LII. On the manner of hunting and sporting by the English in Bengal

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gave a dark red ponceau; which, however, possessed great brightness.

Exp. XVII. A piece of kerseymere was dipped for three minutes in a solution of muriate of strontian, and then immersed in a bath of cochineal. It assumed a dark colour; which at first imitated that of scarlet, but which by drying passed to crimfon.

Exp. XVIII. A neutral solution of nitrate of strontian produced a bright reddish brown.

Exp. XIX. Acetite of strontian produced a bright *ponceau*.

The results of these experiments prove, not only that the metals and earths subjected to trial possess a certain chemical affinity for the colouring matter of cochineal, and are capable of fixing it on stuffs, but that they possess also the property of producing with the same pigment very different shades. They prove besides, that the nature of the acid, which serves as a solvent to these substances, exercises a great influence on the shades produced.

The results obtained with the oxide of arsenic and the acid of that metal, are no less worthy of attention. The difference of the colours produced is particularly remarkable. The oxygen, no doubt, had the greatest share in this phenomenon, as this principle manifests, in a very evident manner, its great influence in the production of scarlet by the muriate of tin oxidated by the air.

LII. *On the Manner of Hunting and Sporting by the English in Bengal.* Communicated by Colonel G. IRONSIDE*.

FEW parties of pleasure can be more agreeable than those for hunting, formed by ladies and gentlemen in Bengal, particularly at some distance from the presidency of Fort William, where the country is pleasanter, and game of every kind in greater plenty. Any time between the beginning of November and end of February is taken for these excursions; during which season the climate is delightfully temperate, the air perfectly serene, and the sky often without a cloud.

To transport the tents and other requisites, for the accom-

* From the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1801.

modation of the company, to some verdant spot, near to a grove and rivulet, previously selected, elephants and camels are borrowed; small country carts, oxen, and bearers hired, at no considerable expense, the price of all kinds of grain, and wages of course, being exceedingly reasonable. Nor does the commanding officer of the troops within the district often refuse a guard of sepoy to protect the company from the danger of wild beasts, (for such generally resort to the haunts of game,) or the depredations of still wilder banditti, now and then pervading the country.

The larger tents are pitched in a square or circle, while those for the guards and servants usually occupy the outer space. Every *marquée* for a lady is divided into two or three apartments, for her camp-bed, her closet, and her dressing-room; is carpeted or matted, and is covered with a spreading fly, for defence against rain, or exclusion of casual heat, the air ventilating powerfully between the vacuity (about two feet) of the tent and its canopy in unremitted undulation. The doors or curtains of the *marquée*, wattled with a sweet-scented grass, are, if the weather chance to become sultry, continually sprinkled with water from the outside; and a chintz wall, stained in handsomely-figured compartments, encompasses the whole.

For the supply of common food, if no village be very near, petty chandler shops enow are engaged by the family banyans (house stewards) to accompany them, glad to profit of such an opportunity of gain. Liquors and every species of European articles are provided by the party themselves.

Horses are employed for the conveyance of the gentlemen, and palanquins for the ladies, with their female attendants; and, where the roads will admit of it, close and open English carriages also.

Part of the morning sports of the men, commencing at dawn of day, consist in rousing and chasing the wild boar, the wolf, and antelope (or gazelle), the roebuck, the musk, the red and other deer, hares, foxes, and jackalls: besides the common red, the spotted and the small moose, there are ten or twelve sorts of hog or short-bristled deer. Boars are usually found amongst the uncultivated tracts, or the more regular plantations of sugar-canes, which give to their flesh the finest flavour imaginable. Wolves and jackalls are seen prowling and lurking, at break of day, about the skirts of towns and villages, or retiring from thence to their dens within woods; or within pits, hollows, or ravines, on the downs. Hares shelter in the same situations as in England.

The

The hog, roebuck, and musk deer, conceal themselves amongst the thickest heath and herbage, and the antelope and large deer rove on the plains. All these animals, however, resort not rarely to the jungles (or very high coarse and implicated grafs), with which the levels of Hinduitan abound, either to graze, to browse, or in pursuit of prey.

