

III.—*Note on the Animal productions of the Tenasserim Provinces ; read at the meeting of the 10th October, 1838. By J. W. HELFER, Esq. M. D.*

Eighteen months have elapsed, since I last had the honor to address personally the Society. Since that time, I have wandered over many hundreds of miles, never trodden by Europeans, in countries left to the unbounded operations of nature, in a latitude, which produces all that is created, and, of the vegetable world, mostly in perfection and exuberance, and in tracts, where, in the recesses of the interior wilds, many productions await yet the ardour of naturalists, to bring them forth to everlasting knowledge.

Having to-day the honor to submit the ornithological part of my collections to the Society's inspection, I avail myself of the opportunity, to take a cursory view of the animal productions of the Tenasserim Provinces ; and as man occupies the highest rank in that series, I may be allowed to begin with the different races inhabiting these regions—speaking of man however, only as a naturalist, who describes the habits and manners of the human species, and considering the varieties of it in the different nations and tribes, and the striking peculiarities that are found, with reference to the geographical distribution of each.

The inhabitants may be subdivided into the Burmese, the Siamese, and the Kareans. All three belong, generally speaking, to the Mongolian race, but are so changed, and specifically distinguished, that they form separate races.

The Siamese approach nearest to the Chinese, possessing a flat forehead, a small nose, prominent cheek-bones, black hair, very thin beards, small oblique eyes, thick lips, and a colour more or less yellow. The Burmese are half Malays half Chinese ; the Kareans half Malays half Caucasian, indeed the features of the latter approach so much the Caucasian form, that many of them have even aquiline noses, a high forehead, and the European facial angle. Consequently the idea, latterly followed up by the American Baptist Missionaries with great zeal, sometimes with ridiculous obstinacy, namely, that they are the true lost tribes of the Jews, merits, as far as regards their physiognomy at least, an excuse.

The Kareans are in civilisation the lowest of the inhabitants, and exhibit an anomaly, which is perhaps no where else found. They are an agricultural people without any fixed habitations, but migrating every second or third year ; and so great is their innate love of the

primitive forests, that they hate their own industry, are disgusted with cleared land, pity men who are surrounded by smiling and well dressed cultivation, can seldom be induced to visit towns on the sea coast, and return invariably from thence, as soon as possible, to their secluded mountain valleys, leading the life of hermits, content with the almost spontaneously growing productions of nature, despising the possession of money, because not desirous to exchange their own productions, and, in consequence, not desirous to add to what we call comforts.

The Kareans seem to be the aborigines of the country, or the remains of a once numerous people, which has been again reduced to slavery by subsequent conquerors. They are scattered over a great extent of the country, from the 23rd degree of latitude to the 11th, and though conquered many centuries ago, have preserved their language and their peculiarities; for they never have mixed with foreigners, but avoid as much as possible all contact with them, prohibiting even connexions with distant tribes of their own, but intermarrying in their own families, so much so, that matrimonial alliances between brother and sister, or father and daughter, are not uncommon to this day. And this may be the reason that they are a subdued, timid, effeminate, diminishing race; so low in the scale of nations, that they have no written language, no historical, but only religious and poetical traditions, not even the presentiment of a future state; but live, without erecting their head to their Creator, without aspiring to a continuation of their existence.

The second race is the Siamese.

This nation were the former conquerors of the Tenasserim Provinces, but were driven out of the country by *ALOMPRA* in the middle of last century. They are the deadly enemies of the Burmese, formerly living with them in constant feuds, but, since the British occupation, the constantly nourished animosities have ceased, and they have begun to settle in the British territories, and to live peaceably with the Burmese. They are an enterprising industrious race, and possess a great deal of the ingenuity and shrewdness, so peculiar to the Chinese and their descendants.

Their physical development is not stinted, but they are muscular, hardy, and persevering, and are therefore the huntsmen, and the only people who have a knowledge of the vast wilds between *Zim-may* and *Mergui*, going after elephants, rhinoceros, gold-dust and precious stones. They have much of the enterprising spirit of the undaunted adventurer, and are the most capable of improvement.

