

On the thugs : received from an officer in the service of His Highness the Nizam / [Philip Meadows Taylor].

Contributors

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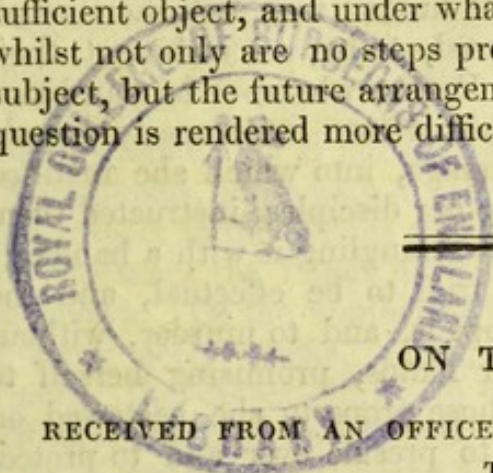
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measure. These good men were evidently terrified by the panic of 1825, and by the run of the interregnum; and they have not yet recovered from their alarm. Instead of endeavouring to prevent the recurrence of commercial panics, (political ones are beyond the reach of economical science,) by establishing a sounder currency, they have endeavoured to check their cure. The patient requires a course of alterative medicine; the physician prescribes for the crisis of a raging fever.

Such is the Government plan. In a mere pecuniary point of view the bargain is a bad one for the public, and, speaking superficially, a very good one for the Bank. The currency is not placed upon a sounder footing than before; it is questionable whether it be not rendered more insecure. *All* the monopolies and privileges of the Bank are not only continued, but extended and *confirmed*. Changes are made without any sufficient object, and under what we must conceive to be a fearful risk; whilst not only are no steps prepared for a permanent settlement of the subject, but the future arrangement of this most momentous and gigantic question is rendered more difficult than ever.



ON THE THUGS*.

RECEIVED FROM AN OFFICER IN THE SERVICE OF HIS HIGHNESS
THE NIZAM.

THE Thugs form a perfectly distinct class of persons, who subsist almost entirely upon the produce of the murders they are in the habit of committing. They appear to have derived their denomination from the practice usually adopted by them of decoying the persons they fix upon to destroy, to join their party; and then, taking advantage of the confidence they endeavour to inspire, to strangle their unsuspecting victims. They are also known by the name of Phanseegurs; and in the north-eastern part of the Nizam's dominions, are usually called "Kockbunds." There are several peculiarities in the habits of the Thugs, in their mode of causing death, and in the precautions they adopt for the prevention of discovery, that distinguish them from every other class of delinquents; and it may be considered a general rule whereby to judge of them, that they affect to disclaim the practice of petty theft, housebreaking, and indeed every species of stealing that has not been preceded by the perpetration of murder.

The Thugs adopt no other method of killing but strangulation; and the implement made use of for this purpose is a handkerchief, or any other convenient strip of cloth. The manner in which the deed is done will be described hereafter. They never attempt to rob a traveller until they have, in the first instance, deprived him of life: after the commission of a murder, they invariably bury the body immediately, if time and opportunity serve, or otherwise conceal it; and never leave a corpse uninterred in the highway, unless they happen to be disturbed†.

* Pronounced Túg, but with a slight aspirate.

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To trace the origin of this practice would now be a matter of some difficulty, for if the assertions of the Thugs themselves are entitled to any credit, it has been in vogue from time immemorial; and they pretend that its institution is coeval with the creation of the world. Like most other inhuman practices, the traditions regarding it are mixed up with tales of Hindoo superstition; and the Thugs would wish to make it appear that, in immolating the numberless victims that yearly fall by their hands, they are only obeying the injunctions of the deity of their worship, to whom they say they are offering an acceptable sacrifice. The object of their worship is the Goddess Kalee, or Bhowanee, and there is a temple at Binda Chul, near Mirzapoor, to which the Thugs usually send considerable offerings, and the establishment of priests at their shrine are entirely of their community. Bhowanee, it seems, once formed the determination of extirpating the human race, and sacrificed all but her own disciples. But she discovered, to her astonishment, that, through the intervention of the Creating Power, whenever human blood was shed, a fresh subject immediately started into existence to supply the vacancy. She therefore formed an image, into which she instilled the principles of life, and calling together her disciples, instructed them in the art of depriving that being of life by strangling it with a handkerchief. This method was found upon trial to be effectual, and the goddess directed her worshippers to adopt it, and to murder, without distinction, all who should fall into their hands, promising herself to dispose of the bodies of their victims, whose property she bestowed on her followers; and to be present at, and to preside over and to protect them on those occasions, so that none should be able to prevail against them.

