

COURT OF SINDE.

101

ing on the Mahommedan crusade against the Sikhs: I expressed my wonder that any person could form such an idea, since it was notorious that the Seyud was fighting solely for the faith; but my answer did not seem to convince them, as they remarked, that though the Bombay government, whose servant I was, knew nothing of the matter, it was probably very well understood at Bengal.

Of His Majesty and the royal family, and many other circumstances connected with England, they spoke with a knowledge which surprised me, and once observed, that English sailors and Beluche soldiers were the best in the world. They knew the character and fall of the Emperor Napoleon, but were ignorant of his death. Of vaccine inoculation they had heard by report; and when I explained its advantages, they declared their intention of establishing it in Sinda, and requested me to assist them with the means of doing so. Among other subjects I told them of the grand discovery of steam-engines; but in this, and respecting the revenues of Great Britain, they evidently considered I was making use of a traveller's privilege. They were obviously much gratified to find I had a knowledge of the history of their family, of which they are exceedingly proud; and on my being shown the sword of their ancestor, Meer Bejur, whose murder occasioned the overthrow of the Calora dynasty, they were equally astonished and pleased to hear me mention

the circumstance of his pilgrimage to Mecca, and the treachery which caused his death.

One thing alone raised a frown on the countenances of the Ameers. In conversing one day with their minister, on the state of Cabûl, I had occasion to refer in his presence to a large map of Hindoostan, and he mentioned the circumstance to their Highnesses, who begged to see so great a curiosity. I accordingly took it to the durbar, and explained its nature to them. Nothing could exceed their wonder when I traced from stage to stage, with my finger, the various routes through Sinde, together with those to Jessulmere and Lahore; and stated that I could travel throughout the whole of their dominions, by the assistance of the map, without asking the way to a single village. It was probably injudicious, but I could not at the time resist the impulse, of covering the whole of their paltry territory with my hand, and pointing out to them the boundaries of our great and glorious empire in India. They affected perfect indifference at first, and pretended that they knew as much of our provinces as we did of their's; but they were extremely grave during the remainder of the interview, and I understood afterwards, from some persons who remained behind me at the levee, that they again reverted to the subject of the map, without concealing their chagrin and vexation that the *Feringees* knew every thing.

In the preceding paragraphs I have endeavour-

ed to give some idea of the manners and habits of the Ameers of Sind, while they are resident at their capital. Once or twice a month, when they are all in good health, they pay visits to their different shikargahs, or preserves for game; and as they are attended, on these occasions, by large retinues, and never previously announce in which direction they mean to travel, they thus combine, with a passion for the chase, a species of policy which enables them to keep their several districts in awe. They take the field with hawks, dogs, &c., but their mode of killing game would have little charms for an European sportsman. They never expose themselves to the sun, but remain comfortably seated in a house till the deer or hog is forced to come before them to a small tank or well to drink, when they shoot him deliberately, and receive the acclamations of their followers.

The shikargahs are large tracts of jungle so carefully inclosed as to prevent the egress of all quadrupeds; and when their Highnesses proceed to them, all the wells, except the one in front of their tents or bungalows, are closed up, and the game is hunted till dire necessity obliges it to seek for water, at the risk of life, in the manner above alluded to. Sometimes they station themselves in temporary buildings, between two shikargahs nearly adjoining, in one of which several hundred matchlockmen are posted to expel the frightened animal, which, in endeavouring to es-

cape through a passage made for the purpose into the neighbouring preserve, is intercepted and killed by the Ameers.

They never hunt on horseback, but sometimes, though rarely, go out a deer shooting on camels; none, except themselves, are permitted to fire at any game; and there is scarcely a sporting excursion which does not cost them the lives of two or three of their subjects, either from false aiming on their own part, or the fury of boars, &c. driven desperate. All the grandees in Sinde, when they appear in public, are attended by their bazbans or falconers, with hawks, some of which are of great value. I saw a bird which had cost Kurm Ali two thousand rupees; and his Highness presented me with one of a scarcely inferior price. The best are, I understand, brought from Turkistan, and the northern parts of Cabûl.

In Sinde, as in all oriental countries, the courtiers exist only in the presence and favour of the prince, and depend entirely on the Ameers for their rank and situation in society. Of them it is unnecessary to say much. They do not carry with them to their own houses that neatness of dress and respectability of deportment, which are exacted from them at the durbar; and as they are generally extremely poor, (the whole wealth of the country being in the hands of the rulers,) they have no means of making display. The favourites of the Ameers may be distinguished by

gold-mounted swords, which are the highest honorary distinctions conferred by the Hyderabad durbar. It is contrary to the usage of the court to wear side arms ornamented with any of the precious metals not presented by their highnesses; and as they are rather sparing in their favours, the honour is much appreciated. For very high services, the Ameers sometimes, though rarely, give one of their valuable blades adorned with diamonds.

It would be in vain to expect independence of feeling where all are really so dependent. The Sindé courtiers can only retain their places by implicit obedience, and the most fawning adulation to their superiors. Their propensity to flatter strangers, and even each other, is ludicrous to an European. Scarcely two persons of the higher rank ever met together in my presence without bespattering each other with the most fulsome compliments, and both joining in exalting me to the skies, by the most far-fetched and hyperbolic praises. Their ceremonious formality is truly distressing. The same inquiries after my happiness, health, &c. were seldom repeated less than four or five times in the course of a visit. The moment I rose from my chair every man of the company did the same, and continued standing till I again sat down, when, after an exchange of salutations between all present, they followed my example. In this respect, they are,

I presume, mere copyists of the courts of Cabûl and Persia.

From what I have said of the character of Meer Mourad Ali, it will be obvious that he is not a prince much guided by the counsels of others ; nor is it easy, with a man of his cold and unsociable disposition, to ascertain on whom he really bestows his favour. None know the workings of his gloomy soul, and scarcely any can claim a share in his confidence ; but there are, nevertheless, two individuals who, from various causes, are of great importance at the court of Sinde, and who demand particular mention in this narrative. I allude to Wullee Mahommed Khan, and Seyud Ismail Shah, the chief ministers of the Ameers, of whose characters I shall attempt to give a brief outline. They both receive high salaries from government, and have palanquins and bearers maintained for them ; an honour which they share unrivalled by any other subject in the country.

The Nuwab, Wulle Mahommed Khan Lagharee, is by the Ameers themselves termed the vizier of Sinde, and, next to the principal members of the Talpoor family, must be considered the most important personage under their government. Being himself the head of a powerful Beluche tribe, which contributed in the field to the elevation of the present rulers, he has ever since been their faithful and able servant, and seems

to enjoy not only the entire confidence of his masters, but, what is rare indeed in a despotic government, the esteem and respect of the people. He is the adviser of the Ameers in the management of the internal affairs of the state ; and, by his adroitness and mild demeanour, has it often in his power, and seldom loses an opportunity, to avert or mitigate the effects of those shocks of tyranny and oppression which emanate from their durbar.

A sincere regard for the interest of his masters has taught this old and respectable individual the necessity of maintaining a friendly intercourse with the British government ; and it is to his advice I owe not only my visit to Sind, but the wish of the Ameers to detain me. Wullee Mahommed Khan must have attained the age of seventy ; and it is to be feared, therefore, that death may soon deprive the Ameers of their best servant, and the people of Sind of their kindest protector. His son, Ahmed Khan, a dissipated young man about thirty years of age, possesses none of the virtues of his parent. The Nuwab is a poet of no mean excellence ; and, although his verses are filled with adulation, it would be unfair to detract from his merits on this account, or to condemn him for following the example of almost every Persian writer. He has composed also several large folios on the subject of medicine, gleaned chiefly from the dreams and theories of

VISIT TO THE

108

the ancients, but which, being supposed original, have gained for him the character of a sage in Sinde. Amongst his works I must not omit to mention a small book on the cure of diseases written in the name of Meer Mourad Ali, the merit of which is claimed by that prince.

Meer Ismail Shah is the adviser of the government in its foreign, as the Nuwab Wullee Mahomed Khan is in its domestic policy. He is second only to the latter in the estimation of the Ameers, who, in addition to their religious reverence for him as a descendant of the Prophet, entertain an exaggerated idea of his judgment and experience. He is the son of a Persian who immigrated about fifty years ago into Sinde, where he was attached to the last Caloras as a state-physician, and afterwards siding with the Talpoors, received employment in their service. Ismail Shah is well known as the ambassador to Bombay in 1820, when it was expected war would be declared between the governments. The hospitality he then experienced, and the munificence of Mr Elphinstone, formed the chief topics of his conversation with me ; but it is notorious that he is faithless in the extreme, and not at all favourably inclined to the British interest. Meer Ismail is a man of respectable appearance and good address, about fifty years of age, has the silly vanity to pretend ignorance of the common language of Sinde, and never speaks or allows himself to be address-

sed in any other language than Persian. He has been occasionally employed at the court of Cabûl, where he informed me he was envoy at the period of Mr Elphinstone's mission ; and he is no doubt thoroughly skilled in the system of intrigue and chicanery, so requisite in an Asiatic cabinet. He has several sons holding important situations under the government, one of whom was lately at Bombay as vakeel, and another is the representative of the Ameers at Shikarpoor. He himself receives a monthly salary of eleven hundred rupees as physician, which is the best paid appointment at Hyderabad, but his prescriptions are little attended to by the Ameers.

A spirit of rivalry may naturally be supposed to exist between the two great officers of the Sinda durbar ; and this is not confined merely to attempts to supplant each other in the favour of their masters, but extends to particulars which would excite a smile among European politicians. They are envious of each other's fame as men of science, and especially as physicians. Both are authors, and exceedingly vain of their own productions ; and, without deciding here on their respective merits, on which I always evaded giving an opinion to themselves, I may observe that the Ameers have shown a correct discrimination of character, in awarding to Ismail Shah the emolument, and to the Nuwab the reputation. In their moral

qualities they can bear no comparison. The Ameers repose implicit confidence in Wullee Mahomed, but doubt, with justice, the integrity of his rival.* The former is upright and charitable, the latter proud and penurious ; the one esteemed, the other feared ; the Seyud owing his elevation and importance chiefly to birth and popular prejudice, and the Khan to a long life of fidelity and virtue, which, it is some credit to Sinde to say, have met their reward.

Next in importance to these officers are a few courtiers who exert a personal influence, from being constantly in private attendance on the Ameers, or as leaders of Beloche tribes. The first of this class worthy of notice is Mirza Khoosroo, a Georgian slave, who was purchased about eighteen years ago by Kurm Ali, and whom his master now treats as an adopted child. He is not a favourite of Mourad Ali, and possesses no political consequence, though he was envoy at Bombay in 1823. He is a man of quiet retiring character, and is known in Sinde as the author of Persian verses, the merit of which he is willing to yield to Kurm Ali, who has considerable vanity as a poet.

* In the letter of advice Mourad Ali had prepared for his children, alluded to in page 52, he cautioned them to beware of Ismail Shah, but urged them to follow implicitly the advice of Wullee Mahomed.

I requested his Highness one day to favour me with a couplet of his own composition to engrave on a sword, and I observed that he immediately called Mirza Khoosroo to him, and, after some whispering, produced a verse as his own.*

Mirza Bakur is also a young Georgian on whom Mourad Ali seems to bestow favour. Bahadoor Khan Cokur, and Kheir Mahommed Tora, are two noblemen supposed to be high in the estimation of that prince; and his Highness pointed out the former to me as one of the bravest and most distinguished of his followers. They are both chiefs of powerful Beloche tribes, always resident at court, where they enjoy situations of responsibility and emolument, and Kheir Mahommed is mohk-tarkar, or manager of Mourad Ali's private affairs.

Ghoolam Ulla Laghree, the brother of the Nuwab, has charge of the important fortress of Omerkote,† where it is reported the members of

* The couplet in question is as follows:—“I am sharper than wisdom from the mouth of Plato; I am more blood-spilling than the eyebrow of a beautiful mistress.”

† My brother has the following remark regarding Omerkote:—“I may here mention, that I heard this far-famed oäsis of the desert, the retreat of the Emperor Humaioon, the birth-place of the great Akbar, the source of contention between Sinde and Joodpoor, and in later times, the depository of the riches and jewels of the Ameers of Sinde, is a small brick built fort, the southern face of which was actually thrown down by the late inundation, with walls much lower than Luckput, and without a ditch to protect it, though

the Sind government have treasure to the amount of several crores of rupees. After obtaining his pre-eminence, Futteh Ali took the immediate precaution of seizing the immense riches of the Calorras; and as additions have been making to the heap ever since, the wealth in possession of the Ameers must now be enormous. Their plan of hording up money, which, as I have already stated, they consider their chief security, has hitherto been successful; but it is most probable that it will end like many schemes of the kind related in history, and be at length turned by some fortunate adventurer against themselves or their family; “an event,” as Hume says, “which naturally attends the policy of amassing treasures.”

Moonshee Khoosheram is a Hindoo who receives one hundred rupees per month as chief secretary. He has no influence; but all public letters are written by him, and to him is to be partly attributed the ungracious style of some of these communications; for I observed, that notes sent to me by order of the Ameers when he was absent, were much more courteously worded than those dictated by himself. However sparing their Highnesses may be of civility in their written communications to others, they are most particular in exacting it for themselves; and, while on this subject, it may be

so near a river.”—Lieutenant BURNES’s *Memoir of the Indus*.

worth mentioning as a trait of their characters, that I was in the durbar when the letters from Sir John Malcolm and Mr Elphinstone, announcing the change of government at Bombay, were presented to them by the native agent ; every word in the titles and compliments was carefully weighed and scrutinized, and I was much amused to observe Mourad Ali point out to his brother some expression which he imagined was less respectful in the one signed by Sir John than in the other.

