

THE ALIPUR ZOO.

Royal Arrivals.

Perhaps, not every one is aware that the Zoo, which at all times is full of interest, is now particularly so by reason of the recent importation of the collection of animals and birds presented to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales by the Nepalese Durbar. They are to sojourn here awhile until arrangements can be made for their transportation to England, which will probably be on the 22nd of May, a delay that will give many people the opportunity of visiting them, but which is likely to prove fatal to some of the creatures unused to the great heat of this part of the world. Among those chiefly remarkable is a fine Tibetan Mastiff had a massive shaggy coat, an excellent natural provision against the rigours of his home climate, here, however, had not the shears ruthlessly reduced him to the appearance of a poodle, minus even the mane, he must soon have succumbed to the burden of his raiment. Two Musk deer are also pining for their native mountain tops, though their plaint is now moderated as ice and moss food brought specially from lofty altitudes is daily allotted them. Of pheasants, beautiful and various in colour, there are several lovely specimens (alas, there were more), Monaul, Kalij, Tragopan and Cher; all that can be done is done for their comfort, but it is very doubtful whether they will survive to fill their berths aboard the homeward bound vessel. Baby Rhinoceros, blissfully indifferent to its new surroundings, and despite the fact that it is cutting its external tooth, is in robust health,—a fine child. So too is Master Elephant, tied by his legs to his nursery table lest he should err and stray into infantile paths of mischief and destruction. In the nursery age, also, are two jolly little tiger cubs, who have the honour of having been born in the palace of the Maharaja of Nepal, and are showing already signs of their inherited ferocity.

The huge man-eating tigress is in herself worth a visit, and would doubtless be at home to any one wishing to enter her house.

Amongst the others, a list of which comprises two Leopards, two Himalayan Bears, two Nilgai, three Sambur Deer, three Spotted Deer, five Indian Antelopes, three Hog Deer, one four-horned Antelope, two Burrhal Sheep, one Ghurral, two Tahr, and several Chukkur Partridge, there are some specimens of Barking Deer, two albinos and one cream-coloured, of peculiar interest because of their extreme rarity.

The Weasels, *Mustela Cathra*, are recommended by Babu R. B. Sanyal, Rai Bahadur, (to whose courtesy we are indebted for our information) as plague preventors. They are trained by the Nepalese to rid their godowns of rats, and he asks why may not these useful little fellows be imported into some of our rat infested districts to kill the rodents.

Preparatory to the departure of the Royal Visitors, Mr. Arthur Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of the Zoological Society, has come, and a keeper is on his way out to supervise their transport to England. Mr. Thompson is full of praise for the Alipur Zoo, and considers that it might well be also called a Horticultural as well as a Zoological Garden.

It is much to be hoped that the approaching sea-trip will prove less disastrous to the health of the collection than did the voyage by train, during which the cold-loving kinds were severely tried by the heat of the oven-like wagons, exposed to the sun as they were from Mohameh Ghat Station to Calcutta, and resulting in abscesses in the liver and stomach, general exhaustion and death, but in the meantime the chance should be seized of viewing this band of wandering animals that have a historical as well as a scientific interest.

A Batticaloa correspondent writes:—The lower classes have already begun to suffer from scarcity of food. The Batticaloa District is one in which the villagers entirely depend on