

SPEECH OF VISCOUNT JOCELYN, M.P.,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE CASE OF THE

AMEERS OF UPPER SCINDE,

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IN rising to move for the papers of which I have given notice, I shall venture to ask the permission of the House to trespass upon their attention whilst I bring to their consideration certain facts to which those papers refer, bearing on the present state and condition of the ex-rulers of Scinde.

I am aware that I may be met by the objection, that this question is one that has been considered some years ago, and that the policy that was then brought under the consideration of Parliament has had the sanction of the House; but it should be recollected that at that time grave doubts were entertained by many persons as to the justice of that policy. Since that period matters and facts have been brought to light bearing strongly upon those acts which, I think, prove that the views that were taken at that time by those who were opposed to the policy of the annexation of Scinde were correct, and that I am now justified in again asking Parliament to reconsider the case of those unfortunate princes.

I could have wished that some individual of greater

weight than myself had undertaken their cause—some one whose abilities would have insured more ample justice being done to the case of these unfortunate princes; and when I recollect that my right honourable friend the member for the University of Oxford, only a short time since, has advocated so powerfully the cause of an oppressed people in a neighbouring country, I feel more than ever my own inadequacy to the task I have undertaken. I have a satisfaction, however, in believing that the ear of the House has never yet been deaf to the claim of justice; and the fact that the persons on whose behalf I plead were princes of India—once our faithful allies, now exiles from their native land—affords no reason why they should be thought undeserving of the sympathy and commiseration of a British House of Commons.

I believe I am justified in asking for those papers on the ground that, as matters of history, they should be given to this House. The documents connected with the affairs of Scinde, up to 1842, have been furnished to Parliament, and bring before us the proceedings by which the British Government came into the possession of that territory. Since the year 1842, various transactions of great political importance have taken place, together with great changes in the internal arrangements of that country, therefore it seems most desirable that the documents containing the additional information should also be laid before Parliament. When we consider more especially that an inquiry is going on up-stairs in reference to the future government of India, we

must feel that these are papers which bear peculiarly upon many points connected with that inquiry, and should be furnished to us without delay.

I concur in an opinion which I lately read in the work of an honourable and learned friend of mine, a member of this House, the hon. member for Sheffield—that “to form a just appreciation of the conduct of those who have taken part in the government of mankind, is one of the great purposes for which history is written,” and that it is therefore right that the transactions in which they have been engaged should be fully and fairly laid before the public. With this view, I consider that it is necessary for the due appreciation of the characters of the public men who took part in the transactions in Scinde, that the House should be furnished with all the documents having reference to those transactions.

Perhaps the House is not aware that a few weeks since, a similar motion to that which I now make was brought forward by a noble earl in another place; but that noble earl, in moving for documents, moved only for a portion of the papers for which I now ask. That noble earl moved for a report of a commission appointed in India twelve months since, for the purpose of investigating certain charges of fraud and forgery that were laid against his highness Meer Ali Moorad, Ameer of Upper Scinde—a commission by which that prince was tried and convicted of the crimes for which he was arraigned; but the noble earl, though he moved for the papers, stated at the same time his own doubt as to the character for

fairness of that commission. Considering the high position of that noble earl, his knowledge of Indian matters, and his experience on this question, it seems to me that anything that has fallen from him is deserving of great weight; and that therefore we should have before us further documents to enable us to come to a more satisfactory conclusion with regard to the report of that commission.

The documents which I think I am justified in requesting are—first, the report of Sir George Clerk, late Governor of Bombay, one of the ablest servants of the Indian Government, on whose opinion it was that the commission was appointed; secondly, the minutes of the members of the Government of Bombay, to whom the report of that commission was submitted; thirdly, the minute of the Governor-General in council—the first authority in India—who is bound to see justice done between all persons, and to maintain the honour and dignity of the British name.

I think I am justified in asking for those documents, as they all bear on the question at issue. They are not in the secret department, but are furnished to the Court of Directors, and it is usual to give them to Parliament on questions of this nature. More than that, I firmly believe in my own mind that those documents, if produced, will do honour to the servants of the British Government in India by whom that investigation was conducted, and demonstrate the impartiality of the tribunal.

I ask for the documents at this moment, because

there are means at the disposal of the British Government by which reparation to some extent may be afforded. I may be asked,—why not leave the matter to the Governor-General of India? In reply, I would say, I feel confident no person could be found more willing to ameliorate the condition of those unfortunate princes than the noble marquis at the head of the Government of India; but at the same time it is my conviction that, in a case which has given rise to so much discussion, and concerning which there has been such diversity of opinion, an expression of sympathy on the part of the British House of Commons would aid the Governor-General of India in carrying out a just and righteous course of policy.

I would beseech the House to give me a patient hearing, whilst I attempt (but feebly I fear) to plead the cause of men who have now no other person in this House to speak in their behalf. I would recall to the recollection of the House the circumstances which took place on the first acquisition of Scinde; and I need not go farther back than the year 1838. That was the year, it will be recollected, which gave birth to that policy, for the carrying out of which, a British army was marched into Central Asia. It was considered necessary to secure the friendly feeling and cordial co-operation of the rulers of Scinde, to insure its success. A treaty was proposed by the British Government, and in that treaty the Ameers, after lengthened negotiations, concurred. In the

year 1838 the first intimate political connection was established between them and the British Government. There were treaties previously, but merely commercial. At this period, three brothers were rulers of Upper Scinde,—Meer Roostum Khan, Meer Mobarik Khan, and Meer Ali Moorad. Their father's name was Meer Sohrab Khan, a chief of the Talpoor dynasty. He died in 1830, dividing his territory into four portions, leaving to each son a portion as a patrimony, and attaching the fourth portion to the turban, or chiefship, which devolved upon Meer Roostum Khan, the eldest of the three brothers.

From 1838 to 1841 disputes at various times arose between Ali Moorad and the two eldest brothers, in reference to territory. Those disputes were decided by the British resident under an agreement made by the treaty of 1838. In 1842, Ali Moorad placed himself at the head of an army, attacked the forces of his brother, defeated him, and forced him to sign a treaty, called the treaty of Nounahar, by which Roostum Khan agreed to make over to him certain villages belonging to himself and Meer Nusseer, son of Meer Mobarik Khan. Those villages formed the subject matter of inquiry under the commission issued in 1850 by the British Government.

From an early period Ali Moorad, who had been described, by those who knew him intimately, as a crafty and designing prince—commenced a series of intrigues against his eldest brother, Meer Roostum Khan: these intrigues were unfortunately too

successful. He placed in the hands of the British resident in Scinde certain letters, which he said he had intercepted—letters purporting to be hostile to the British Government, and which he alleged to have passed between Meer Roostum and the Court of Lahore. Meer Roostum denied the authenticity of the letters, and asked for an opportunity of proving their fabrication. He also begged to be confronted with his accusers. But both those reasonable requests were refused. The letters were sent to certain officers of the British Government, who were supposed to be most competent to pronounce an opinion on documents of that description. Their authenticity was doubted at the time by those officers, one of whom was Sir George Clerk, who declared that he doubted, not only the authenticity of the documents, but more especially the seals attached to them. About this period, in the autumn of the year 1842, Sir Charles Napier made his appearance in Scinde, and soon after became the chief civil and military authority. Contrary to the opinion of the officers to whom reference had been made, and who had seen the letters in question, Sir Charles Napier declared, upon the opinion of Capt. Brown—who, according to Colonel Outram, and other evidence, knew nothing of Persian, (the language in which the letters were written)—that they were authentic, and immediately took possession of a large portion of the territory of Roostum Khan.

