

Notes and Queries.

A VIRTUE ASCRIBED TO AN ELEPHANT.

On a recent tour in Songkla Province I had with me two elephants, one of which was a fine tusker. One morning, in the sub-district of Natawi, we were in a small village, just preparing to start on our day march, when a woman of the village came up with a water bottle, a brass bowl and a taper. She spoke a few words to the head elephant-man, and then gave him these articles. The head-man lighted the taper and stuck it on the edge of the brass bowl, he then passed up the water-bottle to the mahout sitting on the tusker's neck. The mahout poured the water out of the bottle on to the top of the elephant's head in such a way that it ran down the left side of the face on to the left tusk. The head-man held the brass bowl under the tip of the left tusk to receive the water. When the water had finished running the head-man handed back the water bottle and the bowl, with the water it contained, to the woman. On making inquiries, I was informed that the woman had a child who was ill with fever, and that she proposed to bathe the child in the water that had run down the elephant's head and along its left tusk. Further, I was told that such water was often efficacious in curing fever; but it was only certain elephants that could endow the water with this power. The elephant in question was a great grandfather (๗๓๑), and on that account possessed this virtue.

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