

ART. V.—*The Private Life of an Eastern King. By a Member of the Household of his late Majesty, Nussir-u-Deen, King of Oude. London, 1855.*

“THE age of conquests is passed,” said Louis Napoleon; and the European world, delirious with fear lest he should be the conqueror, exulted in the sentiment. It was quoted by statesmen with a glad smile, as a proof that their much vaunted “balance of power” was not yet to be disturbed. The states of Europe were still to occupy their position of armed and fettered neutrals. It was welcomed by the dreamers as heralding in that era of peace and plenty, which they have so often prophesied, and postponed—and it was accepted by thinkers as a proof that the speaker felt himself strong enough to do without immediate war. The acclamations continued. Two years after, the whole strength of France and England was stretched to prevent the boldest attempt at conquest recorded in history. The great fact gave the lie to the pungent aphorism. The age of conquests has *not* passed, nor is it passing; it proceeds, with greater or less rapidity, in every corner of the earth. Russia stands pledged to a deliberate scheme, involving the conquest of the old world. America stands pledged to principles which involve the conquest of the new. England, while repudiating conquest, goes on conquering, annexes a new territory in every half decade, and annihilates some barbarian tribe in every two years. It is true, the last named power believes herself free of any such design. She does not, however, draw back her hand; and the only consequence of her prudery is, that her conquests are without system, made often at the wrong moment, and generally three times as costly as they need have been. She destroys the dynasty of Runjeet, and leaves the seeds of rebellion, because she will not “conquer.” She annexes Pegu, and makes a virtue of abstaining from the “conquest” of the remainder of the kingdom. In short, despite Manchester men and able editors, cotton manufacturers and philanthropic dreamers, she is as much pledged to advance as the Romanoffs or the States. Meanwhile, these conquering nations, these races whose lust of territorial aggrandisement excites the horror of Quakers and of Manchester orators, advance in every other direction at an equally rapid rate. England is incomparably richer, more educated, more virtuous, than she was in the dreary reigns of the first Georges, who repudiated any thing so energetic as annexation. Russia, in thirty years,

has added 30 per cent. to her population, and, the lies of the hour being overlooked—50 per cent. to the physical comfort of her millions. Her policy overshadows Europe. Her diplomacy excites a dread such as Englishmen once felt for the Spaniard and the Jesuit. Her arms have proved equal to those of two of the mightiest nations of the world. Of the United States it is useless even to speak. The child is growing into a giant. While she doubles her country, she quadruples her means of employing it. There are more Dollars, more Railways, more Coin, more Telegraphs, more People, more Missions, and more Education in the States, than there were thirty years ago. Let us turn to the non-conquering States. The Oriental Empires have ceased to conquer, and are ceasing to exist. Every where around is the sound of the crumbling of rotten thrones. How stands the mighty and paternal Government of China? With treason at the gates of Peking, outside barbarians proffering arrogant assistance, the King of the North stealing her fairest provinces, the valley of her most magnificent river. Japan has yielded to the demand of a single squadron of one of the conquering nations. The King of Siam has admitted the Consul, who will give place only to the Resident. The Shah of Persia quails at the threat of a single Englishman. Day by day the dominion of Russia advances further over the Nomad tribes, and Empire-seats of Central Asia. How is it with Spain? Is she happier, richer, nobler, than when engaged in her career of conquest? Is Espartero greater than Alva, or as good as LasCasas. Is O'Donnell the equal of Cortez or Gonsalves? Are the gang of repudiatory Editors who surround Isabella, greater than the grave and stately men of thought, who were the eyes and hands of Philip and Charles the Fifth? Is Spain turned into a Paradise by her long cessation from the career of conquest? Has she more men or manufactures, Railways, Telegraphs, Exports, Imports, or aught that the soul of Manchester rejoices in? Has she even the things in which wiser men take pleasure, books or pictures, achievements in literature or art? Has she so many rivals to Calderon and Cervantes, to Velasquez and Murillo? If we turn to Italy, the picture becomes even more striking. But one section of that land has woke from the dream of ages, and entered the race of modern civilization. The first effort of that one was to conquer Italy, an effort not abandoned at Novara; its second to assist in resisting the conquest of Constantinople. France and the Scandinavian Powers are the only ones in which the cessation of conquest is not apparently accompa-

nied by a downward tendency, and they are not really exceptions to the rule. France has not given up, though she has for the moment suspended conquest. She has not surrendered Algeria, or given up the design of making the Rhine her boundary. As for Scandinavia, her energies are absorbed in one long struggle to resist the inevitable march of one of the conquering powers. Slowly and quietly she recedes, but recede she does. Sweden dares not declare war. Denmark takes a Russian Prince as successor to the throne of Christian.

If then, throughout the world, progress and conquest are in fact united, is it not just possible that they may also be united of right? Is there not some faint probability, that conquest may be right as well as inevitable, and that the Manchester school are committing not only a blunder but a crime, in resisting it? And first, is not conquest on the part of a progressive nation inevitable?

As far as the conquests over mere savages are concerned, this will, we suppose, be admitted without much argument. As a nation becomes richer, its population is certain to encrease. The development of new trades affords place for new households, and in countries where a healthy morality prevails, population encreases somewhat faster than commerce. These mouths must be fed: it is all very well to tell them that they must starve at home. They won't do it, and there is no human force extant competent to make them. They emigrate to lands which wait only cultivation to give them the comforts denied by the old world. Unfortunately, these lands are frequently scoured by savage races who use them as the beasts of prey use the jungle. As a matter of course, they regard the settlers as intruders. The settlers, on the other hand, look on them as thieves and murderers, or if excessively philanthropic, as men who must "retire into the interior." The savages object to either process, recur to their only argument, and whether Seminoles or Sioux, Gualches, or Australians, disappear. The white man needed room, and, under whatever disguise, he took it, and maintained it by superior force. We say nothing of the right or wrong of such a proceeding, we speak simply of the fact, and of its inevitable character. The question, however, must be widened out. Is there any necessity why a progressive nation should be also a conquering one? Why should it not live and permit its neighbours to live in peace? We reply, the necessity exists, unless the nation follows the policy of Japan. If it retires into itself, refuses all communication with the outer world, and ignores all human action, except its own, it may live till some wave of barbarism coerces it once

