

THE
ROYAL TIGER OF BENGAL

HIS LIFE AND DEATH

BY

J. FAYRER, M.D. F.Z.S.
BENGAL MEDICAL SERVICE



LONDON:
J. & A. CHURCHILL, NEW BURLINGTON STREET

— LIBRARY
1875

E.M.

The tiger is a cat in all his actions, and those who have studied him in his native haunts must have been struck with their resemblance.

He is one of the symbols of power in the East ; in China, the judicial throne is covered with his skin ; and he has always occupied a prominent place in the menageries and parks, or rumnas, of Oriental princes, kept for show, and often, half or wholly tamed, led about by a chain, or confined in large cages and enclosures where he was made to fight with other tigers or with buffaloes, elephants, rhinoceros, or even with the horse and other animals, for the amusement of the native courts and their visitors.

I have seen several tiger fights at Lucknow in former years, before King Wajid Ally was deposed ; and the memorable scene that followed that monarch's removal from his government—when an auction of tigers, leopards, cheetahs, elephants, rhinoceros, giraffes, and other animals, took place—had probably never been, and never will be, equalled. A dozen tigers, sold to the highest bidder, at ten rupees each, was perhaps one of the most remarkable purchases ever made, not surpassed even by that of a brace of rhinoceros at 250 rupees, or a giraffe at 500 rupees. All this has now changed ; the rumnas and wild beasts have long since disappeared. Lucknow is no more as she has been. The tiger-throne of Hyder Ally, the tiger of Mysore, at Seringapatam, and his toy tiger devouring

an English soldier, in which he is said to have delighted, are gone likewise. How different Hyder Ally and Tippoo Sultan must have been from the amiable and accomplished old gentleman, Tippoo's last surviving son, who died lately in Calcutta at a ripe old age! He was well known in England some years ago as Prince Gholam Mahomed, and was much respected by Europeans and natives in India.

The geographical distribution of the tiger is very wide. When Buffon stated that it was found, not only in Asia, but also in the South of Africa, he was mistaken, for it is confined entirely to the former country, though the area is a wide one. From Ararat and the Caucasus on the west, it ranges east as far as the Island of Saghalien, but it appears not to ascend to the high tableland of Thibet. ~~From Cape Comorin it extends north in Hindostan to the Himalayas, to the height of 6,000 to 8,000 feet; one was killed recently, as reported in the *Home News* of February 2nd, 1874, at Dalhousie, 8,000 feet above the sea, the first, probably, that has been found so high.~~

Humboldt, in his "Central Asia," speaks of the tiger being found in Ceylon, but evidently he is mistaken. It is neither met with in that island nor in Borneo, notwithstanding that, with reference to the latter island, we find the following passage in Mr. St. John's work:—"At one place two rocks