

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES:

BEING

*REMINISCENCES DURING EIGHTEEN YEARS
RESIDENCE IN BENGAL.*

BY

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(GEORGE TRIGGER.)

EDITED BY

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"Quid dem? quid non dem?
Renuis quod tu, jubet alter."
HORACE.

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS.

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to a more favourable spot; but they retreat in a body, facing the enemy; and if he springs, they simultaneously send a flight of arrows and spears into him.

In this way they have been known to receive and kill a full-grown tiger at one discharge.

They can make nothing of the rhinoceros, of which I shall shortly speak, and they fear him more than the tiger.

This plan which the hill people adopt, of combining in a body for protection, is the natural course taken by *all animals* under a charge from a tiger. Cows and buffaloes club together, elephants also, in spite of the mahout, will close in a lump together, and if one is left out, or is not quick in clubbing, he generally gets his back scratched.

The Rhinoceros (Rh. indicus, Cuv.)

The rhinoceros, like the buffalo and hog, requires water and mud for wallowing in. A deep neglected tank, surrounded by dense and tangled jungle, and well protected from the sun, is a favourite resort of the first-named animal.

The certain sign of his proximity is the ever present tumulus of ordure which is never far from his resting-place; and the circumstance of the animal continuing to use it for his purposes, until

it rises so high as to be no longer within his reach, renders his haunt certain to the sportsman, when he falls in with a tumulus showing recent marks of use.

In the densest and most impenetrable parts of the jungle, quite protected from the sun which the rhinoceros detests, the animal is often come upon. The gloomy sequestered situation in which the animal is generally found adds much to the formidable nature of the pursuit.

The impossibility of getting out of his way, in case he assumes the offensive, and the fact that no jungle, however strong and thick, can in the least impede his progress or rush through it—that everything must yield to his overwhelming strength—render him one of the most intractable beasts that inhabit the hill jungles.

If not shot on the first approach, there is little chance of doing so afterwards; for putting down his head, he rushes on in a kind of trot, crashing through the deepest jungles to the dense forests, where pursuit is utterly impracticable.

The males have often desperate combats, whether from love or casual meeting, is unknown; for, owing to their seclusion and great retirement, it is impossible to make that close observation of their habits which alone could enable one to arrive at a correct conclusion.

When once they meet and engage, their dogged, sullen, obstinate disposition continues the fight until one or other is completely vanquished by wounds and exertion. The battle has been known to rage a whole night without intermission; at last one of the combatants was so overcome by wounds and fatigue that he could neither escape nor defend himself, and was shot into and killed, the muzzle of the gun touching him.

As in the elephant, so in the rhinoceros, the bulk of the brain is very small in proportion to the size of the animal.

The brain of the rhinoceros is curiously divided into cellular partitions by a horny parchment-like substance, and resembles a honey-comb.

In addition to its twenty-eight grinders, the animal has two stout incisive teeth in each jaw, together with two other immediate smaller ones below, and two still more diminutive outside of its upper incisors. It has one horn on the nasal bones, which adheres to the skin, and is composed of a fibrous and horny substance, resembling agglutinated hairs. The horn, which is about thirty inches in length, does not adhere to the bone, but stands loose between the nostrils; but when the animal is irritated the muscular tension is so great that the horn instantly becomes immovably fixed. The skin is fully half-an-inch thick; deep folds extend behind and across the

shoulders, and before and across the thighs. The natives use it in making shields.

They also very carefully preserve and dry the flesh, which is considered by many a perfect restorative for many complaints which human flesh is heir to.

Wild Buffalo (Arnā Bhainsā).

The buffalo has a convex forehead longer than broad ; the horns are directed backwards, and marked in front by a longitudinal projection. It is a very savage and dangerous animal when separated from the herd. He becomes the tyrant monarch of the plains, and attacks men and animals indiscriminately. He proclaims war on all who intrude on his natal domains, and scours the flats and marshes furious as a tiger.

The longer he remains solitary the more dangerous and headstrong is he in disposition, becoming in a few days a desperate and deadly foe to all.

He charges with an impetuosity for one or two-hundred yards which is perfectly astonishing, when he generally makes a dead stop, and gazing wildly on the object of his rage, he throws his steaming nostrils on high, and bellowing defiance, paws the ground and stamps the earth, making the very ground beneath him tremble.