more into conquest. The Romans of the Empire actually did do this. There was Rome. Outside was the universe. They wanted no connection with it ; they ceased to conquer, and for a few years lived on in a luxurious peace. The pig can deny itself to every body but the butcher. The butcher came at last, and Rome woke to find that the age of conquest had not passed away, but that she was herself the conquered. Under any other conditions, conquest is as certain as the demonstration of a mathematical problem. The progressive nation, like a healthy child, gradually grows strong. Like the same child, as she reaches to man's estate, she comes into contact with other beings like herself, forms friendships, enmities and alliances. Ultimately every nation finds it indispensable to consolidate and render definite her business relations with other nations. Soon, either from folly or malice, or the inevitable clash of opposing interests, the growing nation finds or fancies itself injured. It feels that its development perhaps is cramped by inferior intellects, that the good it could achieve is prevented, that the principles in which it has earnest faith are derided. Or it finds simply that its trade is injured, that it is robbed of advantages honestly earned. It demands reparation, and frequently does not obtain it. We all know that even good men cannot be trusted in their own suits, that men really desirous of doing right, actually cannot see, in opposition to their own interest, where the right really lies. How much less probable is it that a nation will thus concede rights to which it believes its title well assured ? The demand is refused. The injured nation must submit or fight. She arms, her internal energy gives her the victory, and she, in fact, makes a conquest. The suit is won, the expenses must be paid, or the victor is still injured. Money or territory is accepted as compensation, and a conquest is effected. It matters nothing that the defeated nation is not subjugated. That is simply the moderation of the victor, or the result of policy. Where land is wanted, it is immediately taken. Even England has already demanded a few Colonies.

Holding then conquest to be inevitable to a progressing people, either from want of room, or from the natural circumstance of strength being exerted to inflict punishment for injury received, is deliberate conquest ever justifiable ? Is it ever a right thing to set forward an army with the distinct intention of putting one nation under the rule of another ? We hold, as thousands hold, if they dared but avow their belief, that it is ; and we so hold, because we believe that every nation, like every individual, has, or ought to have, a conscience and a responsi-

bility. It is bound by a law higher than any international law to put an end to oppression and to victorious crime, and to human suffering, whenever and wherever it discovers it. The man who stands by and looks quietly on at a murder, having power to prevent it, is a murderer. The nation which looks quietly on, while thousands are murdered, shares in the guilt, and will share in the retribution. Indeed, in extreme cases, as they are called, this is openly acknowledged. Who objected to Lord John Russell's threat to *compel* the Duke of Tuscany to liberate the Madini? Who doubts our right to coerce barbarians into a respect for the persons of British travellers? The right here acknowledged in extreme cases exists in all. We are bound, having the power, to prevent human suffering, and being so bound, we must occasionally, in the discharge of our duty, resort to force. That force again will occasionally lead to conquest. There are races on earth who so nearly occupy the position held by maniacs among men, that it is indispensable for their own security to put them, metaphorically, in irons. Reasoning is useless, menaces are not understood, even the scourge is only operative for the moment—we must put them in confinement, keep their dangerous strength in order, place their propensities where they can effect no harm. But if we do this, we are bound to see that they obtain every comfort we can assure them, that their property is well administered, and themselves subjected to the regimen best calculated to effect a return to reason. To effect this great object, we must assume the complete and effectual control, in other words, we must, when speaking of nations, annex.

We are fully aware of the extreme consequences to which this theory may develop itself. "Who," says some horrified member of the Peace Society, "who makes you judge in your own case? Granting even your right in certain cases, to whom are you responsible for a blunder?" We answer, to God alone. On earth the sane man alone can judge of his right to confine the insane. If, through cupidity or lust of power, he confines one not properly insane, he sins, and will undergo the retribution. The possibility of such a crime does not lessen the right of sane mankind to confine madmen. But what proof have we that he is mad, or what is the degree of oppression which justifies interference? We reply, the proof of insanity in nations rests, as in individuals, with the conscience of the sane, assisted by the advice of those specially skilled in such complaints. And as for the degree of oppression, any degree which can be considered equal or superior to the amount of human suffering which will be caused by the effort to

remedy it. But we shall again be told that this would lead us to interfere in such cases as the fearful misgovernment of Naples, or even to put down slavery in the United States by force of arms. Precisely. When Cromwell uttered the haughty menace, "If thou wilt not spare the poor people of God, my guns shall be heard in the Castle of San Angelo," he acted on this very principle. We accept this extreme result, and hold that England commits a crime in permitting the present misgovernment of Naples. The same remark would apply to the slave question, with this one limitation. *Can* we do it? No man is bound to perform impossibilities, or to commit suicide in order to prevent murder. If a man who could not swim, saw a murder being committed in the middle of the Hooghly, he would not be guilty for not jumping into the water to prevent it. It is only the good which it is clear we can do that we are bound to do; and we *can* stop misgovernment in Naples. Therefore, we hold that a nation is bound by a law higher than any precept of Vattel, or any subtlety of Puffendorf, to conquer, if without conquering it cannot put an end to a great oppression.

This being admitted, how much greater is the crime of a nation which enables another to commit crime, and then refuses either to abandon or repair its criminality, because atonement would involve an imaginary horror designated "conquest." Such a nation is like a man who gives a Malay a creese to run a muck with, and refuses either to take away the weapon or to heal the wounds it inflicts, because that involves a little trouble and the obloquy of the bad. Yet this is precisely our policy in India. We place weapons in the hands of men who, from education, are as mad as these Malays; and not only that, but we bind their victims to make the slaughter easy. Then when we awake to the fact that murders are being committed, we refuse to interfere, because, forsooth, Cobden and Bright will be indignant at our interference. We give the Rajah of Travancore the right to enslave a hundred thousand human beings; we enable the Maharaja of Cashmere to use molten lead as a tax-collector's expedient. We permit the King of Oude to perform every act which can ruin his dominions, and then we refuse to interfere. We sell poison, knowing it will be used for murder, and consider ourselves virtuous because we will not put the murderer under arrest.

