

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES,

BEING

THE JOURNAL

OF

A TOUR IN INDIA,

BY

CAPTAIN MUNDY,

LATE

AIDE-DE-CAMP TO LORD COMBERMERE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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624.

immensely rich, and left money to raise this edifice over his tomb. The sepulchre itself is deep underground, in a small vault constantly lighted by tapers. A white marble slab, at the head of which is the bust of the General, bears his name, with the following inscription : ‘ Came to India a common soldier in the year 17—, and died a major-general in 18—.’ Four grenadiers (unfortunately for effect, *in coloured plaster*) stand at the corners of the tomb, resting on their arms reversed.

Dec. 13th. The Commander-in-chief having received an invitation from his Majesty to witness some spectacles intended for his amusement, we proceeded at an early hour to the palace, where the King met us. He conducted us a short distance out of the town, where we found an arena prepared for what were announced as ‘ field sports,’ but which were in fact equally uninteresting and cruel, and totally warring against John Bull’s ideas of fair play. First, five or six antelopes were

were loaded with bracelets. On his Majesty and suite taking leave, the English portion of the assembly descended from the stilts of ceremony, and commenced quadrilling.

His Majesty, before he retired, informed the Commander-in-chief that he had given orders for the wild beast fights to be prepared for his edification on the morrow; and as these sports are celebrated for the grand scale on which they are conducted at Lucknow, we were all very anxious to witness them. Early in the morning, therefore, the whole party, including ladies, eager for the novel spectacle, mounted elephants, and repaired to the private gate of the royal palace, where the King met the Commander-in-chief, and conducted him and his company to a palace in the park, in one of the courts of which the arena for the combats was prepared. In the centre was erected a gigantic cage of strong bamboos, about fifty feet high, and of like diameter, and roofed with rope network. Sundry smaller cells, communicating by sliding doors with the main theatre, were ten-

anted by every species of the savagest inhabitants of the forest. In the large cage, crowded together, and presenting a formidable front of broad, shaggy foreheads well armed with horns, stood a group of buffaloes sternly awaiting the conflict, with their rear scientifically appuyé against the bamboos. The trap-doors being lifted, two tigers, and the same number of bears and leopards, rushed into the centre. The buffaloes instantly commenced hostilities, and made complete shuttlecocks of the bears, who, however, finally escaped by climbing up the bamboos beyond the reach of their horned antagonists. The tigers, one of which was a beautiful animal, fared scarcely better; indeed, the odds were much against them, there being five buffaloes. They appeared, however, to be no match for these powerful creatures, even single-handed, and showed little disposition to be the assaulters. The larger tiger was much gored in the head, and in return took a mouthful of his enemy's dewlap, but was finally (as the fancy would describe it) 'bored to the

ropes and floored.' The leopards seemed throughout the conflict sedulously to avoid a breach of the peace.

A rhinoceros was next let loose in the open court-yard, and the attendants attempted to induce him to pick a quarrel with a tiger who was chained to a ring. The rhinoceros appeared, however, to consider a fettered foe as quite beneath his enmity; and having once approached the tiger, and quietly surveyed him, as he writhed and growled, expecting the attack, turned suddenly round and trotted awkwardly off to the yard gate, where he capsize a palanquin which was carrying away a lady fatigued with the sight of these unfeeminine sports.

A buffalo and a tiger were the next combatants: they attacked furiously, the tiger springing at the first onset on the other's head, and tearing his neck severely; but he was quickly dismounted, and thrown with such violence as nearly to break his back, and quite to disable him from renewing the combat.



engraved by T. S. Spence
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Scene near Hardwar.

Painted by Messrs. the Company.

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CHAPTER III.

THE PROVINCE OF BUNDELCUND.

ON the 8th we crossed the river Sind, leaving the territories of Scindia behind us, and entering Bundelcund, a province cut up and subdivided into numerous petty principalities, or baronies, the greater proportion of which are not more productive in revenue than the unpretending estates of some of the richer commoners of England.

The following morning we were welcomed by the Rajah of Dutteah, who escorted the Commander-in-chief through his capital to the camp, which was pitched without the walls. The city of Dutteah is extensive, commandingly situated, and surrounded by a beautifully-built stone wall. On a lofty, rocky foundation, in the centre of the place, stands an ancient palace of very elegant architecture. The Rajah chiefly resides in a more modern building lower down in the

maker and Wesley Richards of Birmingham—who will doubtless take twenty per cent. off my bill for this recommendation.

Feb. 28th. The morning being calm, the fleet took its sweeps and fairly rowed itself into a favourable wind, which we picked up about mid-day as we passed through that beautiful estuary of the Ganges spread round the picturesque rocks of Janguira. The main rock is insular, and is crowned with a lofty Hindoo temple and the habitations of a band of Fakirs, whose predecessors have occupied this singular spot time out of mind. Janguira is the scene of a poem by a Mr. Derozio, a young Eurasian of great acquirements, who has been styled the Byron of the East. The situation of the temple is not very unlike that of the château de Chillon; and the Ganges at this spot is to the full as wide as Lac Lemane between Chillon and the Meillerie mountains.

