

TOURS IN UPPER INDIA,

AND THE

HIMMALAYA MOUNTAINS, &c.

By Major Archer, late Aid de Camp, to Lord Combermere.

———Where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

Milton.

PREFACE

WITHOUT desiring to attract favourable notice through the aid of dress, which, in this book-making age, could, by the assistance of "experienced hands," have been easily effected, the Author hopes that the garb in which these pages appear, may in no wise raise up a prejudice against the subject: and though he has been led, unwarily perhaps, to depend upon himself alone, he has in all things endeavoured to remember, that he who offers himself to the observation of the Public, is bound to do so with becoming diffidence and respect.

A writer in a recent "popular" Work upon India sets out with the opinion, that "It is not necessary to have visited those countries which are intended to be described," and, as it might most reasonably be expected from one who proceeds upon such a principle, has produced a Work more fanciful and ingenious than consistent or correct. The argument implies, that he who writes at a distance, is less likely to be biassed by prejudice or partiality, than he who describes from the scene itself. The truth of this is more than questionable for whoever writes under such circumstances, must be satisfied either by treating the subject very generally or abstractedly; or, if he enters into particular details, he must be content to derive his information at second hand; in which case, he must labour under great disadvantages, compared with one who has both seen and heard what he describes, and who has formed his judgment, if not by patient, at least by frequent, observation.

The inadvertences and mistakes into which a stranger not conversant with the language and peculiarities of a foreign people must inevitably fall, and without the possibility of correction, are avoided by him who has taken advantage of the opportunities of beholding all things in their actual state, and who, uninfluenced by the reports of others, writes as he sees and feels. It would be impossible for an European who has never travelled in the East, to comprehend, or even imagine, the many and important differences of character which are the effects of climate alone; the numerous and nameless habits and peculiarities, which, originating from civil and religious institutions, can only be viewed under their various shades, and perhaps only correctly estimated by the traveller: and after all, it is these points which constitute the apparent and essential differences between the inhabitants of different countries, and which determine their relative position in the scale of civilization.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

INDIA is inseparably associated in our minds with whatever is rich and varied in the productions of nature, and splendid and gorgeous in art. Barbaric pomp and show have no where been exhibited in such attractive colours as in the great city of Delhi, the capital of the Mogul empire, when Aurengzebe there held court. From the time of Alexander the Great to that of Nadir Shah, Hindoostan, by the fertility of its soil, the mildness of its climate, and the possession of apparently inexhaustible wealth, displayed in the most luxurious fashion, has always tempted northern conquerors, who have in succession overrun and partially occupied the country. The temptations to spoil, and the sudden success of the spoilers, have contributed to make it appear in the minds of youthful readers as the land of romantic adventure where genli do most abound; and where golden sands, gems of the richest value, the incense of sweet odours, and the most luscious fruits give promise and realization of the highest enjoyment to the sensual man. Could an earthly paradise be formed of such materials, India would be the spot; but the soul to enjoy, that higher sentiment beyond mere sense is wanting. And hence, with an antiquity greater than that of the Egyptians themselves, the Hindoos are still semi-barbarous, debased, and idolators, arbitrarily divided into castes, and immolating themselves in numbers at the funeral pyre, or under the cumbrous machinery of their Juggernaut. Next to these, among whom, however, the higher castes, as the Brahmins, display much intelligence and capacity, with refinement of manner, if not of mind, come the Mahomedans, their conquerors; and for a long time the rulers and lords of the soil. After them the Portuguese, the French and the English made India a field on which they fought and intrigued for power with the native princes—and not seldom, the two last nations with each other. England, or rather a number of her merchants, under the name and title of the East India Company, gained at last the ascendancy, and now, by actual occupation, or by means of their residents at the different courts, or by intimidation, may be said to rule over all India.