This kingdom of Oude is perhaps the best illustration of English blundering on the subject of conquest. In 1806, after various most disgraceful intrigues, Lord Wellesley brought the Oude affair to a summary termination. He conquered Oude.

It is true he did not march troops, fight battles, or expend more of his resources than he could help, but still he conquered Oude. The power to do all this was in his hand, and the King knew perfectly that if he refused to obey it would be employed. He signed a treaty which stripped him of half his dominions. It guaranteed to him, however, the other half. It enabled him to live without fear of any external enemy whatsoever. Aware that quarrels might arise with his subjects, with Rajahs indignant at the supremacy of a Mussalman, or with Mussalmans indignant at the restrictions on maltreating Hindus, it guaranteed him also against internal revolt. Six thousand British troops were placed in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, and the King was informed that, as regarded his own subjects, he was absolutely free. More unrestricted power it was perhaps impossible to place in the hands of mortal man. The King was free from the dread of the appeal to Delhi, which was the great check upon the actions of the Nawabs. The religious check, sometimes strong in Mussalman countries, mattered little in a district, three-fourths of whose population were Hindus, and whose traditions had been destroyed by incessant changes of administration. Even the great final check was wanting. So long as the King was popular in the palace, his personal safety was assured. No energy of reformation could render a revolt possible. No excess of crime could give his subjects strength to resist him, backed as he was by all the strength of India, and all the strength of England. The weapons were placed in his hand, and he was assured that he was free, free in the highest sense of the word, to use them as he would. One only stipulation did the conqueror make, one trace only of humanity is to be found in his arrangements. He implied that the mighty powers with which the son of an arch-traitor was invested, were to be used for good, under the implied penalty of forfeiture;—that in the event of notoriously bad government, the treaty would be considered as violated by the King of Oude, and not binding on the other contracting party.

Nor was the kingdom, though shorn of its fair proportions, unworthy the acceptance of Ghazee-ud-deen. The modern kingdom of Oude stretches over an area of about twice the size of England. This great tract is or was inhabited by five millions of the boldest and most industrious race yet known in India. More than one-half its area would produce all the necessities of Oriental life, and all that is useful for exportation. Wheat and barley, oils and gums, indigo and lac dye, gold and silver, were all produced or producible in

profusion. The Ganges was the highway of Oude, as well as of the north-west. Vast forests of teak afforded an inexhaustible material for building. Mines of kunkur and granite rocks supplied the material for endless roads. The revenue was still four millions sterling. The dynasty was tolerably popular. The people were not very heavily ground down. A rich and honoured nobility stood around the throne, with rights sufficiently secure to ensure a constant succession of competent officials. The King himself, though vicious, was a man of decent capacity, and his minister might have done credit to a European monarchy. The trial was made; and from that day Oude has been in the position of a house governed by a maniac. It has been subjected to the most fearful evil which we believe can visit a community, the evil of a Government which unites profligacy to idiocy. Slowly and almost without observation its property has passed away. Its revenue has declined from four millions sterling to seventy lakhs of Rupees. Its population has been not only decimated but reduced one-half. Every kind of order has disappeared. The police has ceased to exist. The revenue is farmed to eighteen chuckladars, who obtain their appointments solely from bribery of the low favourites of the court. The money which they pay in is anticipated years before it is due, and is reduced one-half by the numerous hands through which it passes. The usual course of procedure is somewhat after this fashion. The chuckladar, with a strong body of troops, selects a few villages or a rich zemindary for his first demand. It is for the regular revenue *plus a solatium*. Both are paid with considerable readiness, if the village has not been recently harried, or stormed, or visited by the King, or by any other pestilence. The taxation of Oude is not by itself very oppressive, and as for the *solatium*, that is regarded as a matter of course, a mere expression of respect for a superior. This once secured, the chuckladar makes a new demand. He still, however, usually covers it with some pretext. His troops are in revolt, and he must pay them at once; or his commissariat is out of order; or there is a manufactured balance of arrears; or, in short, the lamb's father abused the wolf. The villagers or the zemindar, anticipating something of the kind, are not quite unprepared. With tears and menaces, and imprecations, and sometimes with a shew of fighting, they still pay. Then the chuckladar comes out without disguise. He seizes all the women he can lay his hands on, and demands a ransom under the threat of insults to them which, to an oriental, are worse than death. Sometimes the terrible threat extorts the remainder of the victim's hoard. Sometimes, parti-

cularly among the Hindus, the threat fills them with despair, the unfortunates turn at bay, and sword in hand, cut their way through to the Company's territory. Sometimes, too, they defeat the chuckladar and take to the mountains. More frequently the village is assaulted, all the property harried, and the women surrendered to the lust of the soldiery. The scene is repeated again and again, and the chuckladar frequently emerges from a district which he has turned into a desert studded with sacked cities. Why should he not? He has no principle, for the little religious feeling he ever possessed has been worn out in the palaces of Lucknow. He has no humanity, for when did an Oriental ever shrink from the spectacle of human suffering? He has no enlightened self-interest, for the profits of his crimes will purchase immunity, and an exchange with some other chuckladar. He has no fear even, for resistance is ultimately impossible. Is he not backed by a favourite eunuch whom he has bribed? Is not the eunuch supported by a nika wife, at whose irregularities he winks? Is not the nika wife, meh-tranee though she may be, omnipotent with her sensual lord? And is he not supported by all the strength of an empire with a hundred millions of obedient subjects, and able to place a thousand pieces of cannon on one battle-field? He perseveres. Occasionally, as in the instance of Naupurah, a whole country is laid waste; but it matters nothing at Lucknow. The King's favourites have money, and the King has, to use Carlyle's expression, "unspeakable peace within doors." Woe to the chuckladar, however, if he presumes to retain too much of his wealth. The courtiers are then awake to humanity. Complaints are listened to, he is ordered to disgorge, tied by the heels to a high roof, covered with oil, and placed in the sun, thrown among hornets, burnt with hot irons on the arm-pits and the thighs. The sponge is quickly squeezed, and King and courtiers get drunk with champaign purchased out of the proceeds. Such is the mofussil of Oude, the dreary scene varied only by the sudden success of some daring Hindu Raja, who, but for his fear of the British, would cleanse Oude of its pestilent rulers in six months. Is the capital any better. We have before us a letter, giving a short account of the visit of a recent traveller to Lucknow, which has never made its appearance in print. The writer, obviously a long resident in India, has, we know, enjoyed peculiar opportunities of arriving at the truth:

