

Poetry.

A WORLD OF LOVE AT HOME.

BY J. J. REYNOLDS.

The earth hath treasure fair and bright,
 Deep buried in her caves,
 And ocean hideth many a gem,
 With his blue curling waves,
 Yet not within her bosom dark,
 Or 'neath the dashing foam,
 Lies there a treasure equalling
 A world of love at home.

True sterling happiness and joy
 Are not with gold allied;
 Nor can it yield a pleasure like
 A merry fireside.

I envy not the man who dwells
 In stately hall or dome,
 If 'mid his splendor he hath not
 A world of love at home.

The friends whom time hath proved sincere,
 'Tis they alone can bring
 A sure relief to hearts that droop
 'Neath sorrow's heavy wing.

Though care and trouble may be mine,
 As down life's path I roam,
 I'll heed them not while still I have
 A world of love at home.

Select Tale.

BOAR-HUNTING IN INDIA.

BY THE OLD FOREST RANGER.

"I declare its nearly ten o'clock! The sun is already hot enough to broil one's brains into an omelet, and still no signs of our scouts returning," said Charles, pulling out his watch, and returning it to his pocket with an impatient gesture, as he sat, on the following morning, lounging indolently under the fly of the tents, the *Kunnats** of which were raised, and supported on bamboos, to act as a verandah, and to admit of a free circulation of air.

A substantial breakfast had already been disposed of. The horses had been visited, to ascertain that their feet were in good order after yesterday's march; that they had been well groomed, and that no water had been given them. Saddles, bridles, girths, and stirrup leathers, had been carefully over-hauled. Spear-heads had been sharpened to the last degree of keenness; and our three Nimrods having now nothing further to occupy their attention, were waiting, in a feverish state of impatience, for the return of the scouts, who had been dispatched, on the previous evening, to gain intelligence of the famous Boar.

The dense shade of the overhanging trees, tempered the heat of the land-wind, which sighed through the grove, rendering it cool and refreshing. But the straggling sun-beams, which here and there darted through the dense foliage, dancing and sparkling on the glassy surface of the tank, with intense, almost painful brilliancy; the glimpses of the open country, which were caught through the stems of the trees, showed the parched earth glowing like heated copper, and the tall palm-trees twisted like gigantic snakes, in the fiery haze, bore ample testimony to the scorching heat of the tropical sun which blazed overhead.

A hundred *coolies*—almost as wild-looking as the animals for which they were to beat—all nearly naked, and many of them armed with rusty match-locks, hunting-spears, or wood-knives were lounging about in picturesque groups under the shade of the trees. The old baggage-elephant, wearied with his long march, stood dozing listlessly under the shadow of a widely-spreading *Banian*, and fanning himself with the feathery branch of a palm tree, to protect his skin from the stings of the buzzing insects which swarmed around him. And a group of handsome *Natch-girls*, encouraged to repeat their visit by the handsome present of the previous day; and now having their charms set off to the best advantage, by all the glittering finery of Indian Belles, with large gold rings depending from their noses, their necks loaded with jewels; massive silver bangles encircling their slender, well-turned ankles; their braided hair, decked with wreaths of the sweet-smelling *Mangro*† and their silken robes, filling the air with the perfume of sandal-wood, were twining their graceful figure in the dance, and darting the most bewitching glances from their large voluptuous dark eyes, in the vain hope of charming the impatient sportsmen, whose minds, however, were too fully occupied by floating visions of panted steeds, blood-stained spears, and foaming boars, to be captivated by the charms of the fascinating *Syrens*.

*Kunnats—Curtains, or canvas walls of a tent.

†Mangro—a large species of jasmine.

The Doctor was lounging indolently in an arm-chair with a cheroot in his mouth, as usual twirling his thumbs, nodding his head approvingly, with the air of a connoisseur in such matters, as any particularly graceful movement of the *Natch-girls* happened to meet with his approbation; and occasionally turning round to give some directions to Heels who was busied, outside of the tent, in skinning the dead panther. Mansfield was amusing himself by giving a finishing touch to the keen edge of his favorite hog-spear, on a fine hone; when Charles, who was by far the most impatient and watchful of the party, started from his seat, with an exulting shout, which brought the performance of the *Natch-girls* to an abrupt conclusion.