Another question had been raised between Roostum Khan and Ali Moorad, viz. the succession to the turban. Meer Roostum Khan, nearly eighty years

of age, was desirous of leaving the turban to his eldest son. But it was also claimed by Ali Moorad. Sir Charles Napier took part with Ali Moorad, with whom he had entered into close communication soon after his arrival in Upper Scinde. Meer Roostum Khan, with a view to escape from the intrigues of his unnatural brother, asked permission to enter the camp of Sir Charles Napier, and to place himself entirely in the hands of the British general. Sir Charles Napier, instead of eagerly taking advantage of such an opportunity of unravelling the tangled skein of Upper Scinde politics, refused at that time to receive him, but directed him to the camp of Ali Moorad, the very person who had probably forged the letters which were so derogatory to his brother's character, and the very person who was at that moment engaged in plots to compass the poor old chieftain's destruction. The House, perhaps, would scarcely believe that a British representative could have taken such a mistaken step, under the peculiar circumstances in which the unfortunate Meer Roostum was placed. But Sir Charles Napier himself records the remarkable fact. He writes to the Governor-General on 20th of December, 1842, that Meer Roostum was anxious to take refuge in the British camp, adding, "I did not like this, as it would have embarrassed me how to act; but the idea struck me at once that he might go to Ali Moorad, who might induce him, as a family arrangement, to resign the turban. I therefore secretly wrote to Roostum and Ali Moorad; and about ten

o'clock I had an express from Ali Moorad, to say, 'that his brother was safe with him.' " *

It appears that subsequently Meer Roostum Khan was prevailed upon to cede to Ali Moorad the turban; but the latter at the same time entered into an agreement, by which he promised to secure to Meer Roostum that portion of his territory which was left to him by his father as a patrimony. The treaty of cession reached the British general, but the agreement between the two brothers, which accompanied it, never came into that gallant officer's hands. Ali Moorad still continued his intrigues with a view to the ruin of his unfortunate brother, and led the British general to believe that Roostum Khan was about to raise troops to attack the British army. Hence the destruction of Emaumghur, and the first commencement of hostilities. Sir Charles Napier marched a force to the point where he was told Roostum Khan was encamped; but on his arrival found there was no enemy to oppose him. He had, however, the satisfaction of blowing up the fortification without mischief to a single man. On the other hand, the unfortunate Meer Roostum, who had fled to the desert, alarmed by an intimation from his brother that the British general wished to make him a prisoner, was found by Colonel Outram surrounded by only a few followers, and his wives and children. Distracted and perplexed, in his agony he implored to be taken to the British general, for the purpose of throwing himself on his mercy; but the interview

* *Vide* "Supplementary Scinde Blue Book," and "Thornton's History of India," vol. vi., pp. 425 to 435.

was again prevented by the intrigues of Ali Moorad,* and subsequently Meer Roostum was directed to proceed to Hyderabad. In Lower Scinde, however, he found that sympathy which he had not met with at the hands of the British representative, or from his relatives in Upper Scinde. The Beloochees, who are always described as a wild and warlike race, stung to madness at the treachery experienced by the aged prince from his near kinsman, and the harsh treatment he had received from the British general, dashed into the field against the British troops at Meanee, under the walls of Hyderabad. There, however, they were defeated by the skill of the British general and the valour of our army; the result of this action was, that some of the Ameers were sent as captives to British India, while others were left under the control of Ali Moorad. Such was the first chapter in this painful history. I will now proceed to the second.

In 1846, Sir Charles Napier, who was about to leave Scinde, appeared to have changed his opinion in regard to the character of Ali Moorad. It seems the general left a memorandum in his office, stating that he had grave doubts of the honesty of Ali Moorad, and that he had reason to believe that he had possessed himself of certain lands which were not his of right, and which belonged to the British Government. Sir George Clerk, the Governor of Bombay, proceeded on a tour to Scinde in 1848, and instituted an investigation regarding this memorandum. He found on his arrival in Scinde, that there were two

* Vide "The Conquest of Scinde, a Commentary." Sect. 9.

individuals, named Sheik Ali Hassan, and Peer Gohur, one of whom had been Prime Minister to Ali Moorad, and the other his confidential adviser, who were prepared to give evidence against Ali Moorad to the effect that the leaf of the Koran on which the treaty of Nounahar was written had been torn from the volume, and that another leaf had been inserted, in which the word "districts" had been substituted for "villages," and that, therefore, property of considerable value, to which the British Government was entitled by right of conquest, had been wrongfully held by Ali Moorad. Although the characters of these witnesses were doubtful, there was such corroborating evidence of the circumstance, that Sir George Clerk was induced to consider it the duty of the Government to appoint a commission to inquire into the whole case. A commission was appointed, consisting of Mr. Pringle, a man of judgment and ability, and Major Jacob and Major Lang, both officers of great political experience and high reputation, before whom Ali Moorad was cited to appear. He appeared accordingly, and was allowed to examine and cross-examine witnesses, but was unable to rebut the charges brought against him. The very leaf on which the treaty of Nounahar had been written was produced; the chief was convicted of fraud and forgery; and has since been compelled to relinquish the territory of which he had wrongfully held possession, and the turban which he had so disgraced.

Now I wish to point out to the House the bearing which this inquiry had on the charges originally

brought against the Ameers of Scinde. It will be recollected that one of the first charges made against those princes had reference to the letters, said to be intercepted, and which were furnished to the British resident by Ali Moorad, who alleged that those documents had passed between Roostum Khan and the Court of Lahore. Roostum Khan asked to be confronted with his accusers, and to be shown the documents, but both requests were refused him. It has now been proved that Ali Moorad was, from the commencement, plotting to effect his brother's destruction; in which he unfortunately succeeded: and this very Ali Moorad, who furnished the letters on which his brother was condemned, has since been convicted of fraud and forgery against the British Government, to which he had such abundant reason for showing the greatest gratitude.

But there is another fact—a most important one—namely, that when that commission was sitting, Ameer Mahomed Houssein, the eldest son of Roostum Khan, who, since the conquest of Scinde, had been living on the bounty of the Mahomedan chiefs on the banks of the Indus—for he would never deign to ask or accept a favour from the British Government, so long as a stigma rested on his name and family—at the risk of his life and liberty, appeared before that commission, saying:—The British Government is about to institute an inquiry into the iniquities of my uncle Ali Moorad: I wish to vindicate the honour and good faith of my father, and to wipe away the stain which now rests on my family, and I have

brought evidence to prove that every one of the charges against my family is false. The commissioners said they regretted not to be able to enter into that inquiry, and that they were obliged to confine themselves to the matters to which they were restricted by the instructions they had received from the British Government. But I believe there was not a man, from the first commissioner down to the humblest individual present at that inquiry, who was not convinced that the family of Meer Roostum Khan were wholly guiltless of the charges originally brought against them.

Another charge brought against Meer Roostum was that of stopping and robbing the Dawk; on which, it will be recollected, Sir Charles Napier laid such stress. Roostum Khan declared at the time that he and his family were innocent of that charge; and proof has since been tendered that the man who caused the Dawk to be intercepted was Ali Moorad himself, for the purpose of laying the crime at the door of his unfortunate brother: to this point the Ameer Mahomed Houssein was ready to give evidence.

The next scene in this painful drama was the cession of the turban, and that was proved to have been forced from Roostum Khan when in confinement; and whilst the treaty ratifying the cession was duly conveyed to the British general, another messenger, who bore the other agreement, by which Meer Roostum's patrimony was secured to his family, was stopped on his way by a horseman of Ali Moorad, and the document taken from him.

Another most important fact was elicited by the commission: that the principal moonshees, or native clerks, in the office of the Government of Scinde, through whom the information was furnished on which the whole of the proceedings was based, were bribed by Ali Moorad. There is one more point to which I must allude — namely, the attack of the Beloochees on the British forces at Hydrabad. Considering that the feelings of the people had been greatly exasperated by the treatment which Roostum Khan had received at the hands of the British representative, I find no fault with brave soldiers seeking with their lives to vindicate the honour of their ancient rulers, and dashing into the field to their support.

