

ENCOUNTER WITH A COBRA.



THE following adventure occurred to a gentleman in India, who was reposing under a tamarind tree alone, after a day's shooting:—

“I was aroused by the furious baying of my dogs; on turning round, I beheld a snake of the *Cobra da Capello* species, directing its course to a point that would approximate very close upon my position. In an instant I was upon my feet. The instant the reptile became aware of my presence, in nautical phraseology, it boldly brought to, with expanded hood, eyes sparkling, neck beautifully arched, the head raised nearly two feet from the ground, and oscillating from side to side, in a manner plainly indicative of a resentful foe. I seized a short bamboo, left by one of the bearers, and hurled it at my opponent's head. I was fortunate enough to hit it beneath the eye. The reptile immediately fell from its imposing attitude, and lay apparently lifeless.

Without a moment's reflection, I seized it a little below the head, hauled it beneath the shelter of the tree, and very coolly sat down to examine the mouth for the poison-fangs, of which naturalists speak so much. While in the act of forcing open the mouth with a stalk, I felt the head sliding through my hand; and to my utter astonishment, became aware that I had now to contend against the most deadly of reptiles, in its full strength and vigour. Indeed, I was in a moment convinced of it; for, as I tightened my hold of the throat, its body became wreathed round my neck and arm.

I had raised myself from a sitting posture to one knee: my right arm, to enable me to exert my strength, was

extended. I must in such an attitude have appeared terrific enough to represent a deity in the Hindoo mythology, such as we so often see rudely emblazoned on the portals of their native temples. It now became a matter of self-defence. To retain my hold, it required my utmost strength to prevent the head from escaping, as my neck became a purchase for the animal to pull upon.

If the reader is aware of the universal dread in which the *Cobra da Capello* is held throughout India, and the almost instant death which invariably follows its bite, he will, in some degree, be able to imagine what my feelings were at that moment; a shudder, a faint kind of disgusting sickness pervaded my whole frame, as I felt the cold clammy fold of the reptile's body tightening round my neck. To attempt any delineation of my sensations would be absurd and futile: let it suffice, they were most horrible.

I had now almost resolved to resign my hold. Had I done so, this tale would never have been written; as no doubt, the head would have been brought to the extreme circumvolution to inflict its deadly wound. Even in the agony of such a moment, I could picture to myself the fierce glowing of the eyes, and the intimidating expansion of the hood, ere it fastened its venomous and fatal hold upon my face or neck.

To hold it much longer would be impossible; immediately beneath my grasp there was an inward working and creeping of the skin, which seemed to be assisted by the very firmness with which I held it; my hand was gloved.

Finding, in defiance of all my efforts, that my hand was, each instant, forced closer to my face, I was anxiously con-

sidering how to act in this horrible dilemma, when an idea struck me, that if it was in my power to transfix the mouth with some sharp instrument, it would prevent the reptile from using its fangs, should it escape my hold of it.

My gun lay at my feet; the ramrod appeared the very thing required, which, with some difficulty, I succeeded in drawing out; having only one hand disengaged.

My right arm was now trembling from over-exertion, my hold becoming less firm, when I happily succeeded in passing the rod through the lower jaw up to its centre. It was not without considerable hesitation that I suddenly let go my hold of the throat, and seized the rod in both hands; at the same time bringing them over my head with a sudden jerk, I disengaged the fold from my neck, which had latterly become

almost tight enough to produce strangulation.

There was, then, little difficulty in freeing my right arm, and ultimately throwing the reptile from me to the earth, where it continued to twist and writhe itself into a thousand contortions of rage and agony.

To run to a neighbouring stream, to lave my neck, hands, and face in its cooling waters, was my first act after despatching my formidable enemy.

The effects following the bite of this snake are faintness, agitation, tremblings, difficulty of breathing, convulsions, paralysis of the limbs, stupor, and death. Various specifics have been recommended and tried, but none are to be depended upon; and it is seldom that a man or animal bitten survives, unless, indeed, the venom-sac was previously exhausted.



THE JAPANESE.

JAPAN is an extensive empire at the eastern extremity of Asia, with a population of 35,000,000, governed by a large number of petty princes called Daimios, over whom is the Tycoon, or chief sovereign. Its chief city is Jeddo.

The earliest knowledge of Japan was brought to Europe by a traveller named Marco Polo, about six hundred years ago. Since his days we have become better acquainted with the hundreds of islands forming this kingdom, which is often called "the sealed empire." Many of these islands are to this day unvisited by Europeans or Americans. Some are said to be lovely and fruitful; others are bleak and barren, and can only be approached through narrow channels, beset with rocks and whirlpools. Of late years attempts have been made to become

friends and traders with the Japanese, and with varying success.

Jeddo is described as "one of the finest cities of the world." The houses of the nobles are palaces; and we may imagine the size of one of these when we learn that it will contain several thousand followers. Everything inside is in good order, rich in value, and very clean. In the villages, the cottage-homes of the poor have neatly-clipped hedges, and have a comfortable look about them.

Some years since, several American men-of-war went on a visit to Japan. The people were at first very shy, but soon became familiar, and went on board the vessels, showing great curiosity to learn about the different objects they saw. They followed the officers and men about the ship, and whenever they could do so, they began to examine every part of their dress. The gold-laced caps, boots, swords, and tailed coats of the