"Hurra, lads, here comes our scouts at last!" The *Natch-girls*, startled at our sudden exclamation, shrunk aside, and made way for two panting *Shikaries*, covered with dust and perspiration, who, advancing at a long, easy, wolf-like trot, and halting in front of the tent, announced with a profound salaam, that a large *sounder* of hog, headed by the far-famed Boar, had been marked down, among the hills, a few miles from camp.

"Boot and saddle! spears and spears! and hurrah for the man that first draws blood from the old Boar," shouted Mansfield, starting to his feet, and brandishing aloft his light elastic spear—a faultless male bamboo from the jungles of the *Concan*, about ten feet long, tough as whalebone, and tapering away beautifully to the smaller end, where it terminated in a keen glittering blade, about the size and shape of a laurel-leaf—a blade which had reeked with the blood of many a grisly boar.

"*Gorah lau!*"† was now the cry, and in less than five minutes, three snorting steeds, accoutered for the field, were pawing the ground impatiently, in front of the tent.

Mansfield's favorite hunter, Challenger, was the very model of a perfect Arab; a light iron-gray, with broad expanded forehead, deep jaw, fine tapering muzzle, white nostrils, and beautifully placed ears; his thin withers, well-placed shoulder, round carcass, compact joints, and long, sleek, muscular quarters, gave promise of uncommon strength and fleetness; whilst a full dark eye, mild as that of the Gazelle, but beaming with the latent fire and indomitable courage of a true son of the desert, belied him much, if his endurance were not equal to his speed. In short, his figure was perfect symmetry, with the exception of his legs, which, although perfectly sound, were sorely disfigured by many a bruise and deep unsightly scar, which blemishes would have given great offence to an English eye; but to one accustomed to the headlong pace at which the Indian Hog-hunter urges his horse over the rocky hills, and through the thorny jungles of the *Deccan*, those honorable wounds, the inevitable portion of every good horse, who has carried a good rider, excited no surprise, and but little regret.

Charles' horse, Lightning, a bright chestnut, had also sprung from Araby's best blood; but his clean, unblemished, wiry limbs, showed that he, like his master, had seen but little service in the field; whilst the fiery eye, restless ears, and fretful movements, together with the unusually long-checked bit with which his bridle was furnished, led one to suspect, that his temper, like that of most horses of his colour, was somewhat of the hottest.

The sportsmen now mounted, without loss of time, and rode out of the grove, followed by their respective Horsekeepers, and the whole party of Beaters. Not a cloud appeared in the whole wide expanse of deep blue sky to veil the splendour of the tropical sun, which shot down his almost vertical rays with an intensity of heat, that threatened to penetrate the brain, even through the thick hunting-caps, and damp towels, which the sportsmen had provided to protect their heads. A silence deep as that of midnight, pervaded the land; for nature was faint with heat, and every living thing sought shelter from the merciless glare of an Indian noon; save the hardy hog-hunters, and the ever-ravaging vulture, which, soaring at an immense height, almost beyond the reach of human vision, swept through the air in wide extended circles, seeking his obscene food in the very eye of the blazing sun.

An hour's easy riding brought them to the place where the hogs were said to be marked down; it was a rocky hill, thinly clothed with stunted brushwood, and rising abruptly from a bare stony plain intersected by numerous dry nullahs or water-courses, and dotted, in the extreme distance, with clumps of palm-trees, and fields of sugar cane, to which the hogs were in the habit of resorting to feed during the night.

Having ascertained the nature of the position, by a rapid glance of his experienced eye, Mansfield issued the necessary orders to his Beaters, and then desired Charles and the Doctor to follow him to a

† "*Gorah lau!*"—Bring forth the Horse.

small clump of date trees, near the foot of the hill where they, and their horses, might lie in ambush, till the hogs were roused.

