiously looking out for some favourable omen, such as the chirping of certain birds, or their flight past the right hand, he knots the roomal the moment that either occurs, and delivers it to the candidate, imploring success upon him. After this, they return, and the ceremony is closed by a feast, or distribution of sweetmeats. It is the seniors only who confer this office; generally, old Thugs held in some estimation, but who from the infirmities of age have ceased to accompany the gangs on their expeditions, and who receive their chief support from the voluntary contributions of those on whom they have conferred the privilege of using the roomal."

The barber, who is so important a personage in the last narrative, met his deserts, having been executed at Jubulpore in 1835.

The Instructions of the Supreme Government, conveyed to the President at Indore in reference to the above proceedings, contained the following passages :—

" Captain Borthwick is considered to merit great praise, for the seizure of so large a gang of those atrocious criminals, and for the full and satisfactory evidence which he has obtained of their guilt. The depositions of Amanooolla, and the other four accomplices who came forward on the promise of pardon,



pardon, afford the strongest proof of the whole of the prisoners belonging to the gang, and of the numerous murders committed by them, in the course of their progress through the several countries which were the scene of their depredations. The discovery of the dead bodies in the places pointed out by Amanoolla, and the production and identification of some of the property found in the possession of the gang, as detailed in the proceedings held by Captain Borthwick, confirm the depositions of the five evidences, and established the guilt of the parties beyond the possibility of doubt. His Lordship in Council observes, that one of the evidences, Khaim Rauj, has deposed to no less than seventy-one murders.

“ These murders having been perpetrated in territories belonging to various Native Chiefs, and the perpetrators being inhabitants of various districts belonging to different authorities, there is no Chief in particular to whom we could deliver them up for punishment, as their Sovereign, or as the Prince of the territory in which the crime had been committed.

“ The hand of these inhuman monsters being against every one, and there being no country within the range of their annual excursions from Bundelcund to Guzerat, in which they have not committed murder, it appears to his Lordship in Council, that they may be considered like pirates,

to



to be placed without the pale of social law, and be subjected to condign punishment by whatever Authority they may be seized and convicted.

“ Under this view of the case, and adverting to the relative situation of the British Government as the paramount power, the Governor General in Council has no hesitation in authorising and directing capital punishment to be inflicted on the leaders, and all the gang who shall be proved to have been employed as the stranglers. With regard to those who aided in decoying and enticing the victims to their fate, or to remove and conceal the bodies, they must be held to be accessaries both before and after the fact; they are equally criminal as the principals, and deserving the same punishment of death: but his Lordship in Council authorises you to commute the sentence of capital punishment into transportation for life, with hard labour, beyond seas, or confinement for a certain term of years, according to the circumstances of each particular case. Such of the prisoners as have acted merely as followers of the gang, employed in the performance of menial duties, such as syces or grass-cutters, and did not, as accomplices, share in the plunder; and boys, also, under fourteen years of age, of whom there are three or four amongst the prisoners; are to be kept in confinement for such periods as you may consider proper.

“ His Lordship in Council conceives that much difficulty, with risk of escape, would attend the plan



plan suggested by you, of executing the individuals condemned to suffer death, each at his own village; and deems it more expedient that the whole, on whom capital punishment is to be inflicted, should be executed at the place where they are now confined. It will be proper to intimate to Holkar's Government the apprehension and conviction of the gang, and the orders which you have received for inflicting capital punishment on the murderers.

“Previously to deciding on the fate of each individual prisoner (seventy-four in number), the Governor-general in Council desire that you will instruct Captain Borthwick to call them up singly, in the order of enclosure No. 11 of Captain Borthwick's Letter, in which their defence is contained; and take the evidence of the five witnesses as to the identity of the individual, his degree of connection with the gang as leader, accomplice, or menial, and compare the evidence as given by each of those five approvers. Captain Borthwick will also hear whatever the prisoners may desire to offer further in their defence; and wherever a doubt may exist in his mind as to the fact of the party being one of the gang (notwithstanding the identification of one or more of the evidence), that individual is to have the benefit of the doubt, and his case to be reserved for further orders. In the deposition submitted with your despatch, the cases of the prisoners are not given in the same numerical order in each; and it becomes difficult, in some instances,



instances, to know whether the witness refers to one and the same individual.

“ By the course of the proceedings now directed, the first prisoner to be identified, according to the list in enclosure No.11, is Oomrao Singh. Each of the five witnesses should be called on in succession, and without the privity of one another, to identify and name him; and Captain Borthwick will keep a record of the proceedings, stating his own opinion regarding the establishment of the prisoner's guilt, and the punishment to which, with reference to the observation in a preceding part of this letter, the prisoner is subject. Captain Borthwick having completed these proceedings, will submit them to you; and you will pass final sentence on all those deserving of capital punishment, and direct it to be carried into execution. Those adjudged to transportation beyond seas, are to be sent, under a suitable escort, to Bombay; to be kept in custody there until the receipt of orders from hence, which will be sent without delay. The individuals who are to suffer temporary imprisonment will be retained where they now are; and you will receive the final instructions of Government on the receipt of your report, and Captain Borthwick's further proceedings as above directed.

“ With respect to the five witnesses to whom Captain Borthwick promised pardon, it does not appear whether unconditional release, on the conviction



viction of their associates, was distinctly pledged to them or not. Considering the past course of life which these individuals, who have taken an active share in all the atrocities to which they depose, have led, his Lordship in Council feels extremely reluctant to let them again loose upon society, without security for their future good behaviour. If by pardon was only meant that their lives, which had been forfeited by their crimes, should be spared, they may be considered to be treated with great lenity if no severer punishment be inflicted than confinement until they can give good security: and you will be pleased to send them, under a guard, to the care of the Governor-General's Agent in Bundelcund; with whom you will arrange as to the time of their despatch, and the place where they may be delivered over to the escort which that officer may propose to send to the frontier of his jurisdiction, for the purpose of relieving the guard which may be sent from Mahidpore. The Agent to the Governor General will receive instructions regarding their disposal, until they can furnish such security as he may see proper to accept. You will apprise the five individuals of this decision, in order that they may know their destination, and adopt means for obtaining the security required."

