Fanny Elssler Heard

from her Mama

Dec 25th 1835

£50

[by Lady C. M. WAKE]

(Fruerside)

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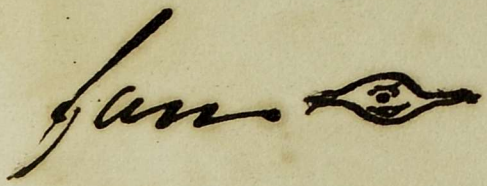

Lizars Sculp.

THE BEAVER SETTLEMENT.

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THE BEAVERS

AND THE ELEPHANT:

STORIES IN NATURAL HISTORY,

FOR CHILDREN.

BY A MOTHER.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH:
AND T. CADELL, LONDON.
MDCCCXXIX.

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INTRODUCTION.

It appears wonderful, that among the numerous books lately written for the use of children, that most amusing and instructive source of information, Natural History, has been nearly, if not entirely passed over. I am aware, that there are many little books professedly on this subject; but the writers of these, contenting themselves with describing the length, height, and colour of the animal, with a too general account of its habits, do not seize on all the advantages the subject presents. Children cannot generalize. If

you wish to interest them, it must be by *individual* story, not by *general* description. There are, besides, two characteristics in children, which must forcibly strike all those who are interested in their management. One is a strong love of the marvellous, and the other, a no less strong desire for truth. What mother has not repeatedly been petitioned for "a story?" and when she has, after ransacking her brains for a new one, complied with the request, how often has she been asked by her little auditors, with countenances so full of anxious inquiry as plainly to evince how much the interest of the tale depends upon her answer, "But, mamma, is it true?" "Did it really happen?"

To produce a wonderful story, and yet a true one, is a difficult, and, unless the

mother herself be full of information, often an impossible achievement; and it is to assist myself, and others in this dilemma, that I have sketched out the plan of writing The Stories of Animals. The *truths* of their history are quite as wonderful as the fictions of the numberless tales for children which fill our nurseries, while they have over them this important advantage, that they lead the mind of the child, from the creature to the Creator, and teach him to trace the wisdom and the universal love of God, in all the arrangements of his Providence.

Those parents who are conversant with the subject will at once perceive, that my plan only aspires to be the thread which strings together the pearls of Buffon and other *well-authenticated* naturalists; for I have made it a principle to reject those

tempting marvels, the truth of which, at the best, is doubtful.

As, however, the vanity of authorism is not my motive, but the hope of being useful to that interesting little world, the world of children, I consider it my best recommendation, that my plan is not to compose but to compile.

THE BEAVERS.

CHAPTER I.

A SETTLEMENT of Beavers had been, for many years, in quiet possession of a secluded spot, in the northern frontiers of Canada. Gentle and industrious, as it is the nature of these animals to be, full of love for each other, and knowing no wants that were not easily satisfied by their woodland lake and clear rivulet, they had, from one gene-

ration to another, enjoyed the reality of that happiness which men are always seeking, but which their unruly passions prevent their ever finding.

All this was now, however, at an end, for their retreat had been discovered by the Beaver Hunters, and during the last two winters they had been terrified and disturbed by their repeated attacks. Rather than give up this, their favourite spot, they had returned each summer to repair their houses; yet in the following winter they found that their enemies, far from giving up their persecution, only continued it in a more cruel and determined manner.

It was useless for the hunters now to set their long traps baited with green poplar sticks in the paths near the water; for the poor Beavers had been so often caught in

this manner that the very sight of their favourite food in anything like an enclosure terrified them : and though the Indian hunters, aware of the keen sense of smell possessed by these animals, carefully washed their hands before they baited the traps, it was all in vain ; for the Beavers, taught by their past experience, always avoided the snare.

When, from the severity of the winter, the ice grew thick, the Indians tried their old plan of breaking holes with their hatchets in the ice ; but still it was of no use, for the Beavers remembered that many of them, when they had before been tempted to approach these holes, for the sake of breathing the fresh air, had been cruelly murdered, and now not one was so imprudent as to venture near them.

In this manner the winter wore away. The poor Beavers, closely besieged, remained prisoners in their own village; but, as up to this time none of them had been taken, they patiently submitted to the confinement, hoping that their persecutors would be tired out and so give up the pursuit. They did not know, that when men are bent upon gaining wealth, they will encounter and conquer every difficulty rather than abandon the means of acquiring it. The Indians knew that the skins of these poor Beavers were of the darkest and most valuable sort. They remembered that the two years before they had received large prices for the skins they had then secured. Their wigwams had been filled with comforts; their wives and daughters had been adorned with European ornaments; and

some of themselves had even obtained that greatly desired object of Indian ambition—a gun; all these having been obtained in barter for the glossy furs of the Beavers. It was not therefore to be expected that they would give up their attacks upon the colony, which they knew still contained a multitude of inhabitants; and, had the Beavers in the least understood the character of men, they never would have expected to be left in peace while one of them remained.

One night, towards the close of winter, when the whole colony were fast asleep, they were suddenly roused by the usual signal that danger was at hand. This signal was three loud slaps on the ice from the tail of the sentry, which these cautious animals never fail to place on the look-out while the rest are asleep. In a moment all

were awake, and in motion; but before they had time to discover where the danger lay, several of the largest cabins were overturned. The unfortunate inhabitants thinking to escape in the usual way, plunged into the water below the ice. There they remained in fear and trembling, till compelled by necessity to come to the surface that they might for a moment breathe the air. This the wily Indians knew they would be obliged to do, and had spread strong nets over all the openings in the ice. In the folds of these the poor Beavers were entangled as fast as they rose above the water. Numbers in this manner were taken, and put to death without mercy. When the cruel hunters had possessed themselves of as many skins as they desired, they drew themselves together with a shout of tri-

umph, and, for the present, left the terrified Beavers to bewail their losses, and to determine what measures ought to be taken to save the colony from entire destruction.

Wearied and disheartened, weakened and distressed, they took the resolution of changing the place of their abode, and of seeking out some solitude yet undiscovered by men. The same God who made us made them ; and He has given them a degree of sense and ingenuity which is beyond the instinct of other animals, and is nearly equal to our reason. But, as they have not souls, as we have, that will live when our bodies are dead, they are gifted with much more peaceable and happy tempers, that they may the better enjoy themselves while they do

live. They have also the power of making themselves understood by each other; and though, if we were unseen by them to watch them, either at work or at rest, they would appear to us to live in total silence, or, at most, sometimes to utter a small plaintive cry; yet they, by signs and sounds we do not understand, converse with each other, so as to enable them to form their plans, and to work together in such a manner that the labour of each single Beaver helps to forward the good of all. It is only when they live in societies, which is their natural state, that they are more ingenious and more industrious than other animals.

It was agreed by the Society of Beavers, of whose adventures this is the story, before they dispersed, as they always do, in

the spring, that, when they again assembled together, it should be rather earlier than usual, in order that they might have time to seek out some quiet and convenient place where they might build themselves a new village. After much searching, they at last fixed upon a very retired spot, far north of their old dwelling-place, and nearer the frozen waters of Hudson's Bay. It was, in many things, less convenient than the home they had so unwillingly quitted; but the solitude was so profound that it appeared as though the footsteps of man, either savage or civilized, had never been imprinted there; and this was so great a gain that it made up for many inconveniences. Here they had no lake to ensure the continuance of the water at one level; but this was a defect which could

be remedied by industry and ingenuity; therefore it was no reason for rejecting a spot, otherwise well suited to their purpose.

CHAPTER II.

In the first week of July, the Beavers arrived from all corners, and soon formed, in the verdant glade they had selected, a troop of nearly two hundred. The trees were not here so thickly crowded as in the other parts of the forest, but scattered on the banks of a clear sparkling river, that ran murmuring onwards till it was lost in the cold waters of the Hudson.

The mild summer's evening sun shed a warm glow on the mute settlers, as they moved about in little groups, sometimes examining with attention the river and its

banks, and sometimes again retiring into the thicket, till their dark forms were scarcely visible in the grey light of the forest, where the struggling sunbeams were unable to pierce the thick canopy formed overhead by the foliage of those amazing trees, which, in the new world of America, cause the sight of the blue sky to be an occurrence that rarely happens. Before the night closed in, their arrangements for the labours of the following day were made. Each Beaver had received his allotted portion of the general plan, and each quietly laid himself down to refresh his strength and spirits by repose.

The slanting rays of the newly-risen sun had just begun to glitter on the dancing current of the river, when one of the oldest and most experienced of the Beavers,

by three loud slaps of his tail on the turf, roused the sleeping republic. In an instant, all were in motion. No part of the plan settled the night before was forgotten; and each, without loss of time, set himself about the task that had been assigned him. One party approached that part of the river which they had ascertained to be tolerably shallow, and gathering themselves round the foot of a tall tree that grew on its bank, they began, with their long cutting teeth, of which each Beaver has four, to gnaw through the trunk; taking care so to conduct their operations that it was sure to fall exactly in the line they desired. No woodman, with his hatchet and saw, could more skilfully have performed his task; and, though the tree was thicker than the body

of a man, they, in a very short time, cut entirely through it, and running out of the way, they, with great satisfaction, beheld it fall, with a tremendous crash, straight across the river. And the further end had scarcely settled itself upon the opposite bank, when some of them running along the stem, and some of them jumping into the water, began, without losing a minute, to cut off the branches, so as to make the tree be perfectly level.

While all this was doing, another party were equally busy in cutting down smaller trees, from the size of a man's leg to that of his thigh. As fast as these were felled, three or four Beavers cut them all into equal lengths, about as long as a common-sized man is high; and these it was the employment of a large party to drag, by

their united strength, to the margin of the river. As soon as they had achieved this, they delivered them one by one to an equal number of Beavers, who were there ready to receive them, and whose business it was to conduct them by water to the tree which they had laid across the stream. This they accomplished in pairs, every two undertaking the management of one stake; one Beaver guiding it along the current, like a steersman at the helm of his boat, the other helping him by keeping the whole length steady.

In this manner, a very large number of stakes, all ready cut and dressed, were, by degrees, brought down to the place where the tall tree lay like a bridge crossing from one bank to the other. How to dispose of them in such a manner as to answer the

purpose for which they had been brought was now the question. It was speedily settled. Some of the Beavers elevated with their teeth the thickest ends against the cross tree at the margin of the river; while others plunged to the bottom, and dug holes with their fore-feet in the sand below the stream, to receive the points, so that they might stand on end.

