

PULICATTA



1891

AARDE Foundation

PULICATTA

A local serial tale

Published in 1891 by

Cosmopolite Press

Madras

Republished by AARDE Foundation, Chennai

2023

Publisher's Note

Pulicat, or Pazhaverkadu, is known for its second-largest water body in India. The lagoon covers an area of 759 sq.km., which is equal to double the size of Chennai City Corporation Limit. The lagoon has attracted maritime traders since the first century. The Arabs, Turkish, Portuguese, Dutch, Japanese, Malay, French, and English were few among the large number of traders around the globe who marketed cotton in exchange for spices and precious stones. The Pulicat or Palcacate cotton cloths were most sought-after in Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa until the 1900s.

Pulicat Lagoon attracts more than eighty thousand migratory birds every season and a few varieties of turtles, including the lesser-known and critically endangered Pondicherry Sharks. Art and Architecture Research Development and Education (AARDE) Foundation, a registered not-for-profit Trust, took an initiative in 2007 to bring attention and much-needed action on the ground to protect the lagoon. As this lagoon was shared by two states of India, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, there was less interest in reviving its past glory due to administrative difficulties. However, after a decade of activities by the AARDE Foundation, the day is nearing to build up the last glory.

This novel, Pulicatta, is a new and original local serial tale. Madras, 1891, was a collection of serial literature published as a single larger work, which, as a work of narrative fiction, is published in smaller, sequential installments. The practice of publishing serial literature started in the eighteenth century, since printed literature was at a premium for large readers. To make it affordable, serial literature was published in installments at varying times. We were excited to find this publication first at the Madras Archives in Chennai, which was in damaged condition. Later, we found a good scanned version of the old book at the British Library in London. With the support of the Madras Archives and the British Library in London, we are publishing the novel.

The novel takes you through the eighteenth-century landscape with a vivid experience of its cultural values. We hope this will bring needed attention and proof to revive the ecology of Pulicat Lagoon on the Coromandel Coast.

AARDE Foundation, 05.March.2023

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The novel has many references to places in and around Pulicat that exist even today with the same name. However you will notice that some villages mentioned to the north of Pulicat in the Sriharikota Island are now in the south of Pulicat. This is due to the fact that these villages were moved South to Pazhaverkadu Panchayat in order to establish the ISRO rocket launch station in the 1980's - 90's. The inhabitants moved to the new location but retained their original village names in order to hold on and honour the memories.

For your attention;

The book is republished from the collection, which was published in 1891 CE. Hence the language would be classical, and in a few places, a mixture of various languages used in those days: Tamil, Dutch, French, and Spanish.

^aFootnotes &

[^]Maps and Pictures were added by us.

References were taken from various sources available on the Internet.

*following pages' content is from the original edition of 1891 CE, not the sketches.

#The story is based partly on geographical location and partly on real-life incidents that happened during the late 18th and -19th centuries.

1574 CE Map of South India



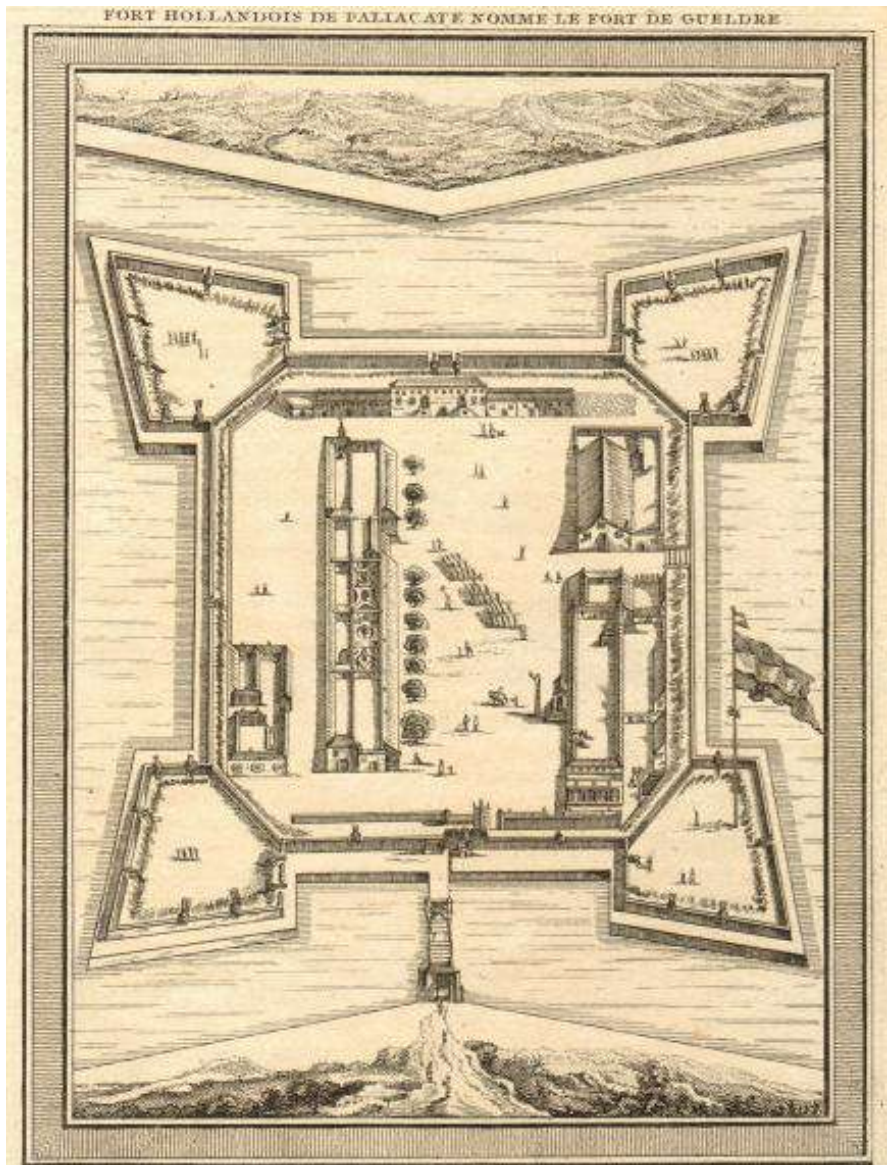
Map of India (a part - South India) titled 'Calecut Nuova Tavola' by Girolamo Ruscelli (1500s-1566) was an Italian polymath, humanist, editor, and cartographer active in Venice during the early 16th century.

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Geographical Map of Pulicat Lagoon



© OpenStreetMap contributors, 2023



The Dutch Fort of Pulicat, called Geldria was built in 1610 CE;
 Drawn by Bellin, Jacques-Nicolas, 1751 CE

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European Cemetery of Pulicat, 1639

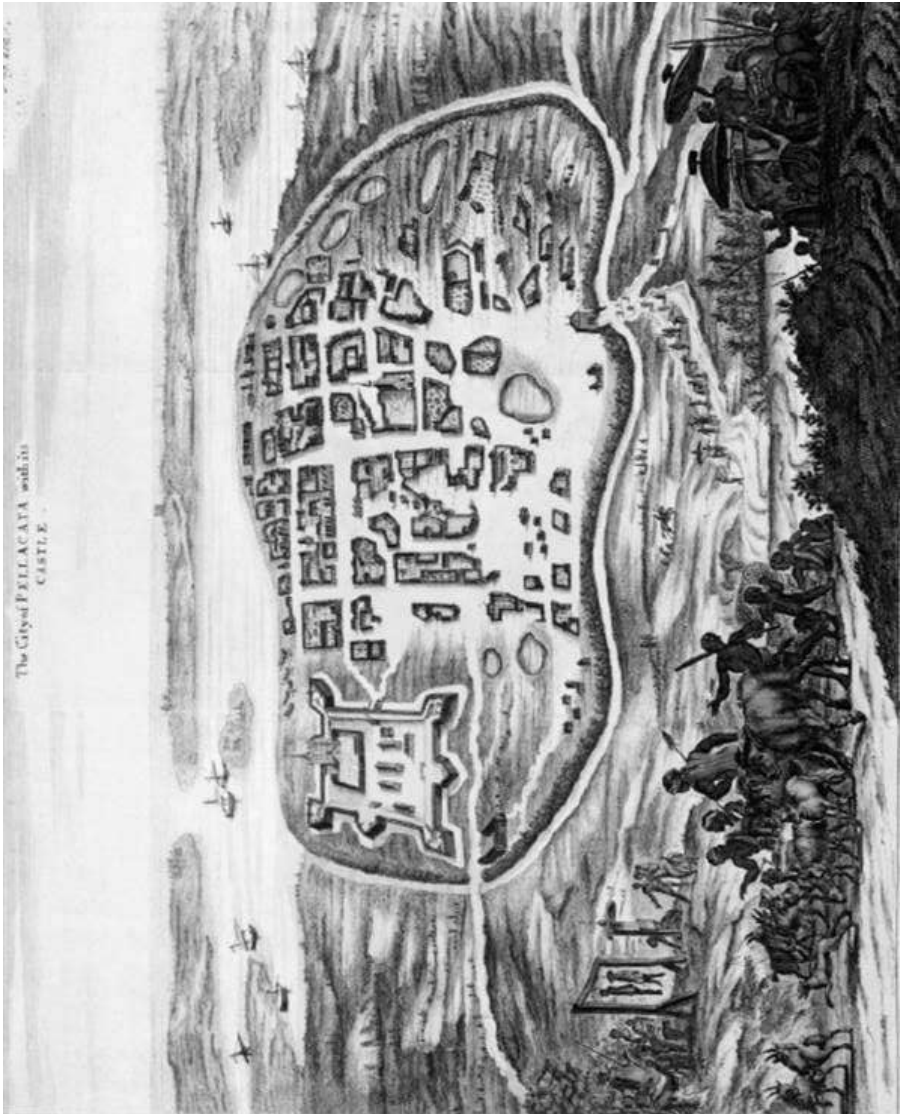
Picture: 2022, AARDE Foundation



Covilluddy Temple, after many renovations, stands tall today.

Picture: 2023, AARDE Foundation

Pulicatta



Hand sketch of an Ariel view of Pulicat in 1669 CE

Source: AARDE Foundation



25th Milestone of the East Coast Canal, Buckingham Canal, Chennai

Pulicatta



17th century Governor House, in Pulicat today



Dutch ship in 1600, visiting Pulicat

Source: <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/collectie/SK-A-3108>

An Introductory Note to Pulicatta
by Rhoda Alex, Communication Artist

Pulicatta - A Hidden Gem

Sometimes we find ourselves reading and enjoying books that are not really meant for us. The novel titled Pulicatta is one such treasure! The plot or the literary genre may not appeal to the majority today save historians, anthropologists or imperial literature scholars. It brings alive the vibrant past of Pulicat - a port in the Coromandel coast of India. Historical evidence of human activity at Pulicat spans to the medieval Cholas (10th century). Now it is known as Palverkadu in Tamil, located on the northern tip of the state of Tamilnadu and is the second largest brackish water lagoon in India. The historical, ecological and economical benefits of wetlands such as Pulicat cannot be emphasized enough and yet its very existence is threatened due to ambitious 'developmental' projects.

Back to the book...the author of the Pulicatta remains a mystery (I am assuming it's a male). Published in the year 1891 by Cosmopolite Press in erstwhile Madras, the book is listed without an author in the 'Catalogue of the Library of the India Office' of all literature from India published between 1822 and 1896. Novels from British colonies especially Asia were eagerly lapped up in Great Britain during this period as they introduced strange worlds, exotic cultures and incredible tales. Pulicatta seems to have been written to entertain the readers in the homeland. So it is packed with condescending and learned wry English humour. Yet, there is a genuine connection between the author and Pulicat. It was his favourite boyhood holiday resort and his knowledge of Pulicat's history and geography is detailed and deliberate so much so that Pulicat is almost the hero of the novel along with Patrick Desmond, a young and dashing Irishman.

The plot showcases how life rolled on recklessly in sea-ports, highlighting the search for a hidden treasure in the island by various characters and their forged relationships with each other to reach their goal. Murder, kidnapping, romance, treason, battles are all part of story-line. Fort Gelaria whose ruins are partially buried in the sands of Pulicat now, is the seat of power in the plot from where the rulers try to manipulate the treasure seekers. The author's presentation of the characters follows the imperial structure. The prank loving Irishman is the hero, Garral from Portugal is a crook, Udong the Malay is a loyal slave and ruthless, the Dutch couple are kind and

dignified, the English lady is bold and courageous, Issac is a cunning Jew, Ragupathy - a scoundrel interpreter .. all part and parcel of Pulicat.

It is interesting to write this now in 2020 as the world is gripped with the Corona scare because R. J. Barendse, a historian of the Indian ocean describes ports of those days as 'fever-holes' - they were meeting-places of diseases from all over the globe. Apart from spices, the ships carried diseases as well. Port cities therefore were the strongholds of efficient maritime traders and port administrators - in Pulicat the Dutch have left an envious legacy ruling it for 214 years - seen from the respectful hate shown towards them in this novel. Through all the changes and ravages of time the simple fisherfolk of Pulicat have survived without much change

The opening chapter offers a fascinating glimpse at a Pulicat of the late 19th century, a bustling port 25 miles north of Madras filled with 'Europeans, Malays, Javanese, Hindus and Bengalese'. (here Hindus means Indians). Five different theories about the original name of Pulicat and the author concludes that Palayaverkaadu is most likely the right one . He then continues to draw a literal map of Pulicat explaining its geographical contours with locations of sand banks, dunes, forests and jungles, the roads (places for ships to anchor) , the shoals (coral reefs), etc. He throws in history too reporting the attempted siege of Castle Geldria by Tippoo's troops and Mahomed Afzool Ghazi Khan.

It all becomes very exciting and realistic as the description mentions names which we can trace even now - Nagari hills, Buckingham Canal, Ennore, Sriharikota, Krishna and Godaveri rivers, a place called Andarmadam - the scene of battle between the Dutch and Mysorians . This certainly gives us an impetus to start searching for other locations mentioned. There are even details of underground tunnels and secret chambers in Pulicat used by pirates and merchants to hide their loot and arms. The author devotes a detailed re-telling of the origin history of the Covilluddy temple built for Ankali-Eashwaram as recounted by a fisherman - two villages Coviluddy and *Karungalli* (black kalli) get their name from this legend. *Karungalli* still exists as mentioned.

In a rib-tickling episode, the author explains kolli piasu - as a phenomenon of marsh gas that sometimes combust spontaneously. Does this happen now in Pulicat? Has the marshy landscape been preserved? Do we still find partridges, hares, green pigeons, mud crabs that are mentioned in the novel. We all know that Sriharikotta jungle does not exist anymore - it has been replaced by a satellite launch centre. The location of sand dunes and

bars mentioned in the novel are probable conservation indicators. The seas near Madras are described as shark-infested too.

Finally this question lingers - are we being carried away by fiction? This genre of novels was not considered serious literature back then or even now. But once in a while a hidden gem such as *Pulicatta* surfaces and gives us narratives that are meaningful to our search. *Pulicatta* is not completely fact nor completely fiction. It was written to share the experiences of the author, an European who lived in the port of Pulicat from his perspective. The expertise of the author in matters regarding life in Pulicat confirms that there are truths to be discovered reading between the lines of this novel. Stories of the rise and fall of human endeavour always have lessons for us, if we care to listen.

INTRODUCTION

About 25 miles to the North of Madras lies the old Dutch Settlement of Pulicat, once populous and prosperous, the streets of which presented a gay and animated scene, as Europeans, Hindus, Malays, Javanese and Singalese—a motley but orderly and good cultured throng—pushed their way hither and thither in pursuit of pleasure or of gain. While the roadstead¹ was crowded with craft of all descriptions and sizes; from the huge Dutch East-Indiaman replete with every convenience and comfort to the Dhoney with its thatch-deck and offensive smell of bilge-water and *nappee*—that fearful and wonderful caviare manufactured by the Burmese and guaranteed to asphyxiate a pariah dog. Plying between these and the shore might have been seen scores of “Masulah” boats manned by Coromandel boatmen—amphibious beings clad (if I may use the word) with a single strip of linen (18 inches by 4) fastened to a string round the waist and having their heads adorned with quaint, conical, palmyra-leaf caps.

But alas! How are the mighty brought low! The wealth, the bustle, the activity of whilom days have been replaced by squalor, and lethargy. In the place of opulent Dutch factors and their plump and smiling fraus and frauliens² one now finds somnambulent Lubbays and their obese spouses; and where once resounded the cheerful hum of life is now heard the drowsy, mournful croak of the raven. The dreary and dreamy Pulicat is to-day is a *living* representation—*a realistic picture—of that Sleepy Hollow so humorously described by Knickerbocker Diederich Esq. The fat and plegmatic Dutchmen of the imaginary Sleepy Hollow with their wonderful stories of personal prowess, courage and skill being replaced in the real Sleepy Hollow by corpulent and complacent Lubbays with their equally marvellous tales of the deeds and daring of their ancestors in repelling the predatory incursions of

¹ A roadstead is a body of water sheltered from rip currents, spring tides or ocean swell where ships can lie reasonably safely at anchor without dragging or snatching. It can be open or natural, usually estuary-based, or may be created artificially.

² a title or form of address for an unmarried Dutch/German young woman.

Hyder Ali and his famous, or rather infamous, son Tippoo Sultan ; and the legend of the “Headless Horsemen” and his nightly scamperings finding a fit substitute in the legend of the “Golden Coffin” and the nocturnal perambulations of its restless inmate.

The derivation of the word Pulicatta (Anglicé Pulicat) is involved in great obscurity and numerous are the conjectures advanced. Some antiquarians maintain that Pulicatta or Pulicat is a corruption of the Tamil word *pālhāyavairkādu* [the old (dye) root town]. Others are equally certain that Pulicat is but a European mask for *pallikādu* (the town of pallies); others again confidently assert that *pāvālbakādu* (the coral town) is the proper derivation; *poolikādu* (the place or jungle of tigers) and *pallakadu* (the low-lying town) have also put in a claim. We have neither the time nor the inclination to dig at the root, but shall content ourselves by observing that Pulicat is to the present day known among Tamulians as *pālhāyavairkādu*. The second of the derivations proposed has some probability lent to it from the fact that a village about a mile to the South of Pulicat is called *edyarmānāi* (the shepherd’s inheritance or settlement). The third and fourth claimants rely solely on tradition for making good their pretensions. For tradition asserts that the “Pulicat Shoal” is in reality a coral reef with a deep accumulation of silt and sand on it, and that in ancient times Pulicat was famous for its “coral fisheries.” If we are to believe the same authority, the whole tract of country from the foot of the Naggery Hills to the sea was, some two centuries back, covered with dense and impenetrable forest, of which the jungle of Sriharicottah is a small remnant. It would be as tedious as profitless to enquire into the other derivations put forward.

There is water communication at present between Madras and Pulicat. The Buckingham Canal links the back waters of Ennore and Covilluddy with that of Pulicat and stretches away North to the fresh water system of Canals of the Krishna and the Godavery. But at the time of our story the only means of transit between the English and the Dutch Settlements was, for the rich by palanquin, and for the poor by the well-known, highly-exasperating, primitive contrivance, the “country-cart”.

The town of Pulicat consists of two distinct portions; the Southern half or Pulicat Proper and the Northern portion or Coopum. The former was,

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in days of yore, the Aristocratic Quarter where dwelt all the Europeans—the Civil Servants of the Netherlands East India Company, the officers of the garrison and the off-duty Captains of the Naval and Mercantile Services. In the palatial dwellings of these are now domiciled indolent Lubbays, of whom mention has been more than once before. Coopum was the Black Town where lived all the natives and miscellaneous population—wealthy native merchants, the menial servants or slaves of the Dutch, the Sepoys (then called Peons) and the mixed offspring of the Dutch and natives. These two towns are, or were until very recently, connected by a causeway (pierced by two canals) running across the intervening low swampy ground which forms the out-let of all the surface drainage of the wide plains to the West and of the surplus flood-waters of the large tanks in the same direction. In the south of Pulicat Proper was the citadel, Castle Geldria—a small square fort with massive ramparts having embrasures for sixteen guns; its angles being dominated by squat Dutch-bottle shaped towers. The whole was surrounded by a deep wide, wet-ditch, the inner and outer slopes of which were thickly lined with pricklypear bushes. A subterranean passage led from the Arsenel to Government House and a sally-port ran S.W. by S. to *āndārmādan*, a distance to two miles, where there was a battery mounting five guns and commanding the only road practicable for an invading army. This place was the scene of many a hard-fought battle between the Dutch and the Mysorians.

To the East of Pulicat three sand-hills or “dunes” rise abruptly from the low-lying coast. These, in the time of the Dutch, were crowned with heavy-armed batteries commanding the roadstead. The middle one on which a lighthouse stands at present was also the Marine Signal Station. The bar or seaward entrance to the backwater was swept by the guns of number three or Northern battery.

Parallel to the coast, and at a distance of a mile or a mile and a half, run a series of sandbanks (the coral reefs of the tradition referred to above) between which and the shore there is deep water affording safe anchorage even to ships of heavy burthen. The entrance to these roads was (and, I believe still is) opposite to Coviluddy, four miles to the South.

To the North of Pulicat and West of Coromandel³ (the *Sandomandulum* of Ptolemy) spreads the Pulicat Lake—a magnificent expanse of water some thirty miles long and varying in breadth from three-quarters to five miles and having a depth of twenty-five feet in the deepest part. The lake was dotted with several large islands (some of which still exist though greatly reduced in size). The largest of these are Ollendorf Island about fifteen miles to the North of Pulicat. It was strongly fortified and five or six gunboats were always at anchor under its frowning battlements. This island was *the* stronghold of the Dutch; for Castle Geldria was liable to capture by an army provided with a tolerable train of artillery, but Ollendorf Island could be assailed only by water and the Dutch gun-boats were more than amatch for any flotilla that an enemy could muster. It was therefore the place where the Dutch deposited their costly merchandise and surplus money to which they had to retreat on two occasions when Pulicat was sacked by Tippoos troops. On the last of these occasions the Mysorians attempted to follow the retreating Dutch soldiers. Requisitioning as many boats as could be had and forming rafts by lashing three or four catamarans together Mohamed Afzool Ghazi Khan, Tippoos lieutenant, embarked eight hundred of his troops and a few lightfield pieces. But the gunboats soon shivered the heading boats of the enemy to match-wood and the others quickly beat a rapid and inglorious retreat—effected as “strategic movement to the rear” with commendable celebrity. A full account of this attack and the incidents connected with it will be found further on.

A sunken bank now marks the place where Ollendorf Island once stood. An earthquake or some other volcanic influence (the same which cast up the ephemeral island opposite to Pondichery) caused the sudden disappearance, or rather subsidence, of Ollendorf Island as well as of two other islands and the upheaval of the Monopoliam Shoal.

I have been thus minute (even to prolixity and tediousness) in description, that my readers may the more easily fix the scenes and follow the incidents of the following story. If Pulicat were the favourite holiday-resort that it was in my boyhood, perhaps, I might have had no necessity for

³*Kari-Manal-Medu* (Black Soil High Ground) in Tamil, according to Bishop Robert Caldwell (1814 - 1891).

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inflicting such a detailed account of the place. But there is a fashion in holiday-resorts as there is in “colours and petticoats” and now Pulicat is forsaken by holiday-makers; and, I fear clean forgotten by them. In conclusion, I have to say that I am fully aware of the fact that a novel whose scenes are laid in India (and especially in such out-of-the-way places as the one of my story) is considered quite unattractive; yea, not worth the paper it is written on. Nevertheless, I will make the attempt; for a story should depend on its intrinsic merit rather than on the site of its adventures.

CHAPTER-II

Impatience—Chaff—The Cutter—The Capsize—In Peril—Practical Joking—To the Rescue.

“I wonder what is delaying her; she should have been in hours ago.” The speaker was Mynheer⁴ Van Bloem, a fat, short Hollander of quick-temper; whose outbursts of anger and impatience resembled summer squalls—sudden and short-lived, leaving sunshine and serene sky after their passage. He was a clerk or “Writer” of the Government of Fort Geldria. The “*sbe*,” whose non-arrival was exercising his mind, was neither wife nor daughter or any other member of the “Softer Sex,” but an Indiaman which had been sighted off Covilluddy at 2 O’C that afternoon and which should have been in the Pulicat Roads by 3 O’C the very latest. Van Bloem had been awaiting her arrival ever since 2.30 and now it was close on to 5.O’C, hence his impatience and ill temper. He was not alone. During the last hour of his weary waiting he had been joined by two others; Van Dirksz, a fellow clerk, (who like himself and in common with most of the European employees of the Company carried on a rather extensive private trade, and Antonio Garral, the Captain (according to his own account) of a Portuguese vessel that had been wrecked on the Santapilly Rocks, those dangerous reefs to the North of Vizagapatam.

“I wonder what on earth has happened to her,” exclaimed Van Bloem for the twentieth time that afternoon.