Having carefully concealed themselves amongst the trees, and ascertained that neither they, nor their horses, were visible from the hill-side, the riders dismounted, and waited with breathless impatience for the first joyous shout of the beaters.—Charles's heart beat almost audibly as he peeped through the leafy screen which concealed them, expecting every moment to hear the yell, which announced the finding of the mighty Boar, and to see the grisly monster, dash headlong down the rocky steep. But half an hour had elapsed, during which the deep silence was unbroken, and the excited feelings of the young sportsman were beginning to subside into something very like disappointment, when a distant shout came faintly on his ear, from the opposite side of the hill. Mansfield, who had been smoking his cigar, and chatting carelessly with the Doctor, started at the well known sound. A grim smile curled his lip, and fire flashed from his kindling eye, as he bounded to his feet, grasped his spear, and sprang into the saddle. "Now, lads, mount!" said he, settling himself firmly in his seat, and grasping the reins. "Mount, and be ready; we shall have him afoot directly."

The others mounted in haste, and fixed their longing eyes on the side of the opposite hill, whilst every nerve tingled, with an almost sickening sensation of wild excitement.

"I see him, I see him!" said Charles in an eager whisper; at the same time tightening his reins, and closing his heels with an involuntary jerk, which made the impatient Lightning snort and rear.

"For Heaven's sake, Charles! keep that fidgetty brute of yours quiet," replied Mansfield, in a chiding tone, as the gigantic Boar was seen to rise slowly from his solitary lair on the hill side, shaking his grey hide like a roused lion, and turning his head to listen to the approaching shouts of his pursuers.—"Steady, steady—not a move till I give the word, 'ride,' and then you may knock the fire of master Lightning as soon as you like. That Boar will try his mettle both in running and fighting, else I'm mistaken."

The Beaters were, by this time, coming over the crest of the hill; and the Boar, apparently satisfied that his enemies were advancing in too great force for him to attempt resistance, began to steal away through the brushwood, stopping occasionally to listen, as if debating to himself, whether to make for the plain, and trust to his speed for safety, or to turn, and charge gallantly amongst his pursuers.

Charles, in the excitement of the moment, was several times on the point of raising a shout to inform the beaters that the Boar was afoot, and to urge them forward; but a glance from Mansfield's frowning eye immediately checked him.

The ground now becoming more open, the Boar increased his pace to a shambling trot; and the eager beaters having at the same moment caught a sight of him, a wild unearthly yell arose, as if a whole legion of devils were at his heels.—The chafed brute stood for one moment with up-raised bristles, burning the white foam between his jaws; then uttering a short angry grunt, that seemed to announce his desperate determination of trying his speed across the plain, he dashed down the hill, and disappeared in the brushwood.

"Now we have him! Now for a glorious burst!" exclaimed Mansfield, grasping his spear more firmly, and shortening his reins, in the hope of seeing the mighty Boar burst gallantly from the belt of low jungle which skirted the foot of the hill. But no Boar appeared, and Mansfield was about to give vent to his feelings in a very unseemly oath, when a thick patch of brushwood, immediately below the Beaters, appeared in a violent motion, and next moment, a whole *sounder* of hog burst from the cover, and came scrambling down the hill; their round black backs rising and falling in quick succession, like a chool of porpoises tumbling along the face of a giant wave. The excited Beaters redoubled their yells, and the terrified animals, dashing at once through the belt of jungle took to the open ground without hesitation.

"Hide!" shouted Mansfield, in a voice clear as a trumpet-sound. And at that thrilling cry, the three horsemen, darting from their concealment, like lightning from a thunder-cloud, urged their snorting hunters across the plain at the very top of their speed, Charles's hot-blooded chestnut, tearing along with his head and tail in the air, and the bit in his teeth, as if determined that nothing should stop him till he was brought up, by running his head against a stone wall, or till he succeeded in breaking his own neck, or that of his rider, in one of the numerous ravines which lay so opportunely in the way. But this was no time to argue the point with a runaway horse, and Charles let him go to his heart's content. The Doctor followed at

a less headlong; but, to do him justice, he plied the spurs, and made the old horse do his best.

