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HIS HIGHNESS MEER JAFUR ALEE

AND HIS SECRETARY.

The Moslem Noble: His Land and People.

OFFICIAL SEAL.

SIGNET.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

The Moslem Noble:

HIS

LAND AND PEOPLE.

WITH

SOME NOTICES OF

The Parsees, or Ancient Persians.

BY

MRS. YOUNG,

AUTHOR OF "CUTCH;" "WESTERN INDIA;" "OUR CAMP IN TURKEY," ETC., ETC.

WITH

Illustrations from Original Drawings by the Author.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1857.

TO

HIS HIGHNESS

Meer Jafur Alee Khan Bahadoor,

AND THOSE OF MY INDIAN FRIENDS

AMONG WHOM

SOME OF THE HAPPIEST OF MY YEARS WERE SPENT,

The Following Pages

ARE,

IN KINDEST RECOLLECTION,

INSCRIBED.

The Cloister, Chichester,
May, 1857.

Contents.

List of Embellishments.

THE MOSLEM NOBLE:

HIS LAND AND PEOPLE.

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.

We all love gossip. That fact I hold to be indisputable. The pleasantest chattings we can remember ever to have had were full of it; and as for books, if we examine the matter closely, we shall find that the more personification, the more dialogue there is, the better we get on. How delightful, for instance, are the Sevigné Letters; how charming the Walpole Memoirs. And why? Because they are full of *gossip;* we walk and talk with the writer; we see his friends, we understand pretty well what they think of each other; we enter into the racy scandal of the day; we tread a measure with the gayest, and laugh for the hundredth time at the *jeu d'esprit* of the wittiest. With sedate history it is the same influence that leads us on;

Macaulay and Napier are our favourite writers. From their pages, as from the Girondists of Lamartine, life-like tableaux open upon us, and we move, and speak, and live among the actors. We can see the pale student, Robespierre, stealing to the glowing hearth of the beautiful Madame Roland; we can hear Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, rating all about her; and we know the very words of those who fell back by hundreds in the trenches upon that fearful night at Badajoz! Now, gossip is of many kinds, but this we speak of is, perhaps, the worthiest, its key-note being sympathy.

The aid-de-camp of the fairy king declares his power to "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes." Steam by sea and land has not yet quite arrived at the despatch of Puck, but it has done much to bring, as it were, the ends of the earth together, to crumble away prejudices, and to originate the belief that there has been learning, and wisdom, and art in those eastern lands, which was even greater than our own; and we can imagine that friendship, kindness, and all the sweetest virtues of humanity may yet be found in the families of those same lands, whose creed, climate, and aspect so differ from our own!

The travelled man, well aware of this, sympathizes with all the world, and that because

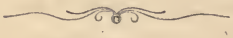
experience has given him knowledge. He has enjoyed the courtesy and hospitality of the wild and predatory chief of central Asia; he has been gratified by the cordial reception of the princely Moslem; he has listened to words of purest wisdom from the lips of a learned Brahmin; and he acknowledges and respects that kindred spirit which makes all men brethren.

Our "home-staying youth, who has ever homely thoughts," lives in a seagirt isle, on which, but comparatively a few years since, his forefathers herded in caves, painted themselves with woad, and lived (in intellect little higher than their prey) on the animals they caught in hunting. The result is, that he views with contempt all that his narrow mind cannot comprehend; and because the outward aspect of the Oriental differs from his own, it pleaseth him to consider the descendant of the Mogul as an inferior being, or as one to be valued only for the richness of his costume and the liberality of his *largess*.

Now, what can alter this lamentable condition of the general mind? Evidently sympathy. And as the mountain sometimes finds it difficult to go to the mouse, and as all persons cannot travel, the subject may now and then come home to them in some pleasant form, "gilt and

lettered;" and as the gentleman of England sits by his seacoal fire, agreeable introductions may take place between himself and the varied classes of the East, from which opinions and acquaintances may be formed, liberal feelings may arise, and the whole atmosphere around him become the warmer, for the genial flow of kindness so begun.

Under this impression, and with the spirit of Oriental gossip strong upon me, I beg to introduce some of my most esteemed and valued Oriental friends to the acquaintance of the reader, jotting them down just as I saw and knew them in their own land, where, surrounded by their people and dependants, they were honoured and beloved by all who knew them.



It was a brilliant day, even in the Strand—the cast shadows were well defined, and deep in colour. The grim hospital seemed less grim than usual; the very lion of Northumberland House appeared excited as by a tropic sunshine; and as our chat took the tone of foreign climes, beguiled perhaps by this very sunshine, a brilliant-coloured, splendid carriage passed, dashing

by, as from the city, westward. It was a noticeable equipage altogether. On the box was seen one whose swarthy face surmounted a dress glowing like a crimson poppy. Within the carriage sat a portly, handsome, prince-like personage, flashing with gold and green, with jewels and Cashmeres; and opposite to him another eastern gentleman, with eyes so keen and countenance so expressive, that one felt at once how shrewdly he could try conclusions with the clearest-headed Templar of them all.

Each, as the carriage passed, raised his hand with the graceful salaam of oriental recognition. "Who's that?" exclaimed my friend. "Oh! that is his Highness Meer Jafur Alee Khan Bahadoor, of Surat." "Who?" I was beginning again—"No, don't! do you know him?" "Of course." "Where?—how?" "Here, and in India years ago; he is one of my kindest friends." "Really! how interesting!—do tell me all about it; I do so like to hear of Elephants, and Howdahs, and Jewels, and Hareems." And now, if the reader will allow me to consider *him* as my companion for the time, we will chat a little—not, perhaps, about Elephants and Howdahs, but of pleasant days and kindly friends, associated with my recollections of his Highness Meer Jafur Alee Khan, as I knew him in his own land.

It is an unhappy truth that the moment any one begins to chat about India, every one looks bored. At St. Stephen's, in old times, as a certain noble lord could well bear witness, as soon as India, her rights or sufferings were introduced, honourable members strolled back to their clubs in search of rest and refreshment. In drawing-rooms it is much the same. Who among us does not dread the sallow-cheeked old colonel, with his interminable stories of tiger hunts and Seringapatam? Who knows anything about the Museum of the India House, or cares whether they are Gunputtis[1] or Guavas, that people in Bombay eat for their dessert?

Well, for my own part, I promise to make my subject as little tedious as possible, and, therefore, instead of entering into all sorts of dry details about Governor Duncan and the Nuwaub of Surat treaty bill, with long names of Begums that none but a student at Haileybury could possibly pronounce; and without saying a word, at least at present, about how it was that his Highness Meer Jafur Alee first visited England in 1844—we will consider him as returned, not to Surat indeed, where his family and palace really are, but to the large porticoed house out

[1] Elephant-headed deity of the Hindoo Pantheon.

there, among the Girgaum woods, a spot, by the by, that one can never think of without a sense of suffocation, so dusty were the ways, and so close the cocoa-nut plantations, in this part of the otherwise most beautiful island of Bombay.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARRIAGE.

"She is like the rising of the golden morning, when the night departeth, and when the winter is over and gone; she resembleth the cypress in the garden, the horse in the chariots of Thessaly."—*Idyllium of Theocritus, on the Marriage of Helen.*

It was in the month of June that my friend's carriage took me from the heat and horrors of cotton bales and screws on the Apollo Bunder at Bombay, to his house in the woods, the character of the locality being only redeemed by one pleasant avenue leading to the shore, by which some circulation of air passes between the stems of the crowded cocoa-nut trees, and prevents that total stagnation of atmosphere so common to the level parts of the island, particularly at the season immediately preceding the setting in of the monsoon. The retainers and humble friends of an Indian nobleman are legion, and the Meer's amiable and benevolent disposition left him no lack of these. There

P. LANDELLS DEL.

SIMPSON LITH.

SHEIK KHOOB.
(FROM LIFE)

was Budr-oo-deen, the Meer's Hakeem;[1] his man of business, the Delall; his English writer, with the adopted title of Mahomed Jaffer, and a Persian dress; Hubbeeb Khan, or the beloved, the Meer's favourite sepoy; with a crowd of coachmen, grooms, water-carriers, pipe-bearers, sherbet-makers, moonshees, and story-tellers beside; the most important of the whole being Ramjeo, the Meer's confidential servant, or Jemidar, as they call him in the family—a young, intelligent, handsome Mahomedan, who accompanied the Meer to England, wondered at Ascot, laughed immoderately at Astley's, and stood with true Moslem self-command, gravely and silently, with folded arms, in the corner of every drawing-room which was adorned by the handsome person and graceful manners of his master.

Many among this crowd were old friends of mine, had travelled with me in England, had voyaged with me to India; and although they did not burst forth into a series of loud praises of my virtues, talents, and largesses, as they would have done had I been their country-woman, I met with kindly recognition, the more grateful as it was the more disinterested. Good old Budr-oo-deen, the Hakeem, smiled, and rolled

[1] Physician.

his eyes with fearful activity as he welcomed me; and I was glad to see him there, both from the personal regard I felt for the old gentleman, and because his very original character never failed to produce amusement to me whenever I have met him.

The excitement of my arrival past, I found the Meer's people deeply interested in some transactions with little Dorabjee, the merchant, who had brought fine muslins and chintzes in abundance, to be admired and purchased as ankrikas[1] and scarfs, though he looked little suited to recommend them, being rather a grim-looking mahajun,[2] with a harsh black beard, descending to his waist. Dorabjee at once recognized me, as "a lady I know very well"—*i.e.*, "that I have imposed on, many times and oft"—after his nature. Ramjeo, the Meer's servant, was very busy in the transactions, reducing charges and settling payments; and it being rather hard labour to bring a Bombay Borah to the semblance of honest dealing, Ramjeo wore his working dress, consisting of a clear flowered muslin skull cap, full trousers, with a dark blue cotton handkerchief girded round the waist; and as I looked at his bare, glossy brown shoulders, it amused me to fancy

[1] Linen dresses worn by men. [2] Merchant.

how such an apparition would have startled the *Habitués* of Hyde Park, and how little chance Ramjeo would have had of being recognised as the Meer's handsome valet, last seen, shining in his rich livery of gold and green, the symbolic hues of the Prophet and the Prince.

The great topic of conversation among the native gentry of Bombay was the approaching marriage of the fair daughter of Sir Jamsetjee[1] Jeejeebhoy, to her cousin, a young Parsee of gentlemanly and pleasing exterior, much liked and well spoken of. In consequence of the illness of the Governor of Bombay, Sir Jamsetjee did not intend to issue any invitations for a general party, a matter of regret to many, for the knight's princely munificence was so well known, and the preparations made for the nuptial celebrations were so extensive, that a participation in the sumptuous entertainment and interesting circumstance of the wedding was of course desired by many, myself prominently among the number.

The Meer delighted my eyes with the examination of a parcel, containing some of the most magnificent shawls that were perhaps ever produced from the looms of Cashmere, as Meer Acbar Alee, his Highness's brother, having

[1] From *Jamsheed,* a celebrated king of Persia.

arrived from Baroda, they were both anxious to select shawls, with which to return Sir Jamsetjee's present, sent *selon règle* with the original invitation to the marriage. Now, the marriage gifts of the inviter are of comparatively small value, but my friends, as the prospective guests, were anxious to quadruple them in richness and splendour. This practice of making offerings at all marriages in the East, is one of the most mischievous in the social usages of oriental families, expense being thus incurred wholly inconsistent with the condition and means of the individuals concerned; so that debts are necessarily contracted, which fetter with difficulty an undue proportion of life's business. The truth is, that marriage ceremonies in the East are altogether inconsistent and absurd, as affects what is supposed necessary éclat; and the presents received from friends on these occasions are immediately disposed of, as the readiest means by which some portion of the enormous burthen of expense may be met by the father and family of the bride. These remarks of course do not apply to persons of the rank of Sir Jamsetjee or Meer Jafur; but among inferior classes, it might be found, if one's acquaintance was extensive in families with marriageable daughters, that demands on the purse for "*shawl money*"

might arrive too frequently for Hymen's torch to lead to welcome sacrifice.

On the day fixed for the presentation of the marriage gifts to Sir Jamsetjee, the Cashmerian shawl merchant, accompanied by Meer Jafur's Surattee Delall, arrived early with a handsome piece of Kinkaub,[1] wherewith to enwrap the shawls. This same Cashmerian I fancy to have been a good specimen of his race; he was tall, graceful, and fair, his complexion partaking of the European style of fairness, and not tinged with the sallow hue so disagreeable in a light-coloured native; his eyes were blue, and his hair a reddish brown, while his manners were pleasing, and he often spoke with much intelligence on the condition of his beautiful and interesting country. On the present occasion, he alluded with great sadness to the enormities which, his private letters told him, had been already perpetrated among the Cashmerians by their Hindoo ruler, Golaub Sing; among others, he mentioned his countrymen's habit of eating beef, and that on one occasion of a fat bull having been slaughtered, Golaub Sing burnt alive several Cashmerians as a punishment and warning. The poor man absolutely wept as he dwelt on the terror entertained by the people of the Sirdar,

[1] Gold embroidered silk.

and said there was no hope, as long as the yoke of Golaub Sing was on their necks. And then he spoke, in the spirit of a mountaineer, of the beautiful and romantic scenery of the Kohistan, and gradually with his excitement recovering his good spirits, chatted cheerfully enough of what was passing, and spoke with a sort of awe-inspired reverence and wonder, almost arising to superstition, of the military powers of Lord Hardinge.

A report was rife, to the dismay of shawl merchants in general, that Sir Jamsetjee, sensible of the expense caused to those who could ill afford it, from this custom of offerings on marriage, and of course feeling that the practice was quite beneath his dignity, if he availed himself of it as a means, in ordinary use, for defraying a large portion of incidental expense, had determined in his own case to afford a distinguished example against the continuance of the practice, and had already declined to receive the shawls of Sunkersett and of Gungadhur Shastree, the wealthiest Hindoo gentlemen in the Presidency. I had heard this news with great satisfaction while paying some morning visits to friends, likely to be very well informed on the matter, but as I repeated it to the Meer, the shawl merchant's countenance began to display the most anxious interest, and at length he

burst forth, with rapid assurances of the whole being a mistake. He knew, he said, what the lady had heard, for he had been told the same tale; of course it was very kind of Sir Jamsetjee, as so rich a man, to refuse to receive anything from the poorer gentry—but from noblemen, such as the Meer and his brother, it was quite another matter; Sir Jamsetjee of course would receive the shaws from *them*—and the Cashmerian began to fold the intended presents not only with great care, but rather unusual despatch, the absolute sale of the shawls depending, it seemed, on Sir Jamsetjee's reception of them—for as yet they had been merely selected, and although I have no doubt the merchant knew all the facts as well as I did, he cared not so to abandon his hopes, while he perhaps calculated a little on the Meer's rank, with his Highness's class as a Mahomedan, and his wrath was very ill concealed when I suggested, that perhaps Sir Jamsetjee would be more gratified if the shawls were not even *offered* upon this occasion.

The Meer listened to the arguments of the merchant, and looked doubtfully at me; in truth, he would not receive the idea that a Parsee *could* exercise so much forbearance as to refuse (and that in opposition to old established custom) a means so favourable for receiving wealth into his coffers, and so the shawl parcel, with its costly

wrapper, was placed in the carriage, and Meer Jafur and Meer Acbar Alee, in full dress, went forth to offer their compliments to Sir Jamsetjee. The shawl merchant looked first triumphant, then anxious. The Delall and he sat upon chairs at the open window, bending towards each other discussing chances, and from time to time suffering their voices to sink to low whispers, as they glanced through the open doors of the room in which I sat, quite unconcerned, because confident in the result. The stake of the shawl merchant was a matter of more than four hundred pounds (4,000 rupees), and the princely independence of Sir Jamsetjee could be but little appreciated by this mercantile pair. They estimated the feelings of others by their own, and so even while trembling, dared to hope the best. In half an hour, however, all doubt was at rest. The carriage of his Highness dashed through the gates. The merchant and Delall spring from their seats. "Ramjeo, what news?" All praise to the noble-hearted knight, the shawls are declined, and my friends have returned, charmed with the courteous bearing of Sir Jamsetjee.

As from this feeling of respect to the illness of the Governor, the wedding party was to be restricted to the native friends of Sir Jamsetjee's family, anxious as I felt to be present at a Parsee marriage, the idea was altogether aban-

doned, and I endeavoured to gain contentment, so that, in the best possible spirit, I might, with other evening loungers on the Esplanade, admire, night by night, the magnificent *façade* of the knight's mansion brilliantly illuminated; wonder whether the pretty pavilion erecting in front of it was for a natch or a supper-room, and gossip about the report that Monsieur Roserre, the Herr Döbler of the day, had been offered four thousand rupees to do what any Kalatnee[1] would have performed more surprisingly, for three thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine rupees less.

At about three o'clock on a certain day, however, a servitor of Sir Jamsetjee's came to "call them that were bidden to the wedding," and he literally said in the Guzeratee tongue, "all things are ready, come unto the marriage."[2] A polite affirmative was at once written by Meer Jafur, on coloured French note paper, and enclosed in an envelope decorated with loves, doves, hearts, and violin players, an original design, perhaps, of the valentine producer's art-union; and this suitable missive having been despatched, Meer Jafur and his brother Meer Acbar soon appeared splendidly and most becomingly attired. The dress of Meer Jafur was of fine white linen, flowered in Surat tambour

[1] Gipsy.

[2] St. Matthew, xii, 4.

work with gold and coloured silks; his turban was of Dacca muslin, striped with gold; a long muslin scarf, such as Mahomedans always wear in dress, fell on his shoulders, and upon his arm he bore a magnificent green Cashmere shawl.

Knowing well the power of perseverance in all mundane matters (even those with the most discouraging aspect), I determined mine should not be lacking in a vigorously sustained endeavour to see as much of this great Parsee wedding as the unbidden might; and, being altogether urgent in curiosity, the Meer, with his usual kindness, assisted my laudable exertions with the loan of one of his open carriages, in which, with sketch-book in hand, I quickly followed to the scene of action, and a brilliant one in truth it was.

Passing through the Sunkersett Bazaar (as this part of Bombay is called in compliment to the rich Hindoo landholder, Juggernath Sunkersett, Esq.), our way was constantly impeded by groups of women bearing marriage gifts, all richly dressed, and followed by their male relatives, every tenth woman bearing on her right hand a salver, on which was a loaf of sugar and an infant's suit of crimson satin, broidered in gold or silver.

As we passed through the church gates of the

fort, the plot thickened, and the crowd was so dense that we could proceed only at a foot's pace, ourselves attracting attention from the crimson silk reins and silver harness of our steeds. This fact from time to time favoured my advance, but the way was choking with the processions of women I have described, and the masses of bidden guests passing from every avenue towards the mansion of Sir Jamsetjee. Each guest wore a "wedding garment," and bore on his arm, closely folded, a Cashmere shawl. This wedding garment was a surcoat of fine muslin, falling in full folds to the feet, fastened with large bows over the breast on the left side, and girded round the waist with flat broad bands of a thicker material. It is proper that this dress should be of sufficient length to conceal the slippers, and must be of very ample dimensions.

As we advanced, it was quite evident that the constabulary force had labour almost beyond their powers and patience in warning off the hired Shigrams[1] filled with half-caste women, and the Buggies crested with English sailors that marred the scene; but if Constable C, who appeared the very genius of order, possessed any taste connected with his public zeal, he

[1] Native carriages closed by Venetians.

must have backed, passaged, and caracoled that bay Arab, which seemed ubiquitous, with right good will. On one side of us was the splendid mansion of Sir Jamsetjee—its handsome portico and broad flight of steps occupied by the male members of the family, welcoming the wedding guests, while Cursetjee, the eldest son, pointed to the place of each on the chairs and benches previously arranged. Thus honourable men who were bidden, sat in the highest place. None were afterwards called on to give way, neither was it necessary to say unto any, "Friend, go up higher,"[1] arrangements having been previously made according to rank; and thus "the wedding was furnished with guests."[2]

On the upper step of the porch was seated Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, benevolence in his every expression, dignity in his every gesture. His garment was of white muslin, of the most delicate fabric and ample dimensions, and on his breast he wore a noble decoration in the gold medal presented to him by her Majesty Queen Victoria, in recognition of the princely munificence which dictated the erection of the noble hospital which bears his name.

In front of, and nearly opposite to, Sir Jamsetjee's house, stretched a line of temporary and

[1] St. Luke, xiv, 10. [2] St. Matthew, xxii, 10.

highly-decorated refreshment-rooms intended for the Natch and supper, and here the band of the 20th Native Infantry played polkas with the most untiring spirit.

I had but time to direct my coachman to draw in at this particular point, as the best for seeing the passers by, when on the porch and steps of the mansion, I observed the guests dividing as if to flank an avenue, and in a second more came forth a procession as brilliant, interesting, and beautiful as could be imagined. It was difficult indeed to fancy myself the spectator of a matter of real life, so like was it to some of the rich, gorgeous, and well-imagined groupings, that delight us in a new opera, or a splendid ballet, where colour, light, and design, have exhausted their best efforts for effect. In this case, however, truth added to the beauty of the scene, and instead of weary, worn-out *coryphées*, we had here the handsome friends and fair young relatives of the bride, bearing marriage gifts to the bridegroom's house. And on they came, trooping forth into the bright sunshine clasped hand in hand, bearing salvers; their rich attire was of French satin of the clearest colours, bright blue, pale blush colour, and full primrose; each Saree bordered with a deep band of gold or silver, and each foot flashing in a jewelled slipper. The band preceded this fair *cortège*,

and as the whole moved on, bright smiles and mirthful glances gleamed upon the crowd, but the slow and measured pace served well to display the grace and natural dignity of the Parsee ladies.

Scarcely had this charming procession passed, when a jewelled hand was laid on the carriage door, and Cursetjee looked in. "I have come," he said, "the bearer of my father's compliments, to beg you to honour my sister's marriage with your presence; you would, perhaps, like to see the ceremony, and your friends, the Meers, are already here."

The reader, to whom I have already confided my anxiety on this point, will sympathize in the delight I felt at thus becoming a bidden guest; in truth, at this moment the invitation appeared the very pleasantest I had ever received, and I immediately followed its kind proposer to the portico, where Sir Jamsetjee received me with the courtesy which so eminently distinguished the fine old knight, and I soon found myself in the seat of honour, "the upper room at feasts," between my friends Meer Jafur and Meer Acbar. Ours was evidently the most distinguished position, for Sunkersett was with us, with his fat, amiable son, and the Brahmin, Vinaek Gungadhur Shastree, Esq., with others of note, while upon the opposite seats, among those of

less degree, I soon espied "our family physician," Budr-oo-deen, whose eyes revolved more than ever, as I thought, and who looked much paler—an odd old gentleman in sooth, and not at his ease as a wedding guest.

But I am digressing, and while the Hakeem is rolling his visual organs, as if boldly defying any cobra in all India to fascinate them, the din of women's voices grows louder through the lattice behind my chair, the lights burn more brilliantly, and Cursetjee summons me to witness the marriage ceremonies. The glare and noise on first entering the great saloon were quite overpowering, and it occupied some minutes before I could see and understand what surrounded me. It seemed that a few moments previous to my entrance a large curtain had been thrown down, which had been drawn across the chamber, the ceremonies connected with which had been strictly private, and from what I afterwards learned of the matter, very properly so; but the mirth of the ladies was at its height, and although this was their sixth day of festivity preparatory to the marriage, rich peals of ringing laughter left no doubt of their untiring enjoyment, and their perfect appreciation of all the

> "Jest and youthful jollity,
> Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,"

which had attended the performance of rites, mystical to the stranger.

In the centre of the hall was spread a large square carpet, the border of which I was particularly requested not to touch, even with the edge of my garment, it being for the time sacred. On one side of this were the bride and bridegroom, seated on richly gilt chairs; the young husband in the usual dress of the Parsees, and the bride enveloped in a veil, or Saree, of gold gauze edged with pearls. They were a handsome couple, and with little disparity of age, the bridegroom being perhaps eighteen, and pretty Ferozebhai[1] some four years younger. Facing the bride stood the Dastur, or chief priest, with the flowing garments and white turban peculiar to the order, and on either side, Mobeds (priests of the second class) holding a dish of coca-nuts and rice, and a small fan. Between the priests and bride were two small tables, teapoys as they are called in India (a perversion of teen-pong or tripod), each supporting a lighted candle and a green cocoa-nut on a silver salver.[2] As the Dastur thus stood, with hand upraised, he scattered rice and dried fruits towards the bride, repeating the nuptial bene-

[1] Literally, the sister of the Turquoi.

