

ACCOUNT OF THE DISTRICT
OF
BHAGALPUR.

BOOK I.

TOPOGRAPHY AND ANTIQUITIES.

CHAPTER 1ST

EXTENT, GENERAL APPEARANCE, AND SOIL.

SECTION 1st.

Extent and Boundaries.

This district forms the jurisdiction of a Judge and Magistrate; and not only includes the whole extent, which is under the management of the Collector residing at its capital, but also part of the lands of which the Collectors of Murshedabad and Puraniya receive the income. This is attended with some inconvenience, both in the administration of justice, and collection of revenue; for the judge must have occasional need to consult the records of the collector, and the latter officer has also sometimes occasion to apply for the assistance of the magistrate, and while they reside at a distance, these applications must be attended with considerable delay, and additional trouble.

This district occupies the S. E. corner of the Mogul province of Behar, together with a small portion of Bengal; but would appear at one time to have been

At that place it receives from the N. W. a very large but stagnant channel called Tilawe, which forms the boundary between this and Tirahut for about 12 miles, and its banks are very well cultivated. From Mahinathnagar the Katnai runs about eight miles to join the Tilyuga.

Three or four miles below the mouth of the Katnai, the Tilyuga receives from the north a small river named the Loram, which comes from Tirahut, and runs through part of the divisions of Gogri and Lokmanpur, more like a narrow winding marsh than a river.

A little below the mouth of the Loram the Tilyuga divides into two branches. The southern retains the name, but it is comparatively the smallest; and though in February its channel is very wide, it contains only a small clear stream. The northern branch is called the Ghagri, and in February, where I crossed it, it might contain 150 yards of water, deep but nearly stagnant.

After a separation of about 12 miles the two channels reunite, after the northern has received the Dayus, which has been described in my account of Puraniya. The united stream of the two branches retains the name of the Ghagri until it falls into the Kosi, as has been described in my account of Puraniya; but in this district it communicates with the Ganges by a channel of considerable length called Sukhani, which is said to be an old channel of the Ganges.

Within this district there is no place of trade situated on any of these branches of the Ghagri, owing more to the wretched condition in which the vicinity is than to a want of convenience in situation.

SECTION 3d.

Of the rivers south from the Ganges.

These rivers have a very different aspect from those that I have hitherto described, either in this district, or in those that have been previously surveyed, and more resemble the rivers of Mysore. Although the channels of some of them are of great width, none of them in this district is at any time navigable, except in the Eastern corner, where in the floods the water of the Ganges, filling the lower parts of their channels, renders them

Some miles farther down it receives from the N. E. a channel of a very long course, which is named the Narahariya. This is said to rise from the southern face of the hills opposite to Ganggaprasad, and after winding among the mountains for a long way it reaches the plains of Manihari. Here it sends to the north a small channel, which passes through the estate called Madhuban, and falls into the Ganges or rather into a branch of it, between Paingti and Teliyagarhi.

The main channel of the Narahariya passes west through the rich mould of Maniharu, in which it makes great havoc, but in January does not contain a stream.

The Koya, after the junction of the Narahariya, passes a few miles east beyond Bhader hill, and there receives a small channel that comes from Baliya. In its upper part it is called Khungturi, in its lower Changdha.

Between Piyalapur and Badlugunj there arises a small channel named Baramasiya, which running N. W. some miles through a fine swelling country where it receives many springs, enters a fine plain inundated by the Ganges. It then takes the name of Singgiya, and turning to the east, after a course of some miles enters the Ganges a little above Paingti.

A little above Sakarigali a small torrent named the Samdanala falls into the Ganges from the adjacent hills, and forms the boundary between divisions Paingti and Rajmahal.

About four miles south from Sakarigali a small torrent from the hills falls down a precipice, and is called Motijharna, or the pearl of streams. At all seasons it has a small quantity of water, and in the periodical rains forms a cascade, which being visible from the great river has attracted some notice. Like other similar sources, its water in the dry season is absorbed before it reaches the plain, but in the floods it finds its way to the Ganges by two routes. The first is nearly opposite to the cascade, the second forms a long channel that winds for a long way south by the roots of the hills, is named Bagicha, and joins an old channel of the Ganges south from Masaha. The Bagicha at the foot of the hills is a favourite haunt of the Rhinoceros.

BOOK III.
OF THE NATURAL PRODUCTIONS OF THE DISTRICT
OF
BHAGALPUR.
CHAPTER 1ST.
OF THE ANIMALS.