Thus, say the Thugs, was our own order established, and we originally took no care of the bodies of those who fell by our hands, but abandoned them wherever they were strangled, until one man, more curious than the rest, ventured to watch the body he had murdered, in the expectation of seeing the manner in which it was disposed of. The goddess of his worship descended, as usual, to carry away the corpse, but, observing that this man was on the watch, she relinquished her purpose; and calling him, angrily rebuked him for his temerity; telling him she could no longer perform her promise regarding the bodies of the murdered, which his associates must hereafter dispose of in the best way they could. Hence, say they, arose the practice invariably followed by the Thugs of burying the dead; and to this circumstance principally is to be attributed the extraordinary manner in which their atrocities have

and then many were hung in Bundelkund. Again, in 1817, they attracted notice by their horrible acts, and twelve villages in Bundelkund, which were peopled almost entirely by them, were taken by a force sent against them. They were then dispersed, but assembled in various parts in Sindhia's and the Nagpoor country, also in Holkar's dominions. From 1817 till 1831 they were not molested; and, in consequence, increased greatly in the latter year. Measures were taken to suppress them, which have been attended with great success in this year. One hundred and eleven have been executed at Jubbulpoor, and upwards of 400 transported for life to the eastern settlement of Pinang, and upwards of 600 are now in jail at Sangor to take their trial at the next sessions at Jubbulpoor. Their apprehension, and their consequent disclosures, gave the means of those in this part of the country being pointed out. Mr. Reynolds, the officer who has the

remained unknown, for with such circumspection and secrecy do they proceed to work, and such order and regularity is there in all their operations, that it is next to impossible a murder should ever be discovered.

Absurd as the foregoing relation may appear, it has had this effect on the mind of the Thugs, that they do not seem to be visited with any of those feelings of remorse or compunction at the inhuman deeds in which they have participated that are commonly supposed to be, at some period of their lives, the portion of all who have trafficked in human blood. On the contrary, they dwell with satisfaction on the recollection of their various and successful exploits; and refer with no small degree of pride and exultation to the instances in which they have been personally engaged, especially if the number of their victims has been great, or the plunder they have acquired has been extensive.

Notwithstanding the adherence to Hindoo rites of worship observable among the Thugs, a very considerable number of them are Mussulmans. No judgment of the birth or caste of a Thug can, however, be formed from his name; for it not unfrequently happens that a Hindoo Thug has a Mussulman name with a Hindoo *alias* attached to it, and *vice versâ* with respect to the Thugs who are by birth Mahommedans. In almost every instance the Thugs have more than one appellation by which they are known. Of the number of Mussulman Thugs, some are to be found of every sect, Sheiks, Sezed, Mogul, and Pathan; and among the Hindoo, the castes chiefly to be met with are Brahmins, Rajhpoots, Lodhees, Ocheers, and Kolees. In a gang of Thugs some of every one of these castes may be found all connected together by the peculiar plan of murder practised by them, all subject to the same regulations, and all, both Mussulmans and Hindoos, joining in the worship of Bhowanee.

They usually move in large parties, often amounting to 100 or 200 persons, and resort to all sort of subterfuges for the purpose of concealing their real profession. If they are travelling southward, they represent themselves to be either proceeding in quest of service, or on their way to rejoin the regiments they belong to in this part of the country. When, on the contrary, their route lies towards the north, they represent themselves to be Sepoys from corps of the Bombay or Nizam's army, who are going on leave to Hindustan. The gangs do not always consist of persons who are Thugs by birth. It is customary for them to entice, by the promise of monthly pay or the hopes of amassing money that are held out, many persons, who are ignorant of the deeds of death that are to be perpetrated for the attainment of these objects, until made aware of the reality by seeing the victims of their cupidity fall under the hands of the stranglers; and the Thugs declare that novices have occasionally been so horrified at the sight, as to have effected their immediate escape. Others, more callous to the commission of crime, are not deterred from the pursuit of wealth by the frightful means adopted to obtain it, and remaining with the gang, too soon begin personally to assist in the perpetration of murder.

