

While in their wild state they are exceedingly fierce, and are not easily subdued; but the vast price they bring in the eastern countries has encouraged a race of hardy hunters to undertake the task, and these have devised various ways to attain their end. In *Ceylon*, *Achen*, and other *Indian* governments, hunting the elephant is a royal diversion, attended with incredible expence; but the most natural and easy way of catching and taming them, is, by training a number of female elephants to traverse the woods, and decoy the males to stables prepared on purpose for their reception, where having first secured them with ropes, chains, &c. they, by degrees, so break their spirits, that they are at length easily trained to labour or war.

Tavernier reports, that the male being once thus decoyed, will never again meddle with the female; yet being sometimes provoked by lustful rage, on such occasions they become extremely mischeivous. The manner of catching the wild elephant, as described by this traveller in his tour thro' *Golconda*, is this:

The huntsmen cut walks in the woods where elephants resort, and digging deep Pits in them at proper distances, lay boughs over them, which they cover with earth. Being thus prepared, they begin their diversion with hollowing and drums, and having thus roused them, they pursue them with pikes illuminated with fire, of which these animals have a remarkable dread, till they fall into the pits. In the end, the hunters bind their feet and trunks, and so take them: Yet, adds he, some escape from these snares, who are ever after so mistrustful, that with a bough in their trunks, they will examine every step they take, and it is impossible ever to catch them a second time. Such as they catch they couple to two tame ones on each side, and set six men about them with lighted torches, to talk to them, and give them meat; and if they refuse their food, the men order tame ones to beat them with their trunks, and teach them obedience.

We have already mentioned the elephants of *Ceylon* as superior to all others, and cannot omit what *Tavernier* observes of the force of instinct, in confirmation, of this precedency. His words are very remarkable; 'One thing, says he, I will tell you, hardly to be believed, but that which is a certain truth, which is, that when any other king, or Rajah, has

one of these elephants of *Ceylon*, if they bring them among any other breed in any other place whatever, so soon as the other elephants behold the *Ceylon* elephants, by an instinct of nature, they do them reverence, by laying their trunks upon the ground, and raising them up again.' This report of a modern traveller, if not founded on what the Antients have said of the sagacity of this animal, is a strong circumstance in favour of their relations, many of which are so incredible that we forbear to mention them, as utterly beyond the bounds of ordinary belief.

On these relations, however, Mr. *Pope* has formed an observation.

How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine
Compar'd, half reas'ning elephant, with
thine!

And, indeed, it is universally allowed that this creature, after being once tamed, becomes so extremely docile, generous, and affectionate, and discovers a sense so much superior to the common race of beasts, that it can scarce be distinguished from human reason.

It is asserted by an author of some rank, upon the concurrent testimony of travellers of all nations antient and modern, that this creature is capable of fidelity, gratitude, and affection; the last to such a degree, as to discover deep affliction for the Loss of a benefactor; and still more, if to the violence of that lustful rage, of which we have already spoken, his benefactor, as it frequently happens, has fallen a sacrifice.

The chastity too of the elephant has been much admired; for it is reported, that if his mate dies, he never makes a second choice; and his modesty has been celebrated by *Ælian*, who tells it as a known fact to all *Rome*, that an elephant covered his mistress and her lover with a garment, as if by that action he meant to have taught them more decency, at last in his presence.

Female tenderness and affection is still more conspicuous in the elephant, not to its young only, but to the wounded and helpless: One of these, seeing her young caught, threw herself into the same pit, and perished rather than give it up: But this material affection the elephant inherits in common with other animals. What is peculiar to that race, if *Ælian* may be credited, is, that they carry food to the sick in the woods, herbs to cure the malady; and if, notwithstanding all their care, death ensues, they will cover the body with boughs and leaves.