I would now wish to point out to the House the claims which I think those princes have to the consideration of the British House of Commons and of the British Government. At the time of the invasion of Affghanistan, it was stated by the military authorities that Scinde being the base for the operations of our army, it was a matter of the greatest importance to obtain possession of the strong fort of Bukkur, on the Indus. At our request, Meer Roostum Khan, contrary to the wishes of his family and of the Beloochee soldiery, surrendered the fort of Bukkur to the British Government, although it was considered the heart of his country. So important was the cession of that fort thought to be, that Lord Auckland and Sir Henry Pottinger declared that the gratitude of the British Government was due to Meer Roostum Khan;

and Sir Alexander Burnes wrote about the same time in these words:—"I have never doubted their (the Ameers') sincere desire to serve us, but, in their weak state, I did not expect such firmness in the day of need." Again, the British envoy writes to the Governor-General—"Meer Roostum has shown in the day of trial what he professed at all times, that he was the sincere and devoted friend of the British nation."

Such were the services that were performed by the family of Meer Roostum in 1838, and such were the opinions expressed with regard to those services. No Englishman can forget the year 1841, when clouds arose which seemed to threaten the annihilation of the British rule in India; but at that moment the Ameers of Scinde, deaf to entreaties and to the religious cry that was then raised by the Mahomedans from one end of India to the other—regardless of all personal considerations—remained true to British interests. So valuable were the services they rendered at that time, that it was said by the highest military authorities, that if it had not been for those services, and especially the supplies they furnished to the army of Brigadier England, that army could never have advanced or retired, and British honour could never have been retrieved under the walls of Cabool.*

In smaller matters also they showed their anxiety

* It is very important to bear in mind that these services were rendered after the treaty of 1839. Previous to that treaty, the conduct of the Ameers was undoubtedly hostile; but subsequently they saw the hopelessness of contending with British power, and, according to Captain Postans, "fully made up for their former hollow professions, and want of faith, by a cordial co-operation."

to assist the British forces: Colonel Outram, acknowledging the services of the Ameers in remitting all customs on supplies furnished to the British troops, wrote in these terms on the 24th of June 1841:—"That he was instructed by the Governor-General to acknowledge the satisfaction with which he had received this additional mark of their friendly disposition, and of the liberal policy with which their administration is conducted."

Such was the letter addressed to Meer Roostum in June 1841. Let us now read the account given of the same prince a few months subsequent, when, branded and hunted by his unnatural relative, assisted by the forces of Sir C. Napier, he was found a fugitive in the desert: Colonel Outram writes, "I beheld the sovereign of Upper Scinde, whose important services a Governor-General had deemed fitting to acknowledge, become a houseless wanderer; one who, nursed in the lap of luxury, had not known what an ungratified wish might mean. I met him in the jungle, surrounded by his faithful retainers, unprovided with the decencies of life. A tent with a single awning, not ten feet square, afforded the sole protection from the weather enjoyed by the party during heavy and long-continued rains; and is it to be wondered at, that I felt intensely for the poor old man?"

I should not do justice to the true character of the Ameers if I did not allude to the charges which have been heaped on them by the first military historian of this country. I could have wished, for the honour of the British army, that those accusations

had never been penned ; for there was no language to be found which was not used to asperse those princes, and no crimes of which they were not said to be guilty. It must be recollected that the historian had never been in Scinde, and had no personal knowledge of the circumstances he relates ; whereas, in direct contradiction to his statements, there is the evidence of British officers,* who had lived in daily intercourse with these calumniated princes in the days of their prosperity, who, one and all, repudiate the charges against them, and bear the strongest testimony to their conduct and character. I have perused letters from many of these gentlemen, but I will select only one to read to the House, because the writer is well known in India, and because he was for a considerable time in constant intercourse with those princes—I mean Captain Postans. That gentleman, who was six years political agent in Scinde, pronounced them to be “merciful to a fault, and just, where they judged for themselves. As men (he added) I consider them exemplary characters; and the devotion and respect evinced towards them by their children and all around them, was a conclusive proof of the domestic harmony which reigned in this singularly-constituted family.”

Now, I would ask the House to allow me to advert to the condition in which the Ameers have been ever since our occupation of their territory. After the battle of Hyderabad, some of these princes were despatched to British India, and others of them were

* *Vide* Appendix.

left to the tender mercies of Ali Moorad. Among the princes sent to India was the aged Meer Roostum Khan, who shortly afterwards sunk under the weight of years and anxiety, and, to use his own touching language, descended into the tomb "with his face blackened in the sight of his countrymen, and his grey hairs dishonoured." He left behind him a son and a nephew, who are still prisoners in India. Besides these princes, there were the members of the families of the Lower Scinde Ameers, against some of whom, there was no charge save that of defending their country, and against others not even that charge. One, Meer Shadad, after four years close confinement in the fort of Surat on certain charges, of which, I understand, he was acquitted after investigation, and released by order of the Governor-General of India, still remains a prisoner in Hindostan.

With reference to the other members of their family, there were some eighteen sons and nephews of Roostum Khan, who were left to the tender mercies of Ali Moorad, at whose hands they experienced treatment which is not to be described. On that subject I will read to the House an extract from a very graphic and painfully-interesting work called "Dry Leaves from Young Egypt," the author of which held political office in Scinde, and writes of what he himself saw and knew. It is as follows:—
"The younger Ameers, the children of Meer Roostum and Meer Mobarik, were handed over by Sir C. Napier to Meer Ali Moorad, who has inflicted on them every cruelty and insult that malice and hatred

can suggest. Born princes, hunger, cold, and nakedness have been their portion. In their memorial to Sir C. Napier they stated that death would be preferable to their condition. In 1848, the resident at Khyrpore reported that not one of Ali Moorad's shikarees was not better off than they. They had been reduced by want to the sale of their wives' ornaments and their own wearing apparel, and it was a well-known fact, that the fourth son of the late Meer Roostum appeared as a suppliant for assistance before the door, and is now living on the bounty of her, who was in his father's lifetime a low courtesan in the Khyrpore bazaar." Such was the state of some of the Ameers of Upper Scinde, whose fathers had earned the commendation of the Governor-General, who had proved themselves our faithful allies, and stood by us in the day of adversity and trial.

Although at the risk of wearying the House, there is one more fact to which I must allude, and it is a painful one. After the battle of Hydrabad, the ladies of the captive Ameers remained in Scinde. Those who know anything of the Eastern character, know that the religious feelings and the habits of the people are such, that it is almost impossible for ladies of that high rank to take long journeys, more especially across the seas. It will be recollected, on a former discussion on this question, we were horrified with details of the brutal conduct on the part of the Ameers towards their wives, which were then told with every air of authenticity; but the extract I am

about to quote is the best reply to these monstrous assertions.

The extract I hold in my hand is from a letter written by the wife of a British officer in Scinde, in reference to the condition of those unhappy ladies, which I will read to the House. She said:—"They looked and acted like what they were, the ladies of the land, and very different from the native women we were in the habit of seeing; not that they were particularly beautiful—on the contrary, there were few of them who had any claims to youth or good looks, but, as I said before, there was a bearing which stamped them at once of a superior class. There they were—whose bare feet had previously never pressed the ground uncovered by the richest carpets, with every luxury around them—living in a place without even a mat to the floor; common bazaar charpoys to sleep upon, and the roof leaking every shower of rain that fell. I thought at the time that the prize agents might have spared the carpets and other little luxuries from the thousands we had taken from them. They were too proud to ask for them, nor did I even hear them complain of this, though they did of having their clothes sold." They said,—'Our jewels and gold we consider as forfeited; but we did not expect to be stripped: it is our fate.' It appeared a day of great rejoicing when a letter arrived from the Meers (their absent lords). They generally sent me a request that I would come and see them, and hear all about the Meers. It appeared as if they thought I could enter into all their little

joys, as well as feel for their misfortunes; which in truth I did, although I always avoided touching on a subject so painful to them.”*

