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O U D E.

THE fate of the kingdom of Oude seems now verging to a crisis, and, in all probability, a short period will decide whether it is to continue under the mismanagement of its present rulers, or be placed entirely under the control of the British Government. At the present period, Lucknow affords an almost perfect realization of the *beau idéal* of the court of an Asiatic despot, though the power over life and limb has been somewhat abridged by the presence of the British Resident.

In natural advantages, the Kingdom of Oude does not yield to any part of India. The whole surface of the province is level, and watered by numerous streams; and the land, when properly cultivated, is exceedingly productive, affording rich crops of every sort of grain, cotton, sugar, indigo, opium, and all the most valuable products of Hindoostan. The gifts of Heaven have, however, been neutralized by the ruinous policy of an oppressive government. "The impression, which generally remained uppermost," observes the writer of a private letter,* dated in December last, "as the general result of our visit to Lucknow, was that of disgust. In a state in which the people have no voice, in respect of the amount or kind of taxation, or as to the disposal of the revenue raised, every sort of improvement must depend upon the ruling power. Every where we saw proofs of the frivolity of the amusements of the sovereign, and of the lavish expense at which they are gratified; nowhere could we perceive any public work in progress for the benefit of the community. Along one entire side of this extensive and populous capital, runs the river Goomtee, over which there is not a single bridge; that which was commenced being left unfinished. What *might* not be done in this kingdom! It has no national debt, and if there be truth in reports generally believed, it has stores of wealth, though secretly hoarded. But even if these rumours be groundless, it is known that the present annual revenue, without reviving an old, or imposing a new tax, is fully adequate to meet all proper demands for the state and splendour of the sovereign, the maintenance of efficient judicial and fiscal establishments, and for carrying forward works of improvement and of utility. It is sad to say, that whatever the public servants do not peculate, and put by in secret, against times of need and difficulty, to themselves, is squandered by the dominant authority in vain and frivolous amusements, in the pursuits of a weak mind, and a vitiated taste, and the indulgence of depraved habits. Although his servants bow down their necks to the royal person, he has little or no voice in the management of the affairs of the country, and the sin of misrule must rest upon the head of his chosen minister. In the short space between Cawnpore and Lucknow, as well as from appearances immediately around the capital, I was disposed to think the tales of mal-administration exaggerated. The reverse, however, became but too obvious each stage we proceeded, by the way of Seetapore, to Shahjehanpore. We passed over miles and miles of waste in succession, not of barren land, incapable of cultivation,—for the fertility of the soil was manifest in many places, and traces of former tillage plainly discernible, such as ridges dividing fields, wells for irrigation, now dilapidated and useless, and groves of mango-trees, far remote from present habitations;—but evincing that these parts of the country had once been populous. Where the soil is naturally so rich, where

* Addressed to the Editor of *The Calcutta Literary Gazette*, and forwarded by him to the writer of this paper.

so much facility for irrigation exists, as well in the nearness of water to the surface, as in the numerous small streams running from the mountains to unite themselves with the Ganges, it seems impossible to trace the mournful waste and depopulation to any other source than that of impolitic and unjust administration. This cause alone was assigned by all those with whom I conversed on the subject,—and they were of all classes, such as officials now in employ, or who had been employed under former ministers, cultivators, shop-keepers, pensioned sepoys, chokeydars, &c.,—they all declared that oppressive taxation occasioned this melancholy state of things; that it was the same whether an aumil (agent) or a renter farmed; that no faith was kept; that the rent assessed was merely nominal, there being no limit to the demand except the degree of means and power to enforce it. This it was which drove the stronger *Malgoozars* (landholders) into resistance, and forced the weaker to fly the country. It is a matter for surprise that any cultivators remain; but the tenacity with which this class cling to their homes is notorious, and it is probable, indeed, that the very lowest grade of the people,—the ryots,—suffer least, because oppression falls principally on the chiefs of villages;—while it is certain that the custom of paying rent in kind by *buttai*, which prevails uniformly in Oude, is beneficial to the mere ryot. In our provinces, money-rents, fixed without advertence to fluctuation of prices, and adhered to for several successive years, have much injured our cultivators. At no time, and on no occasion, did I ever feel more proud of being in the service of the British Indian Government, than on recrossing within its frontier. After having travelled through a wilderness, we passed the small stream called Sooketa, which divides Oude from our territory, and is not more than ten yards wide. Up to this point we scarcely saw a tilled field;—from it, all the way to Shahjehanpore, about four coss, we gazed upon one vast sheet of rich cultivation, wheat, barley, *urhur* (a species of rye), grain of all kinds, cotton, sugar-cane, &c.;—the road bounded by banks or ditches; in short, every indication of industry, prosperity, and security. There is no perceptible change in the nature of the soil, nor is any thing changed, in fact, except the ruling power.”