[2] Genesis, i, 28.

diction. This ended, the bride's feet were bathed with milk, the Kusti, or cincture of seventy-two threads, blessed and adjusted, with some frivolous customs, on which it is unnecessary here to remark, inasmuch as I was assured, both by Manockjee Cursetjee and my obliging friend Nourojee Dorabjee, the radical editor of the Chabook newspaper, that they were mere grafts of Hinduism, and "contemptible to speak of."

The concluding ceremony, however, had too much absurdity in it to pass unnoticed, and the reader will, if a bachelor, perhaps thank heaven that *he* at least was not born a supposed worshipper of A'tish (fire), to be liable to the sufferings I am about to describe, in addition to that of a "wedding breakfast." In the marriage chamber were some hundreds of Parsee women, of all ages and various ranks, splendidly attired, for even those less wealthy than their neighbours were radiant in gold and satin; yet the elder ladies, and some even more than *passée*, had reason to rejoice that the Saree, when required, levelled distinctions by concealment. Every individual of this crowd from the moment, however, the nuptial ceremony was concluded, stepped upon the carpet, and commenced a little benedictory appendix, performed by extending the hands, and passing them over the faces and

garments of the bride and bridegroom, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, repassing them from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, and retiring, after a low salaam. I fancied I could perceive a pitiable shrinking of the suffering bridegroom from the bony hands of some of the elder ladies, and a gentle shaking of the pretty head of the bride, as if these harsh touches on her smooth face were absolutely painful. No doubt they were, but this is a "custom" in the East—a word of most extended meaning, powerful enough at all times to set aside any supposed necessity for reason, and affording an excuse for anything, however monstrous, absurd, or irrational.

On entering the saloon, Cursetjee had introduced me to his mother, Lady Jamsetjee, a remarkably fine-looking person. Her dress was a rich crimson satin Saree, with a deep gold border, slippers worked in diamonds, and a nose jewel, composed of three large pearls, with an emerald pendant, an ornament which the Parsees as well as the Mahomedans very generally use.

After the marriage I was presented to the bride, and had the pleasure of seeing her sweet face unveiled by gorgeous drapery. She wore trowsers of white satin embroidered in gold, a flowered lace under dress, with a pale pink satin boddice, worked with an elaborate design in

E. LANDELLS, DEL.ᵗ

SIMPSON & Cº, LITH.

PARSEE LADY.

(FROM LIFE)

pearls of various sizes, her slippers and nose-ring being similar to those of Lady Jamsetjee; numerous strings of large pearls depended from her face and neck, and her arms were half hidden by rich ornaments. As I looked at the fair Ferozebhai, the ode of the Persian poet came into my memory, and never seemed the words of Hafiz more applicable than here:—

> "Mild is thy nature, gentle maid,
> As is the rosebud's modest head
> In the fresh bower of early spring;
> And such thy shape, to equal thee
> The garden of eternity
> Must its own cypress proudly bring."[1]

The demeanour of the fair girl was indeed eminently graceful and quiet, and I am told that she is accomplished and very amiable, speaking English well, having been educated by an Englishwoman who was accustomed to tuition in England, and is herself well informed. And here I cannot avoid remarking with commiseration on the condition of many of my poor countrywomen in India, whose position appears to be, if not quite destitute, helpless and wretched in the extreme; one sketch of whom will serve as the portrait of many. A young woman, for instance, of a large and impoverished family, the members of which, perhaps, all occupy the

[1] Third Ode.

most dependent and generally the most degraded position of governesses in second-rate families, is induced, with the hope of assisting in missionary labours, to come to India. She marries, perhaps, a clerk in an office, or some man whose family have been unable to provide him with a profession. He gains chance employment probably in an office, or as English writer to some native gentleman, where he gains lodgings and some three pounds (thirty rupees) a month. Disappointment now brutalizes him, he strives to deaden its sense by stimulants; a young family increases care, the wife struggles to improve things by teaching among half-castes and Parsees for a stipend less than her husband's; mutual recrimination too often follows; the unhappy woman, unable to return to her country, fails in health; and the picture is one over which we would willingly draw a veil, wishing that society had no such scenes which have for actresses our sorrowing sisters, sorrowing and helpless in a foreign and ungenial clime.

I had quitted Sir Jamsetjee's house, and was enjoying the refreshment of tea with my kind friend, Manockjee Cursetjee, at his house, a few doors from the knight's, when my attention was excited by a blaze of light, which I found to proceed from hundreds of lanterns, swinging in pairs from the tops of bamboos some ten feet

high, and carried by coolies,[1] engaged to light the procession of the bride to her husband's house. An avenue was now formed, and the fair Ferozebhai appeared, surrounded by her female friends, and enveloped in a crimson Saree, closely drawn round her face and figure; she was then carefully placed in an open palankeen, decorated with cushions of gold and green; this was immediately raised and borne between her male relatives, while the guests of both sexes attended it in distinct groups, according to their sex, but both men and women holding hands, and walking slowly two and two. The innumerable lights gave full effect to this interesting scene, and military bands lent their aid to render it yet more dramatic.

The looker-on could not but be impressed with the singularity of the procession, and the strange fact of this fair girl, whose life had been passed in the seclusion of her own splendid home, being thus brought forth, and borne above the heads of the crowd through the close streets of the crowded fort; a blaze of light cast on her delicate and shrinking form, and curiously gazed on by the lowest of the people, and, this misery past, to enter her husband's house, and lead a life secluded as before. Yet such is the "cus-

[1] Porters.

tom," painful and revolting though it be, and, as I remarked before, no further explanation is required.

It was pleasant, however, to know, that in the fate of this fair Parsee there was less harshness than attends the lives of many who dared scarcely look from their lattices upon her—a fact arising from the strictness of Mahomedan and Hindoo customs. Ferozebhai, it was pleasant to remember, had not married one old enough to be her father, the present husband, perhaps, of a trio of fair dames; nor had she been betrothed in childhood to one she could not but detest. She looks not forward to a life whose sole pleasure is gossip, whose chief luxury is sloth; in her case there is no funeral pyre, with its greedy flames, ever dancing before a terror-excited imagination. Happily, no. Her cousin-husband has won her girlish heart; she fears not the influence of other wives, or any degradation at her husband's hands; she will have cheerful association with her friends, and possess a degree of liberty unknown to other Eastern women. By Parsee edict no legal rival can dispute her power; and but that the Venetians of her carriage are only half open to the morning and evening breezes as she drives to her country house, to enjoy the family pic-nics and festivities in which the Parsees delight so much,

her fate does not materially differ from that of a young Englishwoman commencing the duties and cherished responsibilities of a wife. And thus, sweet bride, with heartfelt good wishes and pleasant thoughts, we say farewell to thee! Be thou as one among the "honourable women," whose clothing is not only vestures "of gold wrought about with needlework," but whose "strength and honour are her clothing," and whose "works praise her in the gates."[1]

"Lips though rosy must be fed," and lips of a less charming hue must also receive sustenance, despite ceremonies, Cashmeres, and stiff muslins; the Parsees especially, too, agree in the idea that life in Bombay would be but a dull thing were it not illustrated by plates, as poor Theodore Hook hath it of London; consequently, as soon as the bride had left her father's house dinner commenced, and as this entertainment was likely to last some hours, I thankfully accepted Manockjee's invitation to look through his library, for which purpose we proceeded to his father's house. On the steps we met Manockjee's interesting little daughter, Koonverbhai, who had run home for a moment to change her delicate blue and silver Saree for a less brilliant one, in anticipation of passing the

[1] Proverbs, xxxi.

evening in romps and pastimes with the bride and her companions. This little lady was in high spirits and under great excitement, but gentle, well-bred, and courteous as ever. Placing her little soft hand in mine, she carefully led me up the winding staircase of the house, smiling and chatting all the way in the most winning manner, and never for a moment betraying the anxiety she felt to return to her more congenial party.

On entering the drawing-room we found a weary group, for six days and nights of festival will tire the most zealous in mirth and gaiety. Manockjee's younger son, Shereen, was especially so, and taking off his little body-coat and turban, and appearing in his loose muslin dress, scarlet trowsers, and blue satin skull cap, he threw himself on a sofa and was soon fast asleep. Manockjee's wife was also there, with her pretty round-faced little baby; but as she spoke only Guzeratee, the language now used by the Parsees, our intercourse was confined to an interchange of smiles.

Soon after ten, I left Manockjee Cursetjee's to attend the Natch at Sir Jamsetjee's "bower," as the Parsees called it. The band of the 20th Native Infantry were still playing polkas with great zeal, and the guests had not yet left the feast. Cursetjee, Jamsetjee, and the bridegroom,

however, received us, and a servant presented a large salver covered with bouquets of delicious roses, but no sooner had I taken one than he sprinkled it with scented water from a golden Golaubdani, which notion of adding, as it were, "perfume to the violet," was too completely in native taste for me to approve. A few days before this, the Meer, who had been at a large party at Sunkersett's, presented me with a bouquet, every blossom in which was speckled with gold leaf. Sir Jamsetjee's people were more poetical in this case, but the little triangular packets of Pān Suparee, folded in fresh plantain leaf, were gilded most profusely.

The dancing-room was elegantly decorated, spread with rich carpets, and lighted with massive silver candelabras and splendid chandeliers, the cornices and pilasters painted with garlands of flowers, evidently by a French artist, while the draperies were of pale pink silk. The Taifa consisted of only two Natch women, but good specimens of their profession; both were young and handsome, wearing the tight trowser and bell-shaped dress of gauze, embroidered with gold. The contrast of colour was pretty: one dancer wearing dark crimson and gold, and her companion pale blue and silver. Natches resemble each other so nearly, that a description of the present would be a work of supereroga-

tion indeed, and altogether intolerable to the reader; it is enough to say that the dancers at Sir Jamsetjee's were perfect in their art. They advanced, retired, revolved, and advanced again as usual, while the musicians grinned, and nodded, and stamped, and made horrible faces of intense excitement, as it is their duty to do. Thus the spectators were lulled and charmed by turns into a succession of the most perfect satisfaction. Behind the dancers a full curtain that depended from an arch excited my curiosity, and under pretence of viewing nearer the decorations of the saloon, I peeped behind it. Stretching away to what really seemed an interminable distance were supper-tables, laden with rich plate, decorated with epergnes and roses, and abundantly studded with certain long-necked bottles, in vases of fresh ice.

The guests now strolling in, I felt that, as the only European present, I might be considered an intruder on the scene, and after being escorted to my carriage by a strong party of "links," I proceeded through the fort. The Will to return was, however, easier than the deed, for the town generally, and the Sunkersett bazaar with its environs, was filled with wedding parties; lights flashed from every house, coloured Chinese paper lanterns swung from every porch, tomtoms were beaten, and singers screamed in loud dis-

cord on every side; fireworks cracked, and torchmen rushed wildly from street to street. It may be imagined that all this merry madness, combined with a bright moonlight and a pair of very fresh and shying horses, rendered my homeward course rather an erratic one, making it late before we drove through the gates of Girgaum House, whither my friends, Meer Jafur and Meer Acbar, the "bidden guests," had preceded me, I found, some hours.[1]

[1] Both in this and in the chapter entitled "Golden Apples," the reader may recognise some paragraphs, which, written by myself, have, with few alterations, already appeared in one of our most successful periodicals.

CHAPTER II.

THE DHOBŪN OR LAUNDRESS.

"How truth's pure channel leads to sacred fame,
Learn, oh my heart! from the pellucid stream."

Hafiz.

A VERY interesting little personage who, morning after morning, attracted my attention, moving and chatting about among the roses and jasmines of Meer Jafur's parterre, was Parbutti, the Dhobūn, and one morning, on returning from my early ride, I persuaded her to let me "write her in a book," as the natives were accustomed to call sketching.

Now, it will be readily understood that the Dhobūn is a very necessary addition to an oriental household, where the most scrupulous cleanliness is joined to the scantiest imaginable wardrobe. And so, at almost all hours of every day, the washerwoman or her helpmate the Dhobhie may be seen with the white Ankrika of either one or the other of the servants, which, shining with rice

E. LANDELLS, DEL.ᵗ

SIMPSON & Cº. LITH.

PARBUTTI DHOBŪN.
(FROM LIFE)

starch, they return, in an hour or two, neatly folded in a thin handkerchief, and balanced upon the head. Parbutti's costume consisted of a bright yellow silk Chola or boddice fastened behind, and a light blue cotton Saree or scarf, having a crimson silk edge, gracefully draped around the figure. On the right arm she wore a Taweed or charm, to defend her, poor little soul, from the evil eye! and all her savings, hard-earned rupees as they were, had been melted down to form anklets and bracelets; a safer system, Parbutti thought, than that of burying them in an earthen Chattee, or pot, within her father's hut. These braveries seemed heavy for so slight an ankle, yet the Dhobūn's step was so light, and so elastic withal, and her figure so well balanced that one could but rejoice she had the means to wear them.

The matter of washing is conducted differently abroad to what we know of it in England.

The Dhobūn, with her husband and assistants, ladens a little bullock with such of the family garments as are in a soiled condition, and drives the animal slowly along to the river bank, the tank, the pool, or, it may be, to the nearest well. The clothes being then laid on large stones placed there for the purpose, they are rolled and beaten—beaten and rolled again, fresh water being constantly poured over them from little

Lotas or metal bowls. Dried, at length, in the warm sunbeams, the linen is powerfully starched with congee, or rice starch, and then smoothed with an iron, somewhat resembling the box-iron of England, if we imagine red-hot charcoal supplying the place of the ordinary heater.

The little Dhobūn seemed the sweetest-tempered little creature living, and every servant, Peon (messenger), Bhisti (water-carrier), or whoever he might be, turned from his occupation to exchange with her a cheerful greeting. Parbutti seemed also to have eminently attained the great virtue of punctuality; no servant anxiously waiting for his clean attire to serve the morning meal, ever had occasion to scold the general favourite, for exactly at the moment that the cook announced that the rice and Kabobs were ready, that moment the sunbeams were broken in their course by the slight figure of the pretty little Dhobūn. Youth, health, and worthy occupation make all lives cheerful, but if merry with us among the roses and oleanders of his Highness's garden, how much merrier was the pretty Dhobūn when engaged in her vocation at the river bank or by the side of that well, shaded by the fine old peepul tree, out there by the Imaun's tomb. How musical has her voice sounded at the sunset hour, when surrounded by her young companions she has chanted her

Mahratta songs, polishing her little Lotas[1] as she sung, while the blue Saree, drooping on her neck, suffered some bright ray of light to fall on the shining tresses of her heavily-braided hair, and the rich gold ornament and red pomegranate blossoms which formed its tasteful decoration.

There is certainly something exquisitely attractive in colour and sunlight. How charmed I have often been in watching the groups of oriental women massed about these Indian wells at sunset! How interesting it becomes to note the brilliant richnesses of colour, the great variety of form, and the singular differences of effect which individual arrangements of dress alone are capable of producing. A stranger, if happily endued with a perception of the graceful and picturesque, can never weary in his admiration of the groups so presented to his view, and though a large number of the commoner classes may mix therein, and, on a near approach, the texture of their garments may seem coarse, their ornaments rude in execution, and a superfices of dirt appear more prominently than is pleasing, the spectator will yet be delighted with the charming contrasts and accidental graces which are sufficiently present, in every oriental group in which women form a part, to fascinate the

[1] Metal bowls used for water.

artistic eye, and beguile all criticism as affects detail.

The European traveller himself has a personal interest in the village well. How often has he felt his flagging spirits cheered, after a long, hot ride over a vast plain, presenting not a shrub to diversify the arid face of nature, when, from a rising knoll, he suddenly descries a group of fresh-leaved peepul trees, and, putting his horse into a canter, speedily arrives at the welcome fount they overshadow? How grateful to his ear is the sound of the running ropes, and the rude song of the water driver! how delicious seems the bright stream that leaps through the little grass-bordered rivulet, towards the rich plantations of young grain! and how willingly he slackens the rein of his good steed, and suffers him to take a long, delicious draught, as the sturdy peasant, calling an authoritative halt to "Rama and Crishnajee"[1] (who are well nigh tired with their morning's work), points to the traveller's tent, scarce an arrow's flight from the spot, and now seen securely nestled under the shadow of a noble banyan tree.

If to the European traveller this well is a sight so refreshing to the eye, what then must it be to the merchant, the pilgrim, or he that

[1] The names of Hindoo demi-gods are frequently given in India to draught bullocks and camels.

journeys with all that he hath to a foreign province, where neither hath the crops failed as with him, nor the locusts devoured the first-fruits of the field? See the aged man leaning on his staff, his eyes bent on the ground, his long white beard brown with dust, his garments torn and travel-stained! How his eye brightens, his pace quickens, and his form becomes more erect, as he sees those shading trees and hears the music of the Mussack (water bag) ropes. How he turns smilingly to point out that cheering scene to the poor weary woman, with her little one cradled on the half-starved pony, that her husband, tired of vainly urging, has left to its own pace, while *he* loiters behind, with their eldest boy, who, clinging round his father's neck, with cheek upon his turban sleeps soundly there—worn to rest by heat and sheer exhaustion. How the group press together as that refreshing well is seen and heard; how quickly the worn-out wife adjusts her Saree and rouses the babes, who wake to smile upon the scene. The miserable pony, too, with cheerful neigh, ambles along right briskly, while the loitering father runs on to join the forward group, holding the sleeping child more firmly by his little hands.

And now the well is gained, the poor family gather to its brink—they drink at the sparkling

rill—they bathe their hot swelled feet—they turn the pony loose, and take from his saddle-bags the provender. Humble fare, indeed! a little grain, a few spices, a fresh paun leaf or two, and a Chillum,[1] shared between them—but it sufficeth for their wants; and then, by the rippling water, they lay them down, shaded from the noontide heat, and slumber calmly, until the sunset hour approaching, the increasing shadow warns the group they must not loiter there. The pony is resaddled, another refreshing Chillum passes round, the poor family prepare to leave their halting place; and Christian charity forbid that the looker-on should scoff, if, ere they quit that happy spot of rest, and calm, and shelter, each elder of the group should lay a grain of such food as he has partaken, with a fresh leaf and a few blossoms, as an offering to the Supreme Spirit of the place, or reverently bow in gratitude to the stone he believes a Deity, and the Giver of the good which has so restored and comforted himself, his wife, and little ones, on their long and weary way.

For my own part, I have quite the affection of a native for a country well. I love to see the bright green turf about it; I love to note the flickering, dancing forms of the huge boughs

[1] Oriental pipe.

that overshadow it, as the bright morning sunbeams are closed out by a canopy of thick, rich-coloured, clustering leaves; I love to see the peasants bringing their baskets of fresh vegetables to wash them in the running stream; to see the roses and the jasmines that were gathered before sunrise to preserve their beauty, sprinkled with fresh drops to keep them cool for the neighbouring market, or until they are strung into chaplets and formed into bouquets for the rich man's hareem or the temple's service. 'Tis pleasant to see how the old well is covered with flowering creepers, with various tinted lichen, with a thousand graceful springing shrubs, whilst all around, perhaps, is drear and sterile. To see the richly-plumaged birds hover near, watching *their* turn to benefit by its gifts; to listen to the song of the bullock-driver, as he sits easily on the ropes, urging and encouraging by turns his well-trained beasts, as, raising the full water bags, they quickly descend the inclined plane, and after a brief halt, while the sparkling, gurgling, frothing water falls over into the wide trough or well-made channel, they lazily and slowly back, until the bags have refilled, and the song and labour recommence. 'Tis pleasant, indeed, to look on *good* in any form, and surely the Indian well is as full and

abundant in its good gifts to those who need them as any feature in the land.

The two great descriptions of wells in India are the "Koor" and the "Bhowree." The first is the simple well surrounded by a wall of masonry, and the other is descended by flights of steps, and is frequently a most costly work, elaborately decorated with architectural ornament. Many of the finest Bhowrees have arcades or galleries round them of several stories, with delicate traceries of flowers, pilasters, cornices, and elaborate decorations of various kinds. Some of the Mahomedan cities show fine remains of this kind of well, which must have been among their most admired architectural decorations. I recollect one of singular beauty in the old city of Junagurh; a second, of yet larger size, near Bhooj, and others of much beauty in all the great cities of Western India. The Koor is essentially, I believe, Hindoo, but the Bhowree pertains to both Hindoos and Mahomedans.

In Guzerat, a system of preserving fresh rain-water is adopted, by means of small tanks to each house, a plan which might well be beneficial in other countries liable to great droughts.

In the neighbourhood of Nuggur there is a particularly fine specimen of Mahomedan masonry, called the Elephant Well, and said to be of the time of Arungzebe. It does not appear to have

ever been used, but the people aver that it was intended to be drawn by double pairs of elephants, hence its name; and the colossal dimensions of the structure render the idea very probable.

The garden well of the Deccan is always one of its most pleasant features, both for the reasons of coolness and shade before remarked, and from the peculiar character of the Mahratta peasantry. This peculiarity results, I conclude, from their fine bracing climate, but there is a gaiety, an activity, an energy of purpose, and an appreciation of the ridiculous about a Mahratta that I have never seen in any other classes of the people of Western India. The Mahratta always lightens labour by a song, and he must be a dull sluggard indeed, equally careless of his health, mental and bodily, who does not feel a cheerful desire to benefit by the fresh morning air of "another blue day" (as the German song has it), to which he is roused with the gay cheerful song of the Mahratta water-drawer, as the full Mussacks cast their sparkling waters over the wheel, to refresh the sweet roses and blossoming shrubs that pour forth their fragrance on the cool and healthful breeze.

To the observant traveller, who, with a mind free from prejudice, desires to judge of the manners and habits of a people with reference

to their own wants and condition, and not by his own notions as an individual acquainted only with the means and appliances of a civilized country in agriculture and manufactures, the simple contrivance of these wells of the Mahratta Ryots must appear the best suited to their purposes that can possibly be imagined, being at once so simple, so cheap, and so effective.

A Mahratta peasant, whose well formed a pleasant resting-place in my evening walk, told me that his whole apparatus for drawing water, bags, ropes, yokes, and the general wood-work, cost him some ten rupees; that with care and the expenditure of a little oil occasionally, the whole would last some years, six or seven perhaps; that the price of bullocks varied much, particularly according to seasons, but that for the "Pandu and Bappoo" then in yoke he had given fifteen rupees, a fair price, and they were young and strong to labour; and this little reckoning will show how much better such a cheap and simple system is for such a people, than a method less rude and clumsy perhaps, but one which would require considerable outlay in the original purchase of material, as well as a degree of skill to repair and keep in order not possessed by village workmen. It is often complained that the agriculturists of India show a very mischievous prejudice in favour of their

own old system of agriculture, but I think the condemnation sometimes unreasonable, and very frequently so as regards their implements, while in the case of irrigation by native wells, nothing could be found better, I should think, than the common system adopted by the Mahratta Ryots.

A native well is pleasant, too, considered as a scene of social gossip and easy chat. To the native woman of the lower ranks it forms the great amusement of her life, in fact; and even the frequenters of the male sex, who can chat elsewhere at their leisure, linger much longer at the well than necessity requires, while the stranger may be most agreeably entertained by observing the picturesque and often very curious groups gathered at such trysting spots. We have the graceful Hindostan sepoy, in the easy native dress, which becomes him so well that one wishes he was never required to wear aught else; the cunning-eyed Bhisti,[1] with his pretty bullock, decorated with a necklace of shells and a little mirror, in which we suspect the Bhisti himself sometimes takes a sly glance at his well-arranged Puggree, with the bunch of oleander so jauntily set over his left ear; the woman of the lower class, with her bright water-vessels

[1] Water-carrier.

to be filled for family use, yet wearing handsome ornaments, and attired in a gay Saree, which well sets off her bright eyes and smiling countenance; and as each member of the party fills their vessel, and places it on the well-side to rest awhile, a world of pleasant chat and kindly question animates the group, and the looker-on will readily perceive, as the merry laugh rings on his ear, that lovers of lively gossip might find worse places for its enjoyment than the much-trodden yet grassy margin of an Indian well.