"Mr. — and I reached Lucknow on — and were most warmly received by—. Round the city stretches a deep belt of desert, apparently some twenty-two miles deep, and which looks to my eye, and I examined the soil very carefully, like

‘culturable tracts. Next morning, mounted on two tall elephants, very thin and woe-begone-looking, we started for a survey of the city. You have been at Cairo I know. Did you remark the strange look of the city from the Mamelukes’ leap, that look as if it were worn out with old age, and only wanted some friendly hand to crumble it into dust? Lucknow has just that crumbling look. Every thing, from the gates downwards, is an imitation of Stamboul. The idea has been originally well conceived, but it is executed in lath and plaster, and everything is going to ruin. The plaster crumbles, the bricks are crushed, and there is no repair. On the road I observed, that our elephants had an eccentric habit of stealing cakes, vegetables and fruit, from every open stall we passed. ‘They are starved, like all the King’s animals,’ was the quiet explanation, ‘and the mahouts, who are fond of the animals, teach them to steal, and abuse the stall-keepers for objecting.’ The King has endless palaces, such as they are, every monarch erecting a new edifice, and robbing his predecessor’s to adorn it. Each has also a mausoleum; all with one exception are robbed in the same way, and I asked the reason of this remarkable exemption. ‘It is under the British guarantee,’ was the satisfactory answer. Everything was dilapidated to the last degree, the plaster dropping from the walls, dirt on every corner, the magnificent furniture all destroyed, guards, all old men or boys, dressed or undressed, in uniform so ragged, that it is a mercy it hangs together. In the great palace, in the audience chamber, were twelve guards watching the diamond throne. Three had no jackets, two a trouser a piece, and one man, who made his salute with a rusty bayonet, because he had no musket, had literally nothing but his cross belt and his dhootie. Almost all were old men, with the blank weary looks of those who had no hope and no interest. ‘How many of these ragamuffins may there be?’ we enquired. ‘Some eighty thousand throughout Oude.’ ‘And are they all like these?’ pointing to one old rascal who was on the stairs, ineffectually endeavouring to salute us with what appeared to be the handle of a cooking pot.

“Bah! was the reply, these are the Coldstream Guards. They are seldom more than two years in arrear. You should see the fellows in the interior.” And is this really the army of Oude?

“There are three or four regiments in better trim, but for the eighty thousand, here you have them.

“We mounted our howdahs again, and rode on. Passing through a long bazar, I observed a whole row of little houses on the wall, with very green jilmils. These were the abodes

of the King's discarded mistresses. In another bazar, right among the people, were two tigers lying on charpoys, and tied with ropes which, in my imagination, looked very rotten. Good God, said Mr. — Why, these are tigers; are they safe? Safe, not a bit of it, but what then? Who cares for human life in Lucknow? They used to be led by a string up and down the bazar, until the Resident interfered. He would have them secured if he could, but lying there and looking at the children makes them fierce.

“And if they eat the said children?—God is great, what does the King care?”

“I saw a spectacle nearly equally bad in the menagerie. I entered the compound almost without thinking. On one side was a rhinoceros tied to a tree, and around me eleven tiger cages. Not one was properly secured. The bars were loose, the floors rotten, the roof full of holes. The animals often escape, and are always dangerous, but what is human life in Lucknow? I confess I made my escape as quickly as possible, more especially as the rhinoceros began to shew signs of displeasure at our long stay. The animals were once in strong cages, but a flood drove them out, and since then they have been retained here. The people, as we passed along, were to me all the same in appearance, a look of ferocious sensuality. The Hindus were best, but all were terribly inferior to the villagers and Cawnporees.

“Is there no money then, that these poor brutes are so starved, I enquired?”

“Money! The menagerie costs thousands a year. I cannot say who gets it, but the tigers certainly don't. It is the same every where in Lucknow. Money is paid for the palaces. The palaces crumble. Money is paid for the mosque. It has no readers, no teachers, no services, no book. Money is paid for the tombs. All that is not dirt in them is cobweb. As we rode homewards, I noticed two scenes I shall not readily forget. The one was the blackened shell of a house, where a Hindu, his wife and two children were, twelve months ago, burnt alive, because the man was unable to comply with the demand of a favourite eunuch for fifty Rupees. The King at first resolutely refused to punish the author of this deed, and when severely pressed, placed him for three days in open arrest. The second sight was a young woman, evidently beautiful in form, walking along with a man with a pistol on half cock behind her.

“‘Who is that,’ quoth I, in my innocence, ‘and what is the pistol for?’”

“ ‘Probably, she is going to some noble, and does not like it. The pistol will kill her if she flies.’