The unfinished bridge intended to span the Goomtee, mentioned in the foregoing remarks, was a project of Saadut Ali, the late sovereign; it was to have been of iron, and the materials had arrived from England; but the death of the monarch taking place before they could be employed for the intended purpose, his successor, imbibing the prejudice common in Hindoostan, that no luck can attend the completion of an undertaking thus arrested in its progress, suffered the design to fall to the ground. There is, however, or at least there was, a bridge of solid masonry across the Goomtee, at Lucknow, besides one of platformed boats, that in the centre being moveable and opened for an hour every day.

The king of Oude has kept up a greater degree of state than his more highly descended, but less fortunate, contemporary of Delhi, and, in fact, Lucknow is the only native court throughout Hindoostan, which can afford any idea of the princely magnificence affected by the former rulers of India; that of Gwalior can bear no comparison, nor are those in the central provinces distinguished by the pomp and splendour which still characterize the throne of this ill-governed kingdom.

Like the generality of Indian cities, Lucknow presents a more imposing spectacle at a distance, than its interior can realize, though some of its buildings may bear a comparison with those of the most celebrated capitals in the world. When viewed from some commanding point, the city exhibits a

splendid assemblage of minarets, cupolas, pinnacles, towers, turrets, and lofty arched gateways, through which, with many windings, the river glides, while the whole of this bright confusion of palace and temple, is shadowed and interspersed with the rich foliage of trees of gigantic growth, and redundant luxuriance. But when visited in detail, the gorgeousness of the picture is obscured by the more than ordinary degree of dirt, filth, and squalid poverty, which are placed in juxta-position with its grandest feature: the lanes leading from the principal avenues are ankle-deep in mud, and many of the hovels, which afford an insufficient shelter to a swarming population, are the most wretched habitations the imagination can conceive. The capital of Oude is divided into three quarters. The first is chiefly appropriated to the mercantile community attached to the court and the residency; this district is composed of narrow, dirty and inconvenient streets, and with the exception of a chowk, or market-place, and one or two open spaces occupied by the higher order of shopkeepers, the whole is mean beyond any comparison with the correspondent portions of other native cities. The population is immense, and the beggars quite as abundant as in places where mendicity is sanctioned by a higher degree of holiness than Lucknow can boast. Every corner of the streets is occupied by faqueers, whose stentorian voices are heard above the Babel-like dissonance of an Asiatic city. The second quarter, which sprang up principally under the auspices of Saadut Ali, in addition to one exceedingly handsome street above a mile long, consists of a spacious chowk, and several well-appointed bazaars. It is entered at each end by a lofty gallery, and is composed of many palaces, and palace-like mansions, belonging to the king, and occupied by the members of his family, and the officers of his household. The architecture, though striking and picturesque, is rather whimsical, being an admixture of all sorts of orders and styles, Grecian and Moorish, diversified by modern innovations and alterations. The furniture of these houses is in the European style, and many contain a very curious and heterogeneous assemblage of upholsterer's goods, such as are seldom now to be seen in the countries which produced them. The third and most interesting quarter is of a more purely Oriental character, and contains numerous splendid buildings, mosques, and royal residences, chiefly completed during the sovereignty of Asoph-ud-Dowlah, who, upon his accession to the throne, quitted Fyzabad, the former capital of Oude, and fixed the seat of his government at Lucknow. The palace, which faces the Goomtee, comprises six principal courts or quadrangles, surrounded by pavilion-like buildings. In the first of these, which is entered by two lofty gateways, the attendants of the court have their apartments. Over the outer-gate there is a handsome chamber, called the *Nobut Khana*, or music-room, forming an orchestra upon a very splendid scale. The second court, encompassed by state apartments, is laid out as a garden, having a well, or bowlee, in the centre. Round this well are pavilions, opening to the water, and intended to afford a cool retreat during the hot weather; the air is refreshed by the constant dripping of the fountain, and the piazzas and arcaded chambers beyond, within the influence of its luxurious atmosphere, are well calculated for sleeping chambers in the sultry nights so constantly occurring throughout the period of the hot winds. Parallel to the second court, and at the eastward of it, stands a splendid edifice, raised upon an arched terrace, entirely of stone. This fabric, which is called the *Sungee Dalaun*, contains a grand hall, surrounded with a double arcade, crowned with a cupola at each angle, and one over the principal front, all of copper doubly gilt. At the extremities of the terrace there are wings, and flower-gardens stretch along

