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**THE
ASIATIC JOURNAL.**

VOL. XIV.

JULY TO DECEMBER 1822.

THE
ASIATIC JOURNAL

AND
MONTHLY REGISTER

FOR
British India and its Dependencies :

CONTAINING

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JULY TO DECEMBER, 1822.

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1822.

of the mind during this philological course, a portion of history seemed desirable. Of General History, however, a brief compendium having been already published in the various numbers of *Dig-dars-hana*, as something more specific they selected Goldsmith's Histories of Greece and of Rome, and placed both in translation; and as the History of Rome was first ready, that has been put to press. The History of Greece, however, is in great forwardness.

The College Library.

In the Prospectus for the College, the formation of a Library was mentioned as one of its chief objects, which, in addition to the best works in the languages of the west, should contain a collection of such works as could be obtained in Sungskrita and its cognate dialects. In pursuance of this plan, the Committee, among other means, have adopted that of sending suitable persons into various parts of the country, furnished with lists of such works as they already possess, and with directions to purchase or transcribe any work they met with, not contained in this list. By this means various works have been brought to light in the popular languages, of which the existence was scarcely known before. On the importance of these works, in their application to the various translations of the Scriptures, it is needless to enlarge.

The accessions made in the past year to the College Library, consist chiefly of works in Sungskrita and the popular languages of India. Those it contains in English and other European languages, amount to little more than a hundred and fifty, while those in Sungskrita and its cognate dialects are nearly four hundred. Of these, twenty-five printed ones and a hundred and one manuscripts, are in Sungskrita; thirty-one printed ones and forty-five manuscripts, in Bengalee; and a hundred and eighty-five printed works and manuscripts, in the other languages of India.—*John Bull.*

ARCHITECTURAL MODEL.

No one who has ever visited or read any thing of the interior of India, can be ignorant of the splendour that characterized its architectural monuments, when its Mohamedan conquerors were in the zenith of their power. Among these, there are many that would alone be worth a short excursion to see; but there is one which stands pre-eminently above all the rest, in beauty and in fame, that might be worthy even a long journey to behold.

Every reader will immediately think of the *Tauj* at Agra, which characterizes the splendour and resources of the age in which it was built, as much as the Pyramids bespeak the wealth of Egypt.

Of the *Tauj* there have been many exquisitely beautiful and accurate drawings, as far as a vast pile of magnificent architecture can be transferred to paper; but as the artists of France found, at the rich yet massy temple of Tentyra, and amid the gigantic wreck of the hundred-gated Thebes, there is a sublimity attached to vastness and colossal dimensions, which defies the pencil of the artist to trace or to fix on his canvas; and the *Tauj* has, besides its size, a character of chaste and beautiful simplicity, both in the unity of its design, and the purity and richness of its materials, which it is utterly impossible to represent in a drawing, though from the first pencil of the age.

The projectors of this superb work, aware of this impossibility, undertook the task of forming a complete model of the whole of the majestic pile in ivory, on a scale of three inches to ten feet. It was commenced at Delhi, by the late Capt. Fordyce, of the Bengal Engineers; but has been chiefly executed and completed by Capt. G. Hutchinson, of the same corps, who carried it on with the most patient care, and constant reference to the original building itself. The white marble is represented by the whitest and best ivory; the black marble that marked the separation of the lotus-leaves which crown the summit of the dome, is represented by inlaid ebony; and even the more costly inlayings of the coloured stones which formed the flowers and other devices of the panelings and frieze-work of the building, are also faithfully represented by inlaid substances of exactly the same form and colour.

We have before mentioned that it cost a period of nearly twelve years to complete, which was about the period occupied in the construction of the original: the first stone having been laid in 1631, the year in which the Begum died, and the edifice being finished in 1642, when Shah Jehan returned from Lahore. The original was, however, the work of some hundreds of hands; the model has been confined to few. The original cost, in its construction and adornment, sixty lacs of rupees; and the model, if estimated according to the skill, labour and expense bestowed upon it, might be thought worth as many thousands, to complete the uniformity of the relative scale of proportions between the original and the copy.—*Cal. Jour., Dec. 17.*

THE MERMAID.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Dr. Philip, representative of the London Missionary Society at Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope, dated April 26, 1822:

“I have to-day seen a Mermaid, now exhibiting in this town. I have always

treated the existence of this creature as fabulous; but my scepticism is now removed. As it is probable no description of this extraordinary creature has yet reached England, the following particulars respecting it may gratify your curiosity and amuse you:—

