

A NEW
ACCOUNT
OF THE
East Indies,

BEING THE
OBSERVATIONS and REMARKS

Of Capt. ALEXANDER HAMILTON;

Who spent his Time there

From the Year 1688. to 1723. Trading
and Travelling, by Sea and Land, to
most of the Countries and Islands of
COMMERCE and NAVIGATION, be-
tween the Cape of *Good-hope*, and the
Island of *Japon*.

VOLUME I.



EDINBURGH,

Printed by *John Mosman* One of His MAJES-
TY'S Printers, and sold at the King's Prin-
ting-house in *Craig's Close*. MDCCLXXVII.

wrack'd Men much more Civility and Humanity than some Nations that I know, who pretend much Religion and Politeness, for they accommodated their Guests with whatever they wanted of the Product of their Country, at very easy Rates, and assisted what they could, to save Part of the damaged Cargo, receiving very moderate Rewards for their Labour and Pains. Their Language was by Signs ; and for a few Glafs-beads, Knives, Scizers, Needles, Thread and small Looking-glasses, which they are very fond of, they hired themselves to carry many portable Things (that were saved from the Shipwrack) to a neighbouring Country, and procured others, who also served them for Guides towards the Cape of *Good-hope*, and provided Eatables for their Masters, all the while they were under their Conduct ; and having carried them about 200 Miles on their Way, by Land, they provided new Guides and Porters for them, for some of the aforesaid Trifles, who conducted them, and provided for them, as the others had done, for 7 or 800 Miles farther, which they travelled in 40 Days, and so delivered their Charge to others, who conducted and provided for them, till they arrived at the Cape ; and some of the *English* falling sick on the Way, they carried the Sick in Hammocks, till they either recovered or died, and out of 80 Men there were but 3 or 4 died ; but how long they journeyed before they arrived at the Cape, I have forgotten. This Account I had from one of the Travel-
lers,

lers. He told me, that the natural Fertility of those Countries he travelled thro', made the Inhabitants lazy, indolent, indocile and simple. Their Rivers are abundantly stored with good Fish and Water-fowl, besides Manatees, or Sea-cows and Crocodiles ; their Woods with large Trees, wild Cattle and Deer, Elephants, Rhinoceroses, Lions, Tigers, Wolves and Foxes for Game ; also many Sorts of winged Fowl and Birds, besides Ostriches. They have some Notions of a Deity, whom they worship with Dancing and Feasting, for they are generally very much inclined to Mirth, an Instance whereof I'll venture to relate, on the Account I had from a Master of a Ship, who went thither to trade in *Anno* 1718. *viz.* When they had got their Ship secured in a River, the Natives assembled in good Numbers to traffick, near the Place where the Ship lay : An arch *Indian* Youth, who was a very good Drummer, carried his Drum ashore, and in a Thicket pretty near the Assembly, beat his Drum very briskly, on which the Young of both Sexes fell a skipping, and a little after the Adult and Old followed their Example, so that none stood idle Spectators ; but the Old beginning to tire, some went to the Drummer, and presented him with Eggs, Fowl and Fruits, and intreated him to leave off, which as soon as he did, they all sat down again on the Ground, well heated.

I saw several Rhinoceroses Horns brought thence to *Bombay*, much longer than ever I

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whose Approach the poor King surrendred his Kingdom, without once drawing his Sword in its Defence, and so it easily became annext to the *Mogul's* Dominions.

THAT Branch of the *Ganges* disembogues into the Sea at *Chittagoung*, or, as the *Portuguese* call it, *Xatigam*, about 50 Leagues below *Dacca*; and this Place confines the *Mogul's* Dominions to the Eastward. The Distance between *Sagor* the westernmost Channel of the *Ganges*, and *Xatigam* the easternmost, is about 100 Leagues, the maritim Coast being divided into many small Islands made by the Currents of the *Ganges*, but very few are inhabited, because they are so pestered with Tigers, that there is little Safety for other Inhabitants; and there are also many Rhinoceroses on those Islands, but they are not so dangerous Neighbours as the Tigers, yet, when provoked, they will assault any living Thing. Nature has endued him with two particular Rarities out of her Stores. One is a large Horn placed on his Nose. The second is a Coat of Mail to defend him from the Teeth or Claws of other fierce Animals. His Tongue is also somewhat of a Rarity, for, if he can but get any of his Antagonists down, he will lick them so clean, that he leaves neither Skin nor Flesh to cover their Bones; but he is seldom known to be an Aggressor, except when he meets with an Elephant, then he sharpens his Horn and assaults, tho' he is much inferior to the Elephant in Bulk and Strength, being no bigger than a
very