Many of the most notorious Thugs are the adopted children of others of the same class. They make it a rule, when a murder is committed, never to spare the life of any one, either male or female, who is old enough to remember and relate the particulars of the deed. But in the

their lives, and, adopting them, bring them up to the trade of Thugs. These men of course eventually become acquainted with the fact of the murder of their fathers and mothers, by the very persons with whom they have dwelt since their childhood, but are still not deterred from following the same dreadful trade. It might be supposed, that a class of persons whose hearts must be effectually hardened against all the better feelings of humanity, would encounter few scruples of conscience in the commission of the horrid deeds whereby they subsist; but, in point of fact, they are as much the slaves of superstition, and as much directed by the observance of omens in the commission of murder, as the most inoffensive of the natives of India are in the ordinary affairs of their lives.

The chief symbol of worship among the Thugs is a khadule, or pick-axe of iron. It is known among them by the name of *hishun*, *kussee*, and *mahee*. With every gang there is carried a *hishun*, which is, in fact, their standard, and the bearer of it is entitled to particular privileges. Previous to commencing an expedition, the jemadars of the party celebrate a poojah to the *hishun*, which is typical of the deity of their worship. The ceremonies differ little from the usual rites of Hindoos on similar occasions. A Hindoo Thug of good caste is employed in making a quantity of the cakes called *poories*, which, being consecrated, are distributed among the assembly. The *hishun* is bathed and perfumed in the smoke of burning benjamin, and is afterwards made over to the *hishun wulluh*, who receives it in a piece of cloth kept for that purpose. It is then taken out into the open fields, in the expectation of an omen being observed. The *hishun* is deposited in a convenient spot in the direction the party intends to proceed, and certain persons are deputed to keep watch over it. There are particular birds and beasts that are looked upon by the Thugs as the revealers of omens, to whose calls and movements their attention is, on this occasion, particularly directed. Among the number are the owl, the jay, the jackall, the ass, &c. &c. If one of these calls out, or moves to the right hand side, the omen is looked upon as favourable; but if to the left, it is considered unfavourable, and the project is abandoned. It is not unusual for the Thugs to look for a favourable omen previous to the commission of a murder, and they are frequently deterred from carrying their intentions immediately into effect by the observance of an unfavourable sign, such as a snake crossing their path when in pursuit of a victim, or the circumstance of any of the animals before mentioned calling out on their left hand sides. This, no doubt, accounts for the Thugs so often keeping company with travellers for many days previous to murdering them, although they had determined upon their sacrifice from the moment of their first joining the party. The omen is denominated *sugoor* by the Thugs, a corruption, no doubt, of the Persian *shugoór*.

In the event of an expedition proving more than ordinarily successful, a poojah is usually made to Bhowanee, and a portion of the spoil taken by the gang is set aside for the purpose of being sent to the pagoda before alluded to, as an offering to the goddess. Propitiatory offerings are also made, and various ceremonies performed, before the *khodulee*, or *hishun*, should the Thugs have failed in obtaining any plunder for a length of time.