The head is almost the size of that of a baboon. It is thinly covered with black hair, hanging down, and not inclined to frizzle. On the upper lip and on the chin there are a few hairs, resembling those upon the head. The *ossa malarum*, or cheek-bones, are prominent. The forehead is low, but, except in this particular, the features are much better proportioned, and bear a more decided resemblance to the human countenance, than those of any of the baboon tribes. The head is turned back, and the countenance has an expression of terror, which gives it the appearance of a caricature of the human face; but I am disposed to think that both these circumstances are accidental, and have arisen from the manner in which the creature met its death. It bears the appearance of having died in great agony.

The ears, nose, lips, chin, breasts and nipples, fingers and nails, resemble those of a human figure. The spinous processes of the vertebræ are very prominent, and apparently arranged as in the human body.

From the position of the arms, and the manner in which they are placed, and from such an examination as could be made in the circumstances in which I was placed at the time I saw it, I can have no doubt that it has *clavicles*, an appendage belonging to the human subject, which baboons are without.

The appearance of the teeth afforded sufficient evidence that it is full grown, the *incisores* being worn on the upper surface. There are eight *incisores*, four *canine*, and eight *molares*. The canine teeth resemble those of a full-grown dog; all the others resemble those of a human subject.

The length of the animal is three feet; but not having been well preserved, it has shrunk considerably, and must have been both longer and thicker when alive than it is now. Its resemblance to the human species ceases immediately under the *mammae*. On the line of separation, and directly under the breast, are two fins. From the point where the human figure ceases, which is about twelve inches below the vertex of the head, it resembles a large fish of the salmon species. It is covered with scales all over. On the lower part of the animal the scales resemble those of a fish; but on that part of the animal which resembles the human form, they are much less, and scarcely perceptible, except on a near inspection. On the lower part of the body it has six fins, one dorsal, two ventral, two pectoral, and the tail.

The pectoral fins are very remarkable;

they are horizontal, and evidently formed as an apparatus to support the creature when in an erect posture, like that in which it has been sometimes represented combing its hair.

The figure of the tail is exactly that which is given in the usual representations of the Mermaid.

The proprietor of this extraordinary animal is Capt. Eades, of Boston, in the United States of America. Since writing the above description, he has called upon me, and I have learned from him the following particulars:—

It was caught somewhere on the North of China by a fisherman, who sold it for a trifle; after which it was brought to Batavia. Here it was purchased by Captain Eades for 5,000 Spanish dollars, and he has since been offered 10,000 Spanish dollars for it, but refuses to part with it for that sum. Captain Eades is a passenger on board the American ship *Lion*, now in Table Bay; he leaves this port in about a fortnight, and the *Lion* will visit the Thames on her passage to America, so that it will probably be soon exhibited in London."

NEW OBSERVATORIES.

Three new Observatories have been established in countries the most remotely situated from each other: at Nikolajen, on the borders of the Black Sea; at the Cape of Good Hope, and in New Holland.—*Jour. of Science, &c.*

FRENCH VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.

The *Coquille* corvette, commanded by M. Duperrey, Lieut. de Vaisseau, the fitting out of which has occupied some months at Toulon, sailed from that port on the 11th of August. She is about to undertake a voyage, from which results interesting to the progress of geography and physical science may be expected.

The *Coquille* will first sail for the Cape of Good Hope. She will afterwards proceed to the Great Archipelago of Asia, several parts of which she will explore. She will also visit the points of the western coast of New Holland, which were observed towards the end of the last century and the commencement of the present, by Rear-Admiral Entrecasteaux and Captain Baudin; and after putting into some of the islands of the Pacific Ocean, discovered by Cook and Bougainville, she will return to France by doubling Cape Horn.

M. Duperrey is to avail himself of all the favourable circumstances which this long voyage may present, to make different observations relative to the configuration of the globe, the inclination of the needle, &c.

Several members of the Academy of Sciences and the Office of Longitude have manifested their zeal in communicating to him instructions for that purpose.

P.S. In my letter inserted in your number for August, the words, "where continually making him the advocate of kings, which the good man's soul

abhorred," should have read, "were continually making him the advocate of things which the good man's soul," &c.

MERMAIDS.

To the Editor of the Asiatic Journal.