We had commenced with a little chit-chat about the object of our sketch, the pretty little laundress of his Highness Meer Jafur Alee, but the fair Parbutti has betrayed us into a dissertation upon Indian wells! It was a natural transition however, for so often have we seen the bright eyes and smiling face of the little Dhobūn raised to ours, as we have drawn bridle beneath the shading peepul tree, that Parbutti became to our imagination as the very nymph of the fountain, inseparable indeed from our ideas of coolness, refreshment, and the pleasant rural music of sweet voices and honest labour.

CHAPTER III.

TROOPS OF FRIENDS.

"Give companions, who unite
In one wish, and one delight."

Hafiz.

THERE was swamp without, and swamp within. The beautiful ruins of the old city of Bassein were decidedly what Mr. Slick would call "juicy." The frogs, snakes, and mosquitoes were in a condition of lively vigour, and, despite the towers, the cloisters, the oriel windows, the rich chancels, peeping from every flowery nook of the tangled foliage (matters so attractive to the owners of block books, pencils, and a taste for the picturesque), we felt that we were little better than the foolish, in thus wooing miasma, in her favourite haunt.

Fortunately we were in time with our new idea, and as a baggage pony was seen helping himself to some coarse grass, flavoured with indigo plants, at the door of the little mudfloored

bungalow, I persuaded him to splash his way with me to the post or Dāk-boat, and so arrived at Gora Bunder, having, in this case, gained experience without a fever.

But the interest of Gora Bunder[1] had waned. The Mahomedan Fojdar, or ruler, good unassuming man, pressed our stay, and pretty Ruttonbhai, the Parsee, wished it too. Her eloquence perhaps would have been the most persuasive, for she was always well-dressed and amiable (pleasant traits in woman), and she was cheering to look on, with her figured lace Sadra, and her bright crimson Saree, its deep blue border contrasting well with the fair round arm that held the oval basket in which she brought down fruit and flowers, attended by her little milk-white curly dog; but, in truth, Gora Bunder had become tiresome.

To watch the great Butteelas or coast-boats lading with corn, the Tannah craft passing and repassing with grass from Bassein; to hear the fishermen shout for passengers, and old Mootunbhai, the ferrywoman, enforcing their fares; to see the children play at tattoo-ba (or puss-in-the-corner), and the little canoes depart laden with people—an old cow lying as ballast in the bottom; all this had been seen too often to

[1] A place of favourite resort, about thirty miles from the Presidency of Bombay.

afford amusement, and so a note was despatched to his Highness the Meer requesting him to send his carriage on a certain day to take us back.

But we acted unadvisedly; when too late to alter our arrangements we received a Persian note, saying that only one pair of horses could be spared to come half-way, inasmuch as the Ramazan[1] had ended, and the Meer requíred his state carriage and bay horses wherewith to pay visits to his friends, in accordance with Mahomedan custom. What was to be done? Servants, furniture, all was gone. In this dilemma the Parsee, whose house we occupied, suggested a remedy; he would put pillows, grass, mattrasses, into his bullock gharree; he had a fast pair of little Deckanee bullocks, and in two hours we should be at our friend Cursetjee's house to meet the carriage, and so we were, a distance of twelve miles! And I then learnt that piles of grass, with a good mattrass resting on it, is equal to a score of air cushions, and allows a journey to be made as pleasantly in a springless native cart, as in the best hung carriage, fitted with Collinge's patent axles, and all such appliances, as was ever turned out of Long Acre, but for the appearance of the thing; and Abdoola, the Meer's handsome coachman, cer-

[1] The "Lent" of the Moslems.

tainly did look rather astonished as he drove up the carriage-road of Cursetjee's house; but all was ready, and the Meer's splendid grays soon found their way to rack and manger, even over the newly-mended ways of the island of Salsette.

As we said, Ramazan had ended—there was no doubt about that. The house at Girgaum looked as gay as brightly dressed servants, with their Zulufs, or love-locks, more carefully arranged than ever, could make it, and there were heaps of roses scattered about, and streams of perfume from scores of Hookaks, and minstrels were in the garden, and professional story-tellers among the retainers grouped in the lower rooms, and his Highness attired in the softest robes of gold-embroidered muslins, the choicest produce of the looms of Delhi, sat in his drawing-room, surrounded by native friends, for it was the "Eed," a great Moslem day for courtesy and salutation.

It was pleasant to have arrived, for among them *I* also had friends. "What!" perhaps some English reader may exclaim, "*friends* among all those black people?" Even so, friends that I respected and esteemed as much as many among my own people, and, if the reader will allow me, I will present to him a few of those so present in Bombay:—There was Mirza Ali Mahomed Khan, a very gentlemanly

Moghul, who spoke English most correctly, and was a very agreeable person. His father was a rich merchant, but Mirza Ali himself was independent, and had a pleasant country house a short distance from our own. Then there was Vinaek Gungadhur Shastree, the Brahmin, who was so fond of taking photographs of everybody, and clever Manockjee Cursetjee, whose daughter Koonverbhai is already known to us, while he, poor man, but lately returned from England, was suffering from the disadvantage of being educated in advance of his times and people. There were some twenty other gentlemen besides these, Moslem, Hindoo, and Parsee.

And here, animated as I must always be by a high regard and warm esteem for all the members of native society I have had the advantage of classing among my friends, I cannot avoid expressing my deep regret that a degree of mutual sympathy is not cultivated between the stranger and the native, which would elevate in the one case, and purify from prejudice in the other. I have often had occasion also to remark the difference of consideration paid to a native gentleman in India and in England. In the drawing-rooms of London, or the *salons* of Paris, we find the Oriental noble, or even men of lesser rank, treated with the utmost courtesy. and the most flattering distinction, but the same

hour that this lionized individual returns to his own land, he is treated by all who meet him as one of an inferior race, and *tolerated*, at the best, by persons who, in rank, are less than his equals, and it is not impossible but that were each individual judged by a fair standard, the Indian gentleman would be found morally, and perhaps intellectually, superior to many of those who thus treat him with slighting disregard.

Persons who have mingled much in general and foreign society, by means of travel, are disabused of the idea that, because men differ from ourselves, they must, per consequence, be inferior in all things, or that intelligence has some inexplicable connexion with colour. Every rational being would scoff at the notion that he could thus consider a dark skin as a proof of semi-barbarism of mind, or fairness of complexion necessary to the possession of enlightenment. Yet, every day in India, acts tend to the impression that some such latent ideas *do* regulate men's opinions, of whose justice they neither care to inquire, and of the extent of whose mischief they are quite indifferent. Most desirable would it be were this otherwise; and that both travellers and residents in India would make the same allowances for differences of opinion in the East, as elsewhere, and as they tolerate the Greek, the Turk, and the Jew, so

should they the Hindoo, the Parsee, and the Moslem, respecting the good they find in all men, and looking to climate and education for the explanation of their varieties.

Juggernath Sunkersett, Esq., the great landed proprietor of Bombay, a Hindoo gentleman of much influence, as, of course, landed proprietors always are, whether their estates lie among the fire-flies of the tropics or the bees of England, has a stout son, a very stout son *indeed*, at the time I speak of, and poor little Koonverbhai, the Parsee, and this young Hindoo were wont to indulge in a good deal of amusing flirtation, for, although the Parsee ladies are generally of very retired habits, Manockjee Cutsetjee's liberal opinions induced him to introduce his daughter into general society, and this lively pair occasionally were at the theatre together, where Sunkersett's son would amuse himself by breaking Koonverbhai's fan, with as accomplished an air of mischief as any English gallant could have done. They were also together at Meer Jafur's on the "Eed," and when they had left, we gossiped about the chance of our little friend's marrying a Hindoo, forgetting what her fate might be if she outlived her husband, for Sunkersett is a most zealous Hindoo, and we thought the directions of the Shastrees, and the institutes of Menu might be rigorously ob-

served, and the torch of Hymen be kept alight till it fired the pyre for Suttee! There was much bandying of jest among the Moslem gentlemen on this matter, but the soft eyed Parsee maiden was reserved for another fate; the angel who presides over destiny,[1] snapt the silken cord which strung the pearls of life, and it was not long before poor little Koonverbhai passed away through the portal of the Tower of Silence,[2] to the flowers of her own Behisti[3] gardens.

The day after this great gathering, Dadoba Pandoorunjee, Esq., the successor of the excellent and talented Bal-shastree, who was long a most respected and beloved teacher at the Elphinstone College, called on me, having heard that I was anxious to see a copy of "Ferishta," which he obligingly brought with him. He was accompanied by his little daughter, an interesting child, eight years of age, who spoke Mahratta, and also a little English, in which language, she told me, she was learning geography and history, and seemed already to know quite as much of both as children of her

[1] Rám, according to the Parsees, the Angel of Destiny, who presides over the twenty-first day of the month. No animal food is used on this day.

[2] The funeral towers of the Parsees.

[3] Paradise: presided over by the angel "Favardin."

age usually do whose advantages of education have been very superior to hers. Dadoba and myself had a very long and interesting chat on education.

He confirmed that which I had already heard of the state of transition, as it were, in which the Hindoo mind now seemed to be, in consequence of the views entertained by some of the most intelligent natives in Calcutta; and he said, that even in Bombay people had received the idea, that the manners, customs, and religion of the Hindoos, as at present known, differed most materially from those of old time; and that the intelligent classes were anxious on the subject, and willing to investigate it. In the present state of opinion, much good, he thought, could be effected by translations. Those of the Vedas, with annotations, had indeed appeared, but great advance would be made, he thought, could the people be instructed by means of their own languages; the translation, for instance, of the Hindoo drama from Sanscrit into Mahratta, he considered, would be of the highest value, by acquainting the people with the manners of society in olden times, the conduct pursued towards the priesthood, and the estimation and liberty of action enjoyed by women; also the re-introduction, by similar means, of works on algebra, astronomy, music, medicine, and others.

At present the ancient learning was sealed against the people, and no interest was felt about matters so difficult to investigate; the learned men of England and Paris knew much more about them than the Hindoos themselves.

Sir William Jones had enlarged much and ably on their theory of music; Professor Wilson on their drama. Much had been said of their knowledge of materia medica, and the skill of their doctors of medicine, but the Hindoo people were entirely ignorant of all this. The musicians played as they sung, by the aid of ear, memory, and tradition; and although it was matter of history that the King of Serinuggur, so late as 1422 A.D., caused many works to be written on music, nothing is now heard of them. The people are debased; they are ignorant of the learning which once gave their nations dignity, and unconscious of the corruptions that the love of power had urged bad men to introduce for their adoption. Blindly had the people fallen into these snares; ignorantly had they permitted their judgment to be led captive, and their imaginations to be excited by dark and terrible falsehoods. At the instigation of priests they had given their daughters over to the fires of Suttee, and their sons to a participation in blood-stained rites; but it had not been always so, and if the people could be taught to know

the purity of their original religion as Deists, they would cast open their hareems, purify their temples, and bow no more to images of wood and stone. These things had nothing to do with Old India, but, unhappily, *caste* now came in to divide men (even the highest students of the colleges) into parties, and so the real objects of education were constantly opposed.

It happened that as we talked the servant announced dinner, and being very much interested in Dadoba's conversation, I asked him if he would pass an hour with his Highness Meer Jafur, and then return to me. Now, to arrive at the Meer's apartments it was necessary that Dadoba should pass through the dining-room, on the table of which smoked a sirloin of beef! Had I known this fact I should certainly not have suggested an arrangement to my friend the Brahmin calculated to insult him by wilfully shocking his prejudices; but I was quite ignorant of the matter at the time, and Dadoba passed through without remark, mistaking, I fervently hoped, the offensive joint for a remarkably fine saddle of mutton!

On his return, however, I was disabused of this opinion. "How much better it would be," he said, "if we understood each other, and could be friendly and kind, and make allowance for prejudices; in that case they would

soon cease to annoy us, for when we had mutual sympathy we should only regard such things as the manners of different countries, just as I wear a Puggree[1] and an English gentleman a hat! I saw you had beef for your dinner, and, as a Brahmin, it is very shocking to me to see our sacred animal so used, but I was not offended, because I have a regard for you; I know this is your custom, and I am sure if you came to my house when my wife was baking the bread for our meal you would be careful not to let your shadow fall over it, to give her the trouble of cooking it all again."

Dadoba then expatiated on the good that would arise from greater sociality between native gentlemen and Europeans. "But," said he, "there is no sympathy, no interchange of good offices; you will not try to find any good in us. You fancy we only offer you attentions from some interested motive; this is often the case now, but it would not be so if you threw off your reserve, and treated us as friends—for instance, Sunkersett and the Shastree you know very well, and Manockjee Cursetjee, and myself, with Ali Mahomed Khan, and many others, and yet you never ask *us* to assist you in any way; you always go to your English friends." He

[1] Turban.

was very anxious I should read the native newspapers, the *Chabook*, the *Samarchand*, and others; I should then see, he said, the shrewdness of native remark, and know what the people really thought of our acts among them.

Dadoba was quite right; many of the leading articles in the Mahratta and Guzeratee newspapers are full of interest. I remember a passage translated from the *Chabook* that amused me much. It had been raining heavily, and on the weather clearing the editor wrote—"We hope soon again to see that *happy* sight, of fair English ladies riding on horseback for their health, attended by their brothers and husbands." Some of the remarks made, too, on more important subjects are full of interest. The opinions held on decisions passed in the Supreme Court, the views taken of public affairs, with criticisms on the acts of the Government and its *employées*. One circumstance, then, of late occurrence had awakened much controversy, and led to the expression of divers opinions. A Brahmin, to whose care was entrusted a child of tender age, murdered the poor little creature on the way to Malabar Hill, and cast the body on the rocks, where it was eventually discovered. The crime was fully proved; the child had been loaded with gold, silver, and jewels in honour of a Hindoo festival, and the Brahmin's cupidity

was the death-warrant of the helpless little one. Some thought sentence would be commuted, and that none would *dare* to hang a Brahmin, whatever his crimes might be, and on this point discussion of no common kind arose. Nowrojee, the Parsee editor of the *Chabook*, laughed to scorn the notion that the odour of sanctity, supposed to envelope a Hindoo priest, would save him from the rope of the executioner; other papers doubted; some hinted at the danger of a general rising, of the same kind as that which took place some years ago among the Parsees on the occasion of a great slaughter of dogs, when their prejudices were outraged. It all ended, of course, in the sentence of the law being executed on the Brahmin, as on any other criminal; and when the priest of Mahdeo was hanged by the neck until he was dead, people went quietly to their houses, and wondered how it could ever have been doubted that it would be so.

Whenever it has been my fate to be in districts governed by our political officers, where the "non-intervention" principle obtained, and have seen preparations made for Suttee, known of cases of infanticide, and heard applications for permission for individuals to be buried alive, either to avoid their bestowing the heritage of disease,[1] or in performance of a vow, I have

[1] It is believed that when men die violent deaths, leprosy and other diseases are not inherited.

always eagerly desired that it were possible, instead of talking of prevention, in the strain of a missionary, by converting the people from their religious errors, to talk of *English law;* to treat all Brahmins, who are ever the stimulators to such acts, as criminals; to punish them as the shedders of man's blood, and thus spread a wholesome terror among these wholesale murderers of a nation. Even a Brahminical intellect might thus arrive at the idea of "doing as he would be done by," and that by a much shorter process of argument than is now commonly used to convince him of his enormities.

Dadoba spoke in high terms of the capabilities of the Mahratta language, as nervous, concise, and not only admirably adapted for purposes of business, but equally so for those of art and scientific acquirement. All that remained worth knowing in India now, beyond such things as were locked away in the difficulties of the Sanscrit language, was to be found, he said, in Mahratta, while with a twelve months' study it might be easily acquired, and would open stores of interest well calculated to repay the labours of the student. The paucity of books now written or translated into the modern languages of India, rendered it imperative that the lads desiring information should learn English; but Dadoba considered that the vernacular would be much more

to the purpose; would save a vast deal of time, and prove to the native mind a much better medium for the expression and reception of ideas.

For his part, the pundit said, he candidly confessed he could not either understand or relish Shakespeare or Chaucer; with modern novels he seemed to get on swimmingly, and enumerated of those he had read what would fill a fair sized catalogue for the circulating library of a country town. At present Dadoba was working away at the "Heart of Mid-Lothian," and I asked him if he did not find the Scotticisms a difficulty, fancying they would be as great stumbling blocks as, it appears, Mrs. Gore's Gallicisms had been to Gungadhur Shastree; to my surprise, however, he replied in the negative; the professor of the college, he said, who was a Scotchman, explained the most remarkable, and he perfectly understood that they were necessary to give additional force to expression, just as a man of business, speaking Hindostanee, would be obliged to introduce many Mahratta words to render the full strength of his position intelligible to the extent he desired. The Scotch novels, like the Hindoo dramas, derived their interest, the pundit said, from being true pictures of the times. The character of Diana Vernon delighted him most. It reminded him, he said, of the bold address

and courage of the Chand Beebee,[1] the heroic Queen of Ahmednuggur, while many of the Mahratta princesses had been celebrated for their skill in horsemanship. As to the freedom of the condition of women, he was, of course, aware of this social difference from observing the manners of the English in India, which, after all, seemed much the same as it is represented to have been in Hindostan when the "Toy Cart" and "Sacontala" were written.

Dadoba said, "That, among all books now composed, he wished some one would enlarge on the English in India, for he was sure they were quite a different class of people to the English in England. Some it was true were very great, very good; animated by generous feeling for the people, and learned in all that concerned them, from ancient days to the present. There could be found, no doubt, both in the civil and military services of "the Company," gentlemen who felt for the natives of India, as friends, sympathized in their condition; wished to benefit them, and to elevate their position in society. But how few these were! What thousands, on the contrary, in the military service, who would

[1] The Chand Beebee, or Silver-bodied, of whom many romantic tales are told, worthy the days of chivalry.

perhaps pass all their lives in India, and yet cared nothing for the people; took no interest in their religion, languages, or history, and did not know a Hindoo from a Mahomedan, when he saw him." On this I inquired why Dadoba thought there was more interest felt in England, and that the English felt differently in their own country on India and its people. He said, Because he knew that books about it were written, which were read, and spoken of in the papers, and the natives who had gone home, whether Mahomedans, Hindoos, or Parsees, had always been received so well, either at Court or by the Prince, and had been invited everywhere, and treated with distinction and kindness. Even the Parsee ship-builders had received as many attentions as if they had been noblemen; for the English nation was known by all to be hospitable to strangers; but, in Bombay, if a native gentleman called at an English officer's bungalow to pay a visit, he was not conversed with as the other guests were, but was constrained to feel himself an intruder, and sometimes would be asked, as soon as he had sat down, "Keea munkta" (what do *you* want?) as if he should not have come at all had he not had business to transact.

There was a good deal of truth in all this,

but, perhaps, in some of his remarks, Dadoba a little exaggerated the state of matters between the European and native society in India. However, as he spoke he felt, and many take his view of the subject. I remember some remarks boing made in a local English paper, on Mr. Reid, when acting Governor, being supposed likely to occupy (while his own house was not in order for his reception) a mansion belonging to Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, at Candalla, on the Poonah road, and the editorial remarks being none of the wisest or most judicious, called forth observation in the *Samarchand*, and a very admirable article, from the pen of a native, adorned its columns, glancing not only at the point in question, but enlarging, with remarkable freedom from prejudice, and with great good feeling, on the advantages that would mutually arise in the feelings if both parties were each better known to the other, and could those dependencies for kindness and sympathy, which formed the bonds of all social life, be encouraged and strengthened between the natives of India and the European residents. The writer of the article was a wise-thinking, warm-hearted man, and his opinions would have reflected honour on an author of any nation. I understood that he was a Hindoo, careful in observing the rites of his

religion, and bowing daily before idols of wood and stone. The spirit of Christian charity, however, was in his heart, and its law of kindness on his lips; happy will it be if they work for him an equal amount of purifying good to that he seeks to introduce to his fellow-men, until he is brought "to stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths; where is the good way, and walk therein" until he sees the altar of truth shining in all its majesty before him.

Meer Jafur had been for many days very uneasy about the health of his mother-in-law the Begum, and the youngest of his daughters; his nature is most kindly and affectionate, and although daily assurances arrived from the European surgeon who attended the family, and in whom the Meer had full confidence, that matters were not of a character to give reason for alarm, he had prepared to go to Surat, and judge for himself. However, the "Sir James Carnac" steamer not starting for a day or two, the Meer, in the interval, was soothed by learning that the fever had left his little daughter, and that the Begum was decidedly better.

After the death of the Nawaub of Surat, his father-in-law, his Highness Meer Jafur, was constrained to visit England, and, as is customary, left his daughters in the palace at Surat. The eldest is grave, sedate, fond of reading the

Koran, being instructed in its pages by the respected Moollah of the family; but the little one loves merriment, enjoys romps in the gardens, and recreates in a superabundance of toys, with which her fond uncle, Meer Acbar, himself without children, was at this time constantly in the habit of supplying her. She is very handsome, I am told, and has not been very long placed behind the Purdah.[1]

Meer Jafur was always particularly strict in attending the Mosque on Friday, the sixth day of the week, appointed by Mahomed to be kept holy; before the Prophet's time, however, this day seems to have been marked, and it is considered, with Moslems, as the "prince of days," the most excellent on which the sun rises. It is allowed that, after public worship, men may return to the common affairs of life, but a truly religious man, a Syud, such as Meer Jafur, devotes the great day wholly to works of religious service, to giving alms, and reading the Koran. As affects giving alms, I never knew the Meer deny relief to any one who sought it. During an evening drive the Prince ever stopped his carriage to relieve the beggar, of whatever caste or creed he might be, who petitioned aid;

[1] Curtain—hareem.

none were sent from his gates empty, and of all the bands of people that, on Friday and Sunday mornings, came below his windows, praising his charity, and clamouring for its exercise, none returned without food and money in their scrip.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BORAH.[1]

"A cazi was asked, 'What is the sweetest thing?' He answered, 'When you can get vinegar for nothing.'"—*Persian jeu d'esprit.*

From the large shaded upper room of the Meer's house in Bombay it was exceedingly difficult to keep away the Borahs, or itinerant traders, who might be seen hour by hour at the entrance porch, endeavouring to insinuate their way into one's presence. As a group, taken in an artistic sense, they were very admirable to look upon. The merchant, with his white linen body coat

[1] There is a bazaar called the Borah Bazaar in Bombay, where stolen goods are too often received. An untranslated Persian work has a good story touching this subject:—A thief stole a garment, and took it to the bazaar for sale; while he was disputing the price a second thief secreted and carried it off. When the discomfited victim returned, his wife asked him what he got for the dress; he said, "Exactly what I gave for it."

and brightly-coloured turban, smiling and bowing in advance of some dozen swarthy porters, bearing baskets full of goods; but once admitted, the waste of time and annoyance was absolutely indescribable. At length we succeeded, by means of considerable coercion and exercised authority on the part of his Highness's servants, in freeing ourselves from intrusion, always excepting one case, that of Hadjee Ahmed, a very well-known and most pertinacious individual, full of "wise saws and modern instances."

Before we enlarge on the characteristics of the Hadjee, however, perhaps the reader will allow us to introduce a slight sketch of what we mean and understand by the "Borah," the waste-time and pass-time of the English resident in India. Now, just what the pedlar in olden times appears to have been in the west, is the present Borah, or itinerant tradesman of the East; a curious feature in its characteristics, and consequently worthy of remark. In Bombay, the Borahs form a distinct class, and have their principal bazaar within the fort. In some rare cases they are workmen as well as venders of goods, but are generally considered and known only as wholesale and retail dealers. The Borahs are all Mahomedans of the "Shere" sect, and are of two great divisions—one, originally from Guzerat, and the other from Mungrole, Porebunder, and

E. LANDELLS, DEL.

SIMPSON, LITH.

NATIVE PEDLARS.
(FROM LIFE)

the coast generally of Kattiawar. These classes are subdivided into the "Daodee" and the "Soolamaney," each of which has its "Peer," or great ecclesiastical head. The Daodee Hadjee, called Abdool Kader Nuzmoodeen, resides at Surat, and the Peer of the Soolamaneys at Jidda, in the Red Sea. There is a considerable schism between these sects, old jealousies, and so on, not of much interest, however, to the general inquirer. About three thousand of these men are to be found in Bombay, and a very large extra number among the navigators of the native craft.

