

THE  
**ASIATIC JOURNAL**

AND

**MONTHLY REGISTER**

FOR

**BRITISH AND FOREIGN INDIA, CHINA,**

AND

**AUSTRALASIA.**

---

**VOL. XI.—NEW SERIES.**

**MAY—AUGUST 1833.**

---

**LONDON :**  
**PARBURY, ALLEN, AND CO.,**  
**LEADENHALL STREET.**

X 1833.

3017  
5-8

## MOFUSSIL STATIONS.

## No. VIII.—BERHAMPORE.

IN its outward aspect, there is no European station in the Mofussil which can bear any comparison with Berhampore; it is situated on the left bank of the Hooghley, in the fair and fertile province of Bengal, and is arrayed with the utmost splendour of foliage; the flowering trees attaining a gigantic size, and the more common offspring of the forest, the banian, tamarind, neem, peepul, and bamboo, occurring in greater profusion, and seeming to riot in richer luxuriance, than in the dry soils of the upper country, where the groves are contrasted with arid sand, instead of springing from long grass and thickly-spreading underwood. The cantonments of Berhampore are well laid out and handsomely built; the quarters of the officers belonging to the European regiments stationed there being of brick covered with cement, like the *puckha* palaces of Calcutta, and forming uniform ranges of considerable extent. The grand square, a spacious quadrangle, enclosing an excellent parade-ground, is particularly striking; and stately houses, belonging to civilians and other permanent residents, arise in tasteful and convenient spots in the neighbourhood, giving to the whole station an air of grandeur and importance not usually found in garrisons, where the pompous array of fortresses and bristling bulwarks is wanting. To contrast with all this beauty and magnificence, and to shew the deceitfulness of outward appearances, a large and melancholy arena, filled with monumental stones, gives silent but mournful evidence of the unhealthiness of the atmosphere, and of the grim dominion of death in the midst of the most lavish productions of nature. Berhampore lies low, and has not been sufficiently drained before its occupation by European troops. Every breath of air which visits it comes over swamps and marshy lands; it abounds with ditches and stagnant pools, those fruitful sources of malaria, and its too redundant vegetation is rank and noisome.

Elegant and commodious as the European quarters appear, they have not been constructed with a proper regard to the health of the inhabitants. It was formerly the custom in Bengal, and one which unfortunately has not been universally relinquished, to glaze the houses only upon what sailors would term the weather-side; close wooden shutters, or glass doors, not being supposed necessary except to keep off the storms of rain brought by the hurricanes from the north-west. Under this idea, the more sheltered parts of the house are merely furnished with venetians, which never can be made to close so exactly as to keep out the damp air. There are no fire-places in these summer residences; and persons compelled to dwell all the year round in them must undergo every change of atmosphere, without the possibility of preventing their exposure to diseases which are generated by sudden transitions from heat to cold. Philosophers assert that the earth is cooling down; and although the sultriness of Bengal during the hot season has not suffered the slightest diminution, it is certain that the air is much keener than heretofore during the few months of cold weather: a fact fully

borne out by the frosts, which have made ice an article of manufacture at Chinsurah by the same process used in the upper provinces. Every person having more regard to health than to expense, takes care to have the family abode glazed upon all sides, and fire-places formerly unknown are becoming common in Calcutta, where, after sunset, in the large lofty rooms, during the cold season, the blaze and genial warmth of a wood fire are very acceptable. The want of these preservatives from cholera, which is more frequently brought on by exposure to chills than by any other cause, is severely felt at Berhampore, where that fatal disease is peculiarly destructive to the European community, making sad ravages amongst the King's regiments every season: doleful records upon the tombstones chronicle its gloomy triumphs; neither sex nor age are spared, and there is no cemetery in India which contains the mortal remains of so many juvenile mothers and young brides as that at Berhampore. The Lower Orphan School, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, receives numerous inmates from this unhealthy station. The institution was established for the purpose of educating and providing for the children of deceased soldiers; should the non-commissioned officers or privates of European regiments desire to take a wife out of this asylum, they are, if men of character, permitted to do so, but they must choose by the eye alone at a single interview. They are not allowed to pay their addresses to the object which has attracted them, or to transfer their affections to another after their selection has been made: no previous acquaintance can be granted, and the bride has only the privilege of rejection.