each front, divided into parterres by walks and fountains. A corridor extends round this court, planted with vines, and out of three entrances, one with a covered passage is appropriated to the ladies. These gateways are decked with gilded domes, and the mosque, zenana, and other buildings attached to the palace, give to the whole edifice the air of a city raised by some enchanters. Without entering farther into dry descriptive details, it may be sufficient to say, that in no place in India can there be a more vivid realization of visions conjured up by a perusal of the splendid fictions of the *Arabian Nights*. Those who have visited the Kremlin, have pronounced that far-famed edifice to be inferior to the Imambara, and the palaces of the Hyder Baugh, Hossein Baugh, and Seesa Mahal, have nearly equal claims to admiration. The banks of the Goomtee are beautifully planted, and its parks and gardens rendered singularly attractive by the multitude of animals kept in them. At a suburban palace, European visitants are delighted with the novel sight of a herd of English cattle, their superior size, roundness of form, and sleek looks, offering a strong contrast to the smaller, humped, and dewlapped breeds of Hindoostan: the latter are perhaps more picturesque, but the associations connected with cows bred in English meads, the numerous pastoral recollections which their unexpected appearance revive in the mind, render them, when viewed beneath the shade of the tamarinds and banians of a tropical clime, objects of deep and peculiar interest.

The menageries of Lucknow are very extensive, and besides those wild and savage animals kept for the purpose of assisting at "the pomps of death and theatres of blood," in which this barbaric court delights, there are many fierce beasts, not intended for fighting, retained merely as ornamental appendages. Several rhinoceroses are amongst the number; they are chained to trees in the park, but some of the tigers appear to be so ill-secured, rattling the wooden bars of their cages with such vigorous perseverance, that it requires rather strong nerves to approach the places of their confinement. Delkusha (heart's-delight) is one of the most celebrated of the parks belonging to the king; it is planted and laid-out with great care and taste, open glades being cut through the thick forest, in which numerous herds of antelopes, Indian deer, and the gigantic variety of this interesting species, the nyelhau, are seen disporting. This park abounds with monkeys, which are held sacred; for, though the Moslem religion has the ascendancy, that of the Hindoo is not only tolerated but allowed the fullest enjoyment of its superstitions: the monkeys in this district are under the guardianship of a party of fakirs, who have established themselves in the private park of a Mohammedan monarch. The palace of Delkusha possesses no great exterior pretensions to elegance, but it is handsomely fitted up, and, in common with the other royal residences, contains toys and *bijouterie* sufficient to stock a whole bazaar of curiosity-shops.

The pigeons belonging to Lucknow even exceed in number those of Benares, and other places where they are objects of reverence; here they are more esteemed for their beauty than for any peculiar sanctity, and the different breeds are preserved with the greatest care. On the summits of nearly all the roofs of the palaces, particularly the zenanas, these interesting birds are seen in flocks of from seventy to a hundred in each; they are selected for the beauty of their plumage, and each variety is kept in a separate flock. Boys are employed to teach them different evolutions in their flights. When on the wing, they keep in a cluster, and at a whistle fly off into the fields of air, ascend, descend, or return home as the signal directs. When turning sud-

denly, and darting towards the sun, the gleam of their variegated necks produces a beautiful effect, and when they alight upon the ground, they form a carpet of the most brilliant colours and the richest design imaginable. So great is the native attachment to the amusements which these birds afford, that it is recorded of some of the sovereigns of Lucknow that, in their country excursions, "they were accompanied by their women and pigeons."

Another remarkable feature of this extraordinary city is its elephants, which are maintained in multitudes; immense numbers belong to the king, and all the nobility and rich people possess as many as their means will admit. In royal processions, festivals, and state-occasions, they appear in crowds. A battalion of elephants, fifteen abreast, formed into a close-serried column, richly caparisoned in flowing jhools of scarlet and gold, with silver howdahs, and bearing natives of rank clothed in glittering tissues, form an imposing sight; but this can only be seen with full effect in the open country beyond the city. Once within the streets, the jostling and confusion are tremendous, and not unfrequently, in very narrow passes, ladders, and housings, or perhaps part of the roof on the verandah of the projecting buildings, are torn away by the struggles for precedence displayed by elephants, acquainted with their strength, and entering with ardour into the resolves of the mahouts to gain or maintain the foremost places. Elephants breed in a state of domestication, and young ones not larger than a good-sized pig, are frequently seen frolicking by the side of their mothers through the streets of Lucknow,—a spectacle fraught with interest to the eye of a European stranger. Camels are equally numerous, and, when handsomely caparisoned, add considerably to the splendour of a procession. The king's stud does not consist of fewer than a thousand horses, many of which are perfect specimens of the finest breeds, and are considered paragons of their kind; these are brought out to increase the splendour of his retinue, and, even upon ordinary occasions, his suwarree exceeds in multitude and variety any European notion of ostentatious show. When seeking amusement at his numerous parks and gardens, the king is attended by immense numbers of people, and spare equipages of every description, dogs, hawks, hunting leopards, with their keepers; and an almost endless train of guards and domestics, both on horseback and on foot, form his multitudinous accompaniments; and though the delight in shew, which characterizes Asiatics, may be esteemed a childish and puerile taste, and we could wish the sovereign of so interesting a territory to be guided by nobler aims and to seek higher pursuits, one can scarcely desire that these pomps and pageantries, the relics of old romance, should be numbered with by-gone things.