Forty of the criminals were sentenced to death: the rest to transportation, or to imprisonment for various terms.



CHAP. XXII.

AMONG the persons whose information was instrumental in aiding the Government in suppressing Thuggee, was a leader named Inaent. The particulars of his capture are thus stated in a Letter, dated December 1829, addressed to Captain Slesman, by Captain Oliver, 73d Regiment N. I.

“ Having arrested, and placed in confinement, a man charged on suspicion of being the leader of a gang of Thugs, and having resolved to send him to Jubulpore to have the case investigated, I beg leave to report the circumstances under which he has been apprehended.

“ Early on the morning of the 7th instant, when the regiment was on the march from Chaka to Sewagunje, two chuprassies of your establishment, named Doulut Singh and Dhun Singh, who are in company with the corps, suddenly came upon a party of about twenty-five men seated round a fire on the side of the road, who, from their appearance, they suspected to be Thugs; and, approaching near to them, this suspicion was confirmed,

c c

by



by their recognising among them a man whom they had formerly known to be a Thug. On the coming up of these chuprassies, this man made a signal to the party ; upon which they dispersed, and ran into the jungle, which is close to the road. The chuprassies seized the man who made the signal ; and although he attempted to draw his sword, and made a desperate effort to escape, they kept hold of him until the advanced guard came up, when he was secured. They also seized a tattoo (pony), which he attempted to mount on the party being surprised, and another tattoo belonging to another of the gang.

“ The prisoner says his name is Sheikh Inaent ; and describes himself to be an inhabitant of Bundelcund, and that he was proceeding to Jubulpore in search of employment ; and denies that he was in company with any person at the time when the chuprassies seized him.

“ The chuprassies, however, assert that he is a notorious murderer, and that they knew him as a Thug these several years ago ; and they say that there are several men at Jubulpore who can confirm all they state regarding him.

“ Under these circumstances, and as I have heard reports that several gangs of Thugs are supposed to be in the neighbourhood, I have thought it proper to detain him in custody ; and shall send him to you to be examined. Thakur Bishun Singh



Singh has undertaken to provide a guard for his security; and he will proceed in progress to Jubulpore to-morrow.

“The prisoner having no money, and requiring subsistence, with his consent I directed his tattoo to be sold by auction. Sixteen rupees were obtained for it; which will be accounted for to you, when the prisoner is made over to you.

“The several effects found on the prisoner, and the second tattoo (of which he professes to know nothing), are sent with him. A list of them has been made out, and it is sent along with him.”

The hero's own version of his apprehension has also been preserved. He says:—“After the Dussehra of 1829, several gangs united, from different points, at the village of Kohpa, between Jubulpore and Banda: about forty from the districts of Futteh-gur and Cawnpore, under Rambuksh, Mihrban, and others; twelve under Bhola Buneea, from Jhalone, and twenty-five under myself, from Jhansee. We intended to operate that season upon the great road from Mirzapore to Jubulpore; and strike off to that between Saugor and Calpee, when necessary. We came on to Shahnugur; and there leaving the main body, I came on with Rambuksh, Bhola, and fifteen other Thugs, to the village of Pureyna, to search for *bunij*. Here we met two shopkeepers, two blacksmiths, and a Mussulman
cc 2 trooper,



trooper, on their way from the Deccan to the Dooab; and having won their confidence in the usual manner, we sent them on to our friends with four of our party, and a message to say that they would find them worth taking. At night we re-joined the main body, and found Dibba Jemadar entertaining the travellers. We set out the next morning, intending to put them to death on the road to Biseynee; but we found so many parties of Brinjaras, encamped, and moving along that road, that we could not manage it. The next morning we went on with them from Biseynee; and at a nullah in the jungle, three cose distant, we killed them, at about eight o'clock in the morning. The bodies were buried under some stones, where your people afterwards found them. We returned through Biseynee to Shahnugur; and thence came in upon the great road to Mirzapore, at the village of Sewagunje. In the evening, four travellers came up, on their way from Jubulpore to Banda, and were persuaded to pass the night with us on the bank of the tank. We were preparing to go on with them after the third watch, with the intention of killing them on the road, when we heard the *duheea* (the call or cry of the hare), a dreadful omen; and we let them go on, unmolested.

“ Soon after, four sepoy of the 73d regiment came up, and sat down at the fire to warm themselves. The regiment was on its march from
Jubulpore



Jubulpore to Banda, and the four sepoy were a little in advance of it. After some conversation, they went on; and we prepared to set out, having thrown into the fire some clothes and a churee (a painted stick, as a badge of office) belonging to the trooper whom we had murdered. While we were preparing, the two men whom you had sent on with the regiment, Dhun Singh and Doulut, came up, and sat down to warm themselves. We overheard Doulut say to Dhun Singh, 'This stick and these clothes must have belonged to murdered men; and these must be some of our old friends, and a large party of them': and both seemed to be alarmed at their situation, as they were then alone. I made a point of being the last off; and my brother, Sheikh Chund, who was lately hung, had already mounted his horse, and I had my foot in the stirrup, when they saw part of the advanced guard, and immediately made a rush at our bridles. We drew our swords; but it was too late. Chund Khan jumped off his horse, and made off. Both fell upon me, and I was secured. Had Doulut and Dhun Singh called out Thugs, the guard might have secured a great part of the gang; but they appeared to be panic struck, and unable to speak. By this time the regiment came up; and finding some of the remains of the trooper's clothes on the fire, the European officers found it difficult to prevent the sepoy from bayonetting me on the spot. I
put



put on a bold face; and told them that they ought all to be ashamed of themselves, to allow a native gentleman to be thus insulted and maltreated on the high road; and that nothing but the dread of the same ruffianly treatment had made my friends run off and leave me. I had three brothers in that gang: they were all afterwards taken: two have been hung, and the third is here."