“Next day we all started out again, and passing through a series of narrow lanes, came upon the great street. There was a tremendous noise, and we emerged upon a scene such as can now be witnessed in its perfection only in Lucknow. The chowk or street was crammed with human beings. There must have been forty thousand persons there, all beating their breasts, wailing, shrieking, flourishing their sabres, and every now and then joining in a sort of wild rush to see something quite invisible to me, but I suppose a *tajeea*. Do these scenes never end in bloodshed? inquired I of—. It is the last day of the Mohurrum said he. I had forgotten it, or I would not have brought you here. The Mohurrum costs about six hundred lives a year in Lucknow. We saw a great deal, but I am sick of all this. I have been listening all day to stories, some of them backed by irrefragable evidence, any one of which would make the House of Commons quiver with indignation. What is the misgovernment of Naples compared with this? I doubt if Tiberius or Caligula were a bit worse either in cruelty or debauchery, than the Nusser-ud-deen; and the present man is as bad, though of a feebler energy. Last night I heard one man defend the Government. He said,—he receives a thousand a month—that it was not so very bad, that the cruelty affected only the slaves of the palace, and the interior was well cultivated. Why is not indigo grown? said I. Well, said he, it has been tried, two Englishmen tried it. One was murdered, and the other had to fly. You see there *is no security for life and property here*. I heard, too, one little statistical fact, that will give you some idea of the state of morals. There are upwards of one hundred houses in Lucknow, all taxed and registered, and inhabited not by women but by men. Was Gomorrhia worse? Such is life in Lucknow.”

Had the writer lived there longer, he would have seen worse things than these, he would have heard of whole villages given up to the tigers, and whole cities given up to plunder, a soldiery useful only to oppress the peasantry, and a nobility whose only safety is at a distance from the capital.

Such is the capital and such is Oude, and we cannot but consider that it comes fairly within our category. Here we have a vast scene of oppression, and oppression which is admitted, and which, if denied, can be demonstrated on evidence that would satisfy a jury. This alone, upon our principles, would justify conquest, having for its sole excuse the termination of

such oppression. But there is more than this. The oppression exists solely because we arm and defend the oppressor. Therefore we are responsible not only for the guilt of slackness in a good work, for that fear of man which bringeth a snare, but for actual and direct participation in crime. The third link in our argumentative chain is not wanting. We can stop the oppression. Two lines in the *Gazette* would banish the whole crew, King, eunuchs, women and chuckladars into their natural insignificance. There is no army in Oude. The Hindu population is wholly on our side. The relatives of our sepoy, of both creeds, are most anxious for the annexation, and the remaining Mussalmans are not sufficiently united or sufficiently aggrieved for hostile action. Two regiments of Europeans would be sufficient, and two regiments of Europeans we can spare.

But one argument remains—It is alleged by some whose Hinduism leads them to sympathize deeply with the Native Princes that to annex Oude, would be to violate engagements. We may deprive the King of the power to do evil, but we may not strip him of his revenues. They are to be paid in order that he may live in luxury. It needs little argument to shew that these revenues belong to the country, and not to any individual house. His hereditary right is one of Government, not property. It is true, that in an Oriental country, the two phrases are, during the life-time of the King, almost synonymous, but they cease to be so at his death. He cannot alienate them by will. He cannot waste them while alive, except by rent-free tenures, terminable with the life of the donor. They are the property of the state, and pass with it into the hands of the conquerors. We question if those who thus argue ever realize to their own minds what an Oriental Prince is. He is one of those beings in whom Englishmen are unable to believe, a man whose one object in life is to procure for himself a moment's amusement at any cost, even of his own future peace and comfort. As for that of others, unless they pander to his vices or are essential to his dignity, it is never cared for at all. Add to all this, that an Indian Prince has usually lost even his own self-respect, and we obtain a character whom Suetonius would have refused to paint. A book has recently made its appearance, which depicts the interior life of one of these very Kings of Oude. Though not worth much in a historical point of view, it is an able work. The writer, apparently portrait-painter to the last King of Oude, has observed minutely and recorded without prejudice. He attempts neither broad sketches nor learned dissertations, but records simply what he has seen and heard.

He had a remarkable opportunity for observing the interior of court life in Oude, and he has used it well. The result is a portrait of an Oriental King, such as has rarely been presented to occidental eyes. The gold and the jewels are all stripped away, the purple robe is pushed aside, and we have the man, immeasurably inferior to the worst sovereign who has ever occupied a European throne. The writer visited Lucknow in 1835, on business, and accepted an office, it is not clear what office, unless it was that of Librarian in the King's household. He commences his narrative with a sketch of the ruling favourite. This scoundrel with whose evil deeds all Lucknow is still ringing :—

The barber was the greatest man of the five. His influence was far greater than the native prime minister, or Nawab. He was known to be an especial favourite, and all men paid court to him. His history, truly and honestly written, would form one of the oddest chapters of human life. All that I knew of him was this :—

He had come out to Calcutta as cabin-boy in a ship. Having been brought up as a hair-dresser in London, he had left his ship, on arriving in Calcutta, to resume his old business. He was successful ; he pushed and puffed himself into notoriety. At length he took to going up the river with European merchandise for sale ; he became, in fact, what is called there a river-trader. Arrived at Lucknow, he found a Resident,—not the same who was there when I entered the king's service,—anxious to have his naturally lank hair curled like the Governor-General's. The Governor-General was distinguished by his ringlets ; and the Governor-General is, of course, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form" in India. The resident would be like him ; and the river-trader was not above resuming his old business. Marvellous was the alteration he made in the Resident's appearance ; and so the great saheb himself introduced the wonder-working barber to the king. That Resident is in England now, and writes M. P. after his name.

The king had peculiarly lank, straight hair ; not the most innocent approach to a curl had ever been seen on it. The barber wrought wonders again, and the king was delighted. Honours and wealth were showered upon the lucky *coiffeur*. He was given a title of nobility. *Sofras Khan* ("the illustrious chief") was his new name, and men bowed to him in Oude. The whilom cabin-boy was a man of power now, and wealth was rapidly flowing in upon him. The king's favourite soon becomes wealthy in a native state. The barber, however, had other sources of profit open to him besides bribery : he supplied all the wine and beer used at the king's table. Every European article required at court came through his hands, and the rupees accumulated in thousands. "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour ?" is a question as apt now in every oriental court as it was when the Jewish queen* recorded it.