King's troops, which have nearly completed the full period of their services in India, generally take their leave of Mofussil stations at Berhampore; but it is too often selected for the quarters of new arrivals; and regiments, acclimating in the midst of its treacherous swamps, pay double toll to the king of terrors. Here are no advantages which can compensate for an unhealthy climate, and no one takes up his abode at this place without a feeling of reluctance; frequent deaths cast a gloom upon society, and there are other causes which prevent the cordiality and good-fellowship, amid the European community, which can alone reconcile the Indian exile to banishment in a foreign land. The extreme youth of the civil and military servants of the Company, upon their arrival in the country in which their lot has been cast, permits them to conform to its customs without any irksome feeling; but it is otherwise with officers of King's regiments, who come out later in life. Their habits and manners have been formed in England, and many refuse to submit to the regulations and usages which have been established time out of mind in India, while others comply with an ill-grace. The order of visiting is completely reversed in the Company's territories; the stranger is expected to call upon the residents, and the rule is so absolute, that persons who refuse to attend to it give much offence, and are in a great measure cut off from society. Subaltern officers of small means, unaccustomed to the state of things existing in a strange country, feel reluctant to intrude themselves upon the mansions of rich civilians, and would rather await the advance of the great man; the civilian is offended by the neglect of common courtesy, and, having lived many years out of

England, forgets to make proper allowances for the prejudices imbibed at home: coldness and dislike ensue, each casts the blame upon the other, and the station is divided into separate circles.

The difference between the style of living and the incomes of persons thrown together at a Mofussil station is but too apt to create suspicion, if not jealousy, on the part of the least wealthy class. They scrutinize the air and deportment of those more favoured with the gifts of fortune with a critical eye; reserve is always attributed to pride; they expect marked and flattering receptions, without considering that their visits may be paid to men who, notwithstanding their station or their talents, may be very little acquainted with the world, and quite unskilled in the art of doing the honours of their houses. The shyness and want of ease, which would pass unnoticed in persons of their own standing, are imputed to the worst feelings when exhibited by rich civilians: no time is given to thaw the ice; a hasty judgment, in many instances of course exceedingly erroneous, is formed, and the visitor withdraws in disgust, determined never to subject himself again to "the proud man's contumely." Ladies, happily, are not expected to undergo this ordeal: upon their arrival at a station, the husband, father, or brother, with whom they reside, makes the tour of the place, and the females of the families, to whom he has paid his respects, call upon the strangers, who are of course expected to return the visit. If the duty, in the first instance, on the part of the gentleman, be omitted, the ladies will remain unnoticed, and it will either be supposed that they desire to live in seclusion, or that there is some not very creditable reason for their being averse to an introduction to the society. The awkwardness of presenting themselves at the houses of persons with whom they have not had any previous acquaintance is considerably lessened when, as is generally the case, the strangers have some friend, well known to the whole station, to accompany them in their round of visits. It rarely happens that the officers of the native army are without a *Cicerone*; for, immediately upon their landing, they are thrown into the way of so many cadets, new-comers like themselves, who, upon their obtaining commissions, are posted into different regiments; and so soon become associated with persons belonging to both services, that, at almost every station, they must have an acquaintance disposed to perform the friendly office. King's troops are differently circumstanced; they have a society within themselves, which they fancy will render them independent of any other. They do not choose to appear to court attentions which they think should be bestowed unsolicited; and if, upon their first arrival in Bengal, they should not be quartered for any length of time at Fort William, they may march up the country without having formed any acquaintance beyond the limits of their own barracks. Officers joining King's regiments long stationed in India generally live for a considerable period isolated from the servants of the Company, unless the corps should have amalgamated itself with the rest of the Anglo-Indian community, and have got rid of all the opinions contracted in Europe. This is only the case, at Berhampore, when its garrison has been recruited from the upper provinces.