Whilst this party was labouring in the manner described, another brought quantities of earth to the place where they were at work. This they transported in a very curious manner. Besides what they could carry with their fore-feet, they managed to shovel their flat broad tails into the heaps of earth they had already loosened, so as to raise upon them a considerable load, which they drew after them as we would

draw a wheelbarrow after us.* So little rest did any of the workmen allow to themselves, that in a short time they had collected enough for the purpose they had in view. It was to fill up the spaces between the rows of stakes which they had placed quite across the river, and which now stood perfectly firm, as their points had not only been fixed in the sand, but their branches, a certain number of which had been left for the purpose, were interwoven with the larger stakes. They plashed the earth into these spaces with their feet, and beat it firm with their tails, in the same manner as a mason beats in the lime which he puts between stones with his trowel.

* Buffon passes over in silence this curious fact, but as it is mentioned by a variety of other naturalists, and is in perfect agreement with the other uses the Beaver makes of his tail, I see no reason why it is not to be believed.

The stakes facing the lower part of the river, were placed quite straight up, and several rows of equal height formed in this manner a steady strong wall; but on that side which received the rush of the stream, they were much shorter, each row gradually increasing in height, till they reached the level of the highest row on the other side, so that the whole pile was twelve feet or four yards wide at the bottom, and only three feet or one yard at the top. This they did, because it was the form best suited to sustain the pressure of the weight of water, and also to repel the efforts of the stream to break through the bank they had thus raised in *the middle of its course.*

How wonderful that these animals should at once act upon a plan, which it has cost men much trouble and study to devise! It

is exactly upon this system that bridges are now supported by their stone abutments against the violence of the currents that beat against them. But man in his savage and untaught condition had no idea of this. His only plan at first, seems to have been to throw a rude arch from one side to another of a river, where it happened to be narrow, and where it was too wide for this, it was given up as totally impracticable. To plant a pier in the midst of a river, and to give it sufficient firmness and solidity to repel all the efforts of the stream, was the result of study and science. Thus God has given to his inferior creatures at once, all the knowledge their comfort and their safety requires, while on man he bestowed the precious gift of reason ; and then, to keep him humble, left him by its help to

overcome the thousand difficulties his ignorance opposes to all his undertakings. How wise and how kind is this arrangement! for the Beavers, by studies of which they are not capable, never could have learned how to make their embankment, and there is no danger of their becoming proud or conceited by their success. It is equally wise and kind to man; for at all times he is inclined to be proud of his achievements, and pride is a sinful passion which it is a kindness towards him to repress. And besides this, his being forced to make use of his reason and his sense gives him more of both. The more he seeks to know, the more he will know.

But to return to our friends the Beavers. Near the top of their bank they made two or three sloping holes, like the waste-pipes in

our cisterns, the use of which was, in any unusual overflow of the stream, to let off the water from their dam without injuring the bank.

When all this was done, the little busy workmen collected themselves in a cluster, to rest from their labour, and to enjoy a comfortable meal, which, while the work was going on, they had scarcely time to think of. While they were eating with silent satisfaction, they watched the level of the water rising higher and higher, deeper and deeper, against their embankment. The work had occupied many fatiguing days, and it was nearly night on the last of these when they had finished. In a very short time darkness hid both the river and their works from their view, and in a few minutes more, every one of the late busy bustling crowd was fast asleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE morning sun rose bright and beautiful, and its glorious rays were reflected, for the first time, on the glassy surface of the pond that now filled a considerable space of the meadow or glade, the size of which had been considerably enlarged by the felling of the trees near the river. The Beavers were soon roused from sleep by the bright light, and the singing of the birds. One by one they approached the pond they had made, gravely surveyed it on all sides, and then, by common consent, the whole troop plunged into the basin, to make the

first trial of its luxuries. At a little distance their dark forms and little black heads, bobbing up and down in the water, had the appearance of a party of Indians bathing; but when they began to regain the shore, their much more harmless nature was easily discoverable, and by nothing more, than by each immediately betaking himself to his own share of the public labour. This quiet persevering industry, was by no means like any part of Indian conduct; for an extreme dislike to every species of actual labour is a leading feature in the character of an Indian. Nor was it more like the conduct of Europeans; for among them so large a body could never have separated without first indulging in much gossip or debate. But the

quiet innocent Beavers neither drew back from their work, nor lost time in talking about it.

They did not, however, now work in one large company; but each little group of friends and associates, who had in their former settlement dwelt beneath one roof, now drew together. This, in many instances, brought sadly to mind the cruel persecution they had so lately experienced, and the havoc it had made among them. It was melancholy to see little societies, that had consisted of six, of ten, and even of fifteen couples, now in many cases reduced to half that number. But this diminution did not induce the diminished families to join themselves together. The tie which had bound them was not that of necessity, but of genuine friendship and affec-

tion, arising out of the intimate acquaintance each had acquired of his associate's disposition and habits. Choice had originally drawn them together ; and where the kindly bond had been dissolved, or rather destroyed, in their late troubles, they did not seek to replace the friends they had lost, by intruding themselves into the social circle of their neighbours.

It was, however, a very remarkable circumstance, that, in all that assemblage, there was not a single widowed Beaver. Several who had lost their partners had refused to accompany the rest in their emigration, and no longer caring for the pleasures and conveniences of an establishment, had remained in their old haunt, hiding themselves and their talents in holes by the side of their lake, and thus adding

themselves to the number of these solitary and unhappy Beavers who are distinguished by the name of Terriers. They did not require, to point them out, the mourning which we put on when death has deprived us of those we love; for, burrowing in an abode so different from what they had been used to in happier times, they had by the constant friction so rubbed off the smooth hair from their backs, that it gave them the appearance of wearing a dirty and tattered robe, very different from the glossy furs of the other beavers.

These disconsolate widows had been left behind; and a few younger Beavers who had been widowed by the inroads of the hunters, had made a second choice from the members of their own particular circles; so that no one appeared without a mate.

Each little group moved quietly off, as soon as its number was completed, and, passing backwards and forwards, upon the margin of their pond, examined the various advantages of the different situations, till each party had decided upon the spot on which their respective cabins were to be erected.

In these arrangements, no quarrelling, no disputing for ground took place. The taste of every member in every family was consulted, and the mutual affection each had for the other, made them all agree in one common choice. This prevented those quarrels which, with us, difference of opinion too often produces in children of one family; and the universal feeling of kindly good will the whole community entertained for one another, made each family incapable

of the selfish bickerings that so often disgrace the proceedings of men, when each insists upon having the best right to the best place.

The different situations for their cabins once settled, they lost no time in seeking out the various kinds of wood best suited to their purposes. These were chiefly alders, willows, and poplars, and as they grew in quantity on the banks of the river, it was not difficult to find them.

Though all the Beavers were quite as busy as before, yet the work went on much more slowly, for now they did not all labour together, but each family for itself. When once they attacked a tree, they never left it till they had fairly cut it down and carried it off. It was a curious sight to see two, three, and four Beavers sitting

upright round one tree, sawing away with all their might, with their sharp teeth, and occasionally stopping to enjoy the pleasure of gnawing the fresh juicy bark and wood. This is their favourite food ; and when, in the process of their labours, it was actually in their mouths, it was not likely that they would not stop to have a better taste of it.

When each family had cut down the number of stakes they wanted, they began in right earnest to build their house. In the first place they made a floor of planks, of a round, and some of them of an oval shape, and then they raised a wall of stakes round about it. These walls they made nearly two feet thick, weaving the smaller branches into them, and plastering them up with mud. When they could find stones to suit them, they fixed them also

into their walls, and filled up every crevice with a kind of stucco, made of a light sandy earth, which their instinct taught them to seek for in the waters, and to prefer, because it could not be dissolved by wet. In short, when the walls were finished they were quite impenetrable to rain, and so strong that the most violent storms might beat against them in vain.

A very few of the huts were only one story high. Most of them had two, three, and some even four stories; but the greater number had two. Towards the top, the walls were made to lean inwards, in a curved form, either gradually coming to a rounded point like a dome, or, if the hut was oval, arching into the form of a vault. This serves them for a roof, and a good warm one it is. In every hut they always

left two openings, or, more properly speaking, one window and a door. The window was on the side of the hut close upon the water, and intended to serve as a balcony, where the Beavers within could sit to enjoy the fresh air, or from which they could throw themselves into the water. In making this window, there were more skill and care employed than in any other part of the building; for they remembered that in the cold climate they inhabited, the ice was usually two or three feet thick, and, therefore, they were careful to raise the aperture sufficiently high to allow for this, and yet to leave room for them to get into the water below the ice, when they found it necessary. The other opening was on the land side, and through it they were now constantly to be seen hurrying back-

wards and forwards, during the progress of their work.

Before the middle of August arrived, the whole village, consisting of twelve or fourteen houses, was completed. Nothing could exceed the satisfaction of the little colony, as they surveyed at their ease their new settlement. The perfect quiet of the woods, through which it was impossible to find the least trace of any path that could have been made by man, gave them a comfortable feeling of security, and they now at last felt themselves beyond the reach of their persecutors.

Bathing, diving, and munching the young branches of the trees on the banks of the river, were very agreeable occupations; but their enjoyment could not tempt them to neglect the important duty that

was still unfulfilled. Their All-wise Creator had taught them that the summer months would soon be succeeded by a dreary winter, during which to collect their food would be quite impossible. Each family, therefore, set themselves seriously to work. It was necessary to disperse themselves into the woods to find a sufficient quantity; and every morning at daybreak they separated, only returning when the shadows of the tall trees began to darken the forest with premature night.

It was then an interesting sight to see the Beavers emerging from the thicket, loaded with the young branches of the magnolia, which grows wild in these woods, and is among their greatest dainties, with long saplings of the American poplar, and aspen, and birch, with bundles of roots of

the sweet-scented flag, and with various other plants of marshy soils. These were dragged, pushed, and carried by the busy purveyors with might and main, each Beaver outdoing his fellow in his efforts, and the whole party forming an animated scene of bustling business. As fast as the loads were brought home, they were sunk by the owners in the water near their respective habitations, each family having established a magazine for its own use. Nearly a month was occupied in this manner, and before September was finished, the labours of the colony were at an end.

