tions, the stages[g] and gradations of exaltation, till he arrives at the ineffable enjoyment of beholding and contemplating God. If teachers have not arrived at this consummation of perfection themselves, it is obvious that to seek knowledge or happiness from them is a waste of time; and the devoted disciple will either terminate his labours in assuming the same character of imposture that he has found in his instructor[h], or he will consider all Soofees alike, and condemn this whole sect of philosophers[i]. It often happens, that sensible and well-informed men follow a master who, though able, has not arrived at that virtue and sanctity which constitute perfection: his disciples conceiving that none are better or more holy than their teacher and themselves, and yet disappointed at not reaching that

[g] We are informed by Ferishta, an Indian Mahomedan author of celebrity, that the degrees of the saints among these religious men are four, which he donominates, *sogrâ*, "the least;" *wâsittâh*, "the middle or great;" *kubrâ*, "the greater;" and *uzmâh*, "the greatest." Every Soofee should attain *diâtte*, "the beginning;" *wâsittâh*, "the middle;" and *nehâitte*, "the end." The holy men of these descriptions in this world are never less than three hundred and fifty-six persons, who are always employed in aiding others and curing souls. The principal Soofees believe that three hundred of this number are *abtâl*, "erroneous or false;" forty *abdâl*, "pious men;" seven *asiâh*, "running waters;" five *âutâd*, "props;" three *kutb*, "poles;" and one *kutb-ool-âctâb*, or "the pole of poles." When any one of these persons dies he is succeeded by another of the rank below him, and so on in regular succession: for instance, if the pole of poles dies, one of the poles fills his place, and so on, till one of the people is brought into the rank of *abtâl*, or "erroneous." Among the three hundred and fifty-six persons nine only are deemed qualified to delegate or invest others with authority as teachers; these nine consist of the *kutb-ool-âctâb*, "the pole of poles;" the three *kutbs* or "poles;" and five *âutâd* or "props;" and these nine alone can be deemed perfect teachers.

[h] Shaikh is the word generally applied to the principal teachers among the Soofees, and is always used by this author to describe them.

[i] Philosoof, which signifies a philosopher, is a word in common use in Persia. It was formerly, they state, applied to Plato and others, who are now known under the more dignified name of Hookâmâh, "or men of science." Impostors in philosophy appear in the East to have degraded the term of *philosoof*, which in the idiom of the present day signifies a master in deceit and art.

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state of enjoyment which they expected to arrive at, seek relief from the reproaches of their own mind in scepticism. They doubt, on the ground of their personal experience, all they have heard or read, and believe that the accounts of the holy men who have in this world attained a state of beatitude are only a string of fables. This our author remarks is a dangerous error; and I must therefore repeat, that those who seek truth should be most careful to commence with prudence and moderation, lest they be lost in the mazes I have described; and, from meeting with evils of their own creation, should give way to disappointment and grief; and, by expelling from their minds that ardent fervour which belongs to true zeal, should disqualify themselves for the most glorious of all human pursuits."

The progress of Soofeeism has of late been very rapid in Persia. Its tenets were mixed with those of the Sheahs, when the latter was established as the national faith by the first Seffavean king; and some monarchs of that race gloried in professing tenets which they inherited from their pious ancestor Shaikh Hyder [k], one of the most celebrated Soofee teachers in Persia. The orthodox hierarchy of Persia have from the first made an open and violent war on this sect; and though they have often failed to rouse the bigotry of the sovereign in their defence, they have always succeeded in convincing him that the established religion was necessary to the support of the state, and that nothing could be more dangerous than the progress of infidelity, which, by unsettling men's minds, was calculated to throw them into doubt and ferment. The principal Soofee teachers, they admitted, might act from different motives: some might be

[k] Kempfer mentions a book called the Kârâ-jild, or "black volume," which the Seffavean monarchs inherited from their pious ancestors. This mysterious legacy was not to be opened till the kingdom was in imminent danger of ruin; and it was supposed to contain counsel and prophecies that would be useful in this extremity. I have never met with an account of it in any Persian author.

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the dupes of their own imagination, while others sought only to delude their followers: but the tenets and rhapsodies of all tended to the same point; they desired first to abolish the forms of religion, that they might with more ease destroy the substance; in their own contemplation they allowed no name, not even that of Mahomed, to come between them and their God; but with the very breath that uttered this sentence they desired to come between God and all other men. They endeavoured to destroy names to which men gave reverence, with no other object but that of substituting their own: for their first and fundamental tenet inculcated, that the profane or erring could not advance a step without a spiritual guide, and that their progress in the true path would be exactly in proportion to their confidence in their holy instructor. What was this but a desire to become the idols[1] of men's worship: it could be of little consequence to a country which their bigotry or their ambition had thrown into confusion, whether they were desirous of a heavenly or an earthly crown; whether they pulled down the fabric from the mere wish of destroying what they deemed bad, or with the object of building out of its ruins something which in their imagination appeared more beautiful. If they did not seek to excite commotion and rebellion, their doctrines threw the community into a state the most favorable for those who had such designs: and the history of Persia and of neighbouring nations abounded with examples of their successful efforts to obtain temporal power, through their spiritual character. Hussun Subah and his descendants were a race of Soofees[m]; and the implicit obedience their devoted fol-

[1] The Moorteza Shahee, a sect of Soofees, make an image of their teacher in clay, which the disciple keeps, to prevent him from wandering, and to bring him, through continual contemplation, to complete identity with his guide or saint.—*Persian MS.*

[m] Hussun Subah is said to have belonged to the Soofee sect of Bâtteneâh. The history of this chief and his descendants has been given, Vol. I. p. 241.

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lowers had given to those mountain chiefs had for two centuries filled Persia with murders, and had made the proudest monarchs of that country and neighbouring empires tremble at their mysterious power. The history of Bayezeed, the founder of the Soofee sect of Rosheneâh [n], or "the enlightened," was not essentially different from that of Hussun Subah: and Bayezeed had established amid the mountains of Affghanistan a temporal power upon the authority of his spiritual character, which enabled him and his successors to disturb the tranquillity of the Empire of Delhi, when, under the celebrated Ackbar, it had reached the very zenith of its power.

There was enough of truth in these arguments to awaken the suspicion of the temporal rulers of Persia; and recent events were calculated to render the government active in their efforts to suppress a heresy of so alarming a character. The Seffavean kings had been taught, by a recollection of their own origin, to be jealous of any of their subjects who appeared disposed to have recourse to the same means: but the Soofees were never actively persecuted, until the last monarch of that race, Shah Sultan Houssein [o], gave himself up to the priests of the orthodox religion, and allowed them to exercise every severity towards all who departed from the established worship.

The attempt of Nâdir Shah [p] to alter the Sheah faith, and to adopt the Soonee as the national religion of Persia, and the discussion of sacred topics which that monarch in the latter years of his reign invited for the purpose, as he professed, of framing a new faith, had no doubt a serious effect in diminishing the influence of the Mahomedan religion on the minds of his subjects. Kerreem Khan, though reputed a true believer and an observer of the forms of

[n] For the history of this sect, see papers of the late Mr. Leyden, Asiatic Researches, Vol. XI.

[o] See Vol. I. page 400.

[p] See Vol. II. page 16.

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worship, was neither rigid himself, nor intolerant of others. During his reign a celebrated Soofee teacher named Meer Maassoom Ali Shah [q], came from India to Shiraz, where his followers soon amounted to more than thirty thousand. The orthodox priests took alarm, and prevailed on the mild Kerreem to banish the saint from his capital, but his reputation was increased by the act of power which proclaimed him dangerous. After Kerreem Khan's death, Meer Maassoom, who resided in a small village near Isfahan, deputed his first disciple, Fyâz Ali [r], to teach in that city.

[q] Meer Maassoom is called a disciple of Syud Ali Rezâ, a native of the Deckan.

[r] The author of the life of some among the principal modern Soofee teachers of Persia states, that Fyâz Ali was of the sect of *Noor-Buksheeâh*, or "the Enlightened," who trace their origin to Maroof of Kirkee; and that he aspired to be the teacher of his sect, till Meer Maassoom arrived from India, when he instantly bowed to his superior in knowledge, and was content to become his first disciple. This writer has given us a statement of seventeen tenets openly professed by this sect. They were as follows:

1st. To adore *nothing* and *no person* but God.

2d. To attend to the ordinances of the Prophet and the twelve Imâms.

3d. To be always pure by ablution, and to deprecate the wrath of God.

4th. To observe the regular periods of prayer.

5th. To attend to the five lessons decreed to be observed after particular prayers.

6th. To use the *tusbee* or "string of beads," constantly saying, "O God, thou art the true and only God; thou alone art pure; I am an unworthy sinner; but thou art the Forgiver of sinners."

8th. To remember the constant necessity of a moorshed or teacher, to give strength to devotion, and aid in the dark and difficult path.

9th. To welcome every grief and misfortune as a blessing.

10th. To pain neither oneself nor others.

11th. To trace every morning and evening with the forefinger of the right hand on the forehead the name of the true God, of the Prophet and the twelve Imâms; and on the first of every month, on seeing the new moon, to trace the same sacred words on the breast.

12th. To eat what is lawful, and clothe oneself in clean robes; as such outward habits aid inward purity.

13th. To revere parents with a reverence like unto devotion.

14th. To preserve the mysteries of the sect a profound secret.

15th. To let the heart be always with God, wherever the body may be.

16th. To be kind to all men, to pain none, and to desire to pain none.

17th.

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That holy person soon died, and was succeeded in his office by his son, Noor Ali Shah; who, though young in years, was, to use the phrase of his historian, "old in piety." The number and rank of Meer Maassoom's followers excited alarm in the priests of Isfahan, who transmitted so exaggerated an account of the vile heresies [s] of the Soofees to Ali Moorâd Khan, and recommended him so strongly to support the faith, by punishing those whose opinions were alike hostile to true religion and good government, that the monarch, the moment he received their representation, sent orders to cut off the noses and ears of some among the most zealous of the obnoxious sect; and, as a further disgrace, to shave the beards of all who had adopted their opinions. The ignorant soldiers intrusted with the execution of this mandate, were not very capable of discriminating between true believers and infidels: and we are assured by a contemporary writer [t], that many orthodox Mahomedans had their noses and ears cut off and their beards shaved on this memorable occasion.

Some of the principal inhabitants of Isfahan [u], shocked at these proceedings, interested themselves in favour of the Soofees; and Ali Moorâd was persuaded to send a second order to stop the persecution he had at first commanded; but Meer Maassoom Ali and Noor Ali Shah were not willing to remain where they had been so publicly proscribed;

17th. To resign oneself to the will of God in all things; never to complain, but to be grateful for every thing.

These, this writer adds, were the seventeen articles of faith to which this sect was required to conform. These were the tenets taught by Fyâz Ali, before the arrival of Meer Maassoom in Persia.

[s] The writer of the MS. here followed informs us, that men notorious for their profligacy and infamy were employed as spies to discover the doctrine of the Soofees. These men reported that Meer Maâssoom was considered as a god by his disciples; and that Noor Ali Shah, Mooshtâk Ali Shah, and others of his favorite disciples personated the angels Gabriel, Israel, &c. &c.

[t] Persian MS.

[u] Meerza Anâyet ollâ Mustoffee is said to have first undeceived Ali Moorâd Khan, and caused him to stop the persecution.

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and they proceeded, accompanied by a crowd of followers, to Kerman: there however the chief priest, alarmed by the defection of his flock, denounced vengeance against them, and forced Meer Maassoom to fly to Meshed in Khorassan. He was refused admission into that city, and went to Herat, with the desire of proceeding by Cabool to India: but his fame and the number of his followers alarmed the King of the Affghans, who compelled him to return to Persia. At Kerman, which he revisited, Mooshtâk Ali, the most pious of his disciples, was put to death. One of his crimes was his excellence as a musician: he played upon the târ (a species of guitar with three strings) in so harmonious and touching a manner, as to melt into tears all that heard him: among other accusations, it was alleged that he had called his guitar a divine instrument.

Noor Ali Shah and Meer Maassoom had proceeded to Kerbelah, and intended to have remained there as a place of safety: but the solicitations of the inhabitants of Kermanshah, where they had before resided, induced them to revisit it. The numbers that crowded to meet them excited the jealousy and indignation of the chief priest, a man of the highest reputation for his learning and piety. Alarmed at the rapid progress of infidelity, he determined to put a stop to it by the most violent measures. He placed Noor Ali Shah in confinement: during the commotion that followed, care was taken that the swords of the faithful should slay Meer Maassoom, who was murdered when at prayers in the midst of his followers. The king highly approved of this conduct: the chief priest of Kermanshah, in a most able, but violent letter to the prime minister, which was made public, endeavoured, and not without success, to expose the heresies of the Soofees, against whom it was the object of his life to direct the popular indignation. This sect, however, notwithstanding the efforts of their enemies, continued to increase in numbers; and Noor Ali Shah, with all who adhered to him, were banished the

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kingdom. He returned some time afterwards, and was urged by his followers to create a tumult, and to murder the tyrannical priest, who appeared determined on his destruction. The mild spirit of Noor Ali Shah revolted from this extreme; and he again fled to Kerbelah, whence he went towards Moossul. His avowed disciples were at this period about sixty thousand; but many more were supposed to be secretly devoted to him; among them a great majority were inhabitants of Persia. The danger to be apprehended from his fame, and the circumstances attending his death [x], which happened at this time, gave reason to suspect that he was poisoned: and they who were supposed to have perpetrated this act, being natives of Kermanshah, his disciples openly ascribed his death to the great opposer of the Soofees, Aga Mahomed Ali, the mooshtâhed [y] or high priest of that city.

Two of his devoted adherents were afterwards taken up and sent to the reigning monarch, who commanded them to be delivered to the high priest of Kermanshah, empowering that determined enemy of the Soofees to do what he chose with them: they were put to death [z].

[x] The writer of his history states, that "two inhabitants of Kermanshah, who were distinguished by an extraordinary appearance of zeal, dressed his dinner on the day that he was suddenly attacked by violent spasms, which in a few hours terminated his existence. Their flight led all to suspect them of having poisoned him. Noor Ali died at nine o'clock on the morning of the tenth of Mohurrum, A. H. 1215. He expired close to the grave of the prophet Jonas, within a league of Moossul."

[y] Aga Mahomed Ali used always to treat this accusation as a malignant calumny. He asserted that the story of Noor Ali Shah being poisoned was an invention, and that he had died of the plague.

[z] The letter from Fatteh Ali Shah, the reigning monarch, to Aga Mahomed Ali, is a curious document. The following is its purport, as given in a MS. in my possession:

"Whereas the Soofees have extended their belief to an alarming extent, and obtained many foolish and credulous converts, who adopt their faith and dress in their fashion; whereas all this is contrary to the interests of the true religion, and has occasioned much thought to the wisest of our state; whereas you also have urged us much on this subject; we have

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Some who pretend to knowledge on this subject, estimate the Soofees in Persia at between two and three hundred thousand; but they cannot have any means for forming such a calculation; and they probably include, not only those who believe in the visionary doctrines of this sect, but those whose faith in the efficacy of the established religion has been shaken by the Soofee teachers. The latter class are very numerous: they have probably been increased by the violent means taken to defend the established religion. Every Soofee who has suffered death, is deemed a martyr: those who revere their memory, contend, that truth could never require to be supported by persecution. Great part of the Soofees in Persia are not to be distinguished from the other Mahomedan population. They are required, when in the first ranks of this mystic faith, to conform to the established religion: and the gradual and unobserved manner in which men are led into infidelity, is justly stated by Mahomedan divines to be one of the greatest dangers that attend this delusive doctrine.

In the above account of the Soofees I have limited my observations to the most remarkable facts and events connected with their doctrines and history. To have minutely detailed the opinions of every sect would have been endless: a long catalogue might be given of Soofee saints: but the story of these ephemeral objects of veneration, and a detail of the different tenets, would prove nothing but that they

taken the ill into consideration, and have written to all our governors and officers to punish these offenders if they do not recant; to take from them all they have plundered from weak men; and, if the proprietors cannot be found, to distribute it among the poor. We have in short ordered, that the sect be extirpated and put an end to, in order that the true faith may flourish. Aga Mehdee and Meerza Mehdee have been deceiving the people about Hamadan, who consider them as holy teachers: they were sent prisoners to our presence: we send them by Ashrâff Khan Yessâwul to be delivered over to you, whom we regard as the wisest, the most learned, and most virtuous oulâmâh of our kingdom. Put them to death, confine them, or punish them in the way you deem most proper and consonant to the decrees of the holy religion. May your health and prosperity continue."

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are all equally ignorant of that great and inscrutable subject, on which they profess a superior knowledge. I have abstained from any description of the various extraordinary shapes which this mystical faith has taken in India, where it has always flourished, and where it has at times been beneficial in uniting the opposite elements [a] of the Hindu and Mahomedan faith: nor have I ventured to offer any remarks on the similarity between many usages and opinions of the Soofees and those of the Gnostics and other Christian sects, as well as of some of the ancient Greek philosophers. The principal Soofee writers are familiar with the wisdom of Aristotle and Plato: their most celebrated works abound in quotations from the latter. It has been often assumed, that the knowledge and philosophy of Greece were borrowed from the east: if so, the debt has been repaid. An account of Pythagoras, if translated into Persian, would be read as that of a Soofee saint. His initiation into the mysteries of the Divine nature, his deep contemplation and abstraction, his miracles, his passionate love of music, his mode of teaching his disciples, the persecution he suffered, and the manner of his death, present us with a close parallel to what is related of many eminent Soofee teachers, and may lead to a supposition that there must be something similar in the state of knowledge and of society, where the same causes produce the same effects.

The Christian religion has never made any progress in Persia, though that kingdom has been visited by many missionaries. Amid the mountains of Kurdistan there is a small colony of Nestorians [b], supposed to have resided there

[a] This is particularly shewn in the life of Nanuc Shah, the founder of the Sikhs; a nation inhabiting between the Indus and Delhi.

[b] At Sennah in A. D. 1810, I found a colony of forty Nestorian families, who had a pastor and a small church. They appeared to live in great comfort, having uniformly, according to their own account, enjoyed the favour and protection of the Walys or Princes of Ardelan. This is chiefly to be ascribed to their peaceable and industrious habits. They were mostly artificers and manufacturers.

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more than thirteen centuries. A Roman Catholic mission has been long established at Isfahan: and the Armenian colony in one of the suburbs of that capital, though they no longer enjoy the privileges bestowed on them by Shah Abbas the Great, are still protected in the free exercise of their religion.

The Jews in Persia, who are not numerous, cannot appear in public, much less perform their religious ceremonies, without being treated with scorn and contempt by the Mahomedans [c]. The Guebres [d]; or "worshippers of fire," do not experience more toleration, except at Yezd, where they obtain respect on account of their numbers. They have in that city a civil magistrate of their own tribe, who presides over their ward; and they observe in their places of worship the forms which were established in the reign of Ardisheer Babigan, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty.

[c] There are numbers of Jewish families at Shiraz, and at Hamadan. This race, who in Persia live despised and in poverty, are not only efficiently protected, but respected in Turkey, where they enjoy both wealth and consideration.

[d] For a description of their religion, see APPENDIX.

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Chapter XXI.

THE GOVERNMENT OF PERSIA; WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE JUDICIAL, REVENUE, AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENTS.

It would be a waste of time to discuss the principles on which orthodox Mahomedans believe the right of governing others to be founded. Since the death of Mahomed, the right of every race of potentates that professed his religion, has rested chiefly on the sword; but through policy the sacred name of Imâm, or "vicar of the prophet," has often been bestowed on those who exercised sovereignty; and we may perhaps refer the comparative permanence of some of the greatest Mahomedan dynasties[e] to the increase of respect derived from the union of the spiritual and temporal powers. No race of kings that has reigned in Persia since the subversion of the Arabian caliphs, has ever been esteemed the head of the Persian religion. The Seffavean monarchs were revered and deemed holy[f], on account of their descent from a saint; but they never assumed the chief ecclesiastical power. That power, which, according to the belief of the Sheahs, was only legitimately exercised by the prophet and the twelve Imâms or descendants of Ali, is considered to belong to Mehdee, the last Imâm, who has disappeared, but is believed still to exist[g]. It is exercised, during his

[e] Particularly the Caliphs of Arabia, and the present royal family of Constantinople.