Travels in such a country must ever form a source of lively interest—enhanced in the case of Major Archer, by the character of the people which he visited, and the opportunities which he enjoyed for seeing both the courts and the camps of the native princes, and participating in their ceremonials and sports. In this way he acquired a knowledge of East India scenery, customs and manners, which he has journalized in so natural and unpretending a manner, as to add not a little to the intrinsic attraction of his subjects. We believe that our readers, after having perused the tours made in succession by Major Archer in Upper India, will join heartily in the following encomium:—"We have had many pleasant publications relative to India lately, and, at more remote times, two or three which took us to the hills near the source of the Sutledge River; but we do not know one, in respect to this interesting region, that has afforded us more lively pictures of customs and manners."—*London Literary Gazette*.

impunity; for by it, they imagine they gain an estimation in the eyes of their countrymen, either from their being supposed to possess more influence than is really the case, or from the more unworthy desire to outwit the Europeans by cunning and impudence. Long residence among, and intimate acquaintance with, the natives and their customs, is absolutely necessary to suppress the invariable disposition they have to assume a higher bearing than that to which they are entitled. By yielding any forms, trivial as they may be thought, which appertain to us as masters, or complying with the assumption on their part as servants, we lose our consequence in the eyes of the natives; for no Hindoostani is without the full belief that forms and ceremonies are essential parts of greatness and power. The former Residents at Lucknow were so tenacious of giving too much, or losing the least degree of consequence, that on meeting the Vizier, (as he then was,) they have been known to count the steps he made, and then they took a corresponding number. As before the assumption of regal style and title, the Resident was on a footing of perfect equality with the present King, it was an express stipulation, that the relations of intercourse, and points of etiquette and ceremony, should have no alteration: the King is therefore bound as formerly to meet the Governor-General at Cawnpore, a station on the right bank of the Ganges, in our own provinces, fifty miles from Lucknow, and there to pay his visit to him. This is derogatory to a crowned head, and the exaction should have been relinquished when the Company acceded to the Vizier's desire of Kingship.

This affair in itself was one of very questionable policy, although it occurred in those bright days of India, when her destinies were swayed by Lord Hastings. It will doubtless be accorded that when King, the monarch should have possessed all the dignities and attributes of royalty, or he should have continued in his previous rank and designation; for, admitting the supremacy of the British, and their being *de facto*, if not *de jure*, the Lord Paramount, the Nawaub was their servant and inferior; but the British, for their own ends and interests, chose to acknowledge his equality with them, except in the observance of the first visit. In the present case, it is absolute mockery to give him the name and not the substance; for how is it likely that foreign powers, or even his own subjects, will attach any importance to the mere designation of King, when they perceive that the title is shorn of all its appropriate beams of superior ceremony and respect, and of all the observance of exterior form and etiquette? The act was *questionable*, for by it the British Government guaranteed to the Vizier the kingdom as his property, which before was his solely from occupation. Nor did the right exist for the Company to alienate a fief of the

empire of Hindoostan, the patrimony of the descendants of the great Timor, admitting the Company were but just in according the name, style, and title of Emperor or King, to the person occupying the throne of Hindoostan; and if the Company merely authorized the Vizier to proceed in his assumption, (in which he could only succeed by their approval,) the injustice to the King of Delhi, "the great Mogul," was as enormous as it was apparent. The Government, it is said, derived a large pecuniary aid, in the shape of a loan, for their agreeing to the usurpation. It must be denied that there existed any political reasons for thus gratuitously trampling on all the feelings, (and perhaps rights) of the Great Mogul. The public feeling at Delhi, where the small and impoverished court of Acbar Shah resided, expressed its sense of the outrage offered to the blood of Timor: but the feebleness of this once powerful house could only vent its anger in pasquinades upon the Vizier's arrogated dignity. Some of these witticisms were not deficient in point and spirit. The vassals of the Vizier, though they held themselves his immediate subjects, resisted his claim to raise the umbrella of royalty over his head, knowing that he himself was only a vassal of the King; neither did they omit to ridicule his presumptuous pretensions, by persisting to refuse the title of *Pudshah*, or King: in reply to any question respecting him, the answer invariably was "the Nawaub,"—"such a thing is the Nawaub's" always refusing the style of "Padshah."*

