

OBSERVATIONS on the BOHON-UPAS, or POISON-TREE of the Island of JAVA.—From the Travels of Mr. FORERSECH, a Dutch Surgeon.

I Long doubted, I confess, the existence of the poison-tree, which the Malays name Bohon-Upas, until more accurate researches convinced me of my error. In the year 1774, I resided some time at Batavia; I was then a surgeon in the service of the Dutch East-India Company; and having often heard of the Bohon-Upas, and of the violent effects of its poison, which appeared to me incredible, my curiosity was so much excited, that I resolved to make the strictest enquiries respecting it, and to trust only to my own observations. With this view, I requested a passport from Mr. Peter Albert Van der Parra, the Governor-General, which I obtained; and, after having procured every information I could, I set out on my expedition; I received also from a Malayan priest letters of recommendation to another priest, who resided as near as possible to the poison-tree; these letters were of the greatest utility. The Emperor had stationed this priest there for the purpose of preparing for the other world the souls of those who, on account of their crimes, were condemned to approach this tree, and to bring back the poison which distils from it.

The Bohon Upas grows in the island of Java, at the distance of about twenty-seven leagues from Batavia, and of fourteen from Soura Charta, where the Emperor resides. This place is surrounded by hills and lofty mountains, and the neighbouring plains, to the distance of ten or twelve miles, are absolutely barren. I made a circuit through them, about eight miles from the spot where the tree stands, and I must own that the aspect of the country appeared to me every where frightful. The Malayan priest lives in that part of the mountain to which there is the easiest access; and it is from his habitation that the criminals depart to seek for the poison, in which the natives of Java dip the points of their weapons; it is very dear, and brings a considerable revenue to the Emperor.

This poison is a kind of gum which distils from the bark, and even from the wood. The only persons who collect it are criminals, who have been condemned to die; after their sentence is passed, they may choose either to die by the hand of the executioner, or attempt to bring back a box of the poison of the Bohon-Upas. They, however, generally accept the latter proposition; for, besides the hopes they entertain of saving their lives, they are certain, if they return, of being maintained ever afterwards at the Emperor's expence: they may ask him a favor, which he often grants. When they set out, they receive a box made of silver or tortoise-shell, and they are instructed in what manner they must conduct themselves in this dangerous expedition. It is recommended to them to travel with the greatest quickness, and to watch for that time when the wind blowing in their backs, carries before it the noxious exhalations of the Bohon-Upas; they are afterwards sent to the house of the priest, to which their friends and relations accompany them; and they generally remain there some days, waiting for a favourable wind, during which the priest prepares them, at all events, by exhortations and prayer.

At the moment of their departure, he covers their heads with a leather cap, which descends to the breast: in this cap there are two holes filled with glass lights to admit the light. He gives them also leather gloves, and, together with their friends and relations, accompanies them to the distance of two or three miles; he then repeats his instructions, points out where they will find the trees, shews them a little hill they must ascend, behind which runs a small rivulet, that, by its course, conducts directly to the Bohon-Upas; he afterwards bids them adieu, and these miserable victims pursue their way in great haste, while he prays to God and Mahomet to grant them a safe return.

This good priest assured me, that during thirty years, which he had passed in that dismal habitation, he had sent about seven hundred criminals in the manner I have described; and that no more than twenty of them returned. He shewed me a list of their names, with the times of their departure, and an account of their crimes; to which he added, that of those who had returned, and these

lists corresponded exactly with others which I have seen since at Soura Charta.

I assisted at some of these dismal ceremonies, and I was very desirous that the criminals might bring me a piece of the wood, a few branches, or at least some of the leaves of this singular tree; I gave them also a silk cord to measure its size, but I could only procure two dried leaves, which were brought me by the only person whom I saw return. All the information I could get respecting the tree, was, that it grows on the brink of the rivulet mentioned by the priest, that it is of a moderate size, surrounded by five or six trees of the same species, and that neither plant nor shrub is to be found near it. The earth in which it grows is of a brownish colour, full of pebbles and covered with skeletons and the remains of dead bodies. I interrogated the old Malayan priest concerning the first discovery of this wonderful tree; what he told me is as follows:

"Not above an hundred years ago," said he, "this country was inhabited by a people, who gave themselves up to the most abominable vices. Mahomet offended at their wickedness, engaged the Eternal to punish them; and caused the Bohon-Upas to spring up from the earth, which destroyed the guilty, and rendered the country ever after uninhabitable."