[f] Kempfer, who visited Persia in A. D. 1712, has given a very curious account of the opinion which the Persians entertained of their sanctity. The water in which the Seffavean monarch washed was deemed a cure for all complaints.

[g] This belief of the Sheahs is in direct opposition to that of the Soonees, who maintain that the Imâm should be always visible. They say he should neither conceal himself, nor be a common object.—D'Ohsson, page 181.

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concealment, or rather his invisibility [h], by those holy men who are raised by popular suffrage to the dignity of Mooshtâhed [i], or "high priest:" and who may be deemed at the head of the hierarchy of Persia.

The Monarch of Persia has been pronounced to be one of the most absolute in the world; and it has been shewn that there is reason to believe his condition has been the same from the earliest ages. His word has ever been deemed a law; and he has probably never had any further restraint upon the free exercise of his vast authority, than has arisen from his regard for religion, his respect for established usages, his desire of reputation, and his fear of exciting an opposition that might be dangerous to his power or to his life. There is no assembly [k] of nobles, no popular representation, no ecclesiastical council of Oulamâh [l], in Persia. It is a maxim that the king can do what he chooses, and is completely exempt from responsibility. He can appoint and dismiss ministers, judges, and officers of all ranks. He can also take away the property or the life of any of his subjects; and it would be con-

[h] The Persian word is *Ghaib*; which means, "latent, concealed, invisible."

[i] I write from several Persian manuscripts of authority, and from the information of able natives, with whom I conversed on the subject. Chardin states, (Vol. V. page 223,) that the Seffavean kings were deemed the vicars, or "the successors of the Imâms."

[k] The usages of the Monarchs of Tartary required that they should call a Corooltai, or "assembly of chiefs," on all great occasions; and when their immediate descendants governed Persia, they probably complied with this custom: but the Corooltai appears to have been assembled less as a deliberative body, than to give force and effect to a measure upon which the prince had previously resolved. Nâdir Shah went through the mockery of consulting an assembly of this sort, before he usurped the crown. See Vol. II. page 16.

[l] Oulamâh signifies "learned men;" and as the highest kind of *ilm*, or "science," among the Mahomedans is a knowledge of the Koran and traditions, those who are skilled in this branch of knowledge are termed Oulamâh: in the Turkish empire they are a body of priests, who, acting under the mufti, or "chief pontiff," both controul and support the power of the grand signior.

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sidered as treason to affirm that he is controuled by any checks, except such as may be imposed by his prudence, his wisdom, or his conscience. The exact limitations to which he is liable, cannot easily be defined: for they are equally dependent upon his personal disposition, and upon the character and situation of his subjects; particularly of that part of them who, from their condition, are the most exempt from the effects of arbitrary power.

The ecclesiastical class, including the priests who officiate in the offices of religion, and those who expound the law as laid down in the Koran and the books of traditions, are deemed by the defenceless part of the community the principal shield between them and the absolute authority of their monarch. The superiors of this class are free from those personal apprehensions to which almost all others are subject. The people have a right to appeal to them in all ordinary cases, where there appears an outrage against law and justice, unless when the disturbed state of the country calls for the exercise of military power.

The merchants are a numerous and wealthy class; and no part of the community has enjoyed, through all the distractions that kingdom has been afflicted with, and under the worst princes, more security, both in their persons and property. The reason is obvious: their traffic is essential to the revenue; oppression cannot be partially exercised upon them, for the plunder of one would alarm all; confidence would be banished, and trade cease: besides, the merchants of Persia correspond with those of the adjacent countries; and the king that ventured to attack them, must consent to have his name consigned to disgrace and obloquy in every quarter[m].

[m] Notwithstanding these claims to favour and protection, contributions in the shape of loans have often been raised; and fines are occasionally levied, on granting or securing commercial privileges. When a case occurred recently in India, the decision of which materially affected the interests of the Persian merchants, the interference of the court was refused, until a sum should be collected to buy it.

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The citizens of great towns have no further protection than what they find in the respect the absolute monarch is disposed to pay to law and usage, and to the character of their priests and magistrates: hence they are much more exposed to the effects of a tyrannical government than the wandering tribes who constitute the military part of the community, and whose condition in a great degree protects them from oppression. These tribes may in fact be considered as a camp of soldiers, only exposed to the common vicissitudes of the military life, and formidable from that social union which produces common feelings of attachment and of resentment. The power of the monarch over this class is liable to the same fluctuations as that which he exercises over the principal tributaries of the kingdom, whose submission or disobedience is always determined by the strength or weakness of his authority.

The Kings of Persia are completely absolute in all that relates to their own family. They may employ their sons in the public service, or immure them in a haram; deprive them of sight, or of life, as their inclination or policy may dictate. The Seffavean kings, after the time of Shah Abbas the Great, confined the princes of the blood; and those not intended for the succession were usually deprived of sight [n], that they might not have it in their power to disturb the peace of the country. The successor to the throne, though fixed upon by the king, was seldom declared until the moment of his elevation: but the rank of the mother was of no consequence: and the son of a slave (if it suited the pleasure of his royal father) had as good pretensions to the crown, as the descendant of the most illustrious prin-

[n] Chardin, vol. v., page 242, states, that "these princes were deprived of sight at all ages." He gives a shocking description of the operation of taking out the eyes, which appears to be the same that is now practised. It had been the custom to sear the eyes with a hot iron; but the discovery that this was not effectual, led to taking them out altogether with a sharp pointed instrument.

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cess[o]. The reigning family have adopted usages more congenial to the feelings of the military tribe to which they belong. Several sons of the present monarch are employed in the chief governments of the kingdom: and a prince, not the eldest of the king's sons, but he whose mother is of a high family in the Kajir tribe, has been declared the heir to the crown, and has for many years enjoyed a consideration and exercised a charge suited to his high destination. So that there is no fixed rule for the treating the princes of the blood royal; but in all periods the members of his family have been entirely dependent upon the monarch. Their condition is regulated by his feelings or his policy; and he is considered to have even a more absolute authority over them, than over his domestics, courtiers, and ministers. In fact they have no rights recognised by law or by custom. No mediating power can interpose between them and their parent. Born on a precipice, they are every moment in danger of destruction, and are alike subject to fall by their virtues and their crimes: for the jealousy of a despot is excessive; and he usually views with increased suspicion and alarm every action of those who are placed nearest to his throne.

From what has been stated, we may assume that the power of the King of Persia is by usage absolute over the property and lives of his conquered enemies, his rebellious subjects[p], his own family, his ministers, over public officers, civil and military, and all the numerous train of his domestics; and that he may punish any person of these classes without examination or formal procedure of any kind: in all other cases that are capital, the forms prescribed by law and custom are observed; the monarch only commands, when the evidence has been examined and the law declared, that the sentence shall be put in execution, or that the con-

[o] Chardin, vol. v., page 240.

[p] Bands of public robbers are considered in the same light as rebels, and put to death, when seized, without trial.

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demned culprit shall be pardoned. There are no doubt instances in which the king exceeds that prerogative which usage gives him: but these are rare; and when they occur, it is generally under a pretext that the offence is dangerous to the person or to the power of the King. It is obvious, indeed, that the hierarchy could not maintain its respect or popularity, if the law, of which it is the organ, was openly contemned and set aside. But we cannot understand the character of the power possessed by the monarch without constant reference to the condition of the empire he governs. Persia, in its most tranquil state, contains tributaries, who reluctantly acknowledge his authority, and against whom he is annually compelled to employ his troops; mountain tribes, who subsist by plundering their less warlike neighbours; ambitious nobles, who are eager to establish their independence; even the more peaceable part of the population have been of late so habituated to change, that they are prompt to obey any new master whom the fortune of the hour places over them. The sovereign of such a country must be dreaded, or his power could not be effective; and we consequently find, that some of the monarchs who have been stigmatized by travellers for their cruelty, are those under whom Persia has been most prosperous. The exaggerated accounts of their barbarity has arisen in a great degree from the king himself ordering all executions, and from the court of his palace being often the scene of bloodshed. But a practice at which we shudder, is deemed by the Persians essential to the royal power. It adds, they believe, in a very great degree to that impression of terror, which it is necessary to make upon the turbulent and the refractory.

In no country has the monarch more personal duties [q]

[q] A few among the weakest and most depraved of the Seffavean family confined themselves entirely to the palace, and communicated with none except favorite eunuchs: but these remarkable exceptions only prove the general rule.

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than in Persia: the mode of performing them appears to have differed very little from the most ancient times to the present day. At an early hour in the morning the principal ministers and secretaries attend the king, make reports on what has occurred, and receive his commands. After this audience, he proceeds to his public levee, which takes place almost every day, and continues about an hour and a half. At this levee, which is attended by the princes, the ministers, and the officers of the court, all affairs which are wished to be made public, are transacted; rewards are given, punishments commanded; and the king expresses those sentiments of displeasure or approbation which he wishes to be promulgated. When this levee is over, he adjourns to a council chamber, where one or two hours are given to his personal favorites, and to his ministers. After the morning has passed in this manner he retires to his inner apartments; in the evening he again holds a levee, less public than that of the morning, and transacts business with his ministers and principal officers of state.

These usual employments are liable to no interruption, but from illness, the pursuit of field sports or occasional exercise on horseback. When in camp, his habits are the same as in the capital: he is from six to seven hours every day in public; during which he is not only seen by, but accessible to, a great number of persons of all ranks. A monarch, whom custom requires to mix so much with his subjects, cannot be ignorant of their condition; and this knowledge, unless his character be very perverse, must tend to promote their happiness.

It is impossible to give an exact description of the duties which the prime minister[r] has to perform: they depend upon the favour and confidence he enjoys, and upon the activity and energy, or indolence and incompetency, of

[r] His Persian title is Hamâd-ood-douleh, "the trusted of the state." He is at present more commonly called Sudder-e-Azim, "first in precedence, or prime minister."

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his sovereign. He is usually the medium through which political negotiations and all affairs relating to the general welfare of the state, should be transacted. He receives and introduces foreign ambassadors, corresponds with the principal governors of provinces; and when a decided favorite, he exercises a great influence over all branches of the government. The prime minister is sometimes placed at the head of every department [s]; at other times this great power is divided, and a separate minister has charge of the public revenue [t]. These arrangements rest solely with the king, upon whose favour the ministers are dependent from hour to hour, not only for their authority, but for their property and their lives, which may be said to be always in peril. Their danger increases with their charge; and their time is incessantly occupied in personal attendance upon their sovereign, in the intricacies of private intrigues, or the toils of public business. Men must be very efficient before they are competent to fill such stations; and they are generally selected on account of the reputation they have attained in inferior offices. It is a maxim of policy, not to raise a nobleman of high birth and rank to the station of prime minister. Perhaps few of that class in Persia are equal to the duties: but if they were, it would not be deemed wise to trust men with the use of the king's name and of the royal seal, who might employ them to further their own plans of ambition, and who could not be cast down without exciting a murmur of discontent, if not a spirit of turbulence, among their vassals and adherents. As the administration is in general constituted, the

[s] The late Hajee Ibrahim, during the whole period that he was prime minister to Aga Mahomed Khan, presided over every department of the state.

[t] This is the case at present: Meerza Shuffee is prime minister; but Hajee Mahomed Hussein Khan presides over the financial and revenue departments. The title attached to this office was *Amcen-ood-Douleh*, or "the safety of the state." He is at present called *Nizam-ood-Douleh*, or "the regulator of the state."

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disgrace or execution of a minister creates no sensation whatever. There are instances of a departure from this policy; but they are too rare to be considered otherwise than as exceptions.

Besides his chief ministers, the King of Persia is aided by secretaries of state [u] in every department: they preside over different offices or chambers of accounts [x]; and the accounts of the receipts and disbursements throughout the ecclesiastical, civil, revenue, and military branches of the government, are kept with much regularity and precision. It is rarely, however, that any of the officers filling these departments enjoy any extensive influence; although it is from this class that the ministers of the crown are often selected.

A great change has taken place in the whole frame of the Court since the Seffavean kings occupied the throne. Some of these monarchs passed a great part of their time in the haram. The consequence was, that they fell under the dominion of women and eunuchs. The latter were sometimes promoted to the first stations in the kingdom, and always exercised a commanding influence. The chiefs of warlike tribes, who have filled the throne since the downfall of this family, have not yet changed the manly habits of their ancestors for such degenerate usages; and eunuchs are very seldom employed beyond the walls of the haram [y]. The chief officers of the household, those who preside over the ceremonies of the court, and the domestics, have not necessarily any official concern with the affairs of government: but as they often, particularly the latter, become great favorites, and enjoy the personal confidence of their

[u] The Moonshee-ool-Moomâlik, or secretary of state; and the Mustoofees, or counsellors, are among the first in rank: their seal is necessary to every royal mandate.

[x] These offices are termed Dufter Khânâh, or chambers of records.

[y] I have known only two or three instances of eunuchs employed in situations of trust during the present reign: they were treated with uncommon attention and deference.

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master more than his ministers, they attain in an indirect manner to a considerable influence, if not authority.

The law of Persia, as of all Mahomedan nations, is founded upon the Koran and the traditions. Hence the duties of priest and judge are combined; and the hierarchy has attained great power, from the priests being the administrators of the sacred law, and thus having the ability to shield the people in some degree from the incessant attacks they are exposed to, from the violence and rapacity of their sovereigns and rulers.

Justice is administered in Persia in two distinct modes; as to which a few observations will be useful, not merely to explain their origin, but to elucidate the causes that lead to their frequent collision. The written law, which Persia has in common with every Mahomedan country, is termed Sherrâh. It is founded on the Koran, and the Soona, or oral traditions: but, since the establishment of the Sheah faith, the learned ecclesiastics who administer this law, have rejected all traditions that come from the three first caliphs, or from others deemed the personal enemies of Ali, and the family of the Prophet.

By the theory of a Mahomedan government there should be no other courts of justice except those established for the admininistration of the Sherrâh, or written law: but in Persia there is another branch of judicature, termed Urf, that is, known or customary: the secular magistrates who administer it, are to decide all cases brought before them according to precedent, or custom. This law, if it can be termed such, is never written; for Mahomedans can have no written laws but the Koran and traditions. It varies in different parts of the empire, having reference to local as well as common usages. The king, as temporal monarch, is at the head of the Urf, which may be considered as an emanation from the royal authority, although it is administered upon a professed regard for the habits and prejudices of the people.

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There can be no doubt as to its origin. The rulers and chiefs of Persia, though converts to the Mahomedan faith, have never been disposed to sacrifice their temporal power, nor the laws and usages they had inherited from their forefathers; and while they submitted to such ordinances as were deemed sacred and indispensable, they have preserved, as more conformable to their prejudices and to their system of government, the Urf, or customary law; but the administration of it has always varied with the power and disposition of the monarch. There have been periods [a] when the religious zeal of the sovereign has caused almost every case to be referred to the ecclesiastical judges; at others the whole authority has been vested in the secular magistrates [a]. The latter are naturally prone to encroach upon the privileges of the former; and as they possess power, they can seldom be at a loss for pretexts.

The ecclesiastical order pretend that the Sherrâh, or divine law, should take cognizance of all cases whatever; while the courts of Urf, supported by the temporal power, have limited their functions to disputes about religious ceremonies, inheritance, marriage, divorce, contracts, sales, and all civil cases; while it reserves to itself the decision on all proceedings about murder, theft, fraud, and every crime that is capital, or that can be called a breach of the public peace [b].

Before the reign of Nâdir Shah, the hierarchy enjoyed power and wealth. The chief pontiff, or Sudder-ool-Suddoor, was deemed the vicar of the Imâm, and exercised a very extensive authority. The priesthood were all subordi-

[a] In the reign of Sultan Hoossein all cases are said to have been decided according to the Sherrâh.

[a] This was the case under Nâdir Shah.

[b] Though the lay magistrates reserve to themselves the decision on the procedure in cases of murder, they call upon the aid of the court of Sherrâh whenever they desire to act according to the law: in all such cases evidence is taken, and the law declared by the Shaikh-ool-Islâm, or presiding judge of the court of Sherrâh.

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nate to this spiritual ruler, who resided at court, and with the approbation of the sovereign nominated the principal judges. The lands with which the different mosques and charitable buildings were endowed, produced a very great revenue; and the office instituted for managing these funds acted entirely under the direction of the Sudder-ool-Suddoor, or Nawab, as he was sometimes called, in allusion to his office as lieutenant of the holy Imâm. Abbas the Great desired to abolish an office which vested so great a power in the individual who filled it; and on the death of the chief pontiff no successor was nominated. But his grandson and successor, Shah Soofee, who feared to persevere in this measure, adopted the expedient of appointing two persons to this high dignity. He thought by dividing the power to diminish the influence of the possessors. One of them was called the Sudder-ool-Suddoor-e-Khas, "the personal, or King's Chief Pontiff;" the other, the Sudder-ool-Suddoor-e-Aum, or "the Chief Pontiff of the People."

The former took rank of the latter, though their duties were nearly the same. Nâdir Shah not only abolished this office [c] altogether, but, as has been related, seized the lands appropriated to the ecclesiastical establishments, in order to pay his troops. These lands have never been fully restored; and the hierarchy is not likely to regain its former wealth and power.

The order of chief priests, who are named Mooshtâhed [d],

[c] Nâdir Shah, when he abolished the office, granted a small pension to the person who held it. His descendants retain this provision and the title of Nawab. In 1800 I dined in company with the present representative of the family. He had come from Yezd to Teheran. Though he had no station, and no duties to perform, he was treated with great respect. All the first nobles and ministers were of the party, and all concurred in giving the seat of honour to the nominal high priest.

[d] The word Mooshtâhed, which is the active participle of an Arabic verb, may be translated "the giver of evidence." This order of high priests existed, though with less authority than they now enjoy, during the reign of the Seffavean monarchs. Kæmpfer has given a very good description of them. He observes, that "in order to captivate the affections, and

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has always existed in Persia; but since the station of Sudder-ool-Suddoor was abolished they have attained a greater degree of power than they before possessed. They fill no office, receive no appointment, have no specific duties, but are called, from their superior learning, piety, and virtue, by the silent but unanimous suffrage of their countrymen, to be their guides in religion, and their protectors against their rulers; and they receive a respect and duty which lead the proudest kings to join the popular voice, and to pretend, if they do not feel, a veneration for them.

attract the veneration of the people, *who alone have the right of conferring this title*, they (the mooshtâheds) affect exterior sanctity, and the most rigid frugality; they shun honours and amusements, and all species of frivolities; their only discourse is on holy and edifying subjects, and all their thoughts appear directed to heaven; they preach the most mild doctrines; they show the greatest patience with their disciples, whom they correct, not only without harshness, but with exemplary moderation; they speak little, and are very sententious; their answers are full of unction, and the odour of the saint seems spread around them; they wear a white cloak, woven of camels' or goats' hair; their head is covered with a high white cap, which gives to their countenance a pallid and thin appearance. When a mooshtâhed is mounted on his mule, his eyes are always cast down; two servants are his only attendants, both of whom walk; the one guides the animal on which the holy man rides, the other carries his book. These high priests often recite in the mosques much longer prayers than those usually said by the faithful, and afterwards retiring into a corner, they preach and give pious instructions to the multitude, who are in ecstasy with their sublime devotion. It is with these holy tricks, that they captivate men's affections, establish a reputation for sanctity, and obtain from the silent suffrages of the people a species of supreme pontificate. But it must be acknowledged, they do not easily attain success in this career of hypocrisy. The title of mooshtâhed is only granted to him who is master of seventy sciences, and even then he must be held in the highest consideration both by the king and the people."—*Amœnitates Exoticæ*, p. 103, 104.