A newly-arrived regiment, which had held out staunchly against paying the first visit, and whose officers could not be persuaded that pride was not the cause of their being unnoticed by civilians of rank, was not a little astonished by the conduct pursued by a gentleman, who succeeded to the appointment of resident at the neighbouring court. The individual in question, from long domestication with native princes in distant states, had adopted the pomp and circumstance of oriental splendour, so necessary to create and retain the respect due to the representative of the governors of the country. The appointments of his establishment were magnificent; he kept a train of elephants, and when he appeared in state was surrounded by a crowd of retainers, *chobdars*, and *chuprassees*, carrying silver maces and sheathed swords before him, while mounted *suwars* brought up the rear. These things were talked of, and of course exaggerated, in a place which has been too long under the dominion of the Company for Europeans to be compelled to study the tastes and prejudices of natives of rank, whom it seems to be the policy to instruct in foreign fashions. A demeanour correspondent to all this outward grandeur was expected by the little world of Berhampore; but, to the surprise of every body, the new resident got into his buggy, that favourite conveyance of rich and poor, and left his name at every door without the least distinction. He became of course exceedingly popular, and rational people perceived that, if they had attended like him to the customs of the country, the whole station might have been united, instead of being split into parties.

To a casual visitor, neither the crowded burial-ground, nor the little jealousies existing between certain classes, can seriously affect the pleasure to be derived from a short sojourn at one of the best-built and best-kept stations in India. The roads are exceedingly fine, and there are no squalid and unsightly objects to destroy the effect of the splendid buildings scattered in every direction. The whole place would realize the *beau idéal* which untravelled persons might form of some imperial residence, exclusively confined to the *attachés* of a court in its rural retirement; and when the band of one of the King's regiments is playing the overtures of Rossini or of Weber, in a masterly style, at the evening promenade, surrounded by gay equipages filled with ladies attired in the latest European fashions, it is difficult to imagine that the scene is placed upon the banks of the Hooghly, so many thousand miles distant from the native places of the music, the glittering paraphernalia, and the assembled crowd. The divine airs of our favourite composers can scarcely be heard to more advantage than when played by accomplished performers, on a fine calm evening, by the side of an Indian river. None, who have ever listened to the strains of harmony waked by skilful hands, while gazing upon the placid waters paved with starry ingots, or silvered over by the moonlight, and shaded with feathery trees, can forget the soothing sensation they produced. The pleasure is too rarely tasted to lose its zest; European bands do not long retain their best performers in India; they have many temptations to indulge in habits of intemperance, and when they drop off, very inferior substitutes must be accepted in their place.

The East-India Company have a manufactory of silk at Berhampore, which furnishes the bandana handkerchiefs so much prized in England, together with taffetas and washing silks, which are however deficient both in gloss and substance, and very inferior to the productions of other looms, either belonging to the eastern world or to European states; the difference in the price between these articles and richer importations, is not sufficiently great to induce Anglo-Indian ladies to patronize them, even if the prejudice did not run very strongly in favour of foreign goods. Where China satins are despised, the silks of Berhampore have little favour, and seldom find their way into the wardrobes of the fair residents. Very beautiful pieces of workmanship, of various kinds, in carved ivory, are brought for sale from the neighbouring city of Moorsshedabad. Though the artizans of the native capital of the province of Bengal cannot support any comparison with the delicate performances of the Chinese, they exhibit considerable skill in the delineations of men and animals, and their figures far surpass the grotesque images which are usually sold in Delhi. The common kinds of chessmen, boards furnished with richly-cut pegs for the game of *solitaire*, paper-presses, and wafer-seals, are exceedingly well-executed, and cheap compared with the European prices. It is seldom that there is a large stock upon hand, the manufacturers not liking to work except by order; nor are these articles purchasable at Calcutta. The natives of India, though industrious and fond of getting money, are not given to commercial speculations; at least, the spirit does not pervade all classes of merchants and manufacturers; and those articles, which are not in common demand all over India, are only to be found in the places where they are produced. There is no general mart in Calcutta, where all the different commodities of Hindoostan can be procured.