It is foreign to my purpose to say much on the people of Sinde, far less to enter into a detail of their character and peculiarities, which have been described at great length by others.* No estimate

* “ The inhabitants of Sinde are a strong and healthy race of men, rather more fitted for fatigue than activity, and are mostly tall and dark complexioned. Those who enjoy ease and indulgence are uncommonly corpulent, which perhaps their great use of milk disposes all to be. The princes are remarkably broad and fat, and many of the Beluche chiefs and officers of their court, too large for the dimensions of any European chair. As rotundity is so much the distinction of greatness, it is admired as a beauty, and sought as an ambition, and prescriptions, therefore, for increasing bulk are much esteemed. The Sindians in their tempers are proud, impatient, knavish, and mean. Placed between Muckran and Hindoostan, they seem to have acquired the vices, both of the barbarity on the one side, and the civilization on the other, without the virtues of either. Their natural faculties are good, and their energies would reward encouragement, but their moral character is a compound scarcely to be described, and still less to be trusted, and fanaticism, supersti-

can be formed of the population, which, if we may credit the information given to Captain Hamilton, was, about the beginning of last century, in the proportion of ten Hindoos to one Mussulman. In this case the knife of circumcision must have made havoc indeed, as the rival sects are now nearly equal, or rather, I believe, the Mahommedan is the more numerous. As the state religion of Sind is taken from the Koran, so the system of jurisprudence is derived from the same source, and when exercised between two subjects of the more favoured creed, would appear to be pretty fairly administered by the Cadi ; but, as this functionary can listen to no complaints against the government, and holds his situation only by the sufferance of

tion, and despotism are debasing it more and more every day. There is no zeal but for the propagation of the faith ; no spirit but in celebrating the Eed ; no liberality but in feeding lazy Seyuds ; and no taste but in ornamenting old tombs. Their active diversions are shooting and clapping with their swords, to prove their temper and the strength of their own arms. They are good marksmen with their matchlocks, and inimitably dexterous with the bow and a blunt heavy arrow, which they use for game, and dart in a transverse instead of a straight direction, so that the body, and not the point of the arrow, strikes the object. With these arrows they kill partridges flying, to the right and left, as surely and expeditiously as an European sportsman with a double barrellled gun. All the princes are from great practice incredibly expert both with their guns and bows. In riding, and the use of the sword, the Sindians have no skill, nor have they any exercise peculiar to themselves."—Crow.

the Ameers, it will be evident that he can be no check on their Highnesses, though privileged by his code to be so.

I have in another place given a specimen of the manner in which justice is dispensed to the Hindoos, who for the most part prudently settle their differences among themselves by punchaets, or arbitration, without a reference to the ruling authorities. The Beloches seem generally to take the law into their own hands, and to act on the simple principle of retaliation ; nor do the Ameers often interfere with them, except where individual disputes extend to whole tribes, when they are obliged to settle matters by force or conciliation. A serious quarrel of this sort took place, from a most trifling cause, while I was at Hyderabad, and called for the mediation of their Highnesses, who sent for the contending parties to the durbar in my presence, and with much flattery and address obtained a promise from each to desist.

In no respect were my expectations more disappointed than in the military force of Sindh. Having lived for some time in Cutch amid frequent rumours of attack and invasion, I had, in common with most others in that province, imbibed the idea that there was a powerful body of troops maintained at Hyderabad. It is quite the contrary, however ; and, with the exception of a small corps of Beloches who are kept to garrison the fortress, the armed retainers of the Ameers are few in num-

ber, and contemptible in appearance. Several of the chiefs of the tribes reside constantly at court, and are able to collect, in the course of a few days, by some means resembling the fiery cross used by our own forefathers, their various followers, who at other times are employed in agriculture, and other peaceful occupations. In this manner it is said the government can assemble about forty thousand men, to whom, while in active service, I find by Captain Seton's Report that it allows a pice each *per diem* ; but I presume this must be either a mistake, or a regulation of former times, as I heard of horsemen being entertained at the respectable salaries of thirty rupees *per mensem*. A case might be supposed in which the whole Mahomedan population would rise *en masse* ; but as patriotism is unknown in this quarter of the globe, nothing except a fiery zeal for religion, fanned into a flame by some designing enthusiast, is ever likely to produce such a result.

Though the iron rod of the Ameers has repressed the daring spirit of the military classes of their subjects, and the general tranquillity of the province has left their energies to slumber for a while, they may yet be considered as a body of marauders ready to take arms for any cause which will afford them support, or which offers a prospect of plunder. Like hungry vultures they would almost seem to "scent the battle from afar;" for the train of dissension is no sooner lighted, than war be-

comes their universal cry, and it is incredible in how short a period they flock to their rendezvous. Sobdar's late insurrection was settled in the course of a few days, but not until twenty or thirty thousand volunteers had joined the different standards, and numbers were crowding in hourly when the adjustment took place. In the field, the Sindian soldier has no discipline; and as his pay is generally contemptible, and frequently uncertain, he conceives himself fully privileged to supply his wants at the expence of the villages on his march. He is acknowledged to be brave and hardy, but his reputation is far higher in his own country than any where else. His vanity and gasconading are proverbial: from the general down to his meanest follower in the camp, every man makes his own past and intended exploits, or those of his ancestors, the constant theme of his conversation and contemplation; and it is remarkable with what patience they listen to the empty vauntings of one another. The army of the Ameers, when collected, presents a motley and ill-accounted assemblage of mercenaries from all quarters; and it is composed chiefly of adventurers who have descended from the mountains of Belochistan, to one of the tribes of which, that of Rind, the reigning house traces its origin.

Horses are brought in great numbers annually from Cabûl and Candahar to Cutch and Bombay, where they are bought by agents for the British

government; and as they all take the route through Sinde, and can be procured there at a very cheap rate, it might be imagined that the Beluche soldiers, who are generally cavalry, would be well mounted. There are no fine horses, however, to be seen, except in the stables of the Ameers; who every year purchase some of the best from the dealers as they pass, and who, besides having excellent studs, all keep an immense number of dogs of good breed, which are also imported from the upper provinces. I saw several large, powerful-looking mules in Sinde, and, conceiving that it might be an object to government to get them for the use of the artillery from that country, instead of from the more distant ports in the Persian Gulf, I made inquiries regarding them, but am afraid they could not be procured at a less expence, or more easily than by the arrangement which at present exists.

The Ameers are, I believe, perfectly aware of the utter hopelessness of any defence they could make, in the event of an invasion by our government. Many circumstances proved to me that "the magic of our name linked with success," and the feeling not to be wondered at, which pervades the eastern world, generally, of its being "the will of God," that, till a certain period, we shall prove victorious in all our enterprizes, have not failed to exert their superstitious influence on the anxious and foreboding minds of the natives. In their attempts to conceal their terror they adopt

means which inevitably lead to a detection of it; such as the vaunting and imperious style of their letters to foreign powers, and their endeavours to impress strangers with an exaggerated estimation of their dignity and importance. Like many men in private life, who contrive for a time to cloak their ignorance under a formal manner and distant deportment, they well know that a closer inspection would infallibly expose their weaknesses; and hence arises their jealousy of our acquiring a nearer or more intimate knowledge of their country or of themselves.

Such flimsy pretences could never blind any individual who has visited Sind and witnessed the true state of affairs. Of the few walled towns in the province all are contemptible, and scarcely one deserves the name of a fortress. Omerkote, the repository of the wealth of the court, which has so long been supposed unassailable from the report of its being environed by a sandy desert of great extent where no water is procurable, has been ascertained, by late inquiries, to be within a few miles of a branch of the Indus, and utterly untenable. The city of Hyderabad is a collection of wretched low mud hovels, as destitute of the means of defence as they are of external elegance, or internal comfort; and even the boasted stronghold of the Ameers, which surmounts their capital, is but a paltry erection of ill burnt bricks, crumbling gradually to decay, and perfectly inca-

pable of withstanding for an hour the attack of regular troops.* The nobility would, in all probability, and, as is usual with Asiatics, desert their masters in the time of trouble; and although I have no doubt the Talpoor chiefs would themselves bravely perish in defence of their sovereignty and treasures, it is scarcely possible to conceive a more easy, or, as far as the people generally are concerned, a more willing conquest, were our victorious arms turned in that direction, than Sinde would prove, unassisted by any of the countries in the neighbourhood.

Were such an event to happen, as happen in all probability it will, from causes as uncontrollable as those which have led to the already mighty

* “ The fortifications of Hyderabad consist of a high wall and a high citadel, upon which some very heavy guns are planted. The wall is thin, but supported inside by a great depth of earth, partly original and partly piled up, which would make a breach difficult. The citadel is entirely brick work, but very thick, and the figure perfectly circular, of not more than one hundred yards diameter. There is a dry ditch round one side of the fort, and low ground on the other. The circumference of the wall may be three quarters of a mile; it has few embrasures, and no commanding angles, nor outworks. The figure of the fort “ comes nearest to an oblong square, but stands upon one side of the extremity of a long and narrow rocky hill, steep in its declivity every way. The country surrounding this rock is an island formed by the Indus, about six or eight miles broad, and twenty or thirty long, well cultivated, and annually inundated by the periodical swell.”—CROW.

extension of our empire, there is no district which would better repay the fostering care of a mild and enlightened management than Sind. The people of that country and our government might mutually congratulate each other and themselves on the advantages they had gained ; and while the one was grateful for the introduction of free institutions and a benignant rule, the other might glory in the acquisition of a valuable and productive addition to its dominions. Agriculture and commerce, which are now languid from ignorance and taxation, would gradually revive and flourish under the new and better order of things ; and the local advantages of the province, combined with security to property and impartial justice, would invite settlers from other countries, whose families would recruit the lost population, and whose energies, unfettered by religious bigotry or military despotism, would have full scope, encouragement, and reward. Then the river Indus might once more become the channel of communication and of wealth, between the interior of Asia and the Peninsula of India ; while Sind herself, equally interesting to us from classic association, and from sympathy with her present sufferings, would rise renewed to claim a due importance in the scale of nations, and to profit by the benefits which nature has bestowed upon her.

By the beginning of January, Mourad Ali's health had been perfectly re-established, but

still the Ameers showed no disposition whatever to consent to my leaving Hyderabad, and I ascertained, what I had previously suspected, that they wished to detain me altogether. Mourad Ali had once or twice asked me whether I had any objection to remain with them ; and although I had always evaded his questions by explaining that I was a servant of the government, without whose permission I could do nothing, he had often reverted to the subject, and had requested my opinion whether Sir John Malcolm would agree to my returning, even should I leave Hyderabad for the present. Wullee Mahommed Khan now informed me that he had recommended the Ameers to make the proposal at once to government ; and although they were evidently unwilling to gain their object in this manner, I was privately apprized that some circumstances had occurred which induced them to protract my departure as long as possible.

About the end of December two vakeels arrived from Shah Shuja Ool Moolk the exiled king of Cabûl, and the pensioner of our government at Ludiana, loaded with presents to the Ameers, and making a demand that the district of Shikarpoor should be restored to his majesty, who proposed proceeding there in person to collect followers, with a view to regaining his lost empire. The king's proposal was accompanied by a threat, privately intimated through Ismail Shah, that, if

the Ameers did not immediately accede to his request, it was his intention to transfer his undoubted sovereignty over Sind to his faithful allies the British, who he declared were preparing to assist him with troops and money in his ambitious enterprises.

The whole message appeared to me from the first an empty bravado on the part of the fallen monarch; but the Ameers, although they had courage enough to reject at once the proposal, felt by no means easy at the appalling intimation which accompanied it, and which conjured up, no doubt, to their recollection many a long arrear of subsidy unpaid, and much harsh conduct to the unfortunate house of Cabûl to be accounted for. Their alarm * was heightened by another circumstance,

* Tatta is described to have been a place of immense wealth and commerce when Nadir Shah visited Sind in 1747-8; but if we can believe the following extract from Tavernier's Travels, written about a century before that time, it had even much fallen off in his days. I quote from an Italian edition, the only copy I ever saw of the book, published at Bologna in 1690, and, strange to say, given to me by the Ameers of Sind, whose servants had taken it from an unfortunate native of Rome, who passed through Hyderabad in the beginning of 1827. The remark about the filling up of the river is also curious. It has no doubt changed its course often; but I question whether it was ever more or less navigable than at the present moment. How unfortunate it is, that no one has left an exact account of the distance of Tatta from the Indus in those days. It is now certainly above five

trifling in itself, but which in their jealous minds amounted to "confirmation strong" of combinations against them. About the time the vakeels arrived from Ludiana, intelligence was also received from their agent at Bawulpoor, that an English officer had arrived there, and had been treated by the Khan with great respect. It occurred at once to the Ameers that he had been sent to assist in Shah Shuja's schemes; but, as far as I could ascertain by the most particular inquiries, he was a traveller unconnected with government, who had probably taken that route from Bengal to Europe, and was thus innocently the cause of much terror to the court of Sinde.

Even in the bright days of the Afghaun monarchy, the respect and obedience which the rulers of Sinde paid to their lord paramount, were exceedingly remiss; and their annual tribute to his treasury was seldom yielded till a powerful army had advanced to extort it. It is not from characters like the Ameers that we can expect reverence for fallen greatness; and, accordingly, the few members of the royal family who, since the ruin of the Doranee dynasty, have sought refuge at their capital, have been treated with undisguised

miles. "At present the commerce of Tatta, which was formerly great, is much diminished, as the mouth of the river is always getting worse, and the sand, by increasing, scarcely gives room for a passage."—*Viaggi di Giov. Battist. Tavernier*, Part 2.

contempt. While I was there, a nephew of the king Timour Shah, passed through on his way to Bombay, to solicit a share in the charity which has been extended to so many of his ill-fated relatives by the British government. He is the grandson of the great Ahmed Shah, but, like most of his house, is now a wanderer without a home. He was too proud to visit the durbar of the Ameers ; and they considered that they had shown him hospitality enough by sending him seventy-five Bombay rupees. He had only two attendants, and found an asylum in a mosque like a common beggar. His distress and disappointment were evident when he learned that Mr Elphinstone had left India ; and he was so poor as to be obliged to ask me for assistance. I gave him a letter to Captain Walter, by whom he was liberally entertained at Bhooj.

Shortly after leaving Cutch, I had been summoned as a witness to attend a general court-martial at Surat, and it was now announced to me by letters from the prisoner, that the trial could not proceed till I made my appearance. I therefore felt extremely perplexed how to act ; for I was unwilling to relinquish an opportunity, which had so unexpectedly offered, of establishing a British influence in Sind, should it be considered an object ; while to the wishes of the Ameers and their vizier I could hold out no encouragement, as I was ignorant of the policy of government, and dreaded the

responsibility of subjecting it to the necessity of an ungracious refusal, were a letter despatched to Bombay at my suggestion. I lost no time, however, in referring the matter by an express messenger to Cutch; but, as the resident was absent, I could obtain no definitive orders without waiting for a considerable interval. It was necessary, without delay, to adopt some course which would meet both emergencies; and I accordingly resolved to propose to the Ameers to leave them for the present, and to return after I had appeared before the court-martial; and, in the meantime also, to ascertain the commands of the Honourable the Governor in Council.