Both the present and former rulers of Oude have manifested a strong partiality for European fashions and European manufactures, but their love of novelty has not been productive of any national improvement; they have thought of nothing beyond some idle gratification or indulgence, and their minds have not expanded, or their views become more enlightened, by constant intercourse with the people who possess so much knowledge, both moral and political. A great number of foreigners have for many years been attached to the court of the king of Oude; a large proportion unquestionably might be styled mere adventurers, ignorant of every art excepting that which teaches them to profit by the follies and weaknesses of mankind; but there were others of a superior order, from whom many lessons of the highest practical utility might have been acquired.

The king of Oude has selected English officers for his aides-de-camp, his

physicians belong to the Company's medical establishment, and he has also other persons of equal rank and intelligence attached to his household. An artist of great respectability and very considerable talent grew old in the service of Saadut Ali and his successor. This gentleman retired, at an advanced age, to spend the remainder of his days at Cawnpore, where he kept up a handsome establishment, and, until the loss of his daughter and increasing infirmities rendered him averse to society, had been wont to exercise the most extensive hospitality to the residents of the station. The place of Mr. Home is supplied, at the court of Lucknow, by Mr. George Beechey, who had distinguished himself by several masterly efforts of the pencil before he left England, and whose portrait of a native female, sent over and exhibited two years ago at Somerset House, attracted the attention of the best judges of the art. It is said,—but whether on sufficient authority we are unable to state,—that Asiatic prejudices had been so far remitted as to allow this gentleman access to the royal zenana, for the purpose of taking the portrait of the favourite wife. Such an innovation cannot fail to produce very important results, and there are too many indications of a similar nature occurring all over British India, to render it at all doubtful that, at no very distant period, the whole fabric of jealous restriction will give way, and that the women of Hindoostan will receive the full enjoyment of liberty so long denied.

The Christian community of Lucknow is rather considerable when compared to that of other native cities; a great many of the shopkeepers and persons holding offices about the court are half-castes, and there are a multitude of hangers-on, of the same religion, who, attracted by the hope of enriching themselves under a monarch, whose splendour and liberality have been of course exaggerated by report, pick up a subsistence, where they had expected to find an easy path to wealth. The military cantonments, in which the Company's battalions are garrisoned, are situated at some distance from the city, where their neighbourhood acts as a salutary check, without creating the annoyance a more close association would naturally produce. There are turbulent spirits amongst the population of Lucknow, that can ill brook the military superiority of their British rulers, and, however hopeless the attempt, would gladly measure swords with them; but this hostility is not so general as some persons have asserted, and it is rarely manifested except upon some strong provocation.

Europeans have made complaints of the insolence which they have sustained in passing through the city without a numerous train of attendants; their palanquin-doors have been rudely opened, and other marks of disrespect evinced; but, though such things may have happened, conduct of this nature is by no means general, and in most cases, upon investigation, it would be found, that the natives were not the first aggressors. The character of the complainant should always be taken into consideration; some Europeans are so imperious and exacting, that they see nothing but insolence and defiance upon the part of those who do not approach them with servility and homage; while others, who think less of their own importance, are struck with the urbanity and courtesy which seem almost innate in natives of any intellectual pretensions. Thus, at a party given by the king of Oude, very contradictory reports will be disseminated respecting the conduct of the native visitants towards the European guests. From one we shall hear a triumphant account of his having succeeded in maintaining an upper seat in a struggle with some rude Mussulman, anxious to uphold his own dignity, and to lower the pride of the English; while another will dilate upon the polite attention