Bholea Buneea, a worthy coadjutor of Inaent, deposes thus:—

"Three and a half years ago, I joined Mehrban, Cheyn, Sheikh Inaent, Dibba, Sewdeen, Bhikka, and Nunha, Jemadars, with a gang of altogether eighty-five Thugs; and we reached the tank at Sewagunje, in the Myhir Jageer, where we passed the night. On the day we reached this place, the advance tents of a regiment, on its way from Jubulpore, were passing; and we consulted upon the propriety of quitting the road, and determined to do so. In the evening, two hours before dark, four Hindoo travellers came up, on their way from Jubulpore towards Bandah; and we invited them to encamp with us. One watch before daylight we were preparing to set out, and these four travellers with us, when we heard the voice of a hare; and this we took for a very bad omen, and allowed the travellers to pass on: their lives were saved in consequence. We remained there; and I and

Sheikh



Sheikh Inaent were on our way to the bank of the tank near the village, when Rambuksh, the son of Runna, called out, and asked us to smoke. I returned to him alone, and sat down with him by the fire he had kindled to warm himself. Sheikh Inaent went on; and soon after four sentries came up, and sat down to warm themselves by the same fire, and soon after went on. One of them lost his regimental cap; and soon after they had gone, he came back, and asked me whether I had seen it. I said I had not; and he went back, on his road to Jubulpore, to search for it. After this, a gentleman (European) came upon horseback; and seeing a young monkey under a tree tied to a hackery, he ordered the driver to put it on the hackery; and the driver said that he got on and off when he liked; and the gentleman went on. The sun was now near rising, when Dhun Singh, approver, came up, and sat down to warm himself by the fire, with a spear in his hand: and immediately after him, Dowlut, approver, came up, and sat down to warm himself at the fire which the party of Mussulman Thugs had just left and gone on towards Belehree. He saw in the fire a black painted stick, which we had taken, three days before, from the five men whom we murdered at Biseynee on our way to Sewagunje, and the party of Mussulmans had torn up and thrown into the fire; and being such a stick as hurcaras commonly use, he concluded that

Thugs



Thugs had been there. He called to Dhun Singh to join him, but Dhun Singh told him to come to his fire; and he came, and they halted together; and we overheard them say, that we seemed a large gang of both Mussulmans and Hindoos; and though we did not personally know either of them, we concluded, from their discourse, that they were spies. By this time a great part of the gang had gone off, and the others were preparing to move, when Dibba the Buncea called out to Sheikh Inaent to move off. He replied, 'Go on, and I will follow.' On hearing this, the approvers rushed in upon Sheikh Inaent, and seized his horse by the bridle. He asked whether they were robbers; and while they were scuffling, the rest made off. Sheikh Chund, who was lately hung at Saugor, the brother of Sheikh Inaent, leaped from his horse as one of the approvers seized him by the bridle, and fled on foot. Sheikh Inaent was secured, and taken away. I, Chimma, and Omeda, ran off; and reached Gutee-aree in three days, travelling night and day. We rested there three days; and then went to our home, in Tirwa in Jhalone.

"Rambuksh, Dibba, and others, making a party of twenty-five Thugs, fled on the road to Mirzapore and Omurpatun; and in their flight, murdered the six Gosaens at Omurpatun. Three days afterwards, Bhikka and others, making a gang of twenty-five, took the road to Belehree in Jubulpore; and with



seven travellers whom they met there, they took the road to Biseynee, where they put them to death.

“When Rambuksh, Dibba, and others, went home after the affair of Omurpatun, I went to visit them in the village of Tirwa, in the pergunah of Phuppond, district Belha; and there I heard them relate the circumstances of that affair.

“The five men murdered at Biseynee were, a Mussulman trooper, from whom we got the stick, two blacksmiths, and two shopkeepers. Had the two approvers called out Thugs when we were running off, we must have been all taken; as the sepoys had come up, and there were many of the Myhire Rajah's horsemen present. They called out, and said ‘the fowls had gone loose,’ or something of that kind.

“The five travellers were from Hyderabad, on their way to Benares; and we fell in with them at the village of Pooreyneea, one cose and a quarter from Shahnugur, on the road to Belehree. I, Rambuksh, and Sheikh Inaent, with a party of two Thugs, had left Dibba and the rest of the gang at Shahnugur, when we met these men at Pooreyneea; and I sent back with them, Imanee, Dumme the son-in-law of Dibba, Bukshee, and another whose name I forget, with a message to Dibba to keep the travellers. They went to the Shahnugur, and Dibba went to his quarters; and we joined
a little



a little before night. We had come on to Poorey-
neea in the hope of meeting some travellers of this
kind. We passed the night at Shanugur, and in
the morning set out with the travellers; and had
sent on Bilhae, to choose a place to kill them at:
but we found so many Brinjaras encamped along
the road, that we could not manage it; and reached
Biseynee, where some encamped on the bank of
the tank, and others took up their quarters in the
shops of the bazaar. In the morning we set out
about sunrise; and three cose from Biseynee, at a
nullah, Sheikh Inaent gave the *Ihirnee*, and they
were seized and strangled by Mehrban, Dibba
Cheyn, and Bhikka the son of Sunum Isuree; neither
of whom is yet seized. Their bodies were buried
under stones in the nullah; and we got from them
100 rupees in money, 400 rupees' worth of gota,
besides clothes and brass pots. On a division, we
got about five rupees each. The bodies were
pointed out last year by Rambuksh, to Chunder
Deen Subahdar's party. Chittooa got a mare in
this affair: and she was taken from him by a sepoy
of the Hadjegur Rajah, stationed at the village of
Gonoura; as a pickpocket told him that Chittooa
was a Thug, and he made off without his mare or
pony. The nullah is about two cose and a half
from Hoppa. No other village is near the place."

