

Dangerous Passes of the Andes.



Page 133.

Preston, Paul

THE

PERILOUS ADVENTURES

OF

QUINTIN HAREWOOD

AND HIS BROTHER BRIAN,

IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND AMERICA.

WITH ENGRAVINGS.

I speak of danger's rugged path
Where I, too oft, have been ;
And tell a tale of wondrous things,
That mine own eyes have seen.

Too much of peril pain, and death
'Tis mine, alas ! to know,
Where deserts frown, and billows rage,
And wild tornadoes blow.

NEW-YORK:

C. S. FRANCIS & CO. 252 BROADWAY.

BOSTON:

J. H. FRANCIS, 128 WASHINGTON-ST.

1843.



SNAKE CHARMERS OF INDIA.

CHAPTER X.

Snake Charmers. Wild Boar Hunt. Quintin Harewood's danger. Pooroo plunges his short sword into the Boar's throat. Arrindy Silk-worms. Fierce encounter between an Elephant and a Rhinoceros. Quintin and Brian crouch down in the underwood to see them fight. Dangerous Situation. Old Moorish Mansion. The Gooroo with his red book and brazen clasps. Quintin and Brian seek for the lost Book. The dreadful Situation of the poor Hindoo. Destruction of the large Snake.

THOUGH I have been astonished by many things in this wonderful world, few things have surprised me more than the

snake charmers of India. We met with these men in several places, and stood gazing with wonder, while the cobra de capellas writhed round their necks and their naked arms and legs, as though they were really delighted with the wild music of the pipe that was played by the snake-charmer.

It was always a high treat to me in my boyhood to see animals roaming abroad in their wild state. Otters, foxes, hares, weasles, even rats and mice, have contributed to my pleasure. As I grew older this inclination increased, and I could almost have ventured alone into the forest to gaze on the lordly lion, the stealthy tiger, or the prowling wolf. The bristly boar fearlessly roaming the woods and jungles is a sight of a peculiar kind.

I had never seen the wild boar hunted, and knowing that preparations were being made for a hunt on the morrow, my mind was made up to join the party, which consisted of horse and footmen, armed with heavy wooden lances shod with iron, called boar spears, and some carried guns and pistols.

There were many plantations and gardens near, which had been sadly injured by the boars, who had rooted up the ground, and destroyed everything eatable that came in their way.

Those who have never seen any other hunting beside that practised in America, can form but a poor notion of the danger of hunting such animals as the lion, tiger, and wild boar. Not but what there is danger in a stag chase, a fox hunt, and

a run after a hare, but the peril is pretty much confined to the leaps necessary to be taken, little being to be apprehended from the animals pursued.

In our hunting party there were Europeans, Hindoos, Musulmans, and Parsees. A few were 'topiwallas,' or *hat people*, as the inhabitants call Europeans, but the greater part 'pagri-wallas, or *turban people*. Pooroo, the principal hunter, a slim, dark man, from the banks of the Brahmapootra, made up for his want of strength by his invincible courage, great self-possession, and wondrous activity; his watchful eye let nothing escape him; his ready hand knew when to strike and when to forbear. Seldom did he throw away his strength, or return unsuccessful from the field. He sallied forth habit-ed like a European, with a boar-spear in his hand, a short sword by his side, and a knife stuck in his girdle.

The haunt of the wild boars was well known to the hunters, who with their dogs, principally of the mastiff kind, led the way to a thicket as closely tangled as if it had grown, without a tree or a shrub being removed since the Flood. The dogs entered the thicket, and the horsemen and footmen, with the exception of a few, who attended the dogs to encourage them, were scattered round in different directions.

In about a quarter of an hour by the furious barking of the dogs it was evident that a boar had been found, and soon, crashing through the branches and brushwood, he suddenly

made his appearance, within a dozen yards of the spot where I stood with a boar spear in my hand.

The boar was of a very unusual size, of a dark brindled color, indeed almost black, and as he rushed onward, his back bristled, his ears erect, and his mouth open, showing to advantage his enormous tusks, he looked a formidable animal to have anything to do with.

It would have been an easy thing to shoot the boar, but the hunters seemed willingly to prolong the chase, for the excitement and amusement it afforded.

The savage animal stretched across the country at a good pace; but being annoyed by dogs, he turned upon them, and, in an instant, ripped up the side of one of them with a stroke of his tusks.

Again the chase was continued, and the rapid run of the wild animal kept the horses at a tolerable hard gallop, but the dogs getting ahead, the boar made another turn, keeping the pack at bay. Two more dogs were disabled, and a hunter, who planted his spear in the boar's neck, was in great jeopardy. The enraged monster caught hold of the lance with his teeth and tore it from the wound, running upon the man who had wounded him with great impetuosity; Pooroo was at hand, and succeeded in rescuing him, but not till the poor fellow had got a rent in the calf of his leg, which altogether disabled him; he was left behind, his leg having been tied up as carefully as the case would allow.

By this time it was the wish of the hunters to kill the boar as speedily as possible, for he seemed likely to do much mischief. A ball or two which struck him did not have much effect in disabling him.

Being on foot, the better part of the chase would have been unseen by me had not the boar turned so frequently to face the dogs ; as it was, it occasioned me to make the best use of my legs. The furious animal now began to tire, stopping oftener than before, and, at last, took refuge in a small but thick jungle, from which the dogs could not dislodge him.