who appear to hold that rank not by the choice of their followers, but in consequence of their wealth and influence in their respective villages, and having assembled their immediate followers in the vicinity of their homes. The profits of a jemadar are of course greater than those of his followers; he receives six and a half or seven per cent. on all silver coin, and other property not hereafter specified, and then shares in the remainder in common with the other Thugs of the party. When gold is obtained in coin or in mass, the tenth part is taken by the jemadar previous to dividing it; and he has a tithe of all pearls, shawls, gold embroidered cloths, brass and copper pots, horses, &c. The jemadar acts as master of the ceremonies when the poojah is performed, and he assigns to every Thug the particular duty he is to undertake in the commission of every murder that is determined on. These duties are performed in succession by all the Thugs of the party, and to the regularity and system that exists among them is to be attributed the unparalleled success that has attended their proceedings. Next to the jemadar, the most important person is the *bhuttoat*, or strangler, who carries the handkerchief with which the Thugs usually murder their victims. This implement is merely a piece of fine, strong cotton cloth, about a yard long; at one end a knot is tied, and the cloth is slightly twisted, and kept ready for use in front of the waistcoat of the person carrying it. There is no doubt but that all Thugs are expert in the use of the handkerchief, which is called *boomal*, or *paloo*; but if they are to be believed, only particular persons are called upon, or permitted to perform this office. When a large gang is collected, the most able-bodied and alert of their number are fixed upon as *bhuttoats*, and they are made the bearers of the handkerchief only after the performance of various and often expensive ceremonies, and only on the observance of a favourable omen. The old and experienced Thugs are usually denominated *gooroo bhow*, and the junior Thugs make a merit of attending upon them, filling their hookahs, shampooing their bodies, and performing the most menial offices. They gradually become initiated into all the mysteries of the art, and if they prove to be powerful men, these disciples of the *gooroo* are made *bhuttoats*. The Thugs say, that if one of their class was alone, and had never strangled a person, he would not presume to make use of the handkerchief until he observed a favourable omen. The ceremonies observed in making a *bhuttoat* are the same as those described in carrying out the *hishun*, in room of which the handkerchief is on this occasion substituted, and an offering of pence (copper coin), cocoa-nut, turmeric, red ochre, &c., &c., is made. When a murder is to be committed, the *bhuttoat* usually follows the particular person whom he has been nominated by the jemadar to strangle; and, on the preconcerted signal being given, the handkerchief is seized with the knot in the *left hand*, the right hand being about nine inches farther up, in which manner it is thrown over the head of the person to be strangled from behind; the two hands are crossed as the victim falls, and such is the certainty with which the deed is done, as the Thugs frequently declare, that before the body falls to the ground the eyes start out of the head, and life becomes extinct. Should the person to be strangled prove a powerful man, or the *bhuttoat* inexpert, another Thug lays hold of the end of the handkerchief, and the work is completed. The perfection of the act is said to

them having time to utter a cry, or to be aware of the fate of their comrades.

Favourable opportunities are given for bhuttoats to make their first essay in the art of strangling. When a single traveller is met with, a novice is instructed to make a trial of his skill; the party sets off during the night, and stops while it is still dark to drink water or to smoke. While seated for the purpose, the jemadar inquires what time of the night it may be, and the Thugs look up at the stars to ascertain. This being the preconcerted signal, the bhuttoat is immediately on the alert, and the unsuspecting traveller, on looking up at the heavens, in common with the rest of the party, offers his neck to the ready handkerchief, and becomes an easy prey to his murderer. The bhuttoat receives eight annas (half a rupee) extra for every murder that is committed, and if the plunder is great, some article of value is assigned to him over and above his share. The persons intended to be murdered are called by different names, according to their sect, profession, wealth, &c. &c.; a victim having much property is entitled "*niamud*," and they are also often called *bunj*. To aid the bhuttoat in the preparation of a murder, another Thug is especially appointed under the denomination of *samsecah*. His business is to seize the person to be strangled by the wrists if he be on foot, and by one of his legs if he be on horseback, and so to pull him down. A *samsecah* is told off to each traveller, and he places himself in a convenient situation near him to be ready when required. In the event of the traveller being mounted on horseback, another Thug assists under the denomination of "*bhugdurra*;" his business is to lay hold of the horse's bridle, and to check it as soon as the signal for murder is given.

