

THE  
ASIATIC  
*ANNUAL REGISTER,*  
OR,  
A VIEW OF THE HISTORY  
OF  
HINDUSTAN,  
AND OF THE  
POLITICS, COMMERCE AND LITERATURE  
OF  
ASIA,  
For the Year 1801.



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blers, (in which performances the Hindus are expert adepts,) and dances of the natives, wile away the time, and beguile it not unpleasantly to the hour of supper, the principal meal; when a repast, enlivened by every elevation of spirit and kindly disposition that can conduce to promote good humour and festive hilarity, terminates the day,

These parties generally continue, with some variation in the amusements, fifteen or twenty days; and the dissolution of them is as generally lamented, with heart-felt regret, by the individuals who compose them.

*From the Calcutta Monthly Journal, December 14, 1795.*

As a party of gentlemen were in pursuit of snipe, in the vicinity of Dum-dum, they most unexpectedly roused a royal tiger. The animal immediately seized on the first person near him, which happened to be a native servant, who was carrying a gun, and killed him on the spot.

The gentlemen, alarmed as they were, did not retire from the place where the accident happened, without attempting to rescue the poor fellow from the jaws of the monster. They discharged their pieces at him; but, as they were all loaded with small shot, they made no sensible impression on him: he continued to devour his prey, until the sporting party assembled a number of the

country people, who, by shouting, and beating of tom-toms, at length drove him off.

Intelligence of this unfortunate affair was immediately dispatched to Calcutta, for the information of some keen sportsmen, who delight in the manly exercise and dangerous amusement of tiger-hunting; the party was soon formed, and the gentlemen who composed it proceeded to the ground without delay, armed for the purpose, and mounted on elephants.

Nor were they long in finding out the ferocious animal, who was weltering in gore when they came up with him. An immediate attack began; but instead of retreating, the tiger made a successful spring, and fastened upon one of the elephants. The driver was not, however, dismayed; for, by a very severe blow struck with his hook on a tender part of the enraged animal, he forced him to quit his hold.

Several shots were then fired at him, and although most of them took place, yet none had touched a vital part. The animal, however, became furious beyond description, running at and charging every thing that came near him, until one of the party, well known for his prowess, as well as dexterity in the field, intrepidly advanced upon him, and, with a hog-spear, pinned the grisly monster to the ground.

#### OF THE SPORTS OF THE FIELD IN HINDUSTAN.

(Communicated by Colonel G. IRONSIDE.)

THE men of rank and fortune amongst the natives of Hindustan, besides falconers, fowlers, fishermen, huntsmen, and gangs of game-keepers, for the chase, and other different sports, entertain also persons

versed in the practice of cat-bing animals by allurements, disguise, ensnaring, ambush, fascination, and other stratagems and devices, wherein are employed a considerable number of different instruments and im-  
 \* B 4 plements

plements of enticement, constraint, imitation, and infatuation.

Amongst others, when they are desirous of taking jackalls alive, two men approach their holes or covert, and begin mimicking the cries of the young ones, while they gambol and play about: this yelping noise soon inveigles the male, who advancing, is entangled in a snare laid for the purpose; on continuing the same kind of squalling, the female soon follows her mate, and is entrapped in the like manner.

#### *Of Fishing.*

Fish are caught in Bengal, by placing a bundle of rushy bushes or bavins in the water over night; also, by surrounding a large extent of shallow water with mats, and then contracting the space 'till hand nets can be used with effect.

Small fish are caught in small rivulets or lakes, in Bengal, by making a noise with small bells or sticks, in one boat, and driving the fish by that means towards another.

#### *Of Fowling.*

Small birds are taken by fowlers, by fixing one hollow and very slender reed into another rather thicker, (like the joints of a fishing rod,) touched with bird-lime, that into a third, and so on, till the first be long enough, by being insinuated among the boughs with a quick motion, to touch the bird aimed at. Or a small arrow, or clay ball, is put into a long tube, and the bird struck with it by a blast from the mouth. Or they are killed with a pellet bow, which is a common bow with two strings, separated by a small slender bit of stick, near which is fixed a bit of leather to receive the pellet. The aim of this instrument is more certain than that of any other missile weapon.

Wild fowl are caught in Persia by persons who go in the night near

marshy rushy places, and display on a sudden many lights on the stern of the boats; then ringing small bells, the birds are frightened, and fly into their very hands.

Wild ducks, and other water fowl, are caught in Hindustan by people wading or swimming the lakes, either with an earthen pot over their heads, or the artificial representation of a duck, fashioned so as to put on like a cap; by which contrivance they get close enough to geese, widgeon, teal, &c. to pull them by the feet under water, till they have filled a girdle made of netting, or tied or twisted one of their wings, so as to let them float, without hazarding their escape, upon the surface of the water. And this they effect without much disturbance among the rest of the flocks on the lake; and so easily, and in such abundance, as to afford them for a penny or three-halfpence a-piece.