Without visiting every part of India, it is impossible to become acquainted with the numerous branches of art which have arrived at a high degree of perfection in remote native cities; many persons have remained for years in Calcutta without having had an opportunity of seeing articles of manufacture, which are better known in England than within a hundred miles of the spot where they were made. No European shopkeeper at the presidency has yet thought it worth his while to inquire about the productions of the Mofussil, with a view of opening a warehouse for their sale. The success of the Chinese shop on the esplanade offers great encouragement for the establishment of a similar emporium, where persons desirous to send presents to England might see all the resources of the country at once, and choose from the gold ornaments and embroideries of Delhi, the mosaics, marbles, and agates of Agra, the sweetmeats and pickles of Lucknow, the medicinal oils of Mhow and other celebrated places, the carpets of Mirzapore, the muslin scarfs of Dacca, the ivory works of Berhampore, defensive and offensive arms, with a great variety of other articles, both curious and ornamental, which are scarcely known except by the few who may meet them by accident, in travelling through the places where they are made.

Within seventy miles of Berhampore, and not more than fifty from Calcutta, at Kisanagar; a civil station on the banks of the Jellinghyr, there is a

manufactory of printed muslins, of a very superior kind, which are not to be met with in the Calcutta market, even when the supply from England is not adequate to the demand. These muslins have the commendation—a strong one to some persons—of being high-priced. The piece, which is more than enough for one dress but not sufficient for two, is twenty rupees (£2). The patterns are elegant, but are only printed in a single colour; and as India muslin, though nearly driven out of the market by steam and spinning-jennies, is still highly-prized, it might be advantageous to an English shopkeeper to keep a stock on hand for the benefit of the ladies of Calcutta.

At the same place, Kishnagur, poor native workmen have become exceedingly expert in an art, which appears to be of very modern date in India, that of modelling figures illustrative of the great variety of castes and classes of the population of Hindoostan. Nothing can be more characteristic, or more skilfully executed, than the countenances; the expression of each is admirable; the water-carrier looks worn with fatigue, while the khansamah bears an air of authority; the lines of care and thought are traced upon the brow of age, and the young seem to exult in strength and vigour. There is the stern determination of the self-torturing *fuqeer*, and the humble insinuating appeal of the common beggar. The attitudes have great merit; but the limbs, though well put together, are not so exactly proportioned as to correspond with the extraordinary degree of perfection to which the heads have been brought, the hands in particular being usually too large. The figures are, in the first instance, composed of rags and straw, covered with a coating of cement: from their weight and appearance, they convey the idea of images formed of finely-tempered clay; but as they are easily fractured, a slight accident will reveal the nature of the materials. These figures, which cannot be copied in England except at a great expense (it being necessary to take casts from the originals), are sold at Kishnagur and Calcutta, where they are also manufactured, at eight annas (a shilling) each, dressed with great accuracy in the proper costume, but in coarse materials. Any number may be procured, and it is only necessary to tell the artist that you require representations of nautch girls, musicians, tailors, or fifty others; they are all brought, and are all equally true to nature.

The amusements of Berhampore are considerably increased by its proximity to Moorshedabad, a city which, after the desertion of Dacca by the imperial soubadar, became the capital of Bengal, and which is still the residence of the pensioned descendant of its former rulers. The dominion which Jaffeer Khan, the founder of the family of the nawáb of Bengal, maintained against the will of the Moghul emperors, who vainly attempted to supersede him, faded away after the famous defeat at Plassey: not a single vestige of power now remains, and the princes of the present day are content to support an outward shew of magnificence upon an income of sixteen lacs (£160,000) a-year, allowed them by the East-India Company. The city is well-situated, and forms a pleasing object from the river, but contains nothing worthy of notice, except the modern palace of the nawáb, which is a fine building, in the European style, of dazzling whiteness, and rising in glittering splendour amid stately groves of flowering,

trees. All the Mohammedan festivals are celebrated with great pomp under the superintendence of a prince, who has little else to divert his mind; and as the invitations are very generally extended to the European residents of Berhampore, they have ample opportunities of studying the character of native entertainments. Deference to European taste has occasioned those at Moorshedabad to be of a mixed character; the nautch is frequently performing in one apartment while quadrilles are going on in another, and the style of the banquet is entirely adapted to the peculiar notions of the guests.