I shall not attempt to make any comment upon this notion, I shall only observe, that they consider this tree as the instrument of the Prophet's wrath, and that to die by its effects, is among them accounted honorable: for this reason, the criminals who go in quest of the poison, are in general clothed in their richest attire.

It is certain, though it may appear incredible, that no living creature is to be found within five miles distance of this tree. We are assured, that the waters near it do not contain fish, that neither rats, mice, nor vermin of any kind are seen in its neighbourhood; and that birds which approach too near it, are overpowered by its effluvia, and fall down dead. Some of the criminals when returning have seen them drop at their feet, and have brought them to the old Malayan priest. I shall here relate an instance which will render the certainty of this fact indubitable. It happened during my residence in Java. (To be concluded in our next.)

FOR THE ROYAL GAZETTE.

MR. PRINTER,
As I conceive it to be your intention to gratify all classes of your readers, as well the "lovers of fun" as those who delight in the wrangling and jangling of politics; I request you to publish the enclosed "dream" which was found in an old publication. The incidents so much resemble what we often see in real life, that it is probable the writer, like the Indian, dreamed wide awake; and that, more than once.—It may not be very pleasing to some married people to read it, but I think it will afford entertainment to every
OLD BACHELOR.

THE DREAM.

AS I was walking home, the streets were so still that I could not help exclaiming good God! it seems as if the world were dead—not a creature I protest! What is gone with all the bustle of the day? Where are all those delightful nymphs that charmed me with their smiles?—Are they in bed? O heavens!

Passing a church yard, I cried, how many ghosts might a disordered imagination raise here! that grave stone, how it seems to stalk! I wish I were in bed! but must I lie here at last! well, it does not signify: When the soul is fled, the body is mere clay, and may mix indifferently with its sister earth.

I got safe into the kitchen, the cat was lying by the fire; but observing me, she arose, and purred about my legs. Poor thing, said I, thou art a docile and inoffensive creature. It is impossible, surely, that there should be any violent particles in the composition of such a domestic, obliging, fondling, animal. Another cat having got to our lady, they set up such a horrid yell, as was sufficient to frighten a whole parish out of their senses. I went down into the kitchen, in order to quell the uproar, but they flew round the room, with their tails as straight, and as thick as my arm, spitting their fury like a couple of devils.

I was so bewildered with the noise of the cats, before I could well get to sleep, that, God help me, I dreamed I was married!

I thought I possessed the sweetest creature imaginable! the prettiest and most lovely lass, that ever tripped the verdant plains! such endearments! such ravishings! such raptures! such entanglements! and such, such, such, O how I sang the joys of marriage!!

But then she would be so careful of me, I must never read, it would spoil my eyes: nor must I write, by any means, it would make me so thoughtful. And then she would chuck me under the chin, and say I must do every thing she bid me, or I could not love her. No, no, I must not smoke tobacco, for that was an odious custom. She would rather I would take snuff, she said; and O how charming a brilliant would look upon my finger, and a nice solitaire about my neck. There, my dear—my sweetest spouse, now you are a king.

Upon my proving rather refractory under all these blandishments and restrictions, I thought the changed her tone, and when I went out she asked me premissorily where I was going—and if I told her to such a place, or such a place, she would say it was very foolish to do so, and that I was always going out after a parcel of nonsense.

Methought in order to avoid these squabbles, I was obliged to give her the slip. But then, when I came home, there was the devil to pay. So now she would say, you are always out when you are wanted—there has been Mr. such-a-one, and Mr. such-a-one, to seek for you; I wonder you will be so foolish now! Why can't you be content at home? Where have you been, hey? Why don't you answer me? How you stand staring like a fool!

Upon these repeated affronts, I would cry, zounds! What the devil is the matter with the woman?—What is it to you where I have been? I am my own master, I will do as I please, for all any body. Then methought she would snivel and roar; and with she had never been married—and all that.

When I had any friends with me, I thought I looked like the most arrant dunderhead on the face of the earth; for she would snarl and pout and reden and be as perverse as a sow; thwarting every thing I said or did; nothing could please; every thing was wrong, and exposing all our silly quarrels to every indifferent spectator.

If I went with her in an evening to visit a neighbour, I was always terrified to death—for as it frequently happens in these cases, when there is much company, that the women go to cards, and the men to their pipes; I was sure as soon as my spouse had finished her pool, and suddenly taken it into her head to go home; to have her come bounding into the smoking room, with her hat and cloak on, her servant and lantern at her heels, and without any previous notice given me of her intention, saucily demand my instant attendance, for that she was determined to go to bed directly.—Now if I was in the middle of my pipe, it signified nothing to remonstrate; she would only be more positive—and if I observing the men wink at one another, pretended to domineer a little and to swear I would not go yet; she would set the whole house in an uproar, so that for mere decency's sake, I was obliged to hurry away with her, leaving our mighty pretty deportment, a sweet object for those that were left behind us, to laugh at and enjoy.