A little beyond Janjipoor, to the west, the first glimpse of the hills is obtained. It took from daylight to 2 P.M. to reach Sootee, which is situated on the west bank of the river, on rather high ground, and from the number of large boats there collected, it seems to be a place of considerable trade. It possesses a factory, but not a very large one. Remained here a short time to obtain some necessaries for the boats, and then proceeded on again till nightfall.

8th. Started early in the morning and reached Laskapoore by about ten o'clock. The rest of the day was spent in getting into the big river, near the embrasure of which there were nearly six hundred large boats jammed and huddled together; the confusion may be within the reach of imagination, but is quite beyond description.

The Ganges here is about three miles in width, and opens boldly to the eye; the stream is pretty rapid.

Here, I had an opportunity of witnessing that curious phenomenon, the mirage. A perfect representation of a most rapid current was beautifully distinct. It seemed to rush past like a mountain torrent at a distance of three or four miles off; though aided by a field glass I could not detect the illusion, but I must observe that the field glass was not a very good one.

At sunset we were obliged to make fast on the

tail of a chur, or rather chain of churs, undulating like the prairies.

9th. By daylight the men betook themselves to the pathway and continued for some time tracking slowly, by-and-bye a fine breeze springing up from the N.W. we made sail and had a delightful run of five or six miles; but finding I was running away from breakfast, and seeing the hour hand pointing to eleven o'clock, we brought up and waited for our dog and cook boat, which soon overhauled us.

I had purchased some fine mullets early in the morning, and after seeing the dogs comfortable and thoroughly cleaned, I commenced an attack on mullets, eggs, toast, coffee etc.

After leaving the churs in the morning, the river assumed a beautiful, clear, wide appearance, not an island or sandbank to be seen, only one broad rippling stream of two or three miles from shore to shore.

By 2 P.M. the range of the Raj Mahal hills became very perceptible. They had been visible the day before, but owing to the haze of distance it was fatiguing to the eye to endeavour to trace them, or their outline on the horizon.

10th. This morning the hills were very plain, and distinguishably variegated with alternate herbage, trees and shrubs, and the sun lit them up very prettily.

The river seemed to extend from three to four

miles. At about eleven o'clock, we reached the mouth of Begumunge Cal. The factory is said to be about two coss distant from it.

Despatched a letter to Bateman.

Lay at the mouth of the Begumunge kol, near to which is Neemtolah factory, carried on by Mr. Henshawe, formerly of the Seracole concern.

At about 12 o'clock Bateman's elephant, a pad one, reached the boat, and I started immediately for the factory.

About half an hour's ride brought me up to one of the neatest sporting lodges, and, I suppose, one of the best sportsmen, India ever produced.

There never was, I suppose, a situation more favourably chosen as a point to diverge from, for every kind of sport, from the mighty elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, etc. down to the quail, than Begumunge, which is within a short distance of the hills, which form a beautiful background to the landscape.

The hills are the abode of the elephant, rhinoceros, tiger, leopard, jackal, deer, pig, and a great variety of feathered game.

Begumunge thus commands, by its situation, the whole of the Raj Mahal hills up to within a short distance of Bhāgalpoor, and is not far from Malda and many other sporting stations.

Of my host, I need only say he is a thorough

sportsman; every one knowing that when they meet such a man they are certain of finding an excellent companion and a good fellow. Mrs. Bateman left nothing to be wished for in the way of comfort and welcome. I left their hospitable roof at about 9 P.M. on a fine moonlight night, and crossing a chur and one or two nullahs reached the boat, after a four or five miles' ride, supped, smoked a Manilla and rested.

Mr. Bateman told me he had formerly caught twelve or thirteen elephants on the hills at a time when the Honourable Company were paying a good price for them, but retrenchment becoming the order of the day altered the profits, and "*le jeu n'en vaut pas la chandelle.*"

Bateman stated that all the elephants he caught had marks of having been once reclaimed. He supposed they had perhaps escaped from our armies, or having been left behind sick they had recovered, and, getting away from the zemindars, had taken up their habitat among the hills and multiplied. A circumstance which renders this conjecture probable is that elephants are not naturally inhabitants of hills, but of the plains. The age of the elephant is unknown, but is supposed to exceed a century.

11th. Killed the first whole quail; weighed 4 oz. 1 dram.