The Ameers met my communication by informing me, that they were making preparations for a visit to Sehwaun, to which they were going in a body, to return thanks at the shrine of a famous saint for the recovery of Mourad Ali's health, and where it was their wish that I should accompany them. I was truly sorry to forego so favourable an opportunity of seeing the country, but I felt it my duty to press the absolute necessity of my departure; and, although they were extremely averse, they at last consented, under an agreement that I would meet them again on their return to Hyderabad in the course of a month or six weeks. I considered that my object was now gained; but I had to appear no less than six or eight days successively, to take my leave; and their Highnesses

still insisted on my deferring my departure for another day. At length, when it could no longer be delayed, they paid me the compliment of asking by which route I should like to return; and as I at once decided on going down the Indus, one of their state barges was got in readiness for me, and their cousin Meer Ghoolam Shah, the grandson of Bejur Khan, mentioned in a preceding part of this Narrative, was ordered, as a great mark of respect, to accompany me to the place of embarkation.

On the morning of the 21st of January, I paid my last visit at the durbar of the Ameers, and the adieus on both sides were, I believe, not unmingled with regret. Their Highnesses expressed themselves more than ever thankful; and I had an opportunity of reiterating my acknowledgments for the continued hospitality and respect I had experienced in Sind. I was accompanied to the river side, a distance of about five miles, by several of their chief officers, and amongst these, by my old friend Wullee Mahommed, who presented me with a copy of his poetical works at parting, and who, unknown to me, had sent several articles which might contribute to my convenience among my baggage. Having embarked at twelve o'clock on board the boat which was prepared for me, together with some officers, whom the Ameers had deputed to attend me, we immediately weighed anchor, and continued a delightful voyage at the rate of about three

miles an hour till evening, when we moored for the night near Triccul. The barge was a large flat-bottomed vessel, resembling a steam-boat in appearance, fitted up with the greatest attention to comfort, and supplied, as usual, with every necessary and luxury the country could afford, for my attendants and myself. On the deck were erected two wicker bungalows, one of which, destined for my accommodation, was as large as an officer's tent, and nearly of the same form, being covered with scarlet cloth, and lined inside with chintz. A fleet of smaller boats accompanied us, having on board the horses, camels, &c.

By day-break on the 22d, we again glided down the stream, and arrived opposite Tatta at night-fall. I had omitted to inform the Ameers of my wish to visit that famous city ; but this, I was resolved, should not prevent my taking advantage of so favourable an opportunity to do so. On the morning of the following day I accordingly rode to it, a distance of about six miles from the river, through a woody country, and passed hurriedly along the streets to the large mosque built by the Emperor Aurungzebe, which I was most anxious to see. The officers who were with me expressed no objection to my visiting the city ; but as they had received no orders from the Ameers, they declined dismounting from their horses, while I was engaged in a hasty glance at the different objects of interest ; and I was constrained to return to the boat, having seen only

enough to excite my curiosity without gratifying it, and not having had an opportunity of conversing with a single inhabitant. I was for a few minutes in the house erected by Mr Crow, formerly commercial agent in Sind, a large building in the native style, situated near the centre of the town, from the roof of which I had an extensive view of the surrounding scenery. Tatta still retains many memorials of its ancient grandeur. The extent of ground which it covers is immense; and the remains of tombs and mosques which are to be seen all around, would almost warrant a belief in the tradition of the people, that it was once twelve Sindian coss, or about thirty English miles in circumference. It was there that I saw the only houses built of stone in Sind. Unlike those of Hyderabad, the buildings of Tatta are generally substantial and elevated, though many of them are now ruinous and dilapidated. *

* “ The celebrated river, which Europeans denominate the Indus, is called by the Hindoos Sindh, and gives its name to the country, though the part which lies on the west side from Hali Ghundh to the sea is, for the sake of distinction, termed Lar. The fertility of the country, when it is exposed to the inundation, is as great as that of Egypt, and subject to less variety and uncertainty; the waters being regular in their return, departure, and quantity, beginning to rise about the latter end of April, and to subside early in September. The breadth of the swell varies according to the nature of the country through which the river passes; in general, I believe, it is felt five miles from the banks on either side, and

On the 24th we again pursued our voyage, and by evening had reached Sitah, a landing-place near Peer Putta, which was visible at about ten miles distance. I met with little worthy of remark on my passage down the Indus ; and I have mentioned in the sketch of my route the various towns which attracted my notice. I saw no signs of cultivation except a single field of mustard ; the country being a jungle laid waste for hunting forests, or, as in the approach towards Tattah, and on the western side, a desert hilly district. The banks of the river were generally low and shelving ; a description, I believe, which applies to those of the Indus for many miles from its mouth. The classic river of Sinde, as far as I saw it, with all its beauties and peculiarities, has been so well and so fully described, in Captain Maxfield's survey and the reports I formerly mentioned, that little is left for me to comment on : it is also unnecessary here to trouble the reader with remarks which have been made by others, and which will be found in the

Gul Hayat Institute

in many parts much more, particularly in the Delta. The Indus, as a river, has few merits except its periodical swell ; its stream is foul and muddy, and so full of shoals and shifting sands, that flat-bottomed boats only are safe, and scarcely any other are used ; its course is extremely crooked, and towards the sea very inconstant. Marks of the caprice of the river abound in the lower country ; the most striking of which are, the bed of a large stream now perfectly dry, about five miles from Corachee, and about five miles further, at a place called Guissary, &c."—CROW.

most interesting form, in the writings of Major Rennell, Mr Crow, * and Colonel Pottinger. Some observations which have occurred to me on the geography of Alexander's Route are appended to the present narrative, but I cannot say that I think them deserving of much consideration.

In a preceding paragraph, I have alluded to the moderate means possessed by the Ameers for repelling an invasion of their territory; and a single glance at the Indus will show the easy passage into the very heart of their dominions, which that river offers to a maritime power. The state-barge which conveyed me to Sitah, although flat-bottomed, was, in my opinion, capable of transporting half a regiment; and, during the voyage, we met many others equally capacious. I am ignorant of naval tactics; but I have no doubt that armed steam-boats of small burden might act with peculiar efficacy; and although the shoals and cur-

* Of the alligators in the river Indus, Mr Crow speaks as follows:—"The alligators should not be forgotten, for they are very numerous, and much respected, not only by the Hindoos, but also by the Mahommedans. The tutelar god of Corachee is a scaly monster, with a train of females and dependants, nourished in the muddy rivulets which flow from the hot springs near Corachee, called Peer Munga, from the name of a saint who formerly resided there. It is singular to see these animals sometimes dozing close to the mouth of the spring where the water is almost boiling hot, and sometimes wallowing in the pools which are perfectly cold."—Crow.

rents in the stream might at first appear an impediment, war would scarcely be declared before the decks of our vessels were crowded with volunteers, well acquainted with the navigation, and ready to contribute their utmost efforts for the subversion of the present government.

At Sitah I was again met by Hyder Khan Lagharee, by whom I was conducted through a productive country to Mugrbhey, and from thence through the desolate tract I have mentioned in the commencement of my narrative, to Luckput, which I reached on the 28th of January.

I had scarcely put my foot on the shore of Cutch, when a letter from the resident, of date the 18th January, authorizing me to remain in Sind, pending a reference to government, was delivered to me; together with a note from Colonel Leighton, which that gentleman had kindly written me from Surat, to say that the proceedings of the court-martial had terminated, and that my evidence was unnecessary. I lost not an hour in apprizing the Ameers of this information, and again crossed into Sind on my return to Hyderabad; but I had not proceeded more than thirty miles, when hearing of Sobdar's rebellion, and of the distracted state of the country, I determined to await the answer to my letters. I remained several days at Pallia, a wretched halting-place in the Runn, amid rumours of battles and murder, till the 13th, when I received a message, through the agent, from the Ameers, entreating me

not to venture forward in the present state of affairs; and, accordingly, I deemed it prudent to fall back to Luckput, where I shortly after received the orders of the Honourable the Governor in Council to return to Bhooj.

On learning that government had no wish to effect the establishment of a resident in Sind, I thought it proper to give the native agent at Hyderabad to understand, that it was likely I would be employed in a particular duty, which would preclude the possibility of my fulfilling my promise of revisiting the Ameers. This was, no doubt, explained perfectly to their satisfaction, as their Highnesses have carried on a constant correspondence with me ever since I left them. Their letters are of the most friendly description, and evidently show a wish on their part to maintain a good understanding with me; nor should I conceal that I believe it is even yet in my power to induce them again to invite me to their court, and to consent to my permanent residence in their capital.

In conclusion, I must lay claim to indulgence for the many imperfections which, I am sensible, may be discovered in this narrative; imperfections which I earnestly hope will rather be attributed to the difficulties I have encountered in drawing it up, than to any neglect or indifference on my part. I cannot but remark also, that, like all persons who undertake to write personal narratives of their proceedings, I have too often been obliged to

speak of myself and my conduct in terms which a fastidious, or probably a very correct feeling, might condemn; but in extenuation, I can only say, that I have been actuated by a sincere desire to represent things as they really are; nor can I accuse myself of having entered more fully into my transactions with the Ameers than was absolutely necessary to exhibit their characters and manners in a proper light. That much has been suppressed which it might have been gratifying to record, may be seen on reference to the letters which the native agent in Sindé addressed to the resident in Cutch, during my stay at Hyderabad, and which have fallen into my hands since my return to Bhooj.

POSTSCRIPT.*—Since the completion of the foregoing narrative, an event, worthy of record, has occurred in Sindé, and fully realized the anticipations expressed in the preceding pages. Meer Kurm Ali died of fever in December 1828, leaving Mourad Ali, now the only surviving of the four brothers who established the Talpoor dynasty, the sole and undisputed sovereign of the country, with a greater degree of power vested in his single person, than was ever previously shared by the family. The deceased chief is much lamented by his dependants, to whom he had en-

* August 15, 1829.

COURT OF SINDE.

135

deared himself by kindness and liberality ; and his death will no doubt cause a considerable revolution in the appearance of the court, the style and dignity of which were supported principally at his cost.

Among the stipulations by which Sobdar's rebellion, in February 1828, was settled, there was a promise sacredly given on the Koran by Kurm Ali, that he would adopt that prince as his heir ; but Sobdar, whose weak character is known, sunk into his former insignificance soon after the reconciliation was concluded, and tamely permitted those who had taken the field in his cause to incur the vengeance and cruelty of the chief Ameers. It will not excite surprise, therefore, that on the demise of his uncle, he wanted spirit to claim the treasures to which he was entitled : accordingly, Mourad Ali first contrived, under some pretence, that they should be left in deposit with his late brother's wives, and latterly, he has appropriated them entirely to himself. The territorial possessions of Kurm Ali, with the exception of small estates granted to the young Ameers, have also devolved into the hands of the present ruler, under whose vigorous sway Sinda is likely, for some time at least, to enjoy undisturbed tranquillity.

REMARKS ON ALEXANDER'S ROUTE.

APPENDED to the copy of the narrative, which I had lately the honour of forwarding to government, were several memoranda respecting the Indus and my route after I left its banks ; but, as most of these appear to me neither interesting nor important, I deem it unnecessary now to transcribe them. The following crude observations, or rather fancies, which were hastily committed to paper, during my passage down the river, I shall allow, however, to remain, not only from the natural desire which every person who visits Sindé must feel to say something regarding the Indus, but also as they may assist some other gentleman who may be disposed to prosecute so interesting an inquiry as the geography of Alexander's route. It will be seen that my opinions are founded chiefly on the supposition that the river is now nearly the same as the Greeks found it, above two thousand years ago ; than which, I need scarcely say, nothing can be more uncertain. I felt a strong desire to collect a number of facts regarding the Indus ; and during my stay in Sindé, as well as since my return, I have examined several natives on the subject ; but all I can gather from them are accounts of its inconstancy, and of the many and sudden changes it has undergone, even in the short period of their personal experience. A very intelligent young native of Khorasan, whom I brought with me from Hyderabad, where he had resided many years, in explaining to me this peculiarity of the river, said, it was so little to be depended on, that a person embarking at any of the higher stations with the intention of proceeding by a particular stream to the sea, could not be certain of finding the branch below Tatta he proposed to

ALEXANDER'S ROUTE.

137

navigate, and of the existence of which he had been assured a few days previous to the commencement of his voyage. *

Below Tatta the river Indus divides into two large arms ; the Meyraun and the Bugghaur. I followed the course of the latter, which is also named Sitah, and which, at the place of division, is the larger of the two. Four coss below Tatta on the left bank is the small village of Summa. The river is here three quarters of a mile in width. There is nothing of this division of the Indus into two large and nearly equal branches, in Arrowsmith's and Carey's maps ; but it is evidently laid down correctly in the quarter-master-general's manuscript one. The Meyraun, although the smaller at first, is described as the main river, and as passing Lahory and Barajay Bunders into the sea ; and this tallies exactly with the name and information given to Major Rennell towards the close of last century.

After all, the ancients, I believe, had a better idea of the Delta of the Indus, than the writers of our time. Arrian says, (l. vi. c. 17-18.) " This realm the river Indus incloses, in the form of the Greek letter Δ , and it is much larger than the Egyptian province of that name. Near Patala the Indus divides itself into two vast branches, both of which bear the same name to the sea." Of the correctness of the latter part of this description I have ocular demonstration ; and the people declare, that, although the Bugghaur or Sitah, in which I am now sailing, soon divides itself into branches, and disembogues its waters chiefly at Wanyance ; yet, with a little difficulty, I could reach Busta Bunder, and consequently the Luckput creek or real easternmost branch of the Indus. Had modern geographers known this, they might have spared themselves the trouble of calling in the assistance of the Nulla Sunkra, to account for Alexander's going down the eastern branch. There is

* The following memoranda were noted down on the Indus, 24th January 1828.

no Nulla Sunkra, as far as I could ascertain, known at the present day in Sind; and although some one of the rivers may still bear that appellation, or, at all events, had it about the middle of last century, when it is expressly mentioned in the treaty of partition between Nadir Shah and the king of Delhi, it must have been the Phuraun,* the Phulailee, or the Pirsyaree; and in that case we must either believe that the present Tatta, and the ruins in its neighbourhood, Braminabad, are not the site of the Patala of the Greeks, or that Alexander went up the river from Tatta to enter and explore the eastern branch of the Indus, of which there is neither an account nor a probability. Nothing is more perplexing than the diversity of names, so common in eastern countries, which is to be attributed to the natives themselves, who have many appellations for the same river, and who are constantly changing them like a matter of fashion.

Were we to suppose that the Macedonian hero navigated the Bugghaur or Sitah, all the circumstances of his second voyage down the Indus might be accounted for without drawing too strongly on our belief. The lake † in which he arriv-

* The following extract from the treaty of partition would almost lead us to believe that the Nulla Sunkra was the Phuraun or Koree River, the most easterly branch of the Indus, which, at its mouth, divides Sind from Cutch. "In consideration of the favour which no father shows to a son, and no brother to a brother, I make over to him (Nadir Shah,) all the country to the west of the river Attok, the water of Sind, and the Nulla Sunkra, which is a branch of the water of Sind. That is to say, &c. All their fields, villages, castles, towns, and ports, from the first rise of the river Attok, with all the passes and habitations, which the above said water and its several branches comprehends, and surrounds as far as the Nulla Sunkra, where it empties itself into the sea, &c."