The intercourse, which has taken place between the nawáb of Bengal and his Anglo-Indian neighbours, has not, up to the present period, been productive of the same salutary effects, which in so many instances have followed the intimacies of European and Indian residents in Calcutta. Though not destitute of talents, and apparently exceedingly willing to accommodate themselves to foreign customs, to live in European houses, and to drive about in European carriages, none of the descendants of the de-throned Meer Jaffeer Khan have been distinguished for literary or scientific attainments, and the late nawáb\* was lamentably deficient in every branch of education. It is, unfortunately, the policy of the relatives of natives of rank, to enervate the mind of the heir of the family by frivolous and ignoble pursuits; this system, in the instance above mentioned, was carried to a fatal extent. The young prince was handsome, graceful in his person, and courteous in his manners; he never neglected to bow to European ladies when he met them in the evening drive, whether he had been previously presented to them or not, paying that mark of respect indiscriminately to every carriage which contained a fair tenant. It was impossible, however, for Europeans, who had any respect for themselves, to take the slightest pleasure in the society of a man wholly given up to dissipation of every kind. The interchange of visits was rendered imperative by his rank and situation; but his presence never could be productive of gratification. When partaking of the hospitalities of the judges of the court of circuit, or other distinguished Europeans, at whose tables he did not sit as a mere matter of form, according to the strict rules practised by persons of his religion in India, he speedily became intoxicated by too frequent libations of that beverage, in which lax Mohammedans permit themselves to indulge, since it does not come under the denomination of wine. Cherry brandy is the favourite juice of the jovial portion of Moslems and Hindoos; even the lofty-minded Rajpoots, the strictest followers of Brahma, who in their central provinces have not been so strongly exposed to the contaminating influence of European example, will condescend to imbibe long potations of this fascinating liqueur, and under its influence become, in an exceedingly short space of time, as they term it, *barra coossee* (very happy).

Upon some occasions, the nawáb of Bengal appears upon the river in state, and the effect of his numerous and brilliant flotilla is the finest imaginable. The prows of these gay and gilded barges are shaped into the resemblance of animals, and painted and varnished with all the hues and

\* The *Asiatic Journal* has lately announced the death of this prince, who fell an early victim to a career of vice and intemperance.



splendour of enamel; at the stern, gilt pillars support richly-embroidered canopies, and the rowers are splendidly clad in white and scarlet. The boats are exceedingly long, and as they skim like bright-plumed birds the surface of the sparkling water, the delighted spectator feels assured that the silver *Cydnus* never bore a fairer fleet. The great men, who follow in the nawáb's train, are magnificently clad in gold and silver brocade, studded with jewels; the punkahs and umbrellas, which are used to agitate the air and screen them from the sun when landing, are formed of rich materials, and there is not, as in other native processions, any mixture of poverty or meanness to mar the gorgeousness of the spectacle.

These regattas are seen to the greatest advantage in the rains, when the *Bhagarathi*—the name given to the arm of the Ganges which branches off from the parent river, about forty miles above Moorshedabad,—is very wide, spreading itself over a vast extent of low ground, and forming beautiful creeks and bays shadowed with the bending branches of the bamboo and other graceful trees. Nor is it by day alone that the river is made the scene of those pageants, which in India supply the place of dramatic spectacles. An annual fête takes place at night, under the auspices of the nawáb, which is scarcely to be paralleled in beauty. It is instituted in honour of the escape of an ancient sovereign of Bengal from drowning, who, as the tradition relates, being upset in a boat at night, would have perished, his attendants being unable to distinguish the spot where he struggled in the water, had it not been for a sudden illumination caused by a troop of beautiful maidens, who had simultaneously launched a great number of little boats into the river, of coco-nut garlanded with flowers, and gleaming with a lamp, whose flickering flame each viewed with anxious hopes of happy augury. The faithful followers of the king, aided by this seasonable diffusion of light, perceived their master just as he was nearly sinking, exhausted by vain efforts to reach the shore, and guiding a boat to his assistance, arrived in time to snatch him from a watery grave. It is said that it is in commemoration of this fortunate escape that the annual festival of the *Bhearer* is celebrated; some, however, attribute its origin to a different circumstance: whatever may have been the motive of its institution, they are fortunate who have had an opportunity of witnessing a scene, which transports the spectator to fairy land.