Such are the general statistics of the Borah class; but it is their ordinary bearing and occupation which render them so curious and entertaining a subject of inquiry and observation to the gleaner of Eastern characteristics. As with the English auctioneer, who admits every description of goods into his store, from libraries to liquorice, so with the Bombay Borah; he may deal in Cashmere shawls, rich silks, and fine laces, but neither does he despise things of small price—odd mustard pots, pins, or boot laces. Some of these people amass enormous fortunes, and others remain comparatively poor, but I fancy utter ruin and loss are never experienced by a Borah, and if failing in one case, he invariably hopes, like Jacob Faithful, for "better luck next

time," and, as is often the case with those who are hopeful, and with people determined to help themselves, the Borah finds it.

They are a strange class these itinerant merchants, being at once particularly troublesome and eminently useful! Troublesome in importunity, and useful by reason of the extraordinary variety of their wares. Always excepting the great Borahs, Meerjee and Tiabjee, who are highly respectable shopkeepers in the fort of Bombay, and their goods of a very excellent description, little that is worth having is to be found in the possession of a Borah. The quick perception of self-interest, which is the ruling faculty of a native mind, attains its acmé of perfection in the brain of a Borah; and the class contains, without exception, the most inventive, most persuasive, and the shrewdest men of business in the world.

A Borah said to me one day, in the course of that sort of desultory chit-chat that I was in the habit of holding with natives, and in the course of which a good deal of original character often displayed itself for my instruction and amusement—"I have some thoughts of going to England to buy goods for myself; my friends advise me to do so, but they say the English people are very shrewd; however, I never was cheated in Bombay, and therefore I think it would be

rather difficult to cheat *me*, even in London." The Borah was quite right, for if a tradesman can hold his own in the commercial, huckstering, business-like, unconscientious arena of Bombay native trading, he is tolerably sure in challenging the whole world — the London jeweller, the Frankfort Jew, the Parisian of the Palais Royal, or even the *Greek of Constantinople* (and that is saying much), to a competition of skill in the art of money-making on false pretences, or the whole knack of buying cheap and selling dear, illustrated by examples, in daily practice.

The most respectable among these dealers are the cloth merchants; these men are generally traders, who purchase goods from the merchants in wholesale quantities and dispose of them again as retail itinerant dealers. Heerjee Gunthur, for instance, a Banian of the Bhattia caste, is called by many, not aware of his distinction, "Borah," by reason of his calling. He is well known in Bombay, and is a man fair in his dealing, and altogether respectable; but Heerjee Gunthur is not a *Borah*, although, as I have observed, he is often called so by persons not acquainted with the distinction between the Guzerat Mahomedan Borah and the Bhattia Banian, although the Cutch Puggree of scarlet cloth and the Loonghie flowing round his ankles should at once show his Hindoo origin. Heerjee

is a most obliging person, and will procure any article that can be possibly required from some of his merchant friends, if notice is given a day in advance. His goods, too, are fresh, and it would seem he has much custom, for the coolies who bear into the house his large japanned tin boxes full of "Challis" and "new fashions," followed by those less favoured in his confidence, who bear the huge bundles containing the variety of cottons supplied so cheaply to the Indian market, to the sad disgrace of those who have rendered forgotten the looms of eastern manufacture, look fresh, as if they rested long and often, on pleasant, airy, China matted landing places, and did not fag from one end to the other of the oven-like island, to be dismissed from doors without a chance of sale, and forced on hopelessly by some unpitying, grumbling task-master disappointed in his profits.

I believe that none but a patient and enduring, because an apathetic native, could bear this monotony of toil, this folding and unfolding chintzes, and arranging and re-arranging packets of socks, and parcels of rejected grass-cloth, hour after hour, day after day, without the slightest interest in the matter but the three pence per diem as porters, which they receive, whether the goods are sold or unsold. These people have none of the pleasures of a shopman even of the com-

monest class; they cannot chat or gossip with a customer, nor find amusement in the act of draping a window to advantage, an absolute matter of consummate skill to an English, and, above all, to a French, shopman. The miserable cooli has no recreation; he must wipe the perspiration from his weary brows, repack the rejected goods (a duty too humiliating for his master), and then taking box or bundle again on his head, trudge away after the fat, well-dressed taskmaster, who craves permission at the door of every mansion to amuse the morning leisure of its mistress or fulfil her requisitions.

The better class of Borahs, as I have said, purchase their goods from merchants, but the lower class, or "Chow-chow" Borahs, as they are called in Bombay, depend for stores almost entirely on the auctions of the commission agents and the refuse part of Liverpool captains' investments for the port of Bombay. Auctions of this kind are of daily occurrence, and a strange assembly generally attends them. The Borahs, that is the people of Guzerat, were converted some five hundred years ago to the Mahomedan faith, and acknowledge as their head Abdool Kader Nuzmoodeen; all wear a similar turban, a very closely folded one of red or white cloth,

but the Mehmens, often confounded with the Borahs, although Moslems from the shores of Cutch, dress, some with the loose turban of the Arab, others with the horn-like fronted head-dress of the Bhattias. Both classes of hucksters, however, are to be seen in these strange auction sales—"Selums," as they are called—while the vociferation of the purchasers can only be imagined by those who know to what pitch the native voice can be toned, or with what marvellous rapidity utterance can be given. The lots so disposed of are often the most incongruous that can be imagined, and these are greedily sought by the "Chow-chow Borahs" as the readiest of sale, and consisting of articles on which they can the more easily realize profit.

Other salesmen, besides the Borah and the Jew, commonly fix a certain per-centage of profit on the article for sale, as calculated for fair remuneration, according to the ordinary rules of general business; but the Borah never dreams of any such self-denying regularities. He gets as much as he can, justly or unjustly, and prices his goods, if compelled to do so at all, generally with more reference to the opinion he holds of the ignorance of his customers on the subject than to the real value or the absolute cost of the article to himself.

A thoroughly ingenious Borah, however, avoids pricing his goods as much as possible; he either states the article to be the property of some one else, whom he describes as a very harsh, determined, never-to-be-turned-aside sort of person, like the father or uncle in an old comedy, and he tells you confidentially that he really is *afraid* to ask him to take less, but will "*try* and bring answer to-morrow, if gentleman please;" or, knowing perfectly well that the article is wanted on the instant, and delay won't be thought of, he tries another plan, and with a despairing, quite-satisfied-to-go-to-prison sort of air, flings the bridle, saddle, book, or whatever it may be, on the ground, unpleasantly near the feet of the intended purchaser, and declining to name a price, exclaims, packing up at the same time the rest of the basket, as if it was altogether a settled bargain, "Very well; there, master take, give what he like—*I* not say anything;" hoping, of course, *your* ignorance will prove *his* gain; if not, and a fair price is offered, the Borah, in the teeth of his own settlement, takes up his goods with an air of affronted honesty, packs them up, puts his basket silently on the cooli's head, just turns once to inquire if anything else is wanted, and seeing you thoroughly annoyed with your own waste of time and his

roguery, walks off. However, before he has reached the gate he returns, unpacks his basket, and after one trial of what is called "splitting the difference" in bargains, he gives up his goods for the sum originally offered. The weary buyer seizes the articles, his tormentor the money; while the purchaser orders him instantly from his presence, never to return; on which the Borah smiles blandly, and proposes to call early the next day with some new goods, "very nice."

The Borah, who knows well enough what is expected of him (vain though such expectations are), always commences negotiations with the assertion, that he bought his goods yesterday at auction very cheap, if you only please to look; and having done so, he immediately asks for each article about ten per cent. more than would be charged by a respectable shopkeeper. He is apt also to purchase all sorts of things made expressly for importation, things worthless beyond all description, and is quite shrewd enough to know that they are so. Needles, for instance, half the papers filled with eyeless rods; pins, whose heads fall off as the unhappy buyer draws them from the paper; reels of cotton, the wood simply veneered, as it were, with thread; and similar wares, their external appearance sadly contradicted by the faithlessness within.

Thus we have sugar cane bottled in Bombay, for garden rhubarb; acid pale ale for white wine vinegar, and so on; all bearing, however, fair promise to the eye, of Heskett, Davis, and Company, with other well-known purveyors to foreign markets. The chances are of course much in favour of not again seeing the face of the shrewd impostor master, but if "fate" causes an encounter, *he* is not to blame; "How could I tell, master? vinegar; bad vinegar, made in England; bought at auction; what can do?" Articles and prepositions, it may be observed, seldom take up position in the parts of speech of a low class native; they are shorn as exuberant flowers of rhetoric, and are in no way considered necessary to the argument.

I have now spoken particularly of the generally inferior, or "Chow-chow" Borahs, but not of the merchants, who usually bring their goods, with great state, in tall hired buggies, drawn by a miserable pony, supported between the shafts, or in the little painted wooden Gharries, covered with dark curtains in the fine weather, and with wax-cloth in the rains, the wheels and body of which are of two bright contrasting colours, and drawn at a sharp trot by a quick, active pair of little Mahratta bullocks.

BOMBAY HACKNEY CART.

These are Mehmans, and generally of a superior class, selling valuable goods, such as Cashmere shawls, jewels, and plated ware.

The greatest character in Bombay, of the Mehman class, is, beyond all question, our friend Hadjee Ahmed, a very useful man, with wit enough for twenty of his calling, yet not very scrupulous, I fear, notwithstanding the odour of morality supposed to be given by his Mecca pilgrimage, and consequent Hadjeeship. No householder ever arrived in Bombay to arrange for proceeding to Europe, but his first visitor, full of anxious inquiries for his forks and curry

dishes, was the Hadjee. No cadet, laden with gun, pistol, rifle, broadsword, medicine chest, and standard books, by considerate parents, but finds the Hadjee seated in his tent the day after his arrival, luring his young ideas with Arab hunters, and Peat's best saddles, at unheard-of prices, while both are represented by the Hadjee as presenting singular advantages when considered as matters of exchange for books and medicine chests.

He lendeth money, too, our Hadjee, but commits not the sin "of being surety" for a stranger; on the contrary, he taketh himself both security and heavy interest, well noted in the bond, and smiles at danger, for, as he says, "I could extract rupees from a stone," and I suspect that few could resist those means of coining money to their advantage, so well known to men of our Hadjee's convenient class.

Meanwhile, the Hadjee's shop, situated in the Bombay fort, is crowded with as much disorder as a "Chow-chow" Borah's basket, yet containing goods of the most valuable description—here is plate of the best fashion, both of China and English manufacture; massive candelabras, silver tureens, epergnes, furniture of every description, valuable books, splendidly bound, engravings, annuals, portfolios of beautiful lithographs! We wonder that he can find purchasers

for such articles in the quantities we see around us, but branch establishments of the same kind at out stations prevent a plethora of merchandise, as well as the baskets of those itinerants of his class, who are to be seen in every station in India, increasing the prices of their goods, mile by mile, as they advance beyond the presidency.

The Hadjee hath a winning way, "a passing pleasing tongue," and, if he have it not, *assumeth* candour, with liberality of dealing. Moreover, he confides to the purchaser the favourable circumstances under which he obtained the goods he now offers at so low a price, and whispers what will be the exact amount of his small profit, if you intend to benefit by such a happy accident. Then, again, the Hadjee often stops a bargain in process at its most interesting point, to tell you, in a low voice, some touching anecdote of a man who ruined himself by trying to gain too much; then shakes his head, and, with a moral sigh, exclaiming, "Ah! avarice is a dreadful vice, master;" returns to his curry dishes and negotiations, and generally succeeds, quite to his satisfaction, in what a Borah understands, by "doing business."

Sometimes the Hadjee tries a rapid, energetic manner, pressing his goods upon his intended purchaser, naming a certain price, ridiculously

E LANDELLS, DEL.ᵗ SIMPSON & Cº, LITH.

HADJIE AHMED BORAH.
(FROM LIFE)

high, but using a quick, sharp tone in doing so, as if he was a victim, and content to be one; as if he had said, "There! I hope *that* will satisfy you!" At the same time piling tea-pot, milk-jug, books, and fifty things you never had an idea of buying, upon table, chair, and sofa, exclaiming as he does so, "Bus—hua—chul!" (enough—settled—go on!) as if all hesitation was now at an end. I never heard the Hadjee bargain, that he did not use this favourite clinching phrase of his every five minutes, and after every question concerning the price of his articles.

Another character that was well known among the Bombay Borahs, was the poor blind man bearing a little box and bundle of trifling goods, and leaning, for guidance and support, on a little lad of particularly prepossessing countenance. The boy was the old man's grandson, and not only led him tenderly and safely over the dangerous highways of the city, but showed extreme shrewdness in assisting him in his calling, examining the money paid to him, and suggesting goods and customers. The poor creature, in consequence of his affliction, was a pensioner among the kind-hearted people in Bombay, and few but lightened the load of the "poor blind Borah."

Peer Abdool Kader, the head of the class at

Surat, is a living proof of ecclesiastical power and influence in the East. As a Fakir he receives a stipend of two hundred and fifty rupees a year only. But, from the voluntary contributions of true believers, enjoys all the advantages of enormous wealth. The Borahs of the Daodee caste, who acknowledge his priestly power, give him five per cent. on all their gains and marriages; gifts are also made to him in accordance with the wealth of the couple, and also on the birth of children.

At Surat this Peer lives in good style, gives alms liberally, and receives visits from nobles and governors, while, perhaps, the itinerant trader deems all acts praiseworthy which enable him to add *his* gift to the coffers of his powerful and respected Moollah, to the increased honour of priest and people.

CHAPTER V.

THE BURDEN OF SURAT.

"Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have
The worship of the world, but no repose."

Let us ask the first old Indian one can meet, soldier or civilian, where he was the happiest, and which he thought the pleasantest station in the whole of the Bombay Presidency? His answer will be immediate—"Oh, Surat! it was such a splendid city; the river was so fine, the commerce and shipping rendered it so cheerful, and the Moslem buildings were so magnificent; besides all that, there was such good feeling in society—oh, there was never anything like Old Surat!" And then, with garrulous delight, the veteran hog-hunter proceeds to dilate on the numerous "first spears" he has taken; on the pleasant pic-nics at Domas and Vaux's Tomb; on the sporting songs of the celebrated Major Morris, so often trolled forth in chorus from

tents pitched on the banks of the pleasant "Tapti;" nor does he forget to laugh once more over that character of fun and gossip, that Figaro of the East, Old Tom the Barber of Surat.

Of course we ourselves know all that characterises Surat, or we should not presume to gossip about it to the reader: still, there lies on the table an odd old volume, possessing those peculiarities of good binding, bad paper, and worse printing, which seem to distinguish the efforts of the press in the last century, and we find that we cannot resist the temptation to begin our sketch with this very book:

If the sharer in all this tittle-tattle really loves literature, he will agree that there is nothing so refreshing as the originality of the old writers. It is so pleasant to note what were men's ideas on subjects new and unhacknied; to see the quaint way into which they put these ideas into their setting of words at a time when book-making had not become a trade, nor "special" or "foreign correspondents" filled, like the air we breathe, all space.

In those days of innocent wonder, the idea of distant lands, and their often very hideous "curiosities," rather alarmed, than pleased the "ancient Britons." Society felt a certain awe for those who had travelled therein, with con-

siderable misgivings, moreover, upon the tales they heard; but now the very land of Sphinxes, by its "return tickets to the first cataract, children half price," has become so vulgarised, that whatever we must continue to think of the "Salts, Champollions, and Belzonis" of the past, we all of us rather dread the imitation lion, with his somewhat moth-eaten fur, and are apt to consider the thinking man of England as the pleasanter companion.

As with Egypt, so it is with India. The overland communication has set all wits to work. Travellers indite their "first impressions" of the Sea of Edom, and the river which bore the fleet of Alexander, as readily as a Greenwich paper would report a whitebait dinner. Yet this sort of writing is very unsatisfactory—it gives us stones for bread. Pleasant chit-chat, indeed, entertaining anecdote, but nothing that is really interesting or valuable concerning these mighty and mysterious lands, whose learning and wisdom —the learning and wisdom which calculates its ages by thousands of years—is cased in the treasure caskets of a language almost unknown to us. For all the religion, the philosophy, the science, the arts of ancient India, we must still look to the "Oriental Researches;" we must still seek through and through such media as men chose, who, in laborious research, passed

the years of their Eastern career, devoting themselves, their time, labour, means, and mighty intellects, to the history of the people among whom they dwelt.

"You will still be talking, Signor Benedick," quoth the most witty of all Shakespere's heroines, and I fear the reader thinks *I* also have been chatting for the mere pleasure of doing so, in that I have gone all this way about to introduce the quaint old book of "Olof Torreen, Chaplain of the Gothic Lion, East Indiaman (fancy a Gothic lion!), and his account of a Voyage to Suratte," a mighty wonder in his days we may be sure.

This book being originally written in German, was in due time printed in translation, not, indeed, by

> "Longman, Brown, Rees, Orme, and Co.,
> Our brethren in the Row,"

but by one Benjamin White, "at Horace's Head, Fleet Street," the said White being an ancestor of the kind-hearted old naturalist of Selbourne.

And here we really must stop again to remark on the sign, "Horace's Head!" When Old London was backward in her Horn Book, she availed herself of hieroglyphics which the most illiterate could construe, and the author's varlet found no difficulty in throwing copy, as it were,

at the head of the Latin poet in Fleet Street, although to deliver it duly at the printing-office of "Benjamin White" might have taken a higher knowledge of orthography than the serving-man possessed.

The style of oriental houses generally is well known to us, and those of Surat differ little in the ordinary characteristics. They have flat roofs, and are covered with Chunam,[1] which gives them a shining, clear, handsome appearance, while the flower-gardens in which they are built are usually well planted and gay in colour. Torreen does not seem aware how much the heat of houses is increased by windows, which the Moslems ever avoid, preferring to ventilate rather by shafts, where such means are practicable. The chaplain, therefore, remarks, "In the lower storeys there are no windows, and but few in the upper. In my opinion, this is done merely through jealousy, and not out of any well-grounded fear of thieves; for he who steals five bottles full of rosewater is punished by the loss of both his hands, which punishment must probably deter from the commission of this crime."

In speaking of the architecture also, Torreen

[1] A kind of mortar, composed of lime and powdered egg-shells.

remarks—"It is neither borrowed from the Greeks nor the Italians, yet there is taste and an agreeable proportion in their columns. Some ornaments on the capital and pedestal do not seem to be in their right places; but they have such confidence in their architecture, that they would make one believe that an whole building is supported by leaves or feathers." How truly this expresses the beautiful tracery so noticeable in all Moslem decoration!

Torreen speaks of the magnificence of the Mahomedan tombs, built with domes (which manner of architecture the Mahomedans greatly affect), and of the castle, as the most considerable building on the banks of the Tapti. This castle, which takes up a prominent position on the wall of the city, is not less noticeable, as we shall perhaps see, in the history of the Mahomedan government, and may be considered, in local position, as the centre of a chord of which Surat and its suburbs include a semicircle of some six miles in extent. The castle has angular bastions and a dry ditch, but in old times could hardly have been well adapted for defence. Torreen mentions that the *réveillé* was played upon "a flageolet" from this castle; and after deciding that the jugglers of Surat were not to be compared to those of China, he alludes to "the dancing-women," facetiously introducing in pa-

THE FORT; SURAT.

FROM AN ORIGINAL SKETCH, BY THE LATE CAPTN POSTANS, B.N.I.

renthesis "(for such is their name, though they stand *still* for the most part)" a phrase which brings at once to the mind's eye the Natch woman of India, on her flat foot, with her doubtfully poetic gestures, and hand upraised, in style so essaying, rather as a fishwife than a Houri, to render to every ear the glowing anacreons of the immortal Hafiz.

The Moslems loved Surat. Its capabilities were all such as delighted their peculiar tastes: the fine river, with its refreshing breezes; the great sea, which, making this port the readiest highway to Arabia, gained for it the title of the port of Mecca; the bright gardens, full of gay flowers; the rich mangoe groves; the beautiful position of the city: and thus this great and powerful people sought to embellish it as they did all places which came into their power, so that the palaces and wells, tombs and terraces, Ghauts and pleasure Kiosks of Surat charmed the eye of every traveller who lingered there.

The Mahomedans had ever taste for the beautiful: the sites of their cities, and the exquisite delicacy of their architectural decorations are proofs of this. The Moslem occupation of India is marked by the magnificence of the Mahomedan capitals; but as the Moslem power gave place to the British, we find ruin and devastation. Beejapore, the very queen of cities, is

MAHOMEDAN KIOSK ON THE BANKS OF THE TAPTI.

now a mere refuge for the owl and the hyena; the exquisitely sculptured tomb of the wife of Shah Jehan, at Aurungabad, is as a lovely pearl overgrown by rank grass and tangled foliage; the fountains, which in a thousand streams reflected the sunlit rays, are choked by thorns and briers; while the howl of the wolf, with the shrill bark of the jackal, and the laugh of the hyena, sounds through the flowery woods that were once vocal with the prayerful call of the Muezzin and the strains of Persian poesy.

Fallen Surat! thou wert once great among the nations! The beautiful fabrics of thy looms

were the wonder of the world. Arabia, in her rest and luxury, owed thee no less thanks than the slave colonies of the west, with their labour and their tears! Merchants traded from thy ports laden with diamonds and spices, fragrant woods, pearls, ambergris, musk, gold, and silks. Of thy wealth there seemed no limit; thy fleets swept the ocean;—but the day came, and with it, its burden, its ruin, and its dismay!

We intended to gossip through this book, but in some way we have committed the folly of being serious for the nonce. Is the reader interested? If so, he will bear with us while we transcribe the means by which this wondrous change was wrought.

If we consult the map of India, the value of the position of Surat, on the river Tapti, resembles, in some degree, that of Constantinople on the Bosphorus; and thus it became a mart of nations: the result of this local position being, to bring together not only the merchants of Persia and Arabia, of the western shores of India and of Ceylon, but the produce of its looms, celebrated throughout the world, supplied cotton goods to all the slave islands of the Eastern Ocean.

The certain effect of an extensive export and import trade is, to give magnitude, magnificence, and wealth to the capitals of the producing

land. So was it with Surat; and in the plenitude of its greatness, Delhi became its governing power. The Moguls, whether from doubt in the political honesty of their great men, from consideration of the temptations incidental to too extended an authority, or from some other causes, thought proper to divide the authority of the civil and military powers, giving governors both to the town and castle, supporting the commander of the castle by assignments of land revenue, and the governor of the town by the customs, taxes, and other minor matters, Delhi, of course, with the royal treasury, now and then taking the lion's share. It was said of old, that a house divided against itself cannot stand, though, certes, the position of some London brick, perilous as it looks, would throw doubt upon this assertion if of less authority; but to let that pass, it is beyond all doubt, that the governments of Delhi did not get on well together. It very frequently happened that the governors were brothers, which did not improve matters, as they were apt to quarrel terribly, as brothers of other lands will do where interest becomes the stimulus. It was not unusual for the governor of the town to shut himself up in the pretty French tower on the banks of the Tapti, and hold his position as in a state of siege. This pretty spot, cooled by fresh breezes, and sur-

FRENCH TOWER NEAR SURAT.

rounded by flowery woods, deserved that pleasanter memories than those of feud should cling around it, and perhaps they may in the recollection of the English sportsman, but to the native resident in Surat the French Tower seems but a monument to fraternal differences.

The Mahomedan government protected the trade of Surat against the piratage so common in the Arabian seas, by a powerful fleet, which was given into the command of certain chiefs of Rajahpoor, called Siddees; but when the energetic Mahrattas, a people eminently skilled in warfare, and ever opposed to the power of the kings of Delhi, pressed their forces against the very gates of Surat, the Nawaub, or Mogul governor, found himself unable to support the heavy expenses of the fleet, and thus excited the commander to blockade the port, so turning that which should have been the chief protection of Surat, into an offensive medium of intimidation. Compelled to appropriate the revenues by this coercion, injustice in some quarters was followed by revolution in others. Moslem governors carried on civil war between themselves, and at length Mea Atchund, a clever man of some popularity, secured his position by seeking the support of the Mahratta power. Then came misgovernment in all forms; the commander of the fleet held the castle, and made matters worse.

The Mahomedans entreated help from the English; they, fearing the powerful Mahrattas, remained neutral, until the naval commander perpetrated some outrage on an Englishman; coalition then took place, and on the 4th of March, 1759, the Rajahpoor chief gave up the fleet and castle, and the East India Company, by sunnuds from Delhi, took the command of both, with an order for the receipt of two lacs of rupees per annum to meet their expenses.