The Commander-in-Chief proceeded to the Residency, where breakfast was prepared, and those who fared ill at the palace had am-

* Lord Hastings, in his summary, furnishes the origin of the assumption, and though the motives may be forgiven by state policy, the means may be considered of a questionable character. His Lordship states that he saw the necessity of making a breach between the Nawaub of Oude and his lawful superior the Emperor of Hindoostan, so that in the event of the British possessions being threatened, there should be cause sufficient to prevent their union in aid of the enemy. The Governor-General "caught" at an observance of etiquette which the Nawaub, as an inferior, was necessitated to fulfil to the brothers of the Emperor, whenever they passed in the streets of Lucknow; and he "hinted" that it rested with the Nawaub to rescue himself from the humiliation, provided it made no change in the relations between him and the Company. The ostensible object was to weaken the power of the Mogul, already prone in the dust, by severing from his fealty, the hereditary Vizier of his empire (*in nubibus*); but the Governor-General did not consider that the Oude people themselves had nothing to gain by this violence to their pride; for it is a fact that, for a long period subsequent to the regal assumption, his people would not style him otherwise than the "Nawaub," and that pasquinades were as numerous and contemptuous at Lucknow as they were at Delhi; the *clat* of making a King, was something to one descended from King-making Warwick. It is, in this single instance alone, that the policy of that noble, talented, and beloved individual can be exposed to the question of fitness or expediency. It will be acknowledged by all who understand the Moslems, and have followed his character through history, that any bone of contention between the Emperor and King would not prevent one moment the gathering of the Moslems around the heir of Timor, when religion became the watchword, or that the slightest chance of success was held out to their regaining even but a portion of the former power of their name. On this point *Divide et impera* would have no force.

ple means and opportunity to recruit nature.

In the evening drove to the *Dil-kusha* (heart-alluring) Park, about two miles from the Residency. This is an enclosure of no great extent, with a handsome house on a commanding knoll. The space around is thick with high grass, and stocked with deer, neel ghye (blue cows,) hares, monkeys, and peafowl: there are the ruins of some mud huts, which was once what was called an *English village*. Heaven knows, the spire, the elms and hedge-rows, and white-washed honeysuckled walls, were all left to the imagination; and even in the extreme of credulity, if such an idea could have existed, the furious hot winds would have parched it immediately.

Nothing more done this day, except a dinner given by the Resident to his Excellency, to which the head-quarter camp, the officers of the cantonment, and strangers and all visitors were invited.

Dec. 12.—At daylight rode round *Dil-kusha* Park, and came back early to receive the King to breakfast. At half-past nine he made his entry, most gorgeously attired in green velvet, studded all over with emeralds; the value of them must have been immense. His armlets were of diamonds; strings of emeralds depended from his neck. The usual confusion on sitting down to table took place. The natives who had admission, took possession of seats before the breakfast was announced, and in consequence there was great difficulty in obtaining one: the scramble for chairs, and the noise of insolent servants, presented a disgusting picture of want of order and decorum. Long spurs and a steel scabbard, for offensive and defensive operations in front and rear, were found to be of persuasive use. Shouldering a well-behaved European gentleman, or even a lady, was fine fun for the fat insolent knaves of nobles, as they are absurdly denominated by some folks: but a determined and unceremonious ejection from a place to which they know they have no right is taken with great civility by these gentry, and should always be adopted. As for manners, they know them not; neither is care observed that they should possess even an indistinct notion of them.