This learned and observing author is rather uncharitable in deeming the whole life of the mooshtâhed to be a course of hypocrisy. Mahomedans are often bigots, but seldom hppocrites; and an attentive observation of the character and conduct of the principal mooshtâheds in Persia has led me to a very different conclusion. Several of them have appeared to me men of sincere piety and goodness; and their chief duty, which is to defend the weak against the strong, appears singularly calculated to inspire and preserve noble sentiments and habits.

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There are seldom more than three or four mooshtâheds[e]. Their conduct is expected to be exemplary, and to show no worldly bias; neither must they connect themselves with the king or the officers of government. They seldom depart from that character to which they owe their rank. The reason is obvious; the moment they deviate, the charm is broken; men no longer solicit their advice or implore their protection; nor can they hope to see the monarch courting popularity by walking to their humble dwellings, and placing them on the seat of honour when they condescend to visit his court. When a mooshtâhed dies, his successor is always a person of the most eminent rank in the ecclesiastical order; and, though he may be pointed out to the populace by others of the same class seeking him as an associate, it is rare to hear of any intrigues to obtain this enviable dignity.

The mooshtâheds exercise a great, though undefined, power over the courts of Sherrâh, or written law; the judges constantly submit cases to their superior knowledge; and their sentence is irrevocable, unless by a mooshtâhed still more distinguished for learning and sanctity. But the benefits derived from the influence of these high priests are not limited to their occasional aid in the courts of justice; the law is respected from the character of its ministers; kings fear to attack the decrees of tribunals over which they may be said to preside, and frequently endeavour to obtain popularity by referring cases to their decision. The sovereign, when no others dare approach him, cannot refuse to listen to a revered mooshtâhed when he becomes an intercessor for the guilty. Their habitations are deemed sanctuaries for the oppressed; and the hand of despotic power

[e] When I was in Persia, there were, I think, five: Aga Mahomed Ali of Kermanshah, (who has been before mentioned,) Meerza Abool Hoossein of Koom, and Hajee Meer Mahomed Hoossein of Isfahan, were the most celebrated. Hajee Syud Hoossein, of Cazveen, had died five years before I first visited Persia: but his memory was so highly venerated, that his house continued to be considered a sanctuary.

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is sometimes taken off from a city, because the monarch will not offend a mooshtâhed, who has chosen it for his residence, but who refuses to dwell amid violence and injustice.

The next in rank to the mooshtâhed is the Shaikh-ool-Islâm; a term which literally means, "the elder or chief of the faith;" but which in its common sense signifies the supreme judge of the court of Sherrâh, or written law. There is a shaikh-ool-islâm in every principal city: he is nominated by the king, from whom he receives a liberal salary; but the desire and wishes of the inhabitants are almost invariably consulted, and the individual is usually promoted from a belief of his superior sanctity and knowledge. These officers often attain a respect hardly inferior to that enjoyed by the mooshtâhed. They studiously avoid any open connexion with men in power: even the appearance of such an intercourse would lose them the respect and confidence of the people, who are naturally very jealous of their independence and integrity. In large cities there is a Cauzee[f], or judge under the shaikh-ool-islâm; and the latter has in general the further aid of a council of moollahs, or learned men, many of whom give their services gratuitously, in the hope of increasing their reputation, or of recommending themselves to notice and employment. In the lesser towns there is only a cauzee: in villages they have seldom more than an inferior moollah, capable of reading a few sentences of Arabic, which enables him to perform the ceremonies at a marriage or funeral, to make out common deeds, and to decide on plain and obvious cases. When subjects of intricacy occur, he refers to the cauzee of the neighbouring town, by whom the cause is often carried before the shaikh-ool-islâm, or supreme judge of the provincial capital.

[f] This officer was originally the supreme civil judge in all Mahomedan countries: he still retains great powers in Turkey, though under the mufti; and in the Mahomedan states in India he is the chief judge: but in Persia the cauzee is considered under the shaikh-ool-islâm, in all cities where that high office exists.

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There is also in Persian courts an officer who bears the name of Mufti, but who has none of the great powers associated with that title in Turkey. His duty is more to prepare an exposition of the case before the court, and to aid with his advice, than to decide: but as this office requires a man of learning, his opinion often influences the judgement of his superiors.

The lower ranks of the priesthood are seldom entitled to that praise which has been bestowed on some of the superior branches. They neither enjoy, nor can expect, popular fame, as their situations are not permanent; and they seldom rise to the higher ranks of their profession. They are exposed to great temptation; and receive but a very limited income. So we can believe that there is truth in those accusations which represent them as being in general equally ignorant, corrupt, and bigoted.

The art and venality of the cauzees and moollahs are often noticed by Persian writers; and the character of this class has almost always been drawn in the harshest colours by European travellers. Chardin states that "nothing but the establishment of the Urf, or customary law, which is administered by the secular magistrates, could enable a person, not of the Mahomedan faith, to carry on any commercial transactions in Persia; as the bigotry of the priests, and the strict letter of the only law which they administer, that of the Koran and the traditions, would operate to deprive him of every hope of justice: that, when an application was made to the courts of Sherrâh against a bankrupt, he was so sheltered[s] under its forms and prescriptive laws, that even his goods could not be seized for the payment of his debts: but if the suit was transferred before the lay

[s] The Mahomedan law against debtors is sufficiently severe: and the creditor (if a Mahomedan) has every means he could desire of recovering his property; but the letter of the Sherrâh, or written law, is in no point favorable to unbelievers; and the bigoted ecclesiastics, by whom it was administered, were not even disposed to grant them the benefit of the law.

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magistrate who decided by the customary law, it was only necessary to authenticate the demands against him to obtain an order for the seizure and sale of his property to satisfy them."

The Urf, or customary law, which is administered by the king [h], his lieutenants, the rulers of provinces, governors of cities, lay magistrates of towns, managers and collectors of districts, and heads of villages, aided by all the different subordinate officers under them, bears some resemblance, in its cognizance of petty offences, to that authority which, in better ordered communities, is vested in magistrates of police: but the magistrates in Persia always exercise the chief local authority, and consequently are above the law instead of being checked by it. Their decrees are instantly enforced by the strong hand of power. They are prompt and arbitrary in their decisions: and as they seldom bestow much time on the consideration of evidence, they are continually liable to commit injustice, even if their intentions are pure. The principal check upon them is the dread of superiors, to whom the injured may always appeal: but it is easier to explain the duties, than to describe the conduct, of men, who regulate their actions by the varying disposition of the despot of the day, and are active and just, or corrupt and cruel, as he happens to be vigilant and virtuous, or avaricious and tyrannical.

The lowest officers intrusted with the administration of the Urf, or customary law, hear complaints of all kinds, and summon evidence: even the heads of villages are

[h] During the Seffawean dynasty, we learn from Kæmpfer, Chardin, and others, there was always a Dewan Beggee, or chief of the council, who superintended this department. That department does not now exist. It was one of great power and influence; and the late Monarchs of Persia have probably been jealous of giving it to one of their principal nobles. The late Sulimân Khan Kajir was for a day styled Dewan Beggee, in order to adjust a ceremony when I first went to the court of Persia; and it was alleged, that the person holding that high office represented the person of the king.

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allowed to inflict slight punishments, or impose small fines; but if the crime be serious, the delinquent is sent to the collector and magistrate of the district[1], whose power is more extensive: and when the case, from the magnitude of the property concerned, the rank of the parties, or the heinousness of the crime, appears above the collector's cognisance, he refers it to the governor of the province, who is generally competent to decide on all such cases as do not affect life. But the power of putting to death is seldom delegated by the king, unless when a country is in rebellion, or when the government is committed to one of the blood royal. In all other circumstances, when an example is necessary, the proof of guilt, taken according to legal forms before the court of Sherrâh, is sent to the king, and a royal mandate is transmitted for the execution of the criminal.

The lay magistrates always hold their courts of justice publicly, which undoubtedly operates as a salutary check upon their proceedings. These courts are sometimes very tumultuous, though the judge is aided by a crowd of inferior officers, whose duty is to preserve order. The women who attend these courts, are often the most vociferous: the servants of the magistrates are not permitted to silence them with those blows, which in case of disturbance they liberally inflict upon the men.

The jurisdiction of the courts of written and customary law neither is, nor, from the constitution of the latter, can be, clearly defined. The sovereign and his ministers promote this confusion of authority, which adds to their power and emolument. But though in civil and criminal cases appeals, or rather complaints, are carried from one of these courts to the other, all deeds, contracts, marriages, and divorces, must be drawn up by the officers of the Sherrâh;

[1] This person is called Zaubit. He collects the revenues, and exercises a limited judicial authority.

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and their decisions are received as evidence by the lay magistrate; who is also in the habit of referring to them all such cases as, either from personal [k] or political reasons, he desires should be decided by their authority: in criminal cases, where a regular procedure is adopted, the chief judge of the court of Sherrâh pronounces sentence according to the decrees of the sacred law.

The decisions of the courts of Persia, whether those of written or customary law, are speedily obtained; and a suit in them is attended with little apparent cost, though considerable sums are often given in bribes. The administration of the customary law, or Urf, is more summary than that of Sherrâh, because it is more arbitrary. All forms and delays of law arise out of a respect for persons and property that is unknown to this branch of the administration of justice in Persia; which always imitates in its decisions, the promptness of that despotic authority from which it proceeds, and by which it is supported.

It has been already stated, that the King of Persia deems himself vested with an authority independent of the law; and considers that, from the prerogative of his high condition he can take away the life or the property of any one of his subjects: but it has been shewn that the exercise of this power is practically limited. In all cases where he does not decide personally, or delegate his arbitrary authority to others, the criminal law is administered in a manner conformable to the Koran. Theft may be forgiven [l], and murder compounded, if the party from whom the property

[k] Where a lay magistrate conceived his decision might involve him in dispute with any person of rank or influence, or feared that by punishing a man of a tribe he might excite a dangerous spirit of revenge, he would certainly refer the case to the court of Sherrâh.

[l] The Koran states, "If a man or woman steal, cut off their hands in retribution for that which they have committed;" but adds, in a subsequent sentence, "Whoever shall repent, after his iniquity, and amend, verily God will be turned unto him; for God is inclined to forgive and to be merciful." It is from the latter passage that commentators have inferred the right of forgiveness in the injured.

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is stolen, or the legal heir of the person slain are disposed to mercy. Mutilation for theft, though commanded in the Koran, is rarely practised: but the king often inflicts capital punishment on those who are convicted of having stolen to any large amount. When a man or woman is murdered [m], the moment the perpetrator is discovered, the heir at law to the deceased demands vengeance. Witnesses are examined: if the guilt be established, the criminal is delivered into his hands, to deal with him as he chooses. It is alike lawful to forgive him, to accept a sum of money as the price of blood, or to put him to death. Only a few years ago [n] the English resident at Abusheher saw three persons delivered up to the relations of those whom they had murdered. They were led bound to the burial ground, and put to death: but the part of the execution which appeared of most importance, was to make the children of the deceased stab the murderers with knives, and imbrue their little hands in the blood of those who had slain their father. The youngest princes of the blood that could hold a dagger, were made to stab the assassins of the late Aga Mahomed Khan at their execution; and the successor of Nâdir Shah sent one of his murderers to the females of his haram, who, we are told, were delighted to put him to death [o].

In the time of the Seffavean kings, the court of the Dewan Beggee, or "supreme criminal judge," decided upon

[m] In all cases of murder Mahomed has expressly commanded the law of retaliation. "The free shall die for the free, the servant for the servant, and a woman for a woman:" but he adds, "He whom his brother shall forgive, may be prosecuted, and obliged to make satisfaction, according to what is just; and a fine shall be set upon him with humanity. This is indulgence from your Lord, and mercy: and he who shall transgress after this by killing the murtherer, shall be grievously punished."—SALE's *Koran*, Vol. I. page 30.

Manslaughter, according to the Koran, is to be expiated by releasing a believer from slavery, by paying a fine to the relations of the deceased, or by giving alms.

[n] I received the account of this transaction from Mr. Hankey Smith, late British resident at Abusheher.

[o] Vol. II. page 54, note.

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the cases of murder and robbery which occurred not only in the metropolis, but over the whole kingdom [p]. This court took particular cognisance of four crimes; the knocking out of a tooth, or of an eye, rape, and murder. Other crimes were judged on the spot where they were committed, by the Haukim, or "chief magistrate," who referred all civil suits to the Sherrâh or "court of written law;" but it was the peculiar privilege of nobles, public ministers, and all the king's guests, including ambassadors and envoys from foreign states, to have every suit instituted by them or brought against them, tried only in the court of the Dewan Beggee, or "supreme judge." Kæmpfer states that the Urf, or "customary law," accommodated itself to the usages of the place where it was administered. This is still the practice; but the high office of Dewan Beggee no longer exists. Its powers are exercised by the monarch: however in most instances where he has appointed one of his sons to govern a province, he has vested him with the power of pronouncing and executing the sentence of death upon convicted criminals, as well as of taking cognisance of and punishing all other crimes, which were formerly noticed by the court of the Dewan Beggee [q].

The mode and degree of punishment in cases decided by the Sherrâh is the same in Persia as in all other Mahomedan countries: but when the sentence is pronounced by the king, or by the governors or military commanders to whom he has delegated his authority, the punishment varies according to the disposition of the inflicter. For lesser offences, fines, flogging, and the bastinado, are the commonest punishments. Torture is seldom used, except to make men reveal hidden treasures. The inhuman practice

[p] Kæmpfer.

[q] There was formerly, and is still, an officer in the courts of justice, called Vakeel-ool-Raya, or "the advocate of the people." The continuance of his name, even though his duties may be dormant, proves that there is a desire to have the reputation of attending to justice.

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of taking out the eyes has long disgraced Persia. The objects are usually persons who have aspired to, or are supposed likely to aspire to, the throne; or chiefs of tribes, whom it is desirable to deprive of power, without putting them to death: and this punishment has been inflicted on the male inhabitants of a rebellious city, in order to intimidate by a dreadful example. The common mode of putting criminals to death is by strangling, by decapitation, or by stabbing: in cases of enormity, or where there is a desire to strike terror[r] or to gratify revenge, inventive cruelty endeavours to discover new ways of adding to the sufferings of its victims. They are sometimes doomed to protracted tortures; at others are empaled, or have their limbs torn asunder by the rebounding branches of trees that have been bent for the purpose[s]. An instance has been given of a barbarous chief associating the idea of luxurious enjoyment with the horrors of the most cruel death, by making a garden of his enemies[t]: and the history of Persia abounds with examples too shocking to be related, of tyrants glutting their vengeance, by subjecting their enemies, before they granted them the mercy of death, to the most shameless insults and horrid injuries.

In Persia women are seldom publicly executed[u]; nor can their crimes, from their condition in society, be often of a nature to demand such examples: but they are exposed

[r] I find in Mr. Jukes's Journal an account of a dreadful punishment at Teheran, when he was there in 1810. A slave had poisoned the family he served. Though they all recovered, by the instant application of remedies, the man was fully convicted, and sentenced by the king to be hung by the heels in the common market-place, and cut up as a butcher does the carcase of a sheep: but he was denied the mercy shewn to that animal of having his throat cut before he was quartered.

[s] Vol. I. page 57, note.

[t] Vol. II. page 77.

[u] When the case is very aggravated, an example is made. Some time ago at Tebreez a woman who had poisoned her husband, was cast headlong from a high tower by the common executioner.

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to all the violence and injustice of domestic tyranny; and innocent females are too often included in the punishment of their husbands and fathers; particularly where they are of high rank. Instances frequently occur where women are tortured to make them reveal the concealed wealth of which they are supposed to have a knowledge; and when a nobleman or minister is put to death, it is not unusual to give away his wives and daughters as slaves; and sometimes, though rarely, they are bestowed on the lowest classes in the community[x]. This usage is defended on the ground of the necessity to make terrible examples of men in high stations: it is argued, that nothing is so likely to deter others from equal guilt, as the dread of having their families exposed to similar dishonour: but no reasoning can reconcile us to a practice, at once infamous, inhuman, and unjust; which marks, perhaps, beyond all others, the wanton atrocity of a despotic and barbarous power[y].

The king nominates the Beglerbegs, or governors of provinces, and the Haukims, or governors of cities, who are not required to be natives of the place of their government; nor is the Darogah, or lieutenant of police, who acts immediately under the Haukim or governor: but the Kalanter, or chief magistrate of the city, and the Kut-khodahs, or magistrates of different wards, though nominated by the king, must be selected from the most respectable inhabitants, just as the members of the corporation are in any English town. Although these officers are not formally elected, the voice of the people always points them out: and if the king should appoint a magistrate disagreeable to the citizens, he could not perform his duties, which require all the weight he derives from personal consideration to aid the authority of office. In small towns or villages the voice of

[x] The wives of men of high rank have been given to mule drivers.

[y] The inhabitants of the Turkish provinces in the vicinity of Persia, who are far from being civilized, have a right, from their opposite usage of the females belonging to criminals of rank, to speak of this practice with horror and indignation.

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the inhabitants in nominating their Kut-khodah, or head [z], is still more decided: if one is named of whom they do not approve, their clamour produces either his resignation or removal. These facts are important; for no privilege is more essential to the welfare of a people, than that of choosing or influencing the choice of their magistrates. It is true, these magistrates cannot always screen them from the hand of power, and are often compelled to become the instruments of oppression: still their popularity with their fellow-citizens, which caused their elevation, continues to be their strength; and in the common exercise of their duties they attend to their comfort, happiness and interests. In every city or town of any consequence, the merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, and labourers, have each a head, or rather a representative [a], who is charged with the peculiar interests of his class, and manages all their concerns with the governor of the town. He is chosen by the community he belongs to, and is appointed by the king. He is seldom removed, except on the complaint of those whose representative he is deemed; and even they must bring forward and substantiate charges of neglect or of criminal conduct.

No general description of the administration of justice can comprehend all the various communities in an empire like Persia. It has been before mentioned that the military part of the inhabitants are divided into tribes, who derive their origin from different nations: the Turks from Turkistan, or Tartary; the Arabs from Arabia; and the original Persians, consisting of Kurds, Lacs, Zends, and many others. All these tribes, though speaking different languages, have nearly similar customs. They dwell in

[z] The head of the village is sometimes called Reis, an Arabic term signifying the head person, or chief. The use of it in Persia is, I believe, confined to the districts inhabited by persons descended from the tribes of Arabia.

[a] He is termed Wasta-asanaf, or the mediator or representative of his class.

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tents; subsist upon their flocks, or the chase; and change their residence with the season. The system of internal government with this whole race of men is nearly the same. They profess the Mahomedan religion, and acknowledge the authority of the written law laid down in the Koran and the traditions. During the reign of the Seffavean kings, the Sudder-ool-Suddoor, or chief pontiff, appointed a Cauzee, or judge, to every one of the principal tribes, whose power formed a considerable check upon the chief. When Nâdir Shah abolished the office of Sudder-ool-Suddoor, he changed this system; the only persons of a religious character at present among the tribes, are moollahs, who perform marriage ceremonies, give names to children, or repeat the prayers at a funeral. In cases of importance they apply to the cauzee, or the shaikh-ool-islâm, of the nearest town.