Succession followed succession, but, as we know what hard reading Mahomedan names are, we will escape to the year 1797, when the English, finding the enormous character of their burthen, and requiring an enlargement of receipts from the ruling Prince, recommended him to disband his own undisciplined soldiery, "and assign to the English funds sufficient for the maintenance of three local battalions." "The Nabob," says Governor Duncan, "betrayed an immediate jealousy of, and repugnance to, any concession, as well on the alleged ground of the inadequacy of his funds, as on the principle of our interference with his administration; which he declared to be inconsistent with the treaty of 1759."[1] Eventually, poor man, he was pressed so hard, that he agreed to make all sorts of con-

[1] Vide Mills's History of British India.

cessions, and perhaps the affliction killed him, for he died before the necessary treaty could be concluded. Then did the flag of England wave triumphantly from the Castle of Surat. Money, money! was the cry. The power of all patronage was in the hand of the British. The fiat of the British placed the Prince upon his Musnud, but —not without *money!* The right of inheritance indeed was a sort of stumbling block, but the Supreme Government of India settled the matter as they pleased.

In 1800, the Nabob agreed to pay a large sum annually, but declared the impossibility of advancing beyond it. Mr. Seton, the chief English authority at Surat, assured the Government that, except by a system of barbarous tyranny among his people, the Prince could not possibly raise more from the revenues of Surat. A despatch in answer to this arrived, the import of which was, to order "the Nawaub to be immediately displaced, and the government and revenues to be wholly assumed by the English."

The British called this "a *reform* of the Government of Surat." The Prince was weak; a puppet of the English—unpopular by reason of his efforts to meet the urgent demands of an oppressive power, and so, in the words of Mills, the English Government exercised their right

to "the monopoly of dethronement, and the Governor of Bombay went up to do his bidding."

With tears the Prince declared "that he could not survive acquiescence in the demand, not only from the sense of personal degradation, but from the odium he must incur among all Mussulmans, if he consented to place the door of Mecca in the hands of a people who had another faith." But what could all avail? Meer Nasseer-ood-deen, forced into the narrowest compass, loving and trusting Governor Duncan, and, through him, believing in the faith of the British Government, signed the required treaty. He resigned all authority, civil and military, "all emoluments, powers, and privileges" to the British Government, "and, on their part, the Company agreed to pay the Nawaub, *and his heirs and successors*, one lac of rupees annually, together with a fifth part of what should remain as surplus of the revenues, after deduction of this allowance, of the Mahratta Chout, and of the charges of collection."

In gold, and silk, and jewels, the Prince was then replaced on the throne of his ancestors by the English Government; the farce was played out with the trumpettings of elephants, and the sounds of sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, and the great and good Mr. Duncan returned to his seat of Government to whisper in the ears of

his many friends, that never had *any* day been to him so bitter as that day!

Strange fatality! The son of the dethroned Prince, Nasseer-ood-deen, to represent the "heirs and successors," in whose favour the treaty had been made, saw but a fair daughter, growing like a lotus flower in his Hareem, and this lady he gave in marriage to one of the sons of a noble gentleman of the Court of Baroda, the "Old Meer," as his English friends affectionately call the Prince Safaraz Alee, for, happily, the good old man yet lives, respected and beloved by all who know him. The "Old Meer" has an immense force of cavalry, and there are few of the large cities in Western India where bodies of these troops are not to be found, commanded by amiable and excellent officers, Moslems, of course. His Highness Meer Jafur Alee, was one of these sons, and Meer Acbar Alee, the other. The fatality seemed not to end here. His Highness Meer Jafur had himself only two fair daughters born to his house, and, in default of malè heirs, claimed in right of his wife, as successor to his father-in-law, the dignity of Nawaub of Surat, in addition to the right of inheritance.

For fourteen years this question has been mooted, but the first trial of the right was fatal to the amiable mother of Meer Jafur's infant daughters. Deprived, by reason of her husband's

visit to England, of her natural protector, shocked at the want of respect shown her sex, religion, and rank, by officials, on the sequestration of the family property, the poor lady pined and died, and the loss of his gentle wife was the first news which greeted the ear of the husband on his return to his native land. The daughters of the Prince are now marriageable, and upon the settlement of his rank naturally depend the arrangements for suitable alliance.

Whether experience, that watchword of rulers, may point to, or necessity enforce, the measure, the dethronement of Princes must ever be attended with saddening circumstances—old associations are so broken by it, old reverences so trampled under foot! Great even is the misery when abdication is enforced by the will of the masses among a misgoverned people; but, when the will of a stranger nation commands the deed, and that nation unsympathizing in all that interests the people—unsympathizing in religion, customs, language, superstition, then indeed is the burden great—even as was this burden of Surat.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRE-WORSHIPPERS.[1]

"Now, they touch the Temple walls;
Now—Hafed sees the fire divine."

Moore.

A most delightful old lady—a rosy, bright-eyed, sweet-voiced, white-handed, *dear* old lady, and a great friend of ours, the instant a word of murmur or regret falls upon her ear, is wont to say, "Take an old woman's advice, my dears, and always keep the sunny side of the way." Now we have been lounging slowly, and chatting much in the shade, about Surat, up to the present time, but, remembering our friend's advice, we will, if our reader pleases, cross over, and take the "sunny side."

The Fire-worshippers of Mr. Moore (and I

[1] I have used this title in conformity with the popular English notion of Parsee worship. But the term is, I believe, quite unfounded. There are two sects among the Parsees; the "Cudmis" and the "Rushmis," and they

had his word for it), came direct from d'Herbelot's "Dictionnaire Orientale," but our Fire-worshippers, the Parsees of Surat, landed from Yezd, which any one, who likes hunting up odd names on small maps, may easily find in the province of Khorassan, and not far from the wide-famed Ispahan. There is little reason for it, but yet Yezd always reminds me of York, with Sir Walter Scott, and "Ivanhoe," and Rebecca; and this, not for the reason that the word begins with Y and has only four letters in it, but in remembrance of the religious persecutions which occurred in either place; the romantic episodes connected with both, and the heroism of the women, whether Hebrew or Per-

differ on details of faith, as we Protestants may do with the Romanists, but *neither* worship either the elements or the heavenly bodies, being, in fact, pure Deists, and regarding the works of God's hand, as to be reverenced only, as proofs of the Divine power.

The Parsees claim descent from the Phœnicians, and acknowledge Abraham as their chief. Many superstitions have deformed the ancient faith since their naturalization among the Hindoos of India. Such, for instance, as the idea of a dog protecting the presence of a deceased person from the evil spirit, with a general hatred of cats, and so on. But the educated Parsees speak contemptuously of these things.

Several works on the Parsee religion, manners, and customs, have been written by missionaries, but the Parsees deny their truth. As a body they abhor the "interference of the missionaries," and admit that they wilfully mislead these zealous, but often mistaken men.

sian. While the spirit of proselytism shook the sword of terror over the ancient Fire-worshippers of Persia, many faint hearts yielded up their faith, many weary heads bowed to the conqueror's will, but at Yezd a faithful few clung to their olden faith, and when pressed on all sides, they gathered the yet glowing embers of their sacred fire, sought the nearest port, and there, trusting to the wild sea waves for the mercy denied by man, pushed off, like the Pilgrim Fathers, they knew not whither; while, 'tis said, that many of their women, necessarily left behind, at this time of misery and dismay, sought death, rather than fall into the captor's power, and asserted, to the last, their faith in the creed of their fatherland.

The Parsees, still carefully preserving the sacred fire, the emblem of their faith, landed a few miles below Surat, at a place called Nowsara, where they erected the Temple, which has since become the point of pilgrimage for the Parsees from every part of Western India, and, in Surat itself, 14,000 of the followers of the doctrines of the Zend and the Pagend preserve the ancient traditions of the Persian people.[1]

[1] This is the received belief, but a Parsee gentleman, a short time since, assured me that when the Parsees left Yezd they first touched at "Diu," but finding that port incommodious, they sailed on to St. John's, near Bassein, not far from Bombay. The Prince of that country was a Hindoo, and he

As many Parsee refugees had fled alone from their native shores, they intermarried with the dark-eyed Pagans of the land in which they had become naturalized, while it became a custom among them to again intermarry almost entirely within the circle of their immediate female relatives. It is also curious, and, therefore, worthy of remark, that, so far from this custom producing a deterioration of race among the Parsees, as it is found to do in other lands, the descendants of the ancient Persians have become a finer people; larger in stature, more active and energetic in habit and character. Many of the diseases common to the Hindoos and Mahomedans are unknown to the Parsees, but one scourge is among them, and that to a fearful extent; the scourge of leprosy.

In the cities of India confirmed lepers dare not enter, they have small villages immediately

only suffered the Parsees to land and make a settlement there on four conditions. 1st, That the Parsees should adopt the Hindoo dress; 2nd, That they should not wear or use arms; 3rd, That they should not eat beef; 4th, That in marriages the rights should first be performed according to Hindoo ceremonial. Once, it is said, the Parsees repulsed an army of attack on the Prince, who gave them Salsette; the second time the city was attacked, the Parsees were absent, keeping some high day of their religion, and the women arming, drove back the foe. The Parsees then separated, some going to Oodipoor, and some to Nowsara; both these places are, therefore, points of pilgrimage.

without the walls, and, when believed incurable, often seek the dense forest sacred to a favourite saint, "the Datar Chelah,"[1] who alone, as they believe, can restore them in health to their homes and little ones.

The Parsees are the most energetic people living, except the French. Nothing dismays them. Among other matters, they farmed nearly all the cocoa-nut plantations in Guzerat for the purpose of producing "toddy,"[2] and took their Hindoo wives with them, to overlook the culture.

The miasma of many of these plantations, however, was so fatal that the women died in great numbers from fever; and it is said that many of the Parsees married no less than five wives in succession from this cause; still, perseverance, the motto of the Parsees, stimulated them to continue the labour, and to realise not only great wealth from this source, but to clear and render the grounds sanitary. Whatever a Parsee undertakes, he does actively; occupation

[1] The Hill of the "Datar," or Giver, overlooks a noble forest on the Surashtra Peninsula, near the Mahomedan city of Junagarh.

[2] Name given to the juice of the palm tree. An annual tax of one rupee, or two shillings, is levied by Government on each tree cultured to make toddy, and the plantations of these trees are considered excellent property, not requiring irrigation, and producing a liquor much esteemed, refreshing in its qualities, and only inebriating after sunrise.

is agreeable to him for its own sake, and speculation is as the air he breathes, a necessary item, as it were, in the requirements of his existence.

It is asserted by French oriental writers, M. Burnouf and others, that the Parsees of Surat lost such portions of their sacred books as they brought with them from Yezd, and that the so-called Zendavesta they now possess, has been compiled from traditions among their priests. I hope, if this remark falls under the eye of the learned, they will not think that I am presumptuously going beyond my depth in this little exhibition of knowledge, for nearly all I know about the Parsees has been derived from personal observation, and I am not disposed to lose myself in the difficulties of cuneiform inscriptions, dialects of Zend, or Sanscrit relations. I have seen the Parsees, day after day, on the sands of the seashore, with their faces turned to the rising or the setting sun, clad in white cotton garments, with a Chinese umbrella or Chittree of varnished palm leaf under their arms, and I have heard them pray in some jargon or other, but whether according to the words of Zoroaster I cannot pretend to say, while sometimes, as we have ridden by, some worthy creature, whose name has ended with a "jee," has broken into his prayer with an episode, reminding us, as we passed behind him, "French ship arrived, master,

good Bordeaux want, some very fine"—and then, on again with the morning invocation.

The present Zendavesta is said to be without sense, and, therefore, I believe the learned will not allow it to have been the compilation of so great and wise a man as the Zoroaster of the Greek, the Zeratush of Persia, a philosopher of such unquestionable genius, that his opinions commanded the intellects of some of the most highly-educated among the Persian scholars and princes. Anquetil du Perron devoted much of his time to this question, and translated two small liturgical works of the Parsees, called the lesser and the greater "Si-rozé." Now, "si" means thirty, and "roz" day; but it seems that there is a third book, which tells us the auspicious and inauspicious days of the whole month. This is a very singular affair; the good and evil being so balanced, that 'tis odd if any one escaping Scylla be not destroyed by Charybdis. Every day has its presiding angel. We could repeat their names, strange as they are, but feel sure that the gratification would not extend itself to the reader. This "Si-rozé" is, in fact, a "fate book," and speaks of the common acts of life, such as bathing, dressing, travelling, &c., on which days they will be attended with fortunate results, and the contrary; as, for instance, in the seventh day of the month, presided over by Amardád, we are told, among

other things, that "the day is auspicious for forming unions, for learning science, and for casting a malicious look at an enemy. The person taken ill will be in danger of his life; and the good and bad results of a dream will be known within twenty days. Anything lost or mislaid will not be recovered. Rumours will not prove false," and so on through the thirty days.

The Parsees are a most interesting people, whether we regard them in the past or present; and, as India owed much of its pomp and beauty to the results of the Mahomedan conquest, so, all that is progressive in the present day emanates from the Parsees. We have heard of their Towers of Silence, where the dead are seated among iron gratings to be reduced to skeletons by the birds of the air;[1]

[1] There is something poetic in this Parsee term, "Tower of Silence," as the resting-place of men when the golden bowl is broken, and the silver cord is loosed, as the wise man has it. It is more serious, more sublime, than the Saxon term, "God's Acre," and yet to us, who are accustomed to say, with Abraham, "Give me a possession of a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight," there is something very horrible in the idea of these towers of the dead. True, in the Capuchin Catacombs of Malta and Syracuse the dead are placed in their ordinary attire, within niches, to be, as it is intended, a perpetual comment on the vanity of life, and the traveller is soon habituated to the hideous company. But the revolting circumstance of these Towers of Silence is, that the

we have heard of their Mobeds or Priests, less respected, as a class, than the priests of any nation under the sun; we have heard of the odd superstition, which teaches that evil spirits are driven from the dead by the presence of a dog, and that the future fate of the deceased may be somewhat guessed at by the manner of the animal's gaze upon the corpse; we have heard of their simple, undecorated Fire-temples, and their gorgeous ceremonies of marriage; but we look forward *now* to their influence, as men of business; as the introducers and speculators in railways; as the great ship-owners of Western India; as traders and merchants, keen, observant, and speculative, as any men of business in the world.

The head of the Parsee community is Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, widely known by reason of his prince-like charities and munificence. The parents of this great man came from Nowsara, and he may, therefore, be considered as a native of Surat, while it is his custom, though by no means bigotted to his ancestral faith, to

dead, in their ordinary dress, are placed, sitting, in grated niches that surround the interior of the tower. The birds of prey then descend, and the fleshless skeleton falls through into the huge pit excavated at its base. None but the priests enter these towers, and their breathing is partially defended from the noisome atmosphere by the folds of a linen cloth.

visit the great Fire-temple of Nowsara as a place of pilgrimage, at intervals of two or three years.[1]

Before the period when trade was thrown open at Surat, it was celebrated as a seat of learning. The college was one of the best in India, so that looms and literature worked hand-in-hand, much as they do with us in modern Manchester; and it is this very city of facts and factories that has told so much against the cotton trade of poor Surat, inasmuch as it is found, that the "raw material" can be sent home, manufactured into usable articles of civilized life, and sold in India, at a less cost than it could be worked there; thanks to *steam* power.

Again, who has not heard of the Pingerah pool, or hospital for old and diseased animals at Surat; the Jains, who wear a cloth over their mouths lest they should destroy insect life with the air they breathe, as well as the Brahmins, are morbidly tender on the idea of destroying life, and hence the origin of this hospital, where the poor beasts drag on a weary and loathsome existence. Moral good is said to be produced by this system, though the fact is very ques-

[1] The public and private charities of Sir Jamsetjee for British, Hindoo, and Parsee purposes, amount to no less a sum than £234,272, a sum standing without parallel in the annals of individual benevolence.

tionable in the minds of all observers of tail-twisting, as the coercive power in common use towards the hapless draught bullocks of the land.

Perhaps the most cheerful-looking points in that part of Surat which rises from the river banks are the Ghauts, or steps, which form the landing-places. The Moollah's, or Priest's Ghaut, the Mar Bhere Ghaut, and the Dutch Ghaut, are the principal of these, although two new landing-places have been recently added. Some of the steps leading from the sea to the fastnesses of our little ocean barrack, Malta, remind one most of the Ghauts of far Surat, but are deficient, even in that bright clime, in the brilliant colour and varied groups, which render, at early morning, the landing-places of the city of the Nawaub so animated and attractive. The Maltese dame in her black faldetta, the English soldier, or the boatman with Neapolitan-like cap and jacket, slung, like the pelisse of the hussar, carelessly over his shoulder, are picturesque enough in their way, but they cannot be remembered for a moment, when compared with the warmly-coloured groups of pleasant Surat. We lack the Brahmin, repeating the Mantrās of his morning service, and laying aside, as he does so, his turban of striped cloth,

and all the items of his upper dress; the handsome wife of the Banian merchant, laden with jewels, and attired in silks of the richest texture and brightest colours, stooping to fill her polished vessels from the sunlit waters; the bright-eyed little bullock-driver, filling his skins for the city's use; the washerman, surrounded by heaps of garments, the colours of the rainbow, beating them on the smooth stones, as he laughs, and sings, and chats to every fresh arrival at the Ghaut; the little children singing, playing, and weaving fresh necklaces of jasmine flowers; the Hindoo girl, slight and handsome; the fruit-seller of the bazaar, or the flower-dresser of the temple, her shining hair heavily braided, and adorned with gold coins and fresh pomegranate blossoms: all these, from time to time, descend to the banks of the blue Tapti, and render the landing-places of Surat the long-remembered spots of interest and of beauty that they are.

Surat, indeed, is fallen! Her Moslem rulers have lost their power; the sound of the shuttle is scarcely heard; the tents of the sportsman are few beneath the shadow of Vaux's Tomb; the college is like one of those at Padua, almost a tradition among men. Still there is sunshine yet. Nature is genial as of yore; the days as blue, and the people as gentle and as kindly.

So here let us end our sketch, satisfied, as our dear old friend has it, of the philosophy of keeping upon "the sunny side."

VAUX'S TOMB, SURAT.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MUSICAL DOMESTIC.

"Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
That grace the proud and noisy pomps of wealth."
Queen Mab.

"WHIRR, whirr! whiz, whiz! twang! whirr!" What an extraordinary noise! "Mahomed Shah, what *are* they doing down stairs?" "Oh!" was the answer, "it is only the Churkee, or cotton-cleaner, who wants to re-dress all the cotton for his Highness's mattrasses!" Truly, a very remarkable sound, decidedly musical in its way, and one that I recollected to have heard before, in the half-ruined streets of Citta Vecchia, where it deluded me into the idea that the modern Maltese had retained this strange rasping kind of melody, as a tradition of some Arab occupation of their island in days long gone by. Yet, as I listened, in utter ignorance of who a Churkee was or how he cleaned cotton, and thinking, per-

haps, that as he worked a companion beguiled the task with some shrill piping stick, such as is used by the snake charmers (though the sound seemed too clear for any of the single instruments commonly played in the highways by idle people, in a spirit of wantonness and mirth) curiosity conquered, and I went down stairs among all the Meer's chess-players, Koran copiers, and others, to see the Churkee, and, if I could, to find out all about it. There he was, a slight, active Mahomedan, his head bound with a brightly-coloured handkerchief, bearing on his shoulder a machine, in appearance very like an old-fashioned, single-stringed harp, the catgut of which, struck by a mallet, had produced the sound described, and has its use, not only in cleaning and separating the cotton, but of attracting attention to the Churkee's presence, the requisition for the cotton-cleaner being very frequent.

It is remarkable that, in every detail of domestic life, the manners of the natives of India are as much opposed to our own, when resident among them, as can be imagined; and of this fact, the necessity for the profession of the Churkee is a case in evidence. A European, doomed to endure the mighty heat of an Eastern climate, seeks to render repose at once as possible, as healthful, and as agreeable, as circum-

stances permit. A hard, firm couch contributes materially to this desirable end; and where horsehair, as cushion and mattrass stuffing is not to be procured (which is commonly the case, unless ordered direct from Europe), coir, or the fibre of the cocoa-nut, is considered a most valuable representative. The native of India, however, if he can afford to do so, cherishes warmth as his great remedy and general preventive; the body being always heated, warm beds are deemed absolutely necessary, and a rich man literally preserves himself in cotton, as the Affghans do their Caubool grapes; for he is not only laid on a bed filled some two feet thick with this gentle comfort, but beneath a coverlet of the same quilted material, compared to which a German eider-down is a cool and manageable luxury. After brief use, this cotton, separating itself into portions from the general body, like a commonwealth breaking into parties, becomes one of the most troublesome things to manage in the world, and, by degrees, the poor son of the sleepless finds himself little better off than the Jogee on his bed of blunted nails, until the Churkee with his Jin sets matters smooth again.

There was no time to be lost, however, so while I stood looking on, full of marvel at the whole affair, the Churkee seated himself about three feet from the wall, holding the handle of

his Jin in a horizontal position, a little inclined towards him; and so commenced his labour. The instrument, which really, as I have said, is a good deal like an old-fashioned harp, and some six feet in length, was fastened by the centre to a long rope tied firmly to the cord of a bow, suspended by a strong nail on the upper part of the wall, which allowed the necessary play to the Jin, while the cotton-cleaner, holding it with one hand, placed the cotton upon the catgut string, and striking it quickly with a double-headed mallet in the other, caused the cotton to fly from it, by means of the vibration, in a clean and open state.

It was hard work for the poor Churkee, who looked thin and wretched enough, and although his hand was protected to a certain degree, by a cotton pad, against the vibration of the string, yet he had his knuckles sadly galled by the play of the instrument, which had taken away the skin, and caused soreness and swelling—not a matter of much consequence, however, to Esoo the sufferer, who seemed rather amused at being pitied than otherwise, for it must be a very severe flesh wound *indeed*, that produces any effect upon a native. This remark I have frequently made when I have seen men wounded by sword-cuts and desperate chances of flood and field; while perhaps it is to their own indifference in the

matter, rather than to absolute cruelty, that their apathy in the cases of the poor beasts of burthen may be traced, when galled by heavy loads.

Whatever the necessities of the factory system may do in compelling the endurance of personal suffering, very few like Esoo the cotton-cleaner would willingly pursue a vocation that seemed so painful as this, nor remain so careless in providing against its evils. "Every Churkee was the same," he said; "all their left hands raw and swelled, but what was that?" I suspect his work was very heavy too, for Esoo did not look like an idler, and he was working for his own people—a fact of great importance as affects honesty and speed among native workmen; it was job work, too, paid at the rate of twelve annas, or about one shilling and eight pence, for a mattrass containing sixty pounds of cotton, and yet every ten minutes he socially availed himself of a Gorawalla's[1] offer to share the pleasures of his "hubble bubble."

The Churkee's stock in trade does not require much capital, and once purchased his labours are all profitable. The Jin, or "Camān," as it is called, is made of the strongest wood, the sesum, and is joined in three pieces, for the sake of com-

[1] Horsekeeper.

bined strength and elasticity. Its price is fifteen rupees (thirty shillings); the Gotilla, or mallet, is of tamarind, at once the lightest and hardest wood known, and this implement costs about three rupees; so that for less than an expenditure of two pounds sterling, the Churkee is set up as a professional man; and as everybody has their mattrass refilled twice a-year, and there are but sixty of his calling in the Presidency, the cotton-cleaner's trade is tolerably profitable, and always secure.

The best cotton in the Bombay market is brought from Guzerat, Broach, Bhownugger, and Dholera. The cotton is gathered every year in the spring, or Hooli season, and sown during the rains, while it averages in price four rupees a Maund, of eighty Seers, in Guzerat, and three rupees a Maund, of forty Seers, in Bombay. It is cultivated by both Mahomedans and Hindoos, but cleaned only by the former.