They are darker than the Burmese, and approach more than the

latter to that prototype, established by GMELIN under the denomination of *Homo-fuscus*.

The Burmese, the third race, and the lords of the land and soil before they were deprived of it, are, comparing their faults and good qualities impartially, an amiable well-behaved race; naturally indolent, self-conceited, and for centuries stationary, but sufficiently civilised to throw off the imputation of being barbarians.

I adhere to the opinion, (consistent with the Mosaic tradition,) that the human species descended from one pair originally; that, in the course of ages, certain distant portions of the globe were first peopled, and that from these, as from many distinct nuclei, mankind dispersed excentrically.

So I think, and history seems to confirm the hypothesis, that from *Java*, *Sumatra*, or *Borneo*, issued the Malayan race; that the Mongols peopling China descended from the high lands of *Kobi*, and that the Indians, originally bred in the Caucasus and its continuations, extended from west to east: and I continue to say, that these three original races, meeting in their courses from south, north and west, in that part of the globe, now called *Indo-China*, gave birth to the nations now inhabiting these regions—that therefore the Burmese are a comparatively recent variety of the human species, the result of Malayan, Chinese and Hindu mixture.

It is here the place to mention that problematical race, which is reported to live in the recesses of the mountain ranges, which, as a spur or a continuation of the great *Himalaya Alps*, run towards the peninsula of Malacca.

I had never the opportunity to ascertain, if this reported race, of the existence of which all the inhabitants in the interior seem to be aware, is one of the numerous varieties of the human species, or belongs to the *Quadrumana*.

If we consider, that close by, on the *Andamans*, there exists a variety of the human species, which justly may be regarded as the lowest in the scale of intellectual beings; and when we are told, that in the south of the peninsula at *Queda*, lives a similar race of beings, belonging to the Ethiopical type, not much superior in intellect to some of the apes, we might be warranted in concluding, that remains of such a race may yet be found in those vast mountainous tracts, which never have been penetrated by Europeans.

However, the collected, and generally pretty well agreeing, descriptions of the natives cover an extent of five degrees: let me indulge in the conjecture, that these pretended human beings are nothing else

than the gigantic orang-outang of *Sumatra*, or a closely allied species, which has hitherto successfully escaped European detection, and still enjoys the daily diminishing privilege in natural history—to be unknown. In fact since the gigantic animal, whose remains ornament only this museum, was by chance discovered, all vestige of its existence disappeared for many years, until recently Major GREGORY brought two skulls of the same species from *Sumatra*, which clearly demonstrate, that the tales, hitherto believed fabulous, of large human skulls with tiger-teeth, have not been altogether unfounded, not as the relics of a rational being, but as the uniting link between man and beast.

Coming now to the *Mammalia*, we find this part of Asia participating in the variety of species, which distinguishes one side of that continent, and in the magnitude of those on the other side. It exhibits nevertheless the distinguishing particulars, which separate all Asia from New Holland, and from the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

In general it may be observed, that the Tenasserim Provinces form a combining line between Hindostan, Indo-China, and the Malayan countries, possessing species peculiar to each of the three divisions, with this distinction, that the number of species in common with Bengal and other parts of Hindostan, is comparatively smaller; that province *Amherst*, and *Ye* possess many species, peculiar to the countries east of the *Burhampootur*, and even several of *Bootan* and *Nepal*, and that the southern provinces embrace many species, which have been hitherto exclusively found only in the Malayan Archipelago.

The *Quadrumanæ* being every where found within narrower limits, do not present a great variety; some of the species are strictly limited to certain districts.

The *Simia syndactyla* has been found in the southern parts, and can be enumerated as an exception to the general rule; for this animal covers a wide range of congenial country, from *Java* and *Sumatra*, to the 15th degree of north latitude.

A *Hytobates*, though the most common species in the interior, howling most pitiably in the solitary forests, seems to have hitherto escaped the observation of naturalists.

