

ALFRED IN INDIA,

OR

SCENES IN HINDOOSTAN.

BOSTON:
GOULD, KENDALL AND LINCOLN,
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point there is a Mohammedan tomb, where the people believe a great treasure is buried. The rock is covered with sculpture, except at the top, where there is a natural grove of trees surrounding a small temple. Here resides a kind of priest, who takes toll from the natives as they pass up or down the river, threatening them with shipwreck and all sorts of calamities if they refuse to comply with his demands. The travellers were told that this filthy and disgusting being, whom they saw sitting like a baboon upon the rock, and with scarcely more clothes on, was worth more than a million of English money; and that besides great possessions of land, he had a hundred thousand buffaloes.

At Bhangulpore they were still six hundred miles from the sea; and yet here this great river, in the rainy season, is eight miles broad. But so many changes have taken place in the channel, that at a point lower down, some little rocky islands which they admired very much, with their crown of beautiful trees, were, not a great many years before, at a considerable distance from the water. After passing Bhangulpore, they were amused with the sight of a fleet of boats carrying to market cargoes of live

fish, kept in wells communicating with the river. At the outlets of the streams running into this part of the Ganges the quantities of fish are enormous. The hamlets on the banks were also a pleasing sight, with their cows coming home in the evening, each with an iron bell round its neck, the sound of which wafted over the river was very agreeable. Jungle fowl likewise were frequently seen; and although they are merely cocks and hens in a wild state, the cock is a much more splendid fellow than was ever seen in a poultry-yard.

They now passed some wild-looking hills, where Alfred was told by his father there were plenty of tigers, leopards, and wild hogs, and where even the rarer rhinoceros may be seen sometimes coming down to wallow in the river.

“Hollo!” cried Alfred; “there is one now—two—three—a dozen—or more!”

“Look again,” said his father quietly.

“I do! And oh, papa, do you not also see these great black horns and wild staring eyes above the surface of the water near the edge of the river?”

“Yes; and they are old acquaintances of yours, although the rhinoceros has put them

out of your head. They are tame buffaloes, which lie in that way for hours enjoying the coolness of the water."

He had scarcely spoken, when some men came down the bank driving more buffaloes before them, and presently those in the river raised up their huge bodies, and all stood together in a crowd, looking straight towards our travellers' vessel, as if meditating a visit.

"What are they going to do?" cried Alfred, watching them with intense curiosity. "I declare they are coming to us!" And at the words the men screamed and shouted, and the buffaloes dashed into the river, followed by their drivers, who appeared to have the herd divided among them, each laying hold of the tail of one of the largest of the animals. The children at first hung back, uncertain as to what their object might be; but when told that this was a common way of crossing the river, they leant over the side as the cavalcade passed, and clapped their hands with delight. At another place, where the river was at least a thousand yards wide, they saw a poor pariah dog crossing in the same manner; but this was perhaps an unusual spectacle, for it attracted the curiosity