Now they dwelt at ease in their cabins, enjoying the sweets of repose, and of mutual love. No quarrelling, no disputes were ever known in their quiet houses. Each Beaver loved his partner the best of

all the world, and next to her the different members of his family; but his affection was not confined within the walls of his cabin, it was shared by the whole community.

Often during the autumn they rambled into the woods on parties of pleasure; but they always returned more and more delighted with the retired spot they had chosen for their village.

At length the leaves began to fall, and dreary winter drew on. The cold became intense, and the little lake was no longer covered with bathers and divers. Its waters were frozen over. But even this could not prevent the Beavers from enjoying the luxuries of their favourite element; for, though the ice was thicker than they had been accustomed to when further south,

with a very little trouble they sloped the sides of their windows in an oblique manner, so as to open a communication with the unfrozen water.

No longer disturbed and alarmed by the attacks of the Indian hunters, the Beavers passed the winter in perfect contentment, satisfied with the quiet pleasures of home; and before the frost and snow had disappeared, each cabin was enriched by the addition of a nursery of little ones. This, of course, produced for a time a great sensation in the colony; and each infant pair, (for the Beaver mothers usually produce twins, though they sometimes have three at a birth,) was watched, tended, and caressed, with the greatest care and affection.

The spring advanced. The stream,

freed from its fetters of ice, danced merrily again through the glade, and in a few weeks the entire face of nature was changed. In North America the rapidity of the change adds greatly to the delight which in every climate Spring brings to all living things. Now every object is wrapped in spotless white. The gigantic trees bend their enormous boughs laden with frost and icicles. No sound is heard in these vast forests, but the soft falling of the snow, and sometimes the fitful howling of the wintry wind as it sweeps through the thickets. One month is passed. The earth is a carpet of verdure and of flowers; the trees are robed in the brightest, gayest green, many of them covered with beautiful blossoms; the American squirrel leaps from tree to tree; the sound of busy wings

fills the air; the calls of the various animals resound through the woods; and Nature herself rejoices as all her children awake to life and love.

The delights of Spring were felt by none more truly than by the beavers. About this time the males of the community retire into the forests to enjoy the pleasures of the season. The females continue in the cabins, occupying themselves in tenderly nursing, protecting, and rearing their little ones. But these, in a few weeks, are able to leave home, and to follow into the woods their mothers, who always pass the summer with their mates, among the trees, or on the waters, hunting for fish, crabs, and fresh bark. They assemble not again till the autumn, when, by refitting, repairing, and beautifying their cabins,

they add a little occupation to the daily routine of their peaceful enjoyments. Their excessive love of cleanliness furnishes them with a never-ending employment. The branches of the box tree and the fir serve them for carpets, upon which they will not permit the smallest dirtiness; and these household cares, with the perpetually recurring necessity of laying up provisions for the winter months, prevent their happiness from being ever diminished by idleness.

And now, my dear little children, that you have heard the history of one colony of Beavers, you will, I think, like to know whether *all* Beavers are equally ingenious and industrious, and whether they always live in villages of their own building. From what has been observed of these an-

imals, it is supposed that the habit of living in societies, and the genius for building, are common to the whole species, if left in undisturbed possession of the region in which they dwell. But they are extremely timid; and their genius, if once withered by fear, never again expands. They then hide themselves and their talents in holes by the sides of rivers; or, sunk to the condition of other animals, they lead a timid and solitary life, occupied only in providing for the absolute wants of nature, and lose for ever those social qualities so much to be admired in the free and unconstrained Beaver.

It is from the reason I have just given, that the Beavers found in the inhabited countries of Europe are always of the kind called Terriers—living alone, and possess-

ing neither the talents nor the enjoyments of their happier relations in the far northern regions of North America, and in the most northern parts of Norway and Siberia. Beavers are never found in very hot climates; and though they have been seen in France, and even in Spain, yet their nature and constitution seem entirely calculated for the colder countries nearer the Pole.

Perhaps you would now like to know something of the appearance of the creature. I have drawn for you, on the first leaf of this little book, the picture of a pair of Beavers, at the side of their artificial bank, and near their huts, that you may have a better idea both of them and of their houses than I could convey to you in words. If you look at this picture, you will see the

Beaver in the attitude in which he always walks, his head low and his back arched. He is covered with a fine bushy fur, which consists of two kinds of hair. That which immediately covers the skin is as soft as down, and is impenetrable by water: it is by far the most valuable. The other is longer, coarser, and thinner; and its only use seems to be, that it makes an excellent covering for the finer fur, and defends it from all dust and dirt. Those Beavers found very far north are quite black, and are the most sought after, their furs being thought more valuable than the lighter kinds which are found in the southern countries. Those in Canada are chiefly of a chestnut colour; farther south they are bay; and still farther, they are of a pale straw colour. It is chiefly for the sake of

these furs that the poor animals are so harassed by the pursuit of men. The warm hats called beavers are manufactured from them ; and, while we are sorry for the poor creatures who are deprived of life for our sakes, we should be thankful that an animal is provided whose skin can afford us in winter so warm and comfortable a covering. Besides the fur, which is the most precious article, the Beaver contains, in two large bladders, a matter of which great use has been made in medicine.

The Beaver is the only quadruped that resembles, in the fore-part of his body, those animals which inhabit the land, and, in the hinder-part, those which inhabit the water. His nose is nearly pointed ; his mouth furnished with whiskers something like those of a cat ; and his teeth very hard,

and so sharp that the savage Indians use them instead of knives. The toes of his fore-feet are separated from each other like fingers, and he uses them as hands, with all the dexterity of a human being: his hind-feet, on the contrary, are webbed, like those of a goose; and his tail, which is large, flat, and of an oval shape, is entirely covered with scales. The uses of this tail are manifold. On land it serves him for a trowel, a shovel, and a wheelbarrow; in the water he uses it as a rudder to direct his course.

Perhaps you may never have observed a very curious circumstance in the universal plan of creation, to which our All-wise Creator has adhered throughout his works. I mean the fact, that between every entirely opposite species, He has formed some-

thing partaking of the nature of both, which is called the link between them. I will tell you of some, that, in future, you may observe it.

Have you never seen upon old walls, a sort of very low-growing moss, that sticks quite close to the stones. It is of a bluish grey colour, and sometimes a little yellow. If you rub it with your finger it does not feel soft like other mosses, but harsh, and so brittle that it will crumble if you rub hard against it. This is the link between stones and plants, and it partakes of the nature of both.

The next time you are on the sea-shore, search about till you find a very curious, and a very beautiful thing, called the sea-anemone. It lies flat on the sand, and looks like a bright pink, or reddish flower;

but if you touch it, it will show you it is alive by curling itself all up, and in a moment changing all its beauty into an ugly lump. If you retire to a little distance, and wait very quietly, you will see it presently put out first one thing that looks like a leaf, and then another, till, in a few minutes, the sea-anemone looks as gay as ever. This is the link between flowers and fishes.

You have often, when late out in the summer evenings, seen the bats wheeling round your head, or fly flickering about, so low as almost to drive against you. If you ever have an opportunity of seeing one of them quite still, and close to you, do not be afraid of it. Though it is an ugly thing, it will not hurt you, and it is so curious a creature, that it is very well worth

examining. It is the link between birds and beasts, and shares the peculiarities of both. It has wings like a bird, at least, it has wings by which it can fly like a bird, for they have no feathers, and it has a body like a mouse. It is very hideous, but still it is interesting to examine it, in its relationship to the two opposite classes of animals, which find a connecting link in its deformed person.

You have heard I daresay of the flying fish, whose natural element is the water, but which is furnished with a sort of fin-like wing, that enables it when it pleases, to rise into the air, and enjoy the pleasures of a flight. By it, the fishes of the sea seem to be connected with the birds of the air. And the Beavers, about whom you have just

been reading, form the link between the creatures of the land and those of the water.

The monkey tribe has been called the link which connects the human species with the brute creation; and certainly, in many things, they are so like ourselves, that the sight of them ought to make us feel very humble. But man, though thus related to the brute, is connected to a higher order of beings, who continually surround the throne of God. The attendants on His presence, the servants of His will, the Angels, pure, sinless and immortal, seem, as they have been revealed to us in the relations of the Bible, to form the highest link of that beautiful and wondrous chain of creation, which thus ascends from the meanest, lowliest of his creatures, in re-

gular and harmonious order, higher and higher, till the last link is hung, as it were, upon the throne of God. But our human nature is still more nearly related to the Godhead. Jesus, the only Son of the Most High, by taking it upon himself, and by being born into the world a helpless, suffering infant, in every thing, except sin, made like ourselves, has so exalted the human nature, that gratitude should for ever fill our hearts:—not pride; for why did He come?—not to honour our species, but to save us from eternal ruin, by bearing for us the punishment our sins had deserved.

Let the thought of his love, my dear children, make you seek to glorify Him in all his works, and to trace his wisdom, and his kindness, in every arrangement He has made for the comfort and the safety of all

his creatures. Though to some, as to the Beavers, He has given more sense or instinct than to others, yet all alike enjoy his kindness and his cares: But on us alone, He has bestowed the precious gift of a reasonable and immortal soul, that for all his mercies, can adore and love our Father and our God.

Lizars Sculpt.

SOUBAHDIR ENSNARED BY THE DECOY ELEPHANTS.

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THE HISTORY

OF

AN ELEPHANT.

CHAPTER I.

In the depths of one of the vast forests of Hindostan, a large female Elephant, after the patient expectation of nearly two years, had at length the joy of beholding her first-born. With all the pride of a mother, she gazed upon her little one, testifying her fondness by a thousand clumsy endearments. There was not a part of its

body, that she did not clasp in the tremendous embraces of her trunk; nor was the young cub at all backward in returning the caresses of its mother. It crept into her bosom, and eagerly accepted the nourishment which nature had liberally provided for his support, stopping every now and then to return her fondling with the coaxing salutes of his little proboscis. He was at his birth about the size of a full-grown hog, and the proportions of his limbs, seemed to promise amazing strength, when his body should arrive at maturity.

After some time given to the private indulgence of her affections, and to the gradual unfolding of the powers of her little one, the mother determined upon joining the herd of wild elephants to which she belonged. Curling her trunk round the

body of the cub, she lifted him from the ground, and, thus holding him with a firm grasp, marched off in search of her companions. She found them on the shady banks of a river, in the bottom of a valley, where the gigantic herd were giving themselves up to the full enjoyment of their most favourite luxuries, the unbounded use of water, and the coolness to be found in the deep shadows of the numberless trees, which formed a complete canopy over their heads, at once sheltering them from the scorching rays of the sun, and furnishing them with every variety of the food in which they most delighted.

