

THE SCRAP-BQOK COLUMN.

A "TOUGH OLD WOMAN" AND THE CANNIBALS.  
—Madame Ida Pfeiffer, in her *Second Journey Round the World*, travelled in Sumatra, and found herself in a ring of Cannibals, whom she jocosely tamed. She says:—  
"More than eighty armed men stood in the pathway, and barred our passage, and before we were aware of it, their spearmen had formed a circle round me, and shut me in, looking the while indescribably terrible and savage. They were tall robust men, full six feet high; their features showed the most violent agitation, and their huge mouths and projecting teeth had really more resemblance to the jaws of a wild beast than to anything human. They yelled and made a dreadful noise about me, and had I not been in some measure familiar with such scenes, I should have felt that my last hour was at hand. At first I sat down on a stone that lay near, endeavouring to look as composed and confidential as I could; but some Rajahs then came up to me with very threatening looks and gestures, and gave me clearly to understand that if I did not turn back they would kill and eat me. Their words, indeed, I did not comprehend, but their action left no matter of doubt, for they pointed with their knives to my throat, and gnashed their teeth at my arm, moving their jaws as if they had them full of my flesh. Of course, when I thought of coming among the wild Battakers I had anticipated something of this sort, and I had therefore studied a little speech in the language for such an occasion. I knew if I could say anything that would amuse them, and perhaps make them laugh, I would have a great advantage over them, for savages are quite like children, and the merest trifle will often make them friends. I got up, therefore, and patting one of the most violent who stood next me upon the shoulder in a friendly manner, said, with a smiling face, in a jargon half Malay and half Battaka, 'Why, you don't mean to say you would kill and eat a woman, especially such an old one as I am! I must be very hard and tough.' And I also gave them by signs and words to understand that I was not at all afraid of them, and was ready, if they liked, to send back my guide and go with them alone, if they would only take me as far as Eier-Taro. Fortunately for me, the doubtless very odd way in which I pronounced their language, and my pantomime, diverted them, and they began to laugh. Perhaps, also, the fearless confidence that I manifested made a good impression; they offered me their hands, the circle of spearmen opened, and rejoicing not a little at having escaped this danger, I journeyed on, and reached in perfect safety a place called Tugala, where the Rajah received me into his house.'