After breakfast, the party went to see some of the sights: these were the menagerie and the tomb of the late King. This last is of the usual shape of tombs, having a large dome, under the centre of which, in the floor, lies the body of *Ghagee-ood-deen* Hyder. The roof is hung with innumerable chandeliers, and lamps of all colours disposed in various figures. The tomb is surrounded with a screen of gold and silver tissue net-work, and is moreover enriched by figures of tigers, in the precious metals and in glass. We were given to understand that the ornaments of this abode of departed mortality are too varied, numerous, and rich, to afford any competent notion of their value. The walls and cornices are

studded with texts from the Koran, and in the vestibule of the building there are twenty-five men roaring and screaming that compilation of Moslem faith, for the alleged purpose of repose of the soul of the departed. Luckily the man was dead; for had he been one, or even all of the seven sleepers, his tympanum never could have withstood the uproar. These prayers for the defunct are unceasing day and night: the people who recite them are hired for the purpose, and are paid from the funds of the endowment, similar to the masses of the Roman Catholics, for it is the part of a wise man while living to provide handsomely for his *corpus* when no more. The dead in the East have no debts paid them, and they may, in scriptural phrase, be left to bury themselves, if they leave not wherewithal to enable others to do this necessary measure. The cupola has over it a coronetted ornament, the whole surrounded by the figure of an open hand, of brass gilt. This is an emblem of *Ali*,* and is adopted by way of distinction by his followers.

We thence proceeded to the menagerie, which contained many tigers, leopards, wild cats, deer, fighting rams, and hill pheasants: these latter, and a white sparrow, were the only things worth seeing: the pheasants were very beautiful. Thence to the "*Moharuck Munzil*," or happy abode: it stands close to the river Goomtee which runs to the east, and close to the town of Lucknow. The building is quite in Hindoostani style, with low rooms and small doors. The taste of natives and Europeans is at extremes; there was nothing princely in the house, no splendour or magnificence about it to warrant the appellation it possesses; the "happy abode" was fitting for any one of moderate rank attached to the court. The evening closed with a grand dinner to all, as yesterday, and a ball to the ladies.

* The grandson of Mahomet.

CHAPTER II.

Sports of the East.—The Imam-bareh.—Dinner with the King.—The Visit returned.—Contests of Wild Beast.—The Sultan Munzil.—Elephant-Fights.—Bombast.—The Minister.—Ruined Town.—Daily Marches.—Bridge of Boats.—Irrigation.—Wolves.—Husbandry.

Dec. 13.—This morning we met the King at his palace, and accompanied him over the river to a place about two miles off, where were prepared divers modes of sport, for the amusement of the Commander-in-chief; but they all proved so deficient in interest, and were all conducted with such cruel unfairness to the poor animals which were the victims,

as to excite disgust at the barbarity practised. Tame deer were loosed to be caught by the hunting leopard or cheetah. Various birds were cast up to be flown at by different kinds of hawks; but as it is expected that we shall witness the sports of the East in their wild and best style, tho description of those at Lucknow is dispensed with: it is to be hoped, as much to the satisfaction of the reader as to that of the narrator. After the slaughter of sundry deer and birds, a muzzled hyena was turned out to about twenty dogs; and when they had pulled and hauled him for some time, a bear, *sans* teeth, succeeded in affording amusement. Bruin had the best of the matter, for it was only behind his back that the curs presumed to attack him. To the bear's assistance a wolf was shown up, but he proved a craven. The victim-birds were paddy-birds, quail, partridge, herons, &c. but all met with the same unfairness as their compeers the beasts.

Breakfasted with the King. The confusion as usual, with the addition of nautch girls splitting our ears. One fat old woman was very obstreperous, moreover she was awfully ugly; but she is considered the top singer of the court,—excellent taste it must have!—The “Kulamuts,” or men singers, were much more soft and pleasing; they gave us some Persian and Kashmirian airs with considerable sweetness and tone.