Nothing could be more strange than the gambols with which these enormous creatures amused themselves in the water. Here, standing knee deep, a majestic ele-

phant of the largest size, would by suction draw in such a quantity as entirely to fill his trunk, then raising it above his head, would send forth into the air a fountain of amazing height: there, under cover of the bank, a party lay wallowing, rolling,* and splashing, expressing the ecstacy they felt by their short, sharp cries of delight. Farther down the stream, on the margin of a little bay, a group of mothers were seriously employed in bathing their cubs, still too young to venture to perform the feat by themselves. This they accomplished by squirting showers of water over them, through their trunks, taking care that every part of their bodies received its

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* The arch in the Elephant's back prevents him from actually rolling over; but he delights in the nearest approach to this manoeuvre that his shape will allow.

due share of this extraordinary shower-bath. Farther off still, a number were swimming; some of them showing from time to time no part of their immense bodies, except the ends of their trunks, which they kept above the stream for the purpose of breathing.

Our cub and his mother joined the party at the shower-baths. That we may be able to distinguish him from his fellows, we shall at once give him the name (which he received long after this time) of Soubahdar. Here, beneath the shade of acacias and bamboos, he passed the first two months of his existence; but forage beginning to fail them, the herd determined upon shifting their quarters.

They travelled together, but without keeping any regular order in their march,

while they traversed deserts and forests, stopping at their pleasure, wherever a moist and shady spot could be found. If one of the stragglers had the good fortune to discover a plentiful pasture, he never failed to call his companions, that all might partake alike, of the roots, herbs, and tender shoots of their favourite trees, on which the whole party browsed at their leisure. Gradually, however, they emerged from the deeper recesses of the forests, and as the country through which they passed, began to shew some signs of cultivation, their line of march assumed a very different appearance. The oldest and strongest of the elephants ranged themselves in front; the next in age and repute brought up the rear; while the young and the feeble were placed in the middle; the mothers carry-

ing, firmly embraced in their trunks, those of the cubs, who were too young to endure the fatigues of marching. In this order they proceeded steadily forwards, and bold would have been either man or beast who had dared to assail them. As they advanced on the cultivated fields, all fled before them; and dire was the havoc that marked their line of march. They had arrived in a part of the country, where rice and all sorts of Indian grains were cultivated in prodigious quantities. The huts of the natives were scattered about on the edges of the fields, each little dwelling embowered by plantains and palmettos; and before the arrival of the elephants, peace and plenty smiled over the extensive plain. But now the whole scene was changed. These tremendous visitors rushed on the

harvest with all the energy of hunger and undisputed might. In one hour the fields lay desolate around them. The weight of their enormous bodies crushing and destroying ten times more than they could possibly devour, they trampled and utterly laid waste all the treasures of the poor Indians, in a space of time that was scarcely credible.

But every species of pleasure must have an end, and the elephants' was already concluded. They were beginning, though very unwillingly, to discover, that they could eat no more, and, by way of variety, to turn their attention towards the little gardens of the natives, when lo! on all sides, arose clouds of smoke, and pyramids of flame. With the instinctive consciousness of safety in numbers, the affrighted

herd drew together in alarm. Their opponents, the owners of the fields, were now to be seen in the distance, leisurely and cautiously advancing towards the field of battle; but their puny size and evident fright, justified the contempt of the majestic invaders, who, at this moment, presented a most formidable phalanx. The Indians, under cover of blazing fires, threw among them, with amazing force, some missiles, which descended on the impenetrable mass, with about as much effect as leaves upon a rock; but lo! no sooner did they touch the ground, than a cracking noise was heard, and showers of fire scattered the terrified host, who, with tails and trunks erect,* rushed towards the forest, over-

* The elephant shows both fear and anger by erecting his trunk and tail.

turning, in their flight, the limber habitations of their foes, and filling the air with their tremendous roarings.

Soubahdar had nearly fared ill in the scuffle; for though, on the first appearance of danger, his mother had snatched him up with her trunk, yet, encumbered by his weight, she could not make so rapid a retreat as her companions. The general panic, however, lasted no longer than till the herd were fairly out of the reach of the artificial fireworks which the natives sent after them. Then the males, as if ashamed of their cowardice, in thus leaving their partners to protect themselves and their young, returned as quickly as they had fled; and, though prudence prevented them from renewing the engagement, they formed again into a regular line, retreating in good order.

Their disasters were not yet concluded. Some of the natives, enraged at the ravages committed on their property, had stolen between them and the forest, and, by throwing a brand or two into the jungle that lay between, had raised such a barrier of flame, as effectually disconcerted the operations of the retreating party. Though extremely unwilling to return by an untried route, they were compelled to do so; and, after a long circuit, to regain their woods by a path widely distant from that which they had previously traversed. All this occupied a considerable time. It was morning when they had first arrived; and now the shadows of night were beginning to deepen the gloom of the forest, when they once more entered its friendly shade. The trees on this side grew so closely together,

and were of such amazing size, that the elephants were forced to separate from each other; but, as the Indians with their fireworks were far behind, this, though contrary to their usual mode, was preferred to the alternative of again facing the blazing jungle. Fire is the only mode of warfare against which the courage of an elephant is not proof; but this they seldom can be brought to face, even when custom has, in some degree, inured them to the sight. The consternation of this wild herd may therefore easily be imagined, when they beheld the dry grass and brushwood, glaring around them, and sending forth volumes of smoke in every direction, except the one which they were, in order to escape it, compelled to pursue. They had nothing for it but to make their way

through the dark thickets with what speed they might.

Soubahdar and his mother sought protection from the company of a large male elephant, whom she closely followed, comforting herself with the reflection, that since she could no longer have the advantage of being surrounded by guards, she might, at least, feel tolerable security while preceded by so formidable a defender. A banian-tree, in itself a forest, with its thousand branches, each taking root wherever it touched the ground, separated them still farther from the others. The mother of Soubahdar anxiously kept her eyes upon her guard, whose giant form at one moment was scarcely visible among the deepening shades, at another was clearly seen by the contrast of his dark skin against the

pale green foliage of the acacia trees. She strove to keep up with his rapid strides; but what was her amazement, when at once he sank from her view! A hideous roar, and the crashing sound of his fall in a moment collected the herd. With dire dismay, they discovered that their comrade was precipitated to the very bottom of a pit, which had been artfully concealed from his observation, by trees laid across, and brushwood scattered above them. What was to be done? The darkness, every moment increasing, prevented them from ascertaining either the extent of the disaster, or the possibility of rescue. Meanwhile, their luckless companion, who was one of the largest and oldest of their band, filled the forest with his roaring. To abandon him in the hour of calamity, the generosity

of their nature would not permit; and it was unanimously resolved to pass the night where they were.

Soubahdar was placed upon his legs, and, sheltering himself from further danger by running under his mother, he found consolation for all misfortunes in an excellent supper, and a sound sleep. It was the juniors of the party, alone, who slept that weary night; for the seniors were too much excited by alarm and resentment to think of repose, even if they had not been effectually prevented by the incessant bellowing of the Elephant in the pit. The night wore heavily on; but morning came at last, bringing, with its reanimating rays, the usual feeling of comfort and of hope, that always accompanies the return of light and cheerfulness to the darkling world.

But, alas! these agreeable sensations lasted no longer than the dawn; for, in broad daylight, the actual fact of their comrade's irreparable misfortune was plainly revealed. He was sunk to a depth that defied all attempts to liberate him. At the bottom of the pit, he lay struggling and roaring, almost mad with rage and affright. To furnish him with whatever might sooth and support him in his unpleasant situation was all that was in their power. A stream flowed not far from the spot, but nearer the scene of their late depredations and subsequent flight. This, however, was not to prevent them from fulfilling their charitable purpose. Two or three of them marched towards it, and speedily returned with their trunks filled with water. This they emptied into the

pit, refreshing, at least, their feverish companion, though by no means satisfying his burning thirst. The others were meanwhile employed in tearing off the young branches of the trees around, and throwing them down to him for food. But their utmost efforts could not reconcile him to his situation. He still sent forth the most dismal complaints, in which the whole herd occasionally joined.

Every moment affairs became more critical. By the time that the whole party had finished breakfast, the forage, in the immediate vicinity of the pit, was so much diminished, as to convince them that to remain there above one day was out of the question. To return to the cultivated fields was not to be thought of, especially as the last night's experience had taught

them, that man's cunning was even more to be dreaded than his fireworks. To leave the place was to leave their unfortunate companion in the power of his enemies. There was no help for it. Left he must be; and, if they had any doubts on the subject, they were very soon settled, by the report of firearms at a distance, and the sight of bursts of flame, every now and then shooting up among the trees. These tokens convinced them it was time to be gone, and, taking a sorrowful farewell of their brother in the pit, they set off upon their journey homewards.

About two hours after their departure, several Indians cautiously advanced from the thickets. Some of them peeped into the pit, and then made signs to the rest, which they appeared to understand,

for they immediately withdrew. Shortly after, they returned, some of them carrying pails of water, others ropes and poles, and bundles of rice and young leaves. The pails of water were, one after another, lowered into the pit, and placed within reach of the prisoner. His thirst got the better of all other considerations, and, plunging his trunk into the pitcher, he quickly sucked up the water, as fast as they could supply him with it. They then threw him some rice and leaves. These he also accepted; as well as the gift of some bundles of straw, which he arranged with his trunk in such a manner as to make his bed a little more easy. After these civilities, the Indians withdrew, and the poor Elephant was left till evening to bemoan his case at leisure.

They then returned, and again presented him with a liberal supply of water and food.