We have the testimony of several of the party,
that



that they were not idle on their retreat. A man named Beekun Khan being asked, "What did you do after Inaent was taken," answered, "We Mus-sulmans of his gang took the road to Biseynee, through Belehree; the Dooab men went off on the road to Mirzapore; and Bhola and his party went to their homes. While we were resting at a village two cose on the other side of Belehree, in this district, two carriers of Ganges' water, two tailors, and a woman, came up, on their way to Banda; and having rested and taken some refreshments with us, they went on in our company to Shahnugur, where we passed the night; and the next day we went on together to Biseynee, where we fell in with two other travellers, on their way to Banda. These two men we found so poor, that we tried to get rid of them; as they might be some obstacle to our designs upon the five, and could yield us nothing. We tried to get off without waking them, but in vain: they got up; and we tried to persuade them that it was too soon for them to set out, but in vain. We then sent four of our party, with orders to take them along the high road; while we struck off on the bye-path by which we usually took our victims on that road. They soon after got alarmed, and insisted upon being taken to the main body, which they had seen strike off to the right. The four Thugs were obliged to consent, and they soon overtook us.

It



It was now determined that they also should die ; and six of our party were desired to attend them, and move on a little faster than the main body, to the nullah in the jungle where we usually killed people. We slackened our pace : and as soon as the six men reached the nullah, they put the two men to death, and concealed their bodies till we came up, when the other five persons were strangled ; and the bodies of all seven were buried under the stones near the place where we had buried the five men whom we killed in our advance, and where we, the next year, killed the five Byragees and the sepoy. All these eighteen bodies I pointed out to Chunder Deen, subahdar of the 4th regiment, whom you sent with me from Saugor in 1832. From the two poor men we got only one rupee ; but from the others we got 200 ; and in the division, Chund Khan and Dulele, who have been hung at Saugor, took the share of their brother Sheikh Inaent, who had been arrested by the 73d regiment."

The exploits of another portion—the Dooab men—are thus referred to by Captain Nicholson, in a Letter to Captain Sleeman :—

" I think it right to report to you, that six persons were last night murdered near this place, by a gang of Thugs.

" I heard of it on my arrival here this morning :
and



and as it was not convenient for myself to go and inquire into the circumstances, I sent a man for the purpose. He has just returned; and states, that the bodies of six Gosaens were this morning found lying on the ground near a tank close to the road, about a cose to the north of the town. They had been stripped. Their long matted hair seemed to have been opened out and examined; and the only mark of violence apparent on the bodies was that of a string round the neck, with which they seemed to have been strangled. Some articles of clothes were found near; also a tattoo; and a bow and arrow, under one of the small drains that cross the new road.

“It is further stated, that last evening these poor wretches were seen to stop at the tank, in company with twelve persons, apparently Kauretties, or carriers of Ganges' water; and to them, some of the articles found near the tank are supposed to have belonged.

“The person who brought me this information called afterwards, by my desire, on the Cutwal of the town; and was informed that persons had been sent out in all directions in pursuit of the supposed murderers, but that no trace of them had been discovered. I also am informed, that immediate notice of the murder was sent to the Rewa Rajah, and his son Bulbudder Singh, under whom Omurpatun more immediately is.”

A mem-



A member of the party here adverted to, says —
“ We did not rest till we had got thirty miles in advance of the regiment, on the Mirzapore road. We then halted, and spent the night at a small village ; and were going on again the next morning, when we fell in with four Gosaens, a Brahmin, and a Rajpoot, on their way from Hyderabad to Mirzapore. They went on with us to Omurpatun in Rewa, whence we set out with them before daylight ; and on reaching the place that had been chosen the evening before, they were all six strangled : it was about an hour before daylight. After we had examined the booty, and made the grave, we went to take up the bodies ; but one of the six got up, and tried to run away : he had got off about 100 yards, when he was overtaken, and strangled again.” Being asked if the victim did not call out ; the witness said, “ Yes ; but he had been so much hurt in the neck the first time, that he could not be heard at any distance : and we had no sooner brought his body back, and put it down among the others, than we heard the servants of Captain Nicholson coming up. The Captain was coming from Mirzapore, and was to encamp that day at Omurpatun. As soon as we heard his servants coming up, we all made off, leaving the bodies unburied. A white pony, belonging to Esuree Jemadar, got loose, and ran toward the servants, who called out to know whose it was : and thinking they



they must come up before we could dispose of the bodies, we made off, and left the pony behind us. Whether they discovered the bodies or not, I do not know; but the people of the town must have seen them."

Rambuksh, another actor, thus testifies:—"Three years and a half ago, when Sheikh Inaent was taken at Sewagunje by Dowlut, approver, with the regiment of sepoy, I was with Mehrban and Dibba, Jemadars, and a gang of twenty-five Thugs of the Lhodie caste; and we fled on the road to Rewa, and reached a village under a hill ten cose from Sewagunje, where we rested. In the morning we left this place, and halted on the bank of a tank on the road to Myhur, and there dined; and about twelve o'clock, four Go^oens, and a Brahmin and a Rajpoot, came up, on their way from Hyderabad to Benares. The Jemadars went to them, and, in conversation, won their confidence; and we went on with them to Omurpatun, which we reached about four o'clock, and rested in the shops of the bazaar. We dined there; and some time after dark, we, after consultation, determined to kill these men, and to set out with them for that purpose after the third watch. We did so about a cose and a half from Omurpatun, under some mangoe-trees and mhowa-trees, which had been chosen by Budula. About an hour before daylight, we
sat



sat down, on pretence of performing our ablutions ; when Esuree gave the signal ; and Heira, my nephew, Sumbhoo, Esuree, Mehrban, Dibba, and Pershaud, strangled these six men, while others held them down.