It appears to me that this is one of the most painful stories connected with the British rule in India, and one of the darkest pages in its history. A tale known not only in Scinde, but throughout Central Asia. A tale which has often been cited by the Mahomedans to the detriment of the honour and character of Christian and British rulers. Nor is it alone confined to Mahomedan Asia: Central Africa re-echoes this story of violence and wrong. I find the following passage in a work of Dr. Richardson, a traveller in Central Africa:—“The conversation was stopped by the entrance of a remarkable personage—the quasi Sultan of Ben Walid. Having heard that I was present, he said,—‘Christian, do you know Scinde?’ ‘Yes,’ I said. He then turned and said something to the people in the Ghadamsi language. I afterwards learned it was,—‘You see these Christians are eating up all the Mussulman countries.’ He then abruptly turned to me,—‘Why do the English go there and eat up all the Mussulmen? afterwards you will come here.’ I replied,—‘The Ameers were foolish, and engaged in conspiracy against the English in India, but the Mussulmen in Scinde enjoyed the same privileges as the English themselves.’ ‘That is what

* The *Times* in its report erroneously mentions Lady Macnaghten’s name as the writer of the letter. No name was mentioned in the House. The *Morning Chronicle* states, “The reading of this touching account produced a deep impression on the whole House.”

you say,' he rejoined; and then continued,—‘ Why do you go so far from home to take other people's countries from them?’ I replied,—‘ The Turks do the same; they come to the desert.’ ‘ Ay, you wish to be such oppressors as the Turks.’ He then told me not to talk any more, and a painful silence continued for some time.”

I would ask the House if this is not a question worthy the consideration of Parliament, one in which British honour, British justice, and British humanity are so deeply involved. It is painful to think, whilst we express sympathy for the oppressed people of Hungary, whilst we receive the Poles with open arms, whilst a right honourable friend of mine, only a few weeks' since, made a powerful appeal on behalf of the people of Naples, and whilst we blame our gallant neighbours for their want of faith towards Abdool Kader, that the British Government should sanction conduct equally unjust and oppressive. But here partial redress is in our own hands, and, after the facts that have been elicited, we shall be doubly culpable if we do not make all the reparation in our power to those we have so grievously injured. I have undertaken to bring the subject before the House from a sense of duty and a sense of justice, and I may truly say, I never recollect feeling a warmer interest in any case, or a more solemn conviction of the truth of the cause I advocate.

I have endeavoured—I fear very inadequately—to place before the House—first, the charges that were originally made against these princes; next, the

bearing which the late Commission of Inquiry had in reference to those charges; then to point out the intrigues and machinations of Ali Moorad; and, lastly, to compare the condition of that felon prince, still in the enjoyment of his patrimony, with that of those unfortunate princes, the victims of his treachery.

I know well there is great difficulty in retracing our steps, and that there is an idea that, where civilization and barbarism come into contact, it is a proof of weakness in the former to recede. I am aware that, in a country which has been for some years under our rule, new ties are formed, and new interests are created, which cannot be disturbed without the hazard of committing a second injustice on the people whom we have taken under our protection; but I do not ask on behalf of the Ameers of Scinde that they should be replaced as rulers of their country; they do not ask it for themselves: in their own touching language they make known the earnest desire of their hearts—"A tree in our own land is better than a palace in a foreign country"; they ask merely to be allowed to return to their native land. The Government has it now in their power to grant that boon; and I cannot conceive it possible that it will be refused. At the same time it would ill become a private individual to point out the exact mode in which reparation should be afforded; I am therefore prepared to leave it in the hands of the Government of India, confident in its integrity and in its humanity. But this I may be permitted to say, that little injury is to be feared when honour and character

are to be maintained, in a Government, like that of India, firm and united, acknowledging to the Hindoo and Mahomedan nations under its sway, that unwittingly a grave error has been committed, and showing their desire to remedy that error, as far as possible, in a magnanimous and generous spirit. On behalf, therefore, of the Ameers of Scinde, once honoured, powerful, and wealthy, now fallen, crushed, and poverty-stricken, long our faithful friends and allies, I implore the sympathy of this House, and ask for the papers which bear out the statements I have felt it my duty to make; satisfied that the facts have only to be thoroughly understood, to obtain for these unfortunate princes, not all that justice demands, but all that it is now left in the power of the British Government to bestow.

[The noble lord then moved for Copies of the Evidence and Report of a Commission appointed to inquire into a charge preferred against his Highness Meer Ali Moorad, Ameer of Upper Scinde, of having made fraudulent alterations in the treaty of Nounahar, concluded between his Highness and the late Meer Roostum Khan, and of all Minutes and Correspondence on the Indian records connected with the charge, and of the Report on Scinde of Sir George Clerk, K.C.B., late Governor of Bombay, dated 24th day of April, 1848.]

The documents moved for, with the exception of the report on Scinde, by Sir George Clerk, K.C.B., were granted.

APPENDIX.

The following statements, with respect to the characters of the Ameers, by British officers—many of whom held high and responsible political situations in Scinde, and all of whom were personally acquainted with those injured princes—were published some years ago, and have never been refuted.

Extract from a Letter from CAPTAIN FRENCH, Political Agent, Nimaur, late Assistant Political Agent, Upper Scinde.

It is very deplorable that General William Napier should have published to the world such charges against the ex-Ameers of Scinde. As far as my observations will enable me to speak, they are totally unfounded. I was in Scinde and Cutchee from the 6th September 1840 to the 7th December 1842, when I left for Ferozepoor, and during that period, or in fact until the appearance of the "Conquest of Scinde," on my word I never, as far as my memory will enable me to speak, heard of such doings by the Meers. Had such horrible atrocities ever been perpetrated, I think you will allow I must have heard of them; first, because, as you know, I amused myself by gathering some notes on Scinde; and, secondly, because the Ameers and their Rule was a daily subject of conversation for many months of the above period, while I was at Sukkur, in every house there. Many officers had Scinde Moonshees; I had one, and some

of the others, like myself, employed them probably more with a view of acquiring local knowledge than aught else. (I have but to repeat, that until the appearance of the 'Conquest of Scinde,' I do not recollect ever having heard of these abominations; I don't believe a word of them, but they will be all believed at home.

(Signed) P. T. FRENCH.

From MAJOR WOODHOUSE, Commanding the 6th Regt. N. I.

Sattarah, 16th Sept. 1845.

In the latter end of 1820, Captain Sadlier, of H. M.'s Service, was sent by the Bombay Government as an Envoy to the Court of the Ameers of Hydrabad. The other members of the mission were W. Simson, Esq., and Dr. Hall, and I had the command of the escort. The mission disembarked at Kurachee, and from thence went to Hydrabad, where it remained about two months, and then returned to Bombay by the way of Luckput Bunder. During that time I did not hear anything which indicated any want of humanity on the part of the Ameers, or called in question their characters as rulers for justness and moderation. Had anything existed to militate against a favourable impression of their characters in these respects, it would in all probability have become known to the mission; and I think I do not err in saying that every member of it left Scinde with a good opinion of the Ameers as men and rulers; and during the late field service in Scinde, no facts came to my knowledge to lead me to assign to them a lower standard of character than I was formerly ready to accede to them.

(Signed) F. R. WOODHOUSE.

From DR. HAWTHORN, Surgeon, 3rd Regt., Light Cavalry.

17th August, 1845.

SIR,—I have much satisfaction in bearing testimony to the gentlemanly demeanour, and strictly sober habits of the Ameers of Hyderabad when they were in power in 1835-1836.

I resided at Hyderabad for a period of seven months, during which I was in professional attendance on His Highness the late Meer Noor Mahommed Khan. I had almost daily an opportunity of seeing the other Ameers, either in durbar or in their private dwellings, and frequently accompanied them on their hunting excursions. I never had any reason to suppose they were in the slightest degree addicted to intemperance: on the contrary, they had the greatest horror of any intoxicating liquor or drug, and would never take medicine without an assurance from me that it did not contain opium.

(Signed) H. P. HAWTHORN.

From CAPTAIN LECKIE, late Assistant Political Agent in Lower Scinde.

Sattarah, 2nd October, 1845.