he has received, and upon the gentlemanly manners and address, which, as a prevailing characteristic, exceeds that of more civilized countries. No Frenchmen have better command over their countenances when conversing with persons ill-acquainted with their language; they betray no disgust at the ungrammatical, vulgar phrases introduced by those who are only accustomed to talk to their servants, though they themselves are choice in their expressions, having a vocabulary quite distinct from that of the lower orders, and deeming it the height of ill-breeding to deviate from the established rule. Unfortunately, this graciousness of demeanour, and tolerance of solecisms arising from an imperfect acquaintance with foreign manners and customs, is not very general amongst the English residents in India. They are glad to escape from society which is irksome to them, and it seems their endeavour to make their intercourse with the better classes of natives as brief as possible. This spirit will account for the little progress which knowledge has made at the court of Lucknow; and it seems a reproach to the Europeans attached to the residency, rather than to the natives themselves, that so much superstition and almost brutal ignorance should still prevail amongst a people eminently capable of becoming wise and enlightened. It is scarcely possible to imagine any thing more childish than the belief in omens, the notions of lucky and unlucky days, by which the most serious transactions of life are regulated by the king and his courtiers; and their utter ignorance of the principles which actuate men of honour, or indeed of common morality, would be incredible, were it not supported by well known and undeniable evidence.

Aga Meer, the favourite minister of the late king, had incurred the deepest hatred of his successor, not only by the odium which he brought upon the government by his rapacity and cruelty, but on account of personal offences, which could neither be forgotten nor forgiven. A shew of reconciliation had taken place previous to the death of the then reigning monarch; and his son, released from confinement, readily agreed to bury the past in oblivion. Once seated on the throne, the opportunities which offered themselves to satiate long-smothered vengeance, could not be rejected. Aga Meer, justly alarmed for his safety, took refuge at the residency. The meditated blow was arrested, and the king, much to his mortification, discovered that he could neither take the life, nor seize the property, of the disgraced minister, both being under English protection. He, therefore, though reluctantly, contented himself with making him a prisoner in his own palace, extending the power which he was permitted to exercise no farther. Aga Meer's riches consisted of jewels and coin to a vast amount; these he had improvidently suffered to accumulate in his own house, instead of taking measures to secure them in foreign banks. There would have been little or no difficulty in effecting his own escape, but it was quite impossible to convey such bulky treasures away in secret. His servants and satellites were, however, instructed to make the most tempting offers to young English officers, whose spirit and enterprize it was thought might achieve this anxiously desired object; but the attempt was too hopeless to be undertaken. Aga Meer, at one time, endeavoured to practise an old and common stratagem; but such stage-tricks are now worn out in Asiatic theatres. He asked leave to send his women away, and loaded their palanquins with jewels. On the present occasion, female privacy was not respected; the palanquins were searched, and Aga Meer was glad to get them back within his own walls. Though the minister despaired of effecting his purpose, the king felt extremely apprehensive that some powerful aid would be raised up in favour of a man possessed of such enormous wealth, and that he,—and the

sequel proved that he was not wrong in his conjecture,—would be disappointed of the golden prize. Aga Meer's death now became an object of the greatest importance, and in the opinion of the monarch's friends and confidants, an easy mode of effecting it presented itself. The health of the prisoner, somewhat injured by anxiety and confinement, was entrusted to the care of a medical officer of the Company's establishment. This gentleman, in whom Aga Meer reposed the greatest confidence, was pitched upon by the conspirators for the instrument of their project. Nothing doubting that he would fall readily into their schemes, two exceedingly polite and plausible persons paid him a visit, and after a few hints, not easy to be understood by a man of high moral principles, proceeded to say that he would greatly oblige and gratify the king by administering a dose of poison to Aga Meer, a service which would be rewarded by the gift of a lac of rupees. Somewhat embarrassed by this extraordinary proposition, and not knowing how far his character might be implicated by its having been made to him, the gentleman dissembled his indignation and horror; asking time for consideration, he dismissed his guests, and repairing to the residency, laid the whole affair before the chief personage appointed by the Company to superintend the affairs of Oude. The surgeon was instructed to appoint another meeting, and to enter into some specific arrangement, which should fully commit the persons who had contrived this cold-blooded scheme. They did not hesitate to bring a deposit of half the money, and when surprised by some unseen witnesses of their interview, could not be made to comprehend the disgust which their proposal had occasioned. They seemed to think it very extraordinary that a poor man should refuse to enrich himself upon such easy terms, dwelling with great complacency upon the facility with which the whole affair might be managed, by the substitution of some deadly drug for a dose of medicine. Upon consideration, the resident deemed it most advisable to hush up this affair, but it was commonly talked of amongst the European community, and the writer of the present narrative received the whole account from the lips of the principal actor, who gave a most interesting, as well as amusing, description of the surprise which the discovery of his scruples elicited. In little more than a year after this transaction Aga Meer obtained his release, but it was not effected without the most spirited interference on the part of the Governor-general, whose determination to compel the king of Oude to yield up his long-desired victim, could not be resisted. A regiment of cavalry was sent over to Lucknow to escort the prisoner across the frontier, and the whole of the garrison of Cawnpore were under orders to march, and lay siege to the capital of Oude, in case the king should refuse to allow Aga Meer to depart with all his treasure. The writer was at Cawnpore at the period of this important transit. It was a time of considerable excitement, though the result could scarcely justify a doubt. Amongst the young military men, nothing was more eagerly desired than a *tamasha* of the kind, and at one time great hopes were entertained of the king's obstinacy; but he was too wise to allow passion to overmaster prudence, and with little less than Pharoah's reluctance, suffered his enemy to depart unscathed. Aga Meer's treasures, amounting, it was said, to the enormous sum of twenty-five crores of rupees (as many millions sterling), were conveyed across the Ganges in eight hundred hakeries (bullock-carts); he established himself at Cawnpore, purchasing several of the most beautiful of the houses which had been built by the English residents for their own accommodation, at a period in which they could better afford to lodge sumptuously than at the present day. Aga Meer did not survive his emanci-