#### *Of Hunting.*

In order to destroy the rhinoceros, when he ravages the corn and herbage, pit-falls are made; but they are seldom caught alive, except when young.

#### *Of catching Tigers.*

To catch tigers and leopards several contrivances are employed. The most common are, a large trap (not unlike a rat-trap) baited with a live kid, caged at one end of the trap, and thus secured from seizure. Or a large bamboo bow is stretched opposite the animal's accustomed haunt, armed with a long barbed arrow. A small thread is then laid across the track, communicating with the bow string, which, whenever it is hampered or contracted, discharges an arrow with a violence that seldom fails to pierce and to destroy its object.

#### *Of the Tiger Bow.*

*First direction.*—This bow consists,

fits, 1st, of a strong bamboo, about six feet long, and half an inch thick, with a small rope for a string. 2d, Of a separate stick, about one inch square and two and a half feet long; two opposite sides whereof are cut through, from the upper end, two thirds of the way down. This slit is in the middle, and one-third of an inch wide. 3d. A loop is fastened to the slit stick, by a cord, just hanging over the upper end of the slit. 4th. To the other end of this cord, which is about one foot in length, is tied a small round stick, not quite the third of an inch thick, and six inches long. 5th. One-third down the slit is a small peg, which passes through the slit of the square stick, in the middle, transversely. 6th. From the top of the small round stick depends a small flat pin, two inches long, by a string, one foot in length. 7th. There is a small string tied rather loosely over the square stick, and also a very thin slight bit of bamboo, one inch long, and the tenth of an inch broad; to the middle of which is fastened a green silk or cotton thread, about seven feet long, to be employed as hereafter directed. 8th. A long barbed arrow is prepared, and the point medicated with poison.

*Second direction.*—1st. Hold the separate square stick with loop upwards, and the point towards the bow; put the string of the bow under the loop.

2d. Put the end of the small round stick through the loop, and a little way into the hollow of the slit.

3d. Convey the small flat pin, first under the peg which crosses the slit, and then push the upper end of it a little back, over the peg.

4th. Place the point of the small flat pin upon a string tied rather loosely over the square stick for that purpose, so as slightly and temporarily to rest upon it.

5th. Stretch the bow with the square stick thus prepared; the upper end whereof then notches into the string, and the other rests firmly upon the inside of the bow itself.

6th. Then place the bow in a bush, or grass, on cross sticks (formed to support it), two feet from the ground, on one side of a path frequented by tigers, wolves, hyænas, &c.

7th. The barbed arrow is to be laid exactly in the direction of the square slit stick, with its notch in the bow string.

8th. Remove the string whereon the small flat pin temporarily rested, and substitute the slight bit of bamboo above mentioned in its stead.

9th. Carry the green string across the path, and tie it slightly to a bush, or grass, on the other side.

On any wild beast touching the string, it draws away the bit of bamboo which supported the point of the flat pin; the pin immediately flies up from the peg, which occasions the small round stick to give way; that of course loosens the string of the bow, which forces away the arrow directly forward, and drives, at the same time, the square slit stick backwards, the whole thus operating, and at once tumbling to pieces.

“The Arabs,” says Dr. Shaw, “do not spring game with dogs, but, shading themselves with a piece of canvas, stretched upon two reeds, into the shape of a door, they walk through avenues where they expect to find it. The canvas is usually spotted, or painted with the figure of a leopard; and, a little below the top, there is one or more holes for the fowler to look through, and see what passes before him. Quails, and such like birds as feed in flocks, will, upon sight of the canvas, stand still, and look astonished. This gives a sportsman an opportunity

portunity of coming very near them, and then resting the canvas upon the ground, and directing the muzzle of his piece through one of the holes, knocks down sometimes a whole covey of them."

Instances of the same sort occur frequently in Hindustan; but it is there attributed, by the natives, to the force of fascination; for they have observed, that when deer or peacocks perceive a tiger, (whose eyes, when either enraged, or keen or eager for prey, appear as if emitting scintillations,) they seem enchanted, look steadfastly at their enemy, and keep gradually and regularly approaching, till within his reach, when he springs upon and devours them. For tigers, and other animals of the feline species, seldom pursue their prey, not being very fleet, but usually lie in ambush for it. Birds and other animals are known in like manner to be fascinated by serpents, whose eyes generally flash vibrations of vivid light. Of this bewitching power in tigers the mountaineers of Hindustan avail themselves, particularly in the allurements of peacocks. Upon a light bamboo frame, of the dimensions of six feet by four, they fasten a slight painted canvas, coloured and streaked like the skin of a tiger, with a hole near the top; concealed by this screen, they plant it near a flock of peacocks, and opposite to the sun. As soon as the birds perceive the coloured canvas, they advance towards it, sometimes bristling up their crests, wings, and tails, till the sportsman, pointing his gun through the hole, shoots them with unerring aim.