In the forenoon visited the Imam-bareh, where repose the mortal remains of Nawaub, “Azoph-ood-dowlah,” the third preceding Vizier, who was remarkable only for his utter disregard of economy and inattention to business. Lavish beyond bounds in his expenditure, he exhausted his treasury, while an absence of taste and disregard to expense induced him to give as much for a common wooden cuckoo-clock, as he would for a finished chronometer; he was also particularly addicted to all sorts of sport and amusement.—The Imam-bareh was erected by him, and according to custom he desired his remains to be laid in it. The form of the building, it is said, is taken from the Mosque of St. Sophia; it consists of one large arched hall, which, as nearly as could be estimated, is one hundred and fifty feet long, sixty broad and eighty in height; the walls supporting this huge fabric are eighteen feet in thickness. At both ends of the hall is a room of sixty feet square with a dome over each; these domes are of an elegant shape and display excellent proportion: there are corridors or cloisters on all sides; the style is Saracenic, but not highly ornamented; the whole is exceedingly chaste in the design, and beautiful in the workmanship. The use to which it is put prevents any other being made of it: the Moslems not permitting sepulture in their “Musjeds” or mosques.—The prayers here were only five or six. The lapse of time since the death of the founder has weakened attention to his well-being, and the

folks now leave him to say something for himself. The building exceeds any other in the city, for magnificence of size and design; it would make a noble throne and presence-room, or a banqueting-hall. Close by is a gate called the Roomi gate (or Grecian,) but as unlike any thing Grecian as can be. The reason of its being so denominated I could not discover.

In the evening dined with the King at the palace on the bank of the river; as usual a squeeze, but having become more knowing, we managed to take care of ourselves: fireworks were let off after dinner, and fire-balloons were sent up and made a fine appearance. The natives of India are very skilful in the pyrotechnic art. A boat-load of nautch girls were moored in the middle of the stream and made the air resound with their horrid noises: the introduction of these folks is the greatest bore possible to Europeans.

Dec. 14.—At day-light went to the cantonments to review the 14th Native Infantry, a fine corps, and in excellent order, chiefly owing to a good commandant, and having present with it eleven European officers; a number often more than with two, and sometimes three corps. The cantonments are between three and four miles to the north-east of the city, over the river; the force is subsidized by the King, and is really for his own security as much as for the use of the British. The road to the cantonment is chiefly over deep sand. The Resident has a house and farm in their vicinity, a residence in the city proving very intolerable from the crowds of men and animals, and clouds of dust. In the evening, the King came to dine with the Commander-in-chief; the crowd and scramble on the increase. I had the ill luck to be pushed into a small room with eight or ten other unfortunates, and what with the dragoon band at one end, and several sets of nautch girls at the other, each trying to drown their opponents' clamours, together with the squabbling and quarrelling of at least two hundred servants, all was sufficient to ruffle the equanimity of a saint. Luckily these latter evils had their ebb, for the Residency steward exercised a thick stick with infinite dexterity, and very commendable impartiality: none who felt his force had reason to think lightly of it. Fireworks succeeded the dinner, and, strange to say, they were of a grander description than those with which his majesty entertained us; the fire-balloons were excellent, and the whole was novel and exceedingly well worth seeing. The King and the Chief had an embrace as usual, when the former withdrew; dancing then commenced, which was kept up until a late hour. A report in town that Hakim Meh-dee, a former minister of Oude, is coming over from Putty-ghur, whither he fled for British protection on the accession of the late Nawaub: people say the present minister's seat is not a safe one if the Hakim does come.