A country of Asia abounding in such variety of game, is, of course, not destitute of wild beasts; the principal of which are the tiger, leopard, panther, tiger cats, bear, wolf, jackall, fox, hyæna, and rhinoceros. The leopards are of three or four kinds.

Or the gentlemen divert themselves with shooting the same animals; as also common partridge, rock partridge, hurriât or green pigeons, quail, plover, wild cocks and hens, curlews; black, white, and gray peacocks; florikens, storks of several kinds and colours, together with water hens, Braminy geese, cranes, wild geese and ducks, teal, widgeons, snipes, and other aquatic fowl, in infinite abundance; many of them of extraordinary shape, of glowing variegated plumage, and of unknown species; whose numbers almost cover the water whilst they swim, and, when alarmed, and flushed from the lakes, like a cloud, absolutely obscure the light.

The foxes are small, slenderly limbed, delicately furred with a soft brown hair, and by no means rank in smell; feeding principally upon grain, vegetables, and fruit. They are exceedingly fleet and flexible, though not strong or persevering. When running, they wind in successive evolutions to escape their pursuers, and afford excellent sport. Their holes are usually excavated, not in woods, but on hillocks, upon a smooth green sward or lawn, where, in a morning or evening, they are seen playing and frisking about with their young. They feed generally amongst the corn, and are oftenest found within fields of mustard or linseed, when it has sprouted up high enough to conceal them.

A minor critic, on perusal of *Æsop's* or rather Pilpay's fables, ridiculed the idea of foxes feeding upon grapes; but, had he consulted any Asiatic natural history, he would have learnt that they subsist upon grain, pulse, and fruit, particularly grapes and pine-apples when within their range, much more than upon flesh or fowl. Or, had he turned to the Bible, he would have there found the following passage in confirmation of it:—"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."—*Canticles*, c. ii. ver. 15.

Jackalls are rather larger than English foxes; but of a
VOL. XIV. No. 56. X brown

brown colour, clumsier shape, and not so pointed about the nose. In nature, they partake more of the wolf than of the dog or fox. Their real Asiatic name is shugaul, perverted by English seamen trading to the Levant (where they are in plenty on the coasts of Syria and Asia Minor) into jackalls.

Of the partridge there are several kinds, one with a white belly, and another something like grouse, only more motley feathered.

Plover too are various; and, when the weather becomes warm, ortolans traverse the heaths and commons in immense flocks.

There are no pheasants in the woods of Bengal or Bahar nearer than the confines of Assam, Chittagong, and the range of mountains separating Hindustan from Tibet and Napaul. But there, particularly about the Morung and in Betiah, they are large and beautiful, more especially the golden, the burnished, the spotted, and the azure, as well as the brown Argus pheasant.

As for peacocks, they are every where in multitudes, and of two or three species. One tract in Orissa is denominated More-bumje, or the Peacock District.

Cranes are of three sorts, and all of a cærulean gray: the very lofty one, with a crimson head, called *farus*; the smallest, called *curcurrah*, (the *demoiselle* of Linnæus and Buffon,) uncommonly beautiful and elegant, whose snow-white tuft, behind its scarlet-glowing eyes, is the appropriate ornament for the turban of the emperor alone; and the middle-sized one with a black head, the common *grus*. They return to the northern mountains about the autumnal equinox, after cessation of the periodical rains, with their young, in myriads of flights, frequent as the wood pigeon in North America; and sometimes, when the wind is very violent, flocks of them mount to a vast height in the air, and there wind about in regular circles, seemingly with much delight, and venting all the time a harsh discordant scream, heard at a considerable distance.

In the wilds of Hindustan certainly originated the common domestic fowl, for there they are discovered in almost every forest. They are all bantams, but without feathers on their legs; the cocks are in colour all alike, what sportsmen call ginger red; they have a fine tufted cluster of white downy feathers upon their rumps, are wonderfully stately in their gait, and fight like furies. The hens are invariably brown. It is extremely pleasant, in travelling through the woods early in a morning, to hear them crowing, and to perceive the

hens and chickens skulking and scudding between the bushes. For food, they are neither so palatable nor tender as the tame fowl.