The poor animal wondered at their kindness, and began to feel something like gratitude towards them. He was left to reflect upon it during the night, and in the morning, it was with real pleasure he saw them return to the edge of his prison. They this time not only supplied him with as much water as he could drink, but, to his inexpressible refreshment, threw buckets full over his body. They also brought, after his breakfast was ended, quantities of branches from the banian tree. Some of these the sagacious animal pressed down with his trunk, so as to form a firm footing beneath his fore-feet. Others he crammed below his body, and, by these means, gain-

ed a sufficient basis, against which to press his weight, while he endeavoured to raise himself from the bottom of the pit. The Indians, however, took care not to supply him too quickly with the means of extrication. For several days they continued to visit him, each time increasing their kindness. At length they found him so completely reconciled to their presence, and so evidently grateful for their attentions, that they decided upon freeing him entirely from his unpleasant situation. To accomplish this, nothing more was necessary than to furnish him with the means, and then to trust to his own exertions, to effect the end desired. The pit was deep, and the weight and bulk of the Elephant immense. His extrication must therefore

be a labour not easily achieved ; and that he might have all the advantages of the light of an entire day, the Indians, at earliest dawn, repaired to his assistance. They brought with them a couple of his own species, whose docility and evident attachment to their mohouts, or drivers, they intended to serve as an example for their captive's imitation ; or, if he proved refractory, who might, by their united force, reduce him to order. The tame elephants arrived on the spot, loaded with immense bundles of straw, each one tied tightly together, in the form of a large wheat-sheaf. One by one these were handed to the hero in the pit. He perfectly understood their use, and, with his trunk, stuffed them beneath his chest, his

belly, and his flanks. Then, with more of them, he formed a kind of huge hassock, upon which, having ascertained with his trunk that it was perfectly firm, he, with a violent effort, contrived to kneel. Resting in this position for a few minutes, he gained strength to raise his hind-feet to the same level. Then again he went through the same round of packing, cramming, and kneeling, till, by regular stages, he arrived at the brink of the pit. This was the moment for the tame elephants to advance. The prisoner stared with astonishment, as ropes were passed round his body, the ends of which were secured by what seemed to him to be part of his own family, and, with little or no force, he was partly led, partly lifted from his dungeon.

It is scarce possible to imagine the creature's joy, at finding himself once more on firm ground. He looked round on the green forest with vast satisfaction, stretching his limbs, to recover them from the cramped sensation occasioned by their long confinement, and even seemed inclined to return the caresses of his liberators. Fortunately the pleasant feeling of restored freedom and kind treatment, completely obliterated from his memory, that *they* were, in fact, the original cause of his misfortune. In short, he was pleased, and so were they. He was rescued from a hateful prison: they were enriched by the possession of a valuable animal. It did not after this require much persuasion to gain his permission that a mohout should seat himself upon his neck, in the same manner as he

saw submitted to by his two relations; and in a few weeks, he became, if not the willing, at least the resigned servant of his new masters.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE, all this time, was Soubahdar, and the herd to which he belonged? In the pleasant valleys between the hills, luxuriating amidst delicious herbage and coolest shade. Nothing can be more lovely, than the tranquil recesses that lie embosomed by the mountains of Hindostan. Clusters of palm trees, and bamboos, and plantains, shut them out from the world; and sparkling streams leap from the rocks, adding a pleasant murmur and a grateful coolness to the beauty of the scene. But, of all the profusion of nature,

not one single nut or grain is bestowed in vain. God has not created these treasures, without having first ordained them to be the food of thousands of his creatures. On the very top of the cocoa-nut trees, sat crowds of monkeys, busied in gathering their fruits;—above and below, they swung themselves among the branches, chattering and gamboling in the wantonness of their joy. On the branches of of the peepul, or fig-tree, was perched the splendid peacock, looking down on his companions, who were dressing their plumage, and surveying themselves in the crystal mirror of a basin, below one of the waterfalls. Not a corner of the valley but was occupied with some happy living thing; not a fruit, or a flower, but furnished their food. The vast herd of ele-

phants may seem out of character with this peaceful scene; but the valley was large enough for all its visiters to enjoy themselves after their own fashion, without in any way disturbing each other. On the margin of a deep pool, under the shade of some of their favourite trees, Soubahdar and his friends reposed in perfect contentment, offering no disturbance to any one, and fearing none from the other animals, whom they regarded with a kind of benevolent forbearance, as harmless and permitted intruders into their own peculiar domains.

In such haunts as these, time flew pleasantly by. At six months old, the tusks of Soubahdar began to cut through his gums. He had now attained the size of a large ox, and his mother no longer indulg-

ed him and fatigued herself by carrying him, but left him to make use of his own excellent legs, which, indeed, were strong enough to have carried a much greater weight than his. He now ran beside or under his mother, wherever she went; and after the first year, which flew rapidly by, she soon began to insist upon his finding subsistence for himself. Indeed, it was time, for before* he was two years old, he had shed his first or milk tusks ; and those began to appear which were afterwards to be his implements of labour and weapons of defence. In another year his mother gave birth to another cub, and poor Soubahdar was entirely discarded.

If elephants had as numerous families

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* See Corsa.

as other animals, those countries in which they live, must soon have been entirely overrun, and all the vegetable productions destroyed; but by the great Creator having wisely ordained, that each mother shall only give birth to a single cub, and that but once in three years, the species is prevented from increasing too largely. Had it been otherwise, Soubahdar might have found some difficulty in providing for himself; as it was, all his wants were easily supplied, and he continued daily to acquire courage, and strength, and wisdom. Years passed over his head--wet seasons succeeded to dry—cold and heat, alternately, brought the herd down upon the plains, or drove them to the shady valleys. The herd itself occasionally changed its master; and many were the furious battles for pre-emi-

nence, to which Soubahdar, in the period of his earliest youth, was a wondering witness. But alas! as time passed on, and he advanced towards maturity, his own strengthening and increasing passions revealed the secret springs of rage, jealousy, and ambition.

The Elephant is the wisest, gentlest, and most amiable of all the brute creation. In a wild state, he never makes an improper use of his terrific strength and irresistible arms, for he only avails himself of either in self-defence, or in protecting his companions. Never was he known to injure a single creature weaker than himself. Those of the more formidable sort he regards with the supercilious indifference of undoubted superiority, unless indeed we except the Tiger and the Rhino-

ceros, both of which, but especially the latter, he considers a dangerous foe. The feebler animals he looks upon with a calm benevolence, seeming to take the generous interest in their welfare that a kind-hearted monarch should feel for the happiness of his meanest subjects. But even in the gentle bosom of the Elephant, the curse of the fall has left its blight. Though possessed of so many amiable qualities, he cannot brook a rival of his own species; and if he be himself endowed with superior strength and courage, he is certain to wage a furious war against any of his kindred who may be able to dispute his pre-eminence: nor is peace ever declared till, one by one, his opponents are driven from the field, and he alone remains undisputed master of the herd.

Soubahdar had numbered thirty years, before his size or might had entitled him to the dangerous honour of being considered one of the finest elephants of his time. He had arrived at full maturity, though not at the size he in after years attained. His height at this period was nearly eleven feet—his chest was wide and full—his body broad and well arched in the back—his legs were firm, muscular, and well turned—his tail long and tapering, with, on each side, a row of bristles forming at the end a sort of fork, of a foot long, much like the winged part of an arrow—his forehead has broad, and rising in a protuberance between the eyes,—the top of his head was ornamented with thick bunches of hair—his ears were large and even at the edge—his eyes were clear, bright, and

expressive—and his trunk was thick and very elastic,—above all, his tusks were considered beautiful—they were perfectly equal in length, of purest white, extremely thick and long, and sloping outwards from each other in a graceful curve.

Soubahdar, to these bodily advantages, added a placid temper, an affectionate disposition, and a deportment full of majestic gravity; and his courage was proportioned to his strength, which every day proved to be most formidable. Endowed with so many perfections, it was not to be wondered that the females of the herd looked upon their handsome companion with extreme approbation, and those of the males, who till now had been the established beauties of the party, with constantly increasing jealousy.

Soubahdar had selected from all his companions a young female elephant, of gentlest temper, and excessive beauty. On her he bestowed all his affections, and most of his time. She was equally pleased with his society, and they would wander together from the herd, to enjoy, in tranquillity and mutual affection, the returning loveliness of the season. For her he would select the most odoriferous plants, and gather, with his trunk, the fruits from the lofty cocoa-nut, together with those of the banana, the palm, and the sage trees. But their happiness was soon to be disturbed. One lovely morning, at sunrise, Soubahdar and his chosen companion found themselves at a considerable distance from the rest of the herd, in a beautiful amphitheatre of green turf, sur-

rounded by hills, and refreshed by the waters of a clear rivulet, that murmured from pool to pool, as it fell in sparkling cascades from one rock to another. He was employed in robbing an orange tree of all its verdure, sharing with her its leaves and fruits, and fragrant flowers. Suddenly a hideous roar of defiance filled the air, and he, who for some time had been the acknowledged master of the herd, rushed into their retreat. Soubahdar had scarcely time to assume a posture of defence, before he was attacked with frantic fury. Dire was the combat. Tusk opposed to tusk, and trunk to trunk, they fought till the little valley, lately so peaceful, resounded with the blows and cries of the combatants, Soubahdar's natural courage was heightened by the knowledge that his chosen partner

witnessed his exertions, and that if vanquished she was lost to him for ever.—His antagonist's was maddened by rage and jealousy. The clamour of the battle, and the frightful roarings sent forth by both the heroes, soon caught the attention of the distant herd, and they speedily reached the place. It was long before the day was decided, for obstinately as well as valiantly they fought; but Soubahdar's youthful vigour, with the aid of amazingly powerful muscles, prevailed, and foot by foot, he forced his adversary to the entrance of the dell. Here he made a last and powerful stand, dealing with his trunk the most tremendous blows, and endeavouring, with his tusks, to gore the chest of Soubahdar; but the blindness of his fury defeated his aim, for he collected all his

strength into one home thrust, and, when Soubahdar, aware of his intention, swerved to one side, the headlong rush he had made, threw him at once into the power of his antagonist, whose tusks inflicted such a wound on his descending trunk, that, mad with pain, he at once turned and betook himself to flight. The sound of his hideous outcries was heard for a league around; and those elephants who had stationed themselves on the sides of the hills could see him, far in the distance, venting his fury on every object in his way, tearing up trees by the roots with his tusks, dashing them upon the ground, and overturning with frantic rage whatever seemed to oppose his passage.