Guzerat rather resembles one enormous park, with its fine trees and flat, ribbon-like roads over the rich black soil, than an extensive province, as it is; and its beauty is increased by the plantations of cotton, which, when the bushes are in bloom, with their pretty yellow-tinged blossoms, and the snow-like cotton bursting from the pod, are extremely gay and pretty, scarcely less so than fields of the flaunting poppy, while more

COTTON LEAVES AND BLOSSOM.

pleasing to the thoughtful admirer, inasmuch as, while the one is associated with half the disease, misery, and apathetic indifference, flowing from sensual indulgence among the people of the East, the other is the very type of industry, peace, and commercial affluence.

In all great schemes, individuals suffer, I fear, from the abuses and evils that seem almost inseparable from the system. Inseparable from many causes—from the very nature of the thing itself; perhaps from the weakness or the wickedness of human nature when armed with irresponsible power; or from the impossibility of a complete investigation of details by those in authority.

Our attention, however, is not demanded on this question; we have a brighter and pleasanter subject before us. Let us remember the cheerful faces we have seen even here in the East: young girls and matrons plying the distaff, surrounded by smiling, happy children. Let us think of the comfort this cotton work produces, with the value of the product as an article of trade, both here and in export to our own land; of the beauty that art, design, and colour can effect from these snow-like balls of raw material; and on the value of knowledge, as a means of wealth and happiness to countless thousands, even as here shown by *one* cotton pod, if we will but in imagination follow its course, first to the screw, next to the cleaners, then to the winders, the twisters, the dyers, the weavers, until it shines forth a brilliant flower on the gay dress of some happy village bride, among the rural homes of England, or is returned in fabrics of

the most glowing tints to India, to delight many with its brilliant hues.

Thinking thus, the cotton pod has great interest to the eye of the contemplative traveller, and suggests a thousand thoughts, well suited to its beauty and its value, far beyond the cold calculations of "price currents," or the question of its value in American markets. Let us but put aside the *statistics* of cotton, leaving such knotty matters, with all deference, to those who best comprehend them—to the merchant, the broker, and the reporter on commerce—and we shall then see that no subject in the world is more rife with the power of leading us away with pleasant thoughts, in endless, wide variety.

The looms of the East, for instance, how rich they once were in beautiful fabrics, produced by the cunning hand of man, ere the now forgotten art, chased from India, became known in its perfection in the West, by the wondrous powers of all-controlling, all-producing steam! And even now, how delicate the silk embroidering on this same cotton ground, wrought, it is true, with the rude tools of native workmanship, yet excellent in beauty, and adorning forms among the nobles and princes of the East, that classic lands might have accepted as their artists' models.

The divans and ceilings of princes' Hareems, too, wrought on this same cotton in needlework of divers colours, how beautiful they are! how fit to charm the eyes of fair and gentle women, who need only the fostering hand of civilization to render them in all other things, as they now are in loveliness of feature and grace of form, the more than equals of their Western sisters! The pretty children also, how interesting they are with their little parti-coloured coats of brilliantly dyed cotton cloths, on whom the eye of the fond mother falls, as if her treasure were a second Benjamin!

Contrasting with the child, we see the mounted chief; his cuirass of quilted cotton turning aside the bullets of the Jinjal fired from his rival's fort, as though his armour were of ringed steel; the saddle, too, so bright and gay, beneath which his well-broken steed caricoles with so much spirit; the reins of silk and cotton twist, also so bright and gay: for, if a Hindoo warrior, he dare no more, by reason of his caste, touch the unclean leather, than, indeed, the Prophet's follower can handle the (to him) accursed hog-skin, the abomination of Islam and its followers. Then, again, the holiday attire of the Indian women, even of the common class, as the warm sun shines in streams upon the brilliant

dyes, the gay and pretty borders of their various coloured Sarees; how beautiful even *cotton* seems, when draped with a grace equalling Grecian art over fair forms, which owe all to nature, and acknowledge none of those interferences of the toilette that would mar their beauty! How richly the dark blue folds fall over the half-concealed crimson boddice, and drape round the delicate elastic ankle, decorated with its silver bangle! How handsome the expressive face often looks, the saree half drawn over one cheek, while it casts a clear, decided shadow on the smooth forehead and the plaits of glossy hair so softly braided there!

Would we have a contrast in our theme, let imagination bear us to the gay kerchief head-dresses of the south of France; to the scarlet and yellow handkerchief braiding the woolly head of the merry negress attending on the Turkish hareem, all finery and laughter; or to the crowded streets of London, and moralize on the groups that pass us there.

Half the commerce of the world appears in cotton; half our ideas are borrowed from this topic. Scarcely a thought, whether of the commerce and prosperity of England, or the sufferings of her people, of her foreign influences, of her growing power, but *cotton* may appear a

principal point in every tableau, and presents a series of the most glowing as well as interesting pictures to the imagination; while the stranger, winding along the monotonous roads of fertile Guzerat, his eye fixed on the poor cultivator's little field of blooming plants, may, by the help of a little imagination, be transported to the uttermost ends of the earth, and gather fresh wisdom and certain pleasure from his reverie.

The best cotton known of old in England was chiefly brought from Cyprus and Smyrna. The cotton thread of Jerusalem, called bazas, was also much esteemed. Of Indian cotton, that of Bengal and Guzerat has the readiest sale, as finer, longer, and softer than other kinds. In olden times, the cotton of the Antilles, called Siam cotton, had a high celebrity for its very extraordinary beauty of texture, and stockings woven of it could scarcely be distinguished from silk, in consequence of their fine glossy, delicate appearance, and were sold in England at fifteen crowns a pair. Although cotton must be always packed dry, moist weather, if the cotton is under cover, is considered the best time for this purpose. The great Apollo and Colabah screws in Bombay are, perhaps, among the most curious features in the island to a stranger's eye, as well

as the enormous warehouses required for storing the cotton during the monsoon. These screws are of double power, and worked by Ghatties, or hill coolies, principally from the Southern Ghauts. The screw compresses the cotton to about a fourth its original bulk, and the work is said to be laborious in the extreme.

It is reported that the Bombay cotton trade is grievously declining, and many fear its ceasing altogether. The trade between India and Canton a few years since was very important, but the Chinamen are said to have taken a fancy of late to British goods, manufactured of cheap American cotton, and will have little of India's raw material. If this is indeed so, it were time India recovered her knowledge of the arts, and had steam and hand-looms, designers, cotton printers, and dyers of her own. The poor cultivator, at least, would find recompense for his labour, while the Banian, the merchant, and the boat-owner, might still find, in interior demand and home consumption, all the benefits erst derived from general exportation and foreign trade.

I am afraid that picking through this mass of cotton has tired the reader, as much as his work did poor Esoo; nor has the former had the sunshine that plays about Meer Jafur's pleasant

house to cheer his labour in making way through the puzzled web of the "raw material," so that were he called upon by the Chamber of Commerce to report upon the matter, "cottons are lively" would scarcely be the phrase of his selection, whereby to describe the present market.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD FORT.

"Swift with exulting cries and wild despair,
On the proud fortress rush the maddened host;
The lengthened ladders to its walls they bear,
And press contending for the dangerous post."

"I CAN'T go to Sweden this summer," said a friend of ours, a very *gourmand* in travelling; "because I *must* read up sea-kings and Norsemen first."

It has happened to me to have frequent opportunities of noting how this sort of labour has gained the rich return it sought. How, like all worthy things, not a grain of it has been lost in producing the interest, the compound interest, of recompense. I have stood in the ancient theatre at Verona, with a student of Euripides and Aristophanes, and seen how it affected *him* to note the very ways and means by which the old Greek drama was put upon the boards.

I have sat on the Nyx at Athens, with one of

the first classics of the day, and admired the ecstacy with which *his* eye fell upon the distant groves of Academus, while, in the dreamy fancies of the hour, the population of the neighbouring city seemed streaming round the fair Acropolis, to hear the mighty words of Demosthenes, as given from that spot; and I have also seen the "fast man," full of ignorance and conceit, "doing" both Northern Italy and the fair city of Pericles, and I have *tried* to pity him!

We have show places in India, too, as well as Europe—places great, wonderful, mysterious in old tradition; speaking of languages and religions long forgotten, sciences and arts for ever hidden as it seems: and yet people go and look at them, and dance, and laugh, and boil potatoes in true pic-nic style, nor ask to learn, nor pause to think;—they have *done* Elephanta, Ellora, and Carli—and what remains?

See that calm student there, with his friend the Brahmin, who has glided away among these glorious ruins towards his distant tent pitched on the side of that rocky mound beneath the peepul tree! *He* has laboured on the records of the past, and as he stands and gazes on these mighty monuments of time and art, on gigantic statues, on traceries of flowers, delicate as lace-work, yet of a substance so hard as to turn every instrument now used upon it in roughest work;

he sees the ancient world rolling back again, as it were, in eclipse of all now present; he hears the wisdom of the Buddhist sages; he listens to the strains of Hindoo poetry, to the glorious language of the Sanscrit drama; beautiful women, the "lights of the Hareem," move gracefully before him; conquerors, the Timurs and the Akbars of the East, in shining armour, stride through the corridors; the priests perform their dark, mysterious rites; the dancing-girls weave fresh chaplets for the altar. The student's eye is dark and bright, for glorious dreams are lighting it; and he starts, as if too roughly roused, when his watchful servant warns him to his sunset meal.

Oriental students are, unfortunately, too rare in modern days, nor can *I* boast a rank among them; yet having "read up" a little of Moslem history before I travelled through the Deckan, the reader may, perhaps, feel some interest also in the way we took.

My supposed companion is probably not an early riser, yet the horses will be saddled at three in the morning, and we must make our way over the soft, even, pleasant Mahratta roads while the Pleiades are yet shining, so that we may arrive at the great Mahomedan city of Aurungabad before this sun is hot enough to cause us headache. It will be pleasant, too, as

the dawn breaks and the breeze rises, to canter on over the winding roads of the wide plain, all green and fresh with its varied brushwood, the dew lying on grass and flower, the birds, that "king of the crows," the earliest riser, calling on the Hooppoes and the Minars to give life to the awakening world. How delightful the air is! how peculiar the sensation it occasions! How different is the climate of these mornings in the tropics, to that of any other that we know! The shores of the Mediterranean, the climates of Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and Italy are agreeable, yet not as this is. But we must hasten on, for the sun has risen; flocks of peacocks spread their glorious plumage, strut for a time, and then fly shrieking over our heads; while the monkeys spring from bough to bough of the mangoe trees, followed by their little ones, to whom they never cease to chatter, with warnings, no doubt, of danger.

And thus we reach the famous city of Aurungzebe, the courageous, ambitious son of the mighty Shah Jehan, the great Mogul conqueror of the Deckan.[1]

Our tents have been pitched we find in the tangled garden of the beautiful Mukrubeh—fit monument to the beloved and accomplished

[1] A.D. 1655.

wife of a Moslem prince. And when the rice and curry have received their fair attention, with the dish of blamange-like Soojee[1] that we see in preparation, we can stroll out and note it well. We find the model to have been that of the famous *Taj* at Agra, and determine to devote a day to its inspection, its beauty being so infinitely beyond our expectations. Fortunately the tomb is outside the town, near the hills to the north, and is surrounded by a wall, the masonry of which seems perfection; and the entrance gate-way on the southern side has doors, massive beyond belief, and richly ornamented with brass.

But we will turn to the tomb itself, which is of pure white marble, raised on a terrace platform some twenty feet from the garden plain, and surrounded by beautiful minarets. The traceries and fine work of the exquisitely carved windows are of a lace-like delicacy indescribable; and as we look through the marble doors that enclose the absolute tomb of the lady, with its cloth of gold covering, in accordance with the customs of the Mahomedans, art, we feel, can have no greater perfection.[2]

[1] Fine flour, which is boiled to a certain consistence, and, when cold, is eaten with sugar, cinnamon, and milk.

[2] From the gate of the Mukrubeh we copied a Persian inscription, thus translated :—" This illustrious shrine has been built by Busput Roi, under the supervision of Ut Ullah, 1071 " (Hegira).

The garden looks unusually gay, too, as it happens to be Friday, a day when the Moslems frequent it in great numbers, this being their Sabbath as it were; and though the fountains, which at certain distances mark the centre of each avenue leading to the mausoleum, have long ceased to throw their sparkling showers to the light, and the brilliant flowers, untended, trail along the pathways, the colours of the varied groups give, as we see, animation to the scene, and awaken dreams of the time when "fair women and brave men" made this spot their favourite place of rest and recreation.

It is difficult to repose here on soft cushions under the shadows of the widely-spreading tamarind trees, and to gaze upon the lovely tomb of the Empress Rabia Doorani, the beautiful and tenderly loved wife of one of the greatest warriors of the East,[1] without reflection on the history and character of those great and chivalrous rulers of India, of whose present decadence and ruin, this tangled garden, these broken fountains, these blossoms trampled under foot, seem but as the symbols.

Bactria and Transoxiana gave those chiefs, who, renowned for their learning, taste, and

[1] Aurungzebe assumed the title of Alum Gîr, or Conqueror of the World, at Delhi, in 1658.

civilization, founded the Mogul dynasty of India; among them were poets, historians, linguists, and men of science; mathematicians, astronomers, and geographists. Bokhara and Samarchand were as notable for their libraries and universities as Verona and Padua. Mahmood of Ghuzni honoured with his friendship and protection the Tasso of Asia. The great Timur made institutes marked by a wisdom and a beneficence unrivalled in the history of rulers, and there was a chivalry, a manliness, a purpose, an independence about these Moslem princes, which was unrivalled among the conquered.[1]

Then there was the romance too, despite the seclusion and matter of course system of the hareem! The great Jehangire owed all the influences on his life to the power of love and beauty. Who has not heard of "the light of the hareem, the fair Nour-mahal?" no imagination of the poet, but a Tartar maiden, who, saved from the deadly coils of a snake in early life, lived to become the favourite sultana of an emperor, and not only so, but having carefully culti-

[1] Abul Fazil, the great statician and geographer, was the prime minister of the Emperor Ackbar, A.D. 1605, and assisted him in the compilation of the Ayeen Ackbari. The Emperor Baber, whose charming memoirs are the recreation and delight of every reader acquainted with Oriental literature, died 1530, leaving an inheritance of wisdom to be ever remembered among the fountains and rose-gardens of beautiful Caubul.

vated the arts for self-support in early life, she possessed attractions which had power to exercise sway over all the governments of the land.

Then there were the daughters of Shah Jehan; three Graces, as it were—witty, gentle, beautiful, accomplished—not easily forgotten; their charms and virtues not alone the theme of minstrel poets, but which guided to courteous sentences the pen of the very coldest of historians;—but the sun is lowering in its course, and we have yet, guided by that dark green Moslem flag, to visit the tomb of the well-known Musafir Shah, a saint of great reputed holiness.

When I was there some time since, I made many sketches of the place, and fed the tame carp with bread, who sported in the cool waters of the tank; and I was shown the site of the palace-like house of the great merchant—Palmer, who once exercised prince-like hospitality all around. However, as we have to start for the Old Fort at gun-fire in the morning, it will now be enough, if the reader pleases, to see the tomb of the Shah Sahib, as they call it here.

How dirty Aurungabad is! what swarms of children! what hundreds of long, white-teethed, barking dogs! what heaps of filth! what horrid

odours! But we have passed it all at last; the green flag of the Nizam waves over the wall so handsomely carved in arches, and we are in the cool garden that surrounds the tomb.[1]

How full all the verandahs are of slippers! and how odd it seems that all those grave elders sitting in the shade, with Korans on their knees, seem too much abstracted to notice either our approach or the constant passing of the Hindoos to fill their water-vessels, in preparation for their evening meal. It is habit, and the good Syuds read the Koran sedulously; but there is not much learning here, although some Jahgirs, or landed estates, are enjoyed for the support of the Morreeds, or pupils of the saint's successors, there being colleges attached. Dinner, however, is waiting, the pale ale is by this time cold, as if *frappé* with American ice; the camels are roaring in the distance, and we must see the moon rise over the pearl-like domes of the Muckrubeh before we seek rest—and our morning march must be right early too, though it is but fourteen miles to the Old Fort of Deogurh,[2] our intended halting-place.

[1] On the gate of the Shah's tomb is this inscription:—"Musafir Shah, the world of truth, departed from this earth when his time was come, and Khureed told the date of his departure." 1126 (Hegira).

[2] The Dowlutabad of the Mahomedans.

It is as well that we guide our horses as far from the centre of the pathway as we can, out of the way of the stream of religious fanatics, Hindoo or Moslem, who have entered the city of Aurungzebe, to seek rest for the night at the Shah's tomb. Here are Fakirs and Goshnasheens of all descriptions. That wild, nearly unclothed, fine-looking man, with his black hair falling over his neck, and bearing those great bell-like affairs of crimson embroidered cloth over his shoulder, brings water — *holy* water, as 'tis thought—from the river Ganges; he, on the side there, advancing prostrate on the ground, is measuring his length from Benares to all the sacred shrines of India, in performance of a vow; and that wild, skeleton-like creature, with a bell depending from his waist-belt to his ankles, has walked through the deadliest forest without scrip or clothing, sharing wild berries with the parroquets, and scaring the beasts of prey from his path by the sound of that same bell. But we have, with all our care, pushed against a priest—how he scowls! and holds the tip of his ear till long past our group, and all that trouble simply to guard him from the Evil Eye and the contamination of the Feringee!

Now, then, for Dowlutabad! The road is bad, and the tents will certainly not be up for

breakfast, for we can even now hear the creaking of those dreadful carts, and see the camels not very far ahead; it is evident that the servants halted at midnight, lighted fires among the stones, and slept too late. Well, fortunately, there is capital accommodation in the tombs, so it does not much matter.

Perhaps our friend, the reader, considers it better, as Russell would say, "to wait a little longer" for "capital accommodation" in a tomb, but he must be good enough to recollect that he has consented to be our imaginary companion in an Eastern trip, and there the large apartments, the domed roof, the thick walls of a neglected tomb, are worth the finest tent that Bengal, with all its knowledge of four-cloth Kanauts,[1] double flys, and extending verandahs, can possibly produce.

The tombs we have decided on are capital, they are twin mausoleums as it were, so we arrange them accordingly, having in front that handsome range of domes that the Emperor Mahomed III. caused to be erected over the tooth, which pain, and ignorance of the soothing effects of chloroform, caused him to have extracted.[2] While we admire and wonder at this

[1] The sides of a tent.

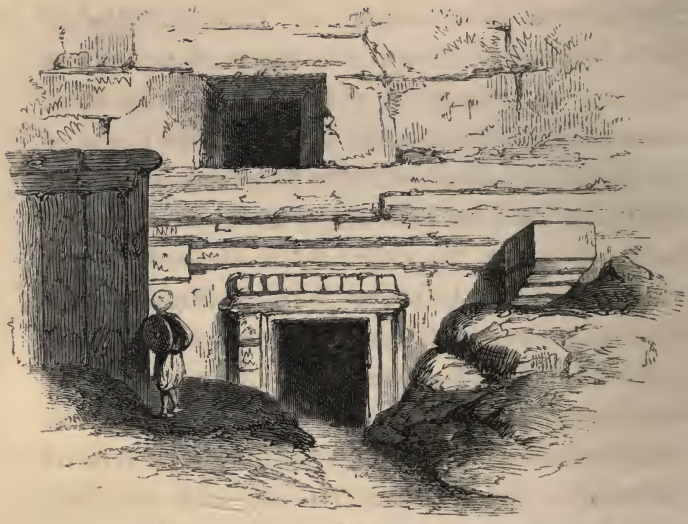
[2] A.D. 1324.

DOWLUTABAD.

DOWLUTABAD.

expenditure of masonry, a Taifa, or band of Natch people, taking the expression of our smiling observation for personal encouragement, have sat down so exactly in front, that the head of the gray-beard with the tom-tom has fallen exactly on the lens of our camera lucida, so we stroll away to the Old Fort. It is fortunate that we have this order from his Highness the Nizam, or we could never see this strong place after all! What a wonderful mound of earth-work, and wall, and bastion it is, and how our Arab steeds scramble, and stumble, and recover themselves again, with rein on neck, till they have wound round and round the roughly-paved outworks, and arrive in front of the marvellously low entrance doorway. It is scarcely high enough to pass under without stooping, even when we have dismounted. Ah! there's the trick of it, the old Mahratta stronghold of Deogurh[1] had not repelled so long and so often the attacks of the Moslem emperors of Delhi but for such stratagems and architectural surprises as we shall meet with here.

[1] House of the God. Deogurh is by some considered to have been the Tagara of Ptolemy. The first notice I find of Deogurh, speaks of it as the capital of a Mahratta chief of the Deckan, called Ramdeo, in 1298.



ENTRANCE THROUGH SCARP TO DOWLUTABAD.

Although the Mogul prince Alla so reduced the power of the Mahratta chief of Deogurh, as to compel him to hold his country as a dependency of the throne of Delhi, still it was only in the reign of Mahomed III. that, charmed with the position of the fort, that emperor determined to transplant his people there from the ancient capital, and gave to the Old Fort the modern title of Dowlutabad; but though long held, it fell into the hands of rebels, Affghan insurgents, and then followed bloodshed, insurrection, miseries unspeakable, until 1650, about when Futteh Khan, a governor under the Prince of Ahmednugger, rather than give it over to the King of Beejapore, offered it to Shah Jehan.

Now, Futteh Khan, like a child who stretches out a bit of cake towards its nurse in a moment of generosity, repented of his act and drew back accordingly—but too late. Dowlutabad was a bit of cake the King of Delhi experienced a great relish for, and so laid siege to it; but, as we shall see when we enter it, it was not to be easily taken, and famine from within effected what no outward attack could compass.

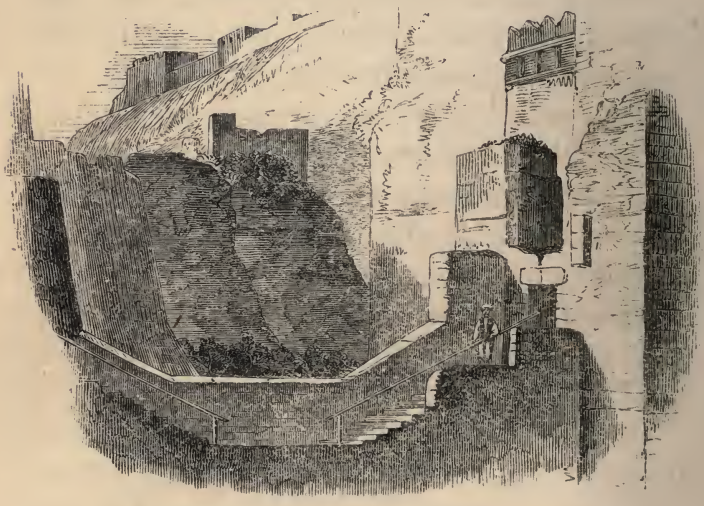
A wonderful place, in sooth, is this great fortification, on a detached rock, of which every natural precipice is taken advantage of for some work of marvellous strength, that strength increased by every ingenious device of Oriental skill.

The Moslem soldier, our cicerone, however, seems rather tired of leaning on his matchlock, and, no doubt, thinks that our rhapsodies should have an end. A very picturesque person he is truly, with his rhinoceros-hide shield bossed with gold, his pouch and powder-flask of embroidered crimson cloth, his green turban, and waist-belt bristling with Creeses; and as he is just the sort of man it would be better to have as a friend than an enemy, we will pass forward without further parley.

Having achieved the outer gate, and passed the great Wardlee wallah[1] by the ditch, all we

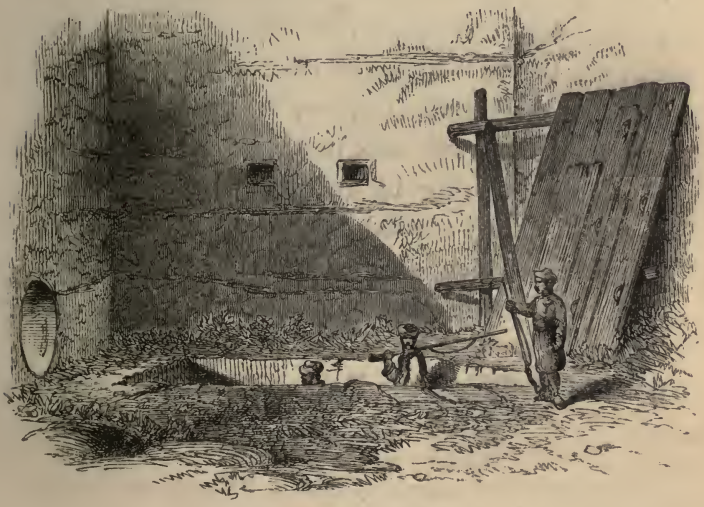
[1] A gun, so called from its having a ram's head at the trunnion. A magnificent piece of Mahomedan work, twenty-two spans in length, and capable of carrying a 12-lb. ball.

thought would be easy. Not so; you see every irregularity of the rock must be ascended and descended by steep steps, part concealed by brushwood, in which lions by the dozen delight to rest, and then we have more strong works before us, and the narrowest and lowest of all possible doorways. "Stoop, stoop, young man," said the wise Franklin to his young friend, "and both in the world and in the gateways you will escape many hard knocks;" so *we* shall do well to stoop in this great Moslem fortress, for many hard knocks must the besiegers from time to time have had before us here.