One of the most necessary persons to a gang of Thugs is he who goes by the name of *tilläee*. The Thugs do not always depend upon chance for obtaining plunder, or roam about in the expectation of meeting travellers, but frequently take up their quarters in or near a large town, or some great thoroughfare, from whence they make expeditions, according to the information obtained by the *tilläees*. These men are chosen from among the most smooth-spoken and intelligent of their number, and their chief duty is to gain information. For this purpose they are decked out in the garb of respectable persons, whose appearance and manners they must have the art of assuming. They frequent the bazaars of the town near which their associates are encamped, and endeavour to pick up intelligence of the intended dispatch or expected arrival of goods or treasure, of which information is forthwith given to the gang, who send out a party to intercept them. Inquiry is also made for any party of travellers who may have arrived, and who put up in the *suräee*, or elsewhere. Every art is brought into practice to scrape an acquaintance with these people. They are given to understand that the *tilläee* is travelling the same road. An opportunity is taken to throw out hints regarding the unsafeness of the roads, and the frequency of murders and robberies; an acquaintance with some of the friends or relatives of the travellers is feigned, and an invitation from them to partake of the repast that has been prepared where the *tilläee* has put up,—the conveniences of which and the superiority of the water are abundantly praised. The result is, that the travellers are inveigled into joining the gang of Thugs, and they are feasted and treated with every politeness and

culating the share they shall acquire in the division of their property. What the feelings must be of men who are actuated by motives so entirely opposed to their apparent kindness of behaviour, it is difficult to imagine; and I know not whether most to admire the address with which they conceal their murderous intentions, or to detest the infernal apathy with which they can eat out of the same dish, and drink of the very cup, that is partaken of by their future victims!

It is on the perfection which they have attained in the art of acting as tilläees that the Thugs pride themselves, and they frequently boast that it is only once necessary to have an opportunity of conversing with a traveller, to be able to mark him as an easy victim, whenever they choose to murder him. Instances sometimes occur where a party of Thugs find their victims too numerous for them while they remain in a body, and they are seldom at a loss for expedients to create dissensions, and a consequent division among them. If all their arts of intrigue and cajolery fail in producing the desired effect, an occasion is taken advantage of to ply the travellers with intoxicating liquors; a quarrel is got up, and from words they proceed to blows, which end in the dissension of the company, who, proceeding by different roads, fall an easier prey to their remorseless destroyers. Having enticed the travellers into the snare they have laid for them, the next object is to choose a convenient spot for their murder. This, in their technical language, is called a *bhil*, and is usually fixed upon some distance from a village on the banks of a small stream, where the trees and underwood afford a shelter from the view of occasional passengers. The Thug who is sent on this duty is called a *bhilla*, and having fixed on the place, he either returns to the encampment of his party, or meets them on the way to report the result of his inquiry. If the *bhilla* returns to the camp with his report, the *suggaees*, or grave-diggers, are sent out with him to prepare a grave for the interment of the persons it is intended to murder. Arrangements are previously made so that the party in company with the travellers shall not arrive at the *bhil* too soon. At the particular spot agreed on, the *bhilla* meets the party. The *jemadar* calls out to him "Bhilla naujeh?" (Have you cleared out the hole?) The *bhilla* replies "Naujeh," on which the concerted signal is given that serves as the death-warrant of the unsuspecting travellers, who are forthwith strangled. While some are employed in rifling the bodies, others assist in carrying them away to the ready-prepared graves. The *suggaees* perform the office of burying the dead, and the remainder of the gang proceeds on its journey, having with them a certain number of the tilläees or watchmen on the look-out to prevent their being disturbed. Should a casual passenger appear, the tilläee gently throws a stone among the *suggaees*, who immediately desist, and crouch on the ground until the danger is averted. After the interment is completed, the *suggaees* rejoin their party, but it is not unusual to have one or more of the tilläees to keep watch to prevent the bodies being disinterred by beasts of prey; and if a discovery should be made by the village people, to give instant information to their companions, in order that they might have an opportunity of getting out of the way.

It often happens that the arrangements and precautions above-mentioned cannot be entered into; that travellers are casually met with on the road and hastily murdered, and as carelessly interred. In these

one to keep watch at the place; and, rather than run the risk of detection, by the bodies being dug up by wild animals, they return, and re-inter them. If the ground is strong, they never touch the corpse; but if the soil is of that loose texture as to render it probable that the bodies, in swelling, will burst the graves, they generally transfix them with knives or spears, which effectually prevents that result.