Soubahdar, the conqueror! with proud superiority claimed at once his trembling

partner, and the mastery of the herd. But dearly had he paid for his honours. His flanks, his chest, and his shoulders, were covered with wounds. The blood flowed over his massive limbs, which, for the first time in his life, he found scarcely adequate to support the weight of his body. These were but trifling evils, for a few days or weeks would find his wounds disappeared, and his limbs renovated in strength; but years would not see the termination of those evil passions, which for the first time had been roused within his breast. His victory over the champion of the herd gave him a confidence and a fearlessness which never passed away, and which from this period were unceasingly employed in maintaining his superiority over his fellows. In the support of his own assumed

rights, he now engaged in those furious combats which in former days had moved his wonder; and year after year some noble animal was driven from the herd, because Soubahdar could not brook the sight of any who might prove a rival. Royalty, of every sort, is always, however, a toilsome pleasure; and our kingly Elephant soon found, that if he lorded it over his comrades in time of peace, he must likewise defend them during war. This his courage and strength rendered him well able to perform, and from various encounters with tigers, he always came off so far victorious that the savage brute was glad to get out of his way. A regular combat with one had never yet been in his power, or probably it might have been equally unpleasant to both; but the might of the Ele-

phant is so little questioned, that even the fierce Bengal Tiger, in general, thinks it most politic to suffer his prowess to remain undisputed.

Soubahdar had learnt to consider himself invincible, when his pride received a check that for some time lowered his conceit. The whole herd were, one evening, scattered on the skirts of the forest—some of them having rather imprudently separated themselves entirely from the rest—when Soubahdar's attention was arrested by cries of distress, succeeded by those of pain. He made all speed to the place from whence they seemed to proceed, followed by the herd, who instantly collected round their leader. Their consternation may be imagined, when it was discovered that a huge Rhinoceros, the sworn foe of their

race, had absolutely ripped up the stomach of a female elephant, who lay near him bathed in her blood, and was at that time fiercely attacking a young male, who, but for the sudden reinforcement of his party, must inevitably have shared her fate. Soubahdar, as in honour bound, rushed upon the sanguinary monster, and a dreadful combat ensued; while the weaker of the elephants retired, under the protection of a guard of their more powerful friends. The almost impenetrable coat of mail, with which the Rhinoceros is covered, his rapid movements, and the malignant ferocity of his disposition, combined to render him a more desperate and dangerous foe than the brave and generous Soubahdar had ever yet encountered. On this occasion his trunk was of scarcely any

use; indeed, he had enough to do to keep it from being transfixed by the short, but dreadful horn of the monster, whose malignant eye marked each unguarded movement of his enemy. The jungle waved to and fro like the tempestuous billows in a storm. Now the Elephant, now the Rhinoceros, drove back his opponent. Soubahdar was dreadfully gored, and bled profusely. For a moment his courage faltered, and he turned to fly. The Rhinoceros followed; but, desperately rallying, Soubahdar rushed upon him, plunging his tusks beneath his ribs. In so doing he received another stab from the dreadful horn; but, though himself desperately wounded, he had the satisfaction of having disabled his antagonist. Neither fell; but eyeing each other with looks of deadly

hate, they slowly withdrew from the combat, the Rhinoceros dragging his wounded bulk into the cover of the more impenetrable recesses of the jungle, and Soubahdar, in no better plight, striving to regain the forest. It was long before he recovered from the rough treatment he had on that day received; and the humbling lesson produced a most salutary effect on his future conduct.

CHAPTER III.

For nearly fifty years, Soubahdar, with his companions, had ranged through the mountainous districts of Hindostan, paying occasional visits to the forests that clothe the more level tracts below. During one of these excursions, they had the misfortune to attract a degree of attention, which in the end proved their ruin.

A grand hunt was proclaimed, and the day fixed for its commencement. The inhabitants of all the country round flocked in to offer their services, for which, on such occasions, they receive regular wages.—

The plans were all taken, the keddah or enclosure formed, every thing was in readiness for the capture of the unconscious herd, who were quietly browsing on the trees of the forest. They were roused from this state of tranquil enjoyment, by the report of muskets, the noise of drums and trumpets, and the shouts of the multitude. Terrified, they fled from the side which, to them, seemed that of the greatest danger. As quickly as they retired, the clamour advanced. Elephants have a natural aversion to sudden noises. Those they now heard were to them of the most unaccountable description, and seemed to hem them in on every side but one. To this one they naturally retreated, not, as during the first moment of panic, with precipitation, but slowly and reluctantly, for

their innate sagacity taught them how to suspect, though not how to avoid the snare. In this manner, gathered together, the herd, with Soubahdar at their head, were gradually driven towards the point desired by the hunters. For two whole days, they paused upon every step, unwilling to proceed, yet unable to remain, as the semicircle of noises drew nearer and nearer. Soubahdar felt the infringement upon his liberty more strongly than the others; and having prevailed upon a few of his companions to accompany him, made a desperate sally towards the depths of the forest, which they had thus been compelled to quit. They were received with a discharge of musketry, and of blazing rockets, which effectually stopped their course. They now perceived themselves

to be regularly hemmed in, by a circle of large fires, war-elephants, and groups of people furnished with every possible instrument of annoyance. This formidable ring contracted every hour, driving them farther and farther from their beloved forest. At length they found themselves at the entrance of a sort of defile, sloping gradually inwards, like a funnel. This was surrounded by strong stakes, and large trees, all too close to each other to permit the escape of any of the captives, but quite far enough apart, for a man easily to pass between. In this defile were strewed branches of the acacia, banana, and palm trees, and a small quantity of those fruits and vegetables in which they most delighted, such as plantains, sugar canes, &c. At the extreme end of the funnel

was the entrance into the keddah itself, and beyond this, the tempting baits were strewed up and down in great abundance. Although by no means reconciled to their fate, the hungry elephants could not resist the sight of their favourite food; and, as during the harassing period they had been under the inspection of the hunters, they had scarcely been able to snatch one peaceful meal, they soon despatched what was in the funnel, and began to look with longing eyes towards the entrance of the keddah, through which they saw abundance temptingly displayed. One by one, the younger and less prudent of the herd ventured through. The example was quickly followed; and in a short time, the whole herd, excepting Soubahdar, were far advanced into the keddah, and quietly

engaged in satisfying their hunger. But Soubadhar had an instinctive feeling that his liberty was about to be taken from him, and no temptation could induce him to enter the fatal porch. His obstinacy caused some consultation among the leaders of the hunting party, for he was by far the finest elephant that had been taken for many years, and to lose him was out of the question. Noises of all sorts were made behind the palisades, in order to terrify him. If he came near enough the sides, to enable them to reach him, the natives irritated him, by thursting through long sharpened poles; but even this had no other effect than to excite his fury. As a last resource, some of the most courageous of the hunters, armed with long spears, and poles with pikes on the heads, at-

tacked him in the funnel, always escaping when pursued, by slipping between the posts, and concealing themselves behind the palisade, which was much too high and too strong for him to surmount. At last, having given chase to several hunters in vain, Soubahdar irritated almost to madness, singled out one whom he set upon with extreme fury. This man fled through the narrow passage into the keddah, and Soubahdar rushed after him in the blindness of his rage. No sooner was he entered, than he found he was ensnared! for the man instantly escaped, and in the moment, a sort of portcullis was let down before and behind, so that being unable to advance or retreat, he delivered himself up to the transports of his fury. The efforts he made to force an outlet were tre-

mendous, and the outcries he raised so hideous, that the forest rang with the echo. The hunters endeavoured to sooth him, by throwing pails of water over his body, from the top of the palisades. When he became less restive, the portcullis before him was drawn up, and he was suffered to enter the keddah, where he joined his companions in misfortune.

For above a week they remained in this place, gradually becoming more reconciled to their situation. At the end of this time, a few tame elephants, trained to the business, were sent in to caress them, and to assure them of their safety, by themselves going in and out before them. Presently they brought their mohouts or drivers seated on their necks; then, behind them, came those appointed to be the

mohouts of the newly-caught animals. One by one, Soubahdar saw his companions submit to receive their appointed masters, and to be led from an outlet at the further end of the keddah. He at last remained alone, receiving the visits of a tame elephant, upon which was seated a native, who had devoted his attentions entirely to him, bringing him the choicest fruits and most fragrant shrubs, bathing him with water, cooling his feverish thirst by as frequent draughts as he could desire, and by every possible method manifesting an earnest desire to console him in his affliction. The heart of Soubahdar was naturally tender and affectionate; he was not, therefore, proof against all these advances, but soon testified his gratitude by permitting his new friend to pull his ears, rub

him with leaves, and even to feed him with his hand. Their intimacy soon ripened into friendship; and, in a very short time, the majestic Soubahdar knelt down at the bidding of this native, and received him upon his neck as his established mohout.

It was at this time, that, from his superiority in size and strength to the rest of the herd, and from his lordly demeanour, he received the name, by which he was ever after distinguished, of Soubahdar, or Governor. The power he had shown, during the resistance he had offered in the keddah, being truly formidable, it was thought expedient not to trust entirely to his present submissive disposition. When, therefore, he was led to the pickets, it was between two trained elephants, who had instructions closely to watch his motions,

and, with the assistance of a third, who followed close behind, to employ force, should it be necessary.

It is one of the most singular circumstances of the life of the elephant, that, when once thoroughly subdued and educated by man, he becomes his most willing and active servant, employing, for his use, all the wonderful properties, with which he had been provided by nature for his own defence. The very same sagacity, which, in a state of freedom, he displays in avoiding all dangers, when domesticated, he employs in ensnaring his own species, seeming to forget, in his affection for his new-made friends, all relationship with his kind.

It was not long before Soubahdar was purchased, at a very high price, by a European gentleman, who was celebrated

for his love of all Oriental field sports. The mohout, as usual, accompanied his charge, and speedily received orders to prepare him for tiger-hunting.

Soubahdar underwent the usual training for this most dangerous, but most animating of all pursuits. At first, the skin of a dead tiger, well stuffed, so as fearfully to resemble the living animal, was placed in a jungle through which he was about to pass. At the first view of this startling object, Soubahdar paused to reconnoitre. When free, he had often encountered, though never regularly attacked a tiger. When, therefore, he observed this one altogether motionless, his fears were less than his mohout had anticipated, and, without much difficulty, he suffered himself to be brought close up to it. Hav-

ing placed one tremendous foot upon its body, he transfixed it with his tusks, and, upon the whole, (though evidently discomposed when the creature was rudely thrown at him,) acquitted himself with a degree of courage and presence of mind that gave the highest satisfaction to his master. The next day, however, his nerves underwent a more severe trial; for a more terrifying deception was put in practice. A boy, dressed in the skin of a tiger, which was otherwise stuffed out to the full size, was made to spring from a cover near him, and uttering frightful howlings, in imitation of the voice of the tiger, to steal along the path directly before him. Soubahdar, it must be confessed, showed no disposition to pursue, and it required much persuasion to induce him to stir one step in the same

direction; but the mohout, by dint of caresses and encouragement, prevailed upon him slowly and warily to follow. The seeming tiger disappeared among the brushwood, and the skin stuffed with straw was substituted in its place. Upon this Soubahdar was again made to perform all the former manœuvres, with some additions, till he had learned the most approved mode of attacking this formidable enemy. A few days afterwards, he was required to show all his learning and skill, in a sort of combat, if so it could be called, with another mock tiger, which, this time, was an unfortunate calf dressed in the dreadful skin. This poor animal paid with his life for the honour of inspiring terror in the breast of his majestic foe, who, after the first moment of panic, pierced and tramp-

led upon its body. Soubahdar was now pronounced to be thoroughly educated; and, with his mohout on his neck, and his master seated on a sort of saddle behind, took a leading part in all the hunting expeditions of the season. His strength, size, and courage, made him a most valuable acquisition; and neither expense nor trouble were spared in contributing to his comforts and happiness.