The customary law of these tribes differs materially from that of the rest of the population. Besides the chief, there are persons, called elders, at the head of each division, or branch, who, in general, are related to the chief, and form the magistracy of the tribe in peace, its officers in war. Their station, like that of their chieftain, is hereditary. From this body of elders the chief, when he does not reside with the tribe, must select his deputy, who has as much power over the tribe as a governor of a city has over its inhabitants; although his rule, from the habits of the persons under him, is in some instances more lenient and patriarchal, in others it is more absolute, possessing more of a military character; but, generally speaking, both the chiefs and their deputies are careful to preserve the attachment of their followers. However, there are frequent exceptions; and these petty rulers, when powerful, are often cruel and oppressive. Common cases are decided by the chief, or his deputy, as by the lay magistrate of a city. But when a person of any consequence is concerned, the proceeding is less summary; a council or meeting of elders is called, the

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question is fully discussed, and is decided by a majority of voices. Any man of family has the privilege of claiming this trial, and it would be oppressive to refuse it. In a dispute between inferior persons it cannot be demanded as a right, but is often resorted to by a chief or his deputy, who is desirous of popularity, as the tribe almost invariably accord in the justice of a sentence passed by this tribunal.

Such a council is not limited to any determinate number. If it be to decide on any dispute about land, it consists of the principal landholders[b]: if on a case of debt, the chief elders, and the friends of the debtor and creditor, meet to adjust it. When a murder is committed, the relations of the deceased and of the murderer are summoned; and if both belong to the tribe, they are admitted to the assembly. The moollah of the tribe usually forms one of the council, and expounds the holy law. This council generally tries to accommodate the dispute, and appears to have been constituted for preserving harmony in the tribe[c]; but when it cannot settle the difference, its authority is given to support the law. Among the wandering tribes, as among citizens, if a debtor refuse payment, after a cauzee has signed a decree that the demands against him are just, he is either allowed a moderate period to make his payments good, or his property is seized, and divided in equal shares among his creditors[d]. A murderer, when the crime is proved, is given up to the heir of the deceased[e], who may forgive him,

[b] Persian MS.

[c] About eight years ago, a high noble of the tribe of Kajir, was suspected of treason. The reigning monarch assembled a jaunkhoo, or council of elders, of the tribe, before whom he laid all the proofs of his guilt. They sentenced him to be severely punished and disgraced. This was a remarkable instance of an absolute sovereign choosing rather to exercise his patriarchal power as chief of a tribe, than his prerogative as king of Persia.

[d] The same law with regard to bankrupts prevails in all Mahomedan countries. In Persia, as has been before stated, the magistrate corrects the defects of the religious code, in cases where Jews, Christians, or Hindoos are creditors.

[e] If the heir be not twelve years of age, the murderer is confined until he

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or take the price of blood [f], or put him to death. It is almost always the object of the council of elders to compound for murder, especially when the parties are of different tribes; for if pride or any other motive prevent this, and the offender is screened from justice, the heir and relations of the murdered person feel disgraced till they obtain revenge. In such cases, where the party has not strength to compel justice, assassination is applauded, though it almost always occasions more murders, and interminable blood feuds [g]. The heir of a person who has been murdered

reaches that age. Under the pretext of attending to this law, Abbas the Great evaded punishing the person he had employed to murder his eldest son.—Vide Vol. I. p. 374.

[f] The price of blood, as stated in the Koran, is a hundred camels, and the freeing a Moslem from captivity; but this verse, like every other in that volume, has been variously interpreted. In Persia this fine is not regulated by any precise rules, but depends chiefly on what the one party can pay, and the other exact. It is also affected by the rank of the party: enormous sums have been sometimes given for inducing a tribe to forgive the blood of a chief.

[g] These feuds are most prevalent when the country is most distracted. An ambitious chief employs those who are desirous of revenging personal or family wrongs, to promote his cause. Many instances might be mentioned: I know none more remarkable than the feud between the families of the chief of the tribe of Shuftee and that of the governors of Resht, the capital of Ghilan. A MS. in my possession contains the following statement of this family war. "In the time of Shah Sultan Hoossein, Kasim Khan Shuftee slew Aga Kumâl, governor of Resht; his son, Aga Jumâl, slew Kerreem, the son of Kasim, who had murdered his father. Aga Raffeah, the brother of Kasim, slew Aga Jumâl, and revenged his nephew. Hedâyet Khan, the son of Aga Jumâl, slew Aga Raffeah, and five of his brothers and nephews; a child, called Aga Ali, the son of Kasim, was the only person of the family of Shuftee that was preserved. Hedâyet Khan, desiring to employ the tribe of Shuftee, was compelled to put this child at their head, as they refused to serve except under one of the blood of their chief. Aga Ali made his escape, and when he attained his sixteenth year, was aided by Aga Mahomed Khan in an attempt to revenge his father, uncle, and brother. He succeeded in taking Hedâyet Khan, whom he slew. Two of that chief's sons, Hoossein Ali and Fatteh Ali, were sent to the Persian court, and when the present king obtained the throne, he gave the former a small force to recover Ghilan. This chief ordered two of his men to conceal themselves in a wood, and assassinate Aga Ali; they did so: and the relations of that

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frequently demands, not only goods and horses, but one or more of the nearest female relations [h] of the murderer in marriage: this is deemed the best mode of ending the feud, as it binds in ties of kindred those who before were the most inveterate enemies.

The tribes of Persia have very different usages with regard to forgiveness of murder: some have a pride in being considered implacable, and invariably exact life for life; but this is not common. If a person belonging to a tribe desire forgiveness for a murder that he has committed, he hangs a sword round his neck with a black cord, goes in that manner to the heir, and says that he comes to receive his doom. Though the laws of honour almost always restrain his enemy from putting him to death, it is very rarely that even the mandates of his superiors can compel one of these fierce barbarians to save his life by what he deems an unmanly and abject submission. When a man of a wandering tribe, or a poor citizen, who has committed murder, is condemned to pay the price of blood, but cannot raise the amount, he is obliged to wear a large iron collar round his neck, and to beg till he collect enough to discharge the fine. The persons who carry this symbol of

chief, alarmed at his fate, fled to the island of Lankeroon, and claimed the protection of Moostâphâ Khan Talish. The reigning monarch invited them to return to their family possessions of Shuft. On his sending a sealed Koran, as the most sacred of all pledges, they came back; but they thought of nothing but revenge: day and night they watched the movements of Hoossein Ali: at last one of the brothers of Aga Ali succeeded in shooting him, as he was riding along the road. There has yet," the writer who gives this account states, "appeared no man of courage among the descendants of Hedâyet Khan; but the murdered Hoossein Ali has left an infant son, and if this boy prove worthy of his family, he will no doubt revenge the blood of his father."

When this account was written, in 1810, the feud between the families had continued about seventy years.

[h] He who receives a bride in this manner, neither pays the customary sums to his father-in-law, nor settles a dowry on his wife. It is not unusual to demand two or three females from the family of the murderer, for the heir and nearest relations of the deceased.

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their guilt and repentance, are the most importunate of mendicants.

The crimes of rape and adultery are very rare among the wandering tribes, and are almost always punished with death, generally inflicted by the nearest relations of the females whose honour has been violated[1]. The promiscuous manner in which these tribes live, admits of no laxity upon this point, as such could not fail of producing general depravity. Hence the chastity of their females is guarded by usages, which are never infringed with impunity: in cases of adultery, both parties often become the victims of jealousy and revenge[k]; and if the fact be proved, the murderer is applauded for having vindicated his honour.

When the chief of a tribe commits any open act of treason or of hostility against the government, the king, if he can seize him, deprives him of sight, or puts him to death without hesitation: but if he has merited capital punishment for any other crime[l], the case is referred to the Sherrâh, that his blood may not rest upon the monarch. When a man of inferior rank belonging to a tribe, but in the king's immediate employ, deserves death, the king usually makes him over to his chief, who repays this confidence by his immediate execution. All these circumstances shew that the military tribes are governed by customs essentially different from those of the inhabitants of towns and villages; and that they are, in some degree, shielded by their habits, their union, and their strength, from that oppression to which some of the other classes are subject.

The interference of the king with their internal administration is continually fluctuating. Those over whom cir-

[1] Persian MS.

[k] When I asked a well-informed chief of one of these tribes, what punishment was inflicted on an adulteress, he answered, that her father, her husband, or her son, cut her to pieces.

[l] Persian MS.

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cumstances give him power, allow him to do what he pleases; while the same tribe, differently situated, would revolt at the slightest infringement of their usages. By their constitution they should be governed through their chief, and the court always endeavours to render him a subservient instrument of its will: but still his influence continues, under all circumstances [m], with a force which would appear incredible, unless we have been in the habit of contemplating the tenacity with which men in such communities preserve the first and deepest impression made on their mind, of the virtue, as well as the necessity, of an inviolable attachment to their hereditary lord.

The Bukhteeâree [n], and several other tribes, can hardly be said to have entirely submitted to the Kings of Persia. Guarded by their inaccessible mountains, they continue to be ruled by their own customs, and admit of hardly any interference from the officers of government in their internal jurisdiction. They consent to furnish a body of their youth as soldiers, and to pay a small tribute, that they may obtain a share in the produce of some of the fine vallies at the foot of the hills: and every effort is made to encourage them to occupy those plains, not merely with the view of rendering them more tangible to the laws of the country, but also, by giving them an interest in the general peace and order, of preventing the frequent predatory attacks which they are in the habit of making upon their more peaceable and civilized neighbours.

The Arabian tribes along the shores and on the islands,

[m] The author of a memoir on the chiefs of Khorassan, after giving an account of Jaffier Khan, the late ruler of Nishapore, then in confinement at Teheran, states, "the tribe of Byât, though treated with great kindness, still continue to desire the return of their cruel chief, Jaffier Khan; and they are not withheld by the memory of his oppression and injustice from saving all they can out of their small means, and secretly transmitting it for his support."

[n] The Bukhteeâree and Fylee tribes inhabit the ranges of mountains which stretch from Isfahan to Shuster, and thence to near Kermanshah.

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of the Persian Gulf continue to follow many of the usages of their ancestors. The interference of the king or his officers in their internal rule depends upon their state of subjection; and this varies with the events which tend to weaken or strengthen his authority over that part of his kingdom. All the tribes upon the continent of Persia may, when the country is at peace, be deemed subject to the authority of the officers of the government: but these seldom exercise any control over the islands[o], even when the latter profess an allegiance to the monarch of Persia.

The principal officers of the empire, and the chiefs of tribes, who are employed or dwell at a distance, commonly have a part of their family at the capital. These hostages are always watched, but seldom strictly guarded, unless the person, for whose fidelity they are a pledge, is suspected of treason. When he actually rebels, they are sometimes put to death: but such examples are not frequent. The dread of them, however, while it retains numbers in the path of duty, makes every ruler, who is at all independent, refuse, as long as he is able to do so, to comply with this custom; his consenting to send his eldest son, or any part of his family, to remain at court, is always considered as a token of complete submission.

The condition of the principal feudatories has been noticed; although they acknowledge the paramount power of the monarch, they have always denied his right of interference in the internal government. The Waly or Prince of Georgia, whose territories have become a province of Russia, held for many years the first rank among those great tributaries. The Waly of Ardelan, in Kurdistan, still enjoys the dignity and privileges that belonged to his ancestors; exercising all the functions of a sovereign within

[o] At present, almost all these islands may be deemed independent. Kharruck is the only one in which there is a Persian garrison. The King, however, claims a right of sovereignty over them all.

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the limits of his hereditary possessions. His system of government is, in its general features, the same as that established in other parts of Persia, only that his personal authority is limited by his situation; for he is checked by the fear of his superior lord, as well as by the necessity of preserving that attachment to his person which constitutes his strength.

Though there are several cities in Kurdistan, the military tribes seldom inhabit either towns or considerable villages; nor do they assemble, except for war, in large encampments. Their dwellings are often solitary; and whether they are houses or tents, it is seldom that more than a few are together. This custom, whether it arises from the nature of the country [p], or from adherence to ancient usage, retards every progress to improvement. We have evidence of the inhabitants continuing in an unchanged state for more than twenty centuries [q]. Neither the rays of civilization which enlightened Persia under Noosheerwan, nor those that shone on the neighbouring provinces of Arabia and Turkey under the most celebrated of the caliphs, ever penetrated amid the wilds of Kurdistan, though in the immediate vicinity of Ctesiphon and of Bagdad. The Kurd despised a knowledge accompanied by an effeminacy and luxury which rendered man more subject to oppression and cruelty. He preferred the savage freedom he enjoyed amid his rugged mountains, and felt a pride in the privations and hardships he was exposed to, when he regarded them as associated with his independence. It is not surprising that religion should never have made any great progress amid such a people. There is no proof of their ever having been zealous as followers of Zoroaster; and though they now profess the faith of Mahomed, they are, in gene-

[p] The Lesghees are remarkable for having habitations similar to those of the Kurds.

[q] See Vol. II. page 132.

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ral, not only careless of the duties, but even of the ceremonies it prescribes. In Sennah, the capital of Ardelan, and in some other towns, there are mosques and priests; and in these, the Sherrâh, or written law, is observed nearly as in other parts of Persia. The principal distinction arises from most of the Kurds being Soonees; so that their laws are founded on the authorities respected by that sect. Among the ruder tribes the Sherrâh meets with little attention. They are governed by the usages of their forefathers, and yield an obedience to their chief, which he repays by his protection, and by exercising his authority with the utmost regard to their customs and prejudices[r].

There are several districts in Kurdistan where the inhabitants profess allegiance to the Monarch of Persia, but which are even more independent of all interference with their internal government than the province of Ardelan; because their mountains are more inaccessible. One of the most remarkable is a branch of the tribe of Hâkâry[s], who

[r] A remarkable instance of this occurred in 1810. I was encamped at a village called Zâghâ, within twenty-five miles of Sennah. The officer who attended as Mehmândâr, or entertainer, to the mission on the part of the Waly, informed me that a man of the tribe of Soorsoor (some families of which were encamped within a mile) had the day before murdered his father. "He will of course be put to death," I observed. "I do not think he will," said the mehmândâr: "he is himself the heir, and there is no one to demand the blood."—"Will not the prince take care that this parricide does not escape?"—"The Waly," he coolly replied, "cannot interfere, unless appealed to: and after all, if the affair be agitated, the murder will be compounded. Among Kurds, who are always at war, the life of an active young man is much too valuable, to be taken away on account of a dead old one!"

[s] This petty state, if we can credit the accounts we receive, has continued for centuries to enjoy more freedom than almost any other Asiatic tribe or nation. The ruler is a direct descendant from Jûz-ood-deen Sheer, a chief of the tribe of Hâkâry, who was governor of Van when Timoor attacked it. The people are represented as constant in their allegiance to this family, except when serious complaints are urged against the reigning representative. On such occasions the Agas, or heads of the different branches of the tribes, whose condition is also hereditary, assemble and summon him before

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dwell in the lofty ridge of hills immediately west of the Lake of Oormeah, and near the Town of Sâlmâs in Aderbejan.

Several of the chiefs of Khorassan, who profess allegiance to the Kings of Persia, are as independent of his authority in their internal rule, as the Waly of Ardelan: but their situation differs in this essential respect: he inherits a power enjoyed by his ancestors for many centuries; theirs is of recent usurpation; and its destruction, and the subjugation of their principalities would be considered as the natural and just re-establishment of the royal authority: whereas any attempt to reduce Kurdistan would be deemed a departure from the policy of the wisest and most powerful Monarchs of Persia, who have always respected the rights of its chiefs and inhabitants: and, though some of its rulers boast a descent from the family of Mahomed, neither Arabian nor Tartar tribes have ever permanently settled in that great province.

The mode of collecting the revenue is intimately connected with the general administration of justice. The same officer sometimes presides over both: and this union of power is favourable or unfortunate for the inhabitants, according to his personal character.

them. His conduct is tried; and if a majority of voices decide that he is unfit to rule, one of the leaders places a pair of slippers before him. The chief rises, puts them on and walks out of the assembly. The next heir succeeds: but the discarded ruler retains the personal property of his family. We are assured, that all the usages of this community display the same character; and that in their internal administration the lowest individual is treated with respect by his superiors. There is an account of this tribe in the history of Kurdistan. I received some curious anecdotes of their usages from an intelligent officer who accompanied me from Tebreez and had long lived in the neighbourhood. He told me, that they were seldom engaged in internal wars: but that, recently, after the majority had decided to depose a ruler, the Aga, whose duty it was to place the slippers, had refused to do so. This had produced a division; and Abbas Meerza, the Prince Royal of Persia, had interfered in favour of the deposed chief, but had failed in his efforts to restore his authority.

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The fixed revenue, which amounts at present to about three millions sterling, is chiefly derived from the produce of crown and government lands[t], from taxes and imposts on landed property, and on every species of goods and merchandise. Before the time of Nâdir Shah, a great portion of the land had been granted to the ecclesiastical establishment, which had been equally enriched by the generosity of the Seffavean kings, and by the piety of their subjects. Personal estates had also increased, during the long tranquillity Persia had enjoyed under this dynasty, to a very great extent: but Nâdir[u] seized the property appropriated to the ecclesiastical body; and amid the subsequent revolutions almost all the principal families have perished, and their estates have fallen to the crown. A very small portion of the territory which once belonged to the priests has been restored. They are at present chiefly supported by pecuniary stipends; and a deduction from the revenue is made in every province to pay the judges of the courts of Sherrâh, to keep colleges and mosques in repair, and to maintain religious establishments[x].

Crown lands are cultivated by the peasantry on terms[y]

[t] Chardin, in his account of the revenue, makes a distinction between what he terms royal domains and government lands: the former being more particularly at the disposal of the king. By the domains, in opposition to the Khâlesâh, or government lands, he means such royal estates as have been long appropriated to support palaces and certain parts of the royal household and establishment.

[u] Vide Vol. II. page 50.

[x] I have no documents for stating the exact provision made for the priesthood. The Mooshtâheds, or chief pontiffs, usually live on their own means, or have lands assigned them. If there are any *Wukf*, or charity lands, in the province, they are placed under their management. The Paish-Nâmâz, or chief officiating priests at the mosques, have often a salary of from four to twelve hundred piastres a year: but many of the most respected perform the duty gratuitously. The shaikh-ool-islâm, cauzee, &c., have all fixed salaries. In Isfahan the sums paid to such persons were estimated at ten thousand tomâns a year. The annual pay of the shaikh-ool-islâm at Shiraz was two thousand tomâns.

[y] These terms are said to have been first settled by Noosheerwan the Just. They are certainly of great antiquity.

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very favourable to the cultivator. When the crop has been measured [z] by an officer appointed for the purpose, if the seed be supplied by government, it is returned; and ten per cent. of the whole is next put aside for reapers and threshers; after which the remainder is equally [a] divided between the cultivator and the king. Lands that are the property of individuals [b] pay according to their situation in respect to water. When the supply is certain, and obtained from a flowing stream, they pay twenty per cent. on the produce, after deducting seed and the allowance before stated. If the water comes from aqueducts [c], they pay fifteen per cent.; and if from wells or reservoirs, only five. The duty on estates is generally farmed by the owners, which prevents trouble and vexatious interference of the subordinate officers of the revenue.

Every encouragement is held out to the cultivators to sow those government lands, where the crops depend solely upon rain. If the cultivator finds the seed, ten per cent. [d] only is demanded for the king. Such a crop is sometimes abundant, but often fails altogether. If the land belongs to individuals, it is seldom cultivated; when it is, the proprietor pays five per cent. on the produce.

This mode of settlement applies to what is termed the

[z] The crop is measured on the ground. The expression in my Persian MS. is, "*as it stands*;" which evidently means before it is reaped.

[a] In one account it is stated, that this mode varies, and that the cultivator in some parts pays two thirds to the king.

[b] The estates of individuals are of different tenures: some free; others pay a small quit rent: and some are of a tenure not unlike our copyhold; they are held by deeds for ninety-nine years, renewable on paying the fine of a year's rent.—CHARDIN, Vol. V. page 382, new edit.

[c] Nothing is of greater value in Persia than water: the government constructs and keeps aqueducts in repair; but the cultivator usually pays for watering his fields and garden in a proportion exceeding the expenditure, which constitutes the right of supplying water into a source of revenue.

[d] Another MS. states twenty per cent.: but when this is so it is probable government finds the seed.