Nussir put no bounds to the honours he heaped upon the fascinating barber ; unlimited confidence was placed in him. By small degrees he had at last become a regular guest at the royal table, and sat down to take dinner with the king as a thing of right ; nor would his majesty taste a bottle of wine opened by any other hands than the barber's. So

* Esther.

afraid was his majesty of being poisoned by his own family, that every bottle of wine was sealed in the barber's house before being brought to the king's table; and before he opened it, the little man looked carefully at the seal to see that it was all right. He then opened it, and took a portion of a glass first, before filling one for the king. Such was the etiquette at the royal table when I first took my place at it.

The confidence reposed in the favourite was, of course, soon generally known over India, or at all events in Bengal. The "low menial," as the *Calcutta Review* called him,* was the subject of squibs, and pasquinades, and attacks, and satirical verses without number; and marvellously little did the low menial care what they said of him, as long as he accumulated rupees. They had the wit and the satire, and he had the money; so far he was content.

Of the newspapers, the most incessant in its attacks on the barber was the *Agra Uckbar*, a paper since defunct. Shortly before I left Lucknow, he employed a European clerk in the Resident's office to answer the attacks of the *Uckbar* in one of the Calcutta papers with which he corresponded; and for this service the clerk was paid Rs. 100 (10*l.*) a-month. So that, if the barber had not his own poet, like the tailors in London, he had, at all events, his own correspondent, like the *Times*.

On my introduction to the private dining-table of royalty, it may be easily supposed, therefore, that the two persons whom I was most anxious to see and to become acquainted with, were the king and the barber.

This man was the King's agent in almost all his evil practices. His influence appears never to have been employed for good, and he accumulated his great fortune simply by pampering the worst and lowest passions of his master. He was the actor in every practical joke, the leader in every outrage upon the King's family. It was he who dressed up a favourite slave girl as a European, and made her appear so disgusting to the King, that she disappeared. It was he who stripped one uncle of his majesty, and exposed him to the jeers of the soldiery. It was he who tore the moustaches from the face of another uncle, when he had tied them to a chair and let off fire works between the old man's legs. Finally, it was he who, by the bitter hatred he inspired among the King's own relatives, finally led to his death from poison administered at their instigation. We take a more pleasing picture of another set of favourites:—

It will not be supposed that during all this time I kept my eyes altogether away from the gauze curtain drawn across one end of the apartment. I had been told previously that some favourites of the harem were allowed by his majesty to witness the dinner-parties from behind that screen, and that it would be rude to be observed gazing intently at it. I found many opportunities, however, of inspecting it without violating etiquette. It was thick enough to prevent our recognising faces or figures behind, although we could see faintly the outline of shadowy masses of

* Art. "Kingdom of Oude." vol. iii.

drapery passing to and fro. One principal figure was seated on a cushion,—the reigning favourite, doubtless; and her jewelled arms and neck glared brilliantly ever and anon as the light flashed upon them. We heard, too, a sweet feminine laugh, as the puppets were cut down, issuing from behind the screen; for although we could not see distinctly through it on account of our distance from it, those on the other side no doubt could.

The revel proceeded; songs were sung. His majesty became gradually more and more affected with the wine he had taken, until his consciousness was almost gone; and he was then assisted by the female attendants and two sturdy eunuchs behind the curtain, and so off into the harem. It was astonishing how like a drunken king looked to an ordinary drunken unanointed man.

Among such men and such women, varied by the addition of a few slave girls, nautch girls, and women of even yet lower grades, his majesty of Oude passed away his time in amusements. Nearly one half the book is taken up with them, and, if our space would allow, we would gladly extract a most vigorous description of a tiger fight.

Sometimes tigers fought elephants, sometimes elephants and rhinoceroses, and so eager was the King for the sport, that twenty-two of these huge beasts were at one time kept for his diversion. Antelopes and nightingales, ewes and rams, in short, almost every beast that roams, or bird that flies, was kept for his diversion. They have been given up now; the present Monarch has no fancy for any thing so energetic, and the menageries are almost in ruins. Antelopes and rams, and we believe, one or two larger animals, are still however kept and occasionally exhibited. Sometimes the King's amusements were by no means so dignified. One day he was watching a game at leap frog among the European household:—

We were in a large walled-in garden at Chaungunge, one of the park palaces, where animal fights often took place. The garden might have been some three or four acres in extent, and was surrounded with a high wall. Some one had been describing the game of leap-frog to his majesty, or else he had seen some pictures of it, and it had taken his fancy mightily. The natives were left without the garden, the heavy gates were swung to, and majesty commanded that we should forthwith begin. The captain of the body-guard "made a back" for the tutor, the librarian stood for the portrait-painter. Away we went, like school-boys, beginning with very "low backs," for none of us were very expert in the game, but gradually "making backs" higher and higher. Tutor, barber, captain, librarian, portrait-painter—off we went like over-grown school-boys, now up, now down. It was hot work, I assure you.

The king, however, did not long stand a quiet spectator of the scene; he would try too. His majesty was very thin, and not over strong. I happened to be nearest him at the time; and he ran towards me, calling out. I "made a back" for him, and he went over easily enough. He was very light, and a good horseman, so that he succeeded in the vault: he then stood for me. I would have given a good deal to have been excused,

but he would not have it so, and to have refused would have been mortally to have offended him.

I ran, vaulted, down went the back, down I went with it; and his majesty the king and the author of these reminiscences went roiling together amongst the flower-beds. He got up annoyed -

"Boppery bapp, but you are as heavy as an elephant!" he exclaimed.

I was afraid he would have been in a passion; but he was not. The barber adroitly made a back for him forthwith, and over he went blithely. The tutor, a thin spare man, was the lightest of our party, and the king made a back for him, and succeeded in getting him safely over. It was then all right. Away they went, vaulting and standing, round and round, until majesty was tired out, and wanted iced claret to cool him. The game was frequently renewed afterwards.

But the snow-balling? asks some impatient reader. Well, I am coming to it.

It was about Christmas-time. Christmas is called in India the great day of the sahebs; and we were conversing about it in this very garden at Chaun-gunge, where the leap-frog had been first tried.