“ These bodies were disposed of in some rising ground 200 yards from the place. Some gentleman’s things were coming from Rewah ; and a white pony, belonging to Esuree, got loose ; and the people, with his property, asked whose it was. Upon that, we left the bodies exposed, and fled. We got from them two ponies, with some clothes upon them ; and we went on with the booty to a village six cose distant, where we opened it ; and found 150 rupees in money, and some gold beads, with 100 rupees’ worth of silver, and eight selahs ; two with gold lace, and six plain. We tied it up again ; and went on with it to Tirwa in the Dooab, where we divided it ; and each man got about twenty rupees. The whole amounted to about 900 rupees.

“ The gang of Mussulmans took the road to Belehree after the seizure of Sheikh Inaent ; and we did not meet again in the Dooab.

“ On one of the Gosaens’ heads the hair was long, but on the three it was cut off. The pony, Esuree let loose ; and we never recovered it, nor did I learn who got it.

“ When we were about to take up the bodies to bury



bury them, one got up, and attempted to run off; but he was pursued by Dibba, Kasee Lhodie, and Dooja, who seized him after he had gone a hundred paces; and Dibba strangled him. He could not make a noise, as his throat had been hurt in the attempt to strangle him before. As soon as we had placed his body with the other five, we saw the party of the gentlemen coming from Rewa approach, and made off. The people did not then see these bodies, but they were afterwards discovered.

The adventures of the rear of the destroyed band are related by an approver, named Zolfukar :—

“ When Inaent was seized, I was with a gang of twenty-four Thugs at Shahnugur, coming up with the others. Mahommed Buksh was with another of seven, at Biseynee. Bhola Buneea, in his flight, came up, and told us of Inaent's arrest. We went, as fast as we could, through Saugor, towards Bhopaul; and at Sehora we fell in with Feringeea, coming from Bhopaul with a gang of forty Thugs. He returned with us; and we proceeded to Bhopaul without killing any person. From Bhopaul we retraced our steps towards Saugor; and at Omaree fell in with the Farsee and his servant, and two Buneeas, whom we killed. But before we killed them, we had fallen in with a gang of eighteen Lodhies from the Dooab; and having shared in the booty, they left us to operate upon the Seronge roads.



roads. We had also fallen in with Noor Khan Jemadar and his gang of seven men, and they also shared in the booty of the Farsee.

“After the Lodhies left us, we came on to Bhilsa; where we fell in with the three men and two women whom we killed near Manora—Ramdeen Sepoy of Bhopaul, and his mother, on their way home to Banda; a bearer, his wife and brother. Coming on to Baghrode, we fell in with two men; who told us that three of their companions had been plundered by robbers, and were behind. We came on to Bahadurpore with them, and killed them between that place and the village of Mirzapore. We had left people to detain the three who were coming up, as we thought they could have nothing left after the robbery. They asked after their two companions, and we told them that they were pushing on as fast as they could for Saugor.

“We now struck off upon the Hoshungabad road; and at Belehree met Mahommed Buksh's gang of seven Thugs; and went on to Raneepore, where we killed two men, and another at Kurheya Khera. Here, to our great surprise and consternation, my mare dropped a foal; and we all came under the *cetuk*, all contaminated alike. We separated, to return home. I, with a party of about thirty, came through Bishunkera, Bhopaul, Bhilsa, and Saugor, home.”

From



From this period, misfortune seems to have attended the entire party — Feringeea attributing all to the neglect of omens. He says:—

“ We were bathing at a river four cose this side of Bhilsa, when I heard, directly over my head, the *chireya*. I was much alarmed; and Kurhora, who is an excellent augur, told me that I ought to take the gang back, on the Gunge Basoda road, immediately, after so bad an omen; but I determined upon coming on towards Saugor, two cose to the village of Muree. On reaching this place, I tied my horse to a tree; and went into the village, to talk with the Puteel, leaving the gang near the horse. While talking with him, I heard a great uproar, and saw my horse running towards the village; and, on going to catch him, saw your Nujeebs seizing and binding my gang. There were forty, but they secured only twenty-eight. I made off as I was, half dressed, and got home; and twelve of my gang escaped. Had I attended to Kurhora's advice, you would have had none of us; —another proof of the efficacy of omens, if attended to.”

Mahommed Buksh, another dignified Thug, confirms this account. He says:—

“ It was a very unfortunate expedition. At Biseyne we fell in with some travellers, and should have secured them; but when Zolfukar came up,



Bhola, who is always talking, could not help saying, in Ramasee—"After all, we shall not go home without something to please our wives and children." The travellers heard, suspected our designs, left our encampment on the bank of the tank, and went into the village. This was our first *bani*j (merchandize); and to lose it thus, was a bad omen: it was, in fact, like being seized. Then came the murder of the women at Manora; and to crown the whole, the foaling of Zolfukar's mare, which brought us all under the *celuk*. Every thing seemed to go wrong with us that season; and I often proposed to return home, and open the expedition anew; but I was unhappily overruled."

Feringeea himself might have escaped, but for the strength of those feelings of natural affection of which the Thug fraternity appear no less susceptible than their more honest neighbours, though the influence of such feelings is seemingly so inconsistent with their detestable occupation. Being asked how he came to be taken, Feringeea answered—"Having lived among the clans of Rajpootana and Telingana for years together, I should have gone off to some of them: but you had secured my mother, wife, and child: I could not forsake them; was always inquiring after them; and affording my pursuers the means of tracing me. I knew not what indignities my wife and mother might



might suffer. Could I have felt secure that they would suffer none, I should not have been taken."