pation very long ; the circumstances of his death are enveloped in mystery, and rumours are abroad that the vengeance of the king of Oude overtook him at the moment in which he enjoyed a fancied security. His wealth also, it is said, unaccountably disappeared ; many of his servants, after his decease, were in a state of destitution from the impossibility of procuring the payment of their wages, which had been long in arrears.

Those who are acquainted with all the particulars of his eventful life,—and they are known to many,—could furnish a very interesting memoir of this subtle adventurer, and the information conveyed by such a narrative would throw considerable light upon the complicated net-work of the affairs of Oude. Originally a common Mussulchee, or scullion, Aga Meer contrived to ingratiate himself with his superiors, and arose at length to the highest appointment in the state. His rapacity is said to have known no bounds, and if he sanctioned half the acts of cruelty and oppression which are laid to his charge, no monster in the human form ever committed crimes of more fearful magnitude. Reverencing neither sex nor age, upon any pretext for the seizure of property, his myrmidons were directed to violate the sacred precincts of the zenana. The males of the family, bound by the dearest ties of honour to prevent such an outrage, were usually slain in the rash attempt ; while the women, unable to survive the disgrace of exposure to the rude gaze, and still ruder touch, of lawless men, threw themselves into the wells, perishing miserably by their own hands. Whole families were thus swept away, their habitations were razed to the ground, and their inheritance became the prey of the spoiler.

Though many Europeans might have been tempted by the hope of a rich reward to effect the deliverance of Aga Meer, none felt any pity for the captive, or deemed his fate unmerited. In our ignorance of the motives which actuated the Governor-general's resolute interposition in his behalf, we are not justified in condemning the measures he adopted ; but it was generally considered rather hard upon the King of Oude, that so notorious a delinquent should have been suffered to carry away the wealth he had wrung from an impoverished country. Succeeding ministers have been little less oppressive than Aga Meer. Hukeem Mhendee Ali, who, during the period of his former disgrace, entered into very extensive mercantile concerns at Futtighur, has been recalled, but is now again in banishment ; rumours are afloat that the late failures in Calcutta, though long threatening, were ultimately occasioned by the sudden withdrawal of a very large sum of money from one of the agency-houses by this person, who, it is said, was incited to revenge himself upon those members of the government who refused to support him in the administration of the affairs of Oude.

Oude is still celebrated for the barbarous spectacles in which, by a strange perversion of taste, men in all ages and countries have taken delight. While cock-fighting continues to be a favourite amusement in England, we ought not, perhaps, to visit the combats of wild beasts, which take place on occasions of great festivity at Lucknow, with the reprehension which such inhuman sports should call forth. Upon the arrival of a new resident, the visit of a commander-in-chief, or any occasion of equal importance, the court of Lucknow is seen in all its glory. It is the custom for one of the princes to meet the expected guest at the distance of perhaps two days' march from the city ; the *cortège* at these times is very resplendent, the cavalcade being composed of a vast body of elephants, attended by battalions of infantry and cavalry, led-horses, palanquins, heralds, mace-bearers, and a nondescript throng of half-