The natives of India are extremely ingenious in all the decorative parts of art, and frequently astonish those who consider their taste as perfectly barbarous by the display of undoubted elegance in their devices. *Talc*, which is found in great abundance in India, supplies the material for numberless brilliant illusions; the splendid *tázees*, carried about at the *Mohurum*, are chiefly composed of the shining and transparent plates of this mineral, which may be cut into any shape, and made to assume all the colours of the rainbow. When illuminated by the profusion of lamps, which are always brought in aid of any midnight exhibition, the effect is perfectly magical.

The banks of the river are brilliantly lighted up on the evening of the festival of the *Bhearer*, and numerous flights of rockets announce the ap-

pranch of a floating palace, built upon a raft, and preceded by thousands of small lamps, which cover the surface of the water, each wreathed with a chaplet of flowers. The raft is of considerable extent, formed of plantation trees fastened together, and bearing a structure which Titania herself might delight to inhabit. Towers, gates, and pagodas appear in fantastic array, bright with a thousand colours, and shining in the light of numberless glittering cressets. Two angles in the river only admit a transient view of the passing pageant; there is no time to detect the human hand in its erection, or to doubt that fairy spells have been at work: 'mid the blaze of rockets, which reveal nothing but its beauties, the clang of innumerable instruments, and the animating shouts of thousands raised to the highest degree of excitement by the interest of the scene, the splendid fabric disappears, and the river is left to its own placid beauty, the sky to its holy stars, and the atmosphere around to those splendid meteors which brighten the evening air in Bengal. The fire-fly is rarely to be seen above Benares, where it does not appear in the countless myriads disporting through the fields of heaven, in the lower and more marshy provinces, one of the most beautiful adjuncts of an Indian night; it is seen in great abundance in the neighbourhood of Moorshedabad, where the trees are literally radiant with lamps on every leaf.

It may be supposed that, when the festival of the *Bhearer* is celebrated with so much pomp, the custom, to which (whatever may be its origin) it bears so strong an affinity, is very prevalent. Though occasionally on the Jumna, and on the higher parts of the Ganges, the fairy boat, with its garland and its light of good or evil omen, is to be seen, the stream is not lit up as in Bengal with numerous barks of hope, which float after each other of an evening in rapid succession, nor is the native attachment to flowers, though extending to every part of Hindoostan, so strongly displayed in any other province.

In addition to the gaieties and festivities which take place at the palace of the nawáb, the residents of Berhampore avail themselves of the opportunities of enjoying field sports, afforded by the adjacent country. The Rajmhal hills arise on the opposite bank of the river, and thither parties of gentlemen are continually attracted by the exciting warfare which Anglo-Indians delight to carry on against the beasts of prey infesting the jungles of India. Numerous wild animals, of the most savage description, abound in the sunny dells and shady thickets of the extensive mountain ranges, which divide Bengal from the neighbouring province of Behar. The rhinoceros is an inhabitant of the woods of Rajmhal, and though of too sullen and cruel a character to become domesticated or useful to man, when taken young may be permitted nearly the same liberty of action as that with which the elephant in the Zoological gardens is indulged. An enclosure of not very large dimensions, but in which there is a spreading umbrageous tree, and a small muddy pond, in Barrackpore Park, contains one of these huge unwieldy animals. The creature is apparently well-satisfied with its condition, wallowing for half the day in the mire, and spending the remainder under the sheltering boughs of its leafy canopy. It does not dis-

play any anger or impatience at the approach of visitors, and gazes unconcernedly at the carriages which are continually passing and re-passing the place of its confinement, which, for the convenience of those who may wish to see it without much trouble, is close to the public road. This extraordinary animal is rarely seen in Europe; a young one, captured a few years ago, which was intended for an English menagerie, unfortunately perished in consequence of the miscalculations of the natives to whom it was entrusted. As they learned that there would be some difficulty in procuring proper food for their four-footed companion, in one stage of their journey to Calcutta, they crammed it with three days provision at once, and it died of repletion, a contingency which never occurred to men who can endure the extremes of abstinence or of excess without sustaining much personal inconvenience.

