

'where every blast shakes spices from the trees, and every month drops fruit upon the ground, where all the diversities of the world are brought together, the blessings of nature selected, and its evils extracted and excluded.' He hoped no one would look on this as an exaggerated panegyric; he spoke from long experience and rigid impartiality, and had no other desire than that of effacing the unfavourable impression which the last gentleman's invective against India had made on their minds. In a country however in which he had passed twenty-three years of uninterrupted happiness, amidst all the delights and gratifications of social life, and all the charms and allurements of an enlightened and hospitable society, it would be difficult perhaps to repress his feelings, or to speak of the country in any other terms than those of rapture and enthusiasm; but his object was not to increase wonder, but to lessen prejudice, and if he succeeded in that, he had little ambition of being looked on as an elegant romancer. Of the dreadful effects of the climate, as related by his friend, many were imaginary, and many proceeded from very different causes. It was not surprising that those who passed twelve hours in bed, and employed the other twelve in gormandizing, smoaking, and tipling, should complain of bile and debility, and enumerate their empty pill-boxes and medical prescriptions. There was one thing in-

deed surprized him, and that was how they were so long able to continue their destructive habits of debauchery, or by what perversity of judgment they could impute to the climate what evidently proceeded from intemperance and idleness.

"But if there was nothing in India but disease and debility, he would be glad to know, what peculiar advantages they had to boast of at home. Of the climate, no one surely would be hardy enough to make any forced panegyrics, a climate, perhaps, more variable and pernicious than any in the known world, and which occasioned colds, catarrhs, melancholy and consumptions, and added more to our bills of mortality in a week, than were to be found in an Indian obituary for a year.

"Of society in England, he could not be supposed to know much;—he had been twenty-three years in India, and never felt a desire to leave it, till required by the urgency of his private affairs, and now that he was at home, his only wish was to get back.—He saw nothing but great expense, with little comfort; and great ostentation, with little to show; he was pursued, insulted, and harrassed in every street, by beggars, bona-robas and hackney coachmen, and had scarcely ever visited a public place of amusement without finding, on his return, his pockets picked."

HIATUS IN—!

For the Asiatic Journal.

AN ACCOUNT OF A HUNTING PARTY

Of the late Nawab Usuf-ad-Dowlah; in a Letter to a Friend.

Lucknow, Jan. 20, 1794.—I am just returned from a four months' excursion with his excellency the Nawab, and as a sketch of our ramble may afford you some amusement, I shall detail a few of the most agreeable and interesting circumstances which occurred. We left Lucknow on the 4th of October last, and directed our course towards Baraech; our kafela, or party, consisted of about 40,000 men, and 20,000 beasts; composed of 10,000 soldiers, 1000 cavalry, and near 150 pieces of cannon; 1500 elephants, 3000 carts or hackeries, and an innumerable train of camels, horses, and

bullocks; great numbers of rutts or covered carriages for women, drawn by oxen, which were filled with the Nawab's ladies; many large and small boats carried on carts drawn by fifty, forty, and thirty oxen each; tigers, leopards, and hawks, fighting cocks, fighting quails, and nightingales; pigeons, dancing women and boys, singers, players, buffoons, and mountebanks. In short, his excellency had every thing, every object which could please or surprise, attract admiration, fire with wonder, or convulse with laughter. About 500 coolies, or porters, were employed to carry his shooting ap-

paratus, guns, powder, shot, and etce-
 teras; he had above one thousand double-
 barrel guns, the finest that Manton and
 Nock could make; single barrels, pistols,
 swords, and spears innumerable. Reli-
 gion constrained him to stop some days
 at Baraech, to pay homage at the tomb
 of a celebrated saint, named Salar Gha-
 zee. All good men who are able resort
 to worship this holy anchorite once a
 year, generally in the month of May; his
 bones were discovered about 400 years
 ago, and manifested their sanctity by
 some miraculous marks: the witty and
 unbelieving say they were the skeleton of
 an ass, without thinking of the impiety
 of imagining any resemblance be-
 tween an ass and a saint, whether dead
 or alive. From Baraech we proceeded
 toward Nanpara, a small town in the
 first range of mountains, commonly call-
 ed the Common Hills, which extend
 from the eastern extremity of Bootan to
 Hurdwar, and divide Hindustan from
 Tibet and Nipal. Game of all sorts
 were destroyed every morning and even-
 ing without number or distinction. His
 excellency is one of the best marksmen I
 ever saw; it would be strange if he was
 not, as one day with another he fires
 above 100 shots, at every species of birds
 and animals. The first tiger we saw and
 killed was in the mountains; we went to
 attack him about noon; he was in a
 narrow valley, which the Nawab sur-
 rounded with above two hundred ele-
 phants; we heard him growl horribly in
 a thick bush in the middle of the valley;
 being accustomed to the sport and very
 eager, I pushed in my elephant, the fierce
 beast charged me immediately; the ele-
 phant, a timid animal, as they generally
 are, turned tail, and deprived me of the
 opportunity to fire; I ventured again, at-
 tended by two or three other elephants;
 the tiger made a spring, and nearly reach-
 ed the back of one of the elephants, on
 which were three or four men; the ele-
 phant shook himself so forcibly, as to
 throw these men off his back; they tum-
 bled into the bush; I gave them up for
 lost, but was agreeably surprised to see
 them creep out unhurt. His excellency
 was all this time on a rising ground near
 the thicket, looking on calmly, and beck-
 oning to me to drive the tiger towards
 him; I made another attempt, and with