But Soubahdar could not entirely forget his native valleys among the hills; and, though resigned, could scarcely be termed happy. His chief comfort was found in the society of his mohout, for whom his attachment knew no bounds. He would watch all his motions, with eyes expressive of his devotion, and, foreseeing his wants, often anticipated his very wishes. His voice he

could distinguish amidst a multitude of cries; and, in the hurry and din of a confused crowd, would calmly execute his orders, with prudence and fidelity. The mohout was not insensible to this attachment; and Soubahdar was nearly as much beloved by him as the members of his own family, who were all enjoined to treat him with the utmost kindness. To this they were naturally disposed, and many were the caresses and indulgences he received from their hands. The mohout's youngest son, however, a most mischievous urchin of nine years of age, could not, by any means, restrain his propensity to all sorts of roguery, even in consideration of his father's commands; and many a sly trick was by him played off on our friend Soubahdar. Towards this boy he always dis-

played the same contemptuous indifference which he had, in his native woods, been in the habit of feeling for the inferior animals when they came in his way. One day, the young Pickle, encouraged by his forbearance, and by his father's absence, was more than usually ill-behaved, and endeavoured to provoke the generous animal, by tantalizing him with mock offers of fruit, which he always withdrew just at the moment when Soubahdar could reach it with his trunk. Having continued this sport for some time, he at length became so emboldened, that, by a quick turn of his hand, he substituted a sharp-pointed wooden pin, in the place of an orange, in such a manner as to prick the animal's trunk. An elephant invariably resents an insult offered to his proboscis; and Soubahdar

instantly punished the boy's impertinence, by seizing him by the middle with his trunk, and, curling it inwards, gave him a gentle press against his tusks, not enough to hurt him, but quite sufficient to terrify the young rogue, who dared not utter a single cry, or attempt the slightest resistance.* Soubahdar saved him the trouble, for, commencing a hideous roar, he summoned the mohout, at whose side he instantly placed his graceless son, safely setting him upon his feet to receive the lecture that was sure to follow up the warning just given. This conduct had such an effect upon the boy, that he never again ventured upon liberties with his terrific playmate.

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* See Oriental Sports.

The eldest son of the mohout, was, next to his father, the established favourite; and this lad, though under fourteen years of age, could govern him by a word. He was often intrusted to take him to the river, and at his command, Soubahdar would walk in, till the water reached his belly, then lie down, first on one side then on the other, filling his trunk and spouting out a shower-bath on the parts that were uncovered. Before coming out of the water, he was well rubbed with a sort of pumice-stone, to clear off every particle of dirt that might still adhere to his skin. When quite dry, the duties of his toilet were begun; but the task of beautifying his charge, the mohout never resigned to any one. With red and yellow paint he drew lines, and many strange patterns, on his face,

round his eyes, and upon his breast and rump. These bright colours, contrasted with the dark ground of Soubahdar's skin, had a lively and pleasing effect, and, however absurd it may seem, were highly approved of by the animal himself, who every day became more of a coxcomb, in his love of finery. He was next well rubbed over with oil, which was also gratifying to his taste; and after all these preparations, he remained in readiness to obey his master's commands. These usually summoned him at earliest dawn, to take his share in the pleasures and dangers of the chace.

One beautiful morning, before daybreak, the whole party were assembled for the purpose of hunting the wild-boar. The sport was animating and successful. Soubahdar, with his mohout on his neck, and his

master on his back, led the way in the pursuit. A large wild hog had broke cover, and was making the best of his way to a thicket at some little distance. The dogs were in full chace. The wind blew the scent from them, and they could follow by the eye alone. The whole party rushed merrily on. The thicket was gained. Soubahdar pressed eagerly forward, when a tremendous roar resounded through the air, and lo! from some shrubs almost at his feet, sprung a tiger of amazing size. Soubahdar instantly recoiled a few paces, while every gun was levelled at the savage brute. The dogs no longer thought of the hog, but most courageously baited the tiger, who, with passions roused to the uttermost fury, dealt death and destruction among them. Soubahdar had recovered

from his fright, and boldly advanced to the charge. No sooner did the tiger perceive him, than quitting the dogs, it darted at his head. A shot from Soubahdar's master foiled this desperate attack; but the claws of the tiger had severely wounded him in the trunk, and unable longer to restrain his terror, the Elephant burst away at full speed with his tail and trunk erect in the air. Vain were all the endeavours of the mohout to guide or restrain him; he dashed through plantations, pursued the peasants who were working in them, and, as if struck with madness, seemed bent on the destruction of every thing in his way. The mohout threw his cloak over his eyes, depriving him at least of the power to single out a victim, and his master, as they rushed past a cottage, leaped upon the roof.

When his strength was somewhat exhausted by terror and fatigue, Soubahdar became more manageable, and the mohout was at length able, in some degree, to resume his authority. He was taken home to have the scratches on his trunk examined, and his composure of mind restored by quietness and caresses. But, alas! the fright of this day had undone all the good that had been done in the course of his hunting education. A very few days afterwards, the mohout, as usual, led him, early in the morning, to the water. He scented a tiger, and at once set off, at full speed, to the forest. It was in vain that the mohout exerted his influence in every possible manner; he was no longer regarded; and, perceiving that his power was at an end, and his life in danger, he saved

himself by springing into the branches of a tree, as they passed below it at full speed.

Soubahdar stopped not for one moment, till he had gained the inmost recesses of the forest. Out of breath and panting, he at length stood still. On every side were vast avenues of trees and tracts of tangled brushwood, but nowhere was to be seen the form of man. Overjoyed at his escape, he tore off, with his trunk, the few trappings he still carried, and endeavoured to rub from his skin every trace of paint. Uplifting his voice, he sent forth a note of joy that rung through every thicket far and near. Presently was heard a trampling rushing sound, and through a vista in the forest was seen a herd of wild elephants approaching at full speed. A few

minutes settled all the ceremonies of introduction, and Soubahdar, joining himself to their number, once more in freedom ranged his native woods.

CHAPTER IV.

A YEAR and a half passed on in uninterrupted happiness; and Soubahdar, in the varied enjoyments of hill and dale, almost forgot that he had ever been a captive. He was distinguished among the herd, to which he had joined himself, for all the beauties and good qualities before enumerated. He again became a general favourite, and this dangerous pre-eminence again excited the jealousy of the acknowledged Lord of the Elephants. Once more Soubahdar tried his strength in a pitched battle; but his rival was on this occasion his

superior both in size and strength. Long and loud the combat raged; he could not, he would not yield, and yet he could not conquer. Dreadful wounds and blows were given and received. Soubahdar, with his tusks, twisted off his enemy's tail. But, rendered desperate by this outrage, which for ever destroyed his pretensions to beauty, the rival elephant so exerted all the powers of his tremendous strength, that he succeeded in driving Soubahdar from the valley.

Filled with rage and disappointment, the vanquished hero ranged the woods and plains, in a temper that brought destruction wherever he turned his course. For days and nights perfectly frantic he raved through the country, disgusted and enraged with himself and every thing around him.

His failing strength alone subdued the extravagance of his passions, which then subsided into sullen discontent. One day he wandered through a thicket of mango trees, forlorn and unhappy, for neither peace nor plenty had any charms for him, if they were to be enjoyed alone. He was a sociable animal, and beheld with indifference, almost with disgust, the abundance he could not share with any of his kind. Suddenly he was roused from his melancholy by a voice at a distance. He could not mistake the sound. It was a friendly note uttered by one of his own species. Again he heard it, and nearer. Another cry, and another came upon the wind. He could distinguish two voices, and both sounded in kindness. He looked eagerly to the side from whence they came and,

through an avenue in the trees, he saw approaching, side by side, two female elephants. They slowly drew near, uttering, from time to time, cries of welcome and kindness. Soubahdar, overjoyed, could scarcely believe his eyes: but he was not long left to doubt whether what he saw was real; for the pair approached him with the most affectionate caresses, as if they already knew all the ill usage he had experienced. Soubahdar looked at his comforters with astonishment and delight. They were both exceedingly handsome; and, though young, were of a majestic size. They led him beneath the shade of a large mango tree, and, with the most affectionate caresses, tried to make him forget the misfortunes he had been so bitterly bewailing. He no longer regretted

them, but was rather inclined to rejoice that his lamentations had been so loud, and so piteous, as to bring these kind comforters to his assistance. He stood between them, while they gently caressed him with their trunks, curling them fondly round his neck, and gracefully bending their heads, as he turned from the one to the other, to express his gratitude for their kindness.

This scene continued for some time, but Soubahdar was much too happy to observe the lapse of it; when suddenly they both left him as if offended. Surprised at their conduct, he attempted to follow them. Not a limb could he move! His fore-legs were pinioned together, his hind-legs were tied fast to the trunk of the mango tree! Words cannot express his fury and despair.