“If you keep on wondering and worrying like that, Mynheer, you will lose two stone ere sun-set,” said a cheery voice which seemed to issue from the other side of the Signal Tower⁵ in whose friendly shade the trio were standing. The next instant appeared the individual to whom the voice belonged. He was a fine handsome young Irishman with laughing blue eyes. Possessing a lithe well-knit frame, exuberant spirits and itinerante disposition, he was active as a cat, mischievous as a monkey and ubiquitous as the wandering jew. If it be added that to the courage of a lion he united in his

⁴ a Dutch title of address equivalent to *Sir* when used alone or to *Mr* when placed before a name

⁵ for the purpose of conveying information by means of visual signals using light/shade to approaching ships.

person the gentleness of a lamb and the affection and tender heartedness of a woman, it will not be surprising that he was both the pet and pest of his friends. Losing at a very early age both his parents, he had been adopted and educated by his maternal uncle, a rich Englishman. When barely 17 years old he had been sent to India in the service of the Honourable East India Company. He had been for a short time a junior clerk at Fort St. George, when a lucky ticket drew 50,000 Rs. in one of the Government Lotteries an institution long since defunct. Throwing away the pen of a “Writer” he seized the staff of a tourist and exchanging the ponderous ledger for a Russia leather bound sketch book, he had set out, to use his own words, “to increase his stock of knowledge and improve the ideas of the natives.”

“I say, Mynheer Bloem, bottle up your impatience—all in good time,” said the newcomer as he approached his friends Dirksz and Bloem.

“Bottle up your impertinence you young Will-o-the-wisp. Are these the manners you learnt at Eton?” replied the explosive Dutch man.

“Don’t go off like a champagne cork, most puissant dyker, I meant offence,” answered Patrick Desmond for such was the name of the latest arrival. “I merely wanted to inject into your fat brains the idea of our ancestors that the kettle which is watched takes long to boil.”

“And I tell you,” replied Bloem, “that kettles watched by young monkeys like you, with ideas that fructify nothing but mischief and devilment, never boil.”

“Thanks, my cheese basket, for the compliment and the information,” laughed Desmond “But, I say, has the good frau been giving you too much sour krant⁶ for breakfast or has worthy Mynheer Van Deck been renewing his attentions to fraulien Kathrina, that you are in such a lovely temper?” What the worried and short tempered Dutchman would have answered is unknown, for just then, Garral, who had ascended the tower, telescope in hand, called out that a cutter under press of sail was rapidly approaching. On hearing this, all three set off at a run for the quay. Van Bloem, a man “ample below the watchguard,” waddled along making frantic efforts, to keep up with Van Dirksz, who was as tall and lank as his

⁶ finely cut raw cabbage fermented by lactic acid bacteria -has a long shelf life and a distinctive sour flavor.

compatriot was short and stout. Desmond, thrown into convulsions of laughter at the sight, subsequently declared that the race was an admirable adaptation of the "Hare and Tortoise." When the quay was reached Desmond's inveterate propensity for chaffing and teasing was checked for a while by the sight of the boat, now about a mile off, cleaving the water and careening over rather dangerously under the large amount of canvass spread to the fresh Southerly breeze or "Long Shore Wind." While the Dutchmen were anxiously speculating about the tidings the boat was bringing and, Desmond whose eye had caught the distant top-sail of a ship homeward bound, was dreamily musing on the hopes and fears, the joy and sorrows, which that vessel was carrying to Europe, and picturing to himself the gladness which the sight of those sails would inspire in the bosoms of expectant friends and anxious relatives waiting to welcome home long absent ones, whose departure to distant lands cost them many a pang, while thus musing, his thoughts assumed the hue so beautifully expressed by the Laureate—

"Fresh as the first, beam glittering on a sail
Which brings our friends up from the under world;
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks, with all we love, below the verge."

Loud exclamations from Garral roused Desmond from his reverie. A sudden white squall had struck the boat capsizing her and throwing her occupants into the water. Quick as thought the young Irishman jumped, dressed as he was, into the churning and seething surf and struck out for the boat to which a young lady was clinging and which was being rapidly swept out to sea by the current acting on the immersed sails. After a desperate struggle he succeeded in bringing his fair and almost inanimate burden ashore. Meanwhile the crew consisting of a petty officer, two sailors, and the pilot (a coast fisherman) had gained *terra firma*. From the first of these, Bloem learnt that the "Walcheren" being unable to make the Covilluddy Channel (the entrance of the Pulicat Roads) owing to the strong Southerly wind and swift set of an adverse current, the captain had at first intended anchoring outside till the morning; but observing three suspicious looking craft in the offing exchanging private signals he determined to bring his ship in at all hazards, and that in the

endeavour the “Walcheren” had grounded on the Inner Spit (a sand bank immediately inside and to the right of the Covilluddy Channel as you enter), but that the pilot was quite sanguine she would float off at 2 O'C in the morning when it would be highwater. He had been sent, he said, with a letter to the Governor of Pulicat requesting the immediate despatch of five or six gunboats to assist in repelling any attempt at a surprise that may be made under cover of darkness by the boats of the suspicious strangers. As to the young lady that had accompanied him, he could say nothing more than that she came on board at Amsterdam just as the “Walcheren” was about to sail and that she gave her name to the clerk as Mary Summerson. When she heard that a boat was leaving for Pulicat she insisted on coming on in her. While the officer was relating all this, Desmond had carried Miss Summerson to the house of Mynheer Kantavisscher, the Captain of the Flaf Staff Battery, and consigned her to the motherly care of good Mrs. Kantavisscher, with whom Desmond with his mischievous pranks and sunny smile was a prime favourite. The worthy dame loved him as if he were her own son. Under the frau's rough and ready but efficacious treatment, Miss Summerson soon regained consciousness. Her rescuer, detained by Mrs. Kantavisscher to be sent to fetch the doctor if necessary, no sooner heard that his attendance was no longer required than he hurried after his friends and soon caught up Bloem and his sable companion, the boatman, who were leisurely following in the wake of Dirksz and the seamen who had gone on ahead to apprise the Governor of the state of affairs and to request his sanction for the despatching of the assistance asked for. As soon as ear-shot was gained Desmond opened fire, “I say, you sly hypocrite, I did not know you were a connoisseur in beauty. No wonder you were kicking your heels with impatience and qualifying for an indigestion by worrying over the idea that some else had misappropriated your treasure.”, “Stop that confounded chattering tongue of yours that works like a wind-mill in a storm,” snarled the irate Dutchman, “if any one is qualifying for anything, it is you for a lunatic asylum.” So saying, or rather growling, he walked on faster in the direction of Mynheer Sterk, the magistrate, whom he espied taking his wonted evening walk along the Battery Road. Now this was giving Desmond the “cut direct,” for Hans Sterk, a vain, pompous man thoroughly impressed with his own worth and the dignity of his office,

detested Desmond, and as the feeling was cordially reciprocated by the latter they shunned each other, in fact, were at daggers drawn, from a practical joke that had been played off at the expense of the conceited magistrate. One sweltering summer day, Sterk had been sent for, in hot haste, to take the dying deposition of one said to be expiring from injuries received; as the message purported to be from the Captain of the Batteries, Sterk lost no time in obeying the call. But great was his wrath and intense his chagrin on finding that it was Kantavisscher's ancient monkey that was *in articulo mortis*⁷ having come to grief while making some researches into the mechanism of a loaded pistol that he has possessed himself of, from his master's arm-rack. This joke, though worthy of Desmond, had for its author another wag and as Sterk would have it that Desmond had perpetrated it, calling him a liar when he denied all knowledge of, or participation in the trick, bad blood had been bred between them.

Determined to "bring down" the Dutchman, Desmond had rapidly matured a plan for doing so with effect. Turning to the boatman, Jedarayyan, he enquired with great gravity whether he felt any the worse for his extemporized bath. Being answered in the negative he improved the occasion by telling Jedarayyan that, that gentleman pointing to Bloem, was vowing that the cutter had been purposely overset with a view of obtaining a handsome reward by a make-believe rescue of the young lady from a watery grave. The frightened boatman solemnly assured him that nothing was further from his thoughts than such *akramum* (wickedness), that the heeling over of the boat was purely accidental and that if any one was to blame at all in the matter it was the *kuppacara thoray* (sailor gentleman) who would, in spite of repeated entreaties and remonstrances, carry all sail.

"Well," said Desmond heaving a deep sigh and casting a look of commiseration on the boatman, "I am very sorry for you, but Bloem fully believing the *accident* to have been the result of design, has gone of, as you may see, to the magistrate, threatening to make you dance to the accompaniment of the music of your own voice." frightened out of his wits and knowing full well the high-handed and summary manner the Dutch had of administering

⁷ At the moment of death, or a moment before death.

justice and meeting out punishment to natives, poor Jedarayyan began protesting, with tears in his eyes, his perfect innocence. Desmond, after pretending to think over the matter, advised the trembling fisherman to run and cast himself at the feet of Bloem, clasping tight his knees till his prayer was granted. The bewildered boatman, beside himself with fear, acted without a moments hesitation on the advice. Running a little ahead of the two Dutchmen deep in the absorbing subject of the moment—the richly freighted “Walcheren” and her peril—he suddenly turned and casting himself prostrate at the feet of Bolem fervently grasped his knees. The consequence may be better imagined than described. Down came the Dutchman like a bull knocked on the head, and clutching Sterk for support he brought that crystalized piece of pomposity also to the earth. There lay the victims of the practical joke—groaning fisherman, bellowing clerk and sputtering magistrate—prone on the ground, wondering at their sudden collapse. The author of all this mischief satisfied with the success of his invention for laying Dutchmen by their heels, thought it prudent to beat a hasty retreat from the scene of his late labours.

Meanwhile all was bustle and excitement at Kloop Island (now called Norton Island, after the late John Bruce Norton, Advocate General of Madras, who a few years back built a bungalow thereon). Six large gun boats, (each of about 70 tons burthen, mounting four light broad-side guns with a long bow chaser and manned by a crew of 50 men all told) were getting ready to go to the assistance of the Indiaman. Attracted by the unusual stir, young Desmond jumped into a fishing skiff and put off to the Island Battery. Learning the object and destination of the armament he eagerly volunteered his services which were accepted at once by the senior Captain.

CHAPTER III

ANTONIO GARRAL

We shall avail ourselves of this opportunity, while the gunboats are silently awaiting the expected attack, to give a brief sketch of the past career of Antonio Garral - an individual who plays no unimportant part in our story.

Antonio Garral as he called himself, but whose real name was Sebastian Gonsalves, was the younger son of a well-to-do broker of Setubal. Destined at an early age for the Priesthood, he had received an education superior to that usually bestowed on young men in his walk of life; but, while at the University of Coimbra⁸, he had acquired habits and developed propensities quite unsuited to that Holy Calling. His father learning of his escapades had recalled him home, threatening to disown him. Young Antonio's sorrow for his past misdeeds seemed to be so sincere, and his promises of future rectitude so solemn that his father relented and had placed him in the counting-house of a wealthy Lisbon Firm. Here his diligence, aptitude for business, and plausible manners won him the approbation and confidence of both the shrewd, taciturn senior clerk and the eagle-eyed, hard to please head of the firm. So well did he play his part in hood winking the former, and in ingratiating himself into the confidence of the latter, that when shortly after, a vacancy occurred, by the death of the principal shipping clerk, he was promoted to that office over the heads of a score of clerks, all his seniors in service. After he had been a year with Messrs D'Silva and Co. a super-cargo being required to take charge of a rich venture of that firm, Garral was selected for that responsible office; and so well did he acquit himself in the discharge of his onerous duties, that he was sent in the same capacity on several more voyages, each of which proved more profitable than the one preceding it. Garral, you may be sure, made the most of his opportunities in lining his pockets and in learning Navigation and Seamanship. So perseveringly did he pursue his lessons in the latter that after his fourth voyage (covering a period of three years) he was quite competent to take command of

⁸Established in 1290 in Lisbon, the oldest university of Portugal.

a vessel. Satisfying his employers of his ability by passing a brilliant examination and obtaining a certificate of competency, he was entrusted with a large ship richly freighted.

It was for this that he had worked and waited like Jacob for Rachel⁹; and now his labour and patience had been rewarded, “one more smile of Fortune and he would be rich and independent.” What he had proposed to himself and set his heart and soul on achieving was briefly this—to earn a name as a skilful trader and an honest super-cargo, to gain the implicit confidence of his employers, to learn seamanship, to get the command of a vessel and then—his heart beat wildly as he thought of it—seize ship and cargo and become merchant and pirate. So far, the luck that is said to attend the devil’s children had not failed him—one more stroke of good fortune and his ambition would be satisfied; his fondest wishes would be realised.

The “San Roque” (the ship in which Garral embarked in the double capacity of Captain and super-cargo) was bound on a long voyage. She was to trade on the West Coast of Africa, call at the Cape, touch at Mozambique and thence proceed to Goa, Malacca and China. Her officers, who had been chosen by Garral himself, were men after his own heart and the majority of her crew were a mongrel lot of villainous—looking ruffians. After touching at the Cape, where, on one pretext or another, he got rid of the small number of the respectable and honest men of his crew, and shipping in their stead the refuse of privateers, merchantmen, and even of pirates, he proceeded to Goa; here disposing of the brandy and costly wines much prized at Mogul Court, he set sail for China and Japan. At the latter of these places he sold the “San Roque” to a rich merchant of Nagasaki, and purchasing a swift sailing, smart French privateer, he began his career of piracy. For three years he was the terror and scourge of the Indian and China seas; now at Ormuz, now prowling off the Cape in the track of homeward-bound vessels, and anon heard of in the Bay of Bengal, or at the Straits of Malacca. He had chosen New Guinea, then, as until recently, a *terra incognita*¹⁰, as his head-quarters, if

⁹ Jacob waited 14 years before he could be with Rachel (Genesis 30, Bible).

¹⁰ is a term used in cartography for regions that have not been mapped or documented.

we may so call the place where he had his depot and where he repaired to refit and make good damages received in his numerous encounters.

Garral had "*prospered*" and grown rich beyond his expectations and was beginning to think of retiring and setting up for an "Indian Nabob," when an *accident* happened that completely upset all his plans for the future. The "Circe" frigate, which has been on the look out for him for the past six months, falling in with the "Dunbar" of Ceylon had learnt from her, that she had been chased the day before by a craft answering to the description of Garrals' vessel the "San Antonio;" Captain Ludlow immediately altered his course and steered for the Straits. Sighting a vessel early next day and rightly guessing it to be the pirate he was hunting, Captain Ludlow lost no time in putting into execution a dodge which he had long ago conceived for entrapping the swift and slippery pirate. By means of painted canvas the graceful frigate was made to assume the appearance of a peaceful merchantman of rather tubbish proportions. It was not long before Garral descried his supposed victim and bore down under press of sail. Pretending to make frantic efforts to escape Captain Ludlow allowed the confident pirate, who had by this time proclaimed his vocation by running up the black flag, to approach within easy gun-shot distance, when throwing off all disguise he poured a tremendous broadside into the "San Antonio" and passing under her stern so racked her fore and aft that she was compelled to surrender without further resistance.

Garral, heavily fettered, was being conveyed to Madras there to be hanged in the presence of the Captains and crew of the numerous merchantmen in the Roads, when he contrived to effect his escape at Trincomalee, where the "Circe" was compelled by stress of weather to seek shelter. Producing files from the most unlikely of all places—the soles of his boats—he cut through his irons and performing the same good office for two of the greatest dare-devils of his dare-devils crew, the three plunged with the recklessness begotten of despair, into the waters of that shark infested harbour and aided by the intense darkness of the night struck out for the shore. When, however, three-fourths of the distance had been covered one of his companions was seized by a shark, and his dying shriek ringing out above the wash of the wave and the wail of the wind had drawn the fire of the

sentries on board; and the alarm being thus given a hail of bullets fell around the spot where the well nigh forlorn swimmers were frantically struggling in their endeavours to reach the shore. One of the bullets, however, found a billet little intended or expected—the glistening mouth of a huge shark just extended to seize Garral. Despite bullets, sharks, and the raging waves, Garral and his Malay companion reached the shore in safety. Pushing on wet and weary as they were they came to a range of wooded hills in the interior where Garral lay *perdu* while the Malay foraged for both; the frigate after a two days search for the fugitives set sail for Madras. After hiding for about a month Garral and his faithful mate embarked on board a country craft bound for the island of Sumbawa but, she being lost in a storm, Garral and a part of the crew who had taken to their soel boat, were picked up by a passing Dutch vessel bound for Chinsurah¹¹ and landed at Pulicat, where Garral and his follower had been for a month when he was introduced to our readers. As his person was little, if at all, known he had apprehension no the score of discovery. It was while waiting here to see what the Chapter of Accidents would throw in his way that he had formed the acquaintance of Mynheers Van Bloem and Van Dirksz—an acquaintance which the confiding Dutchmen little dreamed would be fraught with consequences so disastrous to both of them.

Though they had but recently made the acquaintance of the wily Portuguese yet by his insidious manners and seeming frankness Garral had succeeded in worming himself into their confidence—any latent suspicious that Bloem and his friend might have at first entertained were completely dispelled by the apparent urbanity and sincerity of the “shipwrecked foreigner.” One of the discoveries that, that “stranger” of an enquiring turn of mind had made was, that fraulien Kathrina Vander Stettin, Bloem’s niece—the Katrina, regarding whose rejected suitor, (Van Deck,) Desmond hand, as our readers will remember, chaffed Bloem—was not only a wealthy heiress in her own right but would also inherit the greater part of Bloem’s possessions. From the time that he had made this discovery he had resolved that Miss Vander Stettin should be his by fair means or by foul. The great obstacle in

¹¹ In 1635 Dutch established a settlement adjacent to Hooghly, Bengal, to trade.

the way was Desmond; for, notwithstanding his love of frolic and his harumscarum ways, young Patrick was a shrewd observer of men and manners, and quite capable, when occasion required, of proving himself a Ahithophel¹². This, Garral with his keen perception of character, fully understood. The intuitive antipathy—the natural repulsion—that existed between the two manifested itself at their very first meeting. Garral felt that the Irishman mistrusted him, and Desmond knew that the Portuguese hated him. To brush Desmond from his path was the great object at present with Garral, hence the readiness with which he offered himself as a volunteer when he heard that Desmond intended forming one of the party going to the assistance of the “Walcheren,” thinking that an opportunity might offer for lodging an ounce of lead or an inch of steel in the body of the light hearted Irishman.

¹²A man greatly renowned for his sagacity.

Pulicatta
CHAPTER IV

*Fear's mistake—A strange signal—Desmond at Covilluddy—The legend of the temple—The
face at the window—A midnight adventure.*

Two of the three ships that Captain Jansen of the "Walcheren" had taken for pirates were cruisers¹³! His Britannic Majesty's frigate the "Calliope" Captain Walcott proceeding to Calcutta to refit, and the "Racehorse" Captain Rockwood, one of the Honourable East India Company's cruisers, six days out from Masulipatam in search of the "Seafoam" commanded by Budd, a notorious pirate who had lately distinguished himself by pouncing down on the "Ocean Queen" while at anchor in the Vizagapatam Road, under the guns of the Fort and the Dolphin Nose batteries, and plundering her of the large amount of specie she had on board. It was regarding the third ship which had suddenly altered her course on sighting the war-vessels and was now hull down, that the brisk interchange of signals (many of them unintelligible to Captain Jansen) had taken place between the cruisers. Captain Rockwood unable to learn anything more regarding her than that where first sighted (about two hours ago) by the "Calliope" she was steering directly for the "Walcheren" and had gradually edged away on seeing the frigate in the wake of that vessel, determined to "investigate" her and accordingly bore away in pursuit; the "Calliope," a dull sailer at the best of time, unable owing to the foulness of her bottom, to take part in the chase held on her course.

The "Walcheren" having floated off in the small hours of the morning was about sailing for Pulicat when a bright light, like a ship's mast-head light, was seen on her starboard bow, and shortly after three boats were observed pulling rapidly for the shore. A momentary hesitation seemed to seize them when they found themselves in close proximity to a large vessel, but quickly recovering from their shore further North. As they did not interfere with the Dutchmen but seemed to be minding their own business (whatever that might be) the commander of the squadron of gunboats refused to overhaul them. He had been sent, he said, to perform a specific duty—

¹³ A warship that is generally larger than a destroyer, but smaller than a battleship.

the safe guarding the “Walcheren”—and did not see the benefit of needlessly incurring danger by meddling with affairs that did not concern him in the least. Being unanimously seconded by his officers, who one and all had no ambition whatever of distinguishing themselves in an encounter with desperate villains that formed the crew of the “Seafoam,” the Dutchmen left for Pulicat.

Desmond, though restless with impatience to return with them and relieve himself of certain highly complimentary remarks on Dutch character in general and Dutch courage in particular, nevertheless judged it prudent to stay a few days at Covilluddy so that time might be afforded for the cooling down of Sterk’s wrath. For the reflection he saw that his last joke had been carried a little too far, and was convinced that the conceited magistrate measuring the degree of affront by his favourite thermometer of “Dignity” would not stick at trifles to get him into troubles. Besides this he had another motive in staying back, and that was to fathom the mystery attaching to the light and boats seen that morning. That it was not the “Seafoam” which had signaled the shore he was perfectly sure, though the Dutchmen by their precipitate return seemed to think otherwise. Sending a message for Murty Brien, his attendant or rather factotum, to bring his portmanteau he set out on a ramble preparatory to making himself comfortable in “Nabob’s Bungalow”—a large two-storied building pleasantly situated on the margin of the Covilluddy back water, almost on the site now occupied by McDowell’s Villa. This house was built by some early Nabob of the Carnatic, and was a favourite summer resort of the Nabobs till the troublous times of Mahomed Ali. Good shooting was to be had in the neighbouring jungle of Karunkalli. In the course of his rambles he came across what appeared to be a door set at the bottom of a sand dune. Connecting this with the mystery of the morning, he endeavoured to force it open, but the massive iron-studded door would not yield to his efforts. Thinking he had obtained a clue and waiting for his man Brien he strolled back to the bungalow; and was not long there before Kathavrayyan, the village headman (accompanied by his satellites the *Kólkáran* and the *thandalkáran*) came to pay his respects. From the first of these worthies—an old man and garrulous—Desmond learned the history of the temple, to which the door that had puzzled him really belonged.

THE LEGEND OF THE COVILLUDDY TEMPLE.

In days of yore, or to use old Kathavarayan's words', "more than a crore of years ago," there dwelt in the jungle of Karunkalli a great *Rishi* who one day summoned the headman of the surrounding villages and informed them that the goddess Kali appeared to him, and instructed him to cause a temple to be erected to *Ankali-Eswaram* on the Covilluddy sand hill and to appoint as its *asariapurushan* or chief priest one Rhudra Pandaram. Now this Rhudran was held in great fear and detestation because of his "witchcraft" and sorceries. Some of the headmen unwilling to part with their money and especially their perquisites which they shrewdly guessed would be required to endow the Temple, politely suggested to the rishi that he was afflicted with *dhyana pitham* (literally "madness of meditation") and that the vision of Kali was the result of a distempered imagination induced by an impaired digestion. On this the rishi plucked off a branch from a neighbouring *kalli* (milk-bush) tree and lo! To the astonishment of all a fluid black as ink flowed therefrom. One or two, however, still remaining obdurate in their unbelief, the "holymen" called for a buffalo heifer and sacrificing it with certain mystic rites and potent *mantrams* the goddess herself appeared, black as Erebus and "fierce as ten Furies, terrible as hell," and commanded the awe-struck fishermen to immediately set about the erection of the Temple according to the plan that would be furnished to them by the rishi. "Neglect or delay," said she, "and I will send a grievous pestilence such as there was not since the world began." Startled into belief and goaded into exertion by the threat the villagers instantly began the building of the Temple—the site being marked out by the rishi and the trenches from the foundation being dug that very day. The Temple being built and dedicated, the rishi convening a *kútam* or public assembly of all the people of the "twenty seacoast villages," informed them that annually two buffalo heifers and twenty sheep should be sacrificed and a festival held in honour of Kali. "This Temple" said he, "shall gradually sink into the earth as the power of the *vella kàrargal* (Europeans) increases and shall ultimately reach *nága lógam*. "And to prove the truth of his words he suddenly disappeared in the bowels of the earth." "The temple that once crowned the dune has now sunk," said Kathavarayan, "almost to its foot, and in about

two hundred years more, according to local tradition, will reach its destination. The annual festival is still observed when the temple doors are opened, which can be done only after a two day's digging away of the sand in front of the door. The sacrifice was discontinued from the time the temple began its downward career. If the temple be entered at any other time except the prescribed day the person entering will be struck down dead."

The two fishing villages of Covilluddy and Karungkalli receive their names from this legend, the one from having been situated at the foot of the temple whose traditional origin has been given above and the other, either from the miracle of the *black kallli* milk, or from the manifestation of *black Káli*, or from both.

This Temple exists to the present day, but is almost hid from sight by the accumulation of sand heaped on and around it by the longshore winds of many a year.