† Arrian's description of the lake would almost apply to the Runn, flooded as it was when Alexander sailed down the river. "When he had sailed down the left branch, and was now near the mouth thereof, he came to a certain lake formed by the river, spreading wide over a flat country, or by additional streams flowing in from the adjacent parts, and making it appear like a bay in the sea."—l. vi. c. 20.

ALEXANDER'S ROUTE.

139

ed abounding with fish, as Arrian says, might reasonably be supposed to be the present Luckput creek, which is ten miles wide near the sea. We are told that after passing the lake he made three days' journey * along the coast, ordering wells to be dug as he went. Geographers have differed about his entering Cutch; but supposing he landed near Narraensir, and marched, as Dr Vincent calculates, sixty miles, he must have reached Sandan, in the Abbrassa, and passed through the country now occupied by the villages of Bheyr Jackow and Kotorah, all of which may be said, in consequence, to be classic ground. The situation of Xylenopolis, † as laid down in the maps of ancient geography, is nearer the site of the modern town of Luckput, that is, further up the Creek or Koree river, than Narraensir; and if we believe that Alexander landed there, and still performed a march of sixty miles, he could not have proceeded further than Juckow Bunder.

It is not impossible that Patala may have been situated where the modern town of Jerkh is placed, and in that case Alexander may have navigated the Punjaree branch, which passes by Bunna Laigpoor, Meerpore, and Mugrbhey, and which also would have brought him to the Luckput creek. It is worthy of observation, that I can gain no information of so large a river passing from the Bhuggaur, and termed the Meet Meeraun, as that represented in the quarter-master general's map; and I am assured that at this season it is impossible to reach Mugrbhey by any other route by water, than by the Punjaree. This does not, however, offer any difficulty to Alexander's passing down it in August or September, as then it would be a very large river; and the Residency Moonshee informs me that he and his family embarked at Tatta twenty-

* "Then going on shore with a party of horse, he travelled three days along the sea coast to view it, and try if he could find any bays or creeks to secure his fleet from storms."—l. vi. c. 20.

† Xylenopolis means the city of woods; a most inapplicable term certainly, to the present Luckput and its vicinity.

six years ago, and went down by this identical branch to Cotasir in the Luckput creek. I have not presumed to alter the name given to it on the map, though I must add that the designation of Meet Meeraun, as applied to this river, is, as far as I could learn, unknown in Sinde.

There is no good reason, however, in my humble opinion, to doubt that Tatta is the site of the Patala of the ancients. Arrian says that the word "Patala" corresponded with "Delta" in the Greek; and there is certainly no part of the modern Indus which deserves the name of a Delta but that below Tatta; nor can we suppose that Alexander or his followers, who had seen the Delta of the Nile, would have designated any of the branches higher up, which were all very small at the season of the year he saw them, by such an appellation. Further, as a proof of Patala not being higher up, we are informed that Alexander, after leaving it, in his first voyage down the Indus, followed the course of the right branch (the modern Meyraun no doubt,) and that he had only sailed four hundred furlongs or fifty miles, when his pilots announced to him their approach to the ocean; on hearing which, it is said, he leaped for joy. The ascertained distance from Tatta to the sea is eighty miles; and we can scarcely, therefore, imagine that the pilots, with all their experience in distinguishing the sea air, as stated in history, could have foretold the proximity of the ocean at a greater distance than thirty miles. The only argument against this opinion is, that the tides affect the Indus to about sixty miles from its mouth, and that the Macedonians ought, therefore, to have discovered the ebb and flow, which amazed and alarmed them so much afterwards, long before they were within thirty miles of the sea. But it is not too much to believe that they were carried down by the current, then running four or five knots an hour, many miles without perceiving it; an occurrence which might happen to any navigator, particularly at the season of the year they were in Sinde, when the river is so much enlarged; and that they only became acquainted with the ap-

ALEXANDER'S ROUTE.

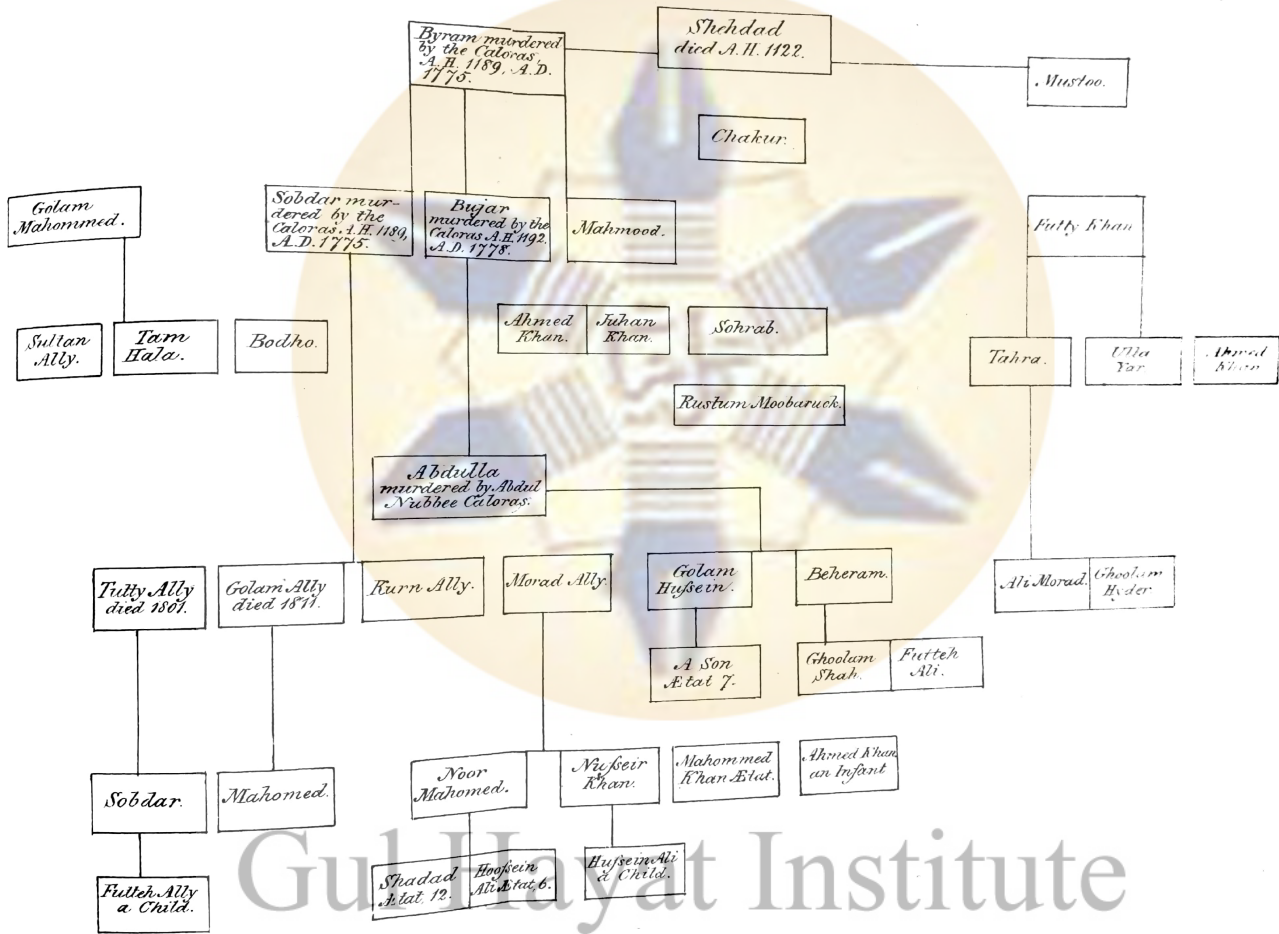
141

palling phenomenon by the violent obstacle which the flow of the tide, accompanied with the south-west monsoon, presented to their progress. This may appear inconsistent, from the fact of Leonatus, with a body of troops on shore, being ordered to regulate his movements by those of the fleet ; but the very nature of the country near the mouths of the Indus must have rendered it impossible for him to remain always in sight of the ships.

It is a singular proof of the superior correctness of the ancient geographers, that Arrian's account of the chief mouth of the Indus being about twelve miles wide, has been proved to be strictly consistent with fact by modern discoveries ; although Dr Vincent has taken great pains to expose his inaccuracy in this respect, which, he says, may mainly be attributed to exaggeration, caused by fear. *

* “ And as it now approached the sea, the stream appeared enlarged to two hundred stadia.”—ARRIAN.—“ An exaggeration which no computation of the stadium, no allowance for the overflowing of the river can justify !”
—VINCENT.

Genealogical Table of the Talpoor Family.



of Talpoor Family, 1807.
(To face Page 142)



Gul Hayat Institute

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

THE following “ Sketch of the History of Cutch since its connexion with the British Government” was compiled from public documents some years ago, as a supplement to a short history of that country by Captain Charles Walter, and in order to gratify the curiosity of a few friends, who expressed a strong desire to know something of the life and proceedings of the Ex-Rao, Bhalmulgee, a state prisoner in Bhooj. Not having Captain Walter’s papers at hand to refer to, I have prefixed a short outline of the early history of Cutch, which consists simply of extracts from official reports by the honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, lieutenant-colonel Pottinger, political resident at Bhooj, and lieutenant James Holland, deputy-assistant quarter-master general of the Bombay Army.

The following Letter, which has reference to the Historical Sketch of Cutch, may be inserted here:—

Bombay Castle, 22d April 1830.

(POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, No. 526.)

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 29th March, with a copy of one from Dr Burnes, and to request that you will convey to that officer the thanks of government for the valuable sketch of the recent History of Cutch which accompanied it.

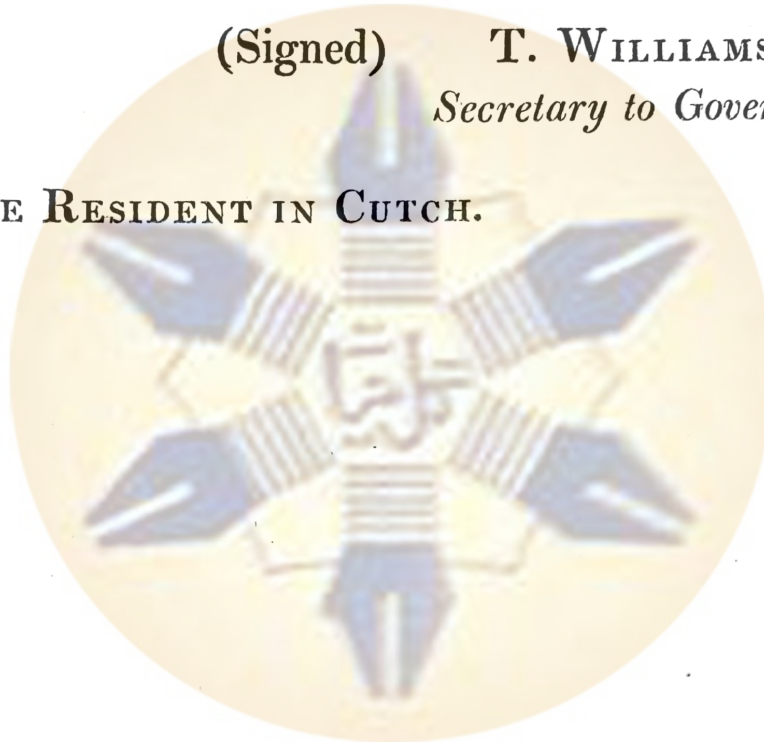
146

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

You will also be pleased to express to Dr Burnes the real satisfaction with which government observes public officers devote their leisure to such objects of useful research, and to acquaint him that his clear and concise account of Cutch will be brought to the notice of the Honourable the Court of Directors.—I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) T. WILLIAMSON,
Secretary to Government.

TO THE RESIDENT IN CUTCH.



Gul Hayat Institute

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF CUTCH BEFORE THE BRITISH CONNEXION.

ABOUT the ninth century of the Christian era, a body of supposed Moosulmans of the Summa tribe emigrated from Sinde, and, under the guidance of five brothers, settled in Cutch, of which by degrees they acquired the complete sovereignty; having either by force or fraud expelled, or subjected to their authority, the aboriginal inhabitants, consisting of three distinct classes, Wagellas, Katties, and Wagum Chowras.

Four or five generations after their settlement, the descendants of the five brothers, assumed the name of Jharejah, * derived from a leader of the tribe named Jharrah, who set his descendants the example of female infanticide, by putting to death his seven daughters in one day.

* Lieut. HOLLAND'S *Account of the Jharejahs.*

Cutch continued tranquil under their sway for many years, until the murder of Humeerjee, the chief of the elder branch of the tribe, by another Jharejah, named Jam Rawul. Khengarjee, the son of Hameerjee, on the death of his father, fled to Ahmedabad to seek the assistance of the viceroy, who had married his sister; and this being readily granted, a force was sent into Cutch to reinstate him, as chief of the tribe, in his rights, which had been usurped by the murderer of his father.

On the approach of the viceroy's army Jam Rawul fled with his adherents to Kattiwar, and founded the town of Nawanuggur, which is possessed by his descendants at the present day; and Khengarjee assumed the sovereignty of Cutch and Moorvee in Kattiwar, with the title of Rao or Rawul, A. D. 1549.

From the time of Khengarjee until that of Rahiden, A. D. 1666, the succession continued according to the law of primogeniture. Pragjee, the third son of the latter prince, murdered his elder brother, Jewajee, and the second brother, Nongaljee, having died in the interim, Pragjee, on the death of his father in 1698, ascended the musnud, to the prejudice of his nephews, Kianjee, the son of Jewajee, and Kallajee, the son of Nongaljee. To the former he gave the command of Moorvee in Kattiwar, which his descendants still retain; the latter retired into the Ubrassa, and took possession

of the principal towns in that district, where his descendants have ever since possessed the chief influence.

Pragjee was succeeded, in the year 1716, by his son, Gorejee, a brave and enterprising prince, who had distinguished himself by his courage and conduct during the lifetime of his father, but whose reign is not marked by any occurrence of note : he was succeeded by his son, Rao Daisul.

Rao Daisul ascended the throne, A. D. 1719.* At no period was Cutch so respectable as during his rule. He not only repelled four armies despatched from Ahmedabad by the emperor's deputy, to enforce the payment of tribute, but sent his troops across the frontier, and established military posts in Sinde, Parkhur, and Okhamundel, by which steps he checked the predatory horse from the two former quarters, and piracy at the latter.