My first introduction to the durbars of Upper and Lower Scinde was in the year 1830, when I accompanied the late Sir Alexander Burnes on a mission to Lahore. Subsequently I went to Hyderabad in October 1838, and remained there until September 1842, as assistant to Sir Henry Pottinger and yourself. During this time, I was frequently with the

Ameers, both in open durbar and at private interviews, on business and in a friendly way. With one solitary exception, I never knew them deviate from their style and bearing, which was always frank and gentlemanly.

In their habits they were temperate, and I never saw them in any way excited. As parents they were kind, and took a pride in the education of their sons. They were beloved by their chiefs and dependents who were at Hyderabad, and in constant attendance on them.

(Signed) J. D. LECKIE.

From CAPTAIN HART, 2nd Grenadier Regiment.
CAPTAIN HART'S OPINION OF THE AMEERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT.

A residence of three years in Scinde (1839-40-41) led me to the conclusion that the government of its Ameers had been judged by too high a standard. Compared with the rule of despotic states in Europe during the past century, their sway was mild; and although unrestrained in the exercise of absolute power, their people were not subjected to harsher measures than are common to native governments in India. The aversion of the Ameers to shed blood was notorious. Property was generally secure, notwithstanding the absence of any regular police. Even the jealousy evinced for the preservation of their shikargahs never carried them the length of the extreme punishments once authorized by the forest laws of Britain.

The acknowledged fact, that crimes of any magnitude were rarely committed, spoke of itself for the condition of

* Author of the Article on Slavery in Scinde in the *United Service Magazine* for January 1844.

the lower classes; of food they had sufficient in quantity, and of clothing in quality, to satisfy their wants. Limited in Scinde, as in other eastern countries, to securing a bare subsistence, the cultivators endured no hardships to which their Indian brethren are not liable; while the simplicity of the form of assessment freed them from numerous petty extortions of subordinates to which the latter are often exposed. The almost exclusive monopoly by the Hindoo population of the management of the revenue, proved that they did not consider the bigotry of their rulers as an intolerable burden. That trade was not, in all instances, depressed or obstructed, was shown by the transit of opium through Scinde to the coast in preference to the route of the British provinces, as well as by the encouragement afforded to merchants by the remission of customs duties in proportion to the extent of their traffic.

Of the private characters of their rulers, the Scindians spoke favourably. They were said neither to indulge in spirituous liquors or to smoke; and violating the sanctity of a subject's dwelling in search of wealth, or tenants for their harems, were acts unheard of, &c. &c.

(Signed) S. HART.

Gul Hayat Institute

From CAPTAIN GORDON, in charge of the Ex-Ameers of Hyderabad.

Dum-Dum, 27th July, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have to acknowledge your letter of the 14th instant, requesting my sentiments on certain charges preferred against the Ameers of Scinde, in the second volume of a work recently published, entitled the "Conquest of Scinde." I shall reply to your queries in the order in which they occur in your letter to my address, premising, that from

my almost constant daily intercourse with the Ameers since they arrived in India, in April 1843, I have had the best opportunities of judging of their character and habits.

I observe, therefore, in reply to your first query, that the Ameers are the most temperate of men, rigidly abstaining from wine, and every kind of liquor; while to smoking also they have a strong aversion, and cannot even endure the smell of tobacco, and it will not be supposed that their present habits of "total abstinence" in these respects are newly acquired, or different from those they have hitherto been accustomed to. In regard, therefore, to "*smoking*" and "*drinking*" the Ameers are examples to most of us who boast a higher civilization, and a more self-denying morality.

With regard to your second query, I am unable to conjecture on what grounds it has been asserted that the Ameers' memorials were written for them by persons at Bombay and not by the Ameers themselves. In my opinion, the memorials referred to are in no respect superior to the usual correspondence of the Ameers, who are quite as capable of representing their own case, and proposing and answering objections, as are educated men among ourselves; and this fact will not be disputed by any person who has had opportunities of observing their good sense and shrewd and pertinent remarks on men and things. I am aware that an opinion is abroad that the Ameers are a set of "illiterate barbarians;" but this is not the case, for with one or two exceptions they are well acquainted with, and appreciate, the best Persian authors (in prose and verse), and the knowledge thus acquired from books, improved by their own sagacity and experience, has made them no mean judges of the motives which ordinarily govern men in their actions. After these observations, I need not obtrude my opinion that the Ameers were fully equal to write the petitions alluded to,—that they did write them, is my most firm conviction, and on this point I can scarcely be mistaken.

The Ameers solemnly deny the allegations referred to in your third query, regarding the destruction of infants in their zenanas; and in justice to them I cannot withhold my testimony, that while was I employed in Scinde and the neighbouring countries, I never once heard that such a practice existed among the Ameers, and had it prevailed it is scarcely possible that it could have been concealed from you and others who resided constantly for several years at, I may say, the doors of the Ameers.

It was, I believe, the wish of the ex-Ameers that their ladies should not accompany them from Scinde; and since their arrival in India, they have always expressed the utmost repugnance to their removal, in the hope, no doubt, that they themselves would eventually be restored to their own country. This hope they still cherish, and while it lasts (although far less intensely than before) they will never sanction a proceeding which, as we are well aware, is so offensive to their ideas of female honour and decorum. The Ameers have always spoken to me of the removal of their ladies as a step to be resorted to only in the event of their "vakeels" returning unsuccessful from England, and they now perceive that their worst fears in this regard are likely to be realised.

(Signed) FORBES M. GORDON.

Gul Hayat Institute

From CAPTAIN WHITELOCK, late Assistant Political Agent, Lower Scinde.

Seroor, 10th Sept. 1845.

It would be absurd to draw any line of comparison between any of the princes of Asia and the enlightened and accomplished rulers of the more civilized parts of Europe.

Among Eastern ones, however, the Ameers deservedly ranked high in the estimation of all the Europeans who had been on terms of intimacy with them. The Ameers, in common with all mankind, had faults and weaknesses, but in many respects their conduct was most exemplary. They religiously abstained from drinking wine, or intoxicating liquors of every description; nor did they use tobacco, with the solitary exception of taking snuff; and, moreover, they were not addicted to that almost universal practice among Mahommedans, of smoking tobacco. Their manners were mild and gentlemanly, their dispositions humane; and, as far as I could judge, their deportment towards their children, relations, and dependents, was invariably kind and affectionate.

I have felt great surprise at the reports that have been circulated of the Ameers' ill-treatment of their wives and females, and I can conscientiously aver, that, during my residence in Scinde, I never heard such a thing hinted at, although it is well known that there was an influential clique among the Hindoos, who were ever too ready to prejudice the European officers against the rulers of Scinde. I feel, however, thoroughly convinced that the Ameers were incapable of acting in so cowardly and despicable a manner. It is true that, with regard to women, there were amongst them one or two sensualists, and they of all persons were not likely to have acted towards them with harshness; yet, one of these, the late Meer Nusseer Khan, has been more particularly accused of treating them with great cruelty.

(Signed)

C. R. WHITELOCK,
Captain, late Assistant Political Agent, Lower Scinde.

From CAPTAIN POSTANS, 15th Regt. N. I., late Assistant
Political Agent, Upper Scinde.

I had the strongest personal regard for all the late Ameers of Scinde. In my personal intercourse with them, they always left the most favourable impressions from their urbanity, amiability, and desire to please. As rulers, though I could point out many faults in their mode of government, these were the consequences of their confined views as to civil polity, but, on the whole, the bulk of their subjects were probably as happy and contented under their rule as could be desired. Their great failing was profusion, on the one hand, and avarice on the other, but they were merciful to a *fault*, and *just*, where they judged for themselves. As men, I consider them exemplary characters (taking into the case their education, and prejudices of birth and religion), and the devotion and respect evinced towards them, by their children and all about them, was a conclusive proof of the domestic harmony which reigned in their singularly-constituted families. I really doubt if it were possible to find in our own country so many families, each and every member of which had his own interests to support, living together so peaceably and affectionately.