A remarkable feature in the history of this man is, the fact of his having been retained in the service of two distinguished British Military Officers. How this connection was brought about, and how it terminated, are thus told by Feringeea :—

" My cousin, Aman Singh Subahdar, after the death of his brother, Dureear, and my father, Purusram, became our guardian. His mother was one of the first families in the country; and her sister's son, Jhundee, alias Gunga Singh, had the command of two regiments at Kotah. Having no sons of his own, he asked Aman to give him either me or Phoolsa, the son of Dureear, (for whom you have offered 200 rupees,) for adoption, as he had great wealth, and no child to leave it to. He suspected Aman to be a thief; but knew not that he was a leader of assassins, or he would have had nothing to say to us. Phoolsa would not consent to live with Gunga Singh Kuptan; nor should I, had I not had a dispute with Aman, while out on a Thug expedition. I went to him; and he became very fond of me, and got me made a Subahdar in the Grenadier Company of the Buldeo regiment. I could not live without some of my old Thug friends; and got Rambuksh, my cousin, for whom you have offered 500 rupees, enlisted, and made a Havildar,



Havildar, on my own security for his good conduct. He was always a very loose character; and when Gunga Singh went to Oudeepore with his two regiments, as the body-guard of the young Queen, who was the daughter of the Kotah Chief, Rambuksh seduced a young widow, the daughter of one of the most respectable bankers of the city, who became pregnant. As soon as the intrigue was discovered, she pounded and ate the diamond of her own ring, or something of the kind, and died; and Rambuksh was obliged to fly, to save his life, which was demanded, by her family, of the Chief. Having given security for his good conduct, I thought my own head in danger; and fled to Boondee, where I contrived to get into the service of Major Todd; recommended to him, by the Postmaster, as a young man of high birth and great promise. On going to meet General Ochterlony at Bheelwarah, soon after, he recommended me to him; and he made me Jemadar of hurcaras. I attended him to Delhi and to Ajmere; whence he sent me, in charge of the Post-office peons, to Rewaree. From this place I was sent, with four peons, to attend a young lady of the General's family from Delhi to Calcutta. Her escort consisted of a Havildar, a Naick, and twenty sepoy, under the command of Bhowanee Singh, Jemadar of the local regiment. We reached Muthura without any accident, and lodged in Colonel Gunge. At night,
Bhowanee



Bhowanee Singh was caught in an awkward position with one of the young lady's women; and dreading the vengeance of the General, he, and all his guard, fled. He roused me, told me what had happened, and advised me to go off with him, and try our fortunes with Runjeet Singh. This I declined; but hearing that my cousin, Aman Subahdar, had gone that season with his gang into Rajpootana, I started; and passing through Hindone and Beeana, joined them at Kuraulee, after having been absent from him some years. It was, I believe, the year after I rejoined Aman that my gang was arrested at Kotah; and that we killed Ashraf Khan, the Subahdar Major of the 4th Cavalry, and his party. From that time till I was taken, or about ten years, I was always out with the gang, except in the season of the rains; and for several even of these seasons we were out in Rajpootana, where the rains offer little impediment. Indeed, in the western parts of Rajpootana, Thugs have an advantage in the rainy season; as at the other seasons, the most wealthy travellers move along in wheeled carriages, and cannot be so easily managed as on foot or on horseback, to which mode of travelling they are obliged to have recourse in the rains."

The histories of these men are as romantic as the most ardent lover of Oriental adventures could desire.



CHAP. XXIII.

It has already been mentioned, that Thuggee is carried on by water as well as land; and Bengal is especially infested by River Thugs. In a case related in an early part of this volume in illustration of the general mode in which River Thuggee is carried on, the offenders were brought to justice: and a few selections from the evidence will tend to throw fresh light upon the subject under consideration. The number of prisoners was eight; and they were indicted for the murder of two weavers and four other persons. Bholai Chung, after stating that he knew the prisoners, said:—

“ Early in April last, Nubeendeo (one of the prisoners) called me to his house, on intention to trade in rice: thence he took me to a boat: it was 100 maunds’ panchway, and five other men were sitting in it, none of whom I then knew. I asked Nubeendeo what seven men could do in so small a boat. He answered, ‘ Bungsee Manjee has another boat, which he has gone to fetch; when there will be room enough.’ That day we remained in the boat. Next evening, Bungsee Manjee, Soobuldam, Birjmohun,



Birjmohun, and Gungaram Mistree, came up, on a pulwar, near to our boat: then Kumul Das left our boat, and called a person named Ramgobind: night came on, and we remained. Next day, at dawn, there were six men in the pulwar, and ten in the panchway. At about one pas day, were about to set out; when Suroop Mistree called out, 'Stop; for when the boat was loosened, I sneezed':—so both boats stopped: and Suroop went ashore, and brought two Tanties (weavers), with several pairs of dhotees: and he said to Nubeendeo, 'O relative, you wanted to buy cloths; and I have brought you the men who sell them.' He replied, 'Bring the men on board the boat': on which they came in, with the cloths. Soobuldam and Suroop Mistree threw an *angaocha*, twisted, on the necks of those two Tanties, and threw them over on the floor; dipped them under water, and held them awhile, and then let them go.—We set out, after this, to the north; pulled fifteen days in the direction of Kakeenu, district of Rungpore, where we went. Thence we went towards Sura, under the hot *kholabooree*. In a bight, we found a boat laden with tobacco and hemp: both our boats put to there. Soobuldam asked the Manjee (commander) of the tobacco-boat, whence he came; and he told him he was coming from Khillaighat, and going to Sherai-gunje: on which, Nubeendeo said, 'Our houses are at Muth, and we will go to Manickgunje': thus