The voluble old gentleman having finished his account of the temple, and finding in Desmond an attentive and seemingly an appreciative listener, was about beginning a yarn regarding the *kolli pasasu*¹⁴, the Tamil name for the *ignis fatuus* : (the natives believe that this phenomenon is one of the peculiar manifestations of his Satanic Majesty) when he was startled out his complacency by Desmond abruptly asking him whether he knew anything about a certain bright light (may be a *kolli pasasu*) sometimes visible off the Covilludy bar. Giving his interrogator a quick, searching look the old fisherman with assumed sang froid answered, that sometimes the *kannimar* (Nereides or sea-nymphs) disport themselves on dark nights when phosphorescent lights are to be seen. Desmond, on whom the confusion of manner and the piercing look of enquiry were not lost, felt convinced that this loquacious repertory of traditions was not such an unsophisticated villager—such a Gothamite—as he appeared to be, and that he could, if he liked, clear up the mystery of the morning. Determined not to be baffled by this wizened piece of anatomy, Desmond more warily set to work to pump him of the information which he was evidently withholding. Telling Kathavarayyan to proceed with his tale, which he pretended he was very anxious to hear, he cast

¹⁴ decomposition of bio materials to the formation of Methane that emanates from marsh lands as fire.

about in his mind for some plan for making the old chap disgorge his knowledge regarding the transaction of the morning. Kathavarayyan had not got beyond his exordium of “you may easily satisfy yourself, sir, of the truth of what I am about relating, by taking a walk this night to the spot I shall indicate,” when Brien put in an appearance with a well stocked hamper of comestibles - the commissariat proper following under the escort of the “Boy”—and Desmond bethinking him of the old saying “in vino veritas¹⁵,” offered the tradition-monger a nip of brandy to wet his whistle rendered dry by so much talking. The old man with a countenance beaming with pleasure readily accepted the offer, remarking as he did so that brandy was a sovereign panacea for all ills that flesh is heir to. Tossing off two-thirds of a tumbler of neat brandy and grinning with satisfaction like a Cheshire cat, he begged that his two companions also might be treated by the *dharma thoray* (generous or charitable gentleman) to a little of the “elixir of life.” His request being complied with, Kathavarayyan, with the prospect of more “*brandhy sarayum*” looming large before his eyes, launched out on his story with great volubility, recounting in a highly dramatic manner an adventure of his with the *kolli pisasu*; inventing as he went on scenes; and events which his glib tongue rolled off as quickly as his fertile, brandy inspired brain manufactured. Allowing him to revel in the creations of his own heated imagination, which seemed to be running riot, Desmond, who had been on the watch for a favourable opportunity, quietly “brought him up” in the height of his story by remarking “I also had a similar experience last night, but my *kolli pisasu* was on the sea.

“That is no demon, your honour,” answered Kathavarayyan, thrown off his guard by the desire of making himself out to be a hero, “that is only the signal light of—.”

“*Kédú vārúm mún määhi kettú vārúm*,” (the “gods delude those whom they wish to destroy”?) sententiously observed the kolokaran. This observation, embodying the concrete wisdom of the ancients, seemed to exercise a powerfully sobering influence on the chatty story teller. Rising almost immediately he said, “your honour, I shall take leave, for the present, and if it be your honour’s pleasure, your humble servant shall wait on you in

¹⁵ suggesting a person under the influence of alcohol is more likely to speak their hidden thoughts and desires.

the evening.” Telling the old cove he would be glad to see him in the evening, and giving him and his companions another taste of the “craythur¹⁶,” as Brien called it, he dismissed them; and old Kathavarayyan went away extolling the condescension and generosity of the *Ingleese thoraygal* (English gentlemen) and commenting in no very flattering terms on the hauteur and niggardliness of the Ollanthacar (Hollander). Brien, who had also been listening with a comical, puzzled look at his master’s sudden liking for the company of dirty “haythen,” no sooner heard the freely expressed opinion of the Dutch and the maledictions invoked on their heads by the departing fisherman, than he exclaimed “faix, maisther, I be a thinking that them same Dootchers, if they heered that ould, jabbering baboon would be afther taching him idears with the cat-ó-nine-tails, as they doed to his counthryman, who comed abouncing an aflouncing an bring’d doon maisther Bloum.” Bursting into a hearty laugh as he thought of the floundering pair of Dutchmen, Desmond asked Brien what became of the unfortunate fisherman, and learnt that Sterk was for tricing him up to the triangle and cutting him to the bone with the cat-o-nine-tails, but that owing to the intercession of Bloem, he had been let off with half a dozen stripes. He also learnt that his share in bringing about the collapse was unsuspected, all being put down to the account of the impulsive and ignorant Jeddarayyan. Were it not for the strange light, which he was bent on investigating, he would have returned at once to Pulicat.

Breakfast over Desmond accompanied by Brien paid a second visit to the Temple, or rather to the door apparently embedded in the sand-hill, for of a Temple or any other building signs there were none; but he found nothing to justify his suspicions of this being the spot where the boats’ crews had concealed themselves. The door was more than half buried in sand, which showed no signs of having been lately disturbed. Taking Brien into his confidence, he told that eccentric but faithful and attached attendant what he had seen in the morning, and how the Dutchmen, supposing the boats to belong to the “Sea-foam” or to some other pirate, had shirked making all search or enquiry. By the advice of Brien it was determined to prosecute a search independently of, and unknown to, Kathavarayyan; who, as Brien said,

¹⁶ *Whiskey*, the term is analogous “the water of life” is a popular old expression.

was sure either to throw them off the scent, or to warn off the parties they were in search of, as the old fellow seemed to be mixed up in the affair. So, when the “ould haythan,” as Brien called him, came in the evening Desmond dismissed him; pleading a headache as an excuse for not venturing out that night on the demon hunting expedition. Begging for a little brandy to “keep out the cold air,” Desmond told Brien to give him some; but muttering that it was sheer waste to give good liquor to such a “spalpeen of a nigger,¹⁷” he, calling the old man aside, helped him to a liberal allowance of rum and castor oil¹⁸—the latter greatly preponderating in the novel mixture. On Kathavarayyan saying something about this liquor being different to that given him in the morning by the *thoray* (gentleman) Brien, whose stock of Tamil was but slender (though he was pretty well up in the vituperative part of its vocabulary) taking the old man’s words to be a compliment on the “blend,” wished him “swate slapean pleesunt dhrams,” and hastened away to obey the summons of his master.

After night-fall Desmond leisurely sauntered towards the spot where the boats had disappeared, but after searching for upwards of two hours and finding no clue whatever, he returned weary and puzzled. Meanwhile Brien who had been seated in a dark corner of a room opening out on the eastern verandah, dreamily watching the play of the surf and drowsily listening to the monotonous *whish* of the waves, suddenly became aware of a face pressed against a pane of glass of an adjacent window; the eyes, which were small and sparkling with a strange light, seemed to be intently surveying the interior of the room, and the whole countenance expressed a diabolic fixity of purpose. A slight sound made by the falling of a light rattan chair, against which Brien had stumbled in groping his way towards an inner room to fetch a loaded pistol, caused the apparition to vanish; just then Desmond entered, and was surprised to find Brien coming towards him with a dark lantern in one hand and a pistol in the other. Hardly had he explained matters, before in rushed the boy, exclaiming, “sar, sar, the debil, he dose come just now only.” Free from the slightest taint of superstitious fear, Desmond was at first inclined to

¹⁷ Slur meaning black rascal, it is offensive word.

¹⁸ oil is mixed to reduce odour of rum, during 19th CE.

attributed Brien's nocturnal visitant to optical delusion, but the testimony of the boy would not allow such an easy solution; and thinking that this visit might be in some way connected with the mystery he was trying to fathom, he accompanied by his two servants carefully examined the places shown by them as the spots where they had seen the spectre, and found distinct prints of naked feet in the sand; thus clearly indicating that it was not ghost, goblin or any other creation of fancy or fear that had affrighted Brien and the boy, but a substantial creature of flesh and blood. There was no doubt now, that some one, entertaining sinister intentions against Desmond, had come to spy out an entrance into the house, or may be to discover Desmond and shoot him down under cover of darkness. Dressing up a rude lay figure in Desmond's clothes, they set it opposite to the window where the face had been seen, and Brien stationed himself near a door leading into the verandah, while Desmond took up a position commanding the whole of the other side of the verandah. The frightened boy, whom neither threats nor persuasions could induce to return to the Kitchen, was allowed to stay in the room, but was strictly charged not to utter a single word or make the least noise should he see anything. The two anxious watchers (the boy having dropped asleep) saw nothing; all was still till near midnight, when "he done come off, he done come off, now only again," greeted their startled cars, and rushing into the verandah they saw a figure running towards a screw-pine thicket close by; discharging their pistols almost simultaneously they heard a most unearthly shriek. Hastening to the spot, under the impression that their bullets had taken effect, they found nothing but gnarled screw-pine branches, twisted and distorted into fantastic shapes and forms. Just as they were about returning, Brien noticed something glittering on an old fallen trunk, and picking it up found it to be a *creese* or Malay dagger. The truth now seemed to flash on Desmond that it must have been Garra's Malay who had been playing the spy for purposes which could only be guessed at.

The next day nothing calling for remark occurred, except it be Kathavarayan's visit to inform the *thoray* that he had spent a most miserable night, and to beg for a little brandy or any other sarayum "to lay the fiend in

his stomach.” Desmond not quite understanding the allusion to the fiend¹⁹ in the stomach &c.²⁰, and thinking he was going to inflict another story as a consideration for some more brandy, gave him a rupee in lieu of liquor. Brien, however, entiring the old fellow to the rear of the bungalow offered him another “peg” of the “Covilluddy blend,” giving him to understand by eloquent gestures that it was good for the stomach; the fisherman, however, was not to be so easily duped, and politely declining the very kind offer, went his way muttering something about old birds and chaff.”

That night about ten, Desmond and Brien, who were on the watch, saw a bright white light almost in the very same spot where it had been first noticed. Going on the terrace they discovered an answering signal (another white light) hoisted on the top of the Karinkalli sand-hill. Taking a brace of loaded pistols each, they lost no time in silently making their way to the dense jungle at the foot of the dune. They had barely time to conceal themselves before a number of men, many of them European sailors, were seen coming along bearing heavy burdens, which on closer inspection, proved to consist of muskets, swords, kegs and small barrels. Cautiously following these, our two heroes came to another sand-hill right in the heart of the forest, where to their surprise they found a huge excavation, the roof and sides of which consisted of thick pine planks supported and kept in their place by large stakes or posts. The interior of this room was filled with arms and munitions of war with a few barrels, which looked like rum puncheons. Satisfied with the result of their quest, they were retracing their steps, when suddenly something sprang on Desmond and knocked him over in the twinkling of an eye. Before the uplifted hand of that something, which held a gleaming dagger, could descend, Brien had knocked it on the head with the heavy butt-end of his pistol. This something was discovered on flashing the bull’s eye on its face to be the identical Malay whom they suspected the night previous of being their nocturnal visitor. Afraid to make noise, and unable, or rather unwilling, to carry this murthering baste, “Brien giving him a couple of heavy blows as a gentle reminder to lie still and quiet, assisted Desmond home. The latter was

¹⁹Extremely addicted to some pernicious habit.

²⁰Et-cetera abbreviated.

found to have received no more serious hurt than a sprained ankle. It appeared that the Malay with dagger held between his teeth had sprung on him from the branch of a tree he was passing under. Brien had spared the brute's life as he was averse to imbruing his hands unnecessarily in human blood, being satisfied that the blows he had administered would keep the jumping "gentleman" quiet till they reached home.

CHAPTER V.

A glance retrospective—Mary Summerson—Friends in council—The haunted house.

As soon as Garral reached Pulicat he had despatched the Malay, Udong, with instructions to narrowly watch the movements of Desmond and to discover what had detained him at Covilluddy. "Dog his steps," and he, "without betraying your presence, and when opportunity offers, as offer it will in some solitary walk, plunge your *creese* deep in the young villain's bosom." He was also ordered to find out all about the strange light and the boats, which Garral said he thought belonged to some pirate having friends and allies among the fisher folk. Nothing loath Udong had set off on his double mission of murder and espionage, being prompted by two of the most powerful incentives, revenge and love of liberty, to a due execution of the commissions entrusted to him. Revenge for he had a private account to settle with Desmond for having called him a pig (one of the most opprobrious terms that can be applied to a Mahomedan and a Malay) and for having lifted his cast to chastise him "like a dog," when he was found bullying some poor fishermen out of a score or so of prime sea mullets; and love of liberty, for he justly concluded that should the supposed pirate be discovered Garral and himself were certain of getting back to their old life of rapine and blood-shed. Arriving soon after Brien, he had concealed himself in some screw-pine bushes and had watched Desmond's interview with Kathavarayyan. Not having seen him leave the bungalow at dusk, he had inferred that master and servant were sleeping off the liquor, which he fancied they had imbibed during the day, basing his supposition on the copious draughts given to the fisherman and his companions. Waiting till it was quite dark he had stealthily approached the house to reconnoitre but being alarmed by the noise made by the falling chair, had sought a hiding place in the out houses; it was while gliding along the back of the range of these buildings that he had been seen and mistaken for a wraith by the boy. His second attempt would have proved successful, in fact had the boy not given the alarm, he would have come upon Desmon unawares, taking him right in the rear, for he had discovered an unfastened window on the western side of the house by means of which he could have

easily gained access to the room which was being watched. The random shots fired had taken effect on his left arm completely smashing his elbow. Though suffering excruciating agony, he stuck to his post with a perseverance worthy of a better cause. The village potter tinkering his arm and giving him some medicine to prevent fever supervening, he had mounted guard on Desmond and had followed him to the smugglers cave; finding, however, that he could not come at him because of Brien, he had swung himself into the tree from which he had pounced on and nearly settled our hero.

Early next morning Brien paid a visit to the place of their previous night's venture and found everything so well concealed that he could hardly believe a cave existed in the sand dune until he had removed the sand from a certain spot indicated by a solitary Margosa²¹ tree which he had noted the night previous.

Desmond resolved to return at once to Pulicat and was in the act of entering his palinquin when he received a letter from Kantavisscher which expedited his movements. The letter informed him that Miss Summerson was suffering from great mental depression and that she was frequently enquiring for Desmond, saying that the doctors had ordered her to go to a lunatic asylum and that Desmond was appointed her keeper; in conclusion Kantavisscher urged the immediate return of Desmond. Not knowing what to make of this communication herepresused it thinking Kantavisscher was ambitious of setting up for a wag in his old age. But he found such a hypothesis untenable. The substantial characters traced in a firm heavy hand, the yard long phrases (here is one of them, all "operations for the development of her powers of imagination" have failed he wrote in Dutch thus *Uerbeeldingskrachtsontwickkelin swerkezaambeden*), the involved sentences, the ponderous style and the matter-of-fact diction of the letter were all too faithful reflections of such an idea. The only other conclusion seemed to be that the young lady was labouring under some hallucination or that she had really become insane; this Desmond was not willing to believe. While still puzzling over the matter he reached Kantavisschers residence, and after a short conversation he burst into roars of laughter, both loud and long. Now

²¹Neem

Kantavisscher's stock of English was so meagre that it could have been safely embarked in a nut shell, floated on the bosom of a slop-basin and insured for six pence, and Miss Summerson's Dutch was, if anything at all, still more limited, hence the worthy man's mistake. After explanations Desmond remarked, surely Mynheer you could have guessed nearer the truth, knowing as you did, that the young lady was not demented; for answer the gallant son of Mars simply shrugged his shoulders and remarked *Davus sum non Œdipus*²². What Miss Summerson told Desmond and what she had tried to make the Kantavisschers understand was briefly this.

She was the only child of Gerald Stapleton, late senior partner of the firm of Stapleton Ridsdale and Co., West India merchants. Her father had appointed Mathew Ridsdale, in whom he reposed unbounded confidence, sole executor of his will, by which he had bequeathed 500,000£²³ to his daughter, Mable Stapleton; who on attaining her majority, or in the event of her marrying before that, was to receive the whole amount : in the interim, Ridsdale was to draw and administer the interest thereon. Rash speculation involving him in great pecuniary difficulties, he had cast covetous eyes on Miss Stapleton's money but finding that he dared not, from fear of the family lawyer, draw out any portion of the money, had at first tried to force his ward into a marriage with his scape-grace of a son, but failing in that from the resolute refusal of Miss Stapleton, he had formed the nefarious plan of getting her shut up in a lunatic asylum²⁴, and had gone so far in his plot as the obtaining of a certificate signed by two doctors—mercenary wretches who for a hand some consideration had sworn away her sanity. Accidentally learning the kind intentions of her guardian, she had quietly given him the slip, and accompanied by her old and faithful nurse had proceeded to Antwerp, where a distant cousin of her mother, employed as an agent to a London firm, resided. But on reaching that town she learnt to her dismay, that he had died a month previously; distracted with fear and not having any definite plans for the future, she had taken the sudden resolve to come out to India. By the help

²² I am Davus (a plain man), not Oedipus (who solved the riddle of the Sphinx) (Terence)

²³ £ 22,036,450.00/- (as on 2017)

²⁴ a psychiatric hospital

of a kind Dutch friend she had been able to convert her costly jewels into ready money, and by the assistance of the same friend she had secured a passage in the *Walcheren* under the assumed name of Mary Summerson. Her nurse, whom she had left back with instructions to watch events, had written to her to say, that Ridsdale had offered large rewards for her apprehension and that several detectives were employed to hunt her down, but that for a long time they were at a loss (having lost all clue at Antwerp) to trace her whereabouts, until a merchant's clerk told one of these sleuth-hounds that he saw an English lady embark on board the "*Walcheren*," Indiaman, bound for Pulicat; and she cautioned Miss Stapleton (as we shall now call her) to be very cautious, as she had no doubt that Ridsdale would send his emissaries to India.

It was this letter received two days back by the "*Texel*:" that had so alarmed Mable and drove her to confide her history to the Kantavisschers, with what success we have seen.

As soon as Desmond had rapidly but clearly translated this to the wondering Dutch man and his wife, the kind hearted pair readily promised to do all they could to secure her present safety and ultimate happiness. After a long and careful deliberation between the Kantavisschers and Desmond, it was resolved that Miss Stapleton should for the present take up her abode in the Haunted House, the only serious difficulty that presented itself was to find an attendant who would be faithful and not betray her mistress even for a large reward. Now there was one Dominga, an old Dutch slave of the Dormusz's, who could be relied on implicitly, but she was very superstitious, and as full of ghost stories and goblin tales as an old cheese is of maggots; hence it was highly problematic whether she would consent to live in the Haunted House and that with a helpless, solitary female. Desmond, however, volunteered to persuade her to consent." Before I move further in the matter, I must tell you, Miss Stapleton, that I have frequently lived in the Haunted House, and that I have seen no ghost or heard any supernatural noises in the house itself; but I cannot say the same the adjoining bungalow. I have no more of than one occasion kept vigil in that bungalow and have invariably heard sundry noises, sometimes like those of suppressed groans, at other times like muttered curses, and occasionally thought that I heard stifled laughter. Before you make

up your mind to reside there, I think it good you should hear a brief account of the house and the ghost said to haunt it.” Miss Stapleton expressing her willingness to hear the tale, and saying that she was not a believer in such silly stories, and therefore Desmond need not fear relating all he knew about the ghostly tenant, Desmond related the following story.

Nearly a century back, when Pulicat was a Portuguese possession, there came one day an individual calling himself Alphanso Rodriguez, a retired merchant in delicate health; he said that he sought a little quietness and rest preparatory to embarking for Europe. He was accompanied by a middle aged lady and a little boy, who he said were his widowed daughter and her son. A morose and taciturn man, with all the peevishness thought none of the appearances of an invalid, people had to be content with the little information he gave of himself; some of the more inquisitive, however, tried to pump his two domestics, Manoel Pereyra and his wife Maria, but found them to be as close and uncommunicative as their master. Rodriguez took up his abode at Arrungum, a small fishing village on the sea coast about five miles to the North of Coromandel; at first he lived in a house built by some Portuguese merchant several years ago and now in state of indifferent repair. After a short time he built a bungalow for himself not far from this house which he had also purchased. The few who questioned him about his change of plan were rudely told that he did not intend going home so soon. Rodriguez had been for a little over three years at Arrungum, and people had ceased to speculate about him, when one day Pulicat was startled by the arrival of two detectives from Portugal in quest of one D'Monte alias D'Sousa, whom they had traced to St. Thome where all clue was lost. Thinking it probable that he might be in hiding at Pulicat they paid it a visit. Their description of the person they were after answered so correctly to the person and appearance of the individual calling himself Rodriguez, that there was no hesitation on the part of the Portuguese magistrate of Pulicat in issuing a warrant for the arrest of Alphanso Rodriguez alias D'Monte, alias D'Sousa. The warrant was entrusted to a local policeman for execution, the two detectives accompanying him to identify their man; expecting no serious resistance they took with them no weapons—the policeman or peon alone being armed with the customary Indian dagger or *bitchma* carried in his cummerbund. But they soon discovered

to their cost that they had reckoned without their host. Rodriguez no sooner saw strangers approaching accompanied by a peon than he with the quickness of those who are always on the watch, armed himself with a loaded pistol and boldly sallied out to meet the trio. While yet at some distance the detectives recognizing the forger and kidnapper D'Monte in the *ci-devant*²⁵ merchant, the peon hastened forward to effect his arrest. Finding his worst fears realised, and the peon being unwilling to allow him to return home for a few minutes to get, as he said, some documents to prove that he was not D'Monte, he shot him dead and ran in the direction of the old house closely followed by the detectives. Before he could reach the house two shots were fired in rapid succession, one of which grazed his right cheek and the other buried itself with a dull thud in the breast of the foremost pursuer, and a frantic female came rushing out with a gun in her hand, which she discharged point blank at Rodriguez. Adroitly avoiding the bullet, he seized the gun and with it felled her to the earth. The other detective seeing how hopeless it was for him single handed and unarmed to cope with a desperate man in possession of fire-arms, hastened back to Pulicat for assistance. The first care of Rodriguez on regaining the house was to load the pistols and the gun, that done, he drew his sword and hacked the still unconscious lady to pieces and then ruthlessly murdered the defenceless little boy. Pereyra, who was away on some business, coming in at that moment was informed by his master in a few hurried words of the situation of affairs and who giving him some hasty instructions disappeared, no one to the present day knowing where he had gone to, or what had become of him. On the return of the detective a careful search had been instituted, but failing to discover Rodriguez hidden anywhere on the premises, and Pereyra solemnly asserting in the name of the Virgin and all the Saints, that he knew absolutely nothing of what had occurred, having arrived, but a few minutes before the detective, from Thoplanpalliam whither he had gone to purchase a few sheep for his master, the police after seizing all papers and valuables they could find, and giving directions for the removal of the

²⁵ formerly

corpses to Pulicat, had returned to headquarters with the harrowing tale of the horrible tragedy that Arrungum had witnessed that morning.

It appeared, from the detective's account, that Rodriguez (as we shall continue to call him) was one of five partners of an Oporto firm that had a branch at Brazil; that being sent to manage the business at the latter place he had tried a short cut to wealth—forging and embezzling wholesale, at the same time wooing a rich heiress of Rio de Janeiro. Some inkling of the doings of Rodriguez reaching the other partners, one of the their number, Nunez Alvarez Almeda, was sent to scrutinize the accounts; that he had not only detected the peculations and forgeries of Rodriguez but had also supplanted him in the good graces of the fair but fickle Donna Isabel Velasquez; that Rodriguez fled the country taking with him Almeda's young son by his first wife, and vowing to wreak a fearful revenge on his former partner and on the perjured lady-love; that he had hired some ruffians to abduct the heiress, meanwhile purchasing a small vessel at Maranham and having everything ready for instant flight as soon as his fair cargo was on board; and that his myrmidons, mistaking Donna Isabella's elder sister for the lady they were sent to kidnap, had brought her instead and time pressing and the blood hounds of the law being on his track, Rodriguez had to be content with the substitute found him and weigh anchor for the East. The rest our readers know.

Such was the story related by Desmond, and Miss Stapleton, though much shocked at the narrative, still saying she was not in the least afraid of taking up her residence in the Haunted House, Desmond set off on his mission of persuading old mother Dominga to accompany the young lady. A handsome reward backed by the promise of his living in the adjacent bungalow, so as to be near at hand in case of emergency, induced the old woman to comply with his wishes.

That same night Miss Stapleton has installed at Arrungum, with Dominga for her servant and Desmond for her champion. We must not omit to mention that Domina had taken a plentiful supply of holy water and "blessed candles" to frighten away the ghost.

CHAPTER VI.

On the trial—An Irish interpretation and a Dutch capture—On the watch—Mysterious disappearance of Miss Stapleton—Ghostly revelations—Garra's plans—Disquieting rumours.

Fortunate was it that the measures advised by Desmond for ensuring the safety of Miss Stapleton were so promptly and successfully carried out, for scarcely had she been two days secreted in the haunted house ere William Ridsdale (the young man, whom she had refused with cold disdain) arrived at Pulicat in search of her. He was accompanied by an English detective and one Timothy Peggle, a keeper, according to his own account, in a private lunatic asylum. Ridsdale appeared before the *Ameen* or assistant native magistrate (Mynheer Sterkes being absent at Sadras on private affairs) and asked for the necessary permission to seize and convey Miss Stapleton out of Dutch territory. He told the magistrate that she was a lunatic who had escaped from a private asylum, in which he her guardian, had her confined. In support of his application he produced a "Certificate of Lunacy," as well as another certificate purporting to be signed by one Dr. Grip (the proprietor of the asylum whence she was said to have escaped) which testified that Miss Mabel Stapleton was a lunatic of homicidal tendencies; that she had been confined in his asylum for over two years, and that she had lucid intervals lasting sometimes so long as six months and at others barely as many days. The Ameen not understanding English and Ridsdale being ignorant of any other language except his mother tongue, matters were at a dead-lock till the former be thought him of Desmond—*pala pashay thoray*, as the natives called him—and sending for him asked him to kindly interpret Ridsdale's "complaint." Taking in the situation at once, our hero told the magistrate that the individual before him was a harmless lunatic who fancied himself to be a rich merchant, brought to bankruptcy by the machinations of Mynbeer Bloem, for the arrest of whom he was now praying. "I learn from the two men accompanying him, who are his keepers," said Desmond, "that it would be dangerous to irritate him by a blunt refusal; your worship had better put him off with some excuse till the morrow, by which time I and the keepers will find means of conveying

him back to Madras." The magistrate did as Desmond advised, and told Ridsdale to make his application the next day, when the European magistrate would be present. This was translated by Desmond into, "his worship desires to know whether you were born at Little Witham." "Ridsdale not blessed with the best of tempers at the best of times and who was at present a little "upsee-Dutch," as Desmond termed it, roared out "what does that Yorkshire tyke mean by the insinuation? Tell him I will comb his noodle with a three legged stool if he treats me to any more of his sauce." Telling the magistrate that Ridsdale was getting excited; and very likely there would be a scene in Court, he suggested that the applicant should be directed to appear in the evening; this the magistrate did in a suave voice. "Get out of this you moon-calf, and that quickly if you don't want a pen 'orth of salad oil," was Desmond's rendering of the Ameen's words. With a bound like that of a wild cat, Ridsdale cleared a couple of benches landing a few feet from the terrified magistrate, who having no particular desire for an encounter with a bedlamite incontinently fled from the bench. Desmond now advised Ridsdale and his companions to leave the Dutch territory at once, for otherwise they would surely be arrested and severely dealt with for the indignity offered the magistrate. Having but Hobson's choice in the matter, Ridsdale was compelled sorely against his will to quit Pulicat; and acting under the directions of Desmond he retired to a choultry at a place called Chengal Shoolay. Before departing he was somewhat consoled by Desmond's promise of inveigling the young lady into a trap. "I shall tell Miss Stapleton that persons have come to apprehend her, and that the best course for her to adopt would be to escape to Negapatam, and promise to see her through the flight. When the palinquin arrives at Chengal Shoolay you must be ready to forcibly take charge of the young lady, and expeditiously carry her away to Madras." Ridsdale gladly promising to do as directed, and telling his obliging friend that he had bearers posted ready for such an emergency, took his departure for the choultry.