He also took possession of various towns and villages along the southern coast of the Gulf of Cutch, to which he laid claim on account of his relationship to the Rajah of Moorvee ; and, notwithstanding all these expensive exertions, exclusive of many improvements he carried on in his own territories, he died at an advanced age, leaving a treasury well stocked with money.

The latter ten years of his life were embittered by the unkindness of his son, the Prince Lacca,

* Lieut.-colonel POTTINGER's *Abstract*.

who threw him into confinement, and also had his celebrated minister, Sett Deokurn, assassinated.

Lacca assumed the supreme authority about the year 1745. The character and forms of the durbar were entirely changed by the luxurious and extravagant splendour that were introduced during his reign, which lasted about ten years after the decease of his father. The advanced posts placed by Rao Daisul in Parkhur and Sindé were driven out; and his son, afterwards Rao Gore, rose in open rebellion against him. Of this period Captain Walter says, "The affairs of the state were left in the hands of a succession of incapable ministers, from whom the only qualification required was assent to every plan, however disreputable or atrocious, which could contribute to the Rao's vanity or profusion. Scenes of cruelty and oppression previously unknown became frequent, &c.

Either two or three ministers were put to death during this reign. Poonjah Sett, the son of the celebrated Deokurn Sett, minister of Rao Daisul, was disgraced and dismissed; and the Prince Gorgee retired to, and resided at, Moondrah for the last seven years of his father's life. Forces were frequently sent against him, but were invariably unsuccessful; and although none of the neighbouring powers attempted to invade Cutch in Rao Lacca's time, and his whole strength was therefore disposable, yet it was in vain exerted to subdue the rebellion headed by his own son in the very

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

151

heart of his dominions. He also made an abortive attack on the town and fort of Terah in the Abbrassa, the patrimony of Soomrajee Jharejah, in which he was beaten off, and obliged to return to his capital discomfited.

On the death of Rao Lacca, his only legitimate son, in 1760, Gore, was unanimously acknowledged, although his father had tried to secure the accession for one of his numerous illegitimate children. Poonjah Sett, as soon as he heard of Rao Lacca's death, hastened to Bhooj, in the expectation of being made minister; but he was treated with undisguised contempt and hostility; and hearing that a plot had been formed to assassinate him, he fled to Sinde, and the situation he had aspired to was filled by a distant relative of his own called Jeewun Sett.

Cutch was invaded no less than four times by the Sindians during this reign; and on each of these occasions the country was desolated and plundered, although the invaders did not succeed in forming a permanent settlement. Two of the inroads were headed by Gholam Shah Calora in person, and two of them by his son Surufraz Khan. The former wished to compel the Rao to give him his sister in marriage; but after a treaty had been entered into, in which this stipulation stood as an article, it was evaded, and Gholam Shah was glad, on his second invasion, to content himself with the daughter of the chief of Khau-

ker, whose family stood next in pretensions to the throne.

The inability of Cutch to withstand the power of Sind was clearly demonstrated by these events; for although the Rao engaged mercenaries from the Nuwab of Rahidenpoor, the Jam of Nuwanuggur, the chief of Moorvee, and others, yet even with all this foreign aid, had it not been for Poonjah Sett, (who first instigated Gholam Shah to the attack, but afterwards repented and persuaded him to return to Hyderabad,) it seems from all accounts probable that the Cutch government would then have been subverted. When the Sindians retired, Poonjah Sett was made minister; but soon after the Rao presented him with his own hand with a bowl of poison, and ordered him to drink it in his presence, merely because he had recommended an adherence to the articles of the treaty. His son Deojee Sett accepted the office of minister about three years subsequent to this, and likewise met an untimely fate by poison.

On quitting Cutch, Gholam Shah left a garrison of 5000 men at Luckput Bunder, which was then a petty town. He also proceeded to build an embankment to prevent the waters of the Indus from falling into the sea through the eastern branch of that river, which passes close to Luckput; and by this unjustifiable act he converted a fertile plain, which yielded from rice cultivation a revenue of

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

153

eight lacs of cories annually to the Bhooj durbar, into a dreary salt marsh.

When Gholam Shah died, his son Surufraz Khan recalled his troops from Luckput, but, as before stated, he twice after this entered Cutch with a considerable force, and devastated a great part of the country before he quitted it.

The garrisons on the part of Cutch in Ballumba, and other places, on the northern coast of Kattiwar, were expelled by the dependants of the Jam about this time ; and, instead of resenting these injuries, or at least attempting it, the Rao gave up his whole time and thoughts to the most unheard of cruelty and sensuality. He kept a body of negroes about his person, who allowed no one but the partakers of his disgusting and depraved orgies to approach him. At length the ladies of the durbar prevailed on some of the principal officers to confine the Rao ; and whilst he was under this temporary restraint, the whole of the negroes were either put to death, or fled to the adjacent countries. The Rao was so much irritated, that, on being released, he proceeded to Mandavie in disgust, and there occupied himself in building a fine palace, which, however, he never completely finished.

After stating these facts, it is almost superfluous to say, that Rao Gore was a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant. Exclusively of the revolting instances already detailed, he killed with his own hand his brother Mansingjee, simply because he discovered

that he had obtained the favours of a female who had declined his visits ; and it is estimated that in the course of his reign, a period of nineteen years, he sacrificed more than thirty ministers to his rage or rapacity. He left two sons, the prince Rahiden, and Pruthiraj, commonly called Bhyjee Bawa, the former of whom succeeded him.

Rao Rahiden began to reign in 1778, at the early age of fourteen. His mother had appointed a Lohana, by name Dewichund, minister ; and it was supposed, from the intercourse they afterwards carried on, that her connexion with him had been criminal, even during Rao Gore's lifetime.

Rao Rahiden had been accustomed from his infancy to hear of and see scenes of bloodshed and vice ; and he quickly afforded proof that he was a most apt scholar in such matters, and needed not the dying exhortations of his father to revenge his mother's infidelity on the tribe (Lohana), to which her paramour belonged. He very soon replaced the negroes who had been turned out or destroyed some years before ; and with their assistance he put to death in one day the minister Dewichund, together with his three brothers, and above two hundred of their followers.

A Banian minister was next set up under the auspices of a negro jemidar, named Mecraj ; but these ill-assorted authorities soon quarrelled. Parties arranged themselves on each side ; and whilst the Rao was indulged in the inner apartments with a few

companions in deeds of abandoned lust and profligacy, the palace was daily deluged with the blood of those who were contending for his favour. Some of the most desperate of the negroes were banished, and others put out of the way by poison, which, it is even asserted, the Rao himself mixed with their food, to rid himself of their continual importunities; but those who remained of this class had influence enough to obtain the Rao's order to destroy the Banian, which was done without delay in the public durbar.

On hearing of these nefarious proceedings, many of the district officers affected to consider themselves freed from all allegiance to Bhooj. Mandavie, however, and some other important places, continued obedient to the Rao; who, having recently adopted the Mussulman religion, resolved to force his subjects to follow his example, which he determined to do by destroying all the Hindoo temples and images. This mad project he first tried at Mandavie, whither he had gone for the express purpose; but the Brahmins and Banians, who form a large portion of the population, opposed him, and threatened, according to their mode of enforcing their wishes, to commit "traga" on themselves. The Rao, to let them clearly comprehend how careless he was of such denunciations, drew his sword and wounded five or six of them, before his attendants could seize his hand. He then gave directions that the town should be pillaged; an outrage which was

happily prevented by the rich merchants bribing the garrison to oppose the miscreants who had gladly hastened to carry the Rao's orders into execution. In the meantime, the Rao was himself in great danger from the exasperated feelings of the inhabitants, who attacked him and his escort, and obliged them to make a rapid retreat to Bhooj; where, as a compensation for the disappointment he had met with, and the opposition offered to him at Mandavie, he adopted the plan of moving about the streets habited as a fukeer, and accompanied by a body of his negroes, who put every man whom they met to death, unless he was able and willing to repeat the Mahommedan creed.

It now became notorious that the Rao was deranged; and after two or three attempts to place him under restraint, in which measure his brother Bhyjee Bawa and the ladies of the palace concurred, he was seized by a body of troops which had been secretly called in from Anjar. In one of the various unsuccessful attempts made to secure his person, which he constantly baffled through the vigilance and ferocity of his negroes, the then minister Kotaree Waga, and above three hundred people, were destroyed in cold blood in one of the palace yards, by the Rao and his desperate associates.

From this time the Rao was lodged in confinement; * but his brother Bhyjee Bawa being too

* The honourable M. ELPHINSTONE'S *Minute*.

young to assume the direction of affairs, the government was conducted by twelve commanders of mercenary troops, who appear to have been all Mahommedans, and who were guided by the authority of Dhosul Vain, the principal member of their own body.

Among these leaders was Futteh Mahommed, a native of Sinde. This person appears to have been endowed with capacity and courage. Finding the government of Dhosul Vain at once weak and odious, he successfully intrigued with the troops, with the ministers by whom the civil business of the government was still conducted, and with some of the Jharejahs ; until, in the year 1792, he was enabled to expel Dhosul Vain and his colleagues, and to transfer the reins of government into his own hands. He conducted the affairs of Cutch with firmness and ability for ten years, until Bhyjee Bawa, as regent, in whose name Futteh Mahommed appears to have administered the government, became of age, and began to feel the hardship of his exclusion from the regency. Hunsraj and the other ministers who were dissatisfied with the predominance of Futteh Mahommed, availed themselves of this feeling ; and, seizing the opportunity of a casual absence of Futteh Mahommed from the capital, they carried off Bhyjee to Mandavie, of which Hunsraj was at that time in charge. The wealth and respectable character of Hunsraj, the junction of the other ministers, and the popular

manners of Bhyjee, joined to the goodness of his cause, soon drew the majority to his party ; while Futteh Mahommed was glad to abandon Bhooj, and to compromise his claim to the administration for the possession of the fort and dependencies of Anjar.

The death of Bhyjee, which happened in 1802, six months after the revolution, restored the ascendancy of Futteh Mahommed. Hunsraj was a merchant, and his wealth and popularity were insufficient to make up for the want of knowledge and confidence in military affairs. He withdrew to Mandavie, leaving Bhooj to be captured by Futteh Mahommed, while Luckput Bunder, Moondra, Bitta, and Seesagud, with their districts, remained in the hands of independent chiefs,* who, although three of them professed Mahomedanism, were all close confederates of Hunsraj. These parties were supported entirely by their mercenary troops, consisting of Arabs, Sindees, and Mussulmans of Cutch. The Jharejahs appear to have possessed but little weight, and to have taken little interest in the struggle ; some remained at their forts entirely neutral, others served the contending parties for pay ; and although the Rao's person was in the hands of Futteh Mahommed, and Hunsraj had not even the shadow of legitimate authority, the greater part of the Bhyaud were entertained in his ser-

* Mahommed Meyan Sotah, who enacted so prominent a part afterwards, was one of these.

vice, or attached to his party. Futteh Mahommed proceeded with vigour against such of these as came within his reach ; he fomented their family quarrels ; he besieged their forts ; he levied contributions on various pretences, as well to fill his treasury as to gratify his revenge. His necessities obliged him also to impose numerous and severe taxes and fines on the merchants and ryots ; but although these proceedings naturally created general discontent, there seems to have been no attempt to form any combination against him. He continued to govern the capital and the greater part of the Rao's territories, and to carry on depredations on the possessions of his rivals until his death ; and the name of the "Jemidar" is now as much respected in Cutch as that of any of the Raos, his predecessors in authority. The death of Futteh Mahommed took place in 1813 ;—it was preceded by that of Hunsraj, and shortly followed by that of Rao Rahiden.

As long as Futteh Mahommed's plans were attended with perfect success, he seems to have been as just and merciful as his situation and motives would allow him to be ;* but the slightest check or misfortune excited his wrath ; and the annals of those days merely exhibit a tissue of civil wars, of assassinations, of public murders, of treachery, and of the grossest tyranny. Indeed, it

* Col. POTTINGER'S *Character of Futteh Mahommed*.

was impossible, with the materials Futteh Mahomed had to work upon, and the objects he had in view, that it could be otherwise; and although we may admire his courage, his liberality, the total want of any sordid feeling, and the consequent poverty in which he died, yet we must abhor his cruelty, his revengeful feelings, his perfidy when it was necessary to his purpose, and the unsparing manner in which he subjected the unhappy people whom he professed to foster to the constantly renewed horrors of a civil war of the most cruel description, which he could only contrive to carry on, by inviting into the country and enlisting bodies of desperate mercenaries, whose pay always amounted to considerably more than the revenue he drew from the places subject to him. He was, in one word, the despotic and remorseless leader of a band of plunderers; and if he showed a different and better feeling by founding two or three towns, building Luckput fort, and establishing a port at Toonah, he did all these from his wish to rival, and perhaps eventually to ruin, the chiefs who held places independent of him in the neighbourhood of these improvements.

He commanded in person four unsuccessful expeditions against the fort of Luckput after it had turned against him, and he laid waste the defenceless towns and villages; butchering the inhabitants, who had been forced by his desertion of them, to submit to the chiefs opposed to him. They

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

161

in their turn retaliated on his partizans; and I have myself been assured by some of the Potails of villages lying between Bhooj and Mandavie, that they have been pillaged and driven from their homes three times in one month by the troops of the contending parties.



Gul Hayat Institute

SECTION II.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE BRITISH
CONNEXION, TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE
TREATY OF 1816.

WE have now arrived at a stage in the history of Cutch when its connexion with the British government forms the chief part of the detail ; and it is here necessary, before proceeding to relate the consequences of the death of Futteh Mahommed, to revert a little, in order to trace the various negotiations which took place. At one of the periods, 1801-2, when Hunsraj, the governor of Mandavie, had gained a temporary ascendancy, he entreated the assistance of the Bombay government, in the name of Rao Rahiden, for the purpose of allaying the dissensions between himself and Futteh Mahommed, which destroyed the peace of the country; and, to obtain this mediation he offered to cede Cutch to the Honourable Company, provided the capital was reserved for the residence of the Rao,

and arrangements were made for the future support of his Highness. During the next two years, another proposal was received at Bombay to subsidize a body of British troops for the protection of Cutch, which was followed also by a third a short time after (1804), in which both Hunsraj and Futteh Mahommed concurred.