more success; he darted out towards me
 on my approach, roaring furiously, and
 lashing his sides with his tail; I luckily
 got a shot and hit him, he retreated into
 the bush, and ten or twelve elephants
 just then pushed into the thicket, alarm-
 ed the tiger, and obliged him to run out
 towards the Nawab, who instantly gave
 him a warm reception, and with the as-
 sistance of some of his Omras, or lords,
 laid the tiger sprawling on his side; a
 loud shout of *wha! wha!* proclaimed the
 victory. On elephants there is no danger
 in encountering these savage beasts, which
 you know from repeated trials. I have
 been at the killing of above thirty tigers,
 and seldom saw any one hurt. If you re-
 collect, I was once thrown off my elephant
 on a tiger, and escaped with a bruise.

The next sport we had of any magnitude,
 was the attack on a wild elephant, which
 we met a few days after the battle with
 the tiger; we espied him on a large plain
 overgrown with grass; the Nawab, eager
 for such diversions, immediately formed
 a semicircle with four hundred elephants,
 who were directed to advance and en-
 circle him; this was the first wild ele-
 phant I had evey seen attacked, and con-
 fess I did not feel very easy; however I
 kept alongside of his excellency, deter-
 mined to take my chance. When the
 semicircle of elephants got within three
 hundred yards of the wild one, he looked
 amazed, but not frightened; two large
*must** elephants of the Nawab's were or-
 dered to advance against him, when they
 approached within twenty yards he charg-
 ed them, the shock was dreadful; how-
 ever the wild one conquered, and drove
 the *must* elephants before him; as he
 passed us the Nawab ordered some of the
 strongest female elephants with thick
 ropes, to go along side of him, and en-
 deavour to entangle him with nooses and
 running knots; the attempt was vain, as
 he snapped every rope, and none of the
 tame elephants could stop his progress;
 the Nawab perceiving it impossible to
 catch him, ordered his death, and imme-

* *Must* elephants are those which are in high
 rut; they are then very unmanageable, bold,
 savage, and often very dangerous. The male ele-
 phants become *must* at a certain age, which some
 say is forty years; the *must* elephants are the
 only ones which will dare to face a wild one; they
 are also used in the elephant fights exhibited be-
 fore the princes of India.

diately a volley of above a hundred shots were fired; many of the balls hit him, but he seemed unconcerned, and moved on towards the mountains; we kept up an incessant fire for near half an hour; the Nawab and most of his Omras used rifles, which carried two and three ounce balls, but they made very little impression; the balls just entered the skin and lodged there. I went up repeatedly, being mounted on a female elephant, within ten yards of the wild one, and fired my rifle at his head; the blood gushed out, but the skull was invulnerable; some of the Khandahar horse galloped up to the wild elephant, and made cuts at him with their sabres; he charged the horsemen, wounded some and killed others; being now much exhausted with the loss of blood, having received above three thousand shots, and many strokes of the sabre, he slackened his pace, quite calm and serene, as if determined to meet his approaching end; I could not at this time refrain from pitying so noble an animal. The horsemen seeing him weak and slow, dismounted, and with their swords began a furious attack on the tendons of his hind legs; they were soon cut; unable to proceed, he staggered, and fell without a groan. The hatchetmen now advanced, and commenced an attack on his large ivory tusks, whilst the horsemen and soldiers, with barbarous insult, began a cruel assault, to try the sharpness of their swords, display the strength of their arm, and shew their invincible courage; the sight was very affecting; he still breathed, and breathed without a groan; he rolled his eyes with anguish on the surrounding crowd, and making a last effort to rise, expired with a sigh. The Nawab returned to his tents as much flushed with vanity and exultation as Achilles; and the remainder of the day, and many a day after, were dedicated to repeated narrations of this victory, which was ornamented and magnified by all the combined powers of ingenious flattery, and unbounded exaggeration:

“Sooth’d with the strain, the prince grew vain,
Fought all his battles o’er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he
slew the slain.”