Christmas sports led to a description of what winter was; winter led to snow: snow to snow-balling. We described to his majesty the art and pastime of snow-balling as well as we could. To a man who had never seen snow, it was not very easy to describe it vividly.

The garden abounded with a large yellow flower, peculiar to India, the smaller varieties of which are used to ornament houses in Calcutta at Christmas-time. It is not quite so large as a dahlia, but somewhat similar in appearance. When snow-balling had been described to the king as well as we could describe it, he pulled three or four of these yellow flowers, and threw them at the librarian, who happened to be the most distant of the party. Like good courtiers, all followed the royal example; and soon every one was pelting right and left. These yellow flowers were our snow-balls, and we all entered into the game with hearty good-will. The king bore his share in the combat right royally, discharging three missiles for one that was aimed at him. He laughed and enjoyed the sport amazingly. Before we had concluded, we were all a mass of yellow leaves: they stuck about in our hair and clothes, and on the king's hat, in a tenacious way. What the gardeners must have thought of the matter, when they came to set the garden to rights again, we did not stop to conjecture. It was enough that the king was amused. He had found out a new pleasure, and enjoyed it as long as those yellow flowers continued in bloom.

Freaks of this kind were incessant, and not always pleasant ones. Once the King kept the whole of his European household locked up in the palace for a week, on pretence of going hunting, laughing every night at the whole business as a most excellent jest. At another time he asked his aide-de-camp, whom he particularly disliked, to play at draughts with him for 100 Gold Mohurs. The poor man, well aware that the King must not be beaten, declined, upon which the King called him a pig. On another occasion, the king suddenly and without warning, struck his tents and departed for Lucknow. The scene that followed is worth quotation:—

There was no more going to sleep that night. The villagers had soon

discovered that the king was gone with the body-guard, and they now broke into the encampment. Through the long dark hours we heard the cries of men and the shrieks of women resounding from the neighbourhood of the king's tents. The poorer portions of the female attendants had been unable to accompany the harem; and they were now exposed to every wrong and injury at the hands of the outraged villagers. Tents were broken into and pillaged; ornaments were torn from the hands and feet of the poor women; boxes were broken open, and clothes seized belonging to the first ladies of the court. As for us, self-preservation is the primary law of nature. It was the nawab's duty, not ours, to protect the camp. We expected every moment an attack upon our own tent, and so we sat up prepared, one with his pistols, another with his gun, and a third with his sword, all looking fierce and resolute. We were reconnoitred doubtless by the plunderers, and they felt no desire to come to close quarters with us. But why not go out and try and save the women from outrage? asks some indignant reader, with more enthusiasm than common sense. I will answer the question. The women left behind were, for the most part, discarded concubines, dancing-girls disgraced, or poor attendants. Had we entered their tents, calumny would soon have been rife in Lucknow; and some of these very ladies would have been the first to charge us with violating their privacy. A charge of having made our way into the harem would bring down at once upon us the anger of the king and of the Resident; and then, farewell, a long farewell, to all our hopes of fortune, to the little or the much we had accumulated. In the second place, our own tent, left without a guard, would soon have been pillaged; and however chivalrous men may be, they do not usually take care of other people's property before their own. Fewer than four of us could not have ventured forth to the succour of the distressed damsels; many of whom, by the by, would not have thanked us for the interference, if every thing we heard was true; and had we all gone, who was to prevent our clothes and our saddles, our couches and our travelling paraphernalia, nay, our very horses and palanquins, from being carried off?

Our horses were picqueted round the tent, and could not be carried off without carrying the native grooms with them; for, on the first alarm, the ropes by which they were attached to the stakes driven into the ground were firmly tied round the arms of the grooms within.

Amid such sights and sounds, as I have described, we sat in our tent, enjoying our cigars, during the long hours of darkness. In the morning, when we sallied forth to see the results of the tumult of the preceding night, a stranger or a more variegated scene it would not be easy to discover any where, or even to picture to the imagination. One of the royal tents had been blown down; and so intent was the king upon instant departure, that he would not allow any attempt to be made to raise it again. Every man was to assist in getting ready what was needful for the rapid march back to Lucknow—more resembling a flight than a march,—and no one thought of the fallen tent; no one except the villagers, *they* had not forgotten it. Notwithstanding all that the guards of the nawab could do, it had been ransacked and plundered. Even the very coat and pantaloons the king had taken off the previous evening were stolen. The whole ground around the encampment was littered, when we visited it, with portions of female attire that had been dropped in the hot haste of the plunderers as they made away with their booty. Articles, many of them of considerable value, lay strewn about in hopeless confusion—articles of furniture, cooking-apparatus, clothing, trappings for elephants and camels;

the whole was, in fact, a complete litter of every kind of oriental requirement for the house, the person, and the road. Not *all* oriental, either. To our surprise, we noticed portions of female attire here and there never used by the Eastern ladies; articles with which the shop-windows in London make the modest man painfully familiar. We were perfectly aware that no European in the king's service—cook, barber, coachman, or of the household—had his wife with him during the march; and our conclusion was, therefore, that these articles belonged to some ladies of the harem, of whom we had heard and knew nothing.

That there had been hard fighting between the guarding attendants of the nawab and the villagers, was apparent enough; for two men lay hacked and hewn almost to pieces upon the ground, both evidently strangers to the encampment; and we heard that several of the nawab's servants had been severely wounded.

We returned to our tent, to partake of a hasty breakfast preparatory to departure. On reaching our quarters, we found every thing in confusion—an uproar would be the proper name for the scene that was apparent within our tent. It was some time before we succeeded in making ourselves heard, and getting intelligible answers to the questions we asked, so fierce was the dispute, and loud and violent the abuse. It was evident at a glance that some servants of the nawab were in violent altercation with ours, about what or wherefore we could not understand. Sticks were even raised in an eminently threatening way upon both sides: and had our return been delayed, another fight would have taken place in our very tent.

"The good-for-nothings will not obey the orders of his excellency the nawab, O! sahebs," shouted the chief of the intruders.