I had hitherto through all the chase been only a looker on, but, heated by running, and excited by the cheering and brave conduct of the huntsmen, I approached the chafed animal within the length of a hog-spear as he kept the dogs at bay in the jungle. A Lascar armed like myself was at my elbow, and a dozen other people within as many yards distance.

It seemed to me that the boar, bleeding as he was, could have but little strength remaining, for he had been repeatedly shot, wounded by hog-spears, and bitten by the dogs : seeing a favorable opportunity I dashed in my spear between his fore legs, but had reason to repent my rashness ; my blow was not given with sufficient force, and in a moment both the Lascar and myself were prostrate in the jungle. I recovered my feet, and a dog which sprang forwards received the wound which otherwise would have been inflicted on me. Unfortu-

nately I had lost my spear, but grasping a long dagger which I carried, I retreated to the foot of a large tree with another companion in the chase. The boar attacked us with savage



POOROO PLUNGING HIS KNIFE INTO THE WILD BOAR'S THROAT.

fury, again I fell beneath his feet as did my companion also. In struggling to extricate myself from my perilous situation, I drew upon me the rage of the wild boar; he attacked me as I lay on the ground, trampling me under foot, tearing my clothes, and giving me a slight rip near the ribs. At this moment the short sword of Pooroo was plunged into his neck, and the rest of the hunters, closing round him, soon after pinned the enraged monster to the earth with their boar spears. Had it not been for this timely aid, Quintin Harewood would never have given this account. The wild boar was killed, and three or four others in the course of the day. This adventure made me a little more cautious afterwards, when placed in a similar situation.

Among many others there was one trait in Brian's character that exactly suited me, and that was a disposition to be gratified with the minute as well as with the vast objects of creation. Well do I remember that in returning from an elephant hunt he stopped to admire the web of a spider. So much was he interested in watching the busy insect weaving his filmy threads that it was with difficulty I could persuade him to quit the spot. Even a bird's nest, a flower, a lichen, or a sere leaf attracted his attention.

We had been for some time, one burning day, bending over a branch of the jujube tree, on which were busily employed several Arrindy silk-worms, the bough was indeed laden, as

it were, with worms and their cocoons, or silk bags, when suddenly a tremendous crashing of the brushwood and small trees was heard in the forest.

In another instant came rushing furiously by us, at not more than a few yards distance, a rhinoceros followed by an elephant at least thirteen feet high. It was a narrow escape, as we were in the only visible pathway; but the rhinoceros, which had most likely been worsted in an encounter, had sought a shelter by pushing his way into the thicker parts of the forest.

Soon after they had passed, it was clear, by the snorting roar, the breaking branches, and the tremendous blows we heard, that these chieftains of the woods were grappling together. Brian and I, without speaking a word, involuntarily moved with cautious steps towards the scene of combat.

It was a fearful sight to gaze on, crouching on the ground, and running the risk of the combatants taking the direction where we were, but the impulse that urged us forward was absolutely irresistible.

There was the elephant, unmatched in bulk and power, and there the rhinoceros in his massy coat of mail, and pointed horn, in deadly conflict, like two warriors determined on victory or death.

It seemed to me that the match was more equal than I had

at first imagined, for though the elephant had an advantage in strength and power, the hard hide of the rhinoceros, and the deadly weapon on his snout, rendered him a most formidable enemy.

The elephant kept close to his rival, banging him about with his trunk, and wounding him with his tusks, while the rhinoceros vainly tried to get at a little distance, that he might run at his foe and plunge his horn deeper into his body.

Many times the rhinoceros was overturned, and as often did he rise again and renew the fight. Once, taking advantage of a large tree, he ran forward with dreadful force, burying his horn in the body of his opponent. Had it been in a mortal part, the elephant must have fallen, but though he bled profusely, he still hotly engaged his armed enemy.

Brian and I were soon convinced of the danger of our situation, for the two grappling giants came in their contention so near us that we every moment expected them to trample us to death: the rhinoceros was hurled to the earth, and the elephant placed one of his heavy feet within half a yard of me as I lay crouched on the ground. When we left the spot, the snorting, the roaring, and grappling of the wounded animals seemed to increase, and no doubt one or both of them fell a sacrifice to the fierce encounter.

Neither of us much relished palankeen travelling, though at times we were glad enough to avail ourselves of it. We

preferred tramping on our own feet to being borne on other men's shoulders.

Once, when fast asleep, snugly tucked up in a palankeen, my bearers, overturned me suddenly on the ground. On putting out my head, the first thing I saw was a dark-colored snake twisted round one of the handles of the palankeen. When the venomous creature was despatched, my bearers again lifted me upon their shoulders.

At Calcutta we saw the famous Black Hole, where a hundred and forty-six English prisoners were once crammed in the hottest part of the year. The heat produced excessive perspiration and raging thirst, and the want of air amounted almost to suffocation; only twenty-three were taken out alive the following morning. What dreadful miseries has war inflicted on mankind!

One of the greatest curiosities in all India is the statue of the granite mountain. Brian and I set off from the place we were at in the Mysore to see it, and it certainly far surpassed our expectations.

It stands on a granite hill two hundred feet high, and the statue, which represents a celebrated saint, is from sixty to seventy. It is, indeed, a mountain of itself, forming a part of the rock below, and has, with incredible labor, been formed into the shape of a human being.