They have, I hear, borne their reverses like *men*, patient under many misfortunes; and this is an additional proof that their minds were well regulated in prosperity.

(Signed)

T. POSTANS,

Late Assistant Political Agent, Upper Scinde.

From DR. WINCHESTER, Civil Surgeon, Rutnagherry, late
Residency Surgeon at Hyderabad,

Bombay, 27th Sept. 1845.

During the two years, I passed at the Residency in Lower Scinde, I had, as you are aware, daily intercourse with the different Ameers of Hyderabad. Previous to my nomination to Scinde I had been much associated with officers who had a personal knowledge of their Highnesses, from their official situation, and I was never prepared, from their conversation, to expect any thing unfavourable to the Ameers. Nor do I think from the latter end of 1831, when I first went to the province of Cutch, that I ever heard attributed to them, with one rumoured exception, and that regarding only one prince, any of those vices which have since been made so notorious. I most assuredly never heard any act of cruelty mentioned; on the contrary, I always thought the Ameers were lenient as rulers, and dispensers of criminal justice; and however oppressive their system of taxation might have been, it never was enforced by cruelty. The condition of the villages and inhabitants did not mark that the population of Scinde was worse treated than the generality of Eastern countries. I have passed repeatedly, alone, unarmed, through great portions of Lower Scinde in 1839-40 and 41, and never met with insult; but, on the contrary, with civility and kindness.

In their habits, the Ameers were exceedingly simple, and in manners unaffected. Their food was plain; their drink was water, and except in the use of snuff, I never heard, or saw, any of them using tobacco or ardent spirits. They were free from the prejudices Mussulmans generally have towards Christians, and I never heard them affect to despise any other religion than the Hindoo, of which they had every contempt, on account of its idolatry.

No one ever hinted to me that the Ameers ill-treated their women. I repeatedly asked natives the manner in which women are obtained for their zenanas. I never heard of force being used; but that the women were very reconciled to their lot, being enriched by valuable presents of jewels, and insured a competence for life. When I have been within the precincts of the harem, I never beheld anything that could lead to the supposition of tyranny. H. H. Meer Nusseer Khan often solicited medicine for his females, as did the other Ameers, evincing, in the detail of their complaints, anxiety for their welfare; and I on one occasion was much struck with the conduct of Nusseer Khan towards a lady of his harem who was dangerously ill.

(Signed)

JAMES W. WINCHESTER.

Civil Surgeon, Rutnagherry.

From DR. LEITH, Assistant Presidency Civil Surgeon, late
Surgeon to the Political Agency in Lower Scinde.

From December, 1841, to November of the following year, I resided at Hyderabad in medical charge of the Lower Scinde Political Agency; and it being the chief part of my duty to give medical attendance to the Ameers, or to any member of their families that might require it, I had, during that time, almost daily opportunities of seeing them either in Durbar or in private. And being again appointed medical attendant to the Ameers, in April 1843, when they were brought in captivity to Bombay, and from thence sent to Sassoor, I saw them during nearly two months under very greatly altered circumstances.

During my acquaintance with the Ameers, I remarked their great freedom from the vices usually prominent among Indian Mussulmans, and I was pleased with their affable and gentle manners and domestic habits, and also with the mild exercise of their power as rulers. The people generally seemed to love them; and from what I saw during my stay at Hyderabad, I could have expected the devotion they displayed a few months afterwards, in supporting their chiefs when fighting for their honour, their independence, and their territory. I never saw anything to give me the least suspicion that any of the Ameers used any intoxicating thing; nor did I ever, while in Scinde, hear even a rumour that they did so; and I think I must have known it if they had. The use of intoxicating substances I have heard several of them openly condemn: most of them used snuff, but none of them ever smoked tobacco or anything else. During the many opportunities of observation that my visits to the sick afforded me, I never saw or heard of any conduct towards the members of their households but what was marked with kindness. During my residence at Hyderabad, I heard of but one severe punishment being inflicted; the criminal was a murderer, and the usual penalty of having his hands cut off by the executioner was inflicted; and in this case the Ameers showed great anxiety for the safety of the man's life after the amputation.

(Signed)

A. H. LEITH.

Bombay, 20th Sept. 1845.

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From DR. PEART, Civil Surgeon, Poonah, and in charge of
the ex-Ameers of Khyrpoor.

Poonah, 17th July, 1845.

Ex-Ameer Roostum Khan of Khyrpoor, with his youngest son, Ali Buksh, and his nephew, ex-Ameer Nusseer Khan, have been under my care since March 1844, and I feel the greatest satisfaction in being able to bear testimony to their noble bearing under their misfortunes; and I can safely say, that since I have had the pleasure of knowing them, I have never observed anything whereby even the slightest shadow of a suspicion of intemperance or debauchery could be attributed to them; and I have had ample opportunities of judging, visiting them at all times. Ex-Ameer Meer Roostum Khan, now upwards of eighty years of age, is in full possession of his faculties—his memory is good, and he is most strict in his religious observances; his mode of living is abstemious, eating meat only once a day, and his sole beverage water or milk.

Respecting the memorials which have been forwarded to England since the ex-Ameers have been under my care, I can assure you most positively that they have never had the most trifling assistance in framing them, neither were they seen by, or their contents known to, any European, until after they had been placed in my hands for transmission to Government.

(Signed)

J. H. PEART.

From CAPTAIN MYLNE, 6th Regiment, N.I., late Political
Agent, Hyderabad.

Bombay, 18th January, 1840.

I hasten to reply as briefly as possible to your questions regarding the private character of the ex-Ameers of Lower Scinde, and most truly can I say that, as far as my own observation went, and as far as I could learn from others, very few indeed of the native Princes of India could so well stand the test of inquiry into their domestic life.

I had, as you know, many opportunities of seeing them: they had, in general, very short notice of my intention of waiting upon them, and my visits not being confined to mere formal interviews at the Durbar, I had the better means of remarking the total absence of all marks of debauchery and symptoms of excess. I cannot recall to my recollection having ever heard, during the seven months of my being in charge of the agency, any accusation against them as being addicted to the common Mussulman vice of intemperance; and, kept informed as I was, through several sources, of their every day life, it could hardly have failed of coming to my ears had there been anything approaching want of kindness or affection displayed by them to their families. But the manner in which they invariably alluded to their households, and the grief expressed when any member of their families was in distress, convinced me that much attachment existed between them.

Need I say, that if there are any other points on which my opinion of the unhappy Ameers can be of any service, it will afford me much pleasure to give it?

CHAS. D. MYLNE.

Extract from "The Conquest of Scinde, a Commentary,"*
by LIEUT.-COL. OUTRAM, C.B., Resident at Sattarah.

To these convincing testimonies, I would add that of an officer long resident in Scinde, and intimately acquainted with its people. "My own knowledge," he writes, "that is, from personal intercourse, is nothing, but the unanimous testimony of all the natives who were in a position to know, shows that, with the sole exception, I believe, of Ali Moorad, the Meers of Scinde were sober and temperate to an extraordinary degree,—not only not drinking or using intoxicating liquors or drugs, but not even smoking a hookah."

On Sir Henry Pottinger I call to confirm the testimony thus rendered in their favour by every British officer who has had an opportunity of intimately knowing the Ameers. He can inform his countrymen that the documents now submitted to the reader are sober and literal statements of undeniable facts. * * * * * Sir Alexander Burnes's eulogies of Meer Roostum, "the good old man," I have already placed before the reader.† And if, as I confidently

* "The Conquest of Scinde, a Commentary," by LIEUT.-COL. OUTRAM, C.B., Resident at Sattarah. Wm. Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1846.