Florekins are amongst the *non descripta*, I believe, in ornithology. A drawing can alone exhibit an adequate representation of this fine bird; it harbours in natural pastures amongst the long grafs, on the extremity of lakes, and the borders of swampy grounds, lying between marshy soils and the uplands. Hence its flesh seems to partake, in colour and relish, of the nature and flavour of both the wild duck and the pheasant; the colour of the flesh on the breast and wing being brown, but on the legs perfectly white, and the whole of the most delicate, juicy, and savoury flavour conceivable.

There are only three claws to its feet; the roots of the feathers of the female are of a fine pink colour.

When the cock rises up, some fine black velvet feathers, which commonly lie smooth upon his head, then stand up erect, and form a tuft upon his crown and his neck.

When set by dogs, it lies close, and scarcely ever rises till the fowler is so near as almost to tread upon it. The nest of it is made amongst the grafs.

You read of them in descriptions of antient knightly festivals of the Nevilles, Percys, Mortimers, Beauchamps, Montacutes, De Courceys, Mohuns, Courtenays, and Mowbrays, under the name, I believe, of *flanderkins*; but whether they were then native of England, I am uncertain.

The height of the cock florekin of Bengal, from the ground, when he stands, to the top of his back, is seventeen inches.

The height from the ground to the top of his head, when he holds it upright, is twenty-seven inches.

The length from the tip of his back to the end of his tail, is twenty-seven inches.

In no part of southern Asia did I ever hear of woodcocks; but amongst the breed of snipes there is one called the painted snipe, larger than ordinary, and which well compensates for want of the former.

Fishing, both with lines and diversity of nets, is the employment of other sets of the party; or the hawking of herons, cranes, storks, and hares, with the falcon; and of partridge and lesser birds, with the sparrow and small hawks.

Ladies now and then attend the early field: if it be to view the courting or hawking, they mount upon small gentlest (for they are all gentle) female elephants, surmounted with arched-canopied and curtained seats; otherwise they ride on horseback; more frequently however in palanquins, under which, as well as under the elephants and horses, the birds, (particu-

cularly the white stork or paddy bird,) when pounced at by the hawks, and the little foxes, when hard pressed by the dogs, often fly for shelter and protection. In general, however, the ladies do not rise betimes, nor stir out till the hour of airing.

The weapons in use on these expeditions are, fowling-pieces, horse pistols, light lances or pikes, and heavy spears or javelins; and every person has, besides, a servant armed with a scymitar or sabre, and a rifle with a bayonet, carrying a two-ounce ball, in the event of meeting with tigers, hyænas, bears, or wild buffaloes. Some of the ladies (like Thalestris or Hypolita, quite in the Diana style,) carry light bows and quivers to amuse themselves with the lesser game.

The dogs are, pointers, spaniels, Persian and European greyhounds, and strong ferocious lurchers. Near Calcutta a few gentlemen keep English hounds; but their scent quickly fades, and they soon degenerate.

But the liveliest sport is exhibited when all the horsemen, elephants, servants, guard, and hired villagers, are assembled and arranged in one even row, with small white flags (as being seen furthest) hoisted pretty high at certain distances, in order to prevent one part of the rank from advancing before the rest. Proceeding in this manner, in a regular and progressive course, this line sweeps the surface like a net, and impels before it all the game within its compass and extent. When the jungle and coppice chance to open upon a plain, it is a most exhilarating sight to behold the quantity and variety of animals issuing at once from their coverts: some are driven out reluctantly, others force their way back into the brake. During this scene of development, rout, and dispersion, prodigious havoc is made by the fowlers, falconers, and huntmen, whilst the country people and children, with sticks and staves, either catch or demolish the fawns, leverets, wild pigs, and other young animals, which have returned into the coppice.

Instances occasionally occur, where the natives of the vicinage petition the gentlemen to destroy a tiger that has infested the district, to the annoyance and devastation of their flocks and shepherds, and perpetual alarm of the poor cottagers themselves. Although an arduous and perilous adventure, and what the gentlemen all profess, in their cooler moments, to reprobate and decline, yet, when in the field, they generally comply with the solicitation, and undertake the exploit. Their instant animation, not unattended with emotions of benevolence and compassion, presently supercedes every dictate of prudence, and, spite of their predetermination, they proceed

proceed to the assault, the villagers all the while standing aloof. If conducted deliberately, with circumspection, and with the aid of the sepoy, they soon accomplish their purpose, and bring in the most dreadful and formidable of all tremendous beasts, amidst the homage and acclamations of the peasantry. But should they lose their presence of mind, prolong or precipitate the conflict, act with incaution, or attack the exasperated infuriated savage with tumult and confusion, the event is often fatal, by his seizing, lacerating, and crushing, every creature within his reach; nor ceasing to rend, tear, claw, and destroy, to the very moment of his destruction, or of his flight.

