

THE
PERCY ANECDOTES

ORIGINAL AND SELECT



SHOLTO AND REUBEN PERCY
BROTHERS OF THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY
MONT BENGER



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THE
Percy Anecdotes.

ANECDOTES OF PASTIME.

————— “PASTIME passing excellent,
If husbanded with Modesty.”

SHAKESPEARE.

DANCING.

DANCING, which may be considered as the most universal of all pastimes, was at first, and indeed during some thousand years, a religious ceremony. The most ancient dance of which we have any particular account, is that of the Jews, established by the Levitical law, to be exhibited at their solemn feasts. After the passage of the Red Sea, we are told, “*Sumpsit Maria prophetissa, soror Aaron tympanum in manu sua egressaque,*” &c. On this occasion there were two distinct bands, one of men, and the other of women.

The daughters of Shiloh were dancing in the vineyards when they were caught by the young men of the tribe of Benjamin, who were advised by the elders of Israel to take that opportunity of supplying

scene of action, and on the haunch of one of them he instantly fastened, and brought it to the ground. His keepers, to whom he was perfectly familiarized, for some time hesitated to go near him. At length they ventured, and not being able to get him to quit the deer, they cut its throat, separated the haunch he had seized, which he never left from his hold a moment, covered his eyes, and led him away with the haunch in his mouth.

RHINOCEROS HUNTING.

The following extract of a letter from the north-east frontier of British India, gives a good account of a day passed in hunting the rhinoceros, during the late Nepal war. "On a late occasion, our huntsmen, whom we have dispersed in all directions, brought us information of a herd of seven or eight rhinoceroses having taken up their abode near Hurdeen. We despatched our elephants, seven in number, and shooting apparatus, &c. without delay, and followed ourselves on horseback. On reaching the spot, we found that either side of the lake, for about one hundred yards, was clothed with glorious jungle for every animal of the savage kind. Rattan, wild rose bushes, and the reeds interwoven, formed a cover of nearly ten feet high. This, then, we began forthwith to beat, each of our party, four in number, having an elephant with howdahs, the other three elephants carrying pads, and a few servants only. We had seventeen guns, most of them double barrelled, and five of the latter kind four ounce rifles. Soon after we entered the jungle, the piping of the elephants and the fresh

prints of the rhinoceroses' feet, proved that the hunters were not mistaken ; and, indeed, in less than an hour, we started two young ones, about the size of a full grown Nilghau, and not unlike that animal in colour. The first fire killed one, and wounded the other severely, which, notwithstanding, went off at a smart elk trot, and howling in a most hideous manner. The sound was infinitely greater, but the tone reminded me of such music as I had often heard on the sod at wakes and funerals. The old ones soon collected around us by the cries, and three males, of monstrous size and frightful appearance, charged our line with daring impetuosity. Two of our elephants giving way, received the charge on their hinder parts, and were instantly upset ; those that stood fronting the charge, were not knocked down, but staggered several yards by the shock. Unfortunately, mine was the only howdah elephant that gave way, and you may believe my situation was by no means laughable. The elephant often attempted to rise ; but so often did the rhinoceros lay him flat again, and at length with such force, that I was thrown several yards into the lake, in a state of utter stupefaction, but luckily falling on some willows, they supported and saved me from drowning. I was not sorry, on recovering, to find myself out of the howdah, for while in it, destruction appeared inevitable, either by the horn of the furious enemy, the rolling over of the elephant, or what was as likely as any, by my companion's shot, who despairing of my escape, fired many times. Their balls struck the monster's body in several places, without producing any evident effect, though from the four ouncer before mentioned.

At last a lucky shot knocked a large flake from his horn, and caused a pleasing change in his conduct; for he walked *Spanish* directly afterwards, tearing through the thickets with astonishing force, at a beautiful *Mahratta canter*. We traced his footsteps for some miles, when being convinced that he had taken to the forest, we returned to look for the others, determined to search again for him on a future day. On our way back, we found the young one that we had wounded in the morning, dead. 'Twas now past one, P. M. and we had nearly given up all hopes of finding the others. However, on rounding the north end of the lake, we roused them again, and after a chase of more than three hours, killed two, a male and a female. They were not so bold now as we expected to find them, and seemed to have lost their courage with their leader, to whom they were very inferior in size; but still their dimensions astonished us not a little. The largest was above six feet in height, and stronger in proportion than any elephant I ever saw. No elephants but males of known courage ought to be employed in this desperate chase."

AQUATIC TOURNAMENT.

The fête of St. Louis is always celebrated with peculiar splendour at Lyons, and among the amusements there is a curious aquatic tournament by the *jouteurs*, who exhibit in boats on the river. Mrs. Baillie, who witnessed this pastime in 1818, thus describes it: "The dress of the combatants, among whom were several young boys of eight and five years old, was very handsome and fanciful, entirely