armed and half-naked pedestrians. It is the fashion for one of the great men to invite the other to partake his howdah ; the two retainues join, and with all the noise they can make, and all the dust they can kick up, the whole *su-warree* sweeps along the road, the irregular cavalry darting out in all directions, displaying their horsemanship, and their skill as spear and swordsmen, by carrying on a running tilt, charging, careering, and curvetting, without the slightest consideration of any impediment in the shape of bank or ditch. The king himself makes his appearance at the outskirts of the city, and the same ceremonies are gone through ; the honoured guest is invited to share the monarch's howdah ; and an embrace, performed in public, shows the amicable terms which the two governments are upon with each other. It is astonishing how few accidents occur from the jostling and concussion of these promiscuous multitudes of horse and foot ; elephants, fortunately, rarely take any delight in wanton mischief ; their sagacity enables them to estimate the damage they might commit, and, even when most incited to action, they are careful of the lives and limbs of the multitude around them. Natives ride so admirably, that, notwithstanding the incurable vice of their horses, those who have been accustomed to the field are rarely or ever thrown ; there will, however, be always some unexpert horsemen, where no one will walk if he can by any means mount himself, and hence the necessity of attendant grooms, armed with spears, whose business it is to keep off loose steeds, which, after throwing their riders, attack others with the ferocity of wild beasts, tearing at every thing that comes in their way. It is the etiquette, upon a triumphal entry of this description, for the king to give a breakfast to his guests, and this is always attempted in the European fashion. Though splendid in its kind, and closely resembling its model, there are always some inattentions to minute particulars, which mar the whole affair ; thus the tea and coffee are never served up hot, and the forks, which are only put into requisition upon such occasions, look as if they had been thrown into a godown since the last entertainment, a year or two before, and left to accumulate rust and dirt. It is exceedingly difficult to make native servants comprehend the propriety of serving up tea while it is hot ; such a thing may be compassed in private families, but never at a public entertainment, where, in order to be ready, every thing is prepared a long time before it is wanted. Old campaigners usually contrive to bring a supply of such things as are essential to their own comfort. The writer, at a very large assembly of the kind, had the good fortune to find the only vacant seat at table next a gentleman who had provided himself with a tripod of charcoal, and other means and appliances for a comfortable breakfast. The tea-kettle was singing merrily outside the door, and the careful khidmutghar had ensconced the tea-pot under his master's chair. The neighbours came in for a portion of the beverage which "cheers but not inebriates," and which afforded a very requisite refreshment after an encounter with the dust and fatigue attendant upon a native spectacle. The khansamah of the King of Oude, however, must not suffer in his character of caterer, on account of little discrepancies, perhaps not in his power to remedy or avoid. Bishop Heber has borne honourable testimony to the culinary powers of the *maitre d'hôtel* who officiated during his sojourn, and the writer can never forget a certain fowl, prepared by the hands of the king's especial attendant (for khansamahs, though they have cooks under them, always superintend the progress themselves), which a Ude or a Carème might view with envy. It was roasted, and served up whole, but so spiced and saturated with curry-powder, as to form no bad representation of a salamander. It may not be unimportant to

add, that the preparation, though excellent in its kind, which goes under the name of the King of Oude's sauce, does not bear any resemblance to the zests and relishes of various descriptions which are served up at the king's table; chatneys and sweet pickles, for which Lucknow is famous, and which, especially the latter, London oilmen would do well to import or imitate.

The etiquette at the court of Oude differs considerably from that of Delhi; though in both the receiving and presenting nuzzurs forms the principal ceremonial. In imitation of European sovereigns, the king gives his portrait set in diamonds to ambassadors and other persons of rank, this distinction being also bestowed upon the aides-de-camp, and officers who have accepted situations of equal honour at the court. There is nothing very remarkable about the audience-chamber, but the king's throne is extremely splendid. It is a square platform, raised two feet from the ground, with a railing on three sides, and a canopy supported upon pillars; of these the frame-work is wood, but the casing pure gold, set with precious stones of great value; the canopy is of crimson-velvet richly embroidered with gold, and furnished with a deep fringe of pearls; the cushions, on which the king is seated, are also of embroidered velvet, and the emblem of royalty, the chattrah, is of the same, with a deep fringe of pearls. The king appears literally covered with jewels, the whole of the body down to the waist being decorated with strings of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, &c.; his crown is a perfect constellation of gems, and overshadowed by plumes of the bird of paradise. A native of rank stands on either side of the throne, waving chowries of peacocks' feathers set in gold handles. To the right of the throne are gilt chairs for the accommodation of the resident and his wife, if he be a married man, the rank of the British ambassador (who certainly acts the part of viceroy over the king) being recognized as equal to that of the monarch himself: he is the only person permitted the use of the chattrah, the chowrie, and the hookah, in the sovereign's presence. The English persons attached to the residency take up their position behind and at the side of these chairs, standing; those in the service of the king wearing very handsome court-dresses of puce-coloured cloth, richly embroidered with gold. The left of the throne is occupied by natives of rank holding high official situations, splendidly attired in the picturesque costume of the country. The prime-minister stands at the king's feet to receive and present the nuzzurs. These consist of money, from twenty-one gold mohurs down to a few rupees in silver, according to the circumstances of the parties. The person offering, advances to the throne with many salaams, and having his gift placed upon a folded handkerchief, presents it to the king to touch in token of acceptance; it is then given to the minister, who adds it to the heap by his side. After this ceremony, the king and the resident rise; the former takes from the hands of a person in waiting certain necklaces composed of silver riband, ingeniously plaited, which offers a cheap mode of conferring distinction; the investiture is made by the king in person, and upon taking leave, the resident is accompanied by the king to the entrance, where he salutes him with a short sentence, "God be with you!" pouring attar on his hands at the final exit. Should the ambassador happen to be in great favour at the time, the compliment is extended to all the English visitants as they pass out. Titles of honour, khillauts, and their accompanying distinctions, such as an elephant fully caparisoned, a charger, or a palanquin, are frequently conferred upon these court-days; the nuzzur is then of proportionate value, persons anxiously coveting some grant or distinction, offering not less than a lac of rupees; this sum is conveyed in a hundred bags, covered with crimson