Sometimes do the natives entreat the gentlemen to rid them of wild buffaloes, (the largest of all known animals, the elephant excepted,) that have laid waste their cultivation; and at others, to clear their vast tanks, or small neighbouring lakes, of alligators, which devour their fish, or do mischief on shore. So much hazard is not incurred, however, by achievements of this sort, as from the encounter of a tiger; for though the hides of those creatures resist a ball from a firelock at common musket distance, they are by no means impenetrable to shot from a rifle, or other pieces with a chamber, or of a wider calibre.

A drum, with a banner displayed from the hall-tent, gives signals to the company for their meals.

Breakfast is a most delightful repast: the sportsmen return keen, fresh, ruddy, and voracious: and the appearance of the ladies in simple loose attire, the elegant dihabille of clearest muslin with plain floating ribbons, and dishevelled tresses, captivate to fascination. Nor is the palate less gratified: English, French, Italian, and Dutch viands, all combine to provoke it, by a profusion of cold victuals, salted and dried meats and fish, hams, tongues, sausages, hung-beef, sallads, chocolate, coffee, tea, fresh milk, preserves, fruit, and eggs, rendered still more grateful by the most sprightly cheerfulness and Auroral gaiety.

After breakfast, conveyances of different sorts are prepared for an airing, not merely for the sake of airing only, but to view some natural or artificial curiosity or manufacture; some noted town, distinguished mosque, celebrated pagoda, renowned dirgah, or venerable manseum; some consecrated grove, the sequestered residence of fakerees, or some extensive prospect from the summit of rugged cliffs, impending over an expanse of water, bordering perhaps a level lawn, whose verdure is vaulted only, not concealed, by a diffused assemblage of stately columniated palms of four different species,

tufted and foliated only, in graceful inclinations at their capitals, all equally ornamental, the date, the cocoa-nut, the beetel, and the palmyra.

Between the airing and an early dinner, the hours are irregularly disposed, as chance may dictate, or caprice suggest. Some play at cricket and quoits, swim, jump, fence, run a match of horses, or shoot at a mark; whilst others direct the mountaineers and woodmen (who rove about in bands for this express purpose) where to inveigle, entangle, or kill beasts, birds, fish, and snakes, for which they are furnished with variety of implements, such as matchlocks, tiger-bows, spears, darts in grooves, balls in tubes, pellet-bows, lined rods, stakes, and bushes; fascinating allurements, such as painted, spotted, and foliated screens, bells, nets, and torches, bundles of twigs, rushes, and reeds, artificial ducks and decoy birds, with traps, gins, springs, snares, and other stratagems and inventions of wonderful enchantment, ingenuity, mechanism, and contrivance.

It is somewhat extraordinary, but nevertheless a fact, the influence of fascination possessed by the tiger, and all of his, (the feline) species, over many other creatures. 'Spied by deer particularly, they stop at once, as if struck by a spell, while the tiger lies still, his eyes fixed on them, and quietly awaiting their approach, which they seldom fail to make gradually within his spring; for the large royal tiger cannot run speedily or far. The glow of their eyes is fierce and powerful. I myself once passed a royal tiger in the night near a wood, and could plainly perceive the scintillations from his eyes. He was deterred from approaching us by the light of flambeaux, and the noise of a small drum which we carried, and was beat by a servant for the purpose of scaring him away.

Wherever tigers roam or couch, a number of birds continually collect or hover about them, screaming and crying as if to create an alarm. But the peacock seems to be particularly allured by him; for the instant a flock of pea-fowl perceive him, they advance towards him directly, and begin strutting round him with wings fluttering, quivering feathers, and bristling and expanded tails. Of this enticement the fowls also make their advantage; for, by painting a brown cloth screen, about six feet square, with black spots or streaks, and advancing under its cover fronting the sun, the birds either approach towards them, or suffer them to steal near enough to be sure of their mark, by a hole left in the canvas for them to fire through.