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summer harvest[e]. In that of winter[f], rice is the only grain regulated by the same rules. The seed of every thing else sown at this season[g] is furnished by the cultivator. The crop is divided into three parts, of which one only is the property of the government. Private estates pay ten per cent. on winter crops.

The above are the principles by which the collection of revenue from land in most of the provinces is adjusted. Local circumstances and usages may make the government share vary in some parts; but the difference is immaterial. The compact between the owners and cultivators of land and the government is simple, and well understood by all. The former often pay a considerable proportion of their rent in kind. This is regulated by convenience, usage, and the ability of the cultivators. Some villages, where the inhabitants are poor, pay the government almost entirely in kind: but when the farmer has wealth, he generally prefers making cash payments, as he avoids, by that means, the interference of the inferior officers of the revenue. According to the general and established rule, half should be paid in money and half in kind[h].

The general mode of settling for large tracts of land does not of course apply to rich and highly manured fields, or to gardens near towns. This is the only land that is

[e] The Shutvee.

[f] Syfee.

[g] What has been said of the harvest, chiefly applies to Irak, Aderbejan, and part of Fars, where the summer crop is reaped between the middle of June and the end of July. In the more arid regions it is much earlier. At Shuster, and in almost all Khuzistan and Deishestan, the seed is put into the ground in the latter end of November or beginning of December.

[h] I find it mentioned in a note on a statement of the revenues, that for every tomân paid in money, one khurwâr, or ass-load of grain is also levied. The khurwâr of grain is a hundred Tebreez maunds, about seven hundred pounds weight; and the fixed price, when it is taken in money, as it generally is, ought to be a tomân for a khurwâr; so that the amount in kind is equal to that in money. Of late years government has often exacted a tomân and a half and even two tomâns for a khurwâr.

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enclosed. It is generally rented for money, and often at a very high rate. When Persia was in a tranquil state, some of the ground near Isfahan produced more than thirty crowns a jurreeb, which is not above three quarters of an acre[j]: but this must have been either garden ground, or fields set apart for the cultivation of melons[k].

The government is always ready to dispose of waste land, particularly if it be to build upon, or to plant a garden. A heritable lease is given, subject to a small ground tax; and the fruit trees and vines become subject to a tax, which varies according to the age of the tree and the quality of the fruit. The fixed tax on fruit is very moderate[l], and this extraordinary assessment cannot be heavy; else this delightful luxury could not be raised so abundantly and so cheaply as it is throughout Persia.

Both the form and the policy of the Persian government have always disposed it to grant arable lands to the wandering tribes on the most favourable terms; but these seldom cultivate more than is necessary for their own consumption. The vast tracts of fine pasture lands allotted for their winter and summer residence, are considered as a payment in part for their military service; but a tax is levied upon families, according to their wealth and the number of their cattle and flocks[m]; it is collected by their chief, or the deputies he appoints.

[j] Chardin has given us some curious information on this subject.

[k] Melons have always been cultivated in great abundance in the neighbourhood of that capital.

[l] In a statement I received at Shiraz in 1800, from a very intelligent native, I find the tax on vineyards and fruit trees as follows:

Vineyards, *faryab*, or with "certainty of water,". . . 6 deenars a vine.
If *bukhs*, or "with uncertainty of water," . . . . 5 the same.
Apple, pear, peach, &c. . . . . 20 the same a tree.
Walnuts. . . . . 100 the same.

The deenar is a nominal coin, in which accounts are kept. There are a thousand to the piastre, or about five hundred to an English shilling.

[m] This duty is not always the same, but never high. In the statement I

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A part of the fixed revenue is derived from ground rents of houses, rents of caravansaries, baths, shops, water-mills, manufactures [n], and duties on all kinds of foreign and home merchandise. This branch of the revenue has greatly increased since the extinction of the Seffavean family, and of that of Kerreem Khan; both of which revolutions were attended with immense confiscations. Whole streets in the principal cities, which before belonged to individuals, have become the property of the government, and are rented by its subjects. The revenue collected from shops is very considerable. When these belong to government, a rent is fixed proportionate to the gain derived by those who hire them; when they belong to individuals, the government claims twenty per cent. on their computed annual profits. There is no impost in Persia that can be called a capitation tax, strictly speaking; but the mode of collecting the ground rents and share of shop profits in towns, and that of levying the duties from the wandering tribes, is regulated by a similar principle. These imposts [o] are made according to general rules, and laid on the houses or families that pay them, not agreeably to their actual condition, but as they are rated.

The principles on which the whole of the fixed revenue is settled are just and moderate; and the system is so perfectly understood, that it is attended with neither difficulty nor oppression: but unfortunately the monarchs have

received at Shiraz I find it rated to the inhabitants of that city and district as follows:

A milch cow pays annually	300 deenars.
An ass	200
A brood-mare	1000
A camel	300
A sheep	700 which appears disproportionate.

[n] This includes cloths of all kinds, glass, leather, hardware, earthenware, &c.

[o] The revenue terms, Ser Shûmâree, or numbering of individual heads, and Khânâh Shûmâree, or numbering of families, used in Persia to describe this mode of collection, shew that these duties approach to a capitation tax.

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never been satisfied with the produce of this, and its justice and moderation only serve to make the people feel more sensibly the irregular and oppressive taxes they are continually exposed to. The first of these may be termed usual and extraordinary presents. The usual presents to the king are those made annually by all governors of provinces and districts, chiefs of tribes, ministers, and all other officers in high charge, at the feast of Nou Rôze, or vernal equinox [p]. These gifts are regulated by the nature of the office and the wealth of the individual, and comprise the best of the produce from every part of the kingdom. Sometimes a large sum of money is given, and this is always the most acceptable present. Every officer of high rank must make this annual offering, which is indeed deemed a part of the revenue, and as such falls ultimately on the farmers, cultivators, and manufacturers. The amount presented is generally regulated by usage: to fall short, is loss of office; and to exceed, is increase of favour. The tribute paid to the king of Persia by the princes and chiefs who own him as their paramount lord, is transmitted at this season, and may be classed under the same head with the other presents given at the Nou Rôze. The receipts from this branch are said to amount to nearly two-fifths of the fixed revenue; one governor of a province has for several years past seldom made an annual present of less than a hundred thousand tomâns [q].

[p] This usage of receiving presents on the Nou Rôze, seems to have existed in Persia from the earliest times. One of the most plausible conjectures concerning the sculptures at Persepolis supposes them to represent a procession of this kind.

[q] Mr. Morier, who saw the offerings on the feast of Nou Rôze, in 1808, states, that the paishkesh, or offering of Hajee Mahomed Hussein Khan, was "fifty-five mules, each covered with a fine Cashmere shawl, and carrying a load of a thousand tomâns." This respectable nobleman, who is minister of finance, and governor of Isfahan, and all the districts subordinate to that city, derives his power to make these splendid offerings from the most legitimate of all sources, the general improvement of the country committed to his charge.

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Besides the usual tribute from dependant princes and chiefs, and the presents from officers in high station, made at the Nou Rôze, there are extraordinary presents of a less definite nature, but which are also of very considerable amount. It is not customary to collect duties in camp, but the merchants permitted to attend it are expected to give collectively a large offering in money to the king. Every person appointed to a high employment makes a present, as a token of gratitude: it is usually settled before he is nominated, and may often be deemed the purchase-money of his station. Monopolies are not unknown in Persia, but this invidious mode of increasing the revenue is not common. The produce of fines imposed by the courts of Urf, or customary law, and of involuntary presents extorted from such as are suspended or dismissed from employment, which are levied on the pretext of their delinquency, is very considerable: the amount annually collected from these, and other sources equally corrupt and oppressive, has been estimated at six hundred thousand tomâns, a sum equal to a fifth of the fixed revenue; but it is impossible to make any exact calculation, where the amount depends so much upon the character of the monarch.

The most oppressive of all the imposts is called Sâdir, a term which means a public requisition, and as opposed to the Malliaat, or fixed revenue, denotes taxation raised to provide for extraordinaries. If an addition is made to the army—if the king desires to construct an aqueduct or build a palace—if troops are marching through the country, and require to be furnished with provisions—if a foreign mission arrives in Persia—if one of the royal family is married—in short, on any occurrence more than ordinary, an impost is laid, sometimes on the whole kingdom, at others only on particular provinces. This is regulated by the nature of the occasion, and by a regard to its local or general extent.

The Sâdir extends to all classes. It usually bears lightest on the wandering tribes, not only because they are

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the poorest, but because they are the most impatient of such taxation. It falls heaviest upon the proprietors of estates and citizens. It is, or rather ought to be, levied according to defined rules, and every person should pay the Sâdir in the same proportion as he pays the Malliaat; but the governors of provinces usually exercise an arbitrary discretion in collecting this tax, which renders it more oppressive[r]; they settle the gross amount each village is to pay, and this affords them an opportunity of shewing partiality and committing injustice. The sum derived from this source has been calculated at two-fifths of the fixed revenue; and it has thus been concluded that the receipts of the king of Persia from presents, fines, and extraordinary taxes, equal the produce of the established taxes, making the revenue of the kingdom amount to little less than six millions sterling; but only a proportion of this is paid in money into the royal treasury. A large deduction is made for the expenses of collection, and a considerable proportion is received in kind, and used for public purposes. It is also a general practice to pay the chief ministers of religion and justice, the principal officers of state, the royal household, and the army, by assignments on the public revenue of different provinces.

This account of the revenue of Persia rests upon the authority of well-informed natives: perhaps the total amount is somewhat exaggerated. The disbursements of the government cannot easily be ascertained, but we know that they are much less than the receipts. It has in general been the policy of the monarchs, as of most Asiatic despots, to amass wealth; for in all countries where there is no public credit, a full treasury is deemed essential to the security of the state.

It will be right, before we conclude this short account of

[r] This tax is often very severe upon the poorer class of cultivators, from the necessity of selling the crops upon the ground at a low price, in order to pay it. It is not unusual to see grain selling for two tomâns and a half the load, which the farmer has sold at one tomân.

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the government of Persia, and of the mode of administering justice and collecting the revenues, to offer a few general observations upon the power of the monarch, and the practical effects of the whole system of internal administration.

It is difficult to describe the operation of the separate parts, or of the whole, on a system of government, exposed, like that of Persia, to continual and violent changes; but, though these changes produce a great effect on the character and condition of the nation, they neither destroy nor materially alter those rules which are established for the conduct of the administration, and which, guarded as they are by usage, by public opinion, and by religion, are seldom infringed with impunity. The government may be termed a military despotism, the action of which is regulated by a regard to the condition of its subjects, and the situation of the empire. The power of the monarch rests chiefly upon the fear he inspires. It has been well observed, that the arm of a despotic prince must be always uplifted; he must be prompt to repel foreign attack, and to repress every appearance of sedition or rebellion: for, surrounded by the ambitious and the turbulent, he can enjoy no security, and his subjects can know no peace, unless he is dreaded. Powerful nobles and high officers of the empire, must needs be arbitrary in their respective charges; and, when they cease to tremble at the supreme authority, the nation suffers a great increase of misery under a multitude of tyrants.

The chief ministers enjoy a very considerable, though indirect power, from being the medium through which all things are represented to a sovereign who generally acts from the impulse of the moment, and whose decisions must, therefore, be much regulated by the sentiments of the persons he relies upon. This kind of power of doing good or evil by secret or open communication with the king, belongs in a greater or less degree to all the officers of his government and domestics of his household; and, as the nature of

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absolute power makes it impossible that persons immediately attached to the monarch should be amenable to any inferior tribunal, it follows that this class must be entirely subject to his will. It is impossible, from the shape of the government, that their condition should be other than it is: and no small proportion of the security enjoyed by the rest of the community may be referred to the danger in which all about the king continually stand; for, unless he be very weak or unjust, it is hazardous for any of his ministers or courtiers to commit violence or injustice in his name.

The governors and chiefs of tribes may be considered in nearly the same relation to the king as his ministers: and when we remember the facility which the habits of the Persian monarch afford to his subjects of preferring complaints[s], and that policy dictates attention to them, we must be satisfied that in a half-civilized community, the absolute power of the sovereign over those to whom he delegates his authority, is essential to preserve the people from the oppression and rapacity of petty rulers.

Though a great proportion of the Kings of Persia may be capricious, cruel, and unjust, we find very few examples of their exercising their prerogative, except over those whom usage and the condition of the state have placed at their disposal: but this class has of late become more numerous, from the frequency of wars and rebellions. Amid revolutions neither life nor property is safe, as the peaceable inhabitants of the country are dragged into participating in the crimes of the individuals who are aspiring to the crown; and that very weakness which compelled them to

[s] Every individual who resides at the capital, or has the means of going to it, may find an opportunity of personally communicating with the king. The usual time is at the morning salam, or "levee." A short time ago an English artillery serjeant, employed in disciplining the Persian troops, availed himself of this circumstance to prefer a complaint to the king against a paymaster, who had kept back his pay. He succeeded in his application for redress; and the proceeding, on his part, was considered perfectly regular.

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acknowledge one party, too often invites the other to plunder them; but it is never considered that a monarch can be justifiable, unless under such circumstances, in seizing the property or taking the life of any of his subjects, not in his immediate employment.

The king always exercises his power as the chief magistrate of the Urf, or customary law, in his capital, and the district around it; and all civil and criminal cases, after being examined by subordinate officers, are submitted to his decision. His numerous occupations compel him, in performing this part of his duty, to trust in a great degree to others, or to form a very hasty judgment on the cases brought before him: and this summary proceeding, added to the custom of inflicting punishment in his presence, and by the hands of executioners[1] who attend his person, often gives a character of barbarity to acts of the most exemplary justice. In a country like Persia the inhabitants of the capital, who are under the immediate jurisdiction of the monarch, are generally the happiest and the best governed. Their goodwill is of more consequence to the despot than that of his other subjects; and they are treated with more lenity and consideration. They are seldom exposed to be tyrannized over by any but the sovereign: and, assuredly, of all the evils which attend absolute power, the greatest is its necessary delegation to mean and sordid agents, whose minds must, from their condition, be insensible to many of the higher motives that may be expected to influence the conduct of the chief ruler.

Many European travellers, who have resided in the capital of Persia, have felt a natural horror at the tyranny of particular sovereigns; and so have given an exaggerated picture of the condition of the country. One affirms, that

[1] The Ferâshhâ-e-Ghuzzub, or executioners, (literally "servants of anger or violence,") always attend the king, and are ready at every moment to execute his commands.

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"the Persians expect injustice from their kings[u];" but the idiomatic phrases adduced to support this assertion only prove that they recognise an unlimited power in their sovereign, which they will admit in no other person. The same author, whose experience was great, and whose local knowledge was minute, after detailing the caprice and cruelty of the Kings of Persia, on which the philosophers of his country have grounded many just and some erroneous opinions, concludes with the following remarkable observation:—"After all, I never saw, and never heard of, the king committing any outrageous act of violence, unauthorised by a public procedure, against any person not in the class of courtiers, or public officers of government. With respect to the latter, the danger they incur does not diminish their solicitude for employment. They listen attentively to the accounts they hear of those countries where life and property are secure; but the impression made on their minds is of the same character as that which most men receive when told of the joys of the other world. It is unaccompanied by any desire to leave that which they inhabit[x]." This writer also observes, with truth, that in a government like Persia, it is necessary to adopt the most prompt and vigorous measures when a great offender is concerned. It is obvious, that a noble of rank, (particularly the chief of a tribe,) might easily find the means of escaping punishment; and the monarch is forced, therefore, to proceed with caution, lest, in the attempt to destroy a guilty individual, he should hazard his own safety or the peace of the

[u] Chardin (Vol. V. page 219,) says that a person often exclaims, when speaking of another who is oppressive, *Pádshâee mekunnud*, "He acts the king:" if they experience violence from any one, they cry, *Mugur pádshâee tou*, "Perhaps thou art a king:" and again, when complaining of the tyranny of another, they say, *Pâdshâee ba mun-kurdâ-ust*, "He acted the king with me." All these expressions merely mean, that the person assumed a power which did not belong to him.

[x] Chardin, Vol. V. page 231, 232.

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country. From these causes marks of favour and honorary dresses are not unusually the precursors of disgrace and death: the victim is decorated for the sacrifice; and the dagger of assassination performs the task of the sword of justice.

The actual power of the monarch depends upon the condition of his empire; and as that is continually fluctuating, it is impossible to do more than offer some general observations on the limits fixed to it by usage, and to state what the king himself recognises as the bounds of his authority, and what it is generally believed he cannot overstep without danger of serious discontent and tumult, if not of general rebellion.

The king claims, upon all occasions, as has been before stated, the right of judging the conduct of his ministers, officers, and servants, and of fining, disgracing, plundering, or putting them to death, at pleasure: but even this admitted power, which is always considerably checked by public opinion, does not extend to any interference with their religion; nor has he a right to seize or confiscate any property, which their family possessed before they entered his service, and which is guarded by legal titles, and has either been granted to, or purchased by them or their ancestors. Such property is under the peculiar protection of the Sherrâh; and the violent seizure of it would be a most tyrannical outrage. However, it continually occurs, that, when the king imposes a heavy fine upon a minister or governor of a province, whom he deems a public delinquent, he adopts rigorous measures to enforce payment, till he compels him to sell his estates, of which government is usually the purchaser; but the observance of this form, where the individual is one of the class whose persons and property are admitted to be at the mercy of the monarch, is a strong proof of the respect in which this kind of property is held. It is owing to the recent violent revolutions that so many estates have been forfeited by the flight or extinction of the

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families they had belonged to: but numbers of this class can still boast the enjoyment of lands[y] that have for centuries been possessed by their ancestors.

The conduct of the kings to the ecclesiastical order has, with few exceptions, been always the same. This class is, in a great degree, exempt from tyranny: and the land which has been granted by government or by individuals for the support of mosques, colleges, and tombs, is deemed sacred, and can neither be alienated nor seized. It is true, Nâdir Shah secularized almost the whole of this property; but this measure was not only deemed indefensible, but sacrilegious: and we have no other example of so violent an act. If the sovereign be restrained by a regard to the religion he professes, and by a deference for the feeling of his subjects, from oppressing the religious order, he is no less prevented by usage and the apprehension of exciting discontent or revolt, from interfering with the established customs of the military tribes: and even the civil branches of the population may, unless in times of insurrection, be pronounced exempt from suffering directly from any tyrannical exercise of the authority of the monarch. Their lives and property are generally secure, unless from the sentence of the law: and though their judges and magistrates can impose fines, inflict corporal punishment, and condemn to death, they cannot direct landed property of inheritance to be seized or alienated, unless for the satisfaction of creditors. We cannot have a better proof of the security of private estates, than the fact that, during the latter years of the Seffavean dynasty, land sold for twenty-five and thirty years' purchase; and that all the late revolutions and the

[y] I was told by Meerza Boozoorg, the prime minister of the Prince Abbas Meerza, that his estate had been in his family several centuries; and many of his ancestors enjoyed high station. Several persons of less note have assured me, that they have inherited lands which had been for an equally long time possessed by their forefathers.

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heavy imposts have never reduced it below half its former value[s].

The king nominates whom he pleases to be governors of provinces and principal collectors of the revenue: but a military tribe will only obey a leader belonging to the family of its chiefs; and the king is not always able to interrupt the regular succession. When he appoints, or, more properly speaking, supports a chief disagreeable to the tribe, their discontent and insubordination often compel him to revoke the measure. The principal magistrates of cities, who act under the governor, and those appointed to preside over different wards, must not only be natives of the city, but agreeable to the majority of the inhabitants. These officers, then, and the magistrates of towns and of villages, may almost be said to be elective. The effect of this system is to render the situation of a magistrate like that of the chief of a tribe; and we often find it hereditary in a particular family. A magistrate so chosen may occasionally bend before a storm that he cannot resist, and become an instrument of tyranny; but all his natural feelings, his own interest and that of his successors, must dispose him to use his power for the protection of his fellow-citizens; the custom, therefore, which grants to the inhabitants this right of influencing the nomination of their immediate superiors, is very effective in preserving them from some of the worst evils of despotic rule. This privilege is extended to all the principal tradesmen and artisans. In every great city each class has its head, raised by the general voice to that condition; and through him all imposts upon their particular trade or manufacture are paid, and all grievances are represented.