When the Thugs may choose to strangle their victims in some more exposed situation,—as in a garden near a village where they may have put up for the night,—they resort to further precautions to prevent discovery. The grave is on this occasion prepared on the spot, after the murder has been committed; and the corpse having been deposited therein, the superfluous soil is carried away in baskets, and strewn in the neighbouring fields; the place is watered and beaten down, and it is ultimately plastered over with wet cow-dung, and *choolahs*, or fire-places for cooking, are made on the spot. If the party find it necessary to decamp, they light fires in the *choolahs*, that they may have the appearance of having been used to cook in. Should they determine on staying, they use the *choolahs* to cook their food in on the succeeding day, having few qualms of conscience to prevent their enjoying the victuals prepared on a spot, the associations attendant on which might be considered too revolting for even a Thug to dwell on.

The parties of Thugs being often very large, they have many beasts of burthen in their train—as bullocks, ponies, and sometimes even camels. If they remain at a place where they have committed a murder, and do not construct fire-places, they take the precaution of tying their cattle on the spot. The Thugs say they can always recognize the fire-places of their own class, there being peculiar marks about them, which are made to serve as directions to the next party that comes that way. The Thugs always prefer burying their victims at some distance from the public road; and therefore, as soon as the bodies of the murdered persons have been stripped of the property found on them, they are carried on the shoulders of the *suggae*s to the spot selected for interring them. They say they are more careless about the concealment of corpses in the Nizam's country than elsewhere; for they are always so secure from molestation, that they have frequently left bodies exposed without running any risk, as no one takes the trouble of inquiring about them.

The division of spoil does not usually take place immediately after a murder, but every one secures a portion of the property on the spot; and when a convenient opportunity occurs, each produces the articles he has been the bearer of, and a division is made by the *jemadar*, whose share is, in the first instance, deducted; then the *bhuttoat's*; next the *sumseahs* and *bhugdurras* claim the extra reward for each murder they have assisted at; the *tilläee* receives the perquisite which is his due for inveigling a traveller into their snares; the *suggae* takes his recompense for the trouble he had in digging the grave; and the residue is divided, share and share alike, among the whole gang. It may be supposed that the cupidity of individual Thugs may occasionally lead them to attempt to defraud their comrades, by secreting an article of value at the time the murdered bodies are plundered; but they say that the whole class are bound by an inviolable oath to produce, for general appropriation to the common stock, everything that may fall into their hands while on

The division of plunder, as may be supposed, often leads to the most violent disputes, which it is astonishing do not end in bloodshed. But it might almost be supposed the Thugs have a prejudice against spilling blood; for, when pursued, they refrain from making use of the weapons they usually bear, even in defence of their own persons. The most wanton prodigality occurs when plunder is divided; and occasionally the most valuable shawls and brocades are torn into small strips and distributed amongst the gang, should any difference of opinion arise as to their appropriation. The Thugs say this is also done that every person may run the same risk, for such an article could not be shared among them until converted into money, and some danger is attendant upon the transaction. They appear invariably to destroy all hoondies* that fall into their hands, as well as many other articles that are likely to lead to detection. Ready money is what they chiefly look for, and when they have a choice of victims, the possessors of gold and silver would certainly be fixed upon in preference to others. In consequence, it seems to have been a general practice among the Bundelcund Thugs to waylay the parties of sepoy's of the Bombay and Nizam's armies, while going on leave to Hindoostan, for the sake of the specie they are usually the bearers of; and they remark, that of the many sepoy's who are supposed by their officers to have abandoned the service, while their friends and relatives consider them to be still with their regiments, they alone can tell the fate, the whole number being strangled by their hands. The immense wealth that has, at various times, fallen into the hands of these miscreants, has been expended in the grossest extravagance and debauchery, and, as may be supposed, their ill-gotten gains remain but a short time in their possession.

The Thugs have in use among them, not exactly a language of their own, but they have sets of slang terms and phrases which give them the means of holding a conversation with persons of their own class, without any chance of being understood by the uninitiated. Their term of salutation, whereby also they recognise each other, if they casually meet without being personally acquainted, is, *ali khan bhace salaam*. What appears most extraordinary is, the manner in which the Thugs recollect the names of their comrades, as well as their persons; and they declare, that though the name of any one of a gang may have escaped their recollection, they never forget the person of a Thug who has assisted with them in the perpetration of a murder. The Thugs, indeed, seem to know each other almost intuitively; and the quickness with which the recognition is made is almost enough to warrant the supposition, that a sort of Freemasonry has been established among them.