It was well known that Sterk was returning that very night, and Desmond determined to play off such a trick on Ridsdale as would make the European magistrate to entertain the same opinion of Ridsdale's sanity as his native colleague did.

Now Sterk (who was a man of low origin) had a sister—an old maid, fat fair and forty—of acid temper, a shrewish tongue, and masculine build; one who would make no ado to measure her strength with any man living : this was well known to Desmond from a laughable episode that had lately taken place. A young Frenchman had recently visited Pulicat, and Desmond one day chaffing him about Miss Sterk, as he was a frequent visitor at the worthy magistrate's, Henri Tuissant had remarked that a whistling maid and crowing hen are neither fit for God nor men, which flattering remark and erudite piece of philosophy, was kindly conveyed by some amiable and mutual friend to Miss Sterk for her special instruction and benefit. Well, the next time that young Tuissant called on the Sterks, he was saluted with *de vrouw draagder de broek*,²⁶ *monsieur*, (sir, the woman wears the breeches) and was chased by this virago of a venus; his foot catching in a root he was precipitated into a miniature tank, where he lay sputtering, floundering and *sacre-ing*, while Miss Sterk mounted guard over him taunting him by saying that he looked like a *crapaud*²⁷, and that he was croaking like a true bull-frog. Every attempt he made to leave the “foreign element” was repulsed by the amazon armed with a toasting fork; who improved the occasion by asking him how he like the pastime of *se mocquer de Gautier et de Garguille* (to make fun of every one) and requesting him, with great politeness, to repeat his remarks about *C'est le mariage d'epervier* ('tis a hawk's marriage) and gave him to understand that she intended keeping him there till all the conceit was washed out of him and expressing great regret at not having his friend, Pot-de-Biere, (the Englishman) to keep him company. It was only after the interference of Mynheer Sterk that Tuissant was allowed to depart a wiser and a sadder man.

About six the same evening Desmond sent a messenger to Miss Sterk, bribing him to say that he was sent by her brother who was ill at Chengal Shoolay and unable to travel any further that night, and that he requested her to hasten to that place. Amongst other qualifications, “The shrew of Pulicat” prided herself on her knowledge of the “healing art,” so packing up her medicine chest she started off to obey the summons. The same messenger

²⁶ This Dutch saying is similar to the French *elle; porte les braies*, and the German *sie hat die Hosen* Angelica, the grey mare is the better horse.

²⁷ toad

running on a head informed Ridsdale that the lady was coming. A little before they reached the choultry, Ridsdale with a *posse* of bearers met them, and quietly fastening the palanquin on the outside, relieved the bearers that were carrying it of their burden, his men shouldering it and setting off at a double quick pace. Roused from the slumber into which she had fallen by the sudden jolting and tossing to which she was subjected, she called out to know what was amiss, but receiving no answer she angrily ordered the bearers to proceed at a gentler place; no heed being paid to her commands she attempted to draw aside the panel doors, and finding him fastened she became seriously alarmed for the first time in her life, and set up such a yell as would have awakened even the seven sleeper of Ephesus²⁸. Just then Sterk's palanquin crossing, he demanded to know whom they were carrying, and receiving an evasive answer from the bearer running in the back, he ordered the palanquin to be set down; and on nearing it recognized his sister's voice pouring fourth choice Dutch words of exquisite vituperation. Meanwhile Ridsdale had come up and seeing Sterk's interference he told him to mind his own business on pain of a sound drubbing. The magistrate immediately ordered his peons to apprehend Ridsdale and his companions, "shoot them down or cut them down if necessary," said Sterk, now beside himself with rage. The Englishmen finding themselves overpowered by numbers quietly yielded. On the palanquin being opened and the grant, tall, figure of Miss Sterk emerging therefrom Ridsdale and his companions were "dumb founded" with astonishment and fear, and attempted to explain matters, but finding themselves not understood, the detective handed sterk a paper which had been given him by Desmond, who had informed him that it was a "permit," which he had obtained from the Ameen, authorising Ridsdale to seize, and convey Miss Stapleton out of the Dutch territory of Pulicat. Now this document was nothing more or less than a certificate which Desmond had obtained from the Ameen testifying to the insanity of Ridsdale; as it was written in Tamil Sterk gave it to his duffadar²⁹ to read, and learning its contents ordered his peons to bind the whole three "hand and foot" and bring them on to Pulicat.

²⁸ is the story of a group of youths who hid inside a cave outside the city of Ephesus around 250 CE to escape a religious persecution and emerged some 300 years later.

²⁹ a junior police officer who is a native of India.

After putting everything in train for the double capture, Desmond called on the Kantavisschers to inform them of the arrival of Ridsdale and of the manner in which he had disposed of him. While they were still laughing at the astonishment and discomfiture in store for the Englishman, and the fright the *fraulien* would receive, the gun-lascar, sent by Kantavisscher to watch events at the Smugglers Cave came in with the information that a part of another cargo had been run the previous night, and that the remaining portion would be landed two nights hence. He further said that he had learnt from a conversation between Garral and Pereyra (grandson of Manoch Pereyra) that on the same night the greater part of the arms were to be sold to the agents of some native Chiefs, who were to call for them at the Haunted-House.

Now, it must be understood that Desmond had confided to Captain Kantavisscher his discovery of the smugglers' depot, and it was by his advice that no information was lodged against the Malay and no disclosures made about the cave. "Don't be precipitate in charging Udong with attempting to assassinate you, or make any premature disclosures regarding your discovery. We have to deal with wily individuals and gallows-birds, who very probably will turn the tables by charging you with complicity with the smuggles; depend upon it, Garral is assisted by some influential persons. Leave all to me and I will unearth the whole gang; only give me a written statement attested by Brien and your boy, "Moonoswamy." Such were Kantavisscher's words, which our hero obeyed to the letter.

Ordering the lascar³⁰ to resume his post of observation and come on as soon as he saw the arms being laden in the boats, Kantavisscher sent for Lieut. Thromp and instructed him to have a strong party of Europeans ready to proceed at a moment's notice on an important expedition, cautioning him, however, to keep secret the preparations.

Matters being thus arranged, Desmond returned to the Haunted House as quickly as possible, being aware of the anxiety of Miss Stapleton on account of him; for he had related to her his Covilluddy experiences, and when sent for that morning by the magistrate, she expressed it as her opinion that it was in connection with the smugglers that he was summoned.

³⁰ a sailor or militiaman from the Indian Subcontinent employed on European ships from the 16th to 20th.

Distrusting, or rather dreading Garral as she did, she had strongly advised Desmond to report everything to the Governor, but he had declined to do so, urging that Capt. Kantavisscher had counselled secrecy. "Come back soon for I shall be in a fever of anxiety till you return," were her parting words. When he reached home he heard a sweet voice singing—

"Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,

His breath like caller air;

His very foot has music in't

As he comes up the stair."

"And will I see his face again?

And will I hear him speak?

I'm downright dizzy wi'the thought,

In troth I'm like to greet!

While he stood listening to the words which reciprocated his own feelings, the song abruptly stopped and he heard a piercing shriek followed by a dull thud, as if a person had fallen to the ground. Alarmed and perplexed he ran round to the front of the house, but finding the door shut and barred, he hastened toward a side entrance, but that also was fastened on the inside, and while attempting to force it open a second shriek greeted his startled ears. Finding the door would not yield to his efforts he was about hastening to the adjacent bungalow for assistance when Brien rushed up to ascertain the cause of the screaming. On Desmond telling him, the doors were securely bolted and that he had heard the shrieks proceed from the room occupied by Dominga, Brien at once climbed to an upper glass-window on that side of the house, and smashing it in, entered just in time to see a figure gliding into the next room; with a shout he pursued the figure, but great was his astonishment on entering the room to find it empty. Desmond, who by this time had joined him, was no less astonished on learning what Brien had seen. A careful search of the house in general and that room in particular was instituted, but not the faintest trace or clue could be obtained as to what had become of Miss Stapleton or her attendant. After searching, and sounding the walls and floor to see if they were hollow, for upwards of half an hour they desisted from their labours, baffled and mortified. Brien remained in the house but Desmond proceeded to the bungalow sick at heart and quite overwhelmed with sorrow. All that day

Brien remained in the haunted house by Desmond's orders; searching wherever fancy dictated or reflection indicated, but all to no purpose. Desmond had meanwhile scoured the surrounding country and made enquiries at all the neighbouring villages, and finding no signs of the lost one, he had despatched a letter by an express cooly to Kantavisscher, and withdrawing Brien from his post had departed as if for Pulicat. Late at night both returned from the place (a small thicket of screw-pine bushes) of their concealment and resumed their watch—Desmond at the bungalow and Brien at the house. Nothing occurred to disturb the monotony of their vigil till the small hours of the morning, when Desmond fancied he heard a knocking against the opposite wall of the room (his bedroom) where he was seated heart broken with sorrow. The knocking being repeated he approached the wall and was able to distinguish a low murmuring sound, seizing a crowbar he struck fiercely against the wall which sounded hollow. While thus engaged, all of a sudden a portion of the wall came down with a run and a human figure leaped out of the aperture. Back recoiled Desmond and swinging the crowbar round his head stood on the defensive, when to his utter astonishment and glad surprise the apparition resolved itself into Miss Stapleton who pale and trembling threw herself into his outstretched arms, where she swooned away. Placing her gently in his arm chair he dashed cold water in her face; calling her by her name in a low, tender voice, she opened her eyes and asked, in an uncertain tone, "who calls me."

"It is I, Desmond," answered our hero. "Desmond! Desmond!" she murmured anxiously and mechanically rising leaned tremblingly forward against Desmond's breast;—who pressed her to his heart, and imprinted a gentle kiss on her brow. On this, she rose quickly from her reclining posture, looked upon him with timid, astonished eyes; and withdrawing with maidenly modesty from his embrace, she said,

"Good gracious! the swoon—I do not know what I have been doing."

As soon as she had sufficiently recovered. Desmond asked her where and why she had hidden herself for the past twelve hours, and what had become of Dominga. In faltering words, which seemed to echo the horror and anguish

she had lately experienced, she related, to the astonished Desmond, the story of her abduction and imprisonment.

After Desmond had left, she had been trying to puzzle out a solution of the cause, which had led to his being thus hastily summoned before the magistrate, and finding that she could not get rid of the presentiment of impending evil, she had attempted to divert her thoughts by listening to some of Dominga's stories; but even the old woman's most blood-curdling and gruesome stories of what she had seen, and experienced at the hands of Hyder's free-booters (for she had been carried away captive in one of the numerous raids of that Chieftain, and had been for upwards of six years a slave at Seringapatam) failing to dissipate the strange, undefinable gloom that had settled on her, and to drive away the vague, shadowy fears that haunted her, she had tried to amuse herself with her harp. She had been listlessly playing on it, or rather her fingers were idly straying among the chords, when the words of a song strongly reflecting her feelings suddenly suggested themselves, and she had been warbling them a while, when she felt her arms rudely seized from the back, and a hand unceremoniously laid on her mouth—a bandage at the same time being passed across her eyes. It was while being blind-folded that she became aware of a strong, suffocating odour pervading the room; and quickly after she became unconscious. On coming to herself, she found that her arms were unpinioned and the bandage removed; everything was as silent as the grave, and dark as a wolf's mouth. Groping her way towards what appeared to be a sickly ray of light struggling through a distant crevice, she stumbled over something in her way; this something proved on examination to be Mother Dominga, lashed hand and foot and with a large gag thrust into her mouth. Undoing the cords that bound her and removing the cruel gag, Miss Stapleton learnt that she was indebted to Messrs Garral, Pereyra and Udong for her present residence. Old Dominga had recognized these three worthies with whom were two others looking like devils incarnate. Superstitious fears apart, Dominga, who was fearless and bold, having, as was before remarked, served an apprenticeship under the Mysorians and being there by familiar with horrors and atrocities, which were of daily occurrence in Hyder's Court, no sooner found herself roughly seized than she burst out with, "varlets as valiant as your grandmothers, does it

require five men to overpower and bind an old woman like me! Doff your breeches and put on petticoats. Your ancestors, ye cravens, would have been exceedingly proud could they have seen what a kite's tail they were dragging after them." Proceeding in this strain she waxed so eloquent, and clothed her sentiments in such classical and flowery language, that she was rewarded with a smart slap on her mouth, but this only making her more vehement in calling down maledictions on them, their fathers, their grandfathers and their grandmothers to the third and fourth, yea to the fifth and sixth generations, they had thought it expedient to stop her torrent of Xantippic³¹ eloquence with a wooden gag.

Leaving the old woman, (whose limbs were quite benumbed from the close cording,) to her reflections and orisons, in which her benefactors, Garral and Company, were frequently and earnestly mentioned, Miss Stapleton continued her groping advance towards the solitary, sickly ray of light; whilst thus cautiously proceeding she tripped against some obstacle in her way and fell heavily against the wall on her right, and that giving way she was precipitated into a small chamber dimly lighted by several rays falling into it through the chinks of what seemed to be one of its curtain walls, the light giving her fresh courage and hope she hastened to the place whence the light proceeded, and there to her great joy she discovered Desmond seated apparently on the watch for somebody. How she attracted his attention and effected her escape from her subterranean prison we have already related.

Brien was sent to cautiously explore the subterranean passage that doubtlessly led from the house to the Bungalow, and conduct Dominga out of her dungeon. The panel after a little trouble was removed and Brien, dark lantern in hand, circumspectly advanced, to make the examination. He found himself in a long, narrow passage, the roof and retaining walls of which were formed of planks and trunks of trees rudely put together; at two points the passage abruptly turned to the right and left respectively; at the second of these spots the old woman was discovered slowly making her way towards the advancing light; in the same instant the lantern was struck out of his hand and he found himself sprawling on the ground, being dexterously tripped up by

³¹bad-tempered or aggressively assertive.

the heels. He lying still and motionless for a moment or two and finding no further violence offered, was about rising and making his way back as best he could through the Cimmerian darkness, when his ear caught sounds of a distant struggle quickly followed by a volley of explosive expletives. Striking a light he saw mother Dominga not far from him with a dagger running blood in her hand; as there was no time for explanations he seized her hand and dragged her swiftly forward towards the door by which he had entered. It was broad morning when Brien and the resolute old woman reached Desmond's room. It was now agreed that both Desmond and Brien should after breakfast, examine thoroughly this secret passage. Meanwhile they were highly amused by Dominga's recital of her late experiences. After relating how she had been captured, which we have already related, she proceeded to describe in her own quaint way what had taken place after Miss Stapleton had parted from her that night. From her account it appeared that Garra! and his companions left soon after effecting the capture and confinement of the two females, and that an old villain was left in charge of the prisoners; fancying them quite secure and knowing that his masters would not return till the next night, the old fellow had taken advantage of the opportunity to pay a visit to the brandy casks, of which there were a large number heaped around the place where Dominga lay bound and helplessly; and imbibing copious draughts had reeled off somewhere. When Brien was seen by Dominga slowly and carefully making his way towards her, she noticed two shadows following him and before she could give the alarm she saw the light dash to the ground and heard the heavy fall of a body; determined at all hazards to save Brien she had pressed forward as quickly as the darkness would allow, and suddenly came into violent collision with some body which grappled her round the waist and attempted to throw her, but the old woman after a brief struggle plunged the dagger, which she had accidently found, into the breast of her would be murderer. Dominga said that she was positive only one man had been left in the "infernal corridor," and hence was unable to account for the advent of the second son of *satanos*.

Captain Kantavisscher and his brother-in-law arriving a little before breakfast, it was resolved that all four should undertake the investigation, with Miss Stapleton and Dominga for guides.

After going some distance into this "devils burrow," as Dominga called it, they came to the place where Brien was attached, and found the lantern lying not far off, near which the sand was stained with blood; Dominga assuring them that this was not the spot where she had had the encounter, they looked more narrowly and discovering an iron knob resembling the handle of a door, they tugged at it with all their might but to no purpose; Kantavisscher, however, accidentally pressing it inward out flew a concealed door, admitting them to a fairly large apartment having a few rude benches and tables; on one of which they found a box containing writing materials, and a few documents. Securing the papers and fastening the door they proceeded on their "voyage of discovery." At the angle of the first of the sharp turnings already alluded to, they found a body lying "all of a heap;" this was he who had attacked Dominga, and who by his dress and appearance seemed to be a person of some consequence—"certainly not," said Dominga, "the thin, shrivelled, old ape our late jailor." The suffocating odour that pervaded this part of the passage was stifling in the extreme; it seemed to emanate from a deep recess to their left. Not caring to explore this evil-smelling place they went on as rapidly as possible till they came to the next "turn," where they found an old man lying stretched in death, shot through the heart and head, while before them they beheld a small room the door of which was partly open. With his usual impetuosity, Desmond was about entering, when Kantavisscher held him back; his soldier's eye detecting at a glance that the fatal wounds of the old man were inflicted by some contrivance discharging automatically two or more bullets at the same time.

The door standing ajar being cautiously pushed still further back, there was a rapid discharge of small arms, the bullets whistling past Kantavisscher and embedding themselves in the opposite wall of the tunnel. The room was found to be a long, narrow, chamber; which at first sight seemed to be quite empty, but on closer examination, four substantial, iron-bound, boxes were found at the further end of the room; all attempts to prise them open proving ineffectual, the Captain advised leaving them alone for the present, remarking that he would have supposed, from the festoons of cobweb, that the chamber had been shut for many a year were it not for the "going off" of the guns; he then proceeded to show them the mechanism of

the spring guns, which were all flint-locks; one of them had missed fire, and the priming showed that the piece had been recently charged. While all were attentively listening to the Captain suddenly a loud laugh burst upon their ear. Turning round they beheld a grim figure standing in the door way. It was a tall, gaunt, woman, whose clothes hung like sacks on her attenuated frame. The figure stared at them with its hollow eyes, twisting its, mouth into a frightful grin. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed or rather yelled, the apparition, "what seek ye here? They are all sleeping in another place : follow me and I will show where they lie—how they grin; ha, ha, ha." Kantavisscher recognised in this emaciated woman, clothed in tatters and raving with insanity, Miss Altenstadt, the niece of Mynheer Van Gensaw, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Pulicat. Miss Altenstadt had three years before the opening of our story, suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, and as she was a very wealthy spinster of amiable disposition, she had a large circle of friends and admirers, and her disappearance had created a great stir, and large rewards were offered to any one who could furnish a clue to finding her whereabouts; Mynheer Van Gensaw being the most assiduous in prosecuting the search, and the most inconsolable when all attempts had proved futile. "I thought so," were the first words that escaped the lips of the astonished Captain; and "this accounts for the burst of laughter and strange noises which so long were a mystery to me," thought Desmond. The insane woman asking or rather inviting them to follow her to the "bed room," Desmond, Kantavisscher and Brien prepared to follow her, but before doing so, they carefully reloaded and reset the spring guns so that no suspicions might be aroused. Miss Stapleton and Dominga were left under the protection of Nicholas Tromd (Kantavisscher's brother-in-law) who was instructed to conceal the two corpses in any out-of-the-way nook. The poor insane creature led them back the way they had come, to the spot whence emanated that fearful effluvia, which had nearly asphyxiated them before. Pushing what appeared to be a bracket nail driven into the wall, a small door flew open, and an abominable stench, or rather concentrated *quintessence* of stinks and stenches, assailed them, driving them back like "greased lightning." In the confusion that followed, the unfortunate Hannah Altenstadt was lost, having either purposely concealed herself, or more probably having wandered through that charnel house of a chamber into other

rooms or recesses, which her long residence had made familiar. It being now past noon, and not at all unlikely that some of the smugglers might be dropping in, the whole party proceeded forward at a smart walk, their object being not to explore the tunnel but to reach the opposite end of it. After a five minutes walk, they came to a dead wall, in which their closest scrutiny could discover no concealed door or other means of egress. They, to all appearances seemed to be in a *cul de sac*, but Brien, who had gone a little farther back, discovered another “devil’s peg,” as she called the nails or knobs with which the passage was pretty freely studded and hailed Kantavisscher saying, “*gome mitt me Mynheer*”—unable even in this anxious moment to repress his love of raising a laugh at the Dutch man’s expense—and proceeded to manipulate the knob as he had seen the Captain do with the others; and was rewarded for his trouble by a smart blow on the head, which sent him reeling back. Kantavisscher exclaiming “*dit vor dat*” laid hold of the trap door, that had so unexpectedly descended on the caput of the Emerald Islander, and swung himself up. He then lowered a rope ladder which he found in an alcove above. There being but space sufficient for two persons in the recess in which the Captain stood, Desmond alone mounted and the two had another anxious five minutes of it while trying to discover further means of exit. Succeeding at last in hitting on the spring, they issued out of the tunnel into what had been Miss Stapleton’s bedroom; the party below having joined them they replaced that ladder where they had found it, and were about closing the door, if it might be so called, through which they had emerged (for it was a large shelf or cup-board sunk into the wall which had opened on the spring being touched) when they heard a report followed by a scream, but time pressing, and their danger being imminent they were compelled to forbear “investigating the matter;” to quote Kantavisscher’s official report, “the small party amongst whom were two defenceless females was liable at any moment to the attack of the desperate principals, or their ruffianly followers, or the compromised agents or all three *en masse*, and therefore it was imperative to desist from further explorations, however exciting they might be.”

Young Tromd and Brien were sent in hot haste to Pulicat, the first with orders for Lieut. Van Thromp to instantly bring down a file of soldiers by the route, which would be shown by the bearer; and Brien with instructions

Pulicatta

to borrow the pleasure boat of Mynheer Veerman and to sail down by the lake to Arrungum. Strict instructions were given to both to be as expeditious as possible, but at the same time to be as cautious as a tiger stalking a deer.

Lieut: Van Thromp was the first to arrive, having marched under the guidance of Tromd through the jungle then stretching along the eastern side of Coromandel. Thromp and six soldiers concealed themselves in the bungalow, while Kantavisscher at the head of another party took post at the haunted house. About dusk, the pleasure boat was observed approaching with Veerman, Brien and Ensign Haarman in the stern sheets. At the Captain's suggestion Desmond accompanied Miss Stapleton, and embarking without the least delay, the boat was put about and was soon beating up for Pulicat. They had not proceeded far, however, before another boat was seen bearing down on them in which were Messrs. Sterk, Ridsdale and Ragupathy Naidu. The latter was the English translator and interpreter to the Government of Fort Geldria, and it was owing to his absence on sick leave that Desmond was able to play off his trick on the unwary Englishmen. As soon as Miss Stapleton caught sight of Ridsdale she turned deadly pale with fright, and exclaiming "I am lost," made as if she would throw herself into the arms of Desmond for protection but suddenly remembering where she was, she checked herself, the ashen palor of her countenance giving place to a deep crimson blush. Veerman and his companion, who were listening with awe and wonder to Desmond's account of the discoveries made that day, heard the exclamation and noted the change of countenance and turning an enquiring look on Desmond, he in a few words made them acquainted with Miss Stapleton's history and when he came to that part of it relating to Ridsdale's advent at Pulicat, the two Dutchman burst into pearls of uncontrollable laughter, for the practical joke had become long ere this, common property; this *chef d'oeuvre*³² as Bloem who fully enjoyed : the joke, termed it having spread like wild fire through the length and breadth of Pulicat. Poor Miss Sterk, much to the annoyance of her brother was made the butt for more fun which took the form of mock sympathies with her sufferings, and congratulations at her happy escape. Giving some orders to Brien who was steering, Desmond

³² a masterpiece

stepped to the bows to prevent Ridsdal or his companions from boarding them; and Haarman perplexed to know how Desmond intended getting out of the serious scrape which he had got into, asked Brien if he could enlighten him on the subject, but Murty with a look as serious as a judge about sentencing a man to death, replied “I’m David’s son not a deep ass,” which caused another explosion of laughter in which even Miss Stapleton joined, for one and all recognised, Captain Kantavisscher’s favourite and hackneyed, aphorism, *Davus sum non Oedipus*³³, in the Irishman’s vernacular burlesque of it. These bursts of merriment reaching the ears of the occupants of the approaching boat made them wild with anger—Ridsdale putting them down to his own account, Sterk attributing them to his sisters excursion, and Ragupathy Naidu imagining they were at his expense, for he had also experienced Desmond’s kind attentions.