In no country do men enjoy more personal freedom in egard to their place of residence than in Persia. All ranks,

[s] A few years ago, land near Shiraz was sold at twelve years' purchase, which was deemed a very low price.

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except those in the public service, or slaves, (who are not numerous,) may go where they choose within the kingdom, or leave it whenever they desire. No passport is required: the government never obstructs an individual following his own inclination in this particular; and the facility[a] with which men can remove from the effects of tyranny is one of their securities against oppression.

It has already been stated, that the confusion between the courts of Sherrâh and Urf, or written and customary law, has been purposely promoted, not only by the monarch, but by all who enjoy power. It is a great source of illicit emolument: for in disputed cases, (except on points expressly limited to the decision of the written law,) the favour of the king, or of the civil or military officers vested with his authority, is essential; and it is generally sought by the most corrupt means. The nature of this system varies with the character of the chief ruler, and of the persons he employs, and is more or less oppressive, as he is moderate and just, or venal and rapacious. In a country where the law, as it is termed, is administered in so summary a manner, and where decisions are given at the moment, and on a hurried examination of facts, men with the best intentions may often pronounce an unjust sentence: and those who desire to screen guilt, or to punish innocence, have the means of doing so under the cloak of justice. The principal check on the conduct of subordinate governors is an appeal to the throne, which can always be made; no person can prevent an individual from seeking that relief; and when he reaches court, he is certain of attention; for, supposing even that there is no disposition to redress the injured, an accumulation of these complaints against the governors of provinces and cities, furnishes the king and his ministers with matter of accusation, and either affords them

[a] There are some exceptions to this. The male Armenians may leave the kingdom; but they cannot remove their females without a passport, which is seldom obtained without great trouble and expense.

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a pretext of removing and plundering the party accused, or of compelling him to give them a share of the spoils he has obtained by the abuse of his power. It is impossible for the most virtuous public officer to guard against these accusations, which are often brought forward by the intrigues of his enemies; and when the court is corrupt, innocence is no security. Men in high station, therefore, may be said to be compelled to use violence and extortion. They must provide themselves with the only means for satisfying the cupidity of their superiors, and saving themselves from disgrace and punishment.

The same kind of corruption pervades the collection of the revenue: but oppression is here attended with more difficulty: it is not unusual for whole villages and districts to rise against it; and when the distance prevents their going in a body to the capital, they send deputies. This proceeding is seldom adopted with a hope of obtaining redress, but it is almost certain to stop the abuse; no person, unless very powerfully supported, dares to oppress those who have carried their complaints before the king.

The situation of the public officers, from the highest to the lowest rank, appears precarious and full of anxiety and danger; yet in no country is employment more eagerly sought. It always gives consequence, and sometimes wealth; and those who attain it seem desirous of grasping as much as they can, without a flagrant violation of law and justice. The higher ranks, indeed, are in some degree restrained by a regard for their popularity, which gives them strength; and the lower, by a fear of the punishment which follows detection and exposure. The situation of the petty magistrates and collectors of the districts [b], between rapacious and violent superiors, who desire to exact more than the revenue,

[b] Every province in Persia is divided into bâllooks, or districts; to each there is a separate zaubit or manager, whose duty usually combines that of magistrate and collector.

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and a rude and turbulent populace reluctant to pay even its just dues, must, however, be very miserable. A few years ago, when the prince, who is governor-general of Fars, called on the officers of his court to know what punishment he should inflict on a notorious thief, who had just been seized; "Make him," said a noble, whom age and blindness had privileged to speak freely, "the manager of a district in Fars. I can conceive no crime for which this would not be an adequate punishment."

This despotic and venal system of government has not subdued the spirit of the people; nor has it impoverished them as much as might have been expected. The ministers and chief nobles appear to enjoy affluence; and all persons in the public service seem to have ample means of supporting themselves and their families. Some of the merchants and principal inhabitants of towns possess considerable property; and among the other classes, though few are rich, hardly any are in actual want[c]. The latter may owe this exemption from penury to their fine climate and productive soil, and to their industry and frugal habits; but in Persia, as in other countries, falsehood and deceit keep pace with tyranny and injustice: and the abuses of the government, and its constant changes, have more effect on the moral than on the physical condition of the people.

Every man, indeed, complains of his poverty, and of the violence of the government; but this as often proceeds from a desire to avoid oppression, as from its actual pressure. The system is bad, and those who suffer from it naturally hate the persons who administer it; and to this feeling, destructive of all social ties between the governors and the governed, we may, in a great degree, attribute the recurrence of those internal troubles, which have for so long a period exposed Persia to a succession of civil wars and revolutions.

[c] As far as my own observation went, there are fewer beggars in Persia than in any country I ever saw.

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The character of the persons entrusted with the government of provinces must always have a considerable influence on the happiness and prosperity of the people. The Satraps of ancient Persia appear to have had the same power as the Beglerbegs of modern times. The Caliphs, while they held the kingdom, divided it among military leaders; and the conquerors from Tartary pursued the same system, but employed the princes of their own families in these high stations. Some of the Seffavean kings adopted this policy: but the latter among them confined their sons to the haram, as is the modern usage of Turkey: and, with the hope of increasing their revenue and of preventing rebellion, they nominated men of low birth and civil pursuits, superintendents or farmers of provinces; the consequence has been that tranquillity was obtained, but the empire weakened. Nâdir, and his immediate successors, employed military chiefs in all the principal governments; and the reigning monarch has divided almost the whole of Persia among his sons: but he places with these princes viziers or ministers, whom he considers in a great degree responsible for the internal government of the province. In some cases, a separate person is appointed superintendent of the revenue; and there is almost always an officer nominated by the crown to command the troops [d]. It is difficult to pronounce on the merits of these opposite systems: the one now pursued is certainly the most generous; but, though the conduct of royal governors, who desire to attach the people under their rule, and who are above being the mere purveyors of an avaricious court, may give present prosperity,

[d] In 1800 the Prince Hussun Ali Meerza was governor-general of Fars; Cherâgh Ali Khan was his vizier; Meerza Mahomed Khan, the son of Hajee Ibrahim, was the superintendent of the revenue; and Nâser-olla Khan Karagoozaloo was commander of the forces. In 1810 the prince continued governor-general; but Mahomed Nubbee Khan held both the office of vizier and superintendent of the revenue. Sâduk Khan, a military chief, of the Kajir tribe, commanded the troops.

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the extent of the danger likely to ensue cannot be concealed. On the decease of their common parent, whom they obey from habit and duty, their condition becomes critical, if not desperate; and submission, even to an elder brother, is no security against their continuing objects of his suspicion. In such circumstances, rebellion or flight from the kingdom present the only roads to safety; and the latter is not likely to be contemplated till all hopes are abandoned of succeeding in the former.

We will conclude this Chapter on the Government of Persia, by a short view of the army; which comprises a considerable body of irregular horse, furnished by the military tribes, and commanded by their own chiefs; a numerous irregular militia, raised and supported by the provinces and principal cities; and a corps of infantry and artillery, clothed and disciplined in the European manner.

The irregular horse of modern Persia are the same kind of troops which opposed the Romans; and they have preserved not only the habits but the mode of fighting of their forefathers[e]. As the men are robust and brave, and their horses active and strong, no cavalry can be more suited for all the purposes of predatory warfare. The Persians assert, that their monarch can raise a body of eighty thousand troops of this description, who perform military service in return for grants of land and liberty of pasture. Every chief of a tribe is obliged to furnish a quota[f], proportionate to the

[e] It is true they use a carbine instead of a bow, but they still take their aim at their enemy when apparently flying from him.

[f] Horsemen are furnished in other modes. It is stated in one MS. that every possessor of a water-mill is obliged to contribute a man, mounted and equipped for public service. I am not certain that this usage still exists; but it is not more than six years since it was stated by a Persian nobleman, in a high public employment, to be one of the resources of the country; it is probable, therefore, that the obligation is recognised, and that, when the horseman is not required, the owner of the mill pays a sum of money. A similar usage prevails in many parts of Turkey.

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numbers of his followers. Each horseman[g] receives provisions for himself and horse, when employed, and a small annual payment[h]. This class of the army, unless there be a prospect of plunder, or their own chief is a commander, give their services very reluctantly. They are only obliged to attend a few months in the year; and, if not engaged in active hostilities, always return home during the winter.

The king has constantly near his person a body of horse, termed by way of distinction his slaves, or royal guards. This favourite corps, which at present does not exceed three or four thousand men, is formed promiscuously from Georgian slaves, and the sons of the first nobles of Persia. They are well mounted, and well armed, at the public expense; and their pay[i] is not only better than that of the other troops, but they are employed on every service likely to add to their fortune[k].

Almost all the population of Persia is armed; and there is a militia in every part of the country, which is formed

[g] The horsemen are furnished by the families of a tribe, according to established custom. Sometimes one family furnishes several horsemen, at others only one; and two or three small families are often charged with the support of one mounted soldier. It is common to find substitutes, where there is no youth in the family fit for service.

[h] This seldom exceeds five or six tomâns a year, and is paid by an assignment on the revenue, which the receivers sometimes discount at a considerable loss. Every horseman has also an annual allowance of two ass-loads of grain. The officers have a larger pay than the men; but few receive more than fifteen or twenty tomâns a year, and four or five ass-loads of grain. The ass-load is computed at 700lbs. and its regulated value, if the government pay in money, is one tomân.

[i] They receive from twenty to thirty tomâns a year: and as this is usually given in an assignment upon the revenue, and they are allowed to go in person to receive it, they almost always exact more than their due. This is not difficult: the very name of Gholam Shah, or one of the king's personal guards, throws a village or district into alarm.

[k] Every prince of the blood employed in a separate government has a small body of Gholams, or personal guards, who are on the same footing, in regard to their pay, equipments, and employment, as those of the king.

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equally from men of the wandering tribes, and from the inhabitants of cities and villages. Its usual duties are to defend its home, and to aid the police. They are maintained by the province, town, or village, they belong to and are liable to be called out on any emergency: but when employed with the army, or in distant garrisons, they receive pay from the government [1]. The number of this registered militia is stated to exceed a hundred and fifty thousand. They provide their own clothing and arms. The former is the common dress of the country: the latter usually consists of a matchlock, sabre, and dagger. This militia has no further discipline than that of obeying their own officers: and neither the men of this class, nor the irregular horse, will submit to be commanded by any but those members of their own body whom they deem their superiors.

Before the reign of Shah Abbas the Great, the only army of Persia was the irregular horse and the common infantry or militia. That monarch, from the desire of opposing the Turkish janizaries, and of checking the overgrown power of the khans, or chiefs of tribes, formed a corps of twelve thousand infantry, and a rude park of artillery. He also raised a body of twelve thousand horse, commanded by the favorite officers of his court. Through the aid of this force, formed indiscriminately from men of the military tribes and Georgian slaves, and entirely dependent upon the monarch, Abbas and his immediate successors were able to diminish, and ultimately to destroy the power of the great khans, whose followers had before constituted the whole force of the kingdom; these were first reduced to thirty thousand men, and ultimately so broken and discouraged, that they ceased to be formidable either to the monarch or his enemies. The spirit and strength of this branch of the army

[1] Their pay, when employed, is from five to seven tomâns a year, and from two to three ass-loads of grain.

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has been revived by the turbulence and war with which Persia has been afflicted during the last century: the army of Aga Mahomed Khan consisted of irregular horse and infantry, a few unwieldy pieces of cannon, and a number of zumbooruks [m], or camel swivels: but the present monarch, with a view of opposing the Russians, and of strengthening his internal government, has formed a body of regular infantry and artillery [n], which already amount to twenty

[m] This name is derived from zumboor, or wasp. The terminating k marks the diminutive, and these swivels may be called little wasps.

[n] The disciplined infantry consists of two great divisions, the Surbâz or the resolute, and Jânbâz, or the contemners of life. The former, containing twelve corps of a thousand men each, has been raised and is supported by the prince Abbas Meerza, the heir apparent. It is composed of men of particular tribes and districts. There are two regiments of the tribe of Affshâr, two of that of Shakâkee, two of Mârândee, one of the inhabitants of Erivân, one of those of Tebreez and its vicinity, one of Kârâdâghee, one of Kangooloo, one of Mookuddoo, and one of Dumbâlloo. All the men in this division are natives of Aderbejan, the government of their royal commander. The prince Abbas Meerza has also raised a regular brigade of cavalry, of twelve hundred, and a corps of horse-artillery sufficient to man twenty field-pieces. Both these bodies are formed of men from the different military tribes. The whole was first disciplined by French officers, and afterwards by English. It has chiefly owed its efficiency to the character of Abbas Meerza, who has laboured to assimilate it in appearance and equipments to the regular armies of Europe. The pay of these troops is superior to that of any other class in Persia. That of the officers is from forty to five hundred tomâns a year: and the common soldiers receive ten tomâns, besides certain articles of dress, and rations when on service. The different regiments are willing to be commanded by European officers, but not so by Persians of a different tribe. It has, however, been the policy of Abbas Meerza to subdue this spirit; and he has placed some of his favorite officers in the charge of corps formed of different tribes. As an additional encouragement to this new branch of the army, crown lands have been granted to the soldiers on more favourable terms than to any other tenants.

The Jânbâz, who are more immediately attached to the king, are nominally equal in number to the Surbâz, but their real strength is not computed at more than eight or nine thousand men. This body is not so well paid, clothed, or disciplined, as that under the prince. It is formed in the same manner of distinct tribes. Among these are two regiments of Bukhteeârees: and these rude mountaineers have been reported by the English officer employed to discipline them, as more tractable and intelligent than any other corps in the service.

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thousand men: and a part of these new troops, who have been latterly trained by English officers, is clothed, armed, and paid by the government, and established on a footing quite distinct from that of the militia.

There is no subject of such importance to any country as the constitution of that army which is to preserve its national independence. The military force of a kingdom must be of a character congenial to that of the government, or it cannot be efficient for its defence. A barbarous despotism is always in danger of perishing by the means which created and support it: and the violence it must use to preserve its existence, keeps its subjects in a rude state; for they will neither labour to produce what force may wrest from them, nor abandon any of those defences which their personal habits, their social union, or their local situation, afford them, against tyrannical power. In civilized communities military tribes cannot be allowed to exist, as they are constituted on principles at variance with such an order of society. In such, therefore, the army is formed from all ranks of subjects; and the force of example and of discipline supplies the want of those habits and sentiments which give energy to the warlike inhabitants of a ruder country: but one consequence of this condition is, that a nation almost entirely entrusts its safety to its army. If that be conquered, it falls; the remainder of the people cannot become soldiers in a day; and from their occupations and peaceable habits they are incapable of that irregular, but effective resistance, which a population of a different character continues to offer to invaders, long after armies have been defeated, and their cities taken.

The despotic monarchs of uncivilized countries are continually desiring to have all the advantages of those permanent establishments, which give prosperity and strength to a well-regulated government, and hoping to attain these, particularly a disciplined army, without any sacrifice of their absolute power. These efforts to obtain objects which are

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incompatible, may succeed so far as to add for the moment to the internal tranquillity of the country, by checking or subduing the turbulent spirit and ambition of feudatory lords and their warlike followers: but a total change in the government must take place, before the new system of defence can do more than paralyze the old. An army cannot be maintained in a state of discipline and efficiency for any length of time, unless its pay be regular, and its equipments complete: and this can never be the case, except in a state where the succession to the throne is settled, where the great majority of the population are of peaceable habits, and where establishments are permanent, and the laws respected, and administered upon principles well understood, and not liable to be altered at the will of the sovereign, and of his delegates. That a regular army, by the influence of its example, and habits of order, may be instrumental in promoting civilization, there can be no doubt; but this change must coincide with many other reforms, or every effort to render it effectual to the great end of national defence will prove abortive, and terminate in disappointment.

The reigning king of Persia has been disposed to try this system, by observing the advantages the Russians derived from their discipline, and believing that his subjects, if clothed, armed, and trained in the same manner, would be more equal to a contest with that nation; and he has probably seen with satisfaction the growth of a force, calculated, from its formation, to increase his power over the more turbulent part of his subjects: but it is perhaps fortunate for his kingdom, that this plan has not yet proceeded so far as to have seriously injured either the feelings or the efficiency of that irregular army, to which Persia (while her government remains unaltered) must trust principally for her defence against the attack of any European power. The means this nation possesses for resisting such an attack are far from inconsiderable; but they would not be improved

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by the partial introduction of a new military system. They consist chiefly of natural obstacles, which nothing but a long time and many radical changes could overcome. The great proportion of the inhabitants must be civilized before they could be subdued. Neither the soil, nor the productions, are of a nature to invite conquest: and the internal condition of Persia, and its position relatively to the most warlike and barbarous nations of Asia, would place the European state, which made such an attempt, in a situation of more difficulty and embarrassment on the day when it appeared to be accomplished, than it was in on the day when it commenced.

Chapter XXII.

THE CLIMATE, PRODUCTIONS, AND POPULATION, OF PERSIA; THE APPEARANCE OF ITS CITIES AND VILLAGES; THE PROGRESS OF ITS INHABITANTS IN THE SCIENCES, FINE ARTS, AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

Persia, now that Georgia is separated from it, may be said to extend from the twenty-sixth to the fortieth degree of north latitude, and from the forty-fifth to the sixty-first degree of east longitude. There is, perhaps, no country of the same extent which has a greater diversity of climate. This difference, however, is more dependent on the elevation and soil, than on the distance from the equator. In the southern part of the kingdom, which includes the districts of Kerman, Lâristan, Fars, and Khuzistan, between the mountains and the shores of the Persian Gulf, the

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heat* in summer is very great; and it is increased by the sandy and barren plains, which present to the traveller nearly the same prospects as those of Arabia.

* The following table of the mean temperature of Abusheher, which lies about the middle of this tract, is taken from observations made by Mr. Jukes in 1803.

MONTH.	TEMPERATURE.			REMARKS.
	Sun-rise.	Two P. M.	Nine P. M.	
January	58	65	62	Prevailing winds northerly; violent thunder and lightning on the 19th; little rain during this month; distant mountains white with snow.
February	62	66	63	An unusual quantity of rain this month; very tempestuous weather, with southerly winds.
March	65½	69	67½	Pleasant weather; a good deal of rain.
April	72	76½	73¾	Pleasant weather; northerly wind prevailing.
May	80½	85½	82½	Distant mountains no longer covered with snow; on the 31st the thermometer rose to 110, in a tent, with a fly. Some rain this month, and thunder and lightning.
June	86½	93	88½	No rain; prevailing winds W. N. W.; light breezes beginning to blow from the land during the night.
July	89½	98	93	No rain; partly regular land winds after nine P. M. till morning; prevailing winds northerly; dews at night towards the end of the month.
August	85	100	89	No rain; north-west winds prevailing; dews at night; thermometer one day in tents up at 115, with a south-east wind; exceedingly oppressive.
Septem.	82½	95	86½	No rain; heavy dews; north-west winds prevailing.
October	75½	87¼	78	A very little rain on the 12th; mornings and evenings at the end of the month pleasant; winds variable, chiefly northerly.
Novem.	63	75	68	Stormy, with thunder, lightning, and rain; distant mountains covered with snow; at the end of the month pleasant weather.
Decem.	54	65½	63	South-easterly winds, and sometimes violent; the weather however usually very pleasant.

Mr. Jukes made observations on the climate of Abusheher in succeeding years, and found them nearly correspond with the above.