#### *Of catching Elephants.*

There are two methods practised in the provinces of Tipperah and Silhet (east of Chittagong), to catch elephants. One is by three or four tame male ones, (bred for the

purpose,) a female, and a young elephant, led to the borders of a forest, where the wild ones, attracted by their cries, (and often, probably by their smell,) come near them, and are surrounded by the tame ones, till two or three of the riders, dismounting, entangle their feet in strong ropes, which they pin to the ground or fasten to trees till the prisoner becomes gentle and obedient. The other mode is to make a keddah, or inclosure, by encompassing a pretty large space of ground near some spot where elephants frequent, with stakes and boughs interwoven, except two apertures opposite to each other; then to send several female and young ones to entice the males. When a sufficient number are collected, the females, at a signal, or with drivers on their backs, make immediately for the keddah, and pass directly through it: the wild ones follow, but are prevented passing through by bars shoved between, to intercept their proceeding further. When the whole are in, the bars on the entrance side are also closed, and the wild ones left a few days with little or no food, till they grow tame, which they soon do, being in their nature docile and tractable.

Nigh the mountains separating the provinces of Oude and Rohilcund from Napaul, elephants are caught by pit-falls; or driven from their haunts in the forests, and then surrounded by very numerous gangs of professed hunters, bred to the chase and capture of wild beasts.

There is no part of the world, perhaps, which produces game in such diversity and abundance as Bengal, where no forest or other laws exist for its preservation. Besides fifteen species of deer, comprising the antelope, the roebuck, the red-deer, the small mouse-deer, the hog, or bristled, and the musk-deer, there are wild hogs, hares, several

veral kinds of common partridge, quails, peacocks, ortolans, and black partridge in plenty: wild geese, wild ducks, teal, widgeon, water-hens, cranes, storks, and snipes, of sundry shapes, colours and sizes, together with other aquatic fowl, are innumerable. The florekin too, (the same bird, I believe, that was known in England in ancient times, by the name of Flanderkin, but of which there are now no remains there,) the greatest delicacy and rarity for the table, partaking of the flavour both of the land and water fowl, is also met with here, but in no considerable quantity. Variety of fish is supplied also from a multitude of rivers, creeks, lakes, and tanks. But there are no pheasants in Bengal, though the adjacent provinces of Cooh-bahar, Tipperah, and all the neighbouring woods and mountains dividing India from Tartary, abound with the spotted and speckled, the golden, and the Argus pheasant. One species of the latter kind are of light blue, and another of a brown colour; both of them have eyes at the extremity of the feathers over their whole body.

In the attack of the tiger, and of the wild-buffalo, (the largest of animals next to the elephant) elephants are employed, with the addition sometimes of horse men, armed with guns, spears, bows and arrows, and often with coats of mail. The wolf and the wild boar are chased by dogs (a kind of lurchers,) followed by huntsmen, armed with matchlocks, pistols and lances. Both greyhounds and falcons are bred

to pursue the antelope and the hare, and the former afford excellent diversion also, after the jackall, and a small kind of beautiful fox. Both large and small hawks are fled at partridge, quail, cranes, herons, storks, and all sorts of water-fowl. The small hawk skims the lakes, while the falcons, hovering over the brink of it, pounce upon their prey the moment it flies over the ground.

Game of almost every species is, indeed, so frequent all over Hindustan, that a gentleman, named Knight, remarkably skilful in field sports, and a celebrated marksman, would kill, with his own hand, in the space of a single day, including deer, wild hogs and peacocks, sufficient to load a small Hindustan cart.

Some gentlemen have been at the expence of bringing hounds from England; but after the first season their scent degenerates, and they are liable, as well as European spaniels and pointers, to frequent disorders in their bowels, proceeding from the excessive heats, which soon destroy them.

The native mountaineers sometimes use their country-dogs as hounds; but their scent is not very good, nor do they hunt them in large packs.

In the chase of the ostrich, in Africa, at first setting off, the huntsmen are left far behind the ostrich; but as he proceeds on, he grows tired, and then begins to run round in circles, till at length, quite fatigued, he hides his head in some hole or dark covert, and suffers himself to be taken.

### ACCOUNT OF FEATS OF STRENGTH, ACTIVITY, AND LEGERDEMAIN, IN HINDUSTAN.

(Communicated by Colonel G. IRONSIDE.)

#### *Balancing.*

FIVE earthen water-pots are placed

above each other upon a man's head.

A young girl mounts upon the uppermost,