The boats nearing each other, Sterk hailed Brien to lay to, but Mynheer Veerman calling out that they were proceeding to Pulicat where Desmond would surrender himself to any writ out against him, the magistrate had to rest contented for the present, for Veerman was one of the Councillors of the Government of Pulicat. As soon as they reached the Point (the place of debarkation) Miss Stapleton entering one of the palanquins waiting for the Dutchmen, and escorted by Ensign Haarman and Brien, started off for the Kantavisschers; and the Councillor with Desmond proceeded to the Cutcheery³⁴, where they were soon joined by Sterk and his party.

The Magistrate informed Desmond that he was charged with kidnapping, giving false evidence, mischief &c &c., and that he would be sent to prison unless he found two sureties for 10,000Rs. each. Now Sterk thought he had his persecutor in a corner, for none of his Europeans friends could go bail for him, being precluded from doing so by an order of Government which prohibited any official becoming surety for another. Desmond had, however, sent for old Isaac, the Jew, who at first refused to bail him, saying he was a very poor man and wholly unable to furnish the security required. “The young shentlemansh,” he said, “knows vary vell that I’m earning my living by

³³ I am Davus (a plain man / slave), not Oedipus (who solved the riddle of the Sphinx).

³⁴ An administration office in India, from Kannada word *kachēri*.

a shmall trade in shalt feesh.” “You old rascall,” exclaimed Desmond,” you earn your living by trading in salt fish, eh? What about the train oil that your salt fish barrels frequently contain?”

“O fader Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! I’ve no sthrain oil - no moneish; no got anything. Mynheer Veerman know dat, Mynheer Sterk know dat. May I go to Gehenna³⁵ : may my soul rest in Tophet³⁶ if I bees telling leish: I—”

His eloquence was cut short by Desmond exclaiming “you old Ananias, what have you to do with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; you old weasel, invoke Gesmas Judas and Barabbas and others of that ilk. You know nothing of the train oil eh? you are as poor as a church mouse eh? Well, well, we shall see.” The Jew just then catching sight of Brien (who had returned) making expressive pantomimes in the back ground, and suspecting that his illicit trade or rather traffic in Gin had become known by some means to Desmond, reluctantly agreed to become surety for him, and to get his partner Ephraim to do so likewise. But he begged Desmond not to play any pranks on him; “you bees a funny shentlemansh said he, you make de Engleesh shentlemansh one big fool; you shend Missie Sterk (O fader Abraham! the magisthreet’s sisthar) go husband hunting, ah, ah, ah!” and the old man laughed as if his sides would burst, and he was joined by more than one present. “You make translator shentlemansh going deer shooting kill plenty of de sheeps—plenty! Plenty! of muttong making. You making feeshermans Mynheers all rolling like de—de—peegs in de mood—make poor Isaac one big fool like Ingleeshman, like Missie, like.”

“Stop that clacking tongue of yours, you confounded old blood-sucker,” roared Sterk, on whom it for the first time dawned that he had to thank Desmond and not Jedarayyan for his mud bath.

The business in hand being concluded each dispersed to his own home, Desmond be taking him to the Kantavisschers.

The next morning punctually at ten O’clock, Desmond and Brien with the two Jews were in attendance at the Magistrate’s Court, where they were joined by Haarman and Kantavisscher; the latter, who had been

³⁵ is a destination of the wicked or Hell

³⁶ place of burning

completely successful in his raid on the smugglers, (an account of which we reserve for the next chapter) had come prepared with proofs of Desmond's perfect innocence *re* the charge of kidnapping and enticing away Miss Stapleton from lawful guardianship; the other charges of giving false information to a public servant, of mischief &c, &c., were left to Desmond's ingenuity to rebut. While waiting for the Magistrate, Desmond spied Bloem seated in an ante-chamber, gloomy and forlorn, and going up to him kindly laid his hand on his shoulder. "Alas! Desmond is it you," said Bloem looking up, "I am indeed oppressed with gloomy thoughts. What an Iliad³⁷ of ills have I experienced since I saw you last. A valuable cargo captured by pirates, the death of an uncle dearer to me than a father, suspension from office on a false charge, and last though not least the loss of valuable, very valuable, deeds and documents, not to mention a large sum of hard cash robbed from my strong room last night, while the whole of us were away on a moonlight pic-nic at Kloop Island."

"Neither is my heart a cornucopia of pleasure," answered Desmond, "and if with my recollections I play *laterna magica*, the devil and his grandmother pass along the wall. But cheer up old friend, there is no use of meeting troubles half way, or of crying over spilt milk. You have done me many a good turn and kind office which I am truly thankful for. Remember how you stood my friend when that devil's son, Mynheer."—

"Enough, Desmond, I know full well that you have a feeling and sympathetic heart and would willingly spend and be spent for your friends, but, alas, it is not in your power to restore what has been lost."

"My friend, one good turn deserves another—*fricantem refrica ; manus manum lavat*³⁸ as my Classical Master used to say to us boys whenever he punished us—as you unreservedly spoke to me on the occasion when Mynheer Van Deck brought those serious charges against me, so speak I to you now; cut Garral adrift, shun him as you would the devil. He is a snake in the grass—a *latet anguis in herbe* as you yourself remarked when you first saw him. I know not by what means he has deluded you, but this I know, that all your

³⁷ a series of miseries or disastrous events.

³⁸ one hand washes the other

misfortunes have been caused by him. I shall this evening speak at length on the subject to you.”

Desmond’s lawyer, Jacobsz, coming up with profound bows to Bloem, whispered in Desmond’s ear some instructions.

“All serene; but have you taught Isaac his part?”

“Yes; but he begs that you will make no allusion to ‘sthraïn oil.’ What is this, may I ask.”

“Oh nothing,” said Desmond, “there comes Mynheer Pomposity. Now to business and to fun.”

“Take care you do not over shoot the mark. Don’t mistake disrespect or anything that may be construed into disrespect to the Bench, for fun and wit; depend upon it Sterk will not be slow in making you feel the weight of the law.”

“Never you fear, this chiel³⁹ knows chalk from cheese⁴⁰—a hawk from a handsaw.”

So saying Desmond walked into the Court followed by Bloem and Jacobsz, and immediately began to carry out his part of the programme. Pretending to see Isaac for the first time that morning, he accosted him with, “hallo, raboincent per cent, so you are not hanged yet eh? “Fader Abraham! Vat ish dat for a question young shentlemansh !but young shentlemansh will be young shentlemansh.”

“Let Gryll, be Gryll, and keep his hoggish mind, eh Isaac?”

“Masther Desmond, you no feeling for poor old Isaac. You first calt him raboin, debil; now you calling him grunting anemal. You.”

“Silence,” exclaimed Sterk, “call the prosecutor.” When out stepped the Ameen, and began to relate how he had been deceived by Desmond, and was proceeding to describe how he had mistaken the honest indignation of Ridsdale and his violent anger for the ravings of madness; “I was misled into so believing by the false representations of—”

“Mirandavan kannukku irandadhu ellam pey” (to the timid or frightened every dark object is a devil) soliloquised Desmond aloud.

³⁹In *Scottish* for a young man

⁴⁰Two people think completely different from each other

"Silence," shouted Sterk; "I'll put the next person that disturbs the Court into the stocks."

"They are at 87½ just now—the 5 per cents, "called out some wag from amidst the crowd thronging the doorway.

Sterk who was now livid with rage ordered the Court be instantly cleared.

The order created a good deal of dissatisfaction, as all expected to hear something more about Miss Sterk's wild goose chase, and numerous were the remarks hurled at the Magistrate.

Silence and order being restored, the hearing proceeded; when Sterk noticing the Jew whispering to Desmond, ordered him into the ante-room, saying as he did so, "one would fancy they were hand and glove in the late discreditable transactions."

"That is not it, your worship," observed Ragupathy, "the Jew is afraid to lose sight of the accused, for to find him again would be as difficult as finding a needle in a bottle of hay.

"Or deers in the Coromandel shungle," said Isaac: as this Parthian⁴¹ shot was delivered from the door, it was heard by the idlers outside, who raised a shout of laughter.

The incident referred to by Isaac on this as well as on a former occasion will be found in the succeeding chapter.

The case for the prosecution having closed, and despite Jacobsz' artifice, Sterk having so far kept his temper as not to commit himself by any arbitrary or illegal order, for then according to Dutch law an immediate appeal lay to Governor, who would have to retry the case, Desmond was called upon for his defence Isaac still standing irresolute on the threshold but out of ken of the Magistrate, began telegraphing actively to Desmond, which being observed by the translator and communicated to the Magistrate, the latter burst out with "kick that confounded Jew out of the Court House." Isaac immediately disappeared, mingling with the throng outside and waiting to see the result of the trial. Hardly had Mr. Jacobsz begun his speech, ere in burst an aid-de-camp from his Excellency the Governor, and handed Sterk a

⁴¹ forceful remark at the end of a conversation, and then leave so that no-one has the chance to reply.

letter, at the same time whispering to him to be cautious how he dealt with Desmond, for he at present stood high in favour. The letter instructed him to send Desmond forthwith to Governor's residence at the South Battery. Sterk at once adjourned the case, and retiring to his private room, sent for Desmond and his lawyer and informed them of the Governor's order; but Jacobsz informed him that his client was unable to obey the order as he could not renew his bail, for one of his sureties had by Sterk's own orders been driven away. Now this was a ruse of the foxy lawyer, who knew that Sterk would consent to anything rather than incur the displeasure of his Excellency (a hot headed self-willed man) by keeping him waiting; especially now that he was in the bad books of the Chief Secretary, who had the entire ear of the Governor. He promised to let Desmond off with a nominal fine if he would hurry through the formality of renewing his bail bond. The Jew, he said, could be easily found if they wished it. Bloem and Kantavisscher promising to see that Sterk kept his work, the necessary was quickly done; and Desmond, Kantavisscher and the Aid-de-camp were soon on their way to the Southern Battery. We shall take this opportunity of giving our readers an insight into the doings of Garra. It will be remembered that he had resolved on possessing himself of Miss Vander-Stettin's person and property. The first he found could not be accomplished by fair means — at least by means which he considered fair — and as the second depended wholly on the success of the first he determined to effect both by a *coup de main* — to forcibly carry off the young lady. It was whilst scheming and plotting to this end that he received the welcome news brought by Udong of the Smugglers Cave and the discovering of Desmond in its vicinity under. What he was pleased to call, "highly suspicious circumstances." By dint of watching he had come to learn that Pereyra was one of the principals engaged in the "contraband trade," and by skilfully working on his fears had been able to elicit a good deal of information which made him master of the fate of several others, one of whom was high up on the rung of preferment; and by alternately cajoling and threatening he had been able to induce Pereyra to enlist him in the band. By patience and perseverance he had ferreted out the different smuggling stations — one at Covilluddy, which he was for a long time led to believe was the only one; one at Arrungum and one, however strange it may appear in Pulicat itself;

this latter was situated about a mile to the N. N. W. of Coopum where now stands the Big Mosque, but at the time of which we write a large three storied building occupied the site. Under the pretext of thoroughly identifying himself with the smugglers, whom in reality he despised as sneaking thieves, and their profession he deemed fit only for arrant cowards, he had visited all the places of their rendezvous, had learned all their pass-words and had become acquainted with the Captain : of the smuggling brigantine, who was none other than the celebrated or rather notorious pirate or Marooner Avery, who besides his proper vocation and calling had a few swift sailing vessels engaged in the smuggling line of business. From Madagascar, his headquarters, (as well as those of such congenial spirits as, Bowen, Tew Mission Halsey and North) he pursued his double calling of pirate and smuggler with safety and profit. Garral having made his acquaintance found no difficulty whatever in inducing him to give him a passage to Madagascar. Accident having made him acquainted with a treasonable correspondence carried on by Van Deck with one of Hyder's chieftains, he had with the connivance of Deck caused some letters to be forged in the name of Afzul Khan (the Chieftain alluded to) and addressed to Bloem, thanking him for the information he had afforded, and requesting him for particulars regarding the strength of the garrison of Ollendorf Island, the best means of surprising it &c. &c. These letters he took good care should be intercepted, having informed the Governor anonymously before hand that on a certain day papers of moment would fall into his hands, if he would seize all letters coming on that particular day to the address of Mynheer Bloem. Meanwhile he had despatched Udong to Negapatam to post the forged letters. We have said post, though there was not a regular postal service between the two Dutch settlements, but a swift sailing vessel came in once a fortnight with letters, parcels &c., from Negapatam. All turned out as Garral intended it should. To say that Bloem was thunder struck with surprise and overwhelmed with consternation, when he was arrested and shown the incriminating letters, would convey but a faint idea of the wonderment and fright of the poor man, who seemed to be dazed with the enormity of the crime with which he was charged, and the subtlety with which the plot had been hatched and executed. It was only by the intercession of powerful friends, such as Veerman, Van Gensaw, Kantavisscher and other influential

persons, that Bloem escaped immediate incarceration in the dark, damp dungeons that lay under Ollendorf Castle. For the present he was admitted to heavy bail and was in addition under police surveillance. Garral's object in thus involving Bloem in present disgrace, and probably ultimate ruin, will become apparent as the story proceeds. It was at the urgent entreaty of Garral (who pretended to feel great sorrow at Bloem's misfortune) and by the persuasion of Mynheers Dirkoz and Van Brunt, that Bloem was, with much difficulty, prevailed on to join the pleasure party at Kloop Island. Dirkoz and Brunt thought thus to dispel, or at least divert, the melancholy that had settled on their friend; but Garral's object was to get him out of the way in order to have his strong room broken into and rifled of its contents. In this, as our readers know, he had been quite successful; in fact everything had up to this run smoothly for Garral — his most sanguine expectations had been more than realized, and he was flattering himself that the same luck would follow him to the end of his plot, which was not far distant, when two incidents — two unexpected factors — startled him out of his fancied security. One was the discovery and capture of his confederates at Arrungum, and the other was a conversation (overheard by him) between Desmond and Bloem. The former after recounting several instances, that had from time to time come to his knowledge, of Garral's perfidy, wound up by assuring Bloem that he now had the "interesting stanger of an enquiring turn of mind" fairly in the toils. The first thought of Garral, on learning the kind attentions that Desmond intended paying him, was to lodge an immediate information against our hero, charging him with complicity with the smugglers, but a little reflection showed him the great danger of following such a course — the probability being that Desmond would come off unscathed, by the assistance of Veerman and Kantavisscher. "Let him do his worst," soliloquised the wily Portuguese, "I have a readiet and surer method of disposing of this interloping son of perfide Albion."

What these plans were, and how they were carried out, the next chapter will show.

Meanwhile Pulicat was stirred to its centre by rumours and reports of Afzul Khan's intention of shortly paying the Dutch settlement a visit, in order to relieve it of its plethora of wealth — to practise a little arteriotomy,

according to some, and bronchotomy according to others. Black and threatening looks — looks expressive of malignity and vindictiveness — were cast on poor Bloem, who was branded with such names as, Judas, Machiavelli, and Andrea Dorea; the irony of the latter class of names cut him more to the quick than the opprobrium of the former.

It was partly in connection with these reports that Desmond had been summoned to the presence of the Governor.

CHAPTER VII

Capture of the Smugglers—Further Revelations—The story of Miss Altenstadt—The Deer hunt—Desmond in prison—His escape.

Kantavisscher and Thromp having taken post, as already mentioned, patiently awaited the arrival of the smugglers and their confederates. The twilight was fading into dusk when two men, apparently Mahomedans, were observed stealthily making their way towards a dilapidated shed about a stone throw from the shed when Pereyra joined them. He seemed to have come overland from Pulicat for he was splashed from head to foot with mud. The tree disappearing within the shed and all being quiet, a Corporal with two soldiers was sent to reconnoitre the spot and ascertain (if possible) whether any arms were hidden there. Meanwhile a large body of men were seen approaching from seawards. The whole of them were armed to the teeth and each one bore a heavy load. The sight of these desperate looking villains made Thromp confide to a brother officer, that he expected their present enterprise would be an apt illustration of going out to shear and coming home shorn, "Don't deal in forebodings, it is not a paying commodity; but rather calculate on the amount of prize-money that shall weight our pocket; for if we are to believe all what Tromd told us, the Smugglers Tunnel is a very El Dorado⁴²," said young De Witt. "Not so fast," said Thromp, "don't count your chickens before"—.

"Look !there flashes the signal," exclaimed the Ensign.

A light was exhibited by the Lieutenant in answer to Kantavisscher's signal, and marching his men out he posted them round the house, and leaving them in charge of DeWitt he hurried off to learn the further commands of the Capt. Kantavisscher ordered him to take two men from DeWitt's party and the Corporal's guard, and station himself at the shed, where another entrance had been ascertained to exist. Shortly after the soldiers were thus posted, the men who had carried in the arms made their appearance through the shed entrance, and being received with a volley bolted

⁴²Golden One

in, spreading consternation among the party within. An attempt to escape through the bungalow exit proving equally disastrous, a rush was made for the third means of egress; but the first man who presented himself at the "cupboard hole" being shot dead by DeWitt, the whole party of smugglers finding themselves caught like rats in a trap, knowing it to be impossible to cut their way out, were thrown into the greatest confusion. Some were for igniting the kegs of powder and blowing up tunnel house, bungalow, themselves, and their enemies; but the more timid advised surrender, and the throwing of the whole blame on Pereyra. "Let us say, we were duped by the old rascal, who made us believe that he was a Government agent, and that he had secret orders to store munitions of war in this place." this party being the more numerous they carried the day, and proceeded to choose a representative to treat for terms. By unanimous consent Pereyra was elected their ambassador, but strange to say the old Portuguese was nowhere to be found—he had mysteriously made himself scarce; vanished in thin air or disappeared in the bowels of the earth his confederates knew not. But the discovery of his flight was greeted with a yell of rage and disappointment. It being now late no one would venture to take upon himself the dangerous duty of spokesman, rightly imagining that such a one under present circumstances would soon become a lead mine. There was nothing for it but to wait till the morning.

Kantavisscher placing guards at all the outlets, and giving orders to Thromp to be vigilant and relieve the guards in person, posted to Pulicat to inform the Governor of the late occurrences.

The next morning Kantavisscher having to attend the magistrates' court on behalf of Desmond, Mynheer Van Gensaw was sent to make a full enquiry and bring the prisoners to head-quarters.

Before the Chief Secretary arrived, Lieut. Thromp had succeeded in capturing and handcuffing the whole of the smugglers, Pereyra excepted. After putting a few questions to the principal of the prisoners, Gensaw ordered the Lieutenant to march the whole of them to Fort Geldria; Van Gensaw, however, remained back to explore the tunnel and discover the whereabouts of Pereyra, four peons, his own creatures, remaining with him. Entering the tunnel, the mysteries of which were well known to him, he

proceeded straight to that chamber guarded by the spring guns. Entering the room he turned short to the left, and rapping on one of the planks forming the walls, a low whistle was heard, and Gensaw giving to countersign, out stepped Pereyra from one of the large chests, which we have already mentioned as lying at the further end of the room. In a few words Pereyra related to him the transactions of the past night, concluding with "Mynheer, I am your slave; I am willing to do whatever you bid me—that I have served you faithfully you know well—but if you deliver me over to justice I will speak what I know. Save me from death—allow me to escape to die in distant lands—and your secrets will lie safe locked in my bosom." This was said with a mixture of abject obsequiousness and covert menace which Gensaw well understood, "What about my niece, has she also been discovered by that scoundrel, Kantavisscher, or that marplot of an Englishman.?" asked the Secretary. True to his principle of not dealing in truth when anything else would serve, Pereyra promptly answered, "no; she is safe hidden far hence; not a soul excepting myself knows where she is; allow me to escape and I shall take her along with me. I swear by St. Antony you have nothing to fear on that score, provided of course I am safe."

Van Gensaw readily promised the trembling wretch that he would aid him to escape, and assist him by every means in his power to find some distant asylum of safety suggesting that the safest course would be for him to embark on board one of the smuggling vessels "Santa Maria; "exclaimed Pereyra; you might as well hand me over the tender mercies of a tiger, No, no, Mynheer, no smugglers for me. I mean to escape to some Portuguese settlement, Malacca, Goa or Diu. I must insist on his allowing me to follow him, for you know Mynheer—"

"Hist! hist! What noise is that?" said Gensaw. "I fear some persons, perhaps attached by curiosity, are about visiting the spot. Haste, escape into the jungle and I shall arrange for your further safety. You know the place where three Popul trees clasp a Margossa tree, be there to night and I shall let you know your future movements." So saying he directed Pereyra to escape by the shed which was left unguarded. Van Gensaw then retraced his steps towards the outlet by which he had entered, but had not gone far when he had entered, but had not gone far when he was met by Tromd and Haarman, who

had come to make an investigation on their own account. But they were sternly told that no strangers would be permitted to examine the subterranean passage until after an official exploration had been made. Knowing as he did the fearful secrets of the place, he was afraid that these two young men might make some discoveries of his villainy. His intention was to blow up the whole tunnel that very night after securing the immense treasure concealed in it.

With many a muttered malediction the two disappointed explorers were making their way out, when to their great joy they fell in with Kantavisscher, Sterk and Desmond who had been sent by the Governor to assist Van Gensaw. The Captain had brought along with him a party of gun-lascars, whom he told off to guard the entrances. Had he come but five minutes earlier Pereyra would have been caught; but as it was, that worthy had had time sufficient to make good his retreat into the jungle. It was with the greatest reluctance that Gensaw consented to an immediate examination of the subterranean passage, and entered a vain protest against the presence of Desmond and his man Brien. They were strangers; they were said to be implicated in the smuggling business &c. were the objections advanced by the Secretary. In answer to the first, Kantavisscher showed him the Governor's order, in which both Desmond and Brien were mentioned as co-workers with Geusaw, Kantavisscher, and Sterk; with regards to other objections, the Captain said they were premature and wholly unsupported by even the veriest shred of anything that could be called evidence. From this it will be seen that the Captain and the Chief Secretary entered on their work in a very hostile spirit.

The first room entered was the one which Geusaw had left a few minutes back. The Secretary was staggered when he found that Kantavisscher knew not only its existence, but also was perfectly acquainted with the deadly machinery that protected its entrance. At the Captain's command Brien, who had furnished himself with a crow-bar, soon prised off the lids of the chests. Three of them were filled with money—Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, and a varied assortment of miscellaneous native coins, gold silver and copper. At sight of these, Brien executed a wardance, flourishing the crow-bar to the imminent risk of Tromd's head. "Not satisfied with damaging your own knowledge box with the trap-door, do you want to knock sparks out of that of

your neighbour's," said Desmond. "You might as well try, maisther dear, to knock blood out of a flint or toddy out of a tent pole⁴³, as with out of a Hollander," answered the grinning Irishman. As this was said in English it was not understood by the Dutchmen present — at least sufficiently well to kindle their wrath. The fourth chest was empty, which excited some wonder and curiosity; and Brien striking its bottom with the crow-bar it gave forth a hollow sound, and before Geusaw could interfere crash went the bottom, under a heavy blow dealt by the brawny arm of Brien; disclosing a pit or rather man-hole. After some little hesitation Brien and Tromd volunteered to go down and examine this new discovery. It proved to be a small cavity about six feet deep on one side of which was found a small door fastened by a latch. Making their way through this, they found themselves in what appeared to be another tunnel or gallery, but which readily was only a portion of the original passage shut off at a place where it curved considerably — the original passage closely resembled a Scythian bow, the two extremities being represented by the house and the bungalow; the present tunnel ran straight; it represented the bow string.

Those above learning the discovery of another chamber were not slow in joining Tromd and his companion; Desmond, however, remaining back to guard against any treachery that might be practised by any one hidden in one of the numerous recesses or rooms with which the tunnel was honeycombed. The first sight that met the gaze of the astonished explorers was the corpse of Miss Altenstadt — there lay all that remained of *Bells* of Pulicat. Kantavisscher pointing to the body sternly demanded of Geusaw whether he recognised the features of the inanimate form, rigid and set in death, but wearing a frozen smile, as if the departing soul was visited by a ray of reason and had caught a glance of the better world.

VanGeusaw's countenance was a perfect study. Terror, sorrow, surprise, and contrition were strangely blended together, the whole being set in a curious frame of relief. His face presented a vivid picture of the workings of his mind — of the struggle between his evil and his better nature; of the sharp contention taking place between Satan and Michael for the possession

⁴³Toddy tree usually used as tent pole

of an immortal soul. This lasted but for a minute, the whole giving place to a look expressive of secret satisfaction — Satan had triumphed, Michael, had departed worsted — his guardian angel, weeping tears of blood, had forsaken him to return no more. These varying phases of his countenance were carefully noted by Kantavisscher and Desmond, each drawing his own inference from them. The momentary hesitation was succeeded by an exclamation of horror:— “My God ! it is my long lost niece. Alas! Alas! Is it thus I find her at last,” broke from the lips of Gensaw. Sending Tromd to bring a door or plank, the others penetrated still further. Another twenty yards brought them to the end of the gallery on that side, and finding nothing but a few rusty muskets they turned their steps to the other end, passing as they did so the place where still lay the remains of the unfortunate young lady, and where Geusaw still stood motionless, wrapped in thought. Why did the sixth commandment rise before his eyes like the writing on Belshazzar’s wall — with this difference, that he could decipher too well _the characters, “thou shalt do no murder?” There are more ways of staying, than stabbing with a knife, or giving a cup of poison. Passing by this melancholy spot, they carefully picked their way over heaps of rubbish, bricks and ends of logs, and had advanced some little way when Brien, who was their pioneer, was heard to exclaim, “Holy St. Patrick! What new devilment is this!” at these words the others eagerly pressed forward and saw a sight that filled them with awe and made their flesh creep. Bending over a worm-eaten table sat a figure or rather a skeleton. Its hands were crossed before it, and its head reclined on them. Dust and cobwebs excepted there was nothing else to be seen. Wondering and with hushed voices they slowly made their way back, Brien being the first to break the profound silence that settled on the party, with “an, shure, this is the Owld Nick’s own hunting ground.” “Say rather his precious earthly gehenna,” responded Desmond. Tromd having by this time returned with a rede litter, the body of the ill-starred Hannah Altenstadt was borne by Desmond, Tromd, Haarman and Brien out of the tunnel, and carried up into the room that had been lately occupied by Miss Stapleton.