But it was not the policy nor wish of the British government to form any closer alliance with the state of Cutch than what would merely gain for its own subjects, and those of its allies, protection against the unruly dependents of the Rao: and, accordingly, the only agreements entered into with the chieftains above-named, in 1809, were a provision for the suppression of piracy, which had been carried on to a great extent from all the northern ports; and another for the security of Kattiwar and Guzerat, by a stipulation that no durbar troops should cross to the eastward of the Runn or Gulf of Cutch. In return for these engagements, the British government undertook to adjust the settlement of some pecuniary claims made by the Bhooj durbar on the Jam of Nuwanuggur, but declined to interfere further in the affairs of Cutch than merely to warn the government of Sinde against any attempt at the conquest of that country which the Ameers had shown a disposition to effect.

These arrangements, unfortunately, did not accomplish the object of the English government. The shores of Cutch continued to swarm with pi-

rates, who committed their depredations in the most audacious manner, and to the interruption of all commerce. Sewiraj, the son of Hunsraj, who had succeeded his father in the command of Mandavie, encouraged these outrages by conniving at the escape of the most daring offenders; and further added to the evil, by imposing a tax on all vessels, not even excepting those furnished with British passes, which entered the Gulf of Cutch. Several of the Company's cruizers were employed in checking these piracies; but they, nevertheless, increased to such an extent that the Bombay government at length resolved to send an agent to remonstrate with the Mandavie authorities, as well as to obtain payment of a sum of money due to the Honourable Company, and his Highness the Guicawar, by Sewiraj Hunsraj.

The person selected for this purpose was Captain James M'Murdo, a gentleman whose talents and accomplishments fully qualified him for the difficult task. A considerable marine force was placed at his disposal, and he was instructed to collect information respecting the haunts and strength of the pirates;—a duty which he accomplished often at great personal risk, and in a manner highly satisfactory. This officer had been but a few days at Mandavie when his penetration enabled him to discover that the pirates not only received protection at that place, but were even permitted to remain unpunished under the imme-

mediate eye of Futteh Mahommed. A ship freighted with property to a considerable amount, belonging to Shah Darab, a prince of Cabûl, was plundered in the Gulf of Cutch, by a miscreant named Nackwa Hussun, who carried his ill-gotten wealth to Bhooj, where he was allowed to squander it openly in every kind of dissipation.

With Sewiraj Hunsraj, who satisfied all demands, Captain M'Murdo was able to come to an amicable agreement; but matters had scarcely been settled at Mandavie, when his attention was strongly attracted to Futteh Mahommed, who had now also begun to show his disregard of the stipulation of 1809. Bodies of banditti from the province of Wagur were daily permitted to cross into Kattiwar, which they ravaged and laid waste. A Sindee assassin of a British officer, (Captain Phelan,) who had escaped from Nuwanuggur, was employed in the Bhooj durbar; the notorious pirate, Nackwa Hussun, with many others of the same description, were publicly encouraged to reside in that capital; and, as if all these violations of a sacred compact were insufficient, Futteh Mahommed himself proceeded to lead a force across the Runn into Parkur, and established a garrison at Santilpoor, with the avowed purpose of extending his authority in that quarter.

These various infringements of the treaty were not allowed to pass without a spirited remonstrance upon the part of Captain M'Murdo, who,

having concluded his arrangements at Mandavie, had retired to Moorvee in Kattiwar, whence he reminded the Jemidar of his engagements, and urged him to maintain them. He called on him to make restitution of the property of Shah Darab, who had solicited the intercession of the Bombay government, and insisted on the immediate surrender of the Sindee murderer and the pirate, as the only means of removing a most degrading suspicion from Futteh Mahommed himself. Through this representation the garrison at Santilpore was withdrawn, and negotiations were in progress for the punishment of the Wagur plunderers, &c. when Futteh Mahommed died. Having thus supplied the broken link, we now proceed to follow the regular chain of the narration.

On the death of Futteh Mahommed, the government of Cutch devolved quietly on his two eldest sons, Hussain and Ibrahim Meyans. Nothing could be more dissimilar than the characters of these young men. Ibrahim Meyan possessed talent, courage, and energy, with the two last of these qualities in excess; although the younger of the two, he had already taken an active part in the affairs of the state; and he had been entrusted with the command of the important fortress of Kunkote in Wagur, while his brother, who was understood to be of a weak, slow, and vacillating disposition, had been retained at Bhooj under his father's own eye and direction. For some years

before his death, Futteh Mahommed had been chiefly guided by the counsels of Jugjeewan Mehtah, a Nagur Brahmin, of fair reputation, in whose integrity he himself reposed implicit confidence, and to whose advice it was his earnest and dying request that his sons would pay respect and obedience. The influence, however, of this individual had given great dissatisfaction to many of those who were connected by the ties of blood with the Jemidar, and had not only been the cause of much jealousy to his sons, but had proved particularly irksome to their mother, Jumalbhye, a woman of an intriguing disposition, much under the guidance of Mahommed Meyan Sotah, the soi-disant lord of Moondra, one of the most turbulent characters of the period, to whom she was nearly related. The angry feelings of these members of his family on this account had required all Futteh Mahommed's decision to restrain them, and they now broke forth with redoubled violence on his death. On hearing of that event, Ibrahim Meyan instantly returned from Kunkote, and, under the pretence of assembling his friends to assist at the ceremonies of his father's funeral, he invited Mahommed Meyan Sotah, Malik Mahommed, Dosul Vain, and other Mahommed officers, to Bhooj, where a party was immediately formed against Jugjeewan Mehtah, and a plan entered into for putting him to death.

Hussain Meyan, Futteh Mahommed's eldest

son, does not appear to have been entrusted to the full extent with the designs of these conspirators ; either from an idea that he was partial to the intended victim, or that his timid and irresolute character rendered him unfit, in their estimation, for any measure which required secrecy and decision. The plot itself was discovered by the vigilance of an Arab Jemidar, named Ahya, who had obtained employment in the service of the durbar, through the patronage of Jugjeewan, and who, on hearing of his danger, came boldly forward, together with his countrymen, and declared their united intention of defending the Mehtah's life and property against all attack.

Matters had reached this crisis, when Rao Rahiden died ; and an event occurred, which, from its adding religion to the other causes of dissension, was calculated to inflame the rage of the parties to the uttermost. That unhappy prince, who had long been confined on account of insanity, among his other wild eccentricities, had always affected a fiery zeal for the Mahommedan faith, and had even attempted, when not under personal restraint, to spread it by the sword throughout his dominions. Latterly, his ravings had been entirely on the subject of religion ; he had adopted all the austerities of the most devoted enthusiast, and had left directions that his body should be interred in a small mosque, which he had erected for this particular purpose within the pre-

cincts of the palace. A request of this nature was too much in accordance with the religious prejudices of Ibrahim Meyan and his Mussulman associates to be received with indifference. They lost not a moment in preparing to give effect to it in the most open and solemn manner ; and they had made every arrangement for the funeral, according to the forms prescribed by their creed, when Jugjeewan Mehtah, accompanied by four or five hundred Rajpoots, forcibly seized the corpse and burned it with great display and ceremony, agreeably to the customs of the Hindoos.

This proceeding had been adopted chiefly at the instigation of the ladies of the palace, who viewed the proposed interment in the light of a profanation. Ibrahim Meyan and his party were either too much taken by surprise, or had really not power sufficient to prevent its completion, and the ashes of Rao Rahiden were deposited with those of his ancestors ; but it is almost needless to add, that Jugjeewan Mehtah's conduct was esteemed by the Mahommedans as an act of atrocious sacrilege ; and while it thus exasperated his enemies to the utmost, and unfortunately excited against him the general feelings of a powerful and military class of the community, it had also the more fatal effect, as will afterwards appear, of diminishing his popularity with the Arabs, his recent defenders. In this state of affairs, intrigues immediately commenced regarding the succession to the throne,

and were carried on with all virulence of party spirit for several weeks. Jugjeewan Mehtah and the principal Jharejah chiefs declared in favour of Ladoba, the lawful son of Bhyjee Bawa, and nephew of the late Rao Rahiden ; while the opposite faction resolved to elevate Maun Sing, the son of that prince by a slave girl.

Both these competitors were young, and ignorant of state affairs. Either of the two would have answered the general purposes of the Mahommedan party, who merely wished to place a puppet on the throne, that they might advance their own lawless designs, under the cover of his name and authority ; and Ladoba, from being the younger and more legitimate, would in all probability have been preferred, had not the private feelings of Ibrahim Meyan interfered, and fixed the election on his rival. To explain this circumstance, we must enter briefly into the history of Ibrahim Meyan. About two years before the period at which we have arrived, that young man had formed an attachment for Kesser Bye, the sister of Maun Sing, who, either from affection or ambitious motives, returned his regard, while her brother encouraged his stolen visits at the palace. The intercourse between the lovers was exposed, by a Marwarry Jemidar, named Malum Sing, to Futteh Mahommed, whose conduct on this occasion evinced the superiority of his character. A connexion with the family of the Rao, now easily within his

reach, would have added much to his personal respectability, and might have been a sure means of continuing his power to his descendants ; but he disdained to purchase such an advantage at the expence of his duty and his reputation, and not only peremptorily forbade his son's further visits at the durbar, but forced him to leave the capital and remain in Wagur. On his return to Bhooj after his father's death, Ibrahim Meyan renewed his intimacy with Kesser Bye, at whose entreaties he engaged to support her brother's pretensions, to the exclusion of the lawful heir. Mahommed Meyan Sotah received a bribe of 50,000 cories ; and, by their united influence, Maun Sing was raised to the throne by the name of Rao Bharra, or Bharmuljee.

No opposition appears to have been made to this election by the Jharejahs, many of whom remained in their own possessions indifferent to the passing events, while the others were either bribed to compliance, or afraid to object. Rao Bharmuljee was eighteen years of age when he ascended the throne. His previous life had been passed in the gloomy monotony of the palace, and his elevation made but little change in his situation. Except on occasions when he was required to appear in public as a pageant, he and his cousin Ladoba were alike kept in strict confinement, where they are said to have lived together in terms of the closest intimacy, and even to have engaged in plans for the subversion

of the influence of the Moondra chieftain, who, in the name of Hussain Meyan, soon possessed himself of all the authority, and contrived to fill Bhooj with his mercenary troops. All that two young princes so situated were able to attempt, was not likely to be effectual ; but the haughty and overbearing conduct of Mahommed Meyan Sotah at length had the effect of rousing the slumbering energies of Hussain Meyan himself, who, disgusted at the little consideration which had been shown him, privately abandoned the Mussulman party, and made overtures to that headed by Jugjeevan Mehtah.

Meanwhile the British government had, subsequently to the death of Futteh Mahommed, renewed its application to Hussain Meyan, who, after some negotiations, requested an agent should be sent to Bhooj. The person selected for this employment was Ragoba Appa, a man of competent talent and experience, with whom I have often conversed, and who was directed to adopt the most conciliatory demeanour in his intercourse with the Cutch government. On his arrival at Bhooj, he found the parties in the state just detailed, and by his interposition confirmed the renewed friendship between the Mehtah and Hussain Meyan, both of whom he found favourable to the object of his mission. The consequence of Ragoba Appa's proceedings was a request to Captain M'Murdo, who was still at Moorvee, to visit Bhooj, and a remon-

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

173

strance to Hussain Meyan on the part of Jugjeewan Mehtah, who, as yet supported by the Arabs, and now inspired with confidence by the presence of the British agent, declared his determination not to serve the durbar in any capacity till Mahommed Meyan Sotah was dismissed. Hussain Meyan summoned up resolution to comply with the Mehtah's request ; but Mahommed Meyan Sotah showed no readiness to quit Bhooj, and even attempted, by threats and entreaties, to obtain an order forbidding the approach of Captain M'Murdo. Finding, however, his efforts unsuccessful, he retired to Moondra, in the greatest indignation and disgust. Ibrahim Meyan, though equally hostile to the measures which had been adopted by his brother and Jugjeewan Mehtah, continued to linger at the capital, watching the issue of events, and sunk in a vortex of profligacy and intrigue.

Captain M'Murdo was received by the authorities at Bhooj with respect, and found Jugjeewan Mehtah and Hussain Meyan apparently inclined to be on the most amicable terms with the British government. On the subject of Santilpore, which became a matter of discussion, they excused themselves, by declaring that they considered the Cutch durbar had a right to send troops to that place ; the spirit of the treaty of 1809 being, as they understood it, to prevent incursions into the territories of the Honourable Company and its allies, among whom they did not include the Nawaub of

Rahidenpoore, to whom Santilpore belonged. They acknowledged that Futteh Mahommed had invited the infamous Nackwa Hussun to Bhooj after his plundering Prince Darab's property, but denied the value of the effects seized ; there being, as they asserted, nothing more than a few Persian ornaments, which they professed their willingness to restore. The pirate himself, they admitted, was in the service of Mahommed Meyan Sotah, from whom they agreed to demand him, and to deliver him up to the British government for punishment. They were further ready to give up the Sinda assassin, provided he could be discovered in Cutch ; and they also confessed the justice of our demands against Wagur, to chastise the plunderers of which province they offered to send a force, and invited Captain M'Murdo to accompany it. Hussain Meyan freely acknowledged the imbecility of his administration, and expressed his readiness to accept the mediation of the British government, whose good offices, he said, he had before intended to solicit in assisting to settle the disturbed state of Cutch, and to enable him to place the resources of the country in the hands of legitimate authority.

In conformity with these proposals, which, though evasive in many respects, showed some proof of a desire to obtain the favour of the English government, the durbar applied to the Moon-dra chief for the surrender of the pirate Hussun, and Hussain Meyan marched, 12th April, with

3000 men into Wagur, whither he was accompanied by Captain M'Murdo. Mahommed Meyan Sotah's laconic and cavalier reply to the application just alluded to, will demonstrate the temper of that chief, as well as his regard for truth—the pirate having been actually seen in his employment at the very time his letter was written—and his respect for the government of Cutch. It was in these terms : “ You mention the English M'Murdo is arrived, let me know what he communicates. The Nackwa Hussun is at Curachee.” * On the advance of the above force into Wagur, many of the chieftains repaired to Hussain Meyan's camp, and submitted to his authority. He established garrisons at Palanswa Rapoor, &c. and the province ostensibly returned to a state of order ; but, as his means were too limited to secure an effectual and permanent tranquillity, he shortly after returned to Bhooj, and Captain M'Murdo proceeded to Kattiwar, perfectly satisfied of the inability of the reigning powers in Cutch to restrain their troublesome dependents.