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The hot winds, known under the name of Summoom in Asia, and of Sirocco in Europe, are neither frequent nor attended with danger in this region; which is probably owing to the narrowness of the space between the sea and the mountains. During the first two months of summer a strong north-westerly wind prevails over the whole tract; which, at times, blows with such violence that it brings clouds of a light impalpable sand from the opposite shore of Arabia, a distance of more than two degrees. In the autumn the heats are more oppressive than in summer; but in winter and spring the climate is delightful. It is never very cold, and snow seldom falls on the southern side of the range of mountains which divide this from the other parts of Persia. The rains, which are not heavy, fall in the winter, or early in the spring. The prevailing winds are from the north-west and south-east; and rain is almost always accompanied by the latter, which, though often very violent, hardly ever continues above three or four days at a time. Some parts of the interior of Kerman and Lâristan are subject to extreme heats, particularly the districts of the latter bordering on the Desert of Seestan.

The town and district of Shiraz, and the other parts of Fars above the mountains, enjoy a fine climate, and are neither subject to the oppressive heats of the lower and more southern provinces, nor to the severity of cold experienced in the more elevated and northern[p]. The temperature in this part of Fars varies according to the elevation of

[p] The summer at Shiraz is warm, but the heat is never excessive; and the nights, during the hottest weather, is cool and pleasant. In 1800, on one of the hottest days of June, Fahrenheit's thermometer at noon was at 94° in the house, and 100° in a tent. In May 1810, it never rose at noon above 88°, nor was below 74°. In the morning, at eight, it generally stood about 60°. In autumn the heat continued; but in winter it became cold, the thermometer falling considerably below the freezing point. As late as March there was often a hoar frost upon the ground. April is a delightful month, the thermometer at sunrise being generally from 50° to 55°, at two p. m. 80° to 84°, and at nine p. m. about 64°.

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the different vallies; but neither the heat nor the cold is excessive.

The soil in the interior of Fars is in general rich and productive. There are few large streams, but an abundance of rivulets; and while its more mountainous districts afford excellent pasture, the vallies near Shiraz and the other towns produce almost every kind of grain and fruit in great abundance.

As we proceed northward into Irak, the climate improves; and Isfahan, once its capital, and still its principal city, is placed in the happiest temperature[q]. Its inhabitants are strangers to the heat felt during some of the summer months at Shiraz; yet their winter is hardly more severe. Excepting a few weeks in the year, the sky is unclouded and serene. The rains are never heavy, and the snow seldom lies long on the ground. The air is so pure and dry that the brightest polished metal may be exposed to it without being corroded by rust. The regularity of the seasons here appears extraordinary to a person accustomed to a more uncertain climate; for they change perceptibly almost to the hour. When spring commences, there is no spot in the world where Nature assumes a lovelier garb: the clearness of the streams, the shade of the lofty avenues, the fragrant luxuriance of the gardens, and the verdant beauty of the wide-spreading fields, combine with the finest climate to render it delightful; and we are almost disposed to agree with the representation which describes it as having an intoxicating effect upon the senses[r].

[q] Mr. Jukes states that from the average of twenty-seven days, including the end of May and the beginning of June, the thermometer at sunrise, was 56°, at two p. m. 87°, and at nine p. m. 67°.

[r] The Persians have always boasted of the climate of this capital. A merchant, who had travelled to every quarter, was residing at Delhi: on being asked by the Emperor of India which he thought the best spot in the world, he answered, "My own house."—"Your own house!" replied the emperor, disappointed at not receiving the flattery he had anticipated.—

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The northern cities of Irak do not enjoy so favourable a climate. The country about Hamadan is very mountainous, and the winter severe: while the cities of Cashan [s] and Koom, on the verge of deserts, are exposed to heat almost as oppressive in summer, as the countries on the shores of the Gulf. Teheran [t], the king's residence, lies immediately under the range of mountains which divides Irak from Mazenderan, and is exposed to great vicissitudes of climate, and not deemed salubrious.

In Aderbejan the summer is warm, and the winter [u] very

" Yes, please your majesty," was the reply; " and I trust I shall prove it to your satisfaction, You will allow that the fourth climate * is the finest on the earth."—" I do," said the emperor.—" Irak is admitted, I believe, to be the finest province in that climate, and Isfahan is the first city in Irak. Now Saadut-abad is undoubtedly superior to every other ward in Isfahan, and my house is the best in Saadut-abad." The emperor smiled, approving both of his logic and his patriotism.

[s] The extraordinary difference of climate between this city and the neighbouring high Valley of Kohrood has been already noticed.—Vol. I. page 3.

[t] The mean temperature of Teheran in April, by Fahrenheit's thermometer, was 66° at noon. In May it was in the morning 67°; at two p. m. 76°; and at ten p. m. 72°: but the summer is subject to excessive heats; and the winter is very cold. The climate of this city and its neighbourhood is subject to more sudden changes than any other part of Persia. At Dhaung, about 68 miles from Teheran, on the 13th of June, 1810, Fahrenheit's thermometer, which had been at noon 92°, fell at three p. m. to 60°; and at eight p. m. the wind set in from the north-west, and it suddenly became as cold as in winter. The difference in the thermometer between noon and twelve at night was about sixty degrees. The north-west wind which had caused this great change, is sometimes called Baud-e-Shaheryâr, but oftener Baud-e-Caucâsân, or the wind from Caucâsân, a mountainous district to the north of Cazveen. This wind is common in winter, but not in summer; and a storm, when it lasts any time, destroys all the fruit, and does great injury to the grain.

[u] Tebreez, the capital of this province, lies in north latitude 38° 10'. Near this city in June 1810, we found the thermometer sometimes 68° at sunrise, 94° at two p. m. and 56° at ten p. m. The wind blew strong from the eastward. The following account of the climate there is taken from a journal kept by Mr. Campbell during the winter of 1808. On

* By the geography of the ancients, the only system known in Persia, the earth is divided into seven climates.

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severe: and in parts of Kurdistan, though situated more to the south, so great is the effect of its elevation, that the winter may be said to commence with the autumn [x] of the surrounding country.

The northern provinces, Ghilan and Mazenderan, have like the southern, a cold and a warm region. The former is the higher or mountainous part bordering on Irak and Aderbejan; and the latter, the plains along the Caspian. Both these provinces abound in forests and rivers, which are rare in almost every other part of Persia. Silk is cultivated in Ghilan, and in some parts of Mazenderan; but the latter is most celebrated for its rice, which is of a very superior quality; and its producing this grain in abundance is a proof that its soil and climate are essentially different from that of the other parts of Persia. The rains both here and in Ghilan are frequent and heavy, and much of the lower country is described as very damp and unhealthy.

The great province or kingdom of Khorassan contains every variety of climate: all the districts bordering on the

"On the twentieth of October we had a heavy fall of snow, which covered the surrounding country; but it did not remain long upon the ground, for the weather again became mild, and we had no excessive cold until the middle of December: from which period till the end of January, the thermometer, when exposed to the air at night, never rose above zero; and in our rooms at mid-day seldom stood above 18°. January was far the coldest month. The water became solid almost instantaneously in the tumblers on the dining-table. The ink was constantly frozen in our inkstands, though the tables were close to the fire. For at least a fortnight not an egg was to be had, all being split by the cold. Some bottles of wine froze, though covered with straw; and many of the copper-ewers were split by the expansion of the water frozen in them. Towards the end of February the weather became comparatively mild; but on the first of May we had a fall of snow, and such cold weather, that it destroyed the vegetation: afterwards the weather became very warm, and they began to cut their corn on the fifteenth of July."

[x] I have before stated, (Vol. I. page 4,) that on the plain of Hubatoo in Kurdistan, on the 17th of August 1810, the water froze, and the thermometer was at 38° at sunrise. This plain is in latitude 36° north.

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desert which stretches from Irak to Seestan are arid, and subject to extreme heats: and in some parts the inhabitants, during a few weeks in summer, are compelled to avoid exposure, lest they should be destroyed by the pestilential winds, or buried in the clouds of sand[y], with which they

[y] Captain Pottinger, who, in April 1810, passed over a part of the desert which stretches into Balochistan, has the following interesting observation on the subject.

"The soil (if such it may be called) is a very light red sand; the particles of it when taken in the hand, are scarcely more than palpable: the whole is thrown (most probably by winds) into a confused mass of waves of different dimensions, principally running from east to west. Many of these are very remarkable in their formation. On the opposite side to that on which the wind blows, where they often rise nearly perpendicular to a very considerable height, they have at a distance the appearance of a new brick-wall: the side towards the point from which the wind usually blows, (N. W.) slopes off with a gradual declivity to the base (or near it) of the next or preceding wave, which rises in the same extraordinary manner, so as to leave a hollow or path between them, the waves varying in height from ten to twenty feet on each side.

"I had considerable difficulty and fatigue in getting my camels over these waves, especially where we had to ascend the perpendicular or leeward side of them: in several instances we were obliged to desist from the attempt, and go round until a more favourable place or turn in the wave offered. On the sloping or windward side the camels got up pretty well; and as soon as they found the top of the wave giving way with their weight, (which it invariably did if of any size,) they dropt on their knees, and in that manner gradually descended with the sand, which, luckily for us, was so light and loose, that the first camel made a sufficient path for the others to follow without difficulty. This impediment, however annoying, was nothing to the distress suffered, not only by myself and people, but by the camels, from the floating or moving particles of sand; a circumstance I am quite at a loss to account for. On its first appearance, the desert seemed, at a distance of half a mile or less, to be a flat plain from six inches to a foot higher than the summit of the waves. This vapour or cloud appeared to recede as we advanced, and at times was formed completely round us, conveying a most distressing sensation; at the same time we were imperceptibly covered with small sand, which, getting into our eyes, mouths, and nostrils, caused considerable irritation, and was accompanied by severe thirst, greatly increased by the intense heat of the vertical sun, whereby the sand was so heated as to blister our feet, though we had shoes on. My guide said, those who had seen these floating sands, supposed that the violent heat caused the particles to rise, and that they moved through the atmosphere: but as it was per-

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are often accompanied: but Khorassan notwithstanding may be said to possess a fine and healthy climate.

With the exception of the provinces on the Caspian, Persia, though its climate is very various, has everywhere the same dry and pure atmosphere. It has hardly any great rivers, and does not abound in lesser streams, or springs. Hence it has few trees, excepting those which are cultivated. Some of its salubrity is perhaps owing to this cause; it is free from those vapours and exhalations which, though nourishing to vegetable, are often noxious to animal life: but this want of wood, while it diminishes the beauty of the country, is a most serious inconvenience to its inhabitants: and there is justice in the remark of an intelligent Indian, who, on hearing some comparisons between Persia and India injurious to the latter, exclaimed: "You Persians are always boasting of your climate; but yet you have neither shade to shelter you from the sun in summer, nor fuel to save you from the cold of winter!" The temperature of the interior provinces however is delightful and healthy; though several parts of the kingdom are certainly subject to all the extremes of heat and cold, and others are far from salubrious[z].

The soil of Persia varies, from the sandy and unproductive plains on the Persian Gulf, to the rich clayey soil on the Caspian; but it almost everywhere requires water to render it fruitful: and from this cause, more than any other,

fectly still, so far as I could judge, I doubt the correctness of the guide's ideas on the subject; although I certainly remarked that this phenomenon was more common during the heat of the day, than either in the morning or evening; indeed I cannot say I ever saw it at either of the latter times."

[z] The natives of the more arid regions, particularly of the provinces on the Persian Gulf, have almost all complaints in their eyes, occasioned in part by the constant glare of sunshine, and the absence of vegetation; but more perhaps by the want of that cleanliness, which in such climes is beyond everything else conducive to health. Fevers are also frequent in this quarter, but not so much so as in some of the north-western provinces. Irak, Khorassan, and the inland parts of Fars, are among the healthiest parts of Persia: but throughout the robust frames and healthy appearance of the natives are proofs in favour of the climate: it is rare to meet with weakly or deformed persons.

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have the frequent invasions tended so greatly to diminish the produce, and check the population of the country. The destruction of a few water-courses, which have been made with great labour and expense, changes a verdant valley into a desert plain.

Few countries can boast of better vegetable [a] productions, or in greater variety. The gardens vie in beauty and luxuriance with any in the world; but from the parts which are highly cultivated, we may imagine the prosperity Persia might attain to under a just and settled government. Some of its finest and most extensive vallies, which are covered with the remains of cities and villages, are consigned to wandering tribes, and feed their cattle and flocks; and one may travel for a hundred miles, through regions once covered with grain, without seeing more than the few scattered fields deemed sufficient to furnish food for the families which have the range of the domain, and to give an annual supply of green shoots [b] to fatten their horses.

Persia does not abound in valuable minerals; iron and lead, however, are found in many parts. The natives boast that there are also mines [c] of silver and gold; but these have never been worked to any advantage. Persia has always been indebted to other countries for the precious metals: and it is remarkable, that among a people, whose sovereign deems the right of coining his highest privilege, foreign coins should form a considerable part of the currency [d]. No gems of any value are found except the tur-

[a] I took great pains to introduce the potato into Persia; and the soil in many parts proved very favourable to it.

[b] The first shoots of the barley, termed khusseel, are cut in the spring, for the horses.

[c] I have been informed that a mine of gold was discovered in Fars, and one of silver in Aderbejan; but the ores were not in sufficient quantities to pay for working them.

[d] The Turkish piastre, the ducat, and the Venetian, are among the coins current in Persia.

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kois[e]. The Gulf of Persia has several pearl fisheries, particularly that near the Island of Bahrein: but we can hardly consider these as belonging to Persia; for though its monarchs have always claimed the sovereignty of this sea, they have never had a navy to contend with the Arabian rulers of the opposite shore.

Among the tame animals[f] of Persia, the camel, the mule, and the horse, are the most useful and the most excellent. Oxen, which are only used to till the ground, are not abundant; nor are they remarkable for their size or beauty: but in a country where there are neither navigable rivers nor wheel carriages, it is natural that those animals, which are alike essential for the intercourse of peace and the operations of war, should be the object of peculiar care. In all those parts where the soil is arid and sandy, and which are exposed to great heats, camels are preferred for carrying burdens to all other animals. In some districts[g] of Khorassan they constitute the chief wealth of the inhabitants: but in almost all the other provinces mules are in more general use; and their extraordinary strength and activity, combined with their power of enduring fatigue, places this animal next to the horse in the estimation of the Persians, and their breed is an object of hardly inferior care.

A variety of horses are produced in Persia. The inhabitants of the districts on the Gulf still preserve those races

[e] The best turkoises are found in a mine in the mountains near Nishapore, in Khorassan.

[f] The elephant can no longer be numbered among the tame animals of Persia, as there are not above three or four in the kingdom, which have been sent as presents to the king. It is not probable that the elephant was ever indigenous to Persia: but there is no doubt that, from the most early times, they were known and used in war by its inhabitants; and we may conclude, from the sculpture at the Tauk-e-bostan, which was undoubtedly executed in the reign of Baharam the Fourth, that numbers of this noble animal swelled the pomp of the Sassanian monarchs.

[g] The Arab tribes in the countries between the Persian Gulf and the mountains breed a number of camels; but these are of an inferior kind to those produced in Arabia and many provinces of India.

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pure which their ancestors brought from the opposite shore. In Fars and Irak they have a mixed breed from the Arabian, which, though stronger, is still a small horse compared with either the Turkuman or Khorassan breed, the most prized by the soldiers[h]. Both these have also a great portion of Arabian blood: but the original animal of the country where they are reared being larger, and the pasture finer, they attain to greater size and strength. There are perhaps no horses in the world capable of enduring more fatigue than the Turkuman; and when trained, as they usually are, for predatory incursions, they carry their riders for days together the most surprising distances[i]. The Persians were taught to value this race of animals by the inroads of the tribes who bred them; and who used to issue in parties of twenty and thirty from their plains, on the east of the Caspian, and to plunder the villages around the cities of Cashan and Isfahan.

Sheep are very abundant in Persia. The wealth of the wandering tribes consists in their flocks: but they give no attention to improving the breed of this useful animal, which affords them food, and some of the most essential articles of raiment. Though dogs are deemed unclean by Mahomedans, the qualities of this faithful animal have overcome every prejudice; and in Persia, as in other countries, they are admitted to a companionship with man. They are chiefly cherished by the wandering tribes: they watch their flocks, guard their tents, and aid them in their field sports. Some of the dogs used in the chase are among the most beautiful of their species.

[h] The price of horses varies extremely. The common horse is always to be purchased for from fifteen to forty pounds: fine horses, particularly of the Turkuman or Khorassan breed, are in general very dear; a hundred pounds is a common price, and sometimes much more is paid. They are often valued more from their breed than their appearance.

[i] When I was in Persia, in 1800, a horseman on a Turkuman horse, brought a packet of letters from Shiraz to Teheran, a distance of five hundred miles, within six days.

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Like every country of which many parts are desolate, Persia abounds with wild animals; among which are the lion, the wolf, the jackall, the fox, the hare, the wild ass, the argali or wild sheep, the mountain goat, and deer of various kinds. We also find almost all the birds common in countries in the same latitudes.

It is impossible to calculate the population of Persia, from any materials we yet possess; and we are taught to be diffident in offering a conjecture on this subject, by the difficulties in cases where there appear to be all the means for forming a correct opinion. The calculations of the Persians themselves are exaggerated beyond all belief. In a manuscript which professes to be taken from state papers in the reign of Shah Sultan Hoossein, and which details the numbers of the different tribes and citizens, the total amount is stated at upwards of two hundred millions. Chardin, who made his estimate near a century earlier, rates it at about forty millions; but Pinkerton, concluding that the population of Persia and Candahar does not exceed that of Asiatic Turkey, computes it at ten millions; of which he thinks four may be allotted to Candahar, and six to what he terms Western Persia, or, in other words, to the present kingdom: and this estimate is probably not very remote from the truth. It gives about a hundred to the square mile; and, though some parts may far exceed this, several large tracts of desert are totally uninhabited.

There are many and powerful checks upon population in Persia: the unsettled state of the government, its oppression, the continual civil and foreign wars; and above all others, the debauchery and vices of a great proportion of the inhabitants, and the consequent neglect of their offspring. But, on the other hand, when we consider the salubrity of the climate, the cheapness of provisions [k], the rare occur-

[k] Barley is often sold at a farthing a pound, and wheat on the average is not more than a third dearer. A cow costs from sixteen to twenty shillings; a good sheep from six to eight; a goat from two to four: other articles of provision are in proportion.

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rence of famine, the bloodless character of the civil wars, the obligation to marry, and the comparatively small number of prostitutes, we may conclude that the population has not diminished so much within the last century as is generally supposed. Great changes have taken place in the condition of some cities, and many numerous tribes have removed from their former abodes; but in most cases they have only been transplanted to other parts of the kingdom. Within the last twelve years the number of the citizens of Isfahan has nearly doubled[1], in consequence of the excellent local administration, which has induced its former inhabitants to return from the villages near the mountains, where they had taken shelter from oppression.

In Persia, as in other parts of Asia, male offspring are desired beyond all other blessings, even by the lowest ranks; but female children, though not equally esteemed, cannot be deemed a burden on their parents, in a country where celibacy is unknown, and where the poorest are seldom in want of food. Besides, in all Mahomedan countries charity is so strictly enjoined as a religious duty, that a considerable portion of the superfluities of the rich is always distributed among the poor: and this must have its effect in encouraging population, which will always keep pace with the means of subsistence. The circumstance too that Persians are allowed to emigrate at pleasure to adjacent countries, where many of them find profitable employment, is also calculated to add to their numbers, as it removes one check to their increase. Though the population has, perhaps, diminished in a considerable degree since the invasion of the Affghans, it has increased within the last twenty years, and may be said to be rapidly increasing; but this only applies to the Mahomedan inhabitants. The despised

[1] The population, when it was the capital of the Seffavean Kings, was, if we credit the European travellers who visited it, between six and seven hundred thousand. In 1800 it was not supposed to exceed a hundred thousand; it is now calculated at nearly two hundred thousand.