I was nearly omitting to remark that the Raj Mahal hills are inhabited by a tribe of Aborigines. They are a fine race of men, and hire themselves out in gangs for work at the factories and all kinds of cultivation.

Among the hills are many fertile vales, comprising two or three hundred acres of the richest black soil which has never been cultivated, perhaps, since the creation. Parts of these vales, especially the more swampy, are cultivated by a still more superior race of hill people, who pay for an extent of land equal to a hundred acres only a goat a year and a little jaggery. They are all sportsmen, and particularly expert with the bow and arrow.

12th. Reached the city of Raj Mahal at about 5 o'clock, where Bateman's elephants had already arrived.

Here I found a large detachment of invalids homeward bound from different corps. They occupied about fifty boats, and comprised about four hundred men.

Although late in the day, I took a look at the ruins. They are the most massively built native work I ever saw, and are entirely overgrown with jungle.

Here is also a burial-ground for Europeans, and seemed to contain a great number of tombs.

The inhabitants of Raj Mahal appear to be most

squalid and unhealthy, and had a kind of cadaverous bronze colour. How can they be otherwise, residing in such a place as its depths are, teeming with malaria from the rankest vegetation and with the least circulation of air conceivable?

13th. Started in the morning on Bateman's elephant for Peer Pahar, a village extending I should think fully three miles.

Passed a few dilapidated buildings and a bridge cased with stone. The body of it seemed to be built of large shingle, oval shaped, each one weighing about eight or ten maunds, embedded in strong mortar and apparently imperishable. The bridge was quite overgrown with jungle springing from the parapets on both sides.

Where the village opened to the landscape a beautiful view was obtained. It was a sea of grass jungle extending to the foot of the hills, which appeared about a mile off.

The hills were beautifully lit up by the morning sun, and the sameness of the immense expanse of grass was diversified by small bushes that marked the different lines of small nullahs which intersected the immense plain. These nullahs are outlets of the jheels that extend along the plain at the foot of the hills.

Put up some deer and killed a doe, also sprang some few chickore and black partridge, but did not

bag very many. Reached the boats about 12 o'clock. In the evening took the dogs out and shot several chickore and black partridge.

14th. Started for Koddje, an uninhabited factory close to the foot of the hills.

The dāk road runs through one of the most extensive jungles imaginable, the abode of the rhinoceros and tiger. Saw a herd of deer, a few pigs and peacocks, and came on the remains of a buffalo.

When within two miles of the factory I was directed by the descent and hovering of vultures to a deep jungle by the side of a stagnant nullah, and beating it up, found a fresh carcase of a buffalo.

The elephant gave notice of something on foot, passed the carcase and discovered the footmarks of a large tiger. After beating about for some quarter of an hour I noticed some tall grass moving, and soon getting a peep at his majesty I fired. The shot told, but did not stop him. Nevertheless I felt confident he was well hit. After a little further pursuit we found ourselves in his immediate proximity. When we perceived him he was down on his side, and evidently severely wounded.

Having halted and sketched him from the back of my pad elephant, and feeling sure he was utterly disabled, I dismounted and treated him as I loved him.

Slept at the factory. Had breakfast under a tree, after which I paid a visit to Mr. Darget, by whom I was entertained with true hospitality.

His bungalow is situated on a projecting hill close to the river. Sent back Bateman's elephant and took to boat again. Went ashore very soon after sunrise. The call of the chickore was quite ridiculous, nothing else but "chuckle chuckle," from apparently hundreds of birds. The dogs stood them well, but the jungle was excessively deep, even close to the river.

Killed six and a half brace—had some excellent points—scent evidently a warm one.

Came upon the marks of a tiger, quite fresh, so that he must have very recently passed from the jungle to the river. Apprehensions not pleasant; nevertheless, I beat on, and altogether had most excellent sport, and no undesirable encounter.

Weighed the chickore, and found the cocks 16 and 17 ounces, hens 13 and 14 ounces.

Whilst at Siciree I was told that the jungle fowls came down amongst the tame ones and fed with them, as did also the peacocks and deer.

The hyenas even entered the compound of the bungalow, and several of the proprietor's dogs were severely wounded by them; one had his ribs broken.

Every report agreed that game of all sorts was most abundant there, and I assuredly had the oppor-