† I deeply regret that I have it not in my power to refer to Captain Del'Hoste's Journal, written in 1832, which, though buried in the records of Government, I believe contains sketches of the characters of the Ameers. The following passage, extracted from Dr. James Burnes's book will show how innocent were the preceding generation of Ameers of the foul charges brought against their sons:—

"The Ameers of Scinde are less sunk in sensuality and indulgence than Mahomedan princes in general. Meer Moorad Ali Khan asked me on one occasion whether I had any objection to his taking daroo, a word which I understood in its usual acceptation of ardent spirits; and I was proceeding to explain that it would be better to avoid all stimulants, and particularly wine, for the present, when he abruptly interrupted me, by begging that I would not use the name of the forbidden juice of the grape in the presence of a true believer. I found afterwards that his Highness only meant a pomegranate; and although this anecdote may give an impression of display before a large assembly, still I believe it is well ascertained that the Ameers never indulge in intoxicating drugs or liquors. They have been known to dismiss persons

expect, I have satisfied my reader of the utter groundlessness of this charge of debauchery and drunkenness against the Ameers generally, and against the venerable Meer Roostum in particular, I may safely leave it to his judgment to determine what degree of credit is due to the monstrous and incredible stories narrated on the same authority as that which I have just proved to be so worthless. The Ameers have been accused of committing deeds exceeding in iniquity those ever invented in the most fabulous romance of ancient or modern days; such as, *chopping their own "offspring to pieces with their own hands, immediately after birth; but more frequently placing them under cushions, smoking, drinking, and jesting with each other about their hellish work while the children were being suffocated beneath them;" chastising their wives with "whips of twisted brass wires," for "what they deemed the*

with disgrace from their presence, who have appeared before them redolent of wine; and Bahadoor Khan Cokur, a Beloochee chief of high birth, in the service of Meer Moorad Ali Khan, was suspended from his employments for a considerable time, from having been once seen in a state of intoxication. The Ameers universally objected to take medicine in the shape of tinctures, from the spirits they contained. There is not a hookah to be seen at their court, nor do any of the family ever eat opium. It were to be hoped that this temperance on the part of the rulers had had a proportionate effect on their subjects; but experience obliges me to declare that most of the soldiery, and many of the courtiers, are addicted to every species of indulgence that can either enervate the mind, or debilitate the body. The eating of opium is as common in Scinde as in Cutch; and I found no present more acceptable than a few bottles of brandy, and no annoyance more intolerable than incessant indirect applications to repair the ravages of unlawful disease, or to renew the powers wasted in luxury and debauch. The Ameers commence business about two hours before daybreak, when each holds a private levee to listen to complaints, and adjust the affairs relative to his peculiar province. It is on this occasion only that they wear turbans. About sunrise, they repair to their apartments to dress, and appear shortly afterwards in durbar, where the whole family regularly assemble, and where all State proceedings are transacted. The letters which have arrived during the night or preceding day, are then thrown before them in a heap, and the time is passed in reading or giving orders regarding them, and in conversation till ten or eleven o'clock, when they withdraw to their morning repast. At two o'clock they again show themselves abroad, and remain together till dark, when they separate for the night to their respective places of abode."

*poor women's offences, such, perhaps, as weeping over their slaughtered children ;" "hellish deeds, which rendered them objects for horror rather than sympathy."** Such are the

"Conquest of Scinde," page 348:—"Nusseer Khan of Hyderabad, depicted the most noble and generous of the Ameers, the most humane of the pernicious brood, had in his zenana a whip expressly to correct the women; the last is composed of two lengths of twisted brass wires! It is no fable! the usage is certain, &c." That the romancist who palmed off on his too credulous countrymen the arrant nonsense (out-Heroding the famed Munchausen) of Fitzgerald of the "tempestuous hand," should write such trash, excites but little wonder. But it is surprising, and derogates not a little from the respect due to the collective wisdom of the nation, that the absurd fable should have been listened to in Parliament.

It must have astonished all English gentlemen in India conversant with the mild ways of Mahommedan gentlemen towards the inmates of their harems—(subjected to no other hardships than that of voluntary seclusion, which they themselves consider as disgraceful to infringe as would an English female regard a reflection cast on her chastity)—to see so wantonly libellous and utterly absurd an accusation gravely uttered by a British Senator in the presence of the Parliament of England. The report of the debate given by Hansard states, that *sensation* was caused by this climax to all the misrepresentation and mystification palmed on the House on that occasion, but the nature of that sensation is not described: for the honour of my countrymen I trust that it was the sensation of *indignation* at the unblushing assurance of Mr. Roebuck in presuming to attempt to impose such trash on the representatives of our nation. Of all the Ameers, Nusseer—the courteous, refined, and even chivalrous Nusseer—was the last on whom the romancist should have attempted to cast this stigma. Nusseer! who would as soon have given pain to a woman as would Mr. Roebuck or General Napier dream of inflicting the same barbarous cruelty on their own daughters. Poor Nusseer is now no more. It has pleased God to summon him whither the malice of his persecutors can no longer pursue him; where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. He was mercifully removed ere the atrocious calumnies of General William Napier could add another drop of bitterness to the overflowing cup of his misfortunes. *Requiescat in pace.* His nephew, Meer Hoossein Ali, indignantly replied as follows to the charges, as preposterous as they are malignant, of the historian:—"Whatever stories the General has written concerning our ladies, we could reply to them by as bad and worse words about him; but it is not our custom to write evil about any one, or call him bad names, agreeably to the saying, the man of wisdom will not call him a respectable man who uses the names of respectable men with disdain. (Persian proverb.) Sir Charles Napier has described the killing of children by the Ameers; but in reply we say, thousands of woes to him who wrote such a thing, for we are neither guilty of that, nor know any thing about it. This is only an unfounded charge and a false

statements put forth as *History*, and as worthy of the belief of the most civilized portion of the globe! They can only

calumny. Let it be asked, how can a man be so inhuman as to cut to pieces a young child, and in consequence expose himself to the fire of hell and the curse of God? Regarding the brass whip which the General has written about, it is all a lie, like the rest of his accusations; because a whip is for horses and not for women. There is no matter if the General has got it (the whip with which it was alleged Meer Nusscoor chastised his women) in his possession to show to the people, for we also can produce not only a brass whip but hundreds of iron whips." And thus the young Ameer concludes his humble attempt to defend the memory of his father, and to uphold the character of his brethren, all that remained to them:—"Sir Charles Napier calumniates the Ameers, because he knows that he has injured them very sadly; and, by calling the Ameers monsters, he hopes to draw off the sympathy of people from their sorrowful misfortunes; but he will fail in his design even in this world; and on the day of judgment, when the Beloochees, who were innocently murdered by the General in the battles of Meeanee and Douba, shall rise against him,—on such a day, where will he find refuge from the accusations and complaints of those whose characters he has blackened by his calumnies?" A brass whip—by no means a great rarity in the East—is found in the women's apartments, and the logical inference is, that it was designed for their backs! By a parity of reasoning, the valuable firearms, swords, jewels, and treasures, found in the zenanas, may be concluded to have been collected by the ladies, who, addicted like their lords to intrigue, were meditating a "revolt of the Harem!" Alas, poor England! If your senators are at the mercy of Mr. Roebuck, and your rising generation are dependent for Eastern facts on the imagination of General William Napier! England of all nations is most interested in obtaining correct information regarding India; Englishmen are of all Europeans the most ignorant, and the most easily imposed on, in all that concerns it!