Several other instances of the fascination of animals I have myself been witness to in Bengal. Three or four times, where
a line

a line of troops were marching in a long uninterrupted series, passed a herd of deer; I observed that when their attention was taken off from grazing, by the humming murmuring noise proceeding from the troops in passing, they at first and for a while stood staring and aghast, as if attracted by the successive progression of the files, all clothed in red. At length, however, the leading stag, "*vir gregis ipse*," striking the ground, snorted, and immediately rushed forward across the ranks, followed by the whole collection, to the utter dismay and confusion of the soldiery: thus running into the very danger one naturally supposes they must have at first been anxious to avoid. The men, who were apprised by the sound of their approach, stopped, and made way for them. Over the heads of the others, who were heedless and inattentive, they bounded with wonderful agility, and fled over the plain.

Driving one evening along the road in a phaëton, and pretty fast, I perceived a young heifer running near the carriage, with her eyes intently fixed upon one of the hind wheels; by the whirling of which the animal seemed completely struck and affected. Thus pursuing her object for about a quarter of a mile, she, by a sudden impulse, rapidly darted forward towards the wheel, which then striking her nose, the attention of the creature became interrupted by the violence of the friction, and was, of course, withdrawn: she then immediately stood stock still, and presently after turned about slowly and made off.

Beyond all other animals, however, serpents possess most eminently this occult power: frequently are they seen revolved on the branches of trees, or on the ground, meditating their prey, either birds, squirrels, rats, mice, bats, frogs, hares, or other animals.

The ladies, as they are inclined, either read, walk, swing, exercise themselves in archery, or at shuttlecock in the groves; or they sing and play in their tents. Others, whilst at work, are read to by their companions; of all amusements, perhaps, the most delectable.

At the end of a convivial dinner, every soul, provided the weather prove sultry, or they find themselves fatigued, retires to repose.

On rising from this siesta, (of all listless indulgences the most soothing, comfortable, and refreshing, and certainly most wholesome, all animals inclining to sleep after nourishment,) carriages are again in readiness, or light boats where a stream or lake is near, to give the company the evening's respiration,

(which the inhabitants of colder regions taste only in poetical description,) breathing health as well as recreation.

The twilight being short under the tropics, the day, of course, shuts in presently after sun-set, when cards and dice become part of the evening's entertainment. Chefs, backgammon, whist, picquet, tredrille, quinze, and loo, are the favourite games. These, with domestic sports, antics, gambols, tricks, pranks, and frolics, where the humour prevails; together with the flights of jugglers, feats of tumblers, (in which performances the Hindus are expert adepts,) and dances of the natives, wile away the time, and beguile it not unpleasantly to the hour of supper, the principal meal; when a repast, enlivened by every elevation of spirit and kindly disposition that can conduce to promote good humour and festive hilarity, terminates the day.

These parties generally continue, with some variation in the amusements, fifteen or twenty days; and the dissolution of them is as generally lamented, with heart-felt regret, by the individuals who compose them.

LIII. *Observations upon the Monsoons, as far as they regard the Commerce and Navigation of the Port of Bombay*.*

OUR readers will not require to be told that our year is divided into two grand seasons, or, as they are called, the south-west and north-east monsoon; that the first generally prevails from May to the middle of September inclusive, the other during the remaining months; yet we must premise this as an introduction of what follows.

We need scarcely to observe, that during the south-west monsoon all the ports and roadsteads on this side of India deny approach; so much so, that between the 15th of May and the 1st of September ships are precluded by their policies from touching upon the Malabar coast, or from lying in Surat roads between the 1st of May and the 1st of September. Generally speaking, the monsoon is considered to extend from Dunder-head, the southern extremity of Ceylon, to the Persian Gulf; in order to attain which, they who should sail at this season would be obliged to make what is called a southern passage, that is, go first to the south of the equator before they could stretch over to the westward; a voyage that would occupy, for Muscat about forty days, and

* From the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1802.