Dec. 15.—Met the King this morning at nine o'clock, and proceeded to see the elephant and tiger fights, which were in honor of the Commander-in-chief. On reaching the place, which was adjacent to one of the palaces, we found a strong circular bamboo enclosure covered in at the top with a net; this space was about thirty-five feet high and fifty in diameter; in it were seven or eight buffaloes and a young calf; they were quite tame, but upon a tiger being thrust into the arena, they all attacked him with great and instant fury. A large bear was let in and met with as little good will, but Bruin, knowing the use of his claws, clambered up to the top of the cage, where he abided. A second bear was then introduced, and, after battling for some short time, spied his brother up aloft, whither he speedily followed. No persuasions could induce him to descend, though the arguments used were in the guise of a huge bamboo, laid on with energy and emphasis.—Leaving these poor devils, we came to a spot where a large tiger was tied round the loins by a long rope running through an iron ring fixed in the ground, which enabled several men who had hold of the other end to lengthen or shorten the tether at will. The tiger was attacked by a rhinoceros, who galloped to him boldly, but, getting a scratch on his snout, prudently relinquished the fray. A herd of buffaloes were next sent against him, and forming a good line, they charged him gallantly; he gave one a clawing over the face. A leopard was similarly fettered, and had to defend himself against an elephant;—the latter rushed at the animal and endeavoured to kneel on him; he succeeded in mauling the poor beast, and left him *hors de combat*. Signor elephant was mightily pleased with the part he had played, and literally trumpeted his own praise, by making the noise called trumpeting, which is done by knocking the end of the trunk or proboscis on the ground and screaming; during the scuffle the elephant took good care of his trunk by folding it up and putting as much of it as he could into his mouth. These fights were invariably accompanied by the same want of fairness towards the animals baited, and in no one instance had they any chance of success or escape.

Breakfast was prepared at a palace built by the late King, and called the Sultan Munzil, the prettiest of the royal houses. It is entirely of stone, and in the present Indian taste and style, namely, an oblong room, the ends supported by Saracenic arches of good proportions and light elegance. The walls are coated with a mortar to resemble granite; the pillars are of white marble, as were the arches. The appearance of this room was very pleasing: it has verandahs all round, and also an upper story. The mansion stands on the bank of the river, and realizes more the notion of an eastern pavilion, than any building I have yet seen.

After breakfast some species of quail were put on the table to fight; the contests between these little creatures are carried on with the greatest fury, and their animosity is greatly excited by the presence of a female. The natives are particularly fond of this sport, at which they will risk large sums.

The nearness of the sublime to the ridiculous, was instanced by the party quitting the quail-fight to see one in which large elephants were the combatants. The field of battle was on the opposite side of the river. Two fine animals, evidently under the influence of stimulants, were led out, and when brought from opposite ends of the lists, and within a few paces of each other, they ran their course:—the shock was not what might be expected from two such powerful creatures, but in the struggle for mastery they put forth all their strength and art; one of them was brought upon the lea, his rider unelephantated heels over head, and away the vanquished animal shuffled as fast as he could. Other pairs were brought out, but gave no sport; indeed it was humiliating to put such noble creatures to such unworthy purposes.

All these pastimes being concluded, the Commander-in-chief had a private conference with the King. What transpired never reached the commons; but it was whispered the Government wanted the loan of another crore of rupees, one million sterling! During the elephant-fights, a small boat, in the shape of a fish, with a steam-engine, went backwards and forwards before the palace. The Commander-in-chief was to take his farewell this morning: this occurred with the customary embrace and professions of affectionate attachment; these are in the mouth of every native, and their value is soon appreciated; but the bombast, or what in English is termed "humbug," is necessary on the part of Europeans, to let the Indians perceive we know what they are about. An instance of the florid style will here be, perhaps, amusing. The Begum (Princess) Sumroo, of whom more hereafter, some days subsequent to her quitting the camp at Bhurtpore in 1826, wrote to the Commander-in-chief, that she had had no rest by day or night since she had parted with him. His Excellency, in reply, said "That on his arrival at Cawnpore, he found the boats which had been prepared for him, high and dry, from the lowness of the river; but that the tears he had shed when he thought of the period he should be absent from her presence, were so abundant as to float the vessels, and to enable him to proceed on his voyage."—This was taken as a matter of course, and not considered otherwise than what it should have been.

It was evident that something was going wrong with the Minister, as he was not admitted into the audience with the King and the Commander-in-chief. At meals he invariably