

ANNALS AND ANTIQUITIES

OF

RAJAST'HAN,

OR THE

CENTRAL AND WESTERN RAJPOOT STATES

OF

INDIA.

BY

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motion at a certain hour, when they wind out as much line as they can without the risk of breaking it. Unhappy the wretch whom this disaster befalls, when, happening to fall into a feverish slumber, he kicks the windlass, and snaps the living thread, which creates tenfold inflammation and suppuration. On the other hand, if by patience and skill it is extracted entire, he recovers. I should almost imagine, when the patriarch of Uz exclaims, "My flesh is clothed with worms: my skin is broken and become loathsome. When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise and the night be gone?" that he must have been afflicted with the *narooa*, than which none of the ills that flesh is heir to can be more agonizing.*

They have the usual infantine and adult diseases, as in the rest of India. Of these the *seetla*, or 'small-pox,' and the *tejárrá*, or 'tertian,' are the most common. For the first, they merely recommend the little patient to 'Seetla Mátá'; and treat the other with astringents, in which infusion of the rind of the pomegranate is always (when procurable) an ingredient. The rich, as in other countries, are under the dominion of empirics, who entail worse diseases by administering mineral poisons, of whose effects they are ignorant. Enlargement of the spleen under the influence of these fevers is very common, and its cure is mostly the actual cautery.

Famine is, however, the grand natural disease of these regions, whose legendary stanzas teem with records of visitations of *Bookha Mata*, the 'famished mother,' from the remotest times. That which is best authenticated in the traditions of several of these states, occurred in the eleventh century, and continued during twelve years! It is erroneously connected with the name of Lakha Phooláni, who was the personal foe of Scéjji, the first Rahtore emigrant from Canouj, and who slew this Robin Hood of the desert in S. 1268 (A.D. 1212). Doubtless the desiccation of the Caggar river, in the time of Hamir Soda, nearly a century before, must have been the cause of this. Every third year they calculate upon a partial visitation, and in 1812 one commenced which lasted three or four years, extending even to the central states of India, when flocks of poor creatures found their way to the provinces on the Ganges, selling their infants, or parting with their own liberty, to sustain existence.

Productions, animal and vegetable.—The camel, 'the ship of the desert,' deserves the first mention. There he is indispensable; he is yoked to the plough, draws water from the

* My friend Dr. Joseph Duncan (attached to the Residency when I was political agent at Oodipoor) was attacked by the *narooa* in a very aggravated form. It fixed itself in the ankle-joint, and being broken in the attempt to extricate it, was attended by all the evil results I have described, ending in lameness, and generally impaired health, which obliged him to visit the Cape for recovery, where I saw him on my way home eighteen months after, but he had even then not altogether recovered from the lameness.

the well, bears it for his lordly master in *mesheks*, or 'skins,' in the passage of the desert, and can dispense with it himself altogether during several days. This quality, the formation of his hoof, which has the property of contracting and expanding according to the soil, and the induration of his mouth, into which he draws by his tongue the branches of the *babool*, the *khér*, and *jowás*, with their long thorns, sharp and hard as needles, attest the beneficence of the Supreme Artist. It is singular that the Arabian patriarch, who so accurately describes the habits of various animals, domestic and ferocious, and who was himself lord of three thousand camels, should not have mentioned the peculiar properties of the camel, though in alluding to the incapacity of the unicorn (*rhinoceros*) for the plough, he seems indirectly to insinuate the use of others besides the ox for this purpose. The camels of the desert are far superior to those of the plains, and those bred in the *t'huls* of Dhát and Barmair are the best of all. The Rajas of Jessulmér and Bikanér have corps of camels trained for war. That of the former state is two hundred strong, eighty of which belong to the prince; the rest are the quotas of his chiefs; but how they are rated, or in what ratio to the horsemen of the other principalities, I never thought of enquiring. Two men are mounted on each camel, one facing the head, the other the rear, and they are famous in a retreating action: but when compelled to come to close quarters, they make the camel kneel known, tie his legs, and retiring behind, make a breastwork of his body, resting the matchlock over the pack-saddle. There is not a shrub in the desert that does not serve the camel for fodder.

Khur-guddha, Gorkhur, or the wild ass, is an inhabitant of the desert, but most abounds in the southern part, about Dhát, and the deep *rooé* which extends from Barmair to Bankasirr and Buliari, along the north bank of the great Runn, or 'salt desert.'

Roz or *Nilgádé, Lions, &c.*—The noble species of the deer, the *nilgáé*, is to be met with in numerous parts of the desert; and although it enjoys a kind of immunity from the Rajpoot of the plains, who may hunt, but do not eat its flesh, here, both for food and for its hide, it is of great use. Of the other wild animals common to India they have the tiger, fox, jackall, hare, and also the nobler animal, the lion.

Of *domestic animals*, as horses, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, asses, there is no want, and even the last-mentioned is made to go in the plough.

Goats and sheep.—Flocks (here termed *chang*) of goats and sheep are pastured in vast numbers in the desert. It is asserted that the goat can subsist without water from the month of Kartick to the middle of Cheyt, the autumnal to the spring equinox,