At 3 P.M., the fleet brought-to at Boglipore, and we immediately got out our horses and

uniforms, and proceeded with his Excellency to inspect the barracks of his Majesty's 3rd (Buffs), who are quartered here in temporary cantonments. There is also stationed, about four miles from the European barracks, a native local corps, formed entirely of the wild mountaineers of Rajemál. The country in the vicinity of Boglipore is extremely fertile, and luxuriantly wooded, and the vegetation preserves throughout the year that rich verdure caused by the heavy dews peculiar to the provinces of Bahar and Bengal. At a short distance from the cantonments, stands a monument—perhaps the only memorial ever dedicated by Indians in gratitude to an European—erected by the natives of the neighbouring hills to the memory of an Englishman, named Cleveland, who was formerly magistrate of the district, and whose short life was devoted to ameliorate the condition of those mountaineers, who at his death showed that they were not ungrateful for the kindness of their benefactor. The cenotaph is of Hindoo architecture, and two Fakirs are

employed to keep a lamp eternally burning within the building.

The following morning, after a review and a breakfast with the Buffs, we re-embarked, and, having a good day's run, reached the Colgong Rocks—the Scylla and Charybdis of the Ganges—by 3 P.M. These two strange-looking insular crags stand out in the middle of the stream, opposite a lofty and woody promontory which forces the river from its straight course. They are both more or less clothed with stunted coppice-wood, and are ornamented with carved representations of Hindoo deities, or devils. I landed on one of the sister rocks in pursuit of a curious bird, of a species I never happened to have met with before, and which my companion succeeded in shooting. It was milk white, with two slender feathers, half a foot long, growing out of the back of its head. In size and shape it resembled a small sea-gull.

Looking down from the rock into the pellucid depths of the stream, I could distinguish

the dark forms of several huge alligators, who rose at intervals to the surface. As I was stepping into my dinghee, one of these monsters lifted several inches of his snout (which looked like the rough bark of an old oak) above the water, within ten yards of me. I quickly saluted him with a charge of small shot, on which he instantly disappeared. The fleet *luggowed*, about three miles below Colgong, on the bank of a large island, where, in my evening stroll, I found a good deal of game. In addition to a plentiful bag of snipes, I killed a large bird of the partridge kind, which I believe to be the brown chekoar, common in the Rajemál hills, of whose wooded heights we enjoy from this spot a beautiful view. At the foot of these mountains there is to be had some of the finest shooting in India. In the thickest of the forest the rhinoceros revels in his native swamps. Lord Hastings, with a large party of friends, made a sporting campaign under these hills in 1819, and killed three of the above-named animals. Their skin is so thick as to be almost ball-

proof, and they are usually shot with tin or copper bullets or bolts. Elephants have a great dread of the rhinoceros, and few of them will await his charge.

March 2nd. The thermometer rose to 87° yesterday ; but was this morning reduced by a welcome shower to 75°. It is calculated that this seasonable fall of rain will protract the cool season for another fortnight. Shortly after noon we sailed past the point of Sicrigully, one of the great passes between the provinces of Bahar and Bengal. In former days there was a strong fortress defending the Pass, and a wall running between the mountains and the river : the former is mentioned as having been stormed by Shah Jehan of Delhi, in 1623, when a gallant but unsuccessful defence was made by some Europeans of the garrison, who were finally overpowered, and put to the sword. Sicrigully is now nothing more than a small hamlet of huts. The inhabitants of the lowlands of this part of Bahar are dark coloured, stout made, and

ill-favoured. The Puharrees, like those of the Nepaul mountains, are Tartar-featured, very short in stature, but strong limbed and active. Being unincumbered with the besetting prejudices of the Hindoos of the plains, these sturdy little highlanders are well formed for soldiers.

We passed the night, which was very tempestuous, under a steep bank about ten miles above the town of Rajemál; and the next morning at nine o'clock we sailed past that city. None of our party landed here, as most of us had inspected its interesting ruins when engaged in a similar voyage two years ago. Rajemál was, at more than one period, the capital of Bengal. It was entirely consumed by an accidental conflagration, whilst in the possession of Suja, one of the rebel sons of Shah Jehan, whose misfortunes are so movingly recounted by the historian Dow. Suja then narrowly escaped being burnt: and was, at this same place, twenty years after, defeated by his nephew Mohummet, son and general of the great Aurunzebe. The young Mohummet afterwards

deserted his father's cause for love of his beautiful cousin, the daughter of Suja, whom he married; was seized by his remorseless parent, and confined in Gwalior, where he died, probably of poison. His fair and faithful bride broke her heart for sorrow; and the ill-starred Suja, persecuted by the rancour of his imperial brother, took refuge in Arracan, where he was treacherously murdered by the Rajah of that province. Here are materials for a novel! Let the author of the "Spy" embody them.*

