

Asiatic Gallery,

BAKER STREET BAZAR, PORTMAN SQUARE.

GRAND MOVING DIORAMA OF HINDOSTAN,

DISPLAYING THE SCENERY OF THE HOOGLY, THE BHAGIRATHI,
AND THE GANGES,

FROM FORT WILLIAM, BENGAL, TO GANGOUTRI,
IN THE HIMALAYA.

BY

فاني پارکس

Visitors to the Diorama are allowed to inspect
THE MUSEUM.

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Price One Shilling.



SICKRĪ-GALĪ.

A COUNTRY vessel is being towed by her crew round a rocky point ; each man has his own *gūn*, or track-rope, fastened to a short, thick piece of bamboo, which he carries over his shoulder. A Pinnace, or budjerow, tracks, with ten or twelve men, upon one rope only.

The Sīckrī-galī pass, during the Hindū and Muhammadan Governments, was the commanding entrance from Bahar into Bengal, and was fortified with a strong wall ; however, in 1742, a Mahratta army of cavalry passed into Bengal through the hills above Colgong. The village of Sīckrī-galī is eighteen miles above Rajmahal at the base of a high rocky eminence, commanding a fine view of two ranges of hills. There is here the tomb of a celebrated Muhammadan Saint, Pir Pointī, and a cave in limestone rock ; and higher up, at a place called Pir Pointī, now a mass of ruins, is another tomb of the saint.

This pass is close upon the Rajmahal hills, and the only European inhabitant lives in the *Bangla*, commonly called Bungalow, the house at the foot of the hill. Wild beasts sometimes come to this place at night, and the footmarks of the tiger are often to be seen in the garden. Jackals roam howling through the village; bears, tigers, rhinoceroses, leopards, hogs, deer of all kinds, abound here, and feathered game in the hills. Elephants are absolutely necessary to enable a man to enjoy shooting amidst the high grass and thorny thickets. The place is so much disturbed by the people who go into the hills for wood, that the game retreat farther into the *jangal*. When a gentleman goes out shooting on foot, the *dandīs* accompany him with long poles, to beat the bushes. In the marshy plains under the hills of this pass good shooting is to be found, but on account of tigers it is dangerous.

THE RAJMAHAL HILLS.

BEYOND the heavy rain which is pouring down, the hills of Rajmahal are seen in the distance; they are beautifully wooded, and full of game of every description. No scenes can be more picturesque than those in the interior. The wild climbers hang from the forest trees in luxuriant beauty, especially that magnificent one, the *cachnar* (*baubinia scandens*)—a specimen of its leaves gathered in these hills is in the Museum.

The *dandīs* from the boats that anchor at Sickrī-galī go up the hills in gangs to cut wood for firing, and bring it down in great quantities.

The *byā* birds hang their long nests from the extreme end of the slight branches of the delicate *bābul*-tree pendant over a pool or stream for security. The Museum also contains nests of this little bird suspended on the broad leaf of the fan-palm. The fable declares that the "Old birds put a fire-fly into their nests every night to act as a lamp." For a further account of these interesting little creatures, see "Wanderings of a Pilgrim," (vol. I. 220, 221, and vol. II. 74). The marshes at the foot of the hills are full of leeches the low-lands abound with wild fowl, hares, and partridges of a peculiar sort, said to be found only at Rajmahal, and one other station in India.

The hill-men are a most singular race of people; they are about five feet high, very active, remarkable for lightness and suppleness of limb, with the piercing and restless eye, said to be peculiar to savages. They wear their hair drawn tight up in a knot on the very top of

their head, the ends fastened in with a wooden comb. They are good-natured, gay-looking people. Their principal food is Indian corn, boiled and mashed. They kill wild hogs with a poisoned arrow, taking the precaution to cut out the flesh around the wound before they eat the animal. Their bows and arrows are rough and wild-looking; the strips of feather on the latter are from the wing of the vulture. They assert that they procure the poison, into which they dip their arrows, from a remote hill-tribe, and are ignorant of its nature: it appears to be a carefully guarded secret. Three of these arrows are in the Museum. At the proper season the hill-men descend into the plains to gather in the crops of uncut rice.

A country boat filled with bales of cotton is floating down the stream; and the crew of a *Dacca oolāk*, which is aground, are striving to shove her into deeper water.

A native, sitting on the bank, is quietly watching the noisy scene, and smoking his *nāriyal*, or cocoa-nut pipe, by the side of his *charpāī*, or bed, which is on the bank. Native vessels are towed by the *dāndīs*, or boatmen, most part of the way, except during the rains. These men work from daylight till sunset in the most laborious way, frequently in the water for hours, up to their middles, towing the vessel or shoving it with their backs over sand banks: their labour does not cease until the boats are *lugūo'd* (moored) at night; then they cook on shore and eat their daily meal of boiled rice and curry, or flour cakes, called *chappātīs*. Occasionally, when a fair wind blows, they get some rest; for then an immense square sail is hoisted, tacks, sheets, and haul-yards are fast belayed: they all go to sleep except the steersman, and the safety of the boat depends upon the rotten state of the cordage and sails: frequently very strong and sudden squalls come on, and, before a single rope is let go, every thing is blown to ribbons.