SIR: We live in an age of wonders. The *speciosa miracula rerum* appear rising up in quick succession to astonish us. A short time back, your Journal announced to us the discovery of a Unicorn; not indeed the Unicorn of Pliny, and which helps to support the royal shield, but the Unicorn of Scripture; and, lest this discovery should not be surprising enough, you tell us that a specimen of the former, the Unicorn of the Roman Naturalist, *corpore equo, capite cervo, cauda apro, simlis, etc.*, is actually on its way to England from its native Thibetian Mountains. To fill up the interval of suspense, another wonder more wonderful than the last, is exhibited upon the stage—a Mermaid! Whether we shall proceed *passibus equis* to the *Phoenix*, the *Griffin*, and the *Sphinx*, time will disclose to us.

As the eastern part of the globe was the abode of this (as well as the former) extraordinary animal, which also passed (at least its carcass did) through the warehouses of the India Company to its present fashionable lodgings in St. James's Street, perhaps some remarks upon these monsters of the deep may find a place in the Asiatic Journal.

Before I proceed to this subject, suffer me to remark, with reference to the animal first spoken of, that the part of the skeleton brought to England by Mr. Campbell has been examined by Sir Everard Home, whose account of it, in the last published part of the Philosophical Transactions, would lead to a remarkable conclusion, in direct opposition to a very prevailing theory, namely, that the

animal is identical with that found in a fossil state in Siberia.

The specimen now exhibiting under the name of a Mermaid (which, if it be artificial, displays such dexterity and ingenuity as even on that score to be an object of curiosity), appears, from the statement of the proprietor, Capt. Ede, to have been found among the Molucca Islands by the Malays, who it is supposed have had it some time in their possession, and regarded it as an object of worship!

From a very early period there seems to have been a prevailing belief that a creature existed among the tenants of the Ocean half human and half fish. The ancient Siren, *Dulce malum in pelago*, renowned for the bewitching charms of her voice, is but the Mermaid of the Moderns, without her comb and looking-glass, with which she has since been equipped. Siren is the name given to this class of animals (supposed to be imaginary) by Artedi, in his new System of Ichthyology, who supposes them to constitute a peculiar genus of the *plagiuri* or cetaceous fishes. Its characters, according to his account, are these: it has no pinnated tail; the head, neck and breast, down to the navel, represent those of the human species; there are only two fins on the whole body, and those stand on the breast.

It is generally supposed that various individuals of the cetaceous tribe, in particular the sea-cow, have been mistaken by sailors for the Mermaid, and that all the stories we have met with relate only to the latter animal metamorphosed by means of a startled

imagination. The efforts which have at different times been made at imposition, have tended to confirm the scepticism of mankind as to the existence of such animals as mermen or mermaids. The last attempt of this kind in London was a *lusus naturæ* of the human species, in a fetus of eight months old, with a hydrocephalus head. The two legs grew together, covered by one common membrane; and the toes were beaten out into the resemblance of fins. It was pretended to be a young Mermaid taken on the Acapulco shore.

Without paying implicit credit to all we hear and read of, in regard to such an animal as that in question, we must allow that many travellers have attested its existence, whose descriptions cannot be reconciled with that of the sea-cow, or of any other of the cetaceous tribe we are acquainted with.

Perhaps the earliest account of such a monster is that given by Larrey (*Hist. d'Angleterre*), of one which was fished up in the county of Suffolk, in the year 1187, and kept by the Governor for six months. An opportunity being offered, it plunged into the sea and escaped.

Johannes Hondius tells us of one that was caught in the Netherlands, and being treated with great care and tenderness, was taught to spin.

In the year 1560, near the island of Manar, on the coast of Ceylon, seven mermen and mermaids were taken at once by some fishermen, in the presence of several Jesuits, by some of whom the monsters were examined and carefully dissected, and who found the parts, external and internal, perfectly conformable to the human.

A Merman was seen on the coast of Martinique, near the Great Diamond Rock, by some persons, who gave a precise description of it before a notary, affirming they saw it wipe its hands over its face, and heard it blow its nose!

In the year 1531, a creature of the same species was caught in the Baltic, *Asiatic Journ.*—No. 83.

and sent as a present to Sigismund King of Poland, with whom it lived three days.

The foregoing may perhaps be disregarded as authorities for the existence of this marine monster. The following I think are less exceptionable.