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Jews have much decreased in number; and the persecuted Guebres, who are confined to a quarter of the city of Yezd, are probably over estimated when computed at four thousand families. The colony of Armenians, settled in a suburb of Isfahan, which formerly amounted to two thousand five hundred families, some of them of great opulence, do not now count five hundred, none of whom are wealthy; and this race has diminished in a still greater proportion elsewhere. The Armenians in Persia are calculated, in an estimate made by order of the Bishop of Julfa, to amount to 12,383 souls, not more than a sixth of their number before the Affghan invasion [m].

Persia has in all ages been remarkable for the magnificence of its cities. Isfahan, which was for several centuries the capital, though it has ceased to be the royal residence, is still the most populous of them. When seen from a distance, the lofty palaces, and the domes of the numerous mosques and colleges, derive additional beauty from being half veiled by shady avenues and luxuriant gardens. Though the first impression be weakened by a nearer view, and by contemplating the ruins of former grandeur, enough remains to excite great admiration. The fine bridges over the Zainderood are still in good repair; almost all the colleges have been preserved; many of the former palaces are yet perfect; and some new ones have been erected by the governor, Hajee Mahomed Hoossein Khan, as if to tempt the monarch to make this city once more his residence. No buildings can be more striking than some of these palaces. The front room or hall is in general very open, and supported by pillars, carved and gilded in the most exquisite manner; while the large glass windows, through which it receives a mellow light, are curiously stained with a variety of colours. Before each there is an

[m] I owe this estimate to Captain Frederick, who obtained it from the Bishop of Julfa. The statement is very minute, and has every appearance of being correct.

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space, with a fountain, near which the domestics stand to watch the looks and words of their lord, who is generally seated at one of the windows.

The Châr-Bâgh, or the great avenue, which has received the name of the Four Gardens, has already been described [n]. Several of the private palaces, built on the borders of this avenue, though uninhabited for more than a century, are still in good repair, and their appearance adds to the beauty of the city. The style of the architecture is light and pleasing, though neither regular nor magnificent; and, at a distance, they have a very picturesque effect, from being surrounded with gardens and fine avenues.

Every principal market in Isfahan is covered with an arched roof; and, while ample room is left upon an elevated space on each side for the display of goods, there is a road in the centre for passengers, whether on foot or horseback. The principal caravansaries or inns are excellent solid buildings; and many of the public baths are very splendid, of great size, and paved with marble. The private houses are in general good; those inhabited by the governor and other public officers, or opulent merchants, almost vie with the palaces. Like all Asiatic houses, they present no appearance outwardly but that of high and dead walls, without aperture or window; one large door or gate is usually the only approach. In the interior there is a court, and this, if large, is laid out in walks, the sides of which are planted with flowers and refreshed by fountains. Into this court all the principal apartments of the mansion which are inhabited by men open; and adjoining, but distinct from this court, is a smaller one, around which are the inner apartments belonging to the females of the family. To promote a free circulation of air in summer, every house of this description has a high triangular building [o], which rises far above the

[n] Vol. I. p. 420.

[o] This ventilator is termed Baudgeer, literally a wind catcher.

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terraced roof, and is open at the top; it receives the wind in whatever direction it blows, and by this means the apartments are ventilated: in winter these are warmed by stoves, which are constantly supplied with burning charcoal. Almost every dwelling of any consequence in Isfahan has a garden; this, while it adds to the salubrity and beauty of the city, greatly increases its extent, and reconciles us to the account, that in its more prosperous days, its walls were twenty miles in circumference [p].

Teheran can as yet boast of no splendid edifices except the palace. Kerreem Khan ornamented Shiraz with a bazar or market, equal, if not superior, to any at Isfahan: but Shiraz has not many public buildings; and as there are few gardens and no avenues within its walls, its bare mud terraced houses, when viewed at a distance, give it more the appearance of a ruined, than a flourishing city [q]. Hamadan, so famous under its ancient name of Ecbatana, has few beauties to attract the traveller. The small dome which canopies the remains of Mordecai and Esther, and the modest tomb of the celebrated physician Avicenna, stand near the centre of this city. The former continues to be an object of veneration to the Jews, and the latter is visited by all travellers who respect the memory of learning and genius. Many of the other cities of Persia are as remarkable for the excellence of their buildings as for the romantic beauty of their situation. They usually lie on small rivers or streams, and are surrounded with gardens: almost all have a defence; generally a high mud wall, flanked by tur-

[p] This is Chardin's statement, vol. vii., p. 284. Kæmpfer asserts, that Isfahan, with its suburbs, measures sixteen fersekhs, or about sixty miles: but this is evidently a great exaggeration.

[q] The environs of Shiraz have always been considered beautiful. The palace and garden of Jehân Nemâh, and of Tukht Kujureâh, as well as the gardens at the tombs of Hafiz and Sâdee, are places of public resort. The cluster of gardens at Musjid-e-Burdee extend in length about five miles, and in breadth nearly two: they abound in every variety of the finest fruits.

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rets, and sometimes protected by a deep dry ditch and a rude glacis. In every town there are one or more public caravansaries for the accommodation of travellers. These edifices, which are also found at every stage on the principal roads, are in general of stone or brick: their form is square, and the interior is divided into separate apartments; the walls, which are very high, are usually defended by towers to secure them against the attack of robbers. The houses in Persia are almost all of mud, and have terraced roofs: the inner apartments are usually better than the external appearance indicates. The smaller villages are in general very rudely constructed; and the common huts, instead of a terrace, have often a dome roof, to avoid the necessity of using wood, which throughout this country is a very scarce article.

There can hardly be said to be any roads in Persia; nor are they much required, for the use of wheel carriages has not yet been introduced. Nothing can be more rugged and difficult than the passes over the mountains. The great benefits that would be derived from good roads have often been suggested to the Persians; but they have a reluctance to adopt an improvement which they believe, and not without reason, would destroy one of the natural defences of their country. The only exception is a broad road or causeway, which has been made with great labour over the Kaufelân-koh[r], a lofty and romantic mountain, between Irak and Aderbejan[s]: and this work is attributed to the

[r] The river Koozuloozun winds along the foot of the Kaufelân-koh: a bridge has been built over this fine stream; and the scene has recently acquired more interest from its being the spot where the ingenious traveller, Mr. Brown, was murdered by banditti.

[s] It is usually described as the boundary between these two provinces; but at present the district of Kalkul, which contains near a hundred and fifty villages, and is situated to the south of the mountains, is considered as belonging to Aderbejan.

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Turks, who, when they possessed the latter province, desired to facilitate their further attacks upon Persia.

The more civilized and peaceable classes of the Persians, who dwell in cities, towns, and villages, have made considerable progress both in the useful and the fine arts; but their productions, and the accounts we have received from European travellers, shew that they were as far advanced several centuries ago. This is not so much owing to their internal distractions, or to their prejudices, as to the form and character of their government. Men under a rude despotism can only be happy by reconciling themselves to their actual condition: every effort at improvement is attended with danger. If a new branch of commerce is discovered, the gains of those who embark in it are likely to be over-estimated, and they become exposed to the cupidity of power. If an individual exhibits superior skill as a manufacturer, his labour is liable to be seized by the monarch, or by the provincial despot[t]: and to promulgate new principles of science, however just, subjects the teacher to the hostility of that formidable class, whose rank is grounded upon their supposed pre-eminence in knowledge, and who treat a serious attack upon their dogmas as a crime hardly less than heresy. With these obstacles to prevent improvement, there is nothing to encourage it. Amid the chances to which they are liable, few look further than to providing for their own welfare. Persia affords numerous instances of men led by religion or a desire of fame to expend great sums in charity; and many, even among the lower classes, after acquiring wealth, have wished to perpetuate their name by building caravansaries, baths, and other structures of public utility. But they neither profess nor entertain any feelings connected with the good of their country: all their views are avowedly personal; indeed, from the cha-

[t] I have known several instances of this, even under the reigning monarch, whose rule is comparatively mild and just.

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racter of the government, it is impossible that they should be otherwise. A prince, from the excellence of his disposition, or of his understanding, may indulge in plans of improvement: but even his views are limited by his condition; and he desires to effect the work of half a century [u] in one or two years. His precipitation produces failure; for what depends upon a system, cannot be effected by power. All great improvements are gradual; and even when they are introduced, the society must take the shape suited to them, or they cannot be permanent.

Hence the Persians have made no essential progress in the arts of civilized life. They have appeared for ten centuries to be on the brink of great improvements, but are still stationary: their commerce is nearly the same as it was in the most ancient times. The silks of Ghilan, the wool of Carmania, and several vegetable productions [x], are still exported. The money received for these pays for the shawls of Cashmere, the indigo and printed cottons of India, the sugar of Batavia and of China, and the woollens of England.

In reading the descriptions of the agriculture of Persia by travellers at different periods, we discover little or no alteration. The means now employed to till the ground are probably those which were used in the remotest ages. The Persians have at all periods been well skilled in constructing canals and wells; an essential art in so arid a country; but their chief attention is devoted to their gar-

[u] I observed to a very ingenious Persian employed in casting cannon, that some of the guns he had just made appeared to me imperfect, and that one seemed rather crooked. He replied, it was very true, but it was not his fault: he had been commanded to do the work of ten months in ten days. "But why do not you represent the impossibility of doing so?" said I. He shook his head, and said, he knew better. "My master is an excellent and just man, but he is a Persian prince; and must be obeyed."

[x] There is a considerable export of cotton, gall nuts, and assafœtida, from Persia. The cotton and gall nuts are chiefly the produce of Irak; the assafœtida of Khorassan.

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dens; and their success has been proportionate to their labours. Their vegetables and fruits [y], of which they have a great variety, are excellent. The latter, during the season, form part of the daily food for the lowest classes of the inhabitants [z].

Many of the manufactures are beautiful, particularly the gold and silver brocades, the silks, and the imitation of Cashmere shawls, made of the wool of Kerman. A variety of cotton cloths are made, but not of an equally fine texture with the Indian. There are also several manufactories of glass, and some of a coarse ware resembling china; but these wares have not yet been brought to any perfection.

In the mechanical arts the Persians are not inferior to the other nations of the East; but they do not surpass them. They work well in steel; and their swords, though brittle, are of an excellent temper and edge. They also make fire-arms, and cast cannon; and would soon rival Europeans in this manufacture, if their government, constituted as it is, could give adequate encouragement to men of science, and to the ingenuity of its subjects. In carving and gilding few nations are more skilful. They also enamel upon gold and silver in the most beautiful manner; and their ornaments, made of these metals and precious stones, often display admirable workmanship.

Chemistry, as now understood among us, is unknown in Persia; but alchymy continues to be the favourite pursuit of some of the learned. The philosopher's stone, which during centuries occupied the attention of the wisest men in Europe, still deludes those of the East. The alchymists

[y] In 1800 the finest grapes were sold in the market at Shiraz at less than a halfpenny a pound; other fruits, particularly melons, were still cheaper at Isfahan. In some parts of Persia fruit has hardly any value.

[z] It has been before stated, that extensive fields in the neighbourhood of Isfahan are appropriated to the culture of melons; and the country round is decorated with handsome pigeon-houses, kept up at a considerable expense, to obtain what is deemed the best manure for this favourite fruit.

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make their experiments with the greatest secrecy, lest others should share in the wonderful discovery which they are hourly expecting. This mystery, while it gives an importance to the pursuit in the eyes of the ignorant, affords an opportunity for impostors to practise frauds upon the credulous and wealthy [a].

[a] The mountain of Alwund near Hamadan is supposed to produce some plants that are essential for finding the philosopher's stone; hence many persons in that city waste their life in the pursuit. A few years ago one of its rich inhabitants was assured by a poor man, that he had made the glorious discovery: "But," said he, "if I, who am known to be poor, should suddenly become rich, my secret will be guessed, and I shall be seized and tortured till I reveal it. Now, if you possessed it, there could be no such danger. So I will trust you with my discovery; and if you are satisfied, after repeated experiments, that I have told the truth, you can give me a small portion of the wealth you must acquire, and I will go and end my days in devotion at the shrine of the holy Ali; for, that being under the Turkish government, I shall be safe from the danger to which my good fortune continually exposes me." The whole statement appeared so reasonable, that the hearer granted a ready belief. He was made acquainted with all the materials put into the crucibles except one, termed "the earth of Bâdeoos:" but this, his instructor assured him, was not only obtained at the mountain of Alwund, but in several other parts of Persia, and, being useful for many purposes, was to be found in most markets. He was, however, requested to send his servants to inquire into the correctness of this statement. They went, and brought back some of the earth, having purchased it at a very moderate rate. When every thing was ready, the experiment was made, and gold was produced. The merchant was rejoiced; but, to prevent deception, it was repeated, and with the same result. All doubts were removed; and he was only anxious to pay the purchase money, and get rid of his partner. The man was contented with two thousand tomâns, and proceeded to the Turkish province of Bagdad. The merchant, after he was gone, determined to begin making more gold; but the shopkeepers who had sold the earth of Bâdeoos were gone. He thought it possible, however, that, though that essential ingredient was not in Hamadan, it might be found, as his friend had told him, in other cities. His correspondents at Shiraz, at Teheran, and Isfahan, received letter after letter, desiring them to discover and purchase all the Khâk-e-Bâdeoos they could. No person had ever heard of its name. The rage of the merchant soon led to a detection of the fraud. The cunning fellow, who had duped him, had filed down thirty or forty pieces of gold into some baskets of earth, which he had dignified with a fine name, and given to some accomplices to sell. He was, however, beyond the reach of justice; and the merchant, in addition

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In physic the Persians are still the pupils of Galen and Hippocrates, whom they call Jalenous and Bocrat. They are totally unacquainted with anatomy[b]; and their skill in surgery is consequently as rude as their knowledge of medicine. They class both their diseases and their remedies under four heads: hot or cold, moist or dry: each may contain one or two of these qualities; and the great principle is, that every disease must be cured by a remedy of an opposite quality. If an illness has arisen from moisture, dry remedies must be given; and hot diseases are only to be cured by cooling medicines. This classification of diseases is very arbitrary: but they are in general so bigoted to their practice, that, though disposed to place great confidence in European physicians, they are reluctant to attend to their prescriptions when opposed to their favourite system[c]. The Persian physicians are acquainted with inoculation for the small-pox; but it is little practised, though the ravages of that dreadful disease often threaten whole towns with depopulation; and notwithstanding their suffer ings from this calamity, all the efforts of the humane and skilful surgeons resident amongst them have not yet made them sensible of the great benefit of vaccination[d]. The

to his pecuniary loss, had to bear the ridicule of every one acquainted with the story.

[b] Prince Abbas Meerza sent two young Persians to England some years ago; the one was directed to study painting, the other medicine and surgery. The former unfortunately died. The latter, Hajee Baba, prosecuted his studies in England for some time, and displayed considerable intelligence and industry.

[c] Mr. Jukes, in a MS. on this subject, says, that at Isfahan in 1804, ulcerated sore throats were very common; and that he apprehended many patients died, because the physicians had decided it was a hot disease, and was to be cured by bleeding and other cooling remedies. He also mentions some cases of dysentery, where he in vain recommended mercury. It was a *hot* remedy, and could never be proper where the disease was also hot. Ice and cooling draughts were administered, and several persons died who might have been saved, if their prejudices could have been overcome.

[d] A chief of a tribe assured an officer belonging to the British mission in

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principal men of the kingdom listened with rapture to the accounts they received of this great discovery, and appeared at the moment desirous that their country should benefit by it[e]: but, though a wish to promote the welfare of the people is often expressed, and sometimes felt, by Asiatic rulers, we can hardly expect that steady and persevering ardour for the good of the community, which can alone make the introduction of this great blessing effectual.

What has been said of their knowledge of physic, only applies to the more civilized, who live in cities and towns, and a great part of whom have received some education. Those who dwell in tents are seldom attended by regular professors of this art; but, as their diet is simple, and they take constant exercise, they are subject to few complaints, and for these every old man and woman[f] in the tribe has a remedy. Sometimes, like the ignorant and superstitious in

1810, that he had been told some particular pastoral tribes were exempt from the small-pox; but though positive of the fact, he could give no account of the habits of those supposed to be exempted from this disease: but as many of these tribes have a number of cattle, the assertion had perhaps some foundation in truth.

[e] Nothing can exceed the persevering humanity with which Mr. Jukes endeavoured to introduce vaccination into Persia. His efforts were unremitted for several years: they were defeated more by the apathy of the government than by the prejudices of the people.

[f] In the winter of 1800, almost every person in our mission became blind, from the glare of the snow. The recovery was certain, but tedious: so when blind myself, I listened with delight to a message from the lady of a chief, in whose house I was a guest, that she knew a certain and speedy remedy, provided I would permit her servants to apply it. I expressed my readiness to do so: a large vessel full of snow was put before me, and I was desired to place my face near it; a red hot stone was then thrown into the vessel, and the sudden dissolution of the snow caused a very great perspiration, which was increased by a cloak being pulled at the same moment over my head. This remedy, (which was administered twice,) though very disagreeable, proved efficacious, and my sight was completely restored. They have a similar remedy in North America when the eyes are affected by the snow; it is stated in the Travels of Lewis and Clarke, that, on such occasions, "they sweat the part affected, by holding the face over a hot stone, and receiving the fumes from snow thrown on it."—See the *Quarterly Review*, No. xxiii. page 330.

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other countries, they trust more to their saints than their doctors. When the British mission, some years ago, was in Irak, they saw a few pieces of bread, covered with oil, which were laid upon a rock, as an offering to a saint; and were told that these pieces of bread might enable them to ascertain the number of the sick in the black tents that were pitched near; as this offering was the usual, and almost the only, effort made to get rid of any disease[g] that attacked them.

In cases of surgery the treatment is very rude: but the abstemious habits, and consequent healthy state of body of the patient, often obtain extraordinary credit to the untutored practitioner.

Though the regular physicians generally adhere strictly to the maxims of their Grecian master, as explained and enlarged upon by Aboo Ali-ben-Senna, (the Avicenna of Europeans,) and others of their most learned doctors, they boast the discovery of many new remedies. Salivation is quickly produced, by inhaling a lozenge made of cinnabar and flour, through the common pipe of the country[h]: and this speedy mode of affecting the system is universally practised, where the case is deemed to require it.

In this country, as in all others, there are many quacks in medicine, who obtain money or respect by pretending to cure every complaint[i]. Some of these boast a hereditary

[g] I was told in Kûrdistan, by the chief of a rude tribe, that his followers had only one medicine, a purgative, in which the chief ingredient was the fat of a sheep's tail. "This is boiled," he said, "and given, sometimes in small, at others in large doses. It answers very well in all complaints; and it saves us a great deal of trouble, and the expense of doctors."

[h] Mr. Jukes's MS.

[i] I find in Mr. Jukes's Journal the following remarks on the supposed practice in Persia of cold immersion for fevers:

"Dr. Currie, in the second volume of his Medical Reports, relates the case of Sir John Chardin, when treated by a Persian physician at Lâr. During my residence in Persia, I had never heard of Dr. Currie's system being adopted there; upon reading the case of Chardin, therefore, I was naturally induced to make inquiries if cold water was ever applied to the

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right to certain nostrums. The chiefs of a tribe among the mountains between Persia and the Pachalic of Bagdad, assert that they possess a power, descended through many generations, of curing the ague, a common complaint in that country, by beating the patient in a very unmerciful manner. Their success is said to be great. Those who are skilled in medicine must determine how far this rude treatment can have the effects ascribed to it[k].

body in fevers by the physicians of the present day in Persia. The first person to whom I applied for information, was a well-informed man, who had made medicine his particular study, and was at least acquainted with all the theories of disease, if he had not a very extensive practical knowledge. He told me, that he never had heard of the application of cold water to the body in fever, and spoke confidently of its not being the general practice of the modern physicians in Persia: tepid water to drink, and warm water, in which the leaves of the willow had been infused, to bathe the