What was very extraordinary in this dream which lasted only two or three hours, (but dreams are always inconsistent) I thought I had a very fine boy; which though it was no more than a twelve month old, must ever be the head of the company sitting at table at dinner, though there should be a dozen strangers present—and when from its sputtering and pulling and screaming like a bittern, I only begged the favour it might be taken away, for that it must be very troublesome to my friends, she would storm and rage, and be almost ready to scratch my eyes out; then snatching up the infant, like a tygress, she would fly away with it, telling me at the same time, if I must get children I ought to bear with them. After this terrible scuffle, she would be in the dumps, and not speaking a word for two days together—so that do what I would, I was sure to be worsted, for if I at last coaxed her into good temper, there were but a few half-starved kisses, shuffles and caresses ensued, before we got in the same track again—up to the head

and ears in disputes, squabbles, wranglings and the most perverse endeavours, on her side, to make me as miserable as a hound with a twitch at his tail, pursued, worried and buffeted by all the dogs and cats in the parish.

In the midst of more confusion by ten fold, than the cats brought upon me before I went to sleep, I awaked and cried out with a loud and shrill voice, thank God, this is all a dream.

The Subscriber

HAS IMPORTED
In the Schooner BETSEY, Capt. FLINT,
from HALIFAX,

The following Articles,
WHICH he very Respectfully offers to the Public, Wholesale or Retail, at the STORE of Mr. A. DINGWALL, at reduced prices, for Cash, good Bills, or Country Produce—as follow:

Excellent Madeira and Malaga WINES in pipes or smaller quantity,
Choice Jamaica SPIRITS,
Windward Island RUM,
Holland GIN of the first quality in pipes,
MOLASSES in hlds. of an excellent flavour,
Souchong and Bohea TEAS, warranted fresh and good, in half and quarter chests,
Loaf SUGAR, TOBACCO,
Castile SOAP,
Bar IRON for Axes,
A few Choice Pieces of Fashionable **CHINTZ and MUSLINS,**
Late Fall MACKAREL in half barrels, 20 casks of the much approved Halifax **Burton ALE**—This Article is particularly recommended, and a constant supply will be regularly kept.
A Generous Price will be given for good **BARLEY and HOPS.**

ELKANA MORTON,

St. John, December 23, 1800.

FOR SALE,



THE ESTATE of **ROBERT SCOTT** of Salisbury, Esquire, on the Petticodiac, beautifully situated with a fine Trout, Smelt and Salmon Fishery. The Land consists of above eight hundred Acres, and extends a mile and half a quarter upon the River, which with two large brooks, which run through the same to all advantage, make a great part of it intervale, and that which is not, is esteemed by many no way inferior to the real intervale itself. The place lies in the heart of a settlement, and at present keeps a good stock of Cattle; and as the frosts are not here so prevalent, Indian Corn and all kinds of Grain are raised in perfection. The Farmer can be at no loss to judge that great improvement can be made. On the premises there is a genteel, neat, commodious Framed House, which though it stands but on a small eminence, you command a prospect of the Farm, the River up and down, and see the traveller in his way from Fort Cumberland to the City Saint John.—And what may yet further truly recommend is that Mr. Scott will (according to value) sell cheap, and give the most reasonable terms of payment; being now grown to years, and no son living with him, seeks to disentangle himself from the care, the hurry and bustle of life.
Salisbury, Sept. 5th, 1800.

ALL Persons indebted to the Estate of ABRAHAM VANDERBEAK, late of Fredericton, in the County of York, deceased, are desired to make immediate payment—and all persons having demands against the said Estate, to exhibit the same to
HANNAH VANDERBEAK, Administratrix;
JOHN MURRAY BLISS, Administrator.

Of whom may be purchased on reasonable terms, a likely Bay **GELDING** and a very fine Bay **MARE**, six years old, have been accustomed to run together—a pair of brown **MARES**, age not known, with a good plain double let of **HARNESS**, a good **WAGGON**, a new Horse **SLED**, an Ox **SLED**, a Covered **SLEIGH**, well calculated for a Stage, an Open **SLEIGH**, a good **PLOUGH** and **HARROW**, a side **SADDLE**, a Man's **SADDLE** and two **BRIDLES.**
Fredericton, 2d July, 1800.