

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
FAMILY OF HOBHOUSE
AND
REMINISCENCES

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We had a rajah, "par excellence," at Burdwan. He was very wealthy, very generous, very kind-hearted; had received and profited fairly from an English education, and was a staunch friend to our rule. He built several palaces, but only to lend them to his English friends, myself included, and a "Dil-Koosha," or "Heart's Delight," where he had underground chambers, a menagerie, and gardens. His "underground" was swamped by water and never tenanted, and his menagerie was a mere pretence as such. He had in it two giraffes, two bears, a rhinoceros, and an alligator. A few visitors would occasionally visit the giraffes and the bears. On one occasion the giraffes seized and devoured some sham flowers that were on a lady's hat, and tore off the hat itself. After that no one cared to visit these nor, indeed, any of the beasts. And this the more especially because the rajah's particular native friends, in his absence, used to only amuse themselves in the menagerie by throwing live pigs into the water where the alligator dwelt and watching the struggles and agonies that ensued before the poor pigs were killed, torn to pieces, and devoured. The rhinoceros was more humane. He lived in the same enclosure with the alligator, and by his side might always be seen running a little pig. This pig had been thrown in, but had escaped from the alligator and had run for protection to the rhinoceros. The big brute responded to the relationship and confidence, and it was an interesting and pretty sight when his little brother trotted down to drink in the alligator's water to see the rhinoceros standing on guard and snorting defiance at the alligator, and that successfully.

The rajah's one ambition was to obtain a salute of guns, and Lord Lawrence, on my representation, was good enough to promise, and afterwards, I believe, to accord them, and made quite happy the rajah's last days.

I left Burdwan for good in the middle of 1860, HOOGHLY, and was ordered up to Sylhet, an eastern district 1860. then sixteen days' post away from Calcutta, and favoured by over three hundred inches of rain in the year! but my destination was altered to Hooghly, to do