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SECOND REPORT.

THE PROVINCES OF
YE, TAVOY, AND MERGUE,
ON THE
TENASSERIM COAST;

VISITED AND EXAMINED BY ORDER OF GOVERNMENT, WITH
THE VIEW TO DEVELOP THEIR NATURAL RESOURCES.

BY
J. W. HELFER, M. D.

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PROCEEDINGS

FROM THE 14th OF NOVEMBER TO THE 5th OF
MAY 1838.

OVERLAND JOURNEY FROM MOULMAIN TO MERGUI.

- 1st. Ascent of the river Attaran in boats and examination of the hot springs on the Attaran. Progress to the upper part of the Zamie Khiaung.
- 2d. Overland trip from the Zamie Khiaung to the lower and upper teak forests and along the great eastern range to the Mickeli Khiaung.
- 3d. Tour to the pass of the three Pagodas and the adjoining Siamese high table lands.
- 4th. From the Mickeli Khiaung to Lamain, missing the road and wandering seven days in the wilds, and from thence to Ye.
- 5th. Excursion to the highest part of the eastern range called Zae-town and back.
- 6th. Journey to the Malue mountains, and from thence to the Hinzai bay.
- 7th. Journey along the coast to Zadie Yua.
- 8th. Ascent of the Zadie mountains.
- 9th. Journey from Nabulee Yua to Tavoy.
- 10th. Excursions in the neighbourhood of Tavoy.
- 11th. Journey to the eastward over the high range of mountains to Metamio—visit to the Tin territories, ascent of the Kamaung-thueg Bain Khiaung and part of the upper Tenass-jerim, as far as the hot springs, and back to Tavoy.
- 12th. Journey from Tavoy to the Towngbiaun valley and the Kiauk mountain.
- 13th. Descent of the Towngbiaun valley and overland journey to Pai and Palouk.
- 14th. Descent of the Palouk river and along the sea-coast to Palou.
- 15th. Overland journey from Palou to the east until falling in with the Tenasserim river at the Tarouk Khiaung.
- 16th. Descent of the Tenasserim river to Mergui.
- 17th. Second ascent of the Tenasserim, nine days' journey up from Mergui and back.

18th. Third ascent to the village of Tenasserim and ascent of the little Tenasserim, pursuing it as far as the high table land separating the upper part of the Isthmus of Kraw from the Bay of Siam, to the coal fields and back.

No. 1, No. 14, No. 17, and parts of No. 13 and 18, have been performed in boats—No. 16, and part of No. 18, on rafts.

The rest overland.

The overland journey led the greatest part through extensive districts without a road, following partly wild Elephant paths, partly cutting a road through the jungles.

Parts of No. 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, and the whole of 5, 8, 11, 15, have never been visited before by any European.

The greatest part of the visited country being uninhabited, provisions, sometimes for a fortnight, and once for a month, were carried by coolies.

Besides the tusks they never fail to cut off the tail of the elephant, which is considered by the natives of higher rank a becoming ornament. All the rest of the huge carcase (excepting sometimes the claws) is left unused to decay.

The Tenasserim elephants considered inferior, and reasons.

The elephants of this country are noble and large animals, they are however considered much inferior in strength to the Indian. The reason of this inferiority is not to be attributed to the race, but to the manner in which they are kept and fed. Every elephant is supposed sufficiently able to gather his own food in the jungle and is scarcely ever fed with rice cakes. As the elephants in the teak forests work sometimes hard the whole day, and are expected to feed during the night in the jungle, they have indeed very little time for rest, and cannot be expected to endure the fatigues any length of time.

The Indian army could be supplied with elephants from this coast.

Propositions to establish an elephant stud.

Government could easily supply from here at a moderate cost all elephants requisite for the Military service in India. It would be perhaps recommendable not only to catch and to tame elephants, but also to institute an elephant stud. It is not yet sufficiently ascertained that elephants do not breed in a nominal captivity. It has not yet been properly tried. I consent that elephants will not propagate their species in a narrow space or stable, but if kept in an enclosed extensive jungle forest during the time of their excitement, it would perhaps be otherwise, at least the experiment would be worth trying. In any other part of India, excepting Ceylon, it would be difficult or impracticable; the vegetation and the quantity of congenial food to them is every where scarcer than here, besides the extent of country at the disposal of Government is here greater than anywhere, a large tract of convenient country could easily be selected, and as easily roughly enclosed, wood being no matter of consideration. For the present it would of course be cheaper to catch and to tame the wild animals, and it is only a proposition to provide for the future, for the more the advance of civilization claims the soil as its own, the more must its primitive inhabitants retire, and just the elephant claims the widest range for his exploits and for his unparalleled peregrinations.

2.—RHINOCEROS.

Three species of rhinoceros.

Of this genus the single and double horned species occur in the provinces, and it is still doubtful if there is not yet the third known to naturalists under the name of *Rhinoceros Asiaticus Sumatrensis*, likewise as it is not yet ascertained, if the tapir of Sumatra is to be found in the southern parts or not.

