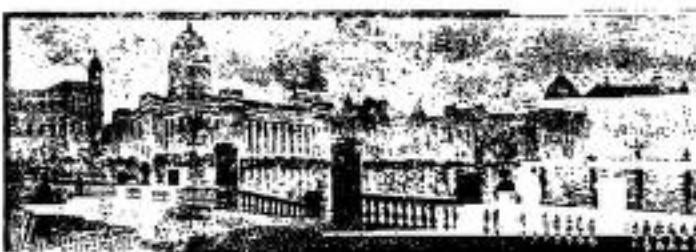


BENGAL PAST & PRESENT



JOURNAL OF THE CALCUTTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Daniells in India.

OUR good friend, Mr. William Foster, is not convinced by the arguments advanced in our last issue (Vol. XXV. pp. 9-12) to support the theory that the Daniells were accompanied by Samuel Davis and the Daniells on their journey into Garhwal by Samuel Davis. The evidence, in his judgment, is not very strong: and no sketch appears to have been found, which can clearly be identified as made by him in that region. Even the sketch by Davis which we reproduced (opposite p. 12) may well have been made (he thinks) in some part of the Bhagalpur district, where the artist civilian was certainly stationed from at least 1787 to 1793. It is stated in the article (p. 10) that there is a gap in the records of the Government of India between August 7, 1783 when Davis was appointed to a writership on his return from Bhutan, and May 1, 1793, when we find him as Collector of Burdwan. Mr. Foster has ascertained that in the India Office lists of Bengal Civil Servants from February, 1785, to April, 1787, Davis is described as "Assistant to Collector and Register to the Court of Adawlut, Boglepore;" and that from October 1788 to April, 1792, his name appears with the same designation, except that he is termed First Assistant. His grades were: factor, August 7, 1788; Junior Merchant, August 7, 1791; Senior Merchant, August 7, 1794. We have it therefore, that he was at Bhagalpur when the Daniells arrived there on July 30, 1790: the date and place being those given by William Daniell in his letter to his mother. Mr. Foster surmises that it was at this period that the uncle and nephew "resided twelve months in the same House with" Davis, as related in the Farington Diary (entry of February 12, 1806). But there is this difficulty in the way: that the sketches in the sixth series of "Oriental Scenery," which contains six of excavations on the Island of Salsette and Elephanta, are expressly stated to have been "taken in the year 1790 and 1793;" and we know that the Daniells were at Calcutta in 1792 and thereafter in the Madras Presidency from June of that year to the beginning of 1793, when they left India. The friendship with Davis certainly continued in England as witness the following further entry in the Farington Diary:

August 11, 1807.—[Thomas] Daniell called.—His tour to Wales with [Samuel] Davis and Wm. Daniell cost them about 45 pounds each. They were out a month.—took a chaise from London and had Post Horses.—Their rule was to have a Bottle of wine at dinner and they dined late, having no Supper.

In the same article on "The Daniells in India" allusion was made (p. 4) to the fact that one of Thomas Daniell's pictures forms part of the National Gallery collection. Mr. C. A. Oldham, C.S.I., has sent us the following copy of an entry in the official catalogue of the National Gallery (printed in 1878):

No. 899. *Woody Landscape—View on the Nullah, near Rajemahel, Bengal.* European travellers with their attendants crossing a bridge, which was built by the Sultan Sujah, in the 17th century. Signed T. Daniell, 1827. On canvas 3ft. 2½in. N. by 4ft. 6in. W. Bequeathed by Mrs. William Mansfield in 1872.

As Thomas Daniell did not exhibit at the Royal Academy after 1828, this must have been one of his latest compositions. It was not shown at the Academy and is not now on view at the National Gallery. Mr. Oldham adds the following note:

It seems that this is the only painting by Daniell which was ever hung at the National Gallery: and it was transferred many years ago to the Tate Gallery, whence it found its way to the Ministry of Transport, where it apparently now is.

The "Waterfall of Dhuh Koondee in the neighbourhood of Sasseram" which supplies the subject for sketch No. 11 in the fourth series of Daniell's "Oriental Scenery" has been identified by Mr. L. S. S. O'Malley, C.I.E., who has been good enough to send us the following note:

I have never heard of any waterfall of this name near Sasseram but think that what Daniell drew was the fall of the river Kao, where it leaves the hills for the plains, a few miles from Sasseram. I walked to it over the hills during the rains, and it was a magnificent spectacle—a great body of water plunging down rocky rapids and then over a precipice into a deep gorge. The Gersoppa falls, according to photographs which I have seen, have struck me as wonderfully similar. It is quite the finest waterfall which I have come across, but is very little known, being off the beaten track.

Daniell, like Mr. O'Malley, must have visited the spot in the rainy season, or shortly after: for in dry weather hardly a trickle of water falls over the cliff.

Here is an entry from the Farington Diary which is provokingly incomplete. Who was the Rajah? as it stands. Can any member of the Society, or reader of *Bengal Past and Present*, fill in the blanks?

March 20, 1808.—Wm. Daniell called and shewed me a Seal engraved, the handle, a golden Elephant, intended by some Officer to be a present to a Rajah in the East Indies well disposed to the English, and from whom they had received favours.—The price about 50 guineas.