silk, tied with a silver riband, and so solid a proof of attachment is not unfrequently rewarded by an embrace before the whole court, a mark of royal favour well worth the money bestowed upon it, since any person's fortune is made in native states, who is known to have interest at court.

The king's dinners are better than his breakfasts; there is abundance of wine for the English guests, and though the native visitants do not partake in public, many confess that they indulge at their own tables. Nautches and fireworks conclude the evening's entertainment; the latter can never be shewn off to so much advantage as in an Indian city, where the buildings they illuminate are of the same fairy-like nature. No description can do justice to the scene presented on some fine, dark, clear night, when the Goomtee is covered with boats, of those long canoe-shaped graceful forms, belonging to the king, some resembling alligators, others swans, peacocks, or dolphins, enamelled in various colours, intermingled with gold, and filled with a splendid company glittering in gems and tissues. Blue lights, so artfully disposed as not to be visible, while they clothe the whole pageant with their unearthly gleams, render every adjacent object distinct, and as the blaze of ten thousand rockets bursts forth, palaces, mosques, and temples seem to rise majestically during the brief illumination. In the next moment, all is dark save the pageant on the Goomtee, and again minarets and domes, cupolas and spires, spring up, silver and gold, as the marble and the gilding catch the vivid gleams of jets and spouts of fire ascending to the skies.

A TIBETAN WIFE.

THE required qualities in a maiden who may aspire to be united in marriage to Shákya (the Buddha), are thus defined by himself:—"No ordinary woman is suited to my taste and habits; none who is incorrect in her behaviour, who has bad qualities, or who does not speak the truth. But she alone will be pleasing and fit for me who, exhilarating my mind, is chaste, young, of good complexion, and of a pure family and descent. She who is young, well-proportioned and elegant, yet not boastful of her beauty, who is affectionate towards her brother, sister, and mother; who, always rejoicing in giving alms, knoweth the proper manner how to bestow them on the priests and brahmins; one who, being without arrogance, pride, and passion, hath left off artifice, envy, deceit, and is of an upright nature; who resteth content with her husband and is always submissive and chaste; who is firm and not wavering; who is not proud and haughty, but full of humility like a female slave; who hath no excessive fondness for the vanities of sound, smell, taste, nor for wine; who is void of cupidity; who hath not a covetous heart, but is content with her own possessions; who, being upright, goeth not astray; is not fluctuating; is modest in her dress, and doth not indulge in laughing or boasting; who is diligent in her moral duties, without being too much addicted to the gods and festivals; who is very clean and pure in her body, her speech and her mind; who is not drowsy nor dull, proud nor stupid; but, being of good judgment, doth anything with due reflection; who hath for her father and mother-in-law equal reverence as for a spiritual teacher; who treateth her servants, both male and female, with constant mildness; who is well versed as any courtesan in the rites and ceremonies described in the *Shastras*; who goeth last to sleep and riseth earliest from her couch; who maketh every endeavour with mildness, like a mother, without affectation:—if there be any such maiden to be found, father, give her unto me as a wife."*

* Translated by M. Alexander Csoma de Kőrös from the *Bksh-kyur*, a Tibetan work, corresponding with the *Lalita vistāra*, an autobiography of Shákya, in *Journ. of As. Soc. of Bengal*, Feb. 1834.