By that Time I was clear at *Bencock*, Captain *Dalglish* arrived there also, in order to proceed to *Bengal*. He had fallen into the Trap laid by *Collet*, and had paid Measurage and Customs, besides the usual Presents to the Court, according to the old Constitution, but he could not get ready to go so soon out of the River as I, otherwise I designed to have brought some Troubles on *Sennerat*, if not on *Collet* and *Powney's* Affairs at *Siam*, but Captain *Dalglish* being still in their Power, tied my Hands.

Siam Bar is only a large Bank of soft Mud, and, at Spring-tides, not above ten or eleven Foot Water on it. It is easy getting into it in the South-west Monsoons, because, in two or three Tides, with the Motion the Ship receives from the small Waves and the Assistance of the Wind, she slides thro' the Mud. My Ship drew thirteen Foot, and we had not above nine on the Bar when we went into the River, but coming out with the North-east Monsoons, the Sea being smooth, we are obliged to warp out with Anchors and Haulers, and, if the Ship draws any considerable Draught of Water, we are sometimes two Springs in warping over, but, at twelve Foot Draught, I got over in four Tides.

AND now, having given some particular Accounts of my Observations on and in *Siam*, I will also give some general Remarks and begin with the Fertility of the Country which, on that Point, is inferior to few (if any) in the World.

THE R

THERE are but two Parcels of Mountains to be seen in the Places that I passed thro', and they ly between East and North-east from the City of *Odia*, about ten Leagues distant, and they produce good Timber for building, and Agala-wood for Perfumes. They have also Mines of Iron, Tin, Lead, Silver and Gold, but they are all entailed on the Crown, who has the sole Benefit of them. They breed vast Numbers of wild Deer, which are hunted and killed for the sake of their Skins, which they yearly send to *Japon*.

THE Plains produce all Sorts of Grain necessary for animal and human Sustenance. They plentifully bear as good, if not the best Oranges, Lemons and Limes in the World. Their Rivers superabound in Fish of several Species, very good in their Kind. Their Villages are numerous, and well inhabited with Artificers and Peasants; but there are but five walled Towns in all the *Siam* Dominions, and *Odia* is one of them.

THEY have Abundance of wild Animals in their Woods, such as Elephants, Rhinoceroses, Leopards and Tigers, and tame Cattle, as Bullocks, Buffaloes and Swine, in Abundance about their Farms. Temples and Priests are more numerous here, in Proportion to the Laity, than in any Country I ever saw out of the Dominions of *Portugal*. Their *Tallapoys* or Priests are distinguished from the Laity by a cinnamon or orange-coloured Cloke which they wear, they again differing among themselves by distinguishing Badges,
by

ON the Mountains of *Zensi*, near the famous Wall that divides *China* from *Tartary*, grows Abundance of that useful and valuable Root Rhubarb, whose Use is so well known in *Europe*. The Root *Gensing* grows also in Woods there, and when the Natives go in Quest of it, to find it, they are forced to go in the Night Season, with Torches in their Hands, for fear of being assaulted by the wild Inhabitants of the Woods, such as Lions, Tigers, Leopards, Rhinoceroses, &c. of the brutal Kind, besides dangerous Reptiles, as Serpents and Snakes, which all flee from Fire. I have heard of Serpents thirty Foot long, and five in Circumference, which lurk all Day in their Dens, and come out in the Nights, to prey on Animals that ly securely in theirs.

THIS Root *Gensing*, when dried, is like a little Carrot, of a light yellow Colour, and, about Mid-way down, it branches in two, which makes the *Chinese* call it the *Man-herb*. It has a sweetish Taste, but, being much chew'd, it seems bitterish. It is cut in Shreds, and drunk with Tea, and then it is esteem'd a very great Restorative of the animal Spirits. It is exceeding hot in Quality, and therefore to be avoided by those of strong Constitutions. It is excellent in Consumptions, and, for its several good Qualities, is sold at a great Price, some at three Times its Weight in Silver; but, after it is a Year old, it goes off at a Shilling *per* Ounce, because it is difficult to keep the Worm out of it.