During this interval, Ibrahim Meyan, although he had accompanied the Wagur expedition, had continued a member of the Moondra party, and had never ceased to upbraid and condemn his brother for his adherence to what he termed the British interests. On the return of the latter to the capital, Ibrahim established himself at Kun-

* A port in Sinde.

kote, and encouraged the Belah and other plunderers of Wagur by every means in his power ; finally, he declared open war against his brother and the Bhooj authorities, and, together with Ascaran Sa, a troublesome and turbulent character, with whom he had allied himself and Mahommed Meyan Sotah, committed extensive depredations in the district of Anjar, and forcibly took possession of the durbar, town, and fort of Futteh Ghud. While the eastern side of Cutch was thus a prey to rapine and disorder, Mandavie was also the scene of contention and bloodshed. Dhosul Vain and Malik Mahommed, at the instigation of the Moondra chieftain, made an attempt to wrest it from Sewiraj Hunsraj, their employer, but were detected and defeated. Civil war raged with all its fury ; nor had the durbar any means to check or suspend its horrors. Three or four distinct factions divided the country, all of whom joined only in one object, the plunder of the labouring and peaceable classes, who were reduced to beggary and starvation by their manifold extortions. The Wagur banditti, seizing the opportunity, extended their ravages both at home and abroad. Sixty villages belonging to the Guicowar and Peishwa in Kattiwar, had now been destroyed ; and as no effectual means were taken to prevent these outrages, the British government at length intimated that their troops, and those of their allies, would no longer be restrained from following the ma-

raiders to their own haunts in Wagur ; that the Bhooj durbar would be liable to the charges of the equipment of the force to be so employed ; and that certain instalments due to his Highness the Rao by the Jam of Nuwanuggur, would be applied to the indemnification of the losses already sustained. This intimation on the part of the English government, added to the successes of the Moondra party, which Hussain Meyan had no power to combat, produced a powerful effect on the weak and timid character of that chief. After some vacillation, he at length determined to throw himself on the mercy of his brother, to whom, through the influence of their mother, he was reconciled ; and Cutch became once more at the disposal of men inimical to any thing like British influence ; as proofs of which, the promise formerly made, that the pirate Hussun, who was now a prisoner at Bhooj, should be delivered up, was disregarded—the Sinde murderer was openly retained in the service of Ibrahim Meyan—and he and his party adopted every means in their power to show their indifference respecting the claims which had been preferred.

The reunion of the brothers was a prelude to a cruel and barbarous tragedy. Jugjeewan Mehtah's habits of business rendered him at first necessary to them as a minister ; but his offences against the party now in power had been too grievous to be forgiven ; and the former resolution

of assassinating him was soon renewed. His popularity with the Arabs had been for some time gradually on the decline. Most of them, in fact, had incurred large private debts to him, besides receiving considerable advances of pay from him as a public servant of the durbar, and they now viewed him only in the light of a creditor from whose importunities they were anxious to be relieved. Under these circumstances, a confidential agent from Ibrahim Meyan, found no great difficulty in corrupting the popular Jemidar Ahya; and the whole Arab body finally consented to withdraw their protection from Jugjeewan, in consideration of an acquittance of all sums of money which had been advanced to them from the public treasury, and a present of 6000 cories to each of their leading officers. These proceedings were carried on with the most profound secrecy; and it is but charity to suppose that Hussain Meyan was not made acquainted with them until too late to prevent their fatal effects. The ill-fated object of the conspiracy himself did not entertain the slightest suspicion of his danger, till the designs of his enemies were ripe for execution, and he saw his residence suddenly surrounded and attacked by a body of armed men under the command of Ibrahim Meyan in person, and Jaffeer Sotah, the brother of the Moondra chief. The presence of two such leaders, whom Jugjeewan had always known to be the most inveterate of his foes, could leave not a mo-

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

179

ment's doubt on his mind as to the intentions of the assailants. In despair, therefore, he prepared to make the most determined resistance, and, supported by his domestics, actually continued to baffle all attempts to effect an entrance into his house for six hours. At the end of that period, three pieces of ordnance having been brought to bear on the door, further defence was hopeless; and he was inveigled into a capitulation by a promise sacredly given, that he might proceed without molestation to the palace of Futteh Mahommed's sons to plead for his life. The assault had been so protracted, that Ibrahim Meyan himself had retired before this understanding was entered into; but a negro Jemidar of some importance in his service, named Ibrahim Seedee, who was present, and in whose honour Jugjeewan believed he could repose confidence, having volunteered to become security for the maintenance of the pledge, and even to escort him in safety to the presence of Hussain Meyan, the unfortunate Mehtah went out into the street without hesitation, and accepted his protection. He was then conducted amidst great tumult and confusion, to the gate of Hussain Meyan's residence, where he was appealing to the populace, and imploring his persecutors to spare his life, when Ibrahim Meyan appeared at a window, and, scornfully taunting him with having tried to sell his country to the British, exultingly ordered him to be dispatched; a command

which was instantly executed by Jaffeer Sotah and his attendants.

Early in the morning of the same day, Ramchunder Mehtah, the brother of Jugjeewan, on going to pay his usual respects at the durbar, had been entrapped and strangled by order of Ibrahim Meyan, who alleged that he had committed suicide. Another brother, the sole remaining member of the family, named Kooberjee, who had long been in declining health, and who was probably spared by the assassins on account of his utter helplessness and insignificance, having witnessed the ruin of his house, determined not to survive it, and a few days after, caused himself to be buried alive, agreeably to a custom sometimes adopted by Brahmins, of invoking the vengeance of the Almighty upon those who have oppressed them. The bloody work of the conspirators being completed, the Mehtah's house was given over to the pillage of the soldiery, and the most valuable part of his property was confiscated to the state, or rather to the private use of Hussain and Ibrahim Meyans, who took the administration of affairs into their own hands, assisted by Mehtahs Wullubjee and Luckmadass. Jugjeewan Mehtah had been much respected at Bhooj, and his murder, under such cruel and afflicting circumstances, excited great disgust among the inhabitants. Hussain Meyan had taken no active or open part in it; and the odium appears chiefly to have fallen on Mahommed Meyan

Sotah, and his brother Jaffeer, who retired to Moondra, in order to escape the popular indignation, as well as from a fear that the British government would interfere.

The ferment occasioned by these tragical events had scarcely subsided when Ibrahim Meyan was as suddenly called to the tribunal of Heaven to answer for his offences. He had, in concert with his brother Luckmadass, and other associates, appointed a public day, in order to bestow rewards and distinctions on his officers, and particularly on those who had assisted him in the murder of Jugjeewan Mehtah; and the whole assembled in great state at Hussain Meyan's residence for the purpose. Amongst others who presented themselves, in the hope of obtaining notice, was Malum Sing, the Marwarry Jemidar, formerly mentioned as having betrayed Ibrahim Meyan's intrigue with Kesser Bye to Futteh Mahommed, and who now urged a claim of many years' service to the durbar for preferment. Ibrahim Meyan, whose feelings towards the man may be readily conceived, repulsed him with scorn, and the grossest abuse; which the Marwarry immediately resented, by stabbing him mortally on the spot. The scene that followed may be imagined. Hussain Meyan horror-struck, and expecting to be the next victim, rushed with Luckmadass into another apartment; but their apprehension was soon proved to be groundless, for the assassin was instantly cut in pieces, and

it was never discovered that he had any confederates.

It is generally understood that Malum Sing went to the levee expressly for the purpose of committing the murder; and this opinion is supported by the fact of his having carried the weapon with which he perpetrated it carefully concealed under his clothes into the assembly. He had just before been relieved from duty at the palace, and he was supposed by many to have been instigated by the Rao; but Bharmuljee, who was then only about eighteen years of age, had previously shown no evil disposition; nor does there seem any good reason for adding this additional sin to his load of crimes. Persons who were well acquainted with the characters of the parties, and who were eye-witnesses of the transaction, do not attribute it to the provocation that was given at the moment; and Ibrahim Meyan's death may probably be referred to his having engaged in an intrigue with a female connected with the Marwarry Jemidar, whose revenge was no doubt sharpened by the insults that were offered to him. Ibrahim Meyan had not attained the age of twenty-five years when he was assassinated. From his depraved habits, and total want of principle, it is scarcely to be supposed that his death would be regretted; but as he was a young man of great liberality, personal bravery, and address, and the only one of his family who inherited any portion of the talent of his father,

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

183

the old friends of Futteh Mahommed bewailed his loss, as that of the representative, however unworthy, of their Jemidar, and foresaw the immediate ruin of his house, whose power he himself, from a knowledge of the characters of his children, had prophesied would not long survive him.

The murder of his brother excited the greatest consternation in Hussain Meyan's mind. Unable to distinguish between friends and enemies, he resigned himself almost to despair, and, with the timidity natural to his disposition, remained shut up in his house, guarded by the Arabs. His suspicions at first fell upon the Rao, whose palace he ordered to be attacked; and although his Highness solemnly protested his innocence, a body of Arabs were permanently stationed in the durbar; while, in order to guard against future conspiracies, the Marwarry soldiery in Bhooj, amounting to two or three hundred men, were either massacred, or expelled from Cutch. All these events created a great sensation throughout the country. The gates of the capital were kept closed for many days, and scarcely any communication took place among the inhabitants. Hussain Meyan's fears rendered him perfectly incapable of acting with calmness or propriety; and the government being without any efficient head, the Arab Jemidars usurped the whole authority, and for a short time conducted the affairs of the state, levying for their own use heavy fines and contributions. But-

chow, Chowbaree, and Rhapoor, with several other towns, taking advantage of the imbecility of the government, declared their independence of Bhooj, and even applied for the support and protection of the British. After a time Hussain Meyan, who had never dared to appear in public since the assassination of his brother, sent to implore the assistance of Mahommed Meyan Sotah ; who, well aware, however, of his unpopularity, declined visiting Bhooj on the plea of sickness, but added to the troubles of the country, by directing his retainers to plunder in every direction. During this state of affairs, the Wagur freebooters continued their depredations, and the British government again reminded Hussain Meyan of their claims. His personal apprehensions, and the weakness of his administration, made him now readily grasp at any chance of support ; and he willingly offered to send an agent to adjust all differences.

But the incapacity of Hussain Meyan for government, and the despicable nature of his character, had of late become but too apparent. The troubles he had inflicted on the country were now so grievously felt, that the respectable part of the community determined to be relieved from a chief, at once odious and contemptible ; and the tide of popular opinion turned entirely in favour of Rao Bharmuljee, who had secretly been carrying on negotiations with Sewiraj Hunsraj and the

principal Jharejahs. Deputies soon arrived from Mandavie, expressing the readiness of the authorities there to acknowledge the Rao ; and Sewiraj himself, with Ascaran Sa and many of the chiefs, assembled troops in support of his cause. Hus-sain Meyan, whom his Arab Jemidars had in vain attempted to inspire with courage, readily yielded to the current ; and when it became evident that his cause was unsupported, he made a virtue of necessity, by entering into a compromise with Bharmuljee, who, on his consenting to leave Bhooj, gave him a grant of Anjar, Butchow, Badurghud, and Kunkote. He was then dismissed with an honorary dress, and proceeded to Anjar, whither he was accompanied by all the Arab mercenaries, none of whom the new government would on any account permit to remain at Bhooj. By these measures all opposition being terminated, the keys of the city were delivered, with every formality, to Rao Bharmuljee, who appointed Sewiraj Hunsraj and Ascaran Sa his ministers ; and the country, for the present, was restored to quietness.

The British government had awaited the issue of events at Bhooj, in the hope that a restoration of legitimate authority would lead to an adjustment of their demands. They now renewed their application to the Rao, and expressed their willingness to receive envoys from his Highness ; but the measures of this prince soon showed how averse he was to the establishment of a good un-

derstanding. The Cutch durbar had not hitherto been absolutely identified with the plunderers of Wagur ; but Bharmuljee settled the question, by openly complimenting Sirmanya, the most notorious of these, with a dress of honour ; and he also adopted the violent step of compelling the agent of Captain M'Murdo to quit Bhooj, under the evasive pretence that he would employ Soonderjee Seojee, a horse-contractor for the Honourable Company at Mandavie, as the mediator with the British government.

The tranquillity of Cutch was of short duration. The hereditary chieftain of Kunkote suddenly surprised that town, and expelled Hussain Meyan's garrison ; Sewiraj Hunsraj and Ascaran Sa quarrelled before six weeks had elapsed, and the latter left Bhooj to join Mahommed Meyan Sotah, who had raised the standard of rebellion at Moondra, and was collecting troops from every quarter. The country was once more involved in faction and confusion. The Rao assembled a force and moved against Moondra, which he invested, at the same time compelling the authorities there to listen to terms. Mahommed Meyan Sotah engaged to surrender his town at the end of one month, provided his Highness would immediately withdraw his army, and, in proof of his sincerity, he delivered up his brother, Jaffeer Meyan, as a hostage ; but before the stipulated period had elapsed, Jaffeer Meyan contrived to escape to Moondra, and assisted his

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

187

brother in retaining that place in defiance of the durbar.

The government of Rao Bharmuljee soon became exceedingly unpopular. His marriage, which took place on his return from Moondra, attracted crowds to Bhooj, who were treated by him and his public servants with great indignity. He evinced a strong and unaccountable aversion to the Jharejah chiefs, many of whom had been instrumental in restoring him to the throne; and an unwarrantable attack he made on the chief of Assumbia, whose town he destroyed, and on whose family he imposed a large fine, gave great disgust to the whole of these noblemen. Unpopular as the Rao was in his own dominions, his ministers determined to raise him enemies from abroad. A British and Guicowar force had been ordered to reduce Jooriah in Kattiwar, and Sewiraj Hunsraj openly supplied the rebellious authorities of that place with assistance and ammunition.

The easy and unexpected reduction of Jooriah embarrassed the Cutch government much, and opened the Rao's eyes to the danger of his proceedings. He consequently determined, if possible, to make his peace, even thus late, with the British, and to atone for his offences. With this view he announced his intention of punishing the Wagur banditti, and marched into that district with a formidable army. He reduced Planswa, Rhapoor, and Kanmeer, and likewise put to death the notorious

plunderer Sirmanya, whom he had before encouraged and rewarded ; but it soon became evident that these measures had their origin in fear, not inclination, for he did not remain absent from Bhooj longer than fifteen days, and no effectual steps were taken to prevent the future incursions of the freebooters. It would almost appear that Sirmanya had been killed by chance, or contrary to the Rao's wishes, as he dismissed his family, equally atrocious as himself, with promises of protection.