To prove how cruelly the Ameers treated their ladies, the historian tells us, that "when the Ameers fell, not one woman, old or young, mother, wife, or concubine, would follow them to Bombay, so much were they detested;" and we are told that they "sought and obtained leave to return to the homes of their childhood." The reader of the foregoing pages will not be surprised when I tell him that THIS IS A PURE UNMITIGATED FICTION; though he will probably be amused at the hardihood of the fabrication. The ladies did not accompany their lords, because to have done so would have been an acknowledgment that all hope of the return of the Ameers was abandoned. The treatment of the captive Ameers, the indignities to which they were exposed, the undefined horror entertained by all Asiatics of transportation across the "black water" (sea), and the incertitude as to the final disposal of the captive princes when in the country of those who had evinced such a recklessness of justice, truth, and mercy,—were enough to deter even affectionate wives from voluntarily accompanying their husbands at first. But it was not their husbands' wish that their wives should accompany them.

be accounted for, by some heartless wag having practised on the credulity and too ready ear of Sir Charles Napier (to

UP TO MY LAST ACCOUNTS—JULY 1845—THE AMEERS' LADIES, SO FAR FROM HAVING "RETURNED TO THE HOMES OF THEIR CHILDHOOD," WERE STILL LIVING IN A TANDA, (A WALLED VILLAGE) ABOUT THREE MILES FROM HYDRABAD! What say Dr. Peart, in charge of the Khyrpoor Ameers, and Captain Gordon, in charge of those of Lower Scinde, on this subject? The former writes:—

"In reply to the last part of your letter, from frequent conversations I have had with the ex-Ameers upon the subject, I am enabled to state that their disinclination to have their families sent to them from Scinde is quite insurmountable, and when I have proposed it to them, their reply has always been, 'As long as we are prisoners, this is no place for our wives and children, to make them prisoners also.' I trust you will excuse my refraining from informing the ex-Ameers of the allegations that have been made against them, as I am sure, by so doing, I should be adding fresh causes of sorrow."

The latter, thus:—"The Ameers solemnly deny the allegation referred to in your second query, regarding the destruction of infants in their zenanas, and in justice I cannot withhold my testimony, that while I was employed in Scinde and the neighbouring countries, I never heard that such a practice existed among the Ameers, and had it prevailed, it is scarcely possible that it could have been concealed from you and others who resided constantly for several years at, I may say, the doors of the Ameers. It was, I BELIEVE, THE WISH OF THE EX-AMEERS, THAT THEIR LADIES SHOULD NOT ACCOMPANY THEM FROM SCINDE, AND SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL IN INDIA, THEY HAVE ALWAYS EXPRESSED THE GREATEST REPUGNANCE TO THEIR REMOVAL, IN THE HOPE, NO DOUBT, THAT THEY THEMSELVES WOULD EVENTUALLY BE RESTORED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY. THIS HOPE THEY STILL CHERISH, AND WHILE IT LASTS (ALTHOUGH FAR LESS INTENSELY THAN BEFORE) THEY WILL NEVER SANCTION A PROCEEDING WHICH, AS WE ARE WELL AWARE, IS SO OFFENSIVE TO THEIR IDEAS OF FEMALE HONOUR AND DECORUM. THE AMEERS HAVE ALWAYS SPOKEN TO ME OF THE REMOVAL OF THEIR LADIES, AS A STEP TO BE RESORTED TO ONLY IN THE EVENT OF THEIR VAKEELS RETURNING UNSUCCESSFUL FROM ENGLAND, AND THEY WILL NOW PERCEIVE THAT THEIR WORST FEARS IN THIS REGARD ARE LIKELY TO BE REALIZED." This, be it remembered, is the testimony of two high-minded English gentlemen, writing simultaneously from the eastern and western extremities of India, daily associating with the Ameers, and acquainted with all their thoughts. They cannot be supposed to be discontented "at being by Lord Ellenborough debarred from plundering the Scinde revenues, under the names of collectors," &c. They are gentlemen whose words have never been doubted, nor their honour called in question; with no interest in the matter save that of Englishmen jealous for the honour of their country. And what is opposed to them? The assertions of one whom I have proved to be as reckless of truth as he is ignorant of what he pretends to discuss—the champion of a brother whose policy is unjustifiable, and only to be extenuated by proving its victims monsters more horrible than it hath hitherto entered into the mind of man to conceive!

hear any thing to the disadvantage of his victims), who forthwith transmitted what may have been intended as a bad joke and fiction, to him who was to become the annalist of the Conquest of Scinde.

Translation of the PETITION of the Wives of the dethroned Ameers of Scinde, transmitted through their accredited Envoys, to Her Majesty QUEEN VICTORIA.

May the shadow of Queen Victoria increase, the pure, and the magnificent as Balkis (Queen of Sheba).

It is almost two years since Sir Charles Napier came to Hydrabad, in Scinde, with an army and artillery, and plundered our habitations of all our money, ornaments, jewels, and of every thing of value. And at the same time he took from us the Ameers and our children, and sent them to Hindostan as captives. We helpless women, devoid of power, were, when Sir Charles Napier arrived, seated in our houses. What manner of custom is this, that he should enter our dwellings, and plunder us of our valuables, leaving us not sufficient for our support? Two years have elapsed since he tore us from our houses, and native city, and compelled us to dwell outside the town of Hydrabad, in huts, like the destitute. God knows the hardships we suffer for our food and raiment; and through our separation from the Ameers, we endure such distress and despair, that life is distasteful to us. That one should die when God wills it, is no calamity; but we endure with each successive day the torment of a new death; wherefore we cherish the hope, that you yourself being a Queen, as we were once, will

sympathise with us, and will take compassion upon us, and cause restoration of those things of which Sir Charles Napier has robbed us; and since our hearts are lacerated with grief at being separated from the Ameers, and from our sons—by which, indeed, we are brought to the brink of despair—you will remove this cause of distress, otherwise we should reckon it the greatest favour to put an end to our existence. May your days be lengthened!

Signatures of the Begums of—

MEER KURM ALI KHAN.

MEER NOOR MAHOMED KHAN.

MEER MAHOMED NUSSEER KHAN.

MEER SOBDAR KHAN.

MEER MEER MAHOMED KHAN.

Written on the 27th of the month Shuwal, 1200,
at Hyderabad, in Scinde.

Translation of a Paper given to LORD ASHLEY by the
VAKEELS of the Ameers of Scinde.

August, 1845.

We, AKHUND HABIBULLAH, DIWAN MITHARAM, and DIWAN DYARAM, the accredited Envoys of the Amírs of Sindh, solemnly declare that we have never, on any occasion, acquiesced in the truth of the charges against our masters the Amírs. We believe, and we affirm it in the most solemn manner, that the letter said to have been written to Bibarak Bugti by Mir Muhammad Nasir Khan,

was a forgery. We believe, before God, that the Amírs are wholly innocent of the charges brought against them.

Signatures of

AKHUND HABIBULLAH.
DIWAN MITHARAM.
DIWAN DYARAM.

19, Harley Street, 15th August 1845.

Extract of a Letter from LIEUT.-COL. OUTRAM, C.B., formerly Commissioner in Scinde, to LIEUT.-GEN. SIR CHARLES NAPIER, G.C.B., dated 26th January 1843, (a few weeks previous to the battle of Meance.)

"It grieves me to say that my heart, and that judgment which God has given me, unite in condemning the course we are carrying out for his Lordship, as most tyrannical, positive robbery. I consider that every life that may hereafter be lost in consequence, will be a *murder*."*

Extract of a letter from the Right Honourable SIR HENRY POTTINGER, Bart., G.C.B., formerly Resident in Scinde, read in the House of Commons by Lord Ashley, in Feb. 1844.

"Your letter brought our happy and merry days in Scinde vividly to my mind, and I lamented, on reading it, if possible more deeply than I had done, over the 'fallen estate' of my old friends the Ameers, of whose case I have all along said, and ever shall say, under all circumstances, and in all society

* Vide "The Conquest of Scinde, a Commentary," page 290, Part 1st.

and places where I may hear it alluded to, is the *most unprincipled and disgraceful that has ever stamped the annals of our empire in India*. No explanation or reasoning can, in my opinion, remove the foul stain it has left on our good faith and honour, and as I know more than any other man living of previous events and measures connected with that *devoted* country, I feel that I have a full right to exercise my judgment and express my sentiments on the subject. I was in hopes that some influential voice would have been raised in England against the tyranny and spoliation that had taken place, but the intelligence by the last mail—that of July—holds forth no such prospect, and all that I can now hope is, that the author of all this cruelty and misery may meet with his deserts hereafter. I shall only add, that I shall esteem it a favour if you will let my opinions be known wherever you hear the affair mentioned, and that you cannot use too strong language in expressing my disgust and sorrow on the occasion.”

THE END.