The single horned species is in many parts very common, the double horned perhaps not more scarce, but more wild, hidden in the recesses of the forests, and shot only sometimes by surprise.

Kareans the proper rhinoceros hunters.

It is very seldom that these animals approach villages, but they are met close to the solitary abodes of the sylvan Kareans. With these it is a passion to hunt rhinoceros, in which they are very skilful, knowing as they say the best places to hit the animal, pretending that no Burmah knows the secret to run a ball through the body of the rhinoceros.

The fact is that the Burmese in general are bad shots and cowards, and many do not dare to approach the rhinoceros, fearing its furious attack when wounded. The Shans, undoubtedly the best and hardiest huntsman, feel only a passion for the elephant—so all rhinoceros fall to the share of the Kareans.

It is an interesting observation that the rhinoceros like to drink mineral waters. The warm hydro-sulphurous springs are very common in the provinces, and when found in the recesses of the forest, I observed always the marks of rhinoceros in the surrounding mud. The Kareans profit of this circumstance, building small huts in the trees above the water, expecting the arrival of the animals, to shoot them from there in safety.

Rhinoceros fond of mineral waters.

The number annually killed, but only guessing roughly, is about
from 60—100 of the one horned,
,, 20— 40 ,, ,, doubled horned species,

Number of rhinoceros killed annually.

but these are only males. The rhinoceros when got at is generally in a wild gloomy den, and the huntsman is very often unable to distinguish the sex. Finding the shot animal to be a female, after cutting a small slice of meat from its haunches to satisfy his momentary wants, he leaves the carcass, taking however the trouble to extract the claws which are considered talismans.

There is a trade carried on with the horns, which is entirely monopolized by the Chinese and destined solely for the Chinese market, where the horns are esteemed a valuable medicine, used either transformed into drinking vessels, and supposed to contain the virtue of discovering poison, or the horn is filed into powder and taken internally on extraordinary occasions.

Trade with the horns.

But like every thing with the Chinese has some mystery known only to themselves, so it is also with the horns. To excuse the inefficacy of the pretended invaluable arcanum, which in fact must manifest itself too often, they assume to know certain signs of exalted innate virtue, which if found, increases the price very much, and for this reason it is difficult to know the pretended or real value of the article.

Superstition and fraud with the horns.

The greatest number of rhinoceros is shot in the southern parts of the provinces, and one Chinese is settled in the old village of Tenasserim, chiefly for the purpose to buy up first hand all horns which can be procured.

The poor ignorant Kareans are always the dupes, they do not know the value, and barter it for trifles. The Kareans have sold small horns at three rupees per piece.

In China the same sell from thirty to fifty rupees, the trade could be carried on on a larger scale if the hundreds of islands of the Mergui Archipelago would be visited, many of which have never been penetrated by men—they swarm, it is said, with rhinoceros.

Hides not used.

It is a great pity that no notice has been taken of all the hides which have been permitted to decay, by which negligence the firmest and strongest leather in existence is lost and wasted.

Rhinoceros a domestic animal.

It is generally acknowledged that the full grown rhinoceros is one of the wildest animals, yet it is known, that young ones have been perfectly domesticated; it has even been proposed to employ them for carrying burthens like buffaloes and tame them for agricultural purposes.

3.—HIDES IN GENERAL.

Trade with the hides entirely neglected.

The trade with hides, so very common in countries which are just emerging from a state of rudeness, where men have occupied but a small space, and animals are the undisturbed masters of the country, is entirely unknown on this coast, though there is a variety of skins, hides and even furs, which are allowed to run waste.

The carcases of elephants are allowed to decay without taking off their skin. It is known that the savage tribes in Africa seldom allow this to happen, and among the Ashantees the armour of their warriors is partly made from elephant skin, and the elephant tails are emblems of royalty.

The skin of the rhinoceros is still more valuable, being when dry so strong and elastic that no musket ball can penetrate—it is supposed that some of the invaluable shields of the heroes of antiquity were covered with the hides either of the hipopotamus or rhinoceros; there are hundreds annually shot, yet nobody ever thought to divest the carcase of the skin.

Buffaloe hides.

The same carelessness takes place with the hides of the buffaloes. The buffaloes are the only cattle of the Burmese, and they are chiefly in those parts where rice cultivation flourishes numerously.

The Burmese use only the buffaloe to prepare the rice ground, and to tread the paddy out; they neither eat the meat, nor use the milk, nor sell the hides. Towards the end of 1836, unfortunately a great epidemic affected the buffaloes of the whole province, and it carried away it is supposed 20,000 buffaloes, one-third of the whole number in existence. Not one single skin of this great number came in commerce, even the horns were allowed to lay scattered about, though the trade of buffaloe horns in India is not inconsiderable. But so much are all resources in these provinces unknown and unused, that only since two years some Mogul merchants in Maulmain, began to collect buffaloe horns, which are to be got at a very low price.

Deer skins.