The treacherous pair, who had so cruelly deceived him to his ruin, had taken care to remove to a safe distance before their fraud could be discovered; and now Soubahdar beheld them actually enjoying the success of their treachery, and only occupied in providing for the safety of their drivers, who now appeared emerging from the long tufted grass that covered the place. Wo had been to them if Soubahdar could have reached them! With frantic efforts he strove to free himself, less from the desire of liberty than of vengeance; for now he could plainly discern the baseness of the deception that had been practised upon him. Now he could explain the motive of all the fond embraces, of all the graceful bendings of the head, whenever he turned to either of

them. He, poor deceived wretch! had received all these as tokens of affection; and they had been, in fact, only hypocritical devices, to prevent him from catching sight of the drivers, who, at the very moment, were busied in securing his feet. Mad with rage, he tore, strained, and struggled, but in vain. He only added to his misery by his efforts; for he now found that the ankles of his hind-legs were secured in clasps, through which, on the inner sides, sharp spikes being driven, with the points turned inwards, every time he strained forwards, he pressed them into his flesh, and added a new torment to those he already experienced. Meanwhile, the traitress elephants bent their knees to receive their mohouts upon their necks, and coolly trotted off, leaving their unhappy vic-

tim to exhaust himself by the ecstacies of his fury.

After tearing down every branch he could reach, striving to pull down the tree itself, ploughing up the ground with his tusks, and roaring till he was nearly choked with thirst, Soubahdar was compelled to remain passive, from the absolute want of any thing to destroy. The grass, the branches, the leaves, the ground itself, lay around him torn into atoms,—and what had he gained? Nothing. His limbs were bound as fast as ever, his ankles were sore with the wounds made by the spikes his own efforts had pressed against them, and his natural thirst was increased to suffocation! Convinced of the inutility of all further exertions, he leaned sulkily against the tree, resolved to endure his hard fate with sullen patience.

All that day and night he remained in the same dismal situation. The next morning, before sunrise, just when his sufferings from thirst had reached to a state of agony, again appeared the very same pair of elephants, who had so fatally befriended him in his former distress. They were now loaded with large pails of water, and carried their drivers openly upon their necks. Still keeping at a most respectful distance, they placed the water within reach of his trunk. Poor Soubahdar was by this time reduced to such an extremity, that he was very thankful to accept the boon, though conferred by his betrayers. He greedily sucked up as much as they would give him, and even picked up some branches of tender leaves which were thrown to him. Day after day, the same pair continued to

visit him, and to minister to his wants. Soubahdar began to think better of them, and to feel glad when he heard the sound of their approaching footsteps. They were too prudent, however, to venture within his reach, which even now would not have been altogether safe; for the recollection of their treachery would sometimes return in such force, that, from time to time, he could not restrain occasional bursts of fury. Of this the decoy elephants were perfectly aware, and took good care not to trust themselves too near.

Besides these, Soubahdar had many visiters. Crowds of natives flocked to see the magnificent animal that had been ensnared, and his fame was spread far and wide. Towards the end of the week, an Indian, having remained for a few minutes

with his eyes fixed upon the captive, burst from the circle that surrounded him, and, to the amazement of the bystanders, walked boldly up to him, exclaiming,—"Ha, my old friend, Soubahdar! have they caught you, my fine fellow!" Then pulling him by the ear, he in a tone of authority and kindness, ordered him to kneel down and receive his old mohout. The Elephant instantly obeyed, seemingly delighted to recognise a friend among so many foes. Fortunately, the British officer, who had formerly purchased him, had returned to his own country. Soubahdar was, therefore, the undisputed property of those for whom he had been ensnared, and gladly they engaged his old driver to attend on him. No force was necessary to induce him to go quietly off with the rest of the

tame elephants; for, with the mohout on his neck, he seemed to have resumed all his old habits of docility and obedience.

Shortly after this time, he was purchased for one of the native princes, whose dominions lay far up the country. His mohout, attended by all his family, accompanied him to this new master, in whose service Soubahdar was treated with the highest consideration. His size, which was now thirteen feet in height, entitled him to great admiration, and no expense was spared to increase, by the most splendid trappings, the beauty of his appearance. On all days of public ceremony, he had the honour of carrying his princely master; and his tusks being encircled with rings sparkling with gems, and his body covered with housings of cloth of gold and every or-

nament that could be devised, he certainly made an appearance so magnificent as to render him worthy of the office. He dwelt in the most splendid stables, solely dedicated to his use, and enjoyed every possible good, except that for which, amidst all his grandeur, he still sighed—the free and uncontrolled range of his beloved valleys among the hills. He had many companions in captivity; for the Rajah to whom he belonged possessed many elephants, and when he compared his lot with theirs, he had abundant reason to be satisfied. Not one of them was so magnificently lodged or attired, as himself; and, however strange it may appear, the elephant, in a domestic state, attaches much importance to outward pomp and circumstance. Besides, some of them had em-

ployments, which to Soubahdar would have been intolerable. One, in particular, performed an office from which his kind heart must have recoiled in horror. He was the public executioner; and many a wretched being was crushed to atoms, beneath the weight of his terrific foot. Others were employed in the more or less menial offices of conveying the Rajah's household and furniture, when he moved from place to place, of transporting his implements of war, and of bearing his officers of state; but none but Soubahdar was intrusted with the person of the Prince himself.

A few years after his arrival in the Rajah's dominions, Soubahdar experienced a misfortune, which filled him with a deeper sorrow than any former event of his life

had ever occasioned. His mohout, to whom he was devotedly attached, sickened and died. During the short period of his illness, sensible of the animal's fondness, he caused the mat on which he was laid to be placed beside him. Soubahdar seemed to have an instinctive knowledge of their approaching separation, and would scarcely suffer himself to be taken to water, or for a moment removed from the spot. With the most tender solicitude, he watched the dying man, neglecting his food, in his anxiety to minister to his comfort. It was during the hottest season of the year, and with the broad leaves of the plaintain he would fan him hour after hour, vainly hoping to dispel the fevered heat that consumed him. He died,—and Soubahdar's grief was perhaps greater than

that of any member of the mohout's own family, if we except his wife, who, according to the custom of the widows of Hindostan, burnt herself alive on her husband's funeral pile. This dreadful scene Soubahdar did not witness. Had he been present, it is very probable, that his sense, far superior to that of the superstitious natives, would have induced him to interfere, and to prevent the sacrifice of the wife of his beloved master, for whom, as well as for her children, he had the strongest affection.

For some days after the death of the mohout, Soubahdar refused his food, and gave himself up to the deepest sorrow. Time, however, had its usual effect, and by degrees, he transferred his attachment to the eldest son, who had succeeded to his

father's office, and was now become Soubahdar's established attendant. This youth, who greatly resembled his father, had always been the favourite of Soubahdar, and to him, he now devoted himself, with the most ardent affection. But the longevity of the elephant, compared with the brief life of man, confers upon him a sort of immortality, which dooms him, again and again, to survive the successive objects of his attachment. Soubahdar mourned for the deaths of the son, the grandson, aup the great-grandson of his original mohout. Yet they all attained to the usual age of man. Successive princes were carried in the magnificent houdah on his back. Empires rose and fell around him; but Soubahdar, amidst all changing things, remained unchanged.

Old age at length began to impair his vigour, he was no longer able for any exertion, beyond making his appearance in the splendid train on days of ceremony. His tusks became too heavy for his diminished strength to sustain; large holes were made in the walls of his stable, in which he was glad to place them, that he might be relieved of their burden. His skin hung in numberless wrinkles on his sides, and his sight began to fail. The youth, who at that time, filled the office of mohout, by his tender care, repaid to the aged animal the attachment he had shewn for two centuries, to every member of his family. The natural dislike of the elephant, when he becomes old and stiff, to lying down, prevented his seeking repose in the attitude which to us appears so na-

tural; but his faithful attendant, knowing his peculiarity of habit, supplied him with every support that could be devised, to relieve his limbs of the weight of his body. At length wearied nature could hold out no longer. Soubahdar laid himself down, and the young mohout knew that his life could not now be of many days duration. He died,—and his magnificent stables became his tomb.

In the history of this Elephant, my dearest children, you will, I know, be pleased to hear, that I have not related one circumstance which is not strictly true: but there are still many other things remaining to tell you of this noble animal, which I could not do before, without interrupting the story.

You must not suppose, that the ele-

phant is only of use to those people for whom he carries burdens, and performs services of actual bodily labour. Not a day passes over your heads, in which you do not, yourselves, make use of some article that is supplied by him. Not only the handles of your knives and forks, but paper-cutters, work-boxes, and, in short, everything you ever saw made of ivory, was made from the tusks of an elephant. In Africa, where they are very numerous, the negroes hunt them chiefly for the sake of their tusks, which they sell at a high price to the Europeans.

Asia and Africa are the quarters of the globe in which elephants are found, and when transported to colder climates, their growth is stopped, their strength impaired, and their lives shortened. Those of the

island of Ceylon are universally allowed to be the finest in the world, and the Indians believe that all other elephants pay them the greatest respect, in acknowledgment of their superiority. You will be surprised when I tell you, that some of the tribes of these poor ignorant natives, pay almost divine honours to the white elephants, of which a very few, occasionally, but *very rarely*, are found. Instead of believing, as we do, that after death the souls of men pass at once to heaven, or to a state of punishment, they suppose that they inhabit, first the body of one animal, then of another, till they have performed a certain round, long or short, according to the bad or good life they formerly led, by which also is regulated the species of animal they are doomed to in-

habit. If a man has, during his life, been kind, humane, and generous, when he dies, they believe his spirit enters into the body of some animal distinguished for these qualities. If he has been rapacious, selfish, and violent, he is doomed, for a time, to assume a shape, in which his old character forms a part of his punishment. Thus, a cruel man is supposed to be, in his turn, subjected to the cruelty of men; and every vice, in the same manner, to be at once punished and corrected by the sinner changing places with the sinned against. So noble, and so magnificent a creature, and one seemingly so formed to rule, as the white elephant, the natives imagine can be animated by no spirit inferior to that of a departed monarch. They, therefore, pay to them the most

superstitious veneration, building palaces for them to live in, and feeding them out of vessels of gold. They are always kept at the court of the reigning monarch, in whose dominions they have been found, and they are never suffered to bow the knee to any but the king himself, who respectfully returns the salute. There was once a dreadful war between the kingdoms of Siam and Pegu, solely on account of two white elephants, which the king of Siam refused to sell, at any price, to the king of Pegu, who, in consequence, carried them off by force, desolated the whole country, and rendered it tributary to himself.

While we pity the superstitious ignorance of these poor heathens, we must, at least, agree with them in admiring the noble qualities of the elephant; and let us,

at the same time, observe the never-failing wisdom of the great Creator, who has implanted so gentle, so docile, and so generous a disposition, in a creature whose terrific strength and size, had it been cruel and fierce like the tiger, must have rendered it the curse, instead of the blessing, of the countries it inhabits.

THE END.

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