In Purchas's account of the first voyage of Columbus (*Pilgrims*, b. ii, c. 1, § 5), he says, "after sayling from Port Natuiutie, he saw three Mermaids leaping a good height out of the sea" (which, by the way, is one of the habits of the sea-cow), "creatures, as hee affirmed, not so faire as they are painted, somewhat resembling men in the face, of which at other times he said he had scene on the coast of Guinea."

The Journal of Christopher Turer, of Haimendorf, in his Travels in Arabia, states, "The eighteenth (November 1565), we came to Thora, which citie is on the shoare of the Red Sea of no lustre; the haven small, in which ships laden with spices out of Arabia, Abassia and India, resort. In this citie wee saw a Mermaid's skinne, taken there many yeares before, which in the lower part ends fish-fashion; of the upper part only the navill and breastes remaine, the armes and head being lost."

In the "Second Voyage or Employment of Master Henry Hudson, for finding a passage to the East-Indies by the North-East," written by himself, is the following passage: "15 June 1608, lat. noon 75 deg. 7. min. This morning one of the companie looking overboard saw a Mermaid, and calling up some of the companie to see her, one more came up, and by that time she was come close to the ship's side, looking earnestly on the men; a little after a sea came and overturned her; from the navill upward, her back and breasts were like a woman's (as they say that saw her), her body as big as one of us, her skin verie white, and long haire and hanging downe behind, of colour blacke; in her going downe
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they saw her tayle, which was like the tayle of a porpoise, and speckled like a macrell. Their names that saw her were Thomas Hilles and Robert Rayner."

There is a French traveller, in (1610,) who gives some particulars concerning a species of monster which he calls "pisce mulier," or woman-fish. These details I do not think proper to quote, and I am persuaded, upon consideration, that the animal he refers to is no other than the sea-cow, which is called by the Portuguese *pezze mouller*, easily corrupted into *pisce mulier*.

But the most precise and least hypothetical account I have met with is the following by Capt. Richard Whitbourne, in his account of Newfoundland, his voyages thither and observations there; wherein he says, "Now also I will not omit to relate something of a strange creature that I first saw there in the year 1610, in a morning early, as I was standing by the water side, in the harbour of St. John's, which I espied verie swiftly to come swimming towards me, looking cheerefully as it had beene a woman by the face, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, ears, necke and forehead: it seemed to be so beautifull, and in these parts so well proportioned, having round about upon the head all blew strakes resembling haire downe to the necke (but certainly it was haire), for I beheld it long, and another of my companie also, yet living, that was not then farre from me; and seeing the same comming so swiftly towards mee, I stepped backe, for it was come within the length of a long

pike; which, when this strange creature saw that I went from it, it presently thereupon dived a little under water, and did swim to the place where before I landed; thereby I beheld the shoulders and backe downe to the middle to be as square, white and smooth as the backe of a man, and from the middle to the hinder parts pointing in proportion like a broad hooked arrow. How it was proportioned in the forepart, from the necke and shoulders, I know not; but the same came shortly after to a boat, wherein one William Hawkrige, then my servant, was, that hath since bin a captain in a ship to the East-Indies, and the same creature did put both his hands upon the side of the boate, and did strive to come in to him, and others taken in the said boate; whereat they were afraid, and one of them strooke it a full blow on the head; when it fell off from them, and afterwards came to two other boates in the harbour; the men in them fled for feare to land. This (I suppose) was a Mermaid; now, because divers have written much of Mermaids, I have presumed to relate what is most certaine of such a creature that was scene at Newfoundland; whether it was a Mermaid or no, I know not; I leave it for others to judge, &c. R. W."

If the animal just spoken of was a sea-cow, Capt. W. must have indulged in what Dr. Johnson elegantly terms "laxity of narration."

I am, Sir,

Your humble Servant,

JOHN DORY.

CHINESE STATE PAPER.

Report to the Emperor of China from two Censors upon the Expenses of the Imperial Harems, the sale of Offices, and the non-employment of the Persons who have passed their Examinations, and are still without Situations;—laid before the Emperor Taou-Kwang in July 1822:
Sin Tsung Yih, Principal of the Literati in Shan Tung province, and Yuen

Seer, Censor of Yun Nan province, lay the following document before the Emperor.

We have heard that the sale of the magistracy, and the vending of high offices originated under the Emperors Hwan and Ling, at the close of the Han Dynasty, A.D. 190; but, alas! the disgrace of selling office under the present