A trade with deer skins does not exist at all, in Siam on the contrary a considerable trade in that article is carried on with the Americans and Chinese. The number and variety of deer is great, but they are seldom shot by the natives, who prefer the wild hog as a venison, and they remain a quiet prey to the numerous tigers.

The skins of the tiger, panther, leopard and cheater are equally unused and their value entirely unknown. I had opportunity to buy good tiger skins at eight annas per piece. In Maulmain where people get a remuneration for killing a tiger from Government, they throw, after having brought some part of the animal, the tiger itself in the river, without farther notice, or leave it in the jungle.

Tiger skins.

The large black squirrel abounds in the forests, and is I am told an acceptable fur to the Chinese, yet it may be easily imagined, that it is still less known to be of any use.

Squirrel skins.

It is here the place to mention a petty trade which is carried on with the skins of one species of bird of the genus halcyon or king-fisher, part of whose feathers are of a beautiful sky blue colour, and which are eagerly bought up in China, where they are used for Mandarin state dresses. The people chiefly on the Upper Attaran are occupied with the chase. They tame one of these birds, and place it upon a trap in which the bait consists of a fish. The wild bird rushes with impetuosity into the trap to seize the fish before his supposed antagonist has time to get at it.

Birds' skins for Mandarin dresses.

The people dry the skins in the sun, and sell them in bundles of ten. I am told the price they get is four annas per piece.

I am very little acquainted with the productions of the sea, having had no opportunity to visit much the coast or any of the islands. The productions of the islands however are precious ; those from which Government derive any revenue are the following : fisheries in general, gnapee, or a paste prepared from small shrimps, a common and indispensable article of food among the natives, tortoise shells, birds-nests, sea slugs. There are besides corals and pearls and pieces of amber to be found, but little about this is known.

Productions of the sea.

It is necessary to observe that the productions of the southernmost parts of the provinces, chiefly those of the Mergui Archipelago, are almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese and some few Malays.

In the hands of the Chinese.

The scanty intercourse with the islands, sometimes none at all, places the people there at the mercy of every one, who will profit of it to impose upon these poor migrating fishermen, who inhabit them, and the headmen, as well as the Chinese traders, are able to do it with secrecy and impunity. It is generally said to be the case, that they intoxicate these poor wretches at first with opium and arrack, and spoil them afterwards deliberately of the valuable productions of the sea which they have contrived to collect.

Great abuses.

Endeavours to induce these people to come to Mergui, to bring the amount of their taxation in kind to the place, to have it sold before their eyes by public auction, and to get the surplus faithfully back, have proved hitherto unprevailing ; like the Kareans of the interior, they are afraid to visit the towns, though they ought now already to know, that their persons are safe, and that nothing but justice

will be done to them. The sad experiences which they had opportunity to witness in the time of the oppressive and arbitrary disposition of the Burmese rule are not yet forgotten, and these poor tribes know nothing about the new Government, except that they have less taxes to pay, even which fact some of their wise men explain to be a snare to entice them.

WAX—HONEY.

There are several kinds of bees working wax and honey, all of whom are different from the European species.

Different kinds of bees.

One very large kind builds a nest or combs on the lower part of the branches of teak trees in the form of a protracted pouch or bag. Several families or swarms occupy the same tree, and one large tree on the Tenasserim was loaded with forty-three distinct nests.

Different kinds of honey.

This is the jungle or tree honey which is got in a liquid form of syrup consistency, of a yellowish transparent colour. It is a favourite dish of the Kareans, who are very skilful to smoke the bees out at night time.

Another kind of bee builds its nests only on limestone rocks, and selects generally a perpendicular wand. There is an isolated limestone rock on the Tenasserim, which is occupied by numerous swarms, and the approach to it in the day time is considered very dangerous. Another rock to the south of the village of Tenasserim is considered Government property, and the getting of honey and wax there is rented out. The honey of this kind is more liquid than the first, of a reddish brown colour, more sweet and aromatic than the first. The very superior hard honey of Ava, which properly speaking comes from the Chinese frontiers of Yunnan, is in the country unknown.

Varnish formed by bees.

Another kind of bees forms its nest, instead of wax, of a substance which belongs to the resinous gums, and yields that valuable substance which has been considered a vegetable production, and which since late years has been imported to Europe under the name of dammer from Sumatra.

It yields a varnish which has been used for coating paintings, and has been considered valuable and superior to copal.

Pitch, a production of bees.

The common pitch used in Maulmain for ordinary purposes is also an animal production, and is equally part of the nest of a bee which inhabits hollow trees. This species inhabits chiefly the neighbourhood of the teak forests, and the substance is brought from the Upper Attaran.

Upon examination I found that with proper treatment it yields a substance very similar to the Venetian or Bordeaux turpentine. This production must be distinguished from another kind of pitch which sometimes is to be got in the bazar of Maulmain, and which is the resin of a pine tree growing in the high tablelands between Amherst Province and the Burmese territory, Shan State of Labong.