To facilitate their plan of operations, the Thugs have established a regular system of intelligence and communication throughout the countries they have been in the practice of frequenting, and they become acquainted, with astonishing celerity, with proceedings of their comrades in all directions. They omit no opportunity of making inquiries regarding the progress of other gangs, and are equally particular in supplying the requisite information of their own movements. For this purpose they have connected themselves with several persons residing in the Nizam's dominions, as patails† and cultivators of villages, many of the

* Bills of exchange.

† Headmen of villages.

latter of whom follow the profession of Thugs in conjunction with their agricultural pursuits.

The Marwarries* and other bankers are also frequently the channels of communication between Thugs, and there is no doubt of their being the purchasers of the property of the murdered. The religious medicants throughout the country occasionally assist in this measure, by becoming the receivers of messages from bands of Thugs, to be delivered to the next party that comes that way; with this view also they have adopted the practice of forming *choolahs*, or fireplaces of a particular construction, to serve as marks of their progress through the country. When a party of Thugs come to a road that branches off in two directions, they adopt the precaution of making a mark, for the guidance of their associates who may come after them, in the following manner:—the soil in a convenient spot is carefully smoothed, and the print of a foot is distinctly stamped upon it. A Thug on seeing this mark, which he naturally searches for, knows by the direction in which it points which track has been followed by those that have preceded him.

The peculiar designation by which they are known is a point in which the Thugs are particularly tenacious, and they attach an importance and even respectability to their profession, that they say no other class of delinquents is entitled to. The denomination of *thief* is one that is particularly obnoxious to them, and they never refrain from soliciting the erasure of the term, and the substitution of that of Thug, whenever it may occur in a paper regarding them, declaring that, so far from following so disgraceful a practice as theft, they scorn the name, and can prove themselves to be as honest and trustworthy as any one else, when occasion requires it.

It seems their ambition to be considered respectable persons; and with this view they expend much of their gains on their personal decoration. Even those who have been seized and admitted as approvers, or informers against their comrades, in fact, king's evidence, are more solicitous about their dress and decent appearance than anything else. They mostly seem to be men of mild and unobtrusive manners, possessing a cheerfulness of disposition entirely opposed to the violent passions and ferocious demeanour that are usually associated with the idea of a professed murderer.

Such is the extent to which this dreadful system has been carried that no idea can be formed of the expenditure of human life to which it has given occasion, or the immensity of the wealth that has been acquired by its adoption. When it is taken into consideration that many of the Thugs already seized confess to their having, for the last twenty-five and thirty years, annually made a tour with parties of more than a hundred men, and with no other object than that of murder and rapine; that they boast of having successively put their tens and twenties to death daily; and that they say an enumeration of all the lives they have personally assisted to destroy would swell the catalogue to hundreds, and, as some declare, to thousands †—some conception of the horrid reality may be formed; of the amount of the property that they have yearly made away

* Inhabitants of Marwar, generally bankers and traders.

† Ameer Ali, an approver and noted Thug, now at this place, declares and glories in having been present at the murder of 719 persons, whose property is estimated at two lacs and a half of rupees!

with, it must be impossible to form any calculation; for, independent of the thousands in ready money, jewels and bullion, the loads of valuable cloths, and every description of merchandise, that continually fall into their hands, the hoondies that they invariably destroy must amount to a considerable sum.

The impunity with which the Thugs have heretofore carried on their merciless proceedings, the facility they have possessed of recruiting their numbers—which are restricted to no particular caste or sect—the security they have had of escaping detection, and the ease with which they have usually purchased their release, when seized by the officers of the weak native governments, in whose dominions they have usually committed their greatest depredations, have altogether so tended to confirm the system, and to disseminate it to the fearful extent to which it has now attained, that the life of no single traveller on any of the roads in the country has been safe, and but a slight chance has been afforded to large parties of escaping the fangs of the blood-thirsty demons who have frequented them.

THE LATE LONDON HURRICANE.

To the Editor of the New Monthly Magazine.