The *Symenopithecus Maurus* is a very wild inhabitant of the loftiest trees, and considered the best food by the Kareans, by whom it is shot with poisoned arrows.

The *Cercopithecus Cynosurus* inhabits chiefly the banks of rivers, and the mangrove forests, being chiefly foud of shellfish.

Another species of *Cercopithecus* belongs to the rarest of this genus, and is found chiefly in the northern parts, upon isolated limestone rocks.

The *Cheiroptera* present a great variety; and several, I imagine, not yet described species are to be met with, chiefly of the genus *Nyctinomus*, *Phyllostomus* and *Pteropus*. Amongst the rarer species *Vespertilio Temminckii* and *Pteropus Javanicus* must be enumerated.

The *Carnivora* present a great number of species. To maintain the equilibrium in nature, it is also necessary, that where so many species are procreated unmolested by man, the number of rapacious animals must increase.

Of the *Plantigradæ* the *Ursus Malayanus* seems to occupy all the mountain parts, as high up as the 13th degree of latitude.

It must be observed that the genus *Canis* has, so far as I know, no representative in the countries, trans-*Burhampootur*; this genus, which possesses in Hindostan several interesting and particular species, seems to become obsolete, even the common jackal does not prosper in *Indo-China*, and not one specimen is to be found in Tenasserim. Yet there are several species of *Viverra*, and one *Herpestes*.

In the same ratio as the number of species of *Canis* diminishes, the number of the species of the genus *Felis* increases.

The royal tiger is to be found in great numbers, and is very strong and large; however, its nature is very different from what it is in Bengal; for scarcely an example is known of its attacking men during the day time, and the carelessness, and even contempt, with which the natives treat this formidable animal, is truly astonishing.

At *Tavoy* the black tiger, the *Felis Nelao*, is not uncommon, and a specimen was caught last year, but unfortunately on its transport to *Maulmain*, it broke through the bamboo cage, and escaped.

I pass quickly over the *Marsupialia*, and the greatest part of the *Rodentia* in this cursory sketch; the genus *Sciurus* presents a considerable number of species, and of *Pteromys*, I found a large, and probably undescribed species.

Of the *Edentata*, the little *Bradypus* has been caught, and so also the *Manis Crassicaudata*.

Coming to the *Pachydermata*, I can not omit to mention the number of elephants, which wander in herds of 10 to 30, through the uninhabited tracts, having the wide extent of primitive forests, from the bay of Bengal to the Chinese seas, open to their constant peregrinations, descending during the monsoon into the plains, and returning into the mountains during the hot weather.

The hog is very common, and the *Sus Barbyrussa* not very rare.

The rhinoceros is a common animal throughout the provinces, and perhaps more numerous than the elephant, though its less gregarious

manners, and its wilder character, do not admit an easy approach to it.

The Tenasserim Provinces seem to be a congenial place for this genus, for I dare to pronounce almost positively, that the three known Asiatic species, occur within their range. The *Rhinoceros Indicus* being found in the nothern parts of the provinces, in that high range bordering on *Zimmay* called "the elephant tail mountain;" the *R. Sondaicus* of Baron CUVIER, on the contrary, occupies the southernmost parts; while the *R. bicornis Sumatrensis*, or the double-horned species, is to be found throughout the extent of the territories from the 17° to 10° of latitude.

In character the *R. Sondaicus* seems to be the mildest, and can be easily domesticated; the powerful Indian rhinoceros is the shyest, and the double-horned the wildest.

I have had the opportunity to ascertain positively the existence of the *Tapirus Malayanus* within the British boundaries, in latitude 11° 37' in province *Mergui*, though I have not been so fortunate as to obtain a specimen of it. It is well known to the natives who call it the great pig.

Finally coming to the *Ruminantia*, as may be expected, the number of *Cervidæ* is considerable.

*Rusa Hippelaphus*, *Elaphus Wallichii*, Cuv. *C. Aristotelis*, *C. Axis*, and *C. Muntjac*, besides two other species have been seen; but there is as yet no antelope known.