The most common monkey in this district, and the most destructive of the wild quadrupeds, or rather as the French naturalists say, of the wild four handed animals, is the Hanuman. This animal seems confined to certain territories in a manner, for which I cannot well account. On the north side of the Ganges there are none, which occasions no difficulty, as the river is too wide for them to cross; but, although they are numerous in almost every wood in the district, and are exceedingly common in the town of Bhagalpur, there are scarcely any in Rajmahal or the low country S. E. from it, nor are there any in Mungger, Suryagarha, or the adjacent villages. There seems to be nothing in the situation of these places, that can occasion the difference. I presume, therefore, that the people of Rajmahal, Mungger, etc., resist the incursions of these destructive animals with more vigour than the consciences of the people of Bhagalpur, and of other sufferers would admit. The people of Mungger, indeed, deny their using any force or violence, and pretend, that when a Hanuman comes to invade their property, they merely make a noise, and use threats, but this I have seen tried very often with no effect, and I have no doubt, that more severity is used, but this is looked upon by so many as sinful, that the poor people, who defend their property, are afraid to avow their industry

with bows or swords, and the ball of the matchlocks which a few have is too small. Still however they would do some good, and if parties of the hill crops were sent to different places for a general hunt, these armed rabble might be of great use, in attending the regulars to procure intelligence and supplies; and I have no doubt that in two or three years the whole of these destructive animals might be killed. The presence of an European officer with each party of 20 or 30 sepoy's would be of the utmost advantage; and the hunt would, in fact, be a good military exercise for the party employed. The whole expense should of course be levied from the Zemindars, whose lands are liable to be injured by the elephant, first offering the alternative of their undertaking to destroy the animals by their own means. If some such exertion is not made, there can be no doubt that the elephants will rapidly increase, and extend their depredations all over the district.

The alarm that they occasion is exceedingly great. One night that I lay close by the hills, although I had a guard, the men of the village close by my tents retired at night to trees, and the women hid themselves among the cattle, leaving their huts a prey to the elephants, who know very well where to look for grain. Two nights before some of them had unroofed a hut in the village, and had eaten up all the grain, which a poor family had preserved in its earthen store (Kuthi).

On the north side of the river, a colony of elephants, similar to that in the southern parts of Puraniya, frequented the marshy woods of that part, and occasioned an equal alarm. Dular Singha Chaudhuri of Puraniya, whose activity I have had already occasion to praise, having purchased an estate there, found it in a great measure deserted, and the principal reason assigned was the destruction occasioned by the elephants. Although Dular Singha probably knew very well of much stronger reasons, he did not neglect this, and brought from Silhat four elephants trained to catch the wild. With these he soon caught seven, and the few that remain on that side of the river have left his estate and its immediate vicinity, and have retired to where the owners are usual totally helpless

This method might no doubt be pursued with success by the other zemindars, but I imagine it would prove more expensive than the killing the animals with muskets. If the creatures could indeed be preserved, their value would in some measure compensate the expense, but of the seven taken by Dular Singha I understand that only one survived the loss of freedom. In fact the casualties among elephants taken by a noose are always very numerous, and here it would be impossible to form a Khada. Nor can this last method of catching elephants be employed so as to free a country entirely from their depredations.

In most of the wild parts of the district, the rhinoceros is occasionally but very rarely seen. Formerly, in the marshes at the foot of the hills between Rajmahal and Sakarigali, there were many, and even now there are always some, but they have been so much disturbed by European sportsmen, that they have become scarce, and exceedingly shy. They never did much harm. In almost every part of the district wild hogs are to be found, and even in Mungger, its best cultivated part, they have been known to come into the fort; but in general they are neither numerous nor very destructive; and are worst on the north side of the Ganges. In the wilder parts they seem to be kept within bounds by the number of persons of low birth, who take a delight in hunting them on account of their unclean flesh.

The Indian term Harin, is difficult to explain. It includes not only the Moschus, Antelope, and Cervue of European zoologists, but also a wild species of the Bos, while it excludes the wild buffalo. While such a vague generic term has been chosen, we need not wonder at difficulties concerning the specific appellations; and in fact I scarcely have met with two people, even in the same vicinity, that agreed on this subject, and at little distances the nomenclature is totally at variance. I shall proceed therefore to mention the animals which I could ascertain to exist, with such names as I heard given to them. I heard of many other names, but so vaguely employed that it is impossible to say whether or not they belong to the same animals.

The *Moschus Memina* of the zoologists is a pretty little animal, not much larger than a hare. Among the