

ORIENTAL MEMOIRS:

SELECTED AND ABRIDGED FROM

A SERIES OF FAMILIAR LETTERS

WRITTEN DURING

SEVENTEEN YEARS RESIDENCE IN INDIA:

INCLUDING

OBSERVATIONS

ON

PARTS OF AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA,

AND

A NARRATIVE OF OCCURRENCES IN FOUR INDIA VOYAGES.

Illustrated by Engravings from Original Drawings.

BY JAMES FORBES, F.R.S. &c.

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unless impelled by hunger, attack in an open or frequented situation, but quickly avails himself of the opportunity afforded by the deviating traveller, to secure a prey."

The tiger will eat nothing but what he destroys himself. The hyena, sya-gush, and even the leopard, will, on emergencies, act otherwise. The lion, with respect to eating, has the same propensity as the tiger, and in many instances they seem to blend something noble with their ferocity. These animals generally seem to have their own walks in the solitary regions which they inhabit, and are seldom seen more than two together. For several miles in extent, the Turcaseer forests, in the dry season, are destitute of water. There was a pool in a wild part, whither the natives informed us the savage race nightly resorted to drink; which they could only approach by one narrow pass. One of our eager sportsmen had a platform fixed among the branches of a lofty tree overhanging this path, where he passed two moon-light nights, and was highly gratified with his success. Among the variety of animals which went to the water, he saw five royal tigers marching together, which the Indians reckon a very extraordinary circumstance.

I mentioned the rhinoceros in the menagerie at the Cape of Good Hope; it is not uncommon in some of the Bengal provinces, and other parts of Hindostan frequented by the wild elephant, with whom it often has a desperate engagement: but as these animals are seldom seen to the westward of the Ganges, I shall here only add, that the skin of the rhinoceros is very valuable, forming shields said to be impenetrable to a musket ball: the foot is also highly esteemed by the Indians for medicinal purposes; and, exclusive of other useful properties, a cup turned from

the horn of this animal is reputed to be an effectual antidote to poison. I have one of the largest and most beautiful I ever met with, being thirteen inches in circumference, though not turned from the thickest part of the horn. There can be little doubt of the rhinoceros being the unicorn of scripture; the questions in the book of Job perfectly correspond with his habits. “ Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, will he abide by thy crib? canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow, or will he harrow the valleys after thee? wilt thou trust him because his strength is great, or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seeds, and gather it into thy barn?”

Next to the rhinoceros and buffalo, the wild boar is perhaps one of the most ferocious animals in India; and not only fierce, but so swift, that few of the savage tribes afford more variety of diversion to sportsmen. Their chief abode is in the jungles and forests; but when the grain is nearly ripe they do great mischief in the corn-fields, especially in sugar plantations, as they are extremely fond of the sugar-cane. The sows have very large litters of pigs, which are soon able to shift for themselves. There is a great variety in the form and colour of the wild hogs: the former varies according to the season. When the sugar-cane is full of juice, and the corn ripe, the hog is large and heavy; during a scarcity of food, he becomes meagre, light, and grim. When hunted in the proper season, we frequently had a young boar barbecued, or roasted with spices and madeira wine, in a sylvan style of cookery, which afforded a sumptuous feast. The largest boars are from three to four feet high at the shoulder; their tusks are five or six