SIR,—The following document gives the most interesting and highly wrought account which I have met with of the recent storm in the metropolis. It is evidently sketched by the masterhand of some inspired paragraphist, who appears to have dropped it on his road to one of the newspaper offices in the neighbourhood of which I had the good fortune to meet with it. It is headed—

PARTICULARS OF THE LATE DREADFUL STORM.

Never did the sun rise on a more lovely morning than that which cheered this large and smoky metropolis, on Tuesday, the 18th of June, 1833, a day destined to be ever remarkable in our London annals. At about 7 o'clock, A. M., the wind was observed by many foot passengers (whose daily occupations had called them abroad at that early hour) to be increasing gradually in strength, and there were sundry nods and winks among those who have learned to watch the various changes of the moody weather, from which a keen observer might have gleaned the fact that something out of the usual course might before night be expected. About 11 o'clock in the forenoon it became palpable, even to the most cursory observer, that "*it was excessively windy,*" a fact which, by 12 o'clock, was found to be, in almost every case, the opening assertion in every conversation that occurred between acquaintances meeting in the highways accidentally. At about a quarter past twelve, the general apprehension was, in some degree, confirmed by the rather unusual circumstance of a man's hat being seen to roll at an extremely rapid rate down Holborn Hill, as it was construed into a proof presumptive that the wind had commenced taking rather serious liberties with the property of the street passengers. Considerable consternation was excited by this abstractedly unimportant circumstance, but the general anxiety was soon after rendered much more intense by the arrival of an omnibus from Hampstead, the passengers in which brought the news that old father Boreas had been, for the last half hour, amusing himself by ringing all the bells at the gates of the various rural retreats which line the road the omnibus had been travelling. At about 2 o'clock it was palpable that no person could leave his residence without receiving a terrible blow in the face from Eurus, who was,

to speak figuratively, rushing through the streets of London and raising a dust in every direction. At one minute he was to be found on Blackfriars Bridge puffing the hat of a passing passenger into the foaming element beneath, while the next minute he was blowing up poor old father Thames, whose agitation was evinced in the most violent heaving of his venerable bosom, to the great alarm of the unskilful navigator between the bridges of London and Westminster. It would be an endless task to enumerate all the effects of Tuesday's wind, but we must content ourselves with specifying a few of the most remarkable.

In Clerkenwell, a policeman was taken up and carried a considerable distance.

In Gray's Inn gardens, several trees were blown down, and there was scarcely one which *rude Boreas* did not *take leave* to strip of *its foliage*.

An unfortunate, who went to drown herself in the Regent's Canal, was providentially blown into *the Lock*, near Hyde Park Corner.

A poor starving man, who had not tasted food for three days, met with a tremendous *blow out*, from a nook on Westminster Bridge, into which he had crept for security.

For further similar particulars, the reader is referred to all the newspapers.
D.

ON THE PROGRESS OF MUSIC FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

NO. II.

OUR first Essay concluded with a promise to lay open the consequences of the various improvements made, during the long period we coursed through, by foreign composers and their works, upon "English taste and English composition." Now that we sit down to fulfil our engagement, we begin to perceive that our terms have been too strict, and that, instead of them, we ought rather to have said, the music which native composers have submitted to the taste of the English public;—so little do we find that can really be esteemed of native origin and growth.

Since the expulsion of the mass, music may almost be said to have departed from the ceremonial of our worship. The plain, unisonous psalmody of the churches ties genius down to the construction of the simplest and the purest melody; and none but those whose professional duties compel them to daily attendance in cathedrals can know to what a wretchedly inconsiderable number of the people the worship of these noble edifices, so richly endowed, is reduced. The result will be easily anticipated,—our psalmody continues in the same state. Its small treasures have been indeed collected, during the last few years, by able hands,—by Mr. Burrowes, the industrious theorist, composer and adapter; by Mr. Edwards; and, lastly, by Mr. Greatorex. But the thing itself is, and must be, incapable of any large or valuable additions, because so limited in its nature. Every attempt to introduce novelty has been discouraged and put down. Mr. Gardiner, of Leicester, amongst others, endeavoured to introduce a love of more varied melody, by adapting the compositions of great foreign masters to English words*; but

* "Sacred Melodies from Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, adapted to the best English Poets, and appropriated to the use of the British Church." 3 vols.