

INDIA IN 1880.

BY

SIR RICHARD TEMPLE, BART.,

G.C.S.I., C.I.E., D.C.L.,

LATE GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY, LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF BENGAL,
AND FINANCE MINISTER OF INDIA.

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time in the day he takes alarm, and makes good his escape, the ease with which his huge, ungainly and apparently unwieldy limbs ascend and descend the steepest hill-sides, and the force with which he crashes through the opposing thickets, astonish beholders. For some days after his capture, the grief, rage and chagrin, indicated by his movements and demeanour, afford a sorry spectacle. He soon, however, becomes reconciled to his lot, and seems to find his happiness in the ways of civilized servitude. He breeds but seldom while in captivity, but his longevity renders him a valued member of an establishment. A young elephant of tender age is petted by Natives as among the choicest of animals. But if a tame elephant happens to become loosed in any locality suited to his natural habits, he reverts to his wild life, and then his recapture is difficult for mankind, with whose devices he has had acquaintance. In some places, herds of wild elephants are known to have been descendants of domesticated elephants escaped from slavery.

The bison is found in most of the hill-ranges of India, and affords sport which is interesting without being specially difficult. The critical moment is when, with lowered head, he rushes like a whirlwind at his enemy.

The rhinoceros is found principally in the forests skirting the base of the eastern Himalayas. He is sometimes shot, at other times he is captured young, and reserved by Native princes for their wild-beast shows.

The alligator is seldom pursued for sport, though marksmen often delight in shooting him while he lies on the edge of the waters, as he is a monster hated by all men. There are two species; one the "sharp-nosed," which preys on fish, and is harmless. The other is the "snub-nosed," which subsists upon carrion and will seize human beings when opportunity may offer, and which is the alligator of such ill-omened fame. Being amphibious, he lives often in the large tanks which are so common in the country. When moving timidly at dawn or by twilight from one tank to another, he is awkward and dis-

composed, having but slight power of movement on land. His limbs are small and his potent tail is of little use out of the water. He reposes chiefly in the depths of the pools of rivers. But he loves to emerge and bask on the sandy bed or rocky surfaces near the banks under the broiling sun. As he lies in utter stillness, he seems at a short distance to be a grey weather-beaten log of wood. In this manner he will often remain at a short distance from the water's edge, a few yards perhaps. If any person, passing by or going to the water's edge to drink and bathe, mistaking the alligator for a log, or not noticing him at all, should come between the monster and the water, then all is over in a moment. The alligator, propelled by his powerful tail, makes a sudden rush, and plunges into the water with his victim in his jaws. If the stranger, however, passes on the outer, or the land side, of the alligator, he is probably safe; the monster, seeing a man approach, will betake himself to his proper element. It is the presence of the alligator that renders bathing in many of the most picturesque rivers so unsafe. European soldiers and others are sometimes thus carried away while swimming. Occasionally the alligator will lie in wait in the water for creatures approaching the margin, in order to seize them. The Natives say that he can, with his terribly armed jaw and with the leverage of his tail, seize, and drag into the water, even a tiger when bending forward to drink on the river's edge. Such a thing is quite possible, and the resistance of a tiger, once caught in this iron grip, would be ineffectual. A sad tale was told thus in eastern Bengal. Some women were bathing in the Brahmaputra; suddenly a gaping mouth, with long rows of teeth, emerged from the water, and seized one of the women by the waist. For a moment the monster rose half out of the water, brandished his victim aloft, and then disappeared with her under water to be seen no more.

The hunting of the ibex and the *Ovis Ammon*, the mountain goat and the wild sheep of the Himalayas, demands not only the highest skill of the marksman, but also the nerve, patience,

and endurance of the mountaineer. The game is rarely to be desried and most difficult of approach, and at the best, the practised and proficient sportsman will find only few rewards. But he will live, move, and have his being amidst the "mountain gloom and mountain glory;" and he will commune with nature in her sublimest moods.

• Anglo-Indian literature abounds in stirring narratives of sport and travel, such as Shakspeare's wild sports in the East, the old Forest Ranger, the Wild sports of the Deccan, Colonel Markham's sporting tour in the Himalayas. Among books recently published, the wonderful interest surrounding the life of those who seek their diversion in the forest, is charmingly illustrated by Lockwood's 'Natural History, sport and travel,' and by Sanderson's 'Thirteen Years among the wild beasts of India.'