OUTER ENTRANCE FROM SCARP—DOWLUTABAD.

There is a cold breeze rushing down from above us, and we find it is caused by a large square opening, heading a flight of wide, convenient stairs! Ha, ha! another trick; the enemy, who had once gained an entry to the fort, and arrived thus far, thought all won; with shouts of triumph they then rushed madly on, to be but cast down again, with yells of pain and anguish. Now, we see those heavy gates of iron resting against the wall; they fit this opening; on them lighted wood was often piled, and kept blazing by a blast-hole from the outer bastion. As the soldiers rushed up to victory, they struck their heads against this burning roof, and were cast



TRAP-DOOR—DOWLUTABAD.

pell-mell back, to die in torments in the castle ditch!

Now we have gained the summit of the fort, and stand beside the old brass Hindoo gun, over which floats the green flag of the Moslem;[1] it is supported on a rickety wooden rest that stands on a circular plateau of masonry, and here the soldier turns, and thinks when we have looked down a dismal hole, of which he tells many tales of men lost, and of Gins and Devis seen, that we have done enough.

So we have, but let us look around upon the great plain below; on the beautiful Moslem tombs of divers architecture, on the fine mangoe trees grouped around, on the graceful Minar rising at one side near the entrance of the fort, and on the little hamlet clustered at the base. We can just make out our own tombs in the distance, with the cooking tent and servants, who seem moving to and fro, as if preparing our now much-needed evening's refection; we will descend then, carefully and slowly, and now, once more upon the open plain, we turn again to gaze upon this wonderful stronghold, and our melancholy friend, the Persian Moonshee, seeing

[1] Bearing the following inscription in Mahratta—"This gun was made at Agra, by Mahomet Hassan, Arab; and is called "Dust Exciter."

us do so, strokes his beard, and breaks forth, after his manner, with a sort of compliment, which, though it does not sound so well in English, we will venture to transcribe—

"Whoever has travelled is approved—
His perfections shall be reflected as from a
Mirror of light,
There can be nothing more pure than water,
But wherever it stagnates it becomes offensive."

THE "DUST EXCITER."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECRETARY.

"Give, to spend the classic hour,
One deep read in learned lore;
One, whose merry, tuneful vein,
Flows like our gay poet's strain."

Hafiz.

We have been introduced to Mirza Ali Ackbar Khan Bahadoor, his Highness's *attaché*, dashing along the Strand in the Meer's carriage, on his return from some notable interview with the chiefs of the English bar; we can now take a nearer view of him as he stands behind Meer Jafur Alee's chair,[1] and the scrutiny will satisfy us at once how completely the countenance is, in this case, the index of the mind.

When his Highness Meer Jafur Alee visited England in 1844, he brought in his suite from Bombay, an English gentleman, who, as he had

[1] Vide frontispiece.

occupied a commercial and literary position at the capital of Western India, his Highness thought a fitting person at once to advance his claims and to assist his introduction to society. It is needless to say that the Nawaub of Surat, as he was called, soon proved his own best introduction. His courtly manners, his splendid costume, the interest which attached to his position in this country, soon gave to his Highness Meer Jafur Alee an *entrée* into the first society of London; and, although he was at this time quite unacquainted with the English language, interpreters of his own pure and elegant Persian were easily found among several officers of the Honourable East India Company's service, who had known his Highness in India, and, being warmly attached to him, felt the greatest possible satisfaction at the reception which greeted the Meer in our own aristocratic and courtly circles.

At Windsor and St. James's his Highness was received as became his rank. At balls and *fêtes*, *déjeúners* and fancy fairs, the eye of beauty rested, well pleased, upon the "Nawaub" and his richly attired suite. Crowds of gaping idlers thronged every street in which the carriage of his Highness stopped, in hopes of seeing him re-enter it, for visions of oriental costumes, with an abundant use of gold, Cashmere, and

the primitive colours, were not so common between St. John's Wood, Maida Hill, and Leadenhall Street in those days, as they are now; and, even at the Polish ball, the brilliant dancers of Willis's Rooms, forgot their own braveries, whether of Turk, Greek, or Mandarin, to gaze upon a costume, whose very correctness seemed a stumbling block in the popular belief.[1]

His Highness returned to Bombay, but disappointment awaited him there, and, after years of anxiety, and that hope delayed which maketh the heart sick, Meer Jafur Alee determined to revisit the shores of England, and, on this occasion, was accompanied by one of the shrewdest of all shrewd political workmen, and the subject of our present sketch—Mirza Ali Ackbar Khan Bahadoor, late Moonshee in the service of the

[1] The receipt for making an "ugly Christian" into a handsome Mahomedan, was, some many years ago, very amusingly given by Mr. Horace Smith, in the *New Monthly*, and seemed very generally tried on the evening in question—

"I made myself that night a vow
To startle all beholders—
I wore white muslin on my brow,
Green velvet on my shoulders—
My trowsers were supremely wide,
I learnt to swear by Allah!
I stuck a poignard in my side,
And called myself—Abdallah!"

British Government in Sindh. At present his Highness speaks and understands English, so that, in ordinary society, an interpreter is not required, but Ali Ackbar's services in other ways have been of the greatest possible value in the arrangement of his Highness's claims.

As he stands there, one hand resting on the chair of the "Nawaub," the Arab Secretary, thoughtful as he looks, seems fitted better for the cabinet than the camp, and yet he has been a warrior, too, and has earned goodly laurels. The history of Ali Ackbar's life is a romance, glowing with tableaux of battles by flood and field; of forays with border chiefs; of single combat; of treacheries 'mid murderous bands; of perilous escapes amongst Beloochee hordes!

The present chief of the British army on the shores of Persia, called him his friend;[1] and Sir Charles Napier, in the style eminently characteristic of that hyperbolic warrior, observed, "I have a right to say that Ali Ackbar did more for the conquest of Sindh than a thousand soldiers could have done." This speech was made after dinner at the Bycullah Club, but Ali Ackbar is, in truth, a brave soldier; and for

[1] Vide the letter of General Outram to Ali Ackbar, when that gentleman was employed as chief Moonshee to the Sindh agency.

his chivalrous bearing, his undaunted courage at the battle of Meeanee, the Governor-General of India bestowed upon him his title of Bahadoor.

Now, as we admit our love for gossip, it is natural we should like to know exactly who Mirza Ali Ackbar Khan is, and all about him, and we may preface the chat by telling the non-oriental reader that Mirza Ali Ackbar are names, *Khan* and *Bahadoor*, titles. Just as we have our Governors of Provinces and Commanders of the Bath.

Now Ali Ackbar was an only son. Not in general an enviable position; but his father, Mirza Hassan, who was employed for nearly a quarter of a century as Moonshee to the British resident at Bushire (oh! it *is* such a very hot place, Bushire), not only saved considerable property in that political oven, but had the wit to belong to the Native Education Society in Bombay, at whose college, when Mirza Hassan died, Ali Ackbar was placed by his guardian, and as Ali was just then fourteen, the very blossoming time of learning, such forcing and culturing ensued, as brought forth marvellous fruit in due season.

Soon, Ali, treading in his father's steps, became also that very important person at native Durbars, a Persian Moonshee, and was identi-

fied, as all Moonshees are, with the appeals of farmers, the quarrels of chiefs, the remonstrances of the taxed—with yellow paper, reed pens, and ink boxes of Chinese lacquer work.

But ability soon asserted its prerogative of success. When Lord Keane forced his army through the difficult defiles of the Affghan mountains,[1] where the scarped rocks of the varied passes were fringed, as it were, with the armed hordes of the marauding chiefs, and their matchlocks, as a deadly *chevaux de frise*, were pointing at the advancing hosts, Mirza Ali Ackbar was appointed on the general's staff.

Throughout that fearful Caubool campaign, with pen and sword, Ali Ackbar cut his way; in the Punjaub, presents from the Court of Lahore were proffered on every side, and, in acknowledgment of his services, the Moonshee was allowed not only to accept, but to *keep* them too. No common boon that, as the reader will admit, if he has ever been the recipient of a splendid matchlock, a superbly chased sword, or a magnificent pair of shawls, from the hand of an Eastern Potentate, and then, ere he has had time to wonder at their beauty, or rejoice at their value, be called upon to send them, without delay, to the Tosha Khana, or Government

[1] In 1838.

auction, and to become proxy for their acknowledgment, his hands full of pistols and watches, and the smile of friendship on his eyes, while his heart was still yearning for the forbidden Cashmeres! Ali Ackbar, however, kept *his* gifts, and we, for our part, fully appreciate the indulgence. We can see them now, those exquisitely delicate French gray Cashmere shawls, embroidered in silver, that, presented on the banks of the classic Indus, were so soon torn from our grasp, and cast unrelentingly into the Tosha Khana! We can see that gazelle-eyed Arab, his sweeping mane worthy of Mazeppa, henna stained, after the manner of a chieftain's horse, and plaited, moreover, with golden threads, we can see even *him* led away to the—Tosha Khana! The bags of turquois—the emerald signets—the embroidered slippers—the caps, like bowls of gold—all had the like fate—all and each of these tempting hopes were ever rounded by the Tosha Khana!

There were not only gifts, but *orders* bestowed upon the secretary for his energetic service. Lord Ellenborough, as we see, gave him the title of "Bahadoor," in addition to the pistols, which seemed symbolic of his warlike bravery at Meeanee. Lord Gough decorated him with a Ghuzni medal, and Colonel Outram writes that he "had never witnessed services, by any

native of India, more zealous, more able, or more honest" than Ali Ackbar's.

We have our great dramatist's word for the difficulty there is of escaping calumny—Hamlet had learned *that* philosophy of life. We know, too, what the sacred Syrian writers thought of the character of him of whom *all* men speak well! We know what Sindh and its campaign did for us in confusing right and might, good and evil; what public and private disputes arose from it; what huge differences grew out of it; how powerful became expediency, and what an individual amount of suffering tended to impede the triumphant progress of the conqueror's car! It would have been strange had these clouds over the political horizon not, in some way, been attracted by a point so prominent as that of chief Moonshee! More or less, consequently, Ali Ackbar has been distressed, and suffered; but he has now petitioned the Court of Directors, and, when fuller evidence is before the Government of India, we hope that the secretary's many friends will have reason to rejoice that the prayer of his memorial is heard.

Ali Ackbar is married, his wife remaining in Bombay. He has two sons, of the respective ages of twelve and seven. These lads he proposes to have at once sent home for education, his nephew being already a student in the

London College. No one knows better than Ali Ackbar the value of learning, although, as he admits, his own advantages have been gained in a university that no student ever graduated in without success. The school of *experience*, in the East, advances the most entangled and difficult problems, and *he* must have a clear head indeed who works them satisfactorily to the end. The statesman, fresh from European courts, sees perplexity and dismay on every side, and were it not for the aid of the old civilian of half a century's standing, and the clear-headed, clever Moonshee, that is ever at their side, few of the great men in our Indian administration would have gathered the laurels with which posterity adorns their brow.

It was *experience*, daily, hourly experience of native character among *all* ranks, that formed the great and noble characters of Sir Thomas Munro and the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone; and it is *only* at the hands of such men as these —men skilled in the languages and religions of the East, and blessed, moreover, with natures abounding with human sympathies and gentle charity, that the people of India can ever receive justice, as it is they *alone* who can understand the characters of the people they govern, without the necessity of any distorting medium.

Mirza Ali Ackbar has all the strength of

frame and appreciation of the humorous which is peculiar to the Arab. He loves a jest infinitely, and the quaintnesses of Persian literature, the punning character of Oriental epitaphs, the involved witticisms of Arabian anecdotes, find in him an admirable translator. So peculiarly characteristic is he in this matter, that I have sometimes fancied his own wit has out-ran that of his author, and that the good old Persian who indited the verses over the saint's tomb, never had a notion of the double meaning and epigrammatic point given to them by Mirza Ali.

As may be supposed, the secretary is an admirable logician, and few could withstand him in argument; and it is when gathering his forces in this way, that Ali Ackbar's diplomatic talents become most developed to the looker-on.

Often have I seen him, since his arrival in England, awaiting a discussion on his Highness Meer Jafur's interests, in presence of old officers of the Indian service, civil and military, while the debate was to turn on a legal opinion given by the highest authorities in the land. We will suppose the tenor of the argument to have become adverse; the Moonshee sits a little apart, looking grave, respectful, grieved; a momentary pause ensues; Ali Ackbar suddenly moves forward, he presses his turban slightly from his

brow, his eyes flash, and a tide of argument, of close reasoning, the result of clear and intimate acquaintance with every detail of his subject, is poured forth, with a pureness of accent, a correctness of expression, and a careful choice of words, which must have startled many, unaware of the acquirements and abilities of the class so distinguishingly represented by the subject of our sketch; for truly, as Hafiz has it, "his counsels are like Asaf's sage."[1]

On the return of his Highness Meer Jafur Alee to India, it is understood that the secretary does not accompany him, being engaged to remain in England on some affairs of importance. The active, intellectual life of Europe well suits the temperament of our Moonshee, and his constant association with English character, among the officers of the British army in the East, enables him to understand and appreciate it here, while, from his Arabian origin, Ali Ackbar possesses a vigour of constitution which renders him almost insensible to fatigue, whether mental or physical. His observation is keen, and has been the schoolmaster of his judgment, so that his opinions of men and acts arise out of the

[1] Asaf was the minister of King Solomon, and the soundness of his policy is the admiration of all Moslems.

broad principles which his experience has taught him, without any of the narrowing prejudices that might be supposed to influence his character as an Oriental. The theory of expediency in all its shapes, the stimulus of self-interest, he everywhere expects, inasmuch as he has been trained in a school where both were common watchwords. It would require a clever diplomatist indeed to outwit the secretary, Mirza Ali Ackbar, although his courtesy of manner, and yet frank address, would lead to the impression that distrust was impossible to him.

This high polish observable in the manners of Asiatics is eminently remarkable; and I recollect being particularly impressed by it in the person of the ex-chief of Sindh, his Highness Meer Ali Moorad, also now in England. At the time I speak of, this nobleman was chief of Diji, a stronghold near the classic Indus. The chief had a large force assembled there, and we passed over, to interchange presents at his Highness's camp. Had Meer Ali Moorad been the most accomplished gentleman at the most polished court in Europe, had his time passed entirely with the gay, the beautiful, and the learned, amidst poets, painters, and wits, the influence on his manners could not have produced a bearing more perfectly elegant and courteous—what the circum-

stances which followed may have produced I am not prepared to record; and this instance is only given to show, that men in almost desert lands, surrounded by bands of wild soldiery, and apart, as it would seem, from all civilizing means, may yet, perhaps, by reason of climatic influences, possess, to a remarkable degree, that ease, suavity, and grace of manner which we, as a race certainly not distinguished for our courtesies, imagine to result only from a highly-trained intellect and carefully cultivated tastes.

Talking of Moonshees always suggests the peculiarity of epistolary correspondence in the East; of the wonderfully long slips of paper that are covered with curved characters, sprinkled with gold dust, enclosed in an envelope of embroidered satin, then passed into a muslin case carefully tied and sealed, and protected by a huge strip of paper on the side, with a most elaborate direction. I asked Ali Ackbar one day if such letters were ever sent from India to the Meer's party here, and he said, "Oh, yes! sometimes." What a wondrous affair one of these missives must appear to the penny postman! How he must look at it, and turn it over, and get confused ideas of the seven men of the mountain, and Ricket with the Tuft, and the Princess Sheherazade, and Sinbad the Sailor,

with Robinson Crusoe, and a hundred other juvenile studies; and how he must wonder what is the meaning of all those dots, and curves, and crooked little marks before him! and how much *more* surprised he'd be to see the way in which the letter is composed, with all that wonderful hyperbolical preface, and the wee, *wee* bit of fact at the end—a letter on business too; and how he would marvel could he see the great reed pen that formed the delicate characters moving from right to left, and the writing on the knee, with the odd way of smearing Indian ink over the signet, to gain the clear impression, which should stand as "my mark," and the authority of the great man, who, possibly, cannot write himself. Poor benighted postman! what wonders, what agonies, what hopes, pass daily through his hands, and 'tis only such a chance missive as this one, all gold and satin, from far Surat, that leads him to question for a moment, or to slacken his mechanical career.

And here, as we are talking of the pen and its labours, with secretaries and so on, chatting together about knowledge and its influences in various forms, the reader may be amused, as I was, if I end this gossip with a quaint saying, gathered from an unpublished Persian book, which Mirza Ali Ackbar himself was good

enough to translate to me but the other day; it runs thus:—

"If a person knows, and *knows* that he knows,
He'll pass a very happy life;
If a person does not know, and *knows* that he does not know,
He'll pass a very tolerable life;
But if a person does not know, and does *not know* that he does not know,
He'll pass a very miserable life."

An ingenious bit of philosophy enough, and *very* characteristic.

F. LANDELLS, DELT.

SIMPSON & Co. LITH.

VINDIA PURDASI.

(MANGOE SELLER) (FROM LIFE)

CHAPTER X.

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE HESPERIDES.

"See! the knotted clusters shine
In the gaily spangled glade."
Hafiz.

These I firmly believe to have been mangoes; and any one who had ever tasted one of those freshly brought to his Highness Meer Jafur's house day by day, borne in a light bamboo basket on the head of the pretty fruit-seller Vindia Purdasi, will not only be inclined to agree with me, but consider those dragons as much to be envied, who formed the guard of honour to fruit so worthy the banquet of the gods.

Eggs, oranges, and mangoes had best be eaten "privately, alone." And, as we write, we can again fancy we see the luxuriating old Bombay civilian on a hot morning, with his sleeves tucked above his elbows, a tub of water

between his knees, a wicker basket on one side, and a deliciously-flavoured Alphonso mangoe between his lips, with the yellow juice streaming away in all directions, his own face reminding one of the melon-eating boys of Murillo, only, that our hero is somewhat of longer standing in the service. The great stone in the centre of the mangoe is a sad stumbling-block to beginners, but after a while, facial contortions decrease, and ingenuity supplies a remedy.

Much of the property in Western India consists of plantations, or "*topes*," of mangoe trees, and mangoes and tamarinds being considered as the fruits dedicated to the ladies in all marriages, they take up a considerable position in the settlement of dowry.

There are no less than thirty different kinds of mangoes, as puzzling as geraniums are with us, but the Alphonso, the Mazagon, and the Raspberry, are the most esteemed. Mangoe-trees live wonderful lives—quite patriarchal. There is a Mazagon mangoe-tree that was brought from the Portuguese settlement of Goa about three hundred years ago, still living in that "Camberwell" of Bombay, and thriving too, with a right cheerful countenance, notwithstanding the "old party" that he is! One is almost apt to forget the birth of such very long-

lived individuals, but the origin is thus: the stone of a mangoe is planted—good; when the plant springing therefrom is four years old, it is grafted with a fine tree, after which, each succeeding year it bears fruit for twelve years. Beyond this period the produce gradually decreases. If the plant is allowed to attain its full size without grafting, it will not bear fruit until it is twelve years old, but every year the produce is finer, both in the flavour and size of the fruit; still the best mangoe is produced from the graft.

His Highness had some mangoes sent home from Bombay, hanging over the stern of the steamer up the Red Sea, and Gunter made ice thereof, and we ate the same rejoicingly in Upper Gloucester Place, and the flavour was as good as that of the fresh mangoe brought to Girgaum House on the head of little Vindia Purdasi, mangoe-seller and smile-dispenser to the household generally.

In Bombay also, his Highness ate mangoes for dessert; and we had there ices of it too, in change with guava and pine-apple, and very pleasant these Indian fruits are when well *frappé* with American ice, notwithstanding good Bishop Heber's criticisms thereon. Dessert always seems useless, except for the purposes of chit-chat, and especially so in India at a native

dinner, but in the months of June and July, when mangoes are ripe, and twenty for a rupee, they are not to be despised.

Perhaps the reader has never been to a Moslem's dinner, and so can't judge; gladly, therefore, we place our experiences at his service. Some Moslems take three meals a day, after this manner; they breakfast at eight, dine at one, and again sup at eight. Some, two meals suffice; this class breakfast at ten in the morning, and dine at eight. His Highness Meer Jafur, when I was with him in India, took but one meal in the twenty-four hours, and this was served at mid-day.

It is customary to spread a table-cloth on the floor, and when dinner is ready, the head servant goes into the room where the guests are assembled and says, "Bismillah" (In the name of God); this is repeated as a grace. The company then bathe their hands, and, sitting round the table, the dinner is served (the Moslems use silver plates, the Hindoos leaves). Several kinds of bread are then brought, leavened and unleavened, some plain, some prepared with butter, almonds, and so on. The dinner is varied: there is Pillau-kooshka, or rice plain boiled with a little butter; Sālna (curry); Nahādi (spiced meat); a great variety of acid and sweet confectionary; "Burfee," from Surat,

made of milk and flour; "Hulwa," very like the Turkish Rah-huk-la-koom, from Muscat; and then, sherbets, lemon, orange, rose, &c., &c., impossible to describe.[1] Then follows another grace, and the hands are again washed. The table-napkins are so pretty! the rich embroidery with the gold and silver fringes, and the coloured silks—it's like the phylacterie of a high priest of the temple of Solomon; and yet it all washes, just as if it were no better than ordinary diaper. Ah! that Indian washing is a great mystery—colours never run there; from a Cashmere shawl to a gold-embroidered table-napkin everything washes and is refreshed; the river and its stones being its sole appliances.

These dinners of great men, however, are more savoury than wholesome we suspect, and "the preserved bamboo" holds a sort of rod in pickle for many a poor dyspeptic; but then there is the family physician to set all right again; and as dear old Budr-oo-deen, the Esculapius of his Highness Meer Jafur Alee, was, as I have said, an especial friend and favourite of

[1] Soup and fish are seldom eaten. The Moslems of India also avoid what Dr. Kitchener calls—

"That surly elf,
Digesting all things but itself."

But the Turks and Persians always finish dinner with cream cheese.

mine, I should like to present him in a sort of Daguerreotype sketch, taken as I saw him when we were together living in the society of his Highness, at our old house in the Girgaum Woods.

THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN,

was a small man, very; yet exceedingly pompous withal, as small men generally are in all countries; his costume consisted of a white calico body coat, a huge cotton turban, and a narrow spotted muslin scarf that he wore round his neck, the ends depending to the turned-up toes of his green morocco slippers, while on his little finger was an enormous emerald signet, engraven with his name and titles in Arabic characters. Had the gem been a solid unflawed emerald, it would have been fit to be promoted as a crown jewel, or would doubtless have been bought up fresh from the mine for the great peacock throne of the Delhi sovereigns; but "general effect" being the object cared for in the East, this decoration of the worthy Hakeem's was like most such—a thin plating, as it were, of gem on a glittering foundation of very sufficient tin, but it answered the purpose, and looked of wondrous brightness whenever the worthy man stroked his beard, and of course added very much to the influence of his "Bismillahs"

on all around; and all around both loved and reverenced our Hakeem beyond description; to them, his wisdom, his learning, his grace, his courage stood unrivalled, and whether his noble employer was considered, the ladies of the Hareem, the Jemidar or butler, down to the grooms, and even the little barber, with his cunning eyes, compact bundle, and parti-coloured jacket, in the heart of all and each rested that degree of awe, which the reputation for surpassing knowledge is sure to awaken.

