

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL,
FOR DECEMBER, 1875.

The monthly General Meeting of the Society was held on Wednesday, the 1st December, 1875, at 9 o'clock P. M.

T. Oldham, LL. D., President, in the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The following presentations were announced—

1. From the Government of India, Home Dept., a set of 67 photographs of the ancient Architectural remains of Chutiá-Nágpur, taken by T. F. Peppé, Esq.

2. From the Director of the Imperial Botanical Garden of St. Petersburg, Trudbi, Imperatorskago Petersburgkago Botanischekago, Soda. Tome III, Pt. II.

3. From the Government of Bengal, a copy of the first volume of Dr. Hooker's Flora of British India.

4. From the Italian Society of Spectroscopists, through Prof. Tacchini, several numbers of their Journal.

The following gentleman, duly, proposed and seconded at the last meeting, was balloted for and elected an ordinary member :—

J. B. Knight, Esq.

The Rev. J. D. Bate, Allahabad, and Maulawí Abdul Hai, Calcutta, duly proposed and seconded at the last meeting, were balloted for and elected Associate Members.

The following are candidates for ballot at the next meeting :—

W. McGregor, Esq., Supdt. Indian Telegraphs, Akyab, proposed by Mr. H. Blochmann, seconded by Col. H. Hyde, R. E.

Ottokar Feistmantel, Esq., M. D., Geological Survey, Calcutta, proposed by Mr. H. Blochmann, seconded by Dr. T. Oldham.

The following gentlemen have intimated their desire to withdraw from the Society—

Thos. W. Bourne, Esq., A. D. B. Gomes, Esq., Rája Chundranáth Rai, of Nator, C. B. Clarke, Esq.

present time they levy five taxes altogether, *viz.*, the old tax which is the customs, the *showabi* tax, the Dar El Wakalat tax of one carat in the dinar, the Dar El Zakat, and brokerage. The Nakhoda Othman bin Omar El Amdî arrived once from Egypt and was found to have with him two maunds of aloes wood which they took from him, and when the time came to settle accounts the maund of aloes was valued at 6 dinars, so $1\frac{1}{2}$ dinars were charged for the customs and half a dinar for the *showabi* tax. It was then valued in the Wakalat at 25 dinars, and it was charged 8 dinars and 2 *daniks* for Wakalat, $1\frac{1}{2}$ dinars for Zakat, and half a dinar for brokerage, which altogether came to 15 dinars, so after deducting the price of the aloes six dinars there remained a balance against him of 9 dinars. The Nakhoda Othman bin Omar El Amdî protested, and said, "By God Almighty, I gain nothing by it, not a single *fuls*; is it not enough that you take from me the two maunds of wood for nothing, but you must demand of me 9 dinars besides!" And the Amir Nasir-ul-din Nasir bin Farût and his followers came upon them at that time, and he said—"This man is constantly coming to Aden and should we take from him double!" and he mediated between them until he squared the account. * * It is said that a ship once arrived on which the customs duties came to 80,000 dinars. There used to anchor every year under Jebel Sira 70 or 80 ships or more perhaps, but not less. And they despatched from Aden every year four treasure parties to the fort of Taiz, *viz.*, the receipts on the ship arrivals from India, the receipts from tribes entering Aden, the export duty on horses to India and the receipts from ships journeying to India. Each of these treasure remittances amounted to 150,000 dinars, or more, but not less, but this has ceased in our time, 625 A. H. The circulation of Aden in the time of the Beni Zurria was gold of Sanaa on the Sultani standard, but less than it and the currency of the country was gold *Maliki*, whereof $4\frac{1}{2}$ dinars, equalled one Egyptian dinar. The *dinar* was divided into quarters, each quarter being equal to three *joz*, each *jaiz* to eight *fulûs*, and each *fuls* to two *beidhas*, and it is said the first who struck the Maliki dinar was Ahmed bin Ali El Sulehi at Sanaa.

They sell *rusi* (a kind of cloth) by the *Kasba*, the length of which is four cubits of iron, and they sell teak planks by the iron cubit, and everything was sold by auction to the highest bidder, and similarly slaves and slave girls.

Some disappointment was felt at Mr. Wood-Mason's announcement that the living specimen of *Rhinoceros Sondaicus*,* which was to have been exhibited at the meeting, was indisposed, and could not attend; Mr. Mason,

* The animal died on the following day. Its skin will be exhibited at the next meeting.—(J. W.-M.)

however, exhibited some excellent photographs of the animal in question, and of *R. Indicus*, and pointed out the differences in the structure of the epidermal exoskeleton in the two species.

Mr. Wood-Mason exhibited the materials for his monograph of *Paratelphusa*, an Indo-Malayan genus of freshwater crabs, of which he recognized altogether seven perfectly distinct and well-marked species; of these five had been or are now described by himself. The genus, he said, was established in 1855 by M. Milne-Edwards for the reception of two new species of crabs, one of which was supposed to have come from the China Seas, the other from New Zealand; but the localities given had proved to be incorrect, the former being really a native of the freshwaters of Southern China and Siam, the latter of those of the three great Sunda Islands—Java, Sumatra, and Borneo. Mr. Wood-Mason, in 1871, himself described two additional species, the one from upper Burmah, the other from India, wherein it ranged from Hardwár, the point at which the Ganges issues from the Siwalik Hills, throughout the Gangetic valley down to Calcutta, where brackish water conditions obtained, and where it occurred both in fresh and brackish water like several of its congeners. It was an interesting fact that all the species described by him inhabited countries the fauna of which was largely leavened, to say the least, with Malay forms, if indeed such forms did not predominate. We were indebted to Mr. W. T. Blanford, than whom nobody had ever done more for the distribution of animals in India, for dividing up the vast tract of country commonly called India into a number of zoological sub-provinces, to one of which, *viz.*, to that denominated by him the Eastern Bengal Province, with the Burmese countries and Assam added, the *Paratelphusas* were confined: Calcutta, Mr. Blanford had said, was on the edge of this province and rather in than outside of it; and Calcutta accordingly had its species of the genus in its common tank-crab. If we turned from these invertebrates to seek an instance amongst the higher animals of this Malayan leaven in the fauna, no more conspicuous one could possibly be found than the interesting animal represented in one of the beautiful photographs exhibited,—the *Rhinoceros Sondaicus*, which inhabited not only the Sunderbans near Calcutta but the great island of Java also. In conclusion, Mr. Wood-Mason said that he could not but look forward with much interest to see whether species of *Paratelphusa* would be found in Ceylon and in Malabar, the fauna of which curiously enough was also Malayan.

The following are the new species:

Paratelphusa Martensi.

Latero-anterior margins of carapace armed with three epibranchial teeth, the first tooth flattened, similar to the extraorbital angle but smaller, the rest salient, acute, and conical. Post-abdomen of the male triangular—as in *P. Dayana*, W-M.

Hab.—Throughout the Gangetic valley, from Hardwár to Jessor.

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with 5 plates



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