This day seemed destined to be one of wonders, for as Kantavisscher was writing a hurried lines to his wife informing her of the melancholy “find,” and requesting her to ask either Mrs. Bloem or Mrs. Dormusz to come over,

bringing old Dominga along to prepare the corpse for interment, he was startled by the sudden appearance of two stalwart grenadiers with the trembling wretch, Pereyra, between them. The terror of the latter was in no way allayed when he found himself the centre of a group of dark and scowling visages, but catching sight of the pale and drawn face—while to the very lips—of Van Geusaw, he assumed a more confident and insolent bearing.

The arrest of Pereyra which was at first a puzzle to the secretary was effected on this wise.

It will be remembered, that when Geusaw arrived at Arrungum he had ordered Lieut. Thromp to march his prisoners to Pulicat, this he did to get rid of the presence of the two officers, refusing even to allow a single soldier to stay back; “you will require all your men to guard such desperate villains as your prisoners are, and remember you are liable to an attack by such of the gang as are still at large. If I mistake not, a rescue will be attempted in that patch of jungle lying between this and Vunnanthoray,” said Geusaw. But Pereyra still being unaccounted for, and having his suspicions that all was not square—suspicions that had been roused by the hasty orders and disordered looks of Van Geusaw acting on certain hints and words dropped by Kantavisscher when departing—Thromp took the liberty of leaving two soldiers behind, with injunctions to secret themselves in the house and the bungalow respectively, and keep a bright look out on the shed. “I am sure the jackal will there break cover,” said the Lieutenant. He was not afraid of thus braving Van Geusaw’s displeasure, for the two soldiers left back did not strictly speaking form part of his command—they were the Captain’s orderlies. While Kantavisscher and the others were busily conducting their researches in the devil’s burrow, the two grenadiers were no less busy in curiously investigating the interior of a large Banyan tree, partially scathed by lightning, which stood on a mound on the outskirts of the Arrungum jungle. Shortly after parting from Van Geusaw, Pereyra had crept with all possible caution out of the shed and was running towards the jungle, when he was spied and chased by the soldiers. Finding his pursurers gaining rapidly on him, he changed his course and made for a huge Banyan tree, standing like a solitary sentinel of the forest on a slight elevation. Here the soldiers lost sight of him and for more than two hours were running backwards and forwards between

this tree (or rather accumulation of trees, for the numerous adventitious roots of the parent tree had each and all become trees and treeings) and the neighbouring jungle, without discovering any signs of their quarry. But about three o'clock one of the soldiers noticed a great commotion among a troop of monkeys, that had a few minutes previously swarmed up the tree. The two men stood enjoying the sight of the grotesque antics, and listening to the loud chattering of this tribe of hillmonkeys, when there rang out Shrick on Shrick, and Pereyra was seen issuing out of the trunk of the mother tree, and racing for life with half a dozen white-bearded black monkeys in full cry after him. To level their muskets and to drop a couple of quadrumanians was the work of a minute. Then dropping their pieces they followed hard after the now exhausted and despairing Pereyra, whom they soon had the pleasure of escorting into the presence of their Captain.

The work for the day having concluded, and the night threatening to be rough, the whole party (with the exception of Haarman, Desmond and Brien) departed. The first was left in command of the detachment of sepoy that had relieved the lascars, while to the two latter was assigned the sad office of "watching by the dead," in which duty they were assisted by Mrs. Dormusz, and nurse Dominga.

Haarman with ten sepoy retired to the bungalow, leaving a like number of men with Desmond, and posting the remaining twelve at the shed. These precautions were taken to prevent any members of the gang, who might still be at large, from plundering the chests of their valuable contents. The night was stormy. Low soughs of wind rose among the distant hills and walked through the stricken branches of the neighbouring trees, till gathering sudden force they lashed the surf into a tumbling mass of froth and foam ; the rain came down in torrents, and blinding flashes of lightning were succeeded by deafening peals of thunder. Haarman had twice visited and relieved the sentries. It was now drawing towards mid-night, and the storm was at its height, when above the war of the elements was heard a despairing cry. The startled females rushed to Desmond for protection, whispering with pale lips, "it is the restless spirit of the poor murdered lady." But Brien, whose latent superstitious fears — for where will you find an uneducated Irishman void of such — were roused by the presence of the corpse and *eerieness* of the night,

asserted, in a voice tremulous with terror, that it was the cry of a banshee, which boded them no good. "Benshie or bodach glay, we have nothing to fear from," said Desmond. "Unless I am greatly mistaken, that cry is the death-shriek of some hapless wight, suddenly done to death. As for you Brien," continued he, "I am surprised at your believing such stories, fit only for winter fire-sides. Shake off such fears, which are a shame to manhood, and nerve yourself for the stern work that seems cut out for us." Ashamed at having thus openly shown the white feather, and put on his mettle by the rebuke of his master, Brien was eager to do and dare anything to retrieve his character for courage.

"I fear Haarman has met with foul play," said Desmond, "and I shall step over to ascertain how matters go." "Never," said Brien, "will I let you risk your life, when mine will do just as well." At the earnest entreaty of Mrs. Dormusz, and the stout refusal of Brien to stay if his master ventured out, Desmond remained back, and his trusty follower went to learn the fate of the Ensign. Just as he neared the bungalow he felt his arms seized, and something pressed against his breast, which a flash of lightning showed to be the shining barrel of a pistol; at the same time a hoarse voice whispered in his ear, "utter the faintest cry and I'll let day light through yer."

Judging prudence under present circumstances to be the better part of valour, he quietly submitted to the pinioning of his arms; a rough gag being thrust into his mouth and a bandage passed across his eyes, he was hurried along some little distance, when he was suddenly lifted off his feet and flung, ("like a log of wood") down, what he at first thought was, a pit. After a little while emboldened by hearing no other sound than the whistling of the wind and the creaking of branches, he cautiously felt around, as well as his ligatured arms would allow, and finding something rough and sharp projecting from one of the sides of his prison, he began rubbing the cords that bound his arm against it, with as hearty a good will as a buffalo ridding himself of some cutaneous irritation. As he was thus grinding away, something alighted flop on his head, sending him flying prostrate on his face. With a mighty effort he freed himself from the incubus that was pressing the very breath out of him, and as his late rider lay motionless, he summoned sufficient courage to resume his frictional exercise, and soon had the satisfaction of finding his arms free.

Plucking the stopper out of his mouth and blinkers from his eyes, he stared wildly around, but his discovery did not proceed further than ascertaining that he was in some dark and narrow hollow sheltered from the rain and wind. By this time the storm had spent itself, and straggling rays of dim moonlight now and again fell through the rifts in the grey masses of clouds hurrying overhead. One of these fugitive beams revealed a dark object lying huddled in one corner. His first thoughts were to leave the thing alone and to make his escape, but a faint moan and a slight movement indicating that it was a living being, and remembering the sudden and violent ingress of a something that had taken a leap on his head, he concluded that it must be another unfortunate individual of his party, who had been treated to like courtesies as himself. While still undecided, and debating with himself, whether he should risk his new-found liberty (such as it was) by going to the assistance of the unknown one, or whether he was to seek his own safety in flight, a burst of moonlight showed him the pale and familiar countenance of Haarman. With a suppressed exclamation of surprise he stepped up to his friend, and whipping out his clasp-knife he severed his bonds, and pulled the gag out of his mouth. Both of them then commenced climbing, as best as they could, to the mouth of the cavern, making in their ascent the discovery that their prison was the identical hollow trunk out of which old Pereyra had been, that morning, compelled to run a race *by* and *with* his Darwinnian relative. Arrived at the mouth, Haarman slipped down the side and hid himself at the foot of the monster tree, while Brien concealed himself in the thick and dripping foliage above. Hardly had they done so, when two men in close conversation walked up to the tree and one of them instantly dived in. After the elapse of a minute or two he was heard cursing and shouting but his companion outside showed no inclination to enter the bowels of the Banyan. Finding his comrade not responding to his calls, he came out swearing "like a trooper." "Curse your folly," said he, "if you had taken my advice this would not have occurred." The speaker was Garral. "I always found it the safest and most convenient plan to stop the mouth of those whom I sweated, by cutting their throats or sending them to feed sharks. I was a fool and worse to hearken to your proposal. A pretty kettle of fish we have cooked."

“A life more or less matters not to you, who have been engaged in the whole sale line of vertical deportment.” answered his companion, “but I have shed no human blood—am no murderer—and I am not ambitious of that distinction in my old age. The recording has catalogued as sufficiently large assortment of sins and crimes against me, and I was not going to add to the heavy score the murder of a man to whom I am greatly obligated.”

“The devil turned preacher with a vengeance!” exclaimed Garral with a savage oath. “Obligation! Fiddlesticks! If obligation obliges you to fit yourself with a hempen collar, I don’t see how it follows that you should perform a like kind office for your friends and acquaintances. Had I known your men were such confounded idiots, I would not have had anything to do with this cursed business. Why stand you like a mooncalf? Haste, gather together some of your precious lunatics, and search for the two runaways. They can’t be far hence.”

Van Deck, for it was he that was Garral’s companion, immediately hastened to do as he was told.

Brien, who understood next to nothing of this colloquy carried on in Dutch, was however, not quite ignorant of the nature of the amenities interchanged, the tone and gestures being sufficiently expressive. Van Deck not returning as quickly as the impatient Garral expected, he began the search alone. A turn of position and a flash of his bulls-eye discovered Haarman. With an imprecation the Portuguese sprang forward, and was in the act of fleshing his dagger in the body of the ensign, when Brien, who had not forgotten his Covilluddy experience of the momentum of falling bodies, and whose knowledge of dynamics was both practical and painful, took a flying leap, and alighting aplomb on Garrals’ head, stretched him senseless on the ground, himself executing a by no means graceful somerset.

“Dank you,” said Haarman, giving Brien a warm squeeze of the hand.

“Thank yourself for teaching me the lesson. But come, I say Mynheer, let’s be off. I felt the weight of your body, now let me see the lightness of your heels.”

The two then scampered off to the adjacent jungle, and concealed themselves in a clump of wild mangoe trees.

"Though my mast does not believe in Banshees yet he sends me to play Brownie to a Dutchman," said Brien. "Did you hear that awful scream just before our troubles began? It was let master say what he will, the warning cry of the Banshee for you see—"

"Hush," said Haarman, "I hear the tramp of approaching footsteps."

About half a score of men now entered the very copse where the two were in hiding, and hurriedly began burying several large sacks they had brought with them. The work of interment was scarcely accomplished, when a shrill whistle was heard, and the men immediately decamped. Not knowing what to make of the sudden alarm, Brien, as soon as the coast was clear, crept out and made for the bungalow. He had gone some little distance, when he heard volley after volley ring out sharp and clear on the keen night air. While still hesitating, Haarman ran past him, exclaiming "—come on; those are my men saluting the precious crew of cut-throat smugglers."

By the time they reached the bungalow the firing had ceased; a dropping shot or two being all that they heard as they neared the shed. Hailing his men not to fire on them, Haarman walked up to the guard, and learning from them that they had been assailed by a party of armed men, whom they had beaten off, and that a simultaneous attack had been made on the haunted house, he ran forward to ascertain how it fared with his men there. In the verandah of the house he found Brien supporting a dying man, and calling loudly for a light. Just as he was about knocking, the door opened, and Desmond, all smeared with blood, made his appearance. By the light he held in his hand, it was seen that the expiring man was Deck; shot in an ungovernable passion by Garra. This they learnt from Deck himself, who was too faint from loss of blood to answer all their questions. But they learnt enough to fit Garra and some others with a 'Bridport dagger.'

Mutual explanations now took place, and Haarman learnt that for a long time after Brien's departure all remained quiet, the sepoys, however, standing to their arms ready for an emergency. Time passing and Brien not returning, Desmond and a naique ventured out to reconnoitre. They reached the bungalow without meeting any one on their way, but being told by the havildar that no one had come to the bungalow, and that the "*Sahib*," who had left on hearing a shriek, had not returned, Desmond and the Naique with

two more men proceeded to the shed where a ghastly spectacle made them shudder and turn faint—the entire guard lay weltering in their blood. On making this discovery one of the sepoy was sent to apprise the havildar of danger, and Desmond with the two others was hastening to the house, when they fell in with coming from a body of men the opposite direction. Shots were immediately exchanged and Desmond fell back fighting on the house. The smugglers coming with range, the guard opened fire, and after a slight show of resistance they bolted. Desmond had just determined to lead a party to search for Haarman, when Brien's shouting brought him to the door.

The early dawn brought with it the "relief" under the command of the Lieutenant Thromp, who on learning the transactions of the night, immediately communicated with his immediate superior, Captain Kantavisscher, and the officer lost no time in hastening to Arrungum. The news he brought Desmond were of such a kind as to make him forget wounds, smugglers, and the desire to be present at the arrest of Garral, who he made sure was lurking in the neighbourhood, and to start at once for Pulicat.

Meanwhile the body of Miss Alternstadt had been conveyed for interment to Pulicat. Deuse crowds thronged the "Point," some of them being drawn together by curiosity, but the most part from sorrowing sympathy. The sudden disappearance in life of the young lady did not cause as much wonder, speculations and sorrow, as her re-appearance in death.

A brief account of her story will not, we deem, be out place here. But such of our readers as disapprove of digressions and detest episodes are at liberty to "skip it."

Miss Altenstadt was the daughter of Mrs. Van Geusaw's sister. Losing her father in infancy, she had been carefully brought up by her mother and a maiden aunt, for on her would devolve the management of the broad acres left by her father. Both mother and aunt cordially detested Van Geusaw, who had married their sister under cover of a lie. Soon after his marriage he had left for the East Indies and all communication between the sisters had ceased. Shortly before the commencement of our story, Hannah lost her mother, who was suddenly out of by an apoplectic seizure. Being left an orphan and an heiress—a doubly dangerous position for one so young and

thoroughly unacquainted with the world—it was not long before she was besieged by suitors for her hand. Meanwhile, Geusaw learning of the death of his sister-in-law returned home, and easily persuaded the unsuspecting young lady to accompany him to the “far east,” promising her that she would find a mother in her aunt. “We have no children,” said he, “and we shall always treat you as our own daughter. You are young, accomplished, handsome and rich; the four things as essential for a woman’s success in life, as blood, brains, brass and brads are for a man’s; but you have no one here to take care of you. True, you can suit yourself with a chaperon, but they are a mercenary lot—chaperons, companions, duennas, the whole tribe of them.” When Hannah said something about her mother’s dislike to the Geusaw, he plausibly explained it as originating from the ruse he practised for obtaining the hand of her sister; you know,” said he, “all things are fair in love and war.” In a word, he induced her to follow him to Pulicat, where he then held the post of chief magistrate.

For a time all went smoothly. She found as Geusaw had said she would a real mother in her aunt; while he was courtesy and kindness personified. But after six months two events took place which greatly altered the aspect of affairs. One was the death of her aunt; drowned in the lake one moonlight night by the capsizing of a pleasure boat; and the other was the advent of William Heemskeek. Young, handsome, and well informed, Heemskeek had brought to Pulicat letters and warm recommendations to several of the leading men, and was soon appointed to a junior clerkship.

Now Van Geusaw, who was a grasping, avaricious man, and one who let no trifles thwart his plans, had formed certain projects for his advancement and aggrandisement. These were built one the marriage of his niece with Ban Deck—the identical scoundrel whom we found bleeding to death in the verandah of the haunted house—who was rather a favourite of Van Hein, the then chief secretary whom he toadied to his bent. Van Deck had promised to make over a moiety of Miss Altenstadt’s fortune to Geusaw and to “advance him in the favour of Mynheer Hein,” if he bestowed his niece hand on him, Geusaw had readily closed with the bargain.

He opened the campaign warily like an old and skillful general by seizing every opportunity praising Van Deck, and dwelling with much

apparent pleasure on his great popularity, the result of a life well spent and riches judiciously used in bettering the condition of the poor. Miss Altenstadt used to listen to these panegyrics as a dutiful niece; but he was greatly mistaken in supposing that he had succeeded in awakening and interest in, and admiration of, Deck and his doings. It was about this time that young Heemskeck arrived, and was the guest of Van Geusaw for a few days. Miss Altenstadt saw the vast difference between this intellectual young man and the majority of the visitors at her uncle's. He felt himself highly flattered by the listening ear and approving voice of the young lady, who understood, appreciated, and was manifestly delighted with the thoughts that he uttered, and the graceful language with which he clothed them. The intimacy thus begun was continued without exciting Geusaw's suspicious. He forgot, if he had ever known, that men's hearts are lost through the eye, and women's through the ear. He thought that love was to be made in a dual solitude—in sighting *teles-a-teles*, by pressing hands and palpitating hearts. Meanwhile the mischief was done. His niece heard and admired and, in a female heart, admiration is often the bud to love's blossom. An impression had been made on the heart of Hannah Altenstadt of the nature of which she was herself quite unconscious and unsuspecting. Ten thousand pretty and pleasant thoughts were starting up and dancing on the surface of her soul, like the bubbles which a sunlit summer shower makes on the bosom of a gentle stream. When she retired to rest one memorable night she had no weariness on her eyelids, and no inclination for sleep; but what it was that kept her awake she knew not, nor did she care to enquire, for she was very happy, and had no desire to destroy her happiness by any attempt to analyse it. The two were constantly in each other's society walking, boating and talking together. Van Geusaw had neither eyes, ears nor understanding for aught else but the realization of his projects. If there be a school of love, these young, fresh hearts needed no teachers, no catechism. Learning was spontaneous, and the lesson fixed at once and for ever, ere a sense of the blame likely to accrue to their love came across their minds. The infatuated lovers, with affection irresistible in the commencement, and equally impossible afterwards to be extinguished, imprudently enjoyed the happiness of the present hour without heeding what consequences the future might produce.

Three—four months passed thus, when Geusaw privately intimated to his niece that she must accept the addresses of Van Deck.

It was then that Hannah Altenstadt casting from her with a wonderful effort her timidity informed him every decidedly that she would do nothing of the kind—a declaration which caused her astonished uncle first to doubt his own sense of hearing, and next to turn white with anger and dismay. Finding that all his anger availed nothing with the young lady, he, after a week's time, sought another interview. "You are here now before me for a purpose more serious than you may choose to think it. A deep doom is upon your choice this day," said he.

If it were given to the very brightest eye that ever beamed, and upon a scrutiny on which their doom depended, to pierce through the material veil which conceals the soul's secrets, Hannah would that day have read an awful sentence in the irritated breast of her uncle. But as it is, she once again decidedly refused to do as her uncle bade her.

"Enough, enough," exclaimed he, "bitterly shall you rue thie."

Shortly after this stormy interview Geusaw removed to his house at Coromandel—the same which is now called the "Hermitage"—and there kept his niece strictly secluded, the only visitors permitted to see her being Van Deek and his sister.

Love it is said laughs at stone walls, how much more then could a sheet of water prove a barrier to interviews between the lovers. Though jealously guarded and helged round with spies in the guise of servants yet Hannah found means night after night to meet Heemskeck in a remote corner of the garden. Not very maidenly conduct you would say and one certainly to rouse the indignation and arch the back—we mean elevate the brows—of prim, starched spinsters of a certain age. But considerations of what the world would say, what the venomous tongue of scandal would fabricate and propagate, never entered into the calculations, nay never crossed the minds of the distressed lovers.

The stolen interviews, however, did not escape the argus-eyes of Maria, Miss Altenstadt's ayah who winked at them for a consideration. But happening to over-hear a plan for their flight discussed by the lovers, she became alarmed and informed her master that the young lady was seen by her

the night previous gliding into the mangoe tope, and that she had followed her in conversation with the *bava* (boy or youth). Van Geusaw told her to say nothing to anybody on the subject and sent her away well pleased with a handsome douceur for her vigilance.

The next night—a bright full moon one—she was again at the trysting place, but no step moved to meet her as she entered the grove, no arms were outstretched to embrace her; but the turf beneath her feet was torn and trampled by many footmarks. She staggered against a tree for support. Her countenance was not that of one wholly stunned by a calamity, for deep and sudden changes flashed across it, it was pallid, and dewy like death, and then, as some dark suspicion stole through her heart, it became flushed, and its veins full, prominent and tremulous.

Though it was now past midnight and she knew that her uncle detested to be disturbed after he had once retired for the night, she boldly knocked at his and after a while he made his appearance, grumbling and grunting at the unseasonable hours some ladies choose for audiences and interviews. Hannah beheld him with looks of unutterable scorn and loathing. In one single hour her whole nature had undergone a complete change. “Mynheer,” she said, with a voice as even, though slower and deeper than its wont, “you have this night committed a great crime against Heaven and against me. You have violated a sacred and solemn right. Me you have insulted and well nigh driven into insanity. God may forgive, but his sinful creatures seldom do. I now invite you, in the name of your Creator, to deliver up to me him whom you have this day taken, and I will go out from your house for ever.” A smile of fierce triumph flashed over the cheek of Geusaw as she finished. “Sooner than deliver him up,” answered he, “my own hand shall slay him. Listen now to me, and my proposition shall be as solemn as yours. He is as yet unarmed, though within keeping from which no human hand shall take him. Three days hence Van Deck will come for an answer, if at that time you choose to give him your hand in marriage, Heemskeck shall live, though in a region far enough from this; but if in your obstinacy you persist in this absurd passion, be the consequences on your own head, for he shall die.”

Hannah leaned against the door, and a succession of quick shudderings taught her uncle how his words had shocked her. “Three days is

the term," said she, "you have fixed for your experiment, lengthen or abridge it at your pleasure. My determination is registered where I now record an oath. Good night."

The three days quickly passed and Hannah remaining resolute, she was conducted on the third night to the haunted house and there was forced to witness the lingering and cruel death of her lover. When she saw he was no more she fell back in a swoon, when she "came to," it was found that consciousness dwelt no longer within the pale and motionless form, which like ivory, tintless and beautiful, gave no sign save by its not altering that the incorruptible life was not gone out. Finding she had become an idiot Geusaw had had her confined in the subterranean passage where she had met with her death.

Both Heemskeck and Miss Altenstadt having disappeared at the same time, many thought that they had eloped; Geusaw openly expressing such to be his convictions.

In the evening all that was left of the unfortunate, ill-starred, Hannah Altenstadt was consigned to its last home in the cold earth. Many an eye shed bitter tears over the dark coffin, which alone separated a form once faultless and full of beauty from the foul worm and its ghastly race, whose untiring watch would be beside it, till it utterly perished.

Desmond, as we have seen, hastened to Pulicat on receiving certain information from Kantavisscher. No sooner did he reach home than he was waited on by Ridsdale and a couple of chuprasies, who served a summons on him. Close on their heels came the old Jew, Isaac, who told Desmond that at the instigation of Ragupathy, Ridsdale had sworn certain information against him and had supported the same by producing several letters and documents. "What the nature of the information is I know, not," said Isaac, "but this much I know, that you run a serious risk of studying solitude in a prison. Mynheer Bloem sent me to warn you of the danger." The Jew had hardly been gone ten minutes when the tall, lank figure of Dirkoz was seen approaching at a smart pace and with a hasty "master at home" to Brien, he burst into the house without waiting for a reply.

"Flee, friend, flee if you value your freedom," were his first words to Desmond. "Ridsdale has laid a charge against you of theft, and he is

befriended by Van Geusaw, who is secretly acting against you, being ably seconded by that scoundrel of an interpreter, Ragupathy, who swears he will be quits with you for the indignity you put upon him the son of the Moodeliar of the place.”

“Run away I will not. Let Ridsdale, Geusaw and Ragupathy do their worst. I defy them to harm me. As for the indignity about which the latter is fuming it was richly deserved. But thank you for your kindness in warning me of the plot. Convey my thanks to Mynheer Bloem also. And if you will excuse me, I am off to the Singal Station Battery to see about Miss Stapleton’s affairs.” So bidding good day to Dirkoz, Desmond proceeded in the direction of the Kantavisscher’s residence, and had gone as far as the Beach Road (about midday to the Battery) when he was arrested by two European soldiers and taken before Sterk, from whom he learned that he was accused of carrying on a treasonable correspondence with the Mysorean Court. “Who is my accuser,” demanded Desmond. “Garra,” was the answer, “who has furnished incontrovertible proofs in support of the charge.”

“May I communicate, with Capt. Kantavisscher,” asked Desmond, “no,” was the curt reply. “My orders are to commit you to prison till to-morrow and not to allow you to communicate with any one.”

Finding resistance useless, and bail out of the question, Desmond followed the soldiers to the common prison, where we shall leave him for the present.