The melancholy ruins of Suja's palace, of which a hall of black marble is the most remarkable feature, still remain as memorials of his unhappy career; but the Ganges, by its silent encroachments, bids fair shortly to obliterate even these vestiges. The great river, nearly two centuries ago, made an important change in its course at this point; deserting Gour, the former capital of Bengal,

* The writer of the 'Romance of History' might, for the extension of his interesting work, cull rich subjects from Dow's History of Hindostan—yet I almost doubt whether English sympathy could be roused by the exploits or misfortunes of Indian heroes and heroines.

twelve miles from Rajemál, and bringing its inconstant waters to wash the more elevated bank of the latter place. Here a pretty solid obstruction to its further migration to the westward is opposed by the rocky ground which distinguishes the neighbourhood of Rajemál, and which ceases abruptly at this point. Immediately below the town the appearance of the country is totally changed : throughout the two hundred and fifty miles of alluvial plain between Rajemál and the bay of Bengal, it would be a difficult matter for a mischievous school-boy to find a pebble big enough to break a window.

The following day, after a fine morning's sail, we reached Bogwangola, a commercial village or town, more remarkable for its importance as a grain mart than for the durability of its architecture.

As this spot is very subject to the encroachments and derelictions of the capricious Gunga—a goddess as notoriously fickle as Fortune—the habitations and grain stores are merely temporary erections of bamboos

and thatch. In one of the invasions of the river, the tomb of an English officer, who died and was buried near the town, was included in its sweeping attack, and ingulphed in the sacred flood.

Bogwangola is situated near the Bhágiretty river, the most western branch of the Ganges. This stream connects its parent river with the Hooghly, and during the rains, when the navigation is available, it presents the most direct passage to Calcutta. At the present season it is totally impassable by budgerows, and those of our party who are bound straight to Calcutta are consequently obliged to travel dák.

The main body of the Head-quarters Fleet proceeds hence in an easterly direction as far as Dacca, where another detachment will branch off to Calcutta by the Sunderbunds; whilst the Commander-in-chief, with a few of the heads of departments, extends his voyage by the mouths of the Burrampooter, to Chit-tagong, and thence across the bay of Bengal to Pooree (a not very fashionable watering place on the Cuttack coast) where, fanned by

the refreshing sea-breezes, we are to pass the three broiling months of April, May, and June.

The two following days were so profoundly calm, that we only made that progress which was attainable by oars. We passed Bauliah, and Surdah where there is a silk manufactory of the Company; and at mid-day on the 7th, our fleet quitted the Ganges for a smaller stream, the Pubna, running out of the great river, and preferable to it on account of the dangerous shoals of the latter. We brought-to, this evening, at the village of Comerlee.

The hot weather has fairly set in with the calms; the thermometer ranging for many hours this day at 90°.

March 8th. Continued our passage along the little Pubna, whose banks are covered as far as the eye can range with all the rich and vivid verdure peculiar to Bengal. This morning, before sun-rise, as the fleet was making but slow progress, a party of three, who

happened to have horses with us, went ashore with some greyhounds, and had some capital coursing, killing three foxes and a jackal. Some villagers reported a fine wild hog in a clump of bamboos close at hand, and offered to drive him out for us, but we had unluckily not provided ourselves with spears.

Early the next morning, we scudded past the village of Viziergunge, and entered the Dullaserry river, which is, in many points, nearly of equal width with the Ganges. After running from 4 A.M. to 7 P.M., the signal—so hungrily hoped for by the crews—was given, and the fleet was in a few minutes snugly laid alongside the bank, near the hamlet of Gwalpara. In another instant the English portion of the party were to be seen stretching their cramped limbs upon the shore, and the momentarily increasing fires betokened the diligence of the dândies and servants in preparing their own or their masters' repasts.

The whole surface of the surrounding country is cut into numberless small islands by

the myriads of streams, large and insignificant, intersecting each other at a thousand angles, as they hurry to throw themselves into the sea, or into the sovereign rivers Ganges and Burrampooter.

The chief product of the country is that gold-coining plant, the indigo: and scattered here and there, at intervals of ten or twenty miles, a snug looking bungalow and a formal business-like range of brick buildings mark the residence of the hog-hunting, claret-drinking factor, who—to his honour be it spoken—is always most ready to share his sports and his bottle with the chance visitor who may happen to stumble upon his solitude.

March 10th. During this day's sail, we quitted the Dullaserry for the Borigunga river; and at 6 p.m. arrived at a hamlet within three miles of Dacca, where we brought-to for the night, in order that we might reach the great city by daylight the next morning. Accordingly, ere sunrise, we were floating past the five miles of half-ruined, half-habitable,