"Now Charles, my boy—now for the spear of honour!" cried Mansfield, as he and Charles rode neck and neck, at a racing pace, over the most terrific ground. "We are tolerably well matched as to speed, I see; and, if you can draw first blood, to dim the lustre of your maiden spear, you shall bear the palm, and welcome; but, by the Prophet! you must ride for it."

"Hurra! here goes for first blood then!" cried Charles in an exulting tone, at the same time shaking the reins and driving the spurs into his fiery horse, already mad with excitement and lathered with foam, whilst the more temperate Challenger, although urged to its utmost speed, had hardly turned a hair.

"Hurra! hurra! away they scour like falcons darting on their prey; the hard baked earth ringing like metal beneath their horses' iron-shod hoofs, and a long train of dust rising like smoke behind them."

Although the two horses were, in fact, well matched as to speed, Charles's light weight soon began to tell, in favour of his horse Lightning, who gradually crept ahead of his antagonist, till, by the time they had got within a hundred yards of the hog, he was nearly half that distance in advance.

"Shall I try it?" exclaimed Charles, looking over his shoulder, and addressing Mansfield, as the leading Boar much to his astonishment, bounded with the agility of an antelope, over a yawning ravine, which happened to cross his path; a dry water-course, with rocky, half-decayed, banks, which looked as if they would crumble in dust under the light foot of a fawn, and as breakneck-looking a place, as the most desperate horseman would care to ride at.

"Ay, ay! go along!" replied Mansfield. "A good horse can always follow where a boar leaps, but keep his head straight, and rattle him at it, as if you were in earnest; for, by mine honour, it is not a place that will improve by looking at it."

Charles, who was just in the mood to ride at the Styx, if it had come in his way, drove in the spurs, and went at the leap with the heart of a lion; but, just as he reached the brink, his violent brute of a horse, who had hitherto gone with his head in the air, and his mouth wide open, as if he neither knew nor cared whether there was any impediment or in his way or not, suddenly swerved, and wheeling round, with a loud snort, dashed off at right angles.

The well-trained Challenger, on the contrary, accustomed to Mansfield's resolute manner of riding and knowing, from experience, that it was in vain to refuse anything at which he was put, cocked his ears, gathering his hind legs well under him, and quickening his stroke, as he approached the ravine cleared it in beautiful style, although the decayed rock, from which he sprang, gave way, just as his hind-feet quitted it, and rolled thundering to the bottom of the *nullah*.

Charles had, by this time, succeeded in turning his horse, and putting him once more at the leap, with head held straight, and the spurs gorging his sides, the snorting brute went at it like a charging tiger, bounded high into the air, and cleared the ravine by several feet.

The race for the first spear was now resumed in earnest, Charles straining every nerve to recover lost ground, and come up with Mansfield, who, having singled out the leading Boar, was now pressing hard upon his haunches; the angry brute with foaming jaws and flaming eyes, uttered, from time to time, a short savage grunt, and swerving from side to side, as if to avoid the expected thrust of the deadly spear, which quivered, like a sunbeam within a few inches of his heaving flanks.

Charles was now nearly alongside of Mansfield, and gaining upon him at every stride. Both horses were beginning to show symptoms of distress; but the gallant little Challenger still answered to the spur, and by one desperate bound, brought Mansfield almost within spear's length of the Boar. A long reach will do it now—and a grim smile of triumph passed over Mansfield's swarthy cheek, as he leaned over his horse's neck, and made a desperate lunge at the flying Boar. He has it! No! it was an inch too short—another stride will do it. Again the trusty Challenger bounded to the spur—again the spear was poised for the fatal thrust—another second, and the glittering blade would have been quenched in blood; when the Boar made a short turn to the right, and dashed across Charles's horse. The terrified animal made a bound to clear the hog, and as he did so, Charles thrust his spear awkwardly forward, without aim or direction; the point however, went true to its destination, and passing through the Boar's brawny shoulder, buried itself in the earth. The horse, at the same in-