The indignity to which Ragupathy alluded was the Deer Hunt, which furnished Isaac on a former occasion with a subject for merriment as well as to point a sarcastic retort. The incident is briefly this. Some six months back Ragupathy had become the proud possessor of a double barrel gun, and was burning to distinguish himself as a Nimrod, and Desmond kindly proffered his disinterested services, which were gladly and gratefully accepted by the aspirant to honours in “the shooting line.” We shall begin with deer and end with tigers, said Desmond, to which proposition thy delighted Ragupathy gave an unqualified assent clear moonlight night the to hoaxed—the hoaxer and the to be hoaxed—made their way to a certain spot in the Coromandel jungle, where, according to the former, deer abounded and to which beaters had been sent forward. Now the fact was Brien had been sent along with Desmond’s

boy and horse keeper with orders to beat down the pen and turn loose a large flock of sheep in the vicinity of the hunting ground. It was about eight o'clock when Desmond and his dupe reached the place, the latter well primed with schiedam "to keep the air out." Leaving Ragupathy with instructions to fire the moment the deer broke cover, Desmond went forward to see, as he said, what the beaters were about. Shortly after Desmond had disappeared behind some bushes, there was a rush, and numerous animals made their appearance, when bang! bang! went Ragupathy's gun, and they rushed back the way they had come; but being topped and turned by the beaters, they agains presented themselves before the would-be-sportman, who again let fly. This was repeated two or three times, and half a dozen sheep attested the skill of the exceltant Ragupathy. Meanwhile the *fax et focux* of this slaughter together with this beaters had disappeared from the scene of their late assiduous labours generously leaving the whole honour and profit of the exploit to Ragupathy Moodeliar, who in addition to a sound beating (which he always indignantly denied) had to pay handsomely for the slaughtered sheep and to run the gauntlet of the Pulicat wags and wits. Ragupathy never forgave the perpetrator of this joke—a joke no way worthy of Desmond; but it must be urged as an "extenuating circumstance" that it was born in the dull, or rather the silly, season.

Early next morning Pulicat and the surrounding villages were thrown into the utmost confusion by the tidings of Tippoo's near approach. Panting messengers and scared villagers arrived in quick succession with the news that the mysoreans (whose numbers fear had exaggerated) would ere sunset fall on Pulicat like a cloud of locusts.

All the families of the Europeans were immediately embarked on board the green vessels and sent off to Ollendorg Island, the prisoners (Bloem, Desmond, and Dirksz) were despatched to the same place along with Pereyra and Brien.

Dirksz and Brien had that very morning been consigned to prison. Their "entanglement" came about thus.

As soon as Brien saw his master marched to prison he informed Kantavisscher, as well as he could, of what he had seen and heard the previous night at Arrungum; and that officer along with Haarman sought an

immediate interview with the Governor, to whom the Capt. related the whole story of Garrat's connection with the smugglers and Desmond's accidental discovery of the same. His Excellency, a weak and suspicious man, fond of flattery and obsequiousness, and one whom Van Gensaw led while pretending to obey, immediately sent for his favourite and put him in possession of all the information (even to the minutest particulars) which he had just received. The Chief Secretary without the least hesitation, unblushingly declared that it was quite impossible for Garrat to have been to Arrungum the previous night, for said he, "he was with me till two in the morning, helping me in the Treasonable Correspondence Affair." On this Kantavisscher, (who was, on account of his independent spirit and brusque manners, far from a favourite) was rather coldly told that His Excellency would enquire into the matter and send for him the next day.

Van Gensaw left alone with his chief soon convinced him that Garrat was an innocent man, and one against whom the crafty Desmond had formed a conspiracy, and had by his artfulness deceived Kantavisscher—a rude unsuspicious soldier—into believing all that rigmarole of a story which he just related.

Among the papers which Kantavesscher hand given the Governor (and which the latter had without even glancing over handed to Gensaw) there happened to be a private letter from Dirksz, whom the Capt. had taken into confidence about the Attenstadt Mystery. This letter showed that Mynheer Dirksz had entered heart and soul into the affair, and had brought his clear and powerful intellect to bear on the Mystery; so Gensaw thought it good to include him among the traitor, and had found no difficulty in inducing the Governor to send him to the dungeons, of Ollendorf Castle.

Brien had entangled himself, "to use his own words," by drawing claret from the noses of some chuprasies. "Desmond was no sooner put in prison than his house was ordered to be searched; to execute which Ragupathy and two peons were sent. Brien who was seated moody and cross as the proverbial bear with a sore head, no sooner saw these myrmidons of the law approaching than he determined to wreak an "Irish revenge," and at the same time obtain "his hearts wish"—go to keep company with his master. The answer to Ragupathy's order to show them Desmond's "writing room"

was a stunning blow, after which he “went for” the two peons, and so scientifically handled them that they were reduced to a pitiable state of yelling inability. Sterk with a few more belted knights coming on the scene, Brien had been made a prisoner; not, however, before he had inspired the worthy magistrate with a wholesome dread of an angry Irishman’s active right hand.

Just as the gun-boat was sailing Gensaw and Garral came aboard to have a look at the prisoners; and the latter happening to think it great diversion to taunt Brien, unexpectedly found himself studying the beauty of the backwater mud. The officers and men were still laughing at the discomfited Portuguese when Kantavisscher and old Isaac came on board : the former escorting Mrs. Kantavisscher and Miss Stapleton, who were leaving by the same vessel for Ollendorf Island. The few under the pretence of having an urgent and important message for Gensaw had been able to see Desmond.

“Ah! Masther Thesmond, you one funnygentleman. How you like fun now,” said Isaac, at the same time winking like an owl, and making sundry motions to Desmond to advance as if to strike him. It took some time for Desmond to understand what the old fellow’s pantomime meant, but conjecturing that Isaac wanted to say something him in secret, he had just risen, when Brien, who was made to work cleaning the guns, caught the Jew round the waist and was about sending him to explore the depth of water on the other side of the gun-boat, when Issac slipped a small packet into his hands with “give masther,” and then pretending to wriggle free he quickly went over the side. Escape being impossible and rescue not even a remote contingency, the prisoners, Peregra excepted, were allowed to walk about on deck, but no conversation between them was permitted.

The vessel was under way when Kantavisscher and the other visitors left her; passing Garral the Captain had whispered something into his ear, which made him start, tremble and turn pale.

Brien found an opportunity of handing his master the Jew’s gift, which consisted of a strong, sharp, claspknife and a couple of files. He had also acquainted Desmond with his intention of taking a “header and swimming for it” as soon as they got opposite to *Musa Moray* (a point of land running out

into the lake to the North of Coromandel). This intelligence he conveyed by singing it while engaged in cleaning the guns.

The gunboat was bowling along under full sail when splash went Brien, and the cry “man overboard” was raised, but which soon became “a prisoner escaped,” when Brien was seen striking out like a Trojan for the shore. He was saluted with a couple of volleys but which fell pattering for short of the mark. By the time the vessel was “have to,” and a canoe lowered, the swimmer had covered three-fourths of the distance, and it seemed as if he would escape into the jungle long before his pursuers could get within musketrage. All were anxiously watching the turn of events—Desmond and his party with very different feelings, you may be sure, from those of the Commander and his men—when apparent by without any cause Brien turned over on his back and lay motionless on the water; the Dutchmen supposed he was exhausted, but Desmond, who knew his strength and “stay,” could not endorse this opinion though he was puzzled to find a reason for this sudden manœuvre—that it was a *ruse* he was sure, and that Brien had a reason for what he was doing he was certain. The canoe approaching he called out not to fire but to take him back to the gunboat. Now Brien knew that the canoe was a very “crantry” affair, and that the majority of the gunboat marines could not swim a stroke so under colour of getting on board he dexterously managed to give the canoe (on the starboard side of which the two marines and a boatman were leaning to equipoise the “scramble upon” the opposite side) a push—“a poke in the ribs,” as he afterwards used to say, “that tickled her and sent her over and over with laughter.” Having thus effectually disposed of his pursuers—the boatmen, who alone could swim, having their whole attention directed to “swim the marines—” to make them float by holding on to capsized and bobbing canoe—Brien got away with the greatest ease; and it was long after his reaching the shore; that the second canoe sent from the gunboat came up to the assistance of the crew of canoe No. 1.

With a round oath the enraged commander ordered Desmond into his cabin, and placed a sentry over him: he would gladly have put Desmond in irons were it not for the express commands of Captain, Kantavisscher and Councillor Veerman.

Shortly before sunset the gunboat arrived at its destination, and the three political prisoners were confined in separate rooms on the third story of the "Commisariat Buildings;" these were strong rooms used as treasure rooms when occasion required, and had been expressly mentioned by Veerman as the place where Bloem, Dirksz and Desmond were to be confined. But for this kindness of Veerman they would have been thrust into the dark, damp, dismal, dungeons of the castle; in one of which Pereyra was incarcerated.

Brien had found means of communicating his "happy escape" to Kantavisscher, and requested him in his next letter to the Fran to ask her to find some means of letting Desmond know that ten nights hence he would have a boat ready and wait for him at Screwpine Cove—a small creak at the south-west extremity of the island. Desmond and his two friends in misfortune were allowed separately to take exercise on the ramparts, and as Desmond always frequented a certain spot, Mr. Kantavisscher found it easy to convey to him Brien's message. She carefully hid her communication under one of the numerous fragments of boulders scattered on the ramparts, and watching when Desmond was taking his constitutional, she walked past him, and catching his eye pointed to a certain stone as she went along chatting with her friend, Mrs. Carapett, the wife of the commandant of the island. The next day Desmond in a similar manner informed Mr. Kantavisscher that that night (the appointed one) he was going to make his escape, and bade her and Miss. Stapleton goodbye for the present.

During the last twenty-four hours he had been busy cutting the bars of his window, and twisting ropes from his sheets torn in strips. The eventful night at last arrived. It was a bright star-lit one. At ten O'clock he cautiously opened the window, and removing the bars, fixed his rope to a staple in the wall, and silently let himself down. The sentry it must be understood paced to and fro in front of the buildings, the only side having doors, the back was left unguarded as its small, strongly barred windows and the great height of the "prisoners' quarters," were deemed to preclude all chance of escape. Having reached the ground in safety he made his way, taking advantage of every possible cover, towards the "Boat Gate"—a rather lofty arch under the south bastion, by which or rather through which small boat could enter the outer fortifications, and which was defended by a heavy portcullis that was generally

raised in the nights to admit “express” from Pulicat. Every foot of ground being well known to him he soon and with out any adventure reached the “strand,” and skirting along the west side he reached a solitary palmyra tree, and had but a couple hundred yards to the Screwpine Cove, when the sound of voices made him step behind the tree. Great was his astonishment to hear Brien’s voice loud in blaming himself for his foolishness, and liberal in the blessings bestowed on the “Dootchers.” “Arrah cried he,” what would my mother say if she could see what a precious fool I have made of myself—caught and caged by mutton-headed Dootchers, who have as much wit as an ould pig.” Thus lamenting he was being escorted between two Dutch soldiers, who, not understanding all the complimentary and pretty things Brien was saying regarding them, were laughing good humouredly and saying in Dutch grumble on sir, grumble on, it is the prerogative of every Englishman.” Meanwhile he had worked the cords binding his wrists loose, and was waiting an opportunity to trip up his companions and take to his heels. As the party passed by the tree where Desmond was in hiding he made a sudden spring on one of the soldiers, calling out to Brien “to tackle the other.” Taken by surprise the soldiers were soon bound hand and foot, and Desmond and his man lost no time in putting off from the inhospitable island. A favourable breeze quickly carried them to their destination, the jungle of Sriharicotta.

CHAPTER VIII

Afzul Khan's advent—Garra! checkmated—Capture of Pulicat—Repulse before Ollendorf Island—The Trail—The execution—The Conclusion.

Three days after the flight of the *fraus* and *frauliens* to Ollendorf Island, Afzul Khan with a small body of horsemen appeared before Pulicat. The information he had received from Van Deck and Pereyra leading him to believe that the Dutch at Pulicat were ill-prepared to sustain a siege, and that there were quarrels and dissensions in the Council, he had left the main body of his troops behind, and at the head of the two hundred horsemen had hastened forward to summon the garrison to surrender. He promised to spare the town and leave everything in the fort untouched for five lacs down and for a like amount to be paid within the next six months, but threatened to sack the one and raze the other if his terms were rejected. The Governor accepted the terms proposed, or rather imposed, and requested to be allowed four days time to get the money from the Treasury at Ollendorf Island. This he did to gain time, for he knew that reinforcements were on their way from Negapatam and would reach him in the course of two or three days. The Mysorean Chief pitched his camp at Andarmadam about half a mile to the south of the Dutch Battery. The next day, however, the Governor had to leave for Chinsurah, the Governor of which place had been recalled. Embarking without delay on board the Indiaman that had brought the despatches from Holland he gladly left Pulicat and its troubled concerns to the care of the senior councillor (or "deputy governor," as he was commonly called). This was none other than Veerman. The junior councillor being in Europe on leave Van Geusaw had hitherto been discharging the double office of councillor and chief secretary, but Veerman, to the intense chagrin of Geusaw, appointed Captain Kantavisscher to act as deputy governor. Whereupon Geusaw swore to be revenged on both of them, and not content with writing home as well as to the governor of Chinsurah (his late chief) a tissue of falsehoods, dashed with malice and flavoured with malignity, against Veerman whom he accused of "doing his best to ruin the settlement," he determined to raise of course on the sly, a hornets' nest about the ears of the acting Governor. With this purpose in view he mentioned and if casually to

Garral that it was not the intention of the present Administration to fulfil the terms of the agreement entered into with Afzul Khan, but that Veerman and Kantavisscher were simply fooling the Mysorean Chief in order to gain time sufficient to allow of reinforcements coming up. "When Afzul finds that he has been duped," said Geusaw, "he will wreak a fearful revenge. He will make no distinction between the innocent and the guilty—will not discriminate between those who basely and treacherously deceived him and those who had neither part nor lot in the matter." I would advise him to capture the "Andarmadam Battery" by a sudden night attack then he will be in a position to compel our worthy Governor and his no less worthy colleague to fulfil their agreement, for fear, would make all the Europeans clamorous for an instant settlement. By the bye," added he as Garral was about to depart, "you need not mention to any one what you have just heard. Mind I was speaking to you in confidence." Garral faithfully promised secrecy and shortly afterwards departed. As soon as he was out of ear shot of the shallowly deep Secretary he muttered, "fool that he is to think he can deceive me! I can read him like an open book. He wants me to communicate all what he said to the Mostens Chieftain, but does not wish to compromise himself for fear of accidents! Not wish me to mention it to a living soul? Oh coward and villain. Fancies he can make me a cat's paw to draw his chesnuts out of the fire. Well, well, we shall see!"

Thus soliloquizing Garral reached home, and his fertile brain soon worked out a plan for enriching himself and furthering his purposes regarding Miss Vander Stettin. About eleven that night he proceeded to the Mysorean Camp and was soon in the presence of the redoubtable Afzul to whom he was known by repute, Deck and Pereyra, his friends (one of whom had gone to his long account, hurried thereto with all his sins and imperfection on his head by the friendly help of Garral, as we have seen; and the other was languishing in the dungeons of Ollendorf Castle, the promises of Geusaw notwithstanding) having mentioned him as a confederate. He soon put Afzul in possession of the information received from the Secretary, not failing to inform him of the disinterested advice that Geusaw had said he would give. After this Garral proceeded to do a stroke of business on his own account and in his own way. He represented to Afzul that the Commandant of Ollendorf Island was

willing to betray his trust and deliver Ollendorf Castle into the hands of the Mysoreans provided he received a large bribe in cash and a promise of getting an office under Tippoo's government equally honourable and remunerative as the one he now held. Afzul Khan readily caught at the offer, and clinched the transaction by paying down twenty thousand rupees with a promise of ten thousand more after he was put in possession of the Castle. Garral also was liberally paid for the work he was to do. The only condition that Afzul insisted upon were, first, that Garral should leave a hostage for the due performance of the contract; secondly, that he should be accompanied to Ollendorf Island by four of Afzul's officers. The first condition, for which he was wholly unprepared, took Garral quite aback. But he quickly recovered from his surprise which he did not betray either by word or look. Though he knew he stood in imminent peril—the least hesitation or slightest confusion of manner and Afzul's suspicions would be aroused and his head would roll in the dust—yet not a muscle of his countenance moved; not a sign of the trepidation he felt manifested itself. Calm and composed he answered "I am ready to obey whatever commands your Excellency is pleased to lay on me. This time to-morrow night the hostage shall be here, when I with your officers shall depart for the Castle." "Be it so" said Afzul "but you do not depart hence till your living pledge arrives." Here was staggerer number two. An ordinary man would have been overwhelmed with consternation, and have betrayed evidences of the same. But Garral was no ordinary man. He was a seasoned villain. One who was a perfect master of dissimulation and an adept in the art of *scoundrelism* in all its branches. With the greatest *sang froid* he answered, "to hear is to obey. Be it as your Excellency commands." He then departed with an officer to his quarters, the most diminutive of diminutive tents. Here he was joined by his faithful follower, Udony the Malay, who had followed him to the Mysorean camp and had been waiting for him in an agony or anxiety, for he well knew the dangerous errand on which his master had come. A few words uttered in the Malay language and Udony understood the present aspect of affairs. Taking a small box that this follower carried under his arm Garral busily fell to writing a couple of letters which with a few words of instruction he delivered to the Malay, who with an "all right" expeditiously

departed on his mission, and Garral proceeded to make himself as comfortable as circumstances and surroundings would permit.

The scare of the Mysorean advent had driven all the Mynheers to places of refuge. Some sought safety in Fort Geldria and other behind the guns of the several Coast Batteries. Among the latter number was Jan Dyke—commonly known as Mad Jan—a half-daft individual with a vein of the rogue running through, and occasionally cropping out, of his idiotic nature. It was to this person that Malay had been sent.

Early next evening Mad Jan in all the splendour of a cast-off Captain's uniform arrival, and after receiving a few lessons in "oriental etiquette" was introduced to Afzul.

"Who and what is he" asked Afzul.

"Mynheer Van Telligan Capt. of the Bar Battery" answered Garral. Jan who had been told by Garral that he was sent for to cure a valuable horse of Afzul's meanwhile kept bowing and scraping and informing his Excellency in Dutch (not a word of Tamil or Hindustani did he know) that he was a proficient horse doctor. Now Jan was a skillful veterinarian only in his own estimation, but the wily Garral took advantage of it to allure Jan into the Mysorean Camp—fattery and promises of a handsome reward had induced, as Garral well knew they would, the draft Dutchman to visit secretly the enemy's camp. The interview ended satisfactorily and Jan was left behind.

Garral accompanied by four Moslem officers set out under cover of night for *Thondravoor*—a suburb of Pulicat, where a boat manned by a crew of eight men (all ex-smugglers that had escaped capture in the late raid made on their several places of rendezvous) awaited them.

Summoning a couple of men from "Hasz House"—the smugglers' place of business at Pulicat, and the site of the present Big Mosque—Garral and his companions (or rather guards in disguise) started on their expedition. Afzul's officers though Mahomedans had no objection to a glass of French brandy or Dutch schnapps, and Garral took care that they should have both. One after the other the Moslem officers having partaken pretty freely of the cheer provided for them and which was cleverly hocussed by Udong (and adept in such doctoring) resigned themselves to the arms of Morpheus, and were tossed overboard to feed the prawns and lobsters for which the lake is so

famous. But the most diligent search failed to discover Ahmed the servant of those now sleeping in the salt ooze of the backwater. The *treakshuit*, or barge, was not put before the wind and at dawn Garral was once more at "Hasz House." The greater part of the day was spent in removing the treasure from the vaults and putting them on board the *treakshuit*, which done, Garral repaired to the residence of Geusaw and informed him that he received a letter from Pereyra threatening to confess all he knew if he were not liberated in the course of a day or two! "And that you know," added Garral, "would not at all be pleasant to either you or me. Give me the necessary permit to enter Ollendorf Castle and leave the rest to my ingenuity. I will bring the whole of us swimmingly through.

The Chief Secretary knowing he was perfectly at the mercy of Pereyra and Garral, and aware that the latter could not be trifled with, drew up, signed and sealed the document requested and handing it to Garral warned him to be cautious. "Never you fear," said that worthy, "trust me to help the whole of us out of this unfortunate piece of business."

Armed with this pass-port Garral departed to carry out his scheme for self escape and aggrandisement. You may be perfectly sure, his promises notwithstanding, that he had not the remotest intention of helping, in the least, his partners in guilt. He looked upon them as stepping-stones to his own escape, and tools for his own advancement.

That night found him busy in the Armungum jungle transshipping the treasure he had brought and secreting it along with some more that he had obtained from the Haunted House. Meanwhile a boat had been despatched to Ollendorf Island in charge of our old friend, Kathavarayan, the head man of Covilludy. Garral had given him along with the "permit" a forged letter for Mrs. Kantavisscher. It purported to be from Tromd and informed her that her husband lay dying from wounds received the night previous in a sortie against the Mysoreans and requested her to hasten at once to Pulicat.

All turned out exactly as Garral expected. The decoy was eminently successful. Mrs. Kantavisscher hurried to Pulicat and was accompanied by Miss Stapleton and Miss Vander Stettin, her inseparable companions. The latter came to see if she could not induce, the acting Governor to mitigate the rigours of her uncle's imprisonment and obtain for him a speedy trial.

Garra! who was on the look out for the party, no sooner saw the returning boat off Armungum Point than he put off to meet it, and as may be imagined, easily made prisoners of the whole of them. Gloating over the success of his plot he hurried his prisoners to the Haunted House, and securing them severally in different cells of the subterranean passage over which the Malay mounted guard, he ascended the neighbouring sand dune and swept the horizon sea-wards with his glass in search of the *Salendor*—the vessel that was to convey him and his ill-gotten gains to Malacca. After an anxious half hour the distant topsails of an approaching vessel were seen glistening in the evening sun, and Garra! went back to the Haunted House to order his men to carry the boxes of treasure to the beach for immediate embarkation, and to put into execution his nefarious plan regarding the ladies. This plan so far as it regards Miss Vander Stettin our readers know; but as regards the other two, it was to deliberately murder them after offering them the grossest insult possible. Thus he proposed to wreak a terrible revenge on Kantavisscher and Desmond—“his persistent persecutors” as he called them. While the boxes are being removed and ci-derant pirate has entered the tunnel on diabolical thoughts intent, let us glance at the aspect of affairs at Pulicat.

The boy Ahmed was a silent and secret spectator of the deliberate and cold-blooded murder of the Mysorean officers. He had resolutely refused Udong’s repeated and courteous invitations to have a “friendly glass.” “I take no kind of *nesbau*” (intoxicant) was his persistent reply to all such calls and offers. Well for him it was that his suspicious nature enabled him to withstand all the Malay’s pressing invitations and so tenaciously to keep his resolution of “neither eating nor drinking anything at the hands of the *Feringhees*.” Through a chink in this partition or bulk head, that separated the chief cabin from the one allotted him and Udong, in common with the crew, he witnessed the unceremonious heaving overboard of his late masters; and before either Udong or any of the boat’s crew could come to perform a similar kind office for him, he crept into the sail-locker and curled himself behind some old sails and tarpaulins. When a search was being made for him, he contrived to skilfully launch a log of wood overboard; the splash led Garra! and the others to believe that fright had caused the lad to plunge into the water. The darkness of the night and the haste they were in to get back “Hasz House,” prevented

them from further search. No sooner did the *trekschuit* anchor at Thandravoor, and Garral with the crew land and disperse—some going to “Hasz House” to get the treasure hidden in its vaults ready for shipment, and others to purchase provisions for their second voyage—than Ahmed swam ashore, and watching his opportunity set off at a round pace for Afzul Khan’s camp. Rushing into the principal officers, he with streaming eyes and bursting sobs told his melancholy tale. Afzul was beside himself with rage, and vowed to wreck a fearful revenge on all *Feringhees* who fell into his hands, particularly the Dutch *Kaffirs*. Mad Jan was brought before him and threatened with immediate death unless he disclosed Garral’s plans, and his share in them. Poor Jan, ignorant of what was said to him, looked from one to another for information; but not one of them could speak Dutch, the only language the unhappy man knew. From the chief’s loud and angry tones, and the scowling countenances of those around him, Jan understood that something was amiss, and that danger was to be apprehended. Acting on the impulse of the moment and the promptings of his idiot nature, he made a headlong rush for life, upsetting and scattering those surrounding him. He was quickly pursued and hewed to pieces; and Afzul Khan sent to Veerman an account of as much of the “Captain of the Battery” as suited his purpose. The latter replied informing the Moslem Commander that Jan was a poor softy whom Garral must have allured to destruction by specious promises and plausible tales; and asking to be informed fully of Garral’s mission to the Mysorean chief. A menacing letter couched in violent language, accusing the Dutch Authorities of perfidy and treachery, and threatening the destruction of the settlement, was Afzul’s answer. The Andarmadam Battery was at once attacked, the Mysorean expecting an easy victory; but to his surprise and chagrin his troops suffered a signal defeat accompanied by heavy loss. This repulse was to him inexplicable as the redoubt contained a small number of men. He knew not of the subterranean passage communicating with the battery from Fort Geldria.* Smarting under this repulse, and determined to retrieve his prestige, he sent for re-inforcements. These arrived in a few days when the Fort was regularly invested and a strict blockade established. Veerman despairing of receiving timely succour from Negapatam, and knowing that the garrison could not hold out much longer, resolved to evacuate the fort by night and retreat to

Ollendorf Island. During the earlier part of the night fixed on for the retreat a heavy cannonade was kept up, and everything seemed to indicate a stout and stubborn resistance on the part of the Dutch. As night advanced the fire slackened, and at ten o'clock became quite desultory. Meanwhile boxes containing treasure, public records, &c., were secretly and swiftly conveyed to the Andarmadam Battery, and thence shipped on board gunboats that had at nightfall anchored off Thondravor, and of the coming of which Veerman had early in the evening, received intelligence. Silently and sorrowfully the garrison then left the fort and were soon on board, and under way for Ollendorf Island.

