



## Confessions of a Thug

By Philip Meadows Taylor

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**Confessions of a Thug** By Philip Meadows Taylor

Confessions of a Thug is an English novel written by Philip Meadows Taylor in 1839 based on the Thuggee cult in British India.

This book is a tale of crime and retribution. Set in 1832 in India, the story lays bare the practices of the Thugs, or deceivers as they were called, who lived in boats and used to murder those passengers whom they were able to entice into their company in their voyages up and down the rivers.

Confessions of a Thug went on to become a best seller in 19th century Britain. The book also became one of Queen Victoria's favourite novels. The story of the Thuggee cult was popularized by Confessions of a Thug, leading to the Hindi word "thug" entering the English language.

"A strange page in the book of human life is this! Thought I, as he left the room. That man, the perpetrator of so many hundred murders, thinks on the past with satisfaction and pleasure; nay he takes a pride in recalling the events of his life, almost every one of which is a murder, and glories in describing the minutest particulars of his victims, and the share he had in their destruction, with scarcely a symptom of remorse! Once or twice only has he winced while telling his fearful story, and what agitated him most at the commencement of his tale I have yet to hear."

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## Confessions of a Thug By Philip Meadows Taylor Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Colonel Philip Meadows Taylor CSI (September 25, 1808 May 13, 1876 in Menton), an administrator and novelist, was born in Liverpool, England. At the age of fifteen he was sent out to India to become a clerk to a Bombay merchant. The merchant was in financial difficulties, though. In 1824, Taylor gladly accepted a commission in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad, to which service he remained devotedly attached throughout his long career. He was speedily transferred from military duty to a civil appointment, and in this capacity he acquired a knowledge of the languages and the people of southern India which has seldom been equalled. He studied the laws, geology, and the antiquities of the country, being one of the foremost early experts on megaliths.<sup>[1]</sup> He was alternately judge, engineer, artist, and man of letters. While on furlough in England in 1840, he published the first of his Indian novels, *Confessions of a Thug*, in which he reproduced the scenes which he had heard about the Thuggee cult, described by the chief actors in them. This book was followed by a series of tales, *Tippoo Sultaun* (1840), *Tara* (1863), *Ralph Darnell* (1865), *Seeta* (1872), and *A Noble Queen* (1878), all illustrating periods of Indian history and society, and giving a prominent place to the native character, for which and the native institutions and traditions he had a great regard and respect. *Seeta* in particular was remarkable for its sympathetic and romantic portrayal of the marriage between a British civil servant and a Hindu widow just before the Indian Mutiny. Taylor himself had married Mary Palmer, the Eurasian granddaughter of William Palmer, the East India Company's Resident at Hyderabad (who had married "one of the Princesses of the Royal House of Delhi").<sup>[2]</sup> Returning to India he acted from 1840 to 1853 as correspondent for *The Times*. He also wrote a *Student's Manual of the History of India* (1870).

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