thus all three boats remained there that night : next day, all three set out together at noon. Nubeendo, seeing a waste *chur* (sand-bank), said to the tobacco-men, 'O Manjee (commander), let us stop our boats here, and cook our food.' There was a pilot with the tobacco-boat ; and we all put to at this *chur*, and dined. After dinner, Nubeendo said : 'I have made a vow to the god, Hurry Soot ; let me here fulfil it. Call the Manjee, and his boat-men, that they may assist.' So he put a mat (carpet) before the first boat ; and when the four sailors and the captain of the tobacco-boat came, Soobul said, 'Do you, I pray, sing the song of Hurry Soot.' They had sung one, and were beginning another, when Nubeendo said, 'Now, Hurry, give us our plunder' : on which, Birjimohun, and Suroop Mistree, and Soobuldam, and Kumul Das, and Lukhikunth Sen, these five men leapt on the throats of the four men of the tobacco-boat, and on that of the pilot ; twisted angoochas, and threw them flat on the sand ; others seized them at the same time ; after which they punched them to death with fists and elbows, and sunk the bodies in the water. I, Ramgobind, and Soobuldam, were put on board the tobacco-boat : and then all three boats started, and went on together till evening, when we stopped. At night, the tobacco and hemp were changed into our panchway and pulwar ; and Soobul struck the tobacco-boat with a hatchet, made



made a hole, and sunk it : next day we set out ; and came in five days to Kishenpore, and fixed the boat. Thence Suroop went to Manickgunje, to ascertain the demand in the bazaar for tobacco : thence he came back, saying the bazaar was empty, because of a disturbance. Then Suroop put the hemp in the panchway, and took it home to his house. I, Soobul, Birjmohun, and Kumul, brought on the tobacco, and the rest went to their homes. We came to Manickgunje, and gave the tobacco to Bullai Sah, to sell for us. Next day I went away ; and in fifteen days returned, and saw that the boat was still there. Suroop told me that sixteen rupees' worth of tobacco had been sold ;—offered me one rupee, which I declined ; and went home."

Kishenmohun, alias Ramgobind Chung, of Kanikola, Pergunah Chaundpertab, aged twenty-two, ploughman, said :—" I knew the prisoners. Frequenting the fair of Manickgunje, I became acquainted with Gungaram Mistree. Last Bysakh, he came to me in a field where I was ploughing, and asked me to go on a trading-boat. I declined at that time : he returned in six or seven days, bringing Kumul Das, who asked me if I had spoken with any person about going on a boat. I said, ' Yes ; with Gungaram.' ' Will you go ?' I said, ' I am poor :' on which he gave me one rupee and a half ; which I left with my family, and went to the house
of



of Kumul Das, and remained there four days: after which, at the River Jumona, at the market of Balia Chundra, there was the boat of Kumul Das, of the class *botom*. I went with him: saw Suroop, Gungaram, and Lukhikunth, in the boat: at one-and-a-half pas watch of the day, a pulwar came, in which were Soobuldam, Birjmohun, Nubeendeo, Bungsee, and Bholae Chung, and was fastened near ours. Then two Tanties, with cloths under their arms, came from the north, towards the south, along the river bank. Suroop called them on board the pulwar; after which I did not see those two men leave the boat. I heard from Bholae, that Suroop, and Soobul and others, had killed these two men, and sunk the bodies. That day we set sail on both boats; and reached in fifteen days the Hat-booree: remained there two or three days, and then set out. Under a hut, in a bight, we found a boat laden with tobacco and hemp. Nubeendeo asked the men whither they were going. Manjee said, 'The boat is come from Khillaigunje, and will go to Sheraigunje': on which, Nubeendeo and the rest replied, 'We also shall go in that direction: come, let us go together':—so that boat came along with ours for one day to Surarez. All three boats put-to at a chur; all cooked, and fed. Nubeendeo said, 'I have a vow to Hurry; let me fulfil it': so all sat on the chur (sand-bank); and those four men of the tobacco-boat, and one pilot with them, came
and



and sat on a mat, and sung songs to Hurry Soot : on this, Nubeendeo, Suroop Mistree, Lukhikunth, Kumuldas, Birjmohun, Gungaram, and Bungsee, twisted angoochas on the throats of these five men, threw them down, killed them, and threw them into the water. Then we set out, the three boats together. At night, Soobul and the rest changed the property into their own boats ; and Suroop and Nubeendeo cut a hole in the tobacco-boat with an axe, and sunk it : next dawn, our boat departed : in five or six days we got to Manickgunje, whence I fled.

Gungaram Mistree, one of the prisoners, made the following statement :—" With my own hand I have killed no person : on board the boat where the two Tanties and five Mullahs were killed, I was a boatman. In the beginning of Bysek last, Suroop, my relative, came to my house, and took me off to repair a boat. We went near to the village of Binanee, on the River Jumona. I saw at that ghaut a pulwar-boat ; and in it were Nubeen Sircar, Birjmohun Biswas, and his wife's brother, and Bhola Chung. Kishenmohun Chung, Soobuldam, I, and Suroop, when two ghurries day were left, got on board that boat, and remained there that night : next day, at about one pas day (nine A. M.), the boat moved, but high wind ; so, at one-and-a-half pas day, put-to at Bhataghaut Binanee, near Khooneepara, and



on the banks of the River Jumona, and remained there that day : next day, at one pas nine A.M., two Tanties (weavers), one of whom had a bundle of cloths, came along the bank from the north towards Binanee, going south towards Dowlutpore. Nubeendeo went ashore from the boat, and called these two Tanties ; who said they had been trying to sell in vain, and were taking their cloths home. Nubeendeo and the others offered to buy, and called them into the boat. These two Tanties went into the boat with their cloths : after which, Suroop said to me, ' Do you go on shore.' I did so, about three begas distant. I sat down ; and on returning to the boat two ghurries after, one of the party called me on board the boat. I embarked ; saw some new dhotees, but not the Tanties (weavers) : asked how, and why. Suroop and Nubeendeo replied, It was no concern of mine ; they would take the cloths on, and sell them ; for they had bought them. The boat was loosened. I asked where they were going : they said, ' We always go to Kakeena and sell cloths ; and thither will we now go. If you will not go with us, remain you at Seraigunje, and work.' In three days we got to Seraigunje, where we stopped ; and remained at Kakeena, and about that part, for a month, and then went on towards Surarez. On the way coming, we found a panchway, with five sailors in it, laden with hemp and tobacco : asked whither going : they said to Seraigunje.