From the mountains we directed our course towards Buckra Jeel, where we arrived on the 4th of December. Buckra Jeel is a large lake, about three miles in

circumference at its most contracted size in the dry season, and about thirty miles in its extensive period, the rainy season; surrounded by thick and high grass at the foot of the Gorruckpoor Hills; the jungle or wild, which *entours* the lake, is full of wild elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, leopards, wild buffaloes, deer, and every species of aerial game. This was the place destined for the grand hunt, which we were daily taught to expect with pleasing anxiety by the florid descriptions of his excellency. On the 5th of December, early in the morning, we were summoned to the sylvan war; a line of 1200 elephants was drawn up on the north of the lake facing to the east, and we proceeded rapidly through the high grass, with minds glowing with the expectation of the grand sport we should meet. Lay down your pipes, ye country squires, who boast in such pompous language the destruction of a poor reynard or puss, and say in what terms ye could convey an idea of the scene I saw, and now endeavour to describe! When we had arrived at the eastern extremity of the lake, we perceived a large drove of wild elephants feeding and gamboling at the foot of the mountains; I counted above 170; at this critical moment Mr. Conway, a gentleman in the Nawab’s service, fell off his elephant, owing to the animal’s stepping his fore foot into a concealed hole; Mr. Conway was much bruised, pale, and almost senseless; the Nawab stopped to put him into a palankeen, and send him back to the encampment; this gave the wild elephants time to gaze on our dreadful front, and recover from their amaze; many of them scampered off towards the hills. The Nawab divided our line of 1200 elephants into four bodies, and sent them in pursuit of the wild ones, which they were to take or destroy. I remained with the division attached to the Nawab; we attacked a large male elephant, and after a long contest, killed him in the same manner as the one I have already described; we killed also four smaller ones, and our division, including the other three, caught twenty-one elephants, which we led to our encampment in high triumph. I have only given a short account of this grand hunt, as it is impossible to describe what we saw and felt: the confusion, tumult, noise, firing, shriek-

ing and roaring of 1200 tame elephants, attacked and attacking 170 wild ones, all in "terrible disorder tossed," formed a dreadful *mélange*, which cannot be imagined by the most luxuriant fancy. There were above 10,000 shots fired from all quarters; and considering the confusion, I am surprised the scene was not more bloody on our side; about twenty men were killed and wounded, and near half a dozen horses. I had two rifles, and two double barrel guns, and a boy to load for me in the khawar, yet I could not fire quick enough, though I expended four hundred balls; many of our tame elephants which were *must*, and brought to oppose the wild ones, were knocked down, bruised, pierced, and made to fly. The largest elephant we killed was above ten feet high*, and would have sold for

* Travellers say there are elephants sixteen feet high; but this is the exaggerated language of travellers, who in general are more anxious to excite wonder than convey information. I never saw an elephant eleven feet high, and I have seen

20,000 rupees if he had been caught. Our prize of this day might, without amplification, be estimated at 50,000 rupees; but you know our only object was amusement.

From Bucra Jeel we came to Faizabad, where we reposed for three weeks, to recover from the great fatigue we had undergone; after a gay scene of every species of oriental amusement, and festive dissipation, we returned to this place, having killed in our excursion eight tigers, six elephants, and caught twenty-one. To enumerate the other kinds of game would require a sheet as ample as the petition which was presented to Jungaze Khan, and might perhaps be treated by you in the manner that Asiatic conqueror treated the petition.—Adieu.

Yours, &c.

above some thousands. The Nawab gives extravagant prices for uncommonly large elephants, and he has none eleven feet high. Their general height is about seven or eight feet.

For the Asiatic Journal.

AN ESSAY ON THE OOPAS, OR POISON-TREE OF JAVA.

BY THOMAS HORSEFIELD, M. D.

(From the Seventh Volume of the Transactions of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Java.)

I HAVE proposed to myself in the following essay, to offer you a short account of the Oopas of Java. I feel some satisfaction in being able, at a time when every subject relating to this island has acquired a degree of interest, to furnish you with a faithful description of the tree, made by myself on the spot where it grows, and to relate its effects on the animal system by experiments personally instituted and superintended; and I flatter myself that the practical information detailed in the following sheets will refute the falsehoods that have been published concerning this subject, at the same time that it will remove the uncertainty in which it has been enveloped.

The literary and scientific world has in few instances been more grossly and impudently imposed upon than by the account of the Pohon Oopas, published in Holland about the year 1780. The history and ori-

gin of this celebrated forgery still remains a mystery. Foersch, who put his name to the publication, certainly was (according to information I have received from creditable persons who have long resided on the island) a surgeon in the Dutch East India Company's service, about the time the account of the Oopas appeared.* It would be in some degree interesting to become acquainted with his character. I have been led to suppose that his literary abilities were as mean, as his contempt of truth was consummate.

Having hastily picked up some vague information concerning the Oopas, he carried it to Europe, where his notes were arranged, doubtlessly by a different hand, in such a form, as by their plausibility

* Foersch was a surgeon of the third class at Samarang in the year 1773. His account of the Oopas Tree appeared in 1783.

"AN ACCOUNT OF A HUNTING PARTY Of the late Nawab Usuf-ad-Dowlah; in a Letter to a Friend." The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies, vol. I, no. VI, 1 June 1816, p. 539+. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CC1903183943/NCUK?u=nuslib&sid=NCUK&xid=203e4976>. Accessed 21 Aug. 2020.