Of the ox kind, the *Bubalus*, *Arnee* and *Domesticus* are both in a wild state; and of the *Bisons*, the great *Gaurus* rather rare, but *Bison Guodus* very common: besides another small kind of cow, called by the Burmese *Fhain*, of which I saw only foot prints, but never the living animal; it remains therefore undecided, to what species it must be referred.

Of birds I have made a collection of 250 species, and 600 specimens, which I herewith place at the disposal of Government, presenting it to-day to the inspection of the Society, and I only regret that economical reasons compelled me to have the birds prepared by the rude hands of common Burmah coolies, previously, a short time instructed by me; and many, otherwise greatly valuable specimens, are therefore more or less defective.

The species inhabiting the provinces are highly interesting to observers of the geographical distribution of the feathered tribe: for they, more than the *Mammalia*, of which the species occupy wider geographical ranges, prove the intimate connexion and resemblance of the lower portions of the provinces with the Malayan archipelago.

More than 60 species found in the southern hemisphere are indigenous, and amongst these is a considerable number of those first described by RAFFLES and HORSFIELD in their accounts of *Sumatra* and *Java*.

Amongst these are to be enumerated *Falco Limetus*, H. St. *Pagrdarum*, TEM. *Strix Castaroptera*, H. *Muscisapa Banyamas* and *Hirundinacea*, *Jóra Scapularis*, *Edolius*, *Puella Crypsirena*, *Temma Vick*, *Brachyptorix montan*, H. *Prinia familiaris*, *Ducelo pulchella* *Eurylaimus*, *Javanensis*, *Eurylaimus tunatus*, GOULD. *Cuculus Xanthorhynchus*, *Parra superciliosa*, &c.

I shall confine the rest of my ornithological observations to very few remarks.

The *Accipitres* are numerous, but as they mostly frequent the gloomy forests, and scarcely accessible cliffs of the mountains, the species are seldom visible, except when soaring high in the heavens, or gliding swiftly over the tops of the lofty trees; many therefore have escaped my observation. The number of *Falconidæ* I collected is 10; of *Strigidæ* five.

The *Passeres* furnish of course that variety, which is to be expected from the great number of species in this order.

The *Hirundinacæ* contain the *H. esculenta*, &c., the nests of which exported into China yield a considerable revenue annually to government.

The family of *Sylviadæ* contains a considerable number of *Taredes*; seven species of *Pastor* or *Acridotheres*, eight *Muscicupidiæ* and several *Oriolinæ*.

The family of *Fringillidæ* boasts of seven species of *Loria*.

The *Corvidæ* possess the beautiful *Cypsinina Temmia Velis*.

It is remarkable that the common crow of Calcutta, the *Corv. Doricus* never occurs in the provinces, its place is supplied by the *Corvus Caronæ*, which is equally numerous and impudent.

The *Certhia* possesses a variety of *Cinnyris* and *Nectarinia* yielding in splendid plumage, and diminutive size, little to the American *Trochili*. The beautiful *Dicæum inver* forms a connecting link with the *Meropida*, which are the glory of the east in richness of plumage, and four species of *Merops* rival in colors the species of *Java* and New Holland.

*Halcyon* and *Alcedo* of the nine species that exist, amongst which the *Halcyon Gurial*, an Indian species, takes the lead in size and noise.

The family of *Buceros* contains four representatives, amongst which the small *Buceros Malabaricus* of LATH. is the most common.

The Indian *Homrai* is equally an inhabitant of Tenasserim, besides two or three beautiful species, which I do not find any where described.

Of the order *Scansores*, the *Picus*, or wood-peckers are numerous and beautiful, and I found nine different species. *Picus Bengalensis* showing the affinity with India, and the closely allied *Picus Tiga* of HORSFIELD with *Java*.

The *Cuculidæ* are numerous. Of *Phoenicophæus*, there are three species of small *Cerulis*; the *Centrophus Castaropterus* is one of the commonest inhabitants near human abode.