Rao Bharmuljee's presence in Wagur suspended for a short time the operations of the banditti ; but he had scarcely withdrawn his force, when their depredations were renewed with redoubled vigour. Captain M'Murdo's own camp was attacked, and much injury sustained by him personally, in the neighbourhood of Moorvee. In the space of a few months, one hundred and thirty-six villages in Kattiwar had been plundered, forty thousand head of cattle had been carried off, and property to the amount of eight lacs of rupees damaged and destroyed. In addition to all this, an expence had been incurred by the British and Guicowar governments of above ten lacs of rupees in equipping troops to check these unwarrantable proceedings. Forbearance had been misconstrued by the Bhooj durbar into inability ; and, as it was now certain that the Rao either wanted the power or the inclination to control his unruly subjects, Captain M'Murdo was instructed to make a spe-

cific demand of compensation for the past, and a guarantee against future incursions, together with the surrender of Sirmanya's children, and satisfaction for the insults offered to the British government in having so long delayed, under frivolous pretences, to send an envoy to settle all disputes, as well as for the offensive manner in which the native agent had been forced to leave Bhooj. To these points an explicit answer was to be required within a given period ; and in order clearly to evince the intentions of the allied governments, an army composed of British and Guicowar troops, under the command of Colonel East and Wittul Row Dewanjee, was ordered to advance at the same time to the border of the Runn.

Bharmuljee permitted the specified period to elapse without sending any answer to these demands, although, a few days after, he addressed a letter to Captain M'Murdo, couched in the most general terms, and without any allusion whatever to the articles in question. In consequence of this evasion, the combined troops crossed the Runn at Venasir, and advanced to Wandiah, the chief of which, and many others, immediately threw themselves on the mercy of the allied governments. Proposals had previously been made by the Mandavie and Moondra authorities, both of which had now thrown off their subjection to Bharmuljee, and with them Captain M'Murdo lost no time in entering into a communication, in order to prevent

a reunion with the durbar. He addressed a letter to the Rao, expressing an eager desire that matters might be amicably settled, and still begging agents to be sent for the purpose. To the principal Jharejahs he issued proclamations calculated to inspire them with confidence, and explanatory of the intention of the British government, which, he assured them, was resolved neither to interfere with their domestic concerns, nor to disturb their repose, so long as they remained quiet in their own domains, but merely, and amicably if possible, to obtain from the Cutch durbar satisfaction for the indignities which had been received, indemnification for past losses, and security against future depredation. The most prudent measures were taken to prevent any interference with the inhabitants and villages on the line of march; and, by the time the force reached Butchow, the people had recovered their confidence, and supplies were readily afforded.

Meanwhile Rao Bharmuljee had taken no effectual means, either by assembling a force, or by negotiation, to prevent the advance of the British army. He had hoped that some assistance would be afforded him by the Ameers of Sind; but the Bombay government had taken the precaution of previously explaining its intentions to their Highnesses, and had expostulated with them against any interference with the affairs of Cutch. As the crisis approached, he made an attempt to

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

191

enter into an alliance with Sewiraj Hunsraj, Mahommed Meyan Sotah, and some other chiefs who had combined against him, but without success. He also directed the Jharejahs to assemble at Bhooj, but a few only obeyed the summons, and these apparently with no warlike intentions.

Colonel East's force advanced to Bheemasir, within three marches of the capital and one of Anjar, without any show of opposition. The intention of Captain M'Murdo had been to proceed directly to Bhooj, and there to enter into such a treaty as would meet the wishes of his government; but this arrangement was entirely changed from the detection of one of the most treacherous and cowardly acts that ever was recorded. On the arrival of the army at Bheemasir, it was discovered that a large quantity of wheat, and it is said arsenic, had been thrown into the tank on which the troops chiefly depended for water; and information was at the same time received that all the wells in the direction of Bhooj were poisoned in a similar manner. Although suspicions at first attached to Rao Bharmuljee, it was soon ascertained that the perpetrators of this atrocity were horsemen from Anjar, and that the more immediate agent was Hussain Meyan. Under these circumstances, it became clear that the army ought not to proceed without due caution; and as such a disposition had been evinced, it was necessary, as a temporary measure, to take possession of some

post, that would secure a constant communication with the friendly shores of Kattiwar. Hussain Meyan was accordingly called on to permit the occupation of Anjar, and its tributary fort of Toonah, on the sea side, by a British garrison; but as he objected to this proposal, the force advanced, and a battery was erected against Anjar, which did not surrender until a breach had been rendered practicable. Hussain Meyan was allowed to remain unpunished, and has since lived in obscurity at Moorvee, chiefly on the charity of the Bhooj durbar.

On the reduction of Anjar, which was immediately followed by that of Toonah, Captain M'Murdo again addressed the Rao, explaining the cause and necessity of the measures which had been adopted, assuring him that the forts would only be held in trust till an accommodation should be concluded, and again urging him to send agents for the settlement of all disputes. On the day after the surrender of the towns, Mahommed Meyan made his submission in person at the British camp, and letters were received from the Rao, and Sewiraj Hunsraj, of a conciliatory nature.

Under the impression that Bharmuljee's occupation of the throne was considered an usurpation by the chiefs and inhabitants, as well, perhaps, as from some regard to the rights of legitimacy, Captain M'Murdo had been instructed to ascertain

the feelings of the Jharejahs towards Ladoba, and if these were favourable, to enter into a treaty with that prince as the lawful Rao of Cutch. No disposition unfavourable to Bharmuljee was, however, evinced in any quarter, and it consequently only remained to commence the necessary negotiations with him.

It was only on the arrival of the British army at Lackoond, within a few miles of the capital, that agents arrived from Bhooj expressing the willingness of their master to agree to the proposed terms. The Rao then delivered a bond with the security of the principal Jharejahs for twenty lacs of rupees in payment of all demands, besides a promise of two lacs of cories as a yearly tribute; and after several negotiations, a treaty of amity and alliance was concluded between the governments, of which the principal articles, independently of the compensation for past, and security against future, depredations, on the part of the durbar, were an engagement on our part to reduce Wagur, &c. to the subjection of the Rao, and the cession of the city and district of Anjar to the British government, in virtue of which, Captain M'Murdo remained at that place as collector and resident in Cutch.

SECTION III.

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY OF 1816, TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY OF 1819.

THE terms of the new treaty were highly advantageous to the Rao Bharmuljee. His title to the throne, however dubious, was now acknowledged by the only power in India which could give it stability; Wagur was reduced under subjection by the British troops in the course of a few weeks; and a yearly assessment in his name, as lord paramount, was laid on its chiefs at the rate of forty cories for every plough. The refractory authorities of Mandavie, Moondra, Seesaghud, Butchao, &c. seeing the aspect of affairs, at once submitted; and Bharmuljee found his country for the first time free from open faction, and himself in undisputed sovereignty.

Of the twenty lacs of rupees claimed in name of indemnification and expenses, the British govern-

HISTORY OF CUTCH.

195

ment shortly afterwards remitted their own portion, amounting to above eight hundred thousand, together with the yearly tribute of two lacs of cories; a liberality which at first equally surprised and delighted the Rao, who found no great difficulty in raising the remaining balance by fines on his refractory chieftains, and demands, under the title of voluntary contributions, from those who had long enjoyed the revenues of the country. Mahommed Meyan Sotah was the only one of these who declared his inability to afford pecuniary assistance; but the Bhooj government eventually found means to obtain from him nearly six lacs of cories.

Tranquillity being thus restored in Cutch, the British troops, with the exception of a small garrison stationed at Anjar, evacuated the country; and the durbar was left free to adopt its own measures. Luckmadass Wullubjee, already spoken of as the confederate of Hussain Meyan, became minister, with the assistance of Nuthoo Mehtah; and the military advisers of the Rao were Jharejahs Noughunjee of Vinjan, and Pragjee of Kotree. None of these men were favourably inclined to the British interests, nor could much confidence be reposed in them in any point of view. Luckmadass, a proud and narrow-minded Brahmin, though a man of talent, had been accused as an accessory in the murder of Jugjeewan Mehtah, and Jharejah Pragjee was known to be faithless and treacherous. Luckily for Bharmuljee, however, he found

an able and sincere adviser in his sister Kesser Bhye, a young lady who is said to have possessed considerable ability, and who, for a time, was able to guide his conduct by the maxims of prudence and moderation.

The British interference in Cutch had given great offence, and occasioned much apprehension to the Ameers of Sind, whose jealousy and fears were not allayed by the repeated explanations they had received from Bombay. They immediately despatched messengers to Bhooj, ostensibly to negotiate the payment of a sum of money due at Hyderabad by a merchant of Luckput, but, in reality, to intrigue with the Rao; and represented the circumstance of our having sent a force into Cutch, in the most exaggerated light to their sovereign lord Mahmood Shah, the king of Cabûl, whom they entreated to remonstrate with the supreme government of India. Intelligence was soon after received at Bombay of preparations for the assemblage of a force at Shikarpoor; and various rumours were afloat of the march of the Afghaun army towards Sind. But the Sindian ambassadors, on their arrival at Bhooj, soon divulged their real object. They represented to the durbar the danger of forming a connexion with neighbours so powerful as the British; and they even went so far as to insinuate that, in case of necessity, the army of the Ameers was at the disposal of Rao Bharmuljee. No means were left untried to break up the

alliance ; but the Cutch government, fortunately for itself, and whatever may have been its real feelings, was proof against their solicitations ; and the vakeels returned to Hyderabad without having gained any apparent object.

The mission from Sind to the Bhooj durbar was soon followed by a remonstrance from the king of Cabûl himself to the governor-general of India ; in which, after expressing his conviction, that the invasion of the Rao's territories was unsanctioned by his lordship, his Majesty proceeds to claim for himself an unknown and never-before-heard-of, sovereignty over Cutch, and to require the renunciation of all interference with that country as a component portion of the Afghaun dominions. A letter from the vizier Futteh Khan, which accompanied the king's communication, was still more explicit. It stated, that " news at this time has been brought to the royal feet, that some Feringees of the English tribe, having more boldness than discretion, have shown a disposition to create disturbance, and have extended the hand of encroachment to the country of Cutch, which is the frontier district of the royal dominions. On hearing of this, the mind of his majesty was disturbed with anger, and his royal mandate was issued, that letters should be despatched to all the Nazims of the provinces of the kingdom, enjoining them to be prepared, and to expect the receipt of further orders." The vizier proceeds to say, that, " if the

people in question should not be restrained, and if intelligence of a similar occurrence should again reach the king, that two lacs of Dooranies and Elats, four dustahs of Emacks and Tymoorias, Huzarahs as numerous as ants and grasshoppers, the tribes of Ghilges, and Andarees, and Tonkas, and Makoos, and Khookhanies, and Kohistanies; the armies composed of the Khusselbashees, and Moghuls, and Kanwaries, and Toorkalans, and Shurnwaries Husmud Khatick, and the Bungoes great and small, and the Daoodyes, and the Rohaus, and the Mahmoodzyes, and the Yoozafzyes both of the hills and of the plains, and the men of Nagaon and Aman, and the Nuwab Suboobund Khan, ruler of Kutch Walliah, and the governor of the Derahs, and of Mooltan, and the army of Beloches, Burohooe, and Muzara, and Rokunsood Dowlah, and Ameersood Dowlah, with the Beloche army, and a train of artillery, and a Shaha Khaneh,—all these forces, numerous as the waves of the sea, having collected agreeably to the royal orders, will surround these people, and annihilate them, and friendship will be at an end. It is best, therefore, that you should prohibit them, and restrain them from these improper proceedings.”

This high-sounding epistle, together with the formidable muster-roll of his Majesty's forces, was not likely to excite much alarm in the mind of the Marquis of Hastings, who considered it, or, at all events, determined to treat the whole as for-

gery. His lordship addressed a friendly reply to the vizier, in which he declared his conviction that the communications from Cabûl were "the fabrication of persons ill-disposed to both states, who sought to embroil them with a view to obtain some benefit to themselves;" reminded him that Cutch had "never at any time formed part of the dominions of the Afghaun monarchy;" and shortly explained the object of the British interference; adding, at the same time, that he necessarily believed the letter fictitious, since he was too well apprized of the "knowledge, experience, and sagacity of Futteh Khan," to imagine that he could conceive the British government would for a moment be influenced by any display of force, "and that his information was too enlarged not to know, that though it does not misuse its strength by wantonly trespassing on its neighbours, it has never been attacked without destroying those who unjustly assailed it."

The state of affairs in Cabûl was, however, somewhat changed before his lordship's reply reached that kingdom, and the messenger who conveyed it, after having been detained several weeks as a prisoner, by a detachment of Runjeet Sing's army, overtook the vizier of Peshavur ready to take the field against the Sikhs, who were threatening the frontier at Attock. Futteh Khan, with that adroitness which native diplomatists generally display, immediately resolved to turn the letter to account,

and with the view of impressing his enemies with sentiments favourable to his own interests, ordered a salute to be fired on its reception ; at the same time proclaiming aloud through his camp that despatches had been received from the friend of the Cabûl government, the governor-general of India.

To the Marquis of Hastings the vizier replied in the most hyperbolical terms of oriental metaphor ; assuring Captain M'Murdo, who had been the medium of communication, that “ the sweet and delicious perfume of his lordship’s rose-scented letter had ascended, with the most exquisite sensations, to the innermost recesses of his brain ;” and that, from the moment he had perused it, he felt the excess of his regard for the British government, between which, and the state of Cabûl, he trusted that the “ carpet of friendship would ever be spread in the palace of affection.” He desired the courier to inform his employer, that, in the prosecution of his operations against the Sikhs, he not only did not expect an enemy in the English, but looked for their support ; that in due time he meant to bring Sindh to its former state of dependence on Cabûl ; and that, if they had really any views towards that country, he would readily enter into them, and afford his assistance. To complete the farce, he gravely professed ignorance of the letters which had been received at Calcutta, and declared, that he could only account for them by supposing, that a Sindian agent had procured

by bribery, impressions of his own and other official seals, from a faithless secretary who had been left at the capital of Cabûl.

The Cutch government had, in the meantime, betrayed its utter unworthiness of the confidence and liberality of the British. Strange as it may seem, even the releasing it from a bond of so many lacs of rupees, excited the suspicion of its members; and the effects of the Sindian intrigues were soon visible. The increased power of the Rao only served to swell his arrogance and pride. During an occasional absence of the resident, the durbar determined to seize on Toona Bunder; and for this purpose, the Arab mercenaries were recruited at Bhooj, in express opposition to the articles of the late treaty. But these treacherous designs were crushed in their birth by the vigilance and decision of Captain M'Murdo, who called in the assistance of some troops from Okamundel, on the Kattiwar side of the gulf, and insisted on the immediate reduction of the newly raised levies. His demands, after a great deal of evasion, were tardily complied with; and, indeed, much indifference was shown to every proposal emanating from the British government. The Khosas, a predatory tribe inhabiting Parkur to the north of Wagur, had at this period commenced their marauding incursions; but nothing could induce the Rao to defend his own territories from these freebooters, much less to en-