

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper
APPU-NAIDOO THE AGHORE.



THE HUMAN
 Ghoul! Not all
 the gruesomeness
 of that word is
 too meaningful
 for description
 now. Old Per-
 sian traditions
 gave form to the

word *gole*, transformed into *ghoul* in our language, as describing a being in human form who feasted and fattened on the decaying flesh of men and animals. This was a mythical personage, said modern enlightenment; but today the nineteenth century civilization must attest the record of the *gole* as a reality—an actual, living being, not in the wilds and mountain fastnesses of Persia, but in that city which for more than two hundred and fifty years has been the stronghold of British control in India. Appu Naidoo, the *aghere* or corpse-eater, has made his appearance at Balasor.

Just west of the Mouths of the Ganges is what is known as Balasor Roads, where, in 1635, the agents of the British East India company sailed into the estuary of Twisting river, marked on the maps by the native title of Burabaling, literally the Old Twister. Sixteen miles up the river they went, but only eight miles from the seashore as the crow flies, and located the little town of Pippli, in the midst of a country occupied by a hostile and uncivilized people. Generally they worked their way into trade with the natives, forming the basis of British greatness in India, flourishing in spite of the oppressiveness of Mahometan governors, and when needful asserting their claims to respect by force of arms. In 1642 they established Balasor, which now contains a population of more than 20,000 souls, and is directly under British administration. The country there may be classed in three divisions: (1) The Salt tract, along the coast; (2) The Arable tract, or rice country; (3) The Submontane tract, or jungle lands. In the Salt tract sluggish, brackish streams creep along between banks of fetid black mud, occasionally marked by sandhills carpeted with creepers and wild convolvulus. Balasor is on the Arable tract, and inland the country spreads out into prairies of coarse, long grass and scrub jungle, which afford shelter and support for wild animals in plenty; and throughout a vast region there is scarcely a hamlet, and only patches of rice cultivation at long intervals—to the west, north and south.

Appu-Naidoo and his four pariah dogs entered Balasor from the south in July last. His first appearance attracted little attention, for there was nothing unusual about him that was known. He proceeded to one of the "ghorestans" outside of town, where carcasses of diseased cattle and corpses of those dead from small-pox or cholera are dis-

posed of by birds and beasts of prey. Soon the news spread that the "Saku," as he was called by the natives—for he claimed magic powers of curing diseases in both sexes, and of charming away sterility in women—was devouring the diseased corpses, and crowds gathered to witness him engaged in the unholy repast.

His reputation as a carrion-eater attracted people to him rather than other wise. Some respectable townspeople, suffering from liver or spleen diseases, went to interview him, and submitted to his cure. This consisted of being anointed with human oil obtained from boiling up diseased human flesh, and eating a portion of a sweetmeat first bitten in half by the *aghere*. In one instance a well-to-do professional man of the town sent a conveyance in order to bring the Sadu to his house to see his son and cure him of some disease.

Crowds of people came to see Appu-Naidoo disposing of his ghastly meal surrounded by his dogs. "Arrest him!" said an Englishman, who was attracted by curiosity and was disgusted at the sight. "What is the use of attempting to arrest him, sir?" said a respectable Bengali clerk in reply. "He cannot be arrested save at his own will, for he has the power of at once rendering himself invisible and of transporting himself elsewhere." Such is the depth of Orissa superstition.

"He is eating wholesome food and pretending to eat carrion," was the suggestion of one observer. But no; he had been seen in the dusk of the evening carving up a human corpse for his diet. Further, he had been observed many times taking the flesh of animals that had died of disease, and, having prepared it, had partaken of it as food. He was asked if he did not fear the disease from such a source, and replied that he secured immunity from danger by anointing his body daily with human oil, obtained by boiling human flesh! For years he had made his abode in the dire, dank charnel-houses of India, feeding on carrion of the vilest description, yet was strong and hearty. Here is a case for the explanation of scientists and authorities on germs—a case for health boards and sanitarians to ponder over.

Though apparently healthy, this human ghoul was by no means handsome, at least from the Caucasian point of view. He was about 35 years of age, and of comparatively small stature. Dressed in a foul waistcloth, and of repulsive features, he wore the usual filthy matted locks of the Hindu mendicant, reaching to his waist. Lac bangles adorned his wrist, and on one arm he wore a fine boar's tusk as an armlet. With blackened teeth, and black, hairy body and face, he seemed more devil than man.

"Why interfere with me? I want nothing from you," said he to a crowd who mobbed him upon the statement that two corpses had disappeared from Balasor, and that Appu-Naidoo had taken and eaten them. The superstitious brought rice and native spirits to propitiate him, but the better informed were angered. Though this human vulture was looked on by the ignorant and

credulous as a supernatural being, the sentiment of the more enlightened portion compelled the authorities to act notwithstanding they had no jurisdiction outside the town, and the ghoulish proceedings were revealed in a civilized court.

Appu-Naidoo was charged with stealing two human corpses. The charge was not sustained, for he had not stolen them. But the bodies of two persons who had died of disease had been placed outside of the town. These, he informed the court, he had taken possession of and devoured. Was he always an *aghere*? No, he said, and then he told the story of his life. He was a Madras Brahmin, and seven years ago he was in a starving condition, when he was initiated by a Guru at Benares into eating human flesh. So there were other ghouls than he! At present, he said, he was obliged to cook his food, but he hoped in time to be able to dispense with this sign of mortal weakness! Then he followed with a detailed recital of gruesome particulars of his diet and its preparation.

So the authorities ordered him to move on. There was no law against eating carrion, but the moral effect of Appu-Naidoo's example was so damaging that his presence could not be endured longer. The ghastly scene which dawned on Balasor in July, 1894, and continued for several weeks, was closed from the view of the people there, and the cannibal moved to more remote parts to continue his mode of life where it would be less objectionable to the European stomach because it was outside of the range of immediate attention.

There is Packer, the Colorado man-eater, who is in jail on a charge of murder for killing the victims he ate; it is admitted that he was insane. But the Hindu ghoul was not so considered; he had been taught, in a time of necessity to himself, to devour human flesh; yet the fact of his instruction, as stated by himself, reveals that in India there are ghouls from choice, who cultivate and gratify atrocious appetites in the belief that thereby they obtain supernatural powers. Fortunately their numbers are few and far between, and may they become fewer and farther still.

GREME.

REACH SUTTER FORT.

ST. GEORGE, Utah, Sept. 9, 1894.—On the evening of the 20th of July, 1847, we commenced to organize companies for traveling home. Where that was not a soul in camp knew. Elisha Everett and nine or ten others were appointed to act as pioneers by going ahead and selecting the way we should go. The next morning Captain Everett and men (myself one of them) set forward, leaving the main camp to complete the organization into companies of hundreds, of fifties and tens. Our course was now up the Los Angeles river in a northern direction. Reaching General Andres Pico's ranch, we bought some fine pears. Proceeding a few miles farther we camped. Here we were visited by General Pico. He was a jolly soul, well dressed, wearing a red silk sash around his body. He bore in his hand a lance and showed how it was used, maneuvering it as if in action with an enemy. On the 27th of July all hands were up, when it was agreed to pur-