We have imagined the costume of Budr-oo-deen, but not his eyes, and they indeed seemed to form the idiosyncrasy of the man. Never were seen such eyes. They were gray in colour, consequently lighter than his complexion—a fact which gave them a strangely glassy and glaring appearance; they seemed, moreover, to have no speculation in them, and they rolled in their sockets with so wonderful an organic mechanism, that 'twas little marvel the people believed he could look into futurity, for one could easily fancy he could look into *anything* with eyes that seemed to make an entire revolution in their orbits every time he spoke; this singular action forming, as it were, with the Hakeem Budr-oo-deen, what a capital letter does in writing—the sign of the commencement of a fresh sentence.

As a teller of stories (not as a story-teller, for I believe, except when he spoke of the miracles of Mahomed, his veracity was unimpeachable), Budr-oo-deen was a perfect Feramorz, and, after the evening meal, when the rich Persian carpet was spread in the moonlight that streamed through the plumed heads of the tall palm trees into the perfumed garden, shouts of laughter and exclamations of the most intense delight would ring from the circle of which Budr-oo-deen was the centre, and Kaliuns grew cold, and the sherbet was untasted, while the skilful *raconteur* fascinated his audience with impromptu tales, of kings who turned religious mendicants, wandering over the earth seeking food and adventures where they might be found, and of those little hareem *fracas*, so common where some hundred and fifty ladies are each determined to support her own individual right! Far into the night did these merry mimicries extend, and the imaginative powers of the entertaining Hakeem seemed never to desert him.

One of the chief merits of Oriental fiction consists in its general absence of all plot, so that the narrative may be continued at any time, or renewed at any interval, a quaint conceit or an absurd adventure fitting one niche in the compartment of a story as well as another.

The audience, too, lose little in these cases; the *raconteur* continues hour after hour with unbated breath, and the listeners come and go, as their occupations may require; one man strolls away to refill his Kaliun, another to bathe his head, a groom to feed his horse, yet, on the return of each, nothing seems to have been missed, for the story proceeds with equal interest, whether at the first, second, or third part thereof, thus bearing no resemblance to a modern novel.

And then the riding of our Hakeem! in sooth he was a very Roostum. In all the Guicwar's cavalry, I question if a rider of them all, regular or irregular, could have matched him, by many a bound, and prance, and curvet. There was a gray, large-boned colt, a wild, unbroken creature, fresh from the Arab stables, with a wicked eye, a heavy shoulder, an unformed mouth, and a back-lying ear; the Hakeem thought these things rather in the creature's favour, as they promised necessity for greater skill in the equestrian, and he rejoiced thereat in grave and solemn triumph. So soon as the sun was shaded by the feathery palms, the iron-gray came forth, held by two grooms, each of whom had long been satisfied, according to the eastern belief in transmigration, that the soul of one of the most distinguished favourites of Siva

(the destroyer) was incarcerated, and having its wicked will, in this same pleasant steed. So a sharp Mahratta bit was placed in his mouth—a contrivance much resembling the barrel of a musical box; his head was tied almost to his knees with a standing martingale of crimson rope, strong enough to have pulled the alarum bell at the market-place at Naples, and stirrups dangled from the well-quilted demi-pique saddle, much like the sole of a shoe set round with spikes.

After much delay, during which the iron-gray spurred his sides and cut his mouth, as the smallest excitement inevitably caused him to do, thereby rendering him momentarily more vindictive, our Hakeem would come forth, and with him all the servants of the family, filled with wonder and admiration, anticipatory of the coming show. And then our friend would mount, and sit for a moment in dead calmness, not as if he were about not to enjoy healthful and vigorous exercise, but to do a deed of desperate purpose; his eyes the while rolling, as only Budr-oo-deen's can roll, and then, with a dash of the stirrups against the sides of poor Bucephalus, away flew horse and rider, like an arrow from a bow. In a second the creature was almost pulled upon his haunches by the cruel Mahratta bit, and then came the grand

sçena of the piece. By right application of the hand and heel, the animal bounded, leaped, and turned, on a space incredibly small, and then again rushed madly forward, scattering the dust about him, until rider and steed were both obscured.

Then the Hakeem would turn the iron-gray, at a hand-gallop, round every palm tree in the plantation, avoiding water vessels and Kaliuns with wondrous dexterity, much as one has seen accomplished waltzers practise with selected chairs as the centre of their circles. And then the lookers-on would cry "Shah bash!" (well done), and the water-carrier's little bullock, who had been long intently looking on, would grow excited too, and, slipping off the half-filled water-bags, canter away himself into the woods, doing infinite mischief, and causing much shrieking from the fair Parsee women, bearing their well-balanced water vessels from the neighbouring Koor (open well).

After an hour so passed, our Hakeem would brink back his panting steed and receive the unqualified expressions of admiration from the lookers-on. Day by day would he repeat the exercise, never, by any chance, going beyond the limits of the shrubbery and grounds, or mounting any steed but that wicked iron-gray! In due time the animal had his mane dyed a brilliant crimson, to match his saddle, by means

of henna, a rule for the horses of all great men, and his mane was plaited with red silk and white shells, and a blue thread was tied round his throat, to keep off the evil eye, equivalent to the horse-shoe on an English stable door, to ensure the preference of witches for broomsticks over hunters for their moonlight rides; *en bref*, the iron-gray was considered trained. After which he was led about for exercise with the general stud, the grooms, however, as the result of their own private opinions, always leading him in couples, each bearing a stout bamboo.

But, if the reputation of the family physician stood high as a horseman, how infinitely higher was his celebrity as an astrologer! By this, indeed, was he sovereign lord of all, for nothing in the household could be done with comfort, unless Budr-oo-deen declared the hour auspicious. I do not think a servant in the house would have had his hair cut or his moustachios trimmed without consulting the Hakeem; if a rich curry disagreed with a luckless epicure, everybody knew he had eaten it at an unlucky hour; if a horse fell lame, it was evident to all that the Hakeem had not been consulted when the Nalbund (farrier) shod him; and when it was necessary for his noble friend to pay a visit of ceremony, or one connected materially with his interests, the Hakeem was invisible for hours, pondering over his horoscope; and I have been

frequently diverted by watching the horses champing their bits, the party in full dress, and all patiently waiting till the Hakeem was pleased suddenly to announce the arrival of the auspicious moment, when a hurried rush was made to the carriage door, the coachmen and grooms mounted with a simultaneous movement, the people vigorously cheered, and the *cortège* dashed forth to fulfil the prognostications attending the lucky hour! And, strangely enough, there never appeared any dissatisfaction in the matter, all that happened was considered right, and "whatever is, is best," was ever the contented feeling after a particularly serious attention to the effects of the Hakeem's astrological inquiries.[1]

Budr-oo-deen was a good Mahomedan, too, and studied the Koran daily, and prayed five times a day, with all the varied attitudes and genuflexions proper to be observed, and he knew all the miracles of the Koran by heart, and a thousand others, of the ridiculous kind, that Moslem traditions have appended to the acts of Mahomed, quite unworthy, as they are, of the character of that earnest and clever man. And the Hakeem knew some verses of the Koran by rote, and repeated them at times with great unction,

[1] It must be understood that his Highness did not, by any means, yield to this credulity of his household.

stroking his beard the while, and wagging his head from side to side, in a fashion worthy the Moollah of the Jumma Musjid (Friday Mosque) himself; but if he could not scribble margins full of little Persian annotations, as his friend the Moonshee did all day in the back verandah, nor write sonnets descriptive of the houris and fountains of Paradise, as an idle young poet did, who lounged about the house, and won the sobriquet of Hafiz, yet still, setting the Moonshee on one side, the Hakeem certainly was a miracle of religious learning. He earnestly desired to go to Mecca, not for anything to be seen or learnt there, but with a vague idea it was a proper thing to do.

He was remarkable for not having a particle of observation; and although, as forming part of his Highness Meer Jafur's suite on his visit to England in 1844, Budr-oo-deen had absolutely been in London, he knew little enough of Frangistan, for though it was in the dog-days, and in a peculiarly hot summer, he remained with closed shutters during the four-and-twenty hours, smoking a Kaliun on a Persian prayer carpet, and rolling his eyes with much apparent agony at a little floating wick in a tumbler of oil; breathing, as he, poor exile! thought, something of the atmosphere of Hindostan. Poor man! no one who has never enjoyed the freedom of the East, of a life passed in the open air,

surrounded by the glad sunshine, which casts on all around it that unimaginable glory which must be seen to be understood;—no one who has never felt the exquisite freshness of the morning air in the tropics, nor gazed on the bright "star galaxies" of the "deep blue noon of night"—who has never experienced the delicious effects of the climate of the East in conferring physical enjoyment, and lulling all care to rest—who has never gazed on faces animated with the intense interest produced by Eastern story, or the eagerness of social intercourse—can judge of what the Asiatic must feel in our cold land, caged in an apartment scarcely large enough, as he feels, for a bath-room, pressed on by an atmosphere of clouds, chilled into torpor by the climate, and receiving the ideas of commonplace existence, in exchange for his poetic dreams and traditionary story, which, fantastic as they often are, yet are filled with sunshine and splendour, with the glitter of spears and minarets, with sparkling fountains, with Houris brighter than the gems of Samarchand!

It was little marvel, then, that poor old Budr-oo-deen preferred to revel in his dreams of distant India, rather than to gaze forth on smoky London, or that the Hakeem's eyes rolled with some pleasure, inexpressive as they are, when

he found himself once more seated beneath the feathery palms of his beloved land.

The family physician, as we have seen, was a man of rare accomplishment, but, strange to say, of the healing art he was profoundly ignorant. He divided all diseases into "hot and cold." Remedies he never attempted, and the sufferers either wore out the disease with patience, or used the simplest aids that pleased them; the Hakeem merely advising them of the most auspicious hours for their adoption. Thus a man with a violent headache would smear his forehead with lime and water, which, tightening as it dried, relieved the pain; or he would tie a blue thread round each wrist for rheumatism, or bind a fresh plantain leaf on the head for fever; he would, if attacked by lumbago or cholera, sear himself with a hot iron, as a farrier would operate on a horse, or perhaps he would patiently excavate an offending tooth with a rusty nail—it was all quite immaterial to the family physician. He wished them better, gave them lucky hours, rolled his eyes most wonderfully, but never attempted to bring his knowledge of *materia medica*, or his skill as a surgeon-dentist to bear upon the facts.

The monsoon had set in, and it was wet and cold, and some native friends suffered severely from rheumatism. Budr-oo-deen solemnly an-

nounced that the sufferings had arisen from eating Guava ices, and the ice confectioner was half ruined in consequence, for he depended on the Mahomedan gentry of Bombay for consuming his consignment of ice before the arrival of the next American ship. On one occasion, I recollect, a boy in my service was taken alarmingly ill, by reason of having eaten some six pounds of Muscat dates, landed from an Arab boat rather the worse for their voyage, and in much anxiety I appealed to Budr-oo-deen for remedies. His face of wonder I shall long remember. I mentioned half-a-dozen drugs in vain. The old man smiled, salaamed, and rolled his eyes; the boy writhed and screamed with agony.

"Had he any opium?" I asked, at last.

"Oh, yes! Affeem in plenty."

"Could the family physician weigh or measure it in solution?"

"By the beard of the Prophet he could not."

So, as a matter of mere chance we gave the lad a great pill of opium, and he recovered to fill the people with gratitude and wonder at the skill of the family physician.

The East is a favoured land. We see worked out among its people and in its scenes the great truth of all creation, that happiness and physical enjoyment is the rule, suffering and pain the casual exception. In the East the effect of cli-

mate itself is to produce a quiet consciousness of physical enjoyment, and to lull the mind to ease with all about it, in a manner extremely agreeable. Trifling yet distressing ailments, such as are in the northern climates the effect of cold acting on the skin and system, are unknown. The remedy of opium with hot baths is at everybody's disposal, with spices in abundance, and oils of the finest quality. The fevers caused by the decay of vegetable matter seldom affect the natives of the country very materially, unless after wantonly exposing themselves to such effluvia, or sleeping on the damp ground; while this very decay becomes the cause of a loveliness in the vegetation of the tropics that no other land can rival, and brings forth abundantly the plants and fruits required for the food, and shelter, and comfort of man.

Cholera, indeed, devastates towns and cities, and fills with terror the heart of the observer; but the population of the East is a very abundant population, and death is its inevitable necessity. Life, while it last, is one of enjoyment, and its extinction, even by means of the scourge of the East, as it is called, is brief in its pains, and more to be desired, perhaps, than an old age of protracted suffering; soft air, pure water, simple plants, spices, and earths, are everywhere abundantly supplied as remedies for the

trifling sufferings of the people; while a beneficent climate, a natural system of life, and a vegetable diet, preserve them from many of the physical sufferings, known in our colder and more artificial land. As the use and knowledge of their simple remedies are traditional, and no inflammatory symptoms ever follow the most extraordinary surgical practice, the general practitioner would enjoy a sinecure; and of Budr-oo-deen, I have little doubt that his charming romances, his exciting horsemanship, his astrological predictions, and his kindly temper, served, in more good ways than even they believed, the credulous and admiring friends of our "Family Physician."

CHAPTER XI.

MAIDA HILL.

"Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,
All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude."

The cabman asks just two shillings more than his fare, and his Highness's servant, Mahomed Shah, is good enough to settle the matter for us. There is quite a collection of handsome carriages and dirty hack vehicles about, but the little boys have left off waiting at the curb-stones for new arrivals; green, and gold, and Cashmere, having quite wearied their young eyes.

Warwick Road West promises well, but at present brick and mortar occupy too much of the roadstead, and the coachman of his Highness the ex-chief of Khyrpore, Meer Ali Moorad, does not find it easy to turn his handsome bays on the sort of promontory which separates the plateau on which Meer Jafur's house stands, from

the wide extent of "desirable building ground," which stretches far away towards smoky London.

As we enter the door two persons are passing out, and we stop to shake hands. One, all green and gold, the A.D.C. of the King of Oude, leaves a perfume on the air which reminds us at once of high mass at St. Peter's, with its censers and frankincense; and the other, in a black dress and dark glazed cotton head-dress, is the Parsee Seit, or merchant, Mr. Heerjeebhoy Rustomjee,[1] who is always so courteous, and full of information about his people. Just now his fine countenance is a little excited, for some altercation has taken place between himself and "the Oude people." As usual, a strong aroma of "curry stuff," garlic in the ascendant, is making its way from his Highness's kitchen, where the cook is preparing dinner for Mahomed Shah, Noor Mahomed, Ryan, and Mirza Meeran; while *Hill*, the English servant, looking almost like a gentleman, has just come in with *Punch*, the *Family Herald*, and *Reynolds's Miscellany*—diet to suit all tastes.

His Highness Meer Jafur Alee receives us with his usual courtesy and kindness, and Mirza Ali Ackbar looks excited, his eye bright, his brain hard at work—both are going out to the Temple as usual; but Meer Mahomed Ali, the nephew

[1] The "jee" in Parsee names is equivalent to our "Esquire."

of Ali Ackbar, remains at home; so we sit down, and chat, and turn over some Persian books. Here is one, written only lately at Tehrān; very droll it is, that the Persians so delight in ridiculing the Hindoos, and that the Hindoos so vivaciously return the compliment. Here is a story to the point: A Hindoo king began to distrust everybody, and so he convinced himself that fish only were faithful. The king, therefore, turned all his wealth into blocks of gold, and every year dropt them into the sea, that his treasury might be safe, as "fishes only were faithful."

Then came the story of King Solomon and the sea monster, a legend altogether Persian. This king was known to be most benevolent, and he laid up stores to feed all creatures that were in want, and none died for lack of food; and Solomon was said to have power over fish, over men, over animals, and over genii. One day the king was walking alone upon the sands, and a great monster raised its head from the sea, and asked for food. The king gave orders that the creature should be satisfied, but it ate, and ate, and devoured all the stores laid up, and roared for more! Then, when it came not, the creature rebuked the king, saying, Oh, man! who art thou to have power over all created nature, birds, beasts, men, and genii, and cannot

feed one fish! God has fed me day by day, and I have never wanted; there is none all-powerful but Allah! And the fish was seen no more.

Then came a story about a tree of emerald, planted on a bank of rubies, which, during the reign of Mahmoud of Ghuzni, blossomed with gold Mohurs,[1] but when the king died the tree disappeared; to this the historian modestly adds, "this is said of a truth, but God is great, and who can tell?"

This Persian book that we were laughing over had the oddest drawings in it possible. They were worse than anything a child of ten years old, in these Marlborough House days, would put its hand to; but we found that they described talismans, and that the Persian text illustrated their virtues.

Mirza Ali Ackbar returned while we were still engaged with the volume, and he said, "Now, I will tell you a droll thing that I *know* happened to two English officers when I was with Lord Keane's force. We were encamped, and did not know what to do to amuse ourselves. It was said that some twenty miles off there was a village, and near the village a well, and that everybody who drank of the water of that well became fools, and the village was full of foolish people. So the two young men laughed,

[1] A coin equal in value to the French Napoleon.

and they said it would be something to do, and they would go and see this village. In the morning 'tope ke braba' (dawn, or gun-fire), they set out on horseback for the foolish village, but it grew hot before they neared it, so, seeing a Bhowree (Moslem well, with steps that descend to the water), they said, 'Let us go down, and drink some water, and then go on;' and they did so, and felt much refreshed. But, as they came up the steps, one said to the other, 'We ought to have brought the servants, perhaps we may not get anything to eat here, and who knows?—they are a wild set, these Affghans, and we are unarmed; really, I think, it is a very dangerous joke.' They, therefore, agreed to return to camp; but had no sooner arrived there, than one said, looking at the other, 'We went all that way, and bore the heat, and nothing molested us, and still we have come back, and seen nothing; truly there is reason in the saying, that those who drink at that well become fools!'"

Somehow or other, we talked of marriage, and I asked how, as a general rule, people got on, who had four wives! Mirza Ali assured me that few Mahomedans, unless they were great men, or influenced by state reasons, had more than one; but, he added, we say, if a man has one wife, he may not like her; if two, the ladies invariably quarrel; but if the husband marries a

third, there is perfect happiness, because the wives so much fear that he will take a fourth. The Shah of Persia has five hundred wives, and that establishment is marked by the amiable tone of its internal arrangements, while, as illustrative of the same system in a different class of society, Aga Khan, the priest of the Khojas in Bombay, has four wives, all living in a small house, where the ladies have but one apartment between them, and yet domestic tranquillity finds to it no parallel.

Divorces are rendered as difficult as possible by Moslems, and after this manner: when a man marries he settles a dowry on his wife, and if he desires to give her a writing of divorce he must pay this dowry, otherwise it is regarded as nominal. Now, the object of all parents is, to render divorce impossible, by reason of the difficulty the husband would have to perform in detail his treaty. It is usual in Persia to fix the dowry at two hundred and fifty rupees, but in India, it sometimes rises to fifty thousand, or a lac. Then come male and female slaves, and sometimes is added, ten maunds[1] of mosquito oil! Now, any one who has ever seen that very slight and remarkably active little insect, the mosquito of India, will at once feel how difficult it must be for a querulous husband to fulfil this point

[1] A Bombay maund is forty pounds.

of the treaty, and so obtain the required emancipation from the wife of his bosom, when considered frail or offending! A Mahomedan lady's property on marriage remains her own, nor can a Moslem, if of the "Shere" sect, marry a second wife, unless he can declare before the priest, that he has obtained the consent of the first.

Some doubters in female devotion, where lords and masters are concerned, may fancy that a tolerably strong guard of "detectives" may be required, to watch over five hundred ladies, the vowed thralls of an Oriental Bluebeard. This is a delusion; the more, the safer, as well as merrier. The ladies look after each other, and the least backsliding is instantly denounced.

The Mahomedan marriage ceremony does not materially differ from our own, except in the privacy of position afforded the lady. The priest sits in front of a door, and the intended bridegroom near him; the lady is then placed behind the door, and the priest inquires if she will have this man, &c. It is true the bride elect cannot answer, "Ay, my lord, and fifty such," for the plurality of helpmates is reserved as a privilege for the woer, not the won, yet the matter passes off with sweetmeats and fireworks, presents and dances, and, on the whole, Moslem marriages are quite as happy as any other.

This, however, Mirza Ali Ackbar accounts for by saying, that husbands are never with their wives for more than eight hours out of twenty-four.

All the servants of his Highness have become attached to England, and they enjoy a freedom from the attacks of fever, so common in their own land, which itself puts them in good humour with our damp but wholesome climate. One or two of them have attained a very respectable knowledge of the English language, and find great amusement at theatres and places of ordinary entertainment. One of the most interesting points to be remarked in Moslem establishments is, the admirable feeling that exists between masters and servants; the protected freedom allowed to the domestics, and their devotion and gratitude to their employers. His Highness Meer Jafur's servants go and come as they please; yet this indulgence is never abused. A servant never leaves home while any possible cause can arise for his services, and their devotion to his Highness's person is so great, that should the slightest indisposition afflict him, the servants not only never absent themselves, but can scarcely be persuaded to give their tour of watchfulness to another.

Meer Jafur was, however, ever noted for consideration and benevolence. His Highness, by

birth, is a Syud,[1] and, in opinion, a liberal Soonee. He is now thirty-eight years of age, though perhaps his stature and general largeness of figure give him the appearance of being rather older. His Highness's habits are most temperate, and his liberality princely. In India he never failed to repeat the *Khums*, or five daily prayers, commanded by his religion, and he has never availed himself of the Prophet's permission for polygamy.

Since the death of the Begum Bukhteya-ol-Nessa, the mother of his children, Meer Jafur has married the daughter of the Cazi of Ahmedabad, and only a month after this marriage, his Highness's affairs compelled his return to England. His present residence among us has extended over a period of three years—years marked by unceasing anxiety; yet, both in public and in private life, his Highness has gained the good opinion, the high respect, and the warm friendship, of all with whom he has been associated, and among these are the fairest, the wisest, the

[1] A Syud is a lineal descendant from the Prophet, not necessarily a priest, however, though he can adopt that profession when he pleases. All Arabia, Turkey, and most of the Affghans are Soonees. A small portion of Affghans and all Persians are Sheres. The one sect believe, that the succession is by inheritance, and ought to be given to Ali, as the son-in-law of the Prophet. The others believe the succession is given to the descendants of the companions of Mahomed.

highest-born of our most distinguished circles. He has gained considerable knowledge of the English language, and speaks it easily and correctly; but, while his health has been improved, and his time (when not absorbed by the difficulties of his position) agreeably passed, the heart of the Moslem noble yearns for his land and people; and, more than all this, he sighs for the bright glances and sweet smiles of the young daughters, who, doubtless, day by day, look forth on the blue waters of the Tapti, and exclaim, in words like those of one who also waited for the familiar voice of the absent and beloved, "Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?"[1]

Before the close of this present year, 1273 of the Hegira, his Highness Meer Jafur Alee Khan will be, probably, once again beneath the palm trees of his native land. The tropic sunshine will, once more, rest upon his brow, the prayerful call of the Muezzin fall upon his ear. Time will pass, and the sounds of London streets, the glare of London *soirées*, the excitement of London parliaments—of public meetings—of legal quibbles—of interested adventurers, who sought to gain a fortune from the Moslem noble's anxieties and inexperience, will be remembered by him but as an uneasy daydream.

[1] Judges, v, 28.

To bless his family and the poor, to cultivate the regard of good men, and to return to his duties, as a Moslem and a Syud, will soon become, as they once were, the sole objects of his Highness Meer Jafur Alee's life, and while, in a considerable degree, success has at length crowned the object of his residence among us, the Meer will not leave our shores without carrying with him the kindliest good wishes of all who have had occasion to remark the high-bred courtesy and winning condescensions of this most amiable "Moslem noble;" while, though we cannot quite compare this gossip on his land and people, to

"Orient pearls at random strung,"

and though we must plead guilty to having had "all the talk to ourselves," yet our chat has not, we trust, been quite devoid of interest, neither fatiguing, beyond all reasonable prospect of his recovery, to our kind companion, and most agreeable, (because, we trust, *uncritical*) fellow-traveller—the reader.

THE END.

F. SHOBERL, PRINTER, 51, RUPERT STREET.

ERRATA.

Page 52, line 12, *for* Hookaks, *read* Hookahs,

Page 54, line 13, *for* per *read* par

Page 130, last line *for* Nyx *read* Nynx

Page 155, lines 17 and 18, *for* of chief Mooonshee!

read of the chief Moonshee!

Page 173, line 23, *for* brink *read* bring

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