Nubeendeo



Nubeendeo said, 'We, too, are going thither; let us go together:' so the boats joined, and went down the stream. On this, all the men on our boat began to speak in slang terms, and used signs which I could not comprehend: but as they wanted to kill the tobacco-men, I remonstrated. They said, 'We always do thus; and so we support ourselves: be at your ease.' In Jeth (May), date forgot, at about one-and-a-half pas day on the border of the river, both boats put-to at a chur or sand-bank, cooked, and dined: then Soobul, Bhola, Kishenmohun, Suroop, and Birjmohun, cast on the throats of the five men of the tobacco-boat, angoochas, threw them down, and closed their breath and killed them, and threw the five bodies into the river. Nubeendeo, and Soobul, and Suroop, went on board the tobacco-boat; rest remained on our own boat: both boats set out together, pulled for two pas (six hours), came to a village, and put-to the boats, and passed the night there; and took out all the tobacco, hemp, a lotah, and some other things, to our own boat; and sunk that tobacco-boat somehow or other. That night we moved on to Serai-gunje, came near Binanee, and put up. They put me ashore, to go home by land: the others took the boat, and went to Manickgunje. They promised to give me something, after selling the property in Manickgunje. Fifteen days after, Suroop came, and said they had sold all to Jugnath Sah: did



did not tell how much, but he gave me two rupees. He had before given me this new dhotee, which I deemed belonged to the two Tanties. As he did not tell me the price, I went in the middle of Asarh to Manickgunje, and asked Jugnath what he had paid; *i.e.* I asked of his Gomashta: he refused to tell me. While I was sitting down, I could see the two Tanties taken into the boat; but I never saw them come out again; hence I suppose they were murdered."

Suroop Mistree made the following confession:—
"I have killed no person. I went on no boat: cannot say why Soobul and Gunga Mistree take my name. In June, Gunga Mistree came to my house, and said, 'We have brought some tobacco and hemp: do you take it to Manickgunge and sell, and I will pay you.' I came to the ghaut, and saw these articles in a pulwar, on which were Soobuldam, Bhola Chung, Kishenmohun, Birjmohun, and Bungsee Chung. They said, 'We cannot ourselves sell it; do you come and sell our things for us.' So I went on board that boat: Gungaram and Birjmohun went on shore. We took the boat to Manickgunje, and sold the articles to Jugnath Sah. I forget the amount; but Jugmohun Biswas took the whole, and gave one-and-a-quarter rupee. They would have given me a red chatta; but I would not accept it; so Gungaram took it. That chatta was
above



above my means.—I cannot write.—I denied all things in the Mofussil, because Soobul had terrified me. They said they had brought the things from the north, yet they did not trade in tobacco." Witness points out Birjmohun, and said, "It was his father Jugmohun who came to Manickgunje after us, and managed the sale and accounts of tobacco."

Another of the party thus deposed:—"On the 2d Bysakh last, I and others, on two boats, put-teela and a pulwar, went from Jumonee and Brim-hoter and Tistee, to Kakeena, in the district of Rungpore; I was on the pulwar, the Manjee of which was Bungsee Nundee: he had said rice should be bought, and all share in the profits of the sale. We lugao'd the two boats at Kukeena, but got no goods: in the beginning of Jeth we set out, and on the low ground of a chur (sand-bank), in the afternoon, we stopped the boat: next day, at ten A.M., there came a boat from the direction of Dinajpore, in which there was tobacco: our three boats followed it, and in Bhatee of Hat-kholapoory all the boats lugao'd together: the tobacco-men, in reply to our question, said they had brought tobacco from Dinagepore for a merchant, and were going to Kakomaree: next day, the malicks of our three boats, viz. Radanath, alias Suroop Chung, Nubeendeo, and Mirthoo Chung, met and consulted: and when the trader's boat set
E E out,



out, our pulwar of Binnoo Manjee set out also : our other two boats remained at a distance, following in rear. At one-and-a-half pas day, the pulwar and tobacco-boat lugao'd (put-to) at a chur. We went ashore and cooked, but the trader's men cooked and fed on their own boat. Then I and Gungaram went on the chur, to get fire-wood. In four ghuries, or perhaps 1 pas, we returned to our boat, but did not see the trader's men on their boat. Our men, Nubeendeo, Radhanath, and Mirtoo Chung, who were our boat's maliks (masters), said, 'Loosen the tobacco-boat, and bring it near ours.' We all did so. When two ghuries of the day were left, we took all the tobacco, hemp, lota, planks, tusla, and kutono, from the tobacco-boat; put them into our pulwar, and sunk the tobacco-boat. Then we set out with our boat; and shortly, our other two boats came up and joined us: they said, 'Sell the tobacco at Manickgunje, and we will, in a few days, bring rice or dal, or whatever we get': so we took our boat with tobacco to Manickgunje. Radhanath, Suroop, Kishenmohun, Bungsee Nundee, and Bholanath Chung, remained in the pulwar, to sell the tobacco: two men were sent homewards. That tobacco was sold for one-and-a-half per maund to Bulram, Tantee Muhajun: we got forty-eight rupees; and the hemp was sold for five rupees to a Beoparee: Suroop and the other men divided the amount, and gave me two rupees.