The genus *Bucco* contains five species, of which two appear to be new.

The *Psittacidæ* have five representatives, amongst which the small *Portrams preporsitis* is the great destroyer of *duria* blossoms.

The next order are the *Gallinanæ*.

The family of *Columbidæ* possess, as far as I am aware, seven species, of which four belong to the genus *Vinago*.

The splendid *Geophilus Nicobarensis* is an ornament of the Islands constituting the *Mergui* archipelago.

The *Tetraonidæ* possess few representatives, the whole country being an uninterrupted forest, and these animals liking bare rocky grounds, pasturage fields, and meadows. Only one species of *Perdrix*, and two species of *Coturnix* have been observed by me.

The *Phasianidæ* possess the *Ph. Gallus*, or the father of our domestic fowl, in great abundance in the jungles; and the breed, amongst the natives, is commonly kept up by supplies of eggs from the forests.

Of the *Pavonidæ*, the Indian peacock is in great abundance in the interior near mountain torrents.

The *Grallæ*.—Of the *Charadriadæ*, three species of *Charadri* amongst which, the Indian *Ch. ventralis*! of Genl. HARDWICKE, and the *Gloriola* or *Entalis* of LEACH.

The family of *Ardeadæ*, possesses many representatives. The *Ciconia Argala*, or the common Calcutta adjutant, is never seen on that coast, and the existence of a substitute in the *C. capillata* of TEMMINCK, or the adjutant without pouch, reminds us again, that the provinces approach more to *Java* than to Hindostan.

The genera *Grus* and *Ardea*, possess 11 species of which the *Ardea Malaucersis* of GMELIN is the most common.

The family of *Fringellidæ* have a due number of species, *Numenius*, *Scolopax*, *Totanus*, *Rhynchus*, *Limosa*, *Tringa* and *Hemantopus* are found, and have their residence chiefly near the mouths of the numerous rivers, descending from the mountains, as far as they are exposed to the influence of the tides.



Of the *Rallidæ* I can only enumerate the *Parra Superciliosa*, and two species of *Ortesgometra*.

Finally ending with the *Palmiperæ*, we have one species of *Pelicanus* so widely spread over the east, and four species of *Carbo*, which have taken up their residence upon the great rivers.

To render the enumeration complete, I have only to mention four species of *Sterna*, and of the *Anatinæ*, the *Anser Girra* of India, the *Mareca Ausuree* and another unknown species.

Having thus completed the enumeration of observed animals I have only to add, as may well be imagined, that the occupation of the provinces by the British, has opened a wide field to the naturalist and philosopher. What I have done has been only to remove the upper veil, which densely covers this much promising land; but the result of my limited researches will, I trust, demonstrate that success and a rich harvest must await every one who investigates the country with leisure, *con gusto et amore*, confining himself to certain definite branches; and I will only add that I shall be most happy to submit to the Society further additions and more information, which, I hope, I shall be able to gather in future.

IV.—On a new species of Pheasant from Tibet. By B. H. HODGSON, Esq.

The zoological region comprising *Tibet*, with the lofty mountains which bound it towards India and China, is chiefly distinguished in the bird department, by the number of its pheasants, (*Phasianidæ*,) hardly any two of which agree in form and external organisation. This rich variety of structure, whilst it mocks all past attempts at systematic arrangement, seems to indicate, that we yet possess, in this family, but the fragment of the complete circle, (termed *Phasianidæ* by VIGORS and *Pavonidæ* by SWAINSON,) though the riches of recent discovery, may induce us to hope, that the deficient forms are not extinct, but only unknown.

Be that as it may, there is at least no doubt, that in the present state of the scientific classification of this family of the *Rasores*, an insulated observer cannot well hope to class newly discovered species satisfactorily; and I shall therefore at once proceed to the summary description of what I believe to be such, without any present attempt to decide, whether my bird be an aberrant species, or a new type in the family.