"The vile sons of vile mothers want us to leave my lords' tent, and go and help them somewhere else," screamed our servants in chorus.

Both parties spoke, Hindu fashion, at the utmost pitch of their voices. When men quarrel in India, they invariably try and frighten each other with loud talking.

We were evidently interested in the matter in dispute. A little questioning soon brought forth the information, that the nawab had sent an order to the sahebs' servants to assist in the general work of the encampment before departing; and the messengers wanted to press into their service all our bearers and grooms, all not actually engaged in packing or preparing breakfast. Had we submitted to this injustice as we considered it, there was no telling when we should be able to depart; and with a large stock of muddy linen, it was my interest to get back to Lucknow as soon as possible. I was by no means the only one, however, who felt the necessity of immediate departure. The king's company would leave the country through which we had to travel bare enough of labourers to assist in carrying our palanquins; if the nawab's also left before us, there was no telling when we should reach Lucknow, or whether we should reach it at all; for the European members of the king's household were not popular in Oude.

We reasoned calmly and quietly, representing the anxiety of the king for our presence, and his commands to follow him with all convenient speed. We were answered, that the nawab would take upon his own head the blame of our delay. We urged again, that it was our duty to attend his majesty forthwith; and that if we gave up our servants without a struggle, we should be wanting in respect to "the refuge of the world." We were answered, that in the king's absence the nawab was the ruler, and that the command was his. We urged again, that we had several

brace of pistols, six fowling-pieces, two rifles, and a large variety of swords, and that we were able to defend ourselves and our servants. The quiet reply was, that the nawab had three servants for our one, a much larger collection of arms, and if forced to use violence, would leave us no servants at all.

The quiet firmness of the officer sent with the party convinced us that the nawab was determined in the matter. Mingling his words with polite flattery and oriental exaggeration of our bravery and greatness, he yet persisted incessantly, never yielding so much as an inch.

We were at our wits' end. It was a very unpleasant position in which to be placed; and to fight the nawab we did not intend. At length, as we still argued uselessly, the barber was thought of. Not a native attended upon the court but had a hearty and unfeigned fear of the barber; his influence was known to be preponderant. An old and unsavoury proverb says, that if we think of a certain person he will appear. The barber was thought of at this moment, and the barber appeared. He was anxious to be off, too, immediately; fortunately it was his interest, therefore, to travel with us, and to get to Lucknow as soon as possible. The circumstances were explained to him, and the little man seemed to grow big with indignation,

"You are all a pack of scoundrels together," he exclaimed, addressing the officer, "every one of you, nawab and all." This was in English, and was intended for the officer alone. "Go and tell his excellency," he continued in his halting Hindustani, "that the 'refuge of the world' requires me to dress his hair. I must be in Lucknow without delay; and these gentlemen will travel with me. Not a servant must be touched. Are there not villagers enough?"

The officer said nothing in reply; but bowed, and went his way. Nor did we murmur at being thus taken under the protection of the little hero of the curling-tongs—not of the razor, for he did not shave the king. The barber was satisfied; we were satisfied; and if the nawab was not, he never let us know the fact—we heard nothing more of the want of servants.

Arrived in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, we found the king was anxiously awaiting us in the palace, whence we had set out—Dilkushar.

"You have left me long by myself, gentlemen," said his majesty, when we made our appearance one morning whilst the barber was officiating as usual; "you have left me long by myself, gentlemen, in this dull place."

"Your majesty travels more swiftly than ordinary men can do," was the reply of one of our party.

"I am glad you are come: I have heard of the plundering of the camp by those rebellious villagers; may their fathers' and mothers' names be reviled! The barber has been telling me about it. Let me hear it all again!"

We told what we saw, and only what we saw. The king's anger grew fierce as he listened.

"To think," he stammered forth, "to think of the wretches daring to put their defiling hands on the clothes worn by me and by my wives. By my father's head, but they shall pay dearly for it."

"The nawab, I have heard, your majesty," said the barber, "has seized the principal offenders; and is bringing them here to await your majesty's pleasure."

"They shall die, every one of them: no power on earth shall save one of them, if there are a hundred."

Such was the sentence of the "refuge of the world."

We saw the sentence of the "refuge of the world."

We saw those miserable wretches afterwards as they were being brought to the palace. They were certainly ferocious, cut-throat-looking fellows enough. Each was strapped down to a charpoy, like a drunken man on a police-stretcher in England; and all of them had cuts of swords or stabs of daggers about their persons, their wounds unbound and unattended to. There were probably a dozen of them. The fatal order was given, and their heads were cut off the same day. Whether they actually were the principal delinquents in the plundering of the encampment or not, I cannot of course decide; the nawab's word was taken for it that they were. It certainly was his interest to appease the king by some such sacrifice; and if these poor wretches had been only harmless villagers, seized for the purpose by the lawless soldiery who attended the nawab, it would have been no worse than things which constantly take place in India—not in native states only. A great crime was never yet committed there, but the police were sure to find out some poor wretches who should suffer as the criminals, and who, they were convinced, if you believed them, were the actual perpetrators.

The extract is somewhat long, but it is instructive. It shows us what despotism in Oude really is. It is no regular and splendid system, like that of France. It is no irregular, but rough energetic mode of Government like that of Russia. It is not even a weak, suspicious, cat-like, but successful tyranny like that of Austria. It is simply an anarchy, organized occasionally when the Sovereign requires organization, and powerful while his sword is ready to protect himself. The instant the immediate pressure is withdrawn, Government is over, every one holds his own by his own right hand, and even the King's servants are without protection.

The last argument then is extinguished. If conquest is occasionally right in itself, if it is specially right, when, by refraining from it, we are supporting crime, if we are so supporting crime in Oude, and if the claims of the only person who professes to have rights are null, then Oude, we conceive, should be annexed. There is no cause for delay. Even as we write there is a faint sound of a religious war, which, at all hazards, and at any cost, must be prevented. The only method of preventing it is by annexation.