Next day the Mysoreans were agreeably surprised at finding their fire not answered from the ramparts; and at noon, the fort keeping persistently silent, a few adventurous spirits swam the ditch, clambered up the walls and hailed their fellows with the intelligence that the garrison had fled. Afzul, however, was disappointed in his expectations of booty and balked of his thirst for revenge. To get the one and satisfy the other, he resolved on following up the Dutch to their stronghold in the lake; and "requisitioning" as many boats and catamarans as he could get he set sail for Ollendorf Castle, leaving instructions for the capture of the Coast Batteries. As soon as the Dutch sighted Afzul's flotila the gunboats were ordered out to attack and disperse it, and right gallantly did they carry out the order Afzul's light batteries on refts and flats notwithstanding. The Moslem chief had placed great reliance on these floating batteries for neutralizing, if not silencing, the fire of the gunboats, but they were found unwieldly in action, and impossible to be manœuvred so as to bring their guns to bear with any degree of accuracy on the swift-sailing, well-steering Dutch boats. Afzul suffered an ignominious defeat and fled to Pulicat leaving all his artillery in the hands of the victors.

Gulam Cawder, his second in command, who had been left behind with instructions to capture the Coast Batteries, met with no better success. The anxiously expected reinforcements from Negapatam arrived the very evening on which Afzul set out on his ill-starred expedition, and finding they were too late to succour the garrison of Fort Geldria, their commander threw them into the Coast Batteries, which were thus enabled to bid defiance to Gulam Cawder and successfully resist all his attempts to reduce them. Afzul

finding his soldiers dispirited, and inclined to be mutinous on account of what they called, “their commander’s fool hardy attempt against Ollendorf Castle,” thought it prudent to retrace his steps and join the main army under Tippoo; accordingly he hastily dismantled the fort and sacked the town, and drawing a circle of desolation round the Settlement fell back on the Prince’s army.

Meanwhile, Veerman hearing of the arrival of the detachment under Capt Offland, despatched the major portion of the troops at Ollendorf Island under the command of Kantavisscher with orders to effect a junction with Offland and attack the Mysoreans. But when they arrived at Pulicat they learnt that Afzul had departed and was making forced marches towards the main army; they found the town a ruin and the fort a wreck.

CHAPTER IX

As soon as intelligence of Afzul's departure was communicated to the authorities at the Island, they together with the greater portion of the civil population returned to head-quarters, and vigorously set about repairing the damage done by the enemy, Geusaw, of course, did not lose this opportunity of vilifying and traducing the characters of the Governor and his Councillor. He wrote voluminous Despatches home accusing Veerman of rashness and Kantavisscher of cowardice, and attributed the late calamity to the want of foresight on the part of the latter. Among those who had returned to their pillaged and desolated homesteads were mynheer Blœm and Dirksz who, now that all immediate danger was past, were liberated on bail; this Kantavisscher had prevailed on the Governor to do. As for the prayers and entreaties of Pereyra for a similar concession, they were passed unheedingly by, and the wretched man was left to languish a little longer in prison,—Geusaw was quite unprepared for the present turn in the course of events; he never anticipated that such dark and lowering clouds would rise to obscure the bright sky of his hopes. He felt extremely uneasy at the liberation of Blœm and Dirksz; he did not know what had become of Desmond—if he were dead well, but should he believe he may turn up when little expected and then—he shuddered to think of the consequences. Turn which side he may, he found danger lurking, and death—a miserable and ignominious death—looming large. His only hope of escape lay in flight; either secretly and as such, or openly and under the guise of sick leave to Europe. He resolved on adopting the latter expedient, and it would have been well for him had he done so at once, but avarice made him delay. He had a large amount of treasure hid in a recess of the subterranean passage of the Haunted House at Arungum—the vault or room in which this treasure was concealed was known only to Pereyra and himself, and had not been discovered when the tunnel was explored by Desmond and the others—how was he to get it brought secretly to Pulicat? Go himself he could not, for he was watched and his movements reported to Kantavisscher. Whom was he to employ? Garral, whom he supposed his tool and cats-paw, had out-generaled and out-manœuvred him; Van Deck was dead; Pereyra in prison. While still in this dulcarnic state, he received a message that drove him

almost to despair and suicide. What the nature of the message was and from whom it purported to come we shall learn by and by.

We shall not hark back to Garral and his doings at Arrungum. It will be remembered that when last seen he was busy superintending his cut-throat crew in conveying the treasure and other valuagitated by conflicting doubts and fears. To carry out his design in its entirety and to ensure perfect success Kathavarayyan's co-operation was required. But the wily old fisher was nowhere to be found : after an hour's futile search and hallooing they gave it up with despondent spirits. Where had he gone to? Why this secret departure of himself and fellows? Does he suspect their designs? Does he mean mischief? These and a hundred similar questions were asked by the smugglers one of another without evoking a satisfactory reply. Garral was now seriously apprehensive of imminent danger. He knew that the mercenary old rascal would not have thus stolen away for light reasons, and feared that he would, to save his own neck, betray the whole of them. Udong was sent to look for him at Covilluddy, but returned with the disappointing report that he was not to be found there. By Garral's advice they left Arrungum and the Haunted House, as places likely to be searched for them, for Covilluddy and the Buried Pagoda. They purposed hiding themselves in the latter till an opportunity for escape presented itself; the only difficulty was about obtaining food, this, however, the Malay promised to overcome by foraging for them all. So they departed at once for their new places of concealment. Before doing so however, Garral once again descended into the tunnel for the purpose of carrying out that portion of his programme that related to Mrs. Kantavisscher and her companions in misfortune. To his intense surprise he found the cell door wide open and the ladies gone. Now the door had been so fastened that it could be opened only from the outside, clearly then someone had been there while they were deliberating above on their future course. Garral kept asking himself; who could he be? How came he, whoever he may be, by his information regarding the ladies and their place of imprisonment? These questions, he little knew, had such answers as would make his blood run cold and his hair stand on end; stout-hearted as he was, yet had he known who delivered the ladies and what a fate was reserved for him, he would have shuddered with horror and quaked with abject fear. The two men who took

the prisoners' breakfast down swore that all the ladies and the "Spit-fire cat" (nurse Dominga) were safe in the cell four hours back. Troubles and dangers were coming as thick as mosquitoes during the monsoons : peril followed peril as ants on a line of march. Though greatly agitated and exercised in mind as to what all this meant, and how all would end he maintained a calm exterior, and appeared to treat the sailing away of the *San Salvador*, the defection of Kathavarayyan and the disappearance of the ladies as matters of no moment. "The wheel of Fortune has taken a dip," said he "the same wheel must, in the nature of things, soon make another rotation, placing us, who are now down, on the summit." on the line of march to Covilluddy, however, he unbosomed himself to his faithful follower, concluding his words with the observation that the smuggler-crew was now an encumbrance and a source of great danger. "They are," said he, unfitted by nature to cope with difficulties; easily raised to the pinnacle of joy and hope by some trifling success, and as easily cast into the depths of sorrow and despondency by some trivial defeat. I am quite convinced that if they knew the peril they, in common with both of us, stand in, they would vie with one another in their race to the Dutch Authorities to turn 'King's evidence' and rival each other in painting you and me as dark as (if possible, darker than) the devil." Udong, however, felt no fear in this quarter and said as much. He told Garral to make his mind easy as regarded the smugglers. "I have that here," observed he, tapping his powder-pouch, "that will give them a happy release from all the cares and anxieties of life." On hearing this and knowing what an adept the Malay was in the art of poisoning, Garral grew more hopeful. Meanwhile the smugglers, all unconscious of the dark fate impending over them, were walking a little ahead and indulging in profane jokes and coarse jests. Thus wags the world—some carelessly joking on the brink of a precipice, or light-heartedly promending on a charged mine; others darkly plotting the destruction of their fellow creatures and deeply scheming their own advancement and aggrandisement; while others again, dissatisfied with the world in general and their Creator in particular, undertake to reform, in their own peculiar way, the former and instruct the Omnipotent. O man! Man! Man! Born into the world with a cry—the harbinger of future sorrows—and departing thence with agroan—the sum total of thy experiences here below—what fantastic tricks dost thou play

in thy day and generation! What a subject art thou to the Cynic, what a theme to the Satirist, what a puzzle to the Philosopher, what a study to the Divine, what an object of commiseration to the Angels! "The proper study of mankind is man" said the sage, but he imperfectly realised the Gargantuan sweep of his syllabus, thus knowledge of the parts and passions which go to form that intricately complex, animated, and rational machine we call a human being, was the partial.

But to return to our story Kathavarayyan and his men after their unceremonious departure from the Haunted House plunged into the jungle hard by and were making their way, as fast as tiger-grass, brambles and creepers would allow, to a spot known to the oldman as a secure cover, when they were startled by a voice hailing them to stop. "Halt, ye devil's cubs, and kape as silent as dead rats, or I'll give ye an ounce of honest lead" said the speaker, who was none other but our friend Brien. Though the fishermen did not understand what was said to them, yet the pointed musket and the finger laid on the lips were sufficiently suggestive of the speaker's command and threat. With folded arms and bowed heads they stood; Kathavarayyan, as their spokesman, saying: "we are your salves; do to us according to your *sittbum* (pleasure)." They were conducted into the presence of desmond and old Kathavarayyan immediately recognising him as *dburmaraja* of Covilluddy experience, quickly unfolded his tale, his tongue being loosened thereto by expectations of *brandhy sarayum*.

Desmond and Brien had, since their escape, been living in the heart of the then dense jungle at Arrungum, occasionally paying flying visits to the Haunted House; but nothing that they saw or heard there (and they saw and heard a good deal of Garral's villaniy) led them to suspect the thorough-paced scoundralism which the old fisherman's story disclosed. Waiting till near midnight Desmond accompanied by Brien set off for the Haunted House, leaving the fishermen behind with a warning to lie still their return. They, you may be sure, required no such warning, being but too glad to fall in with friends and good cheer in the shape of liquor, not to speak of, under the circumstance, comfortable quarters. Entering the subterranean passage from seawards they cautiously began their search for the room or cell in which the ladies were imprisoned. It was a long and tedious search, and one requiring

the utmost circumspection. Though more than two weary hours had been spent in the attempt, they were no nearer to the discovery than when they had begun. Disheartened and worn-out, they still persevered—now crawling on all fours, now listening with their ears to the ground, anon gliding stealthily forward like restless ghosts. Well, to make a long story short, after more than four hours of this toilsome work they saw a speck, a minute point, of light and creeping and crawling to within a few yards of it, and lying down on their stomach quietly watched. As soon as their eyes became accustomed to the darkness of the spot, they discovered that the light proceeded from a chink in one of the planks that did service for a maintaining-wall. This discovery made, they proceed to reconnoitre through the crevice, and found to their intense relief and great joy, that it was the very cell they were in search of. There lay some of the ladies fast asleep, while others were already awake and despondently seated, and old Dominga, like a sensible woman, was on her knees engaged in prayer and seeking help from Him alone who could not succour them. Brien was for instantly making themselves known, but Desmond counselled a little delay so that he might apprise them of the presence of friends, and prevent a scream or any other outcry by abruptly entering the room. He knocked thrice against the plank and Miss Vanderstettin (one of those awake) looked round to discover whence the sound came; after waiting a minute or two he repeated the knocks. This time both Miss Stapleton and Miss Vanderstettin were roused into activity and walked round the apartment to ascertain the direction and the meaning of this unusual sound. Just as the former came near the spot where he stood, Desmond signalled again similarly, and softly whispered her name with his lips to the friendly chink. She immediately recognised his accents and with a light, joyful bound was beside the sleepers, awakening them with the glad news that deliverance was at hand. All this time Brien had been groping and feeling in all directions for one of those “devil’s knobs” as he termed them. Successful in finding one, he pressed it, and the heavy plank doing duty for a door fell outward nearly braining Desmon, and by the clatter of its fall rousing the smugglers above. However, both the one and the other were averted by Desmond adroitly leaping aside and catching the falling plank, in which he was assisted by the author of the nearly-to-have-been calamity. The ladies

were quickly got out of the dismal place and hurried away to their home in the jungle. We shall pass over the joy of the meeting, and all that was asked and answered by deliverers and *deliverees*. When they reached "Brienville," for so Desmond had named their shed in the jungle, Dominga, discovered Kathavarayyan complacently seated, with a smile of satisfaction lightening up his old and dusky countenance, and turned on him with the fury of a tiger-cat robbed of her cubs. "You, villian, you it was that decoyed us to this place," she exclaimed, "you and that—(forcible Portuguese expletive) misbegotten son of the devil, Garral, allured us, by means of a forged letter, to death and worse. Let me get to Pulicat; I'll fall at the feet of the governour, I'll grovel in the dust, and beg that you be whipped and hanged." Desmond cut short her flow of vituperative eloquence by telling her that he believed Kathavarayan was the dupe of Garral and that, even granting he knew his employer's purpose, this was neither the time nor occasion to take him to task. Then turning to Kathavarayan, who was nearly scared out of his senses by Dominga's threats of vengeance, he said, "I believe you. I shall see that no harm befalls you, provided you serve us hence forward faithfully. That lady," said he pointing to Dominga, "does not mean what she says; she is carried away by the remembrance of her late sufferings." The old fisherman promised by all that he held sacred to serve Desmond well and truly even at the risk of his life. Matters being thus settled, Desmond proceeded to see about the commissariat arrangements; and Brien having resigned his culinary functions in favour of Dominga, took his gun and strolled out to supply the larder, soon returning with a hare, a couple of braces of partridges, and half a dozen or so of green pigeons, which Dominga dished up in various appetising forms.

Garral and his party arrived at dawn at Karungkally and secreted themselves for the day in the jungle. That night and the following one, they worked at shovelling the sand away from the temple door. With such hearty good will did they labour that they were able early the second morning after their arrival to enter the temple. About a day or two after they had taken up their temple-abode, the Malay proceeded to put his "happy despatch system" into force, with the, to him gratifying result, that the rising sun, one fine morning, saw ten corpses tossed, sans ceremony, into the backwater, and the outgoing tide wash them out sea to become the prey of sharks. One of

Kathavarayan's men venturing by night to return for a few days to Covilluddy, accidentally made the discovery of Garral's retreat and lost no time in making Desmond acquainted with the same. Mrs. Kantavisscher and the other ladies had ere this left for Pulicat, where they were welcomed by relations and friends as those risen from the dead. Capt. Kantavisscher listened attentively to his wife's account of her late adventures and promised to intercede with the governour on behalf of Desmond and his man to the extent of granting them a conditional pardon for escaping from custody, and permitting them to remain at liberty on bail. On learning this piece of good news Miss. Stapleton sent for our old friend, Isaac, the Jew, and questioned him as to his and his partner's willingness to bail Desmond and Brien. Now, Isaac had, chiefly by the help of Desmond, managed to escape the late spoliation by the Mysoreans, and was acquainted with the hiding place of his benefactor, but with his usual caution answered : "maisther Dhesmond is one very is one very funny shentlemansh, but a very goot, very goot shentlemansh, I'll do all I can for heim; yes, I will. But I don't know at all, at all, where he now bees." Miss Stapleton told him Desmond was safe and well, and would shortly come to Pulicat when his services would be required. The Jewdeparted promising not only to bail Desmond and Brien, but also to lend them *monish* if required.

As soon as Garral's hiding place was made known to Desmond, he placed Capt. Kantavisscher in possession of the same. Obtaining a warrant. Kantavissche in person arrested the Malay, who was "at home" when the captain and his soldiers arrived, and after a somewhat long hunt succeed in capturing Garral. The worthy pair were sent to keep company with Pereyra in the damp, dismal dungeons of Ollendorf Castel, where we shall leave them for the present.

Capt. Kantavisscher's interference on behalf of Desmond proved successful. The Acting Governor (who was all along convinced of Desmond's innocence) not only enlarged him and Brien on bail, but also granted them an unconditional pardon for their late escape from custody. This he did in consideration of their services in apprehending Garral and his notorious subordinate. We must digress a little here to relate a funny incident that occurred at the Magistrate's Court when Desmond and Brien appeared to be bailed. Their sureties, Isaac and Ephraim, being asked by the pompous Sterk

whether they, knowing as they did Desmond's propensity for mischief and his late breaking away from custody were willing to stand surety for his appearance when required, they answered they were quite willing to do so; Isaac slyly adding :—"his too fond of *missey* to runaway." Now Miss Sterk was commonly known among the natives as *missey*, and the worthy magistrate fancying that the Jew was insinuating something about his sister and the wild-goose adventure on which, it will be remembered, Desmond had sent her, severely rebuked the Jew for the levity of his behaviour in court, and threatened to commit him to prison should he again attempt to make such remarks. On hearing this, the Jew, forgetting the concluding words of the magistrate in his anxiety to explain himself, exclaimed :—"Holy fader Abraham ! not your vurship's missey. Oh! No, no; she's too old; too-too—" "Tough," suggested Brien in an undertone. "Yes; ishtough," triumphantly exclaimed the Jew, She'll only do for Dutchmen. No, no; I mean that putty lady—that rosh-bud—mish Ishstapleton." During this explanation (rapidly rattled off by the flustered Jew) there was great mirth in Court, even the staid and solemn-looking clerk burst into a grin behind his papers. The magistrate, boiling over with anger but knowing that his hasty rebuke was the cause of the Jew's floundering explanation, sternly commanded silence and quickly concluded the business in hand.

Now let us turn to Ollendorf Island. As soon as Pereyra heard from turnkey that Garra! and Udong had been apprehended and had been consigned to the gloomy vaults of Castle, he became alarmed for his safety and finding no means of communicating with Geusaw, he thought it best to save his life at the expense of those of his confederates and partners in guilt. He therefore petitioned to be allowed to become "Kind's evidence," alleging that he could give most important information not only regarding the "smuggling operations" but also of far more serious matters. His petition being granted, he was brought to Pulicat for examination. The next day his declaration was taken in open Court by Sterk. The disclosures made by Pereyra were listened to with breathless silence and deep awe. Though the courthouse was densely packed by hundreds—some sitting, some standing, and all suffering great discomfort—yet so profound was the silence that the fall of a pin to the ground could have been distinctly heard. After giving a

detailed account of the smugglers and their operations in and around Pulicat, Pereyra proceeded to relate the story of Miss Altensladt's disappearance and death. With the former our readers are already acquainted; the latter, according to the approver's account, was caused by the unfortunate lady accidentally treading on the lever of one of the numerous trap-guns with which the "underground house" was provided. But the most startling revelation made by the ex-smuggle was regarding the late attack and sack of Pulicat. The thrill of horror that ran through the audience at the recital of Miss Altensladt's tragic story, now gave place to a fierce desire for revenge, and the deep silence that had hitherto prevailed was succeeded by loud and angry murmurs and threats of violence against the traitors who had worked so much mischief and brought such desolation on the Settlement. The uproar becoming deafening, and the officers of the court fearing in the present excited state of the people to use force in clearing the court, Pereyra was remanded to jail and was removed under a strong escort to the Military prison within the fort—hundreds following hooting and execrating him and his associates in treason.

Pereyra's information lead to a warrant being issued for the immediate arrest of Geusaw and the seizure of all his papers. The Chief Secretary had, however, anticipated the law and eluded human justice and an ignominious death on the scaffold. All the morning he had been on tenterhooks not knowing how much Pereyra would reveal, and hoping against hope that his name would not be mentioned and his doings laid bare. Probably Pereyra would have done so but for fear of what Garral might reveal, and also for a threat of Capt. Kantavisscher that unless he spoke "the whole truth, and put the authorities in possession of all the information he possessed, his conditional pardon would be forfeited." As soon as Geusaw was informed by a friend (who had hastened from the court to tell him of the crimes' imputed to him by the approver) that a warrant was out for his arrest, he retired to his "study" and blew his brains out. His papers, which he did not think worth the trouble of destroying, fully corroborated, as far as they went, all that Pereyra had laid to his charge.

Pereyra was again examined the next day, but this time in the jail, from which of course the public were excluded. He exonerated Mynheers

Bloem and Dirksz from the charges laid against them and related how Garral had discovered Geusaw's connection with both the smugglers and the Mysoreans, and how he had plotted for the ruin of two Dutchmen. He further informed the magistrate that Garral alone could throw light on the treasonable correspondence carried on with the Mysorean Court and concluded by indicating the sports where their ill-gotten wealth was concealed.

Garral was next examined, but evaded the questions put to him, fencing with them in a way that showed he was a master in the art of quibbling and prevaricating. When threatened with punishment, he became sullen and sulky, and chose to be insolent and insulting in the few answers he gave. Kantavisscher then ordered him to be "put to the question," the rack, the thumbscrew and other ingenious contrivances for extorting a confession or reducing a refractory prisoner to submissions, were recognised *judicial machinery* in those days. Though stretched on the rack and knowing the exhercising anguish that would most certainly follow the next question, Garral maintained a stubborn silence and a defiant mien. A dead silence, as though even breathing was suspended, reigned through the room, when the signal of the magistrate bade the torture commence. It was a pitiful sight to see the limbs wrenched out into deformity, and the wild eyes starting from their sockets. The skin tightened over every feature of the pallid face. Then came scream upon scream in horrible and quick succession till the blood burst from the mouth in torrents, and the voice was only audible in a hoarse gurgling, as it struggled with the nearly suffocated lungs. A momentary respite was then allowed him, ere the question was put again. No sooner were the cords loose on their pulleys than the strained limbs, in which elasticity was not yet destroyed, coiled themselves with a sickening creaking into their own homes. No one of the several spectators evinced pity for the wretch either by word or look. When the first interval was allowed; all eyes instinctively sought the glance of Sterk; it was unmoved in this glassy and cold stare. A second signal was given, the cords were again strained, and the body of the sufferer grew again into gigantic and horrible proportions; the limbs were lengthened into shapeless lengths, and the hollow sockets sucked in blood from the compressed flesh to fill their cavities; every sinew and muscle rose up into frightful distinctness, and the whole plan of the infinite tracery of minute

veins, through which life circulated, became visible. The lips sent forth horrible volumes of sound as intelligible and far more awful than the most plaintive language; and, finally, as insupportable pain strangled every energy and remaining strength, the shrill shrieks sank into low and continuous meaning. Thrice was the spirit arrested in its flight, and stimulants and restoratives given, but not in charity. Desmond then interceded on behalf of the wretch, but the stern magistrate was inexorable. "Let him answer, or die in agony" was his reply to every entreaty of Desmond. Unable any longer to bear the excruciating torture of the rack, Garral answered all the questions put, and in so doing inculpated the Malay, who was an unwilling spectator of the torture of his master. Garral's confession need not be recounted, for our readers are already acquainted with his villainies. Meanwhile two smugglers were taken at Covilluddy, who threw further light on the nefarious doings of Geusaw, Garral and Co., and some fishermen testified to having seen several dead bodies of Europeans float out to sea. Udong made no secret of his murders and villainies, but rather gloried in having been able to do such harm to his hated foes. "I would die quite contented and happy," said this fiend in human form "if those two," pointing to Desmond and Brien, "were also in their accursed graves." Garral and Udong were sentenced to undergo the extreme penalty of the law, and the two smugglers to one year's rigorous imprisonment. Bloem, Dirksz, Desmond and Brien were honourably acquitted, and the two latter were offered appointments at Pulicat and Sadras respectively, which they, however, declined as they intended to go back shortly to England.

A few days after being sentenced Garral and the Malay were hanged in the presence of a vast concourse of people, and amidst general and deep execrations. Pereyra was pardoned, but finding everyone shun and avoid him as if he were infected with the plague; and, moreover, having good reason for believing that his life would be attempted by both the sympathisers of Miss. Attenstadt, and by such as had been reduced to abject poverty from comparative opulence by Afzul's incursion, he thought it expedient as well as prudent to quit the scene of his many rascalities. After wandering from place to place, he finally settled down at Goa, where he not long after miserably

perished in a drunken brawl with some Portuguese sailors who had recognised him as the smugglers' late Agent at Pulicat and their subsequent betrayer.

About two months after the occurrences related above, there was a double wedding at Pulicat. Desmond and Trom respectively led Miss. Stapleton and Miss. Vanderstettin to the hymenial altar, and vanish from our story in a voyage to Europe, the former to look after his wife's patrimony and bring Ridsdale to justice, and the latter to enjoy a short change in Holland.

Dominga had a liberal pension allowed her by Desmond, and received other substantial rewards from the Kantavisschers and Tromds.

Bloem and Dirksz lived in peace and prosperity to a green old age, dying in the land of their adoption full of honour and wealth. It is in connection with Bloem that the "Legend of the Golden Coffin," referred to in the opening chapter of "PULICATTA," had its origin, and which we hope to relate in some future issues of the *Cosmopolite*.

FINIS



Pulicat, or Pulicatta or Paliacate, is an island located on the north coast of Madras. This book is a republication of a local serial tale from The Cosmopolite Press, Madras, in 1891. The AARDE Foundation has republished it to bring you a beautiful novel based on the life of the lagoon.

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