Those huge ferocious bears, which form such conspicuous inhabitants of European menageries, and which in their native haunts are not less formidable than the tiger, stalk in horrid majesty through the woods of Rajmhal: one of the tribe was formerly to be found in the collection at Barrackpore Park, which contained specimens of the most interesting animals in India; but the present Government, too economical in its arrangements to sanction an expense of five hundred rupees per month, the cost of the establishment, gave away birds and beasts without remorse, and though not at the trouble of taking down the buildings, which are tasteful and well-constructed, has permitted them to fall into decay. The niggard parsimony pursued in this instance must always be a subject of regret to those who are interested in the study of natural history. Had the menagerie been kept up a few years longer, there can be little doubt that, besides the gratification which it afforded to visitants from the presidency and the neighbouring cantonments, it would have become an emporium for the supply of England, since it would have been always easy to fill up the places of those animals which should be sent to Zoological societies at home. There would have been no kind of difficulty in procuring the most rare inhabitants of the peninsula of India, since, had any desire been manifested on the part of the Government to render the menagerie complete in all its departments, every civilian in the service would have been happy to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by his situation, and the ready aid given by the natives to any thing which the judge or collector may choose to undertake, to furnish the collection with such wild animals as were known to exist within the limits of his jurisdiction.

Very rare and beautiful animals may frequently be purchased in India at reasonable prices. A pair of the small Nipal cattle, which furnish those long silky tails, so distinguished an ornament of every native court, and which when converted into *chouries* are always thought worthy of being affixed to handles of solid silver, were offered for sale by the proprietor for three hundred rupees. The tails form an article of commerce in great demand, but the animals which supply them are seldom seen upon the plains of India, as they will not live through the heats of the sultry months. The introduction of the breed in England, therefore, would not be difficult, and

as an ornamental appendage to a nobleman's park, they would be invaluable. Not one amid the numerous varieties belonging to their species can compare in outward beauty to those lovely little animals; they are exceedingly well-shaped, and their coats, jet black, and shining like satin, are contrasted with a pure white bushy tail, long, soft, and wavy. The pair above-mentioned were carried to Gwalior, the officer to whom they were offered being deterred from making the purchase, on account of the difficulty, in the existing state of things, of having them properly taken care of in Calcutta, or of making arrangements for their being shipped for England.

The sunny regions of Rajmhal are particularly favourable to the growth of snakes; all the venomous kinds thrive in a congenial soil, and the boa-constrictor attains a size unknown in other parts of the continent of India.

It has been already remarked, that a very sensible change has been experienced in the four months of cold weather, which affords so seasonable a relief to the overpowering heat of Bengal; and as by experiment, made at Chinsurah, it is now supposed that ice may be obtained by the method employed in the upper country, those who are of opinion that saltpetre, and a freezing apparatus, are necessary for the manufacture, may feel desirous to learn the common mode in use all over India. At the principal stations in the Mofussil, there are regular ice-harvests; the night-frosts during a certain number of weeks being always sufficiently strong to congeal water exposed to their influence, if of an inconsiderable depth. A piece of ground, commensurate to the number of persons who subscribe to the concern, is laid out for the purpose of collecting a sufficient quantity of ice to last through the hot season; shallow pans are provided, of convenient dimensions, and these are placed in rows, close to each other. After sunset, they are filled with water by superintendents, whose business it is to remove the cakes when sufficiently frozen, and to replenish the pans: an operation which is performed several times in the course of each night. The cakes of ice are deposited in excavations made according to the principles observed in England, and with proper care may be preserved during the rains. The least neglect, however, is fatal in the damp season; the ice melts in an instant, and the unfortunate subscribers, instead of having the stipulated quantity to cool butter, cream, jellies, water, and wine, are compelled to do as well as they can with the only substitute, saltpetre. Artificial ice, made by the assistance of an air-pump and other machinery, has been found too expensive, and is seldom or never resorted to in India: upon its first introduction into Bengal, the novelty proved very attractive, and a rich and luxurious native, it is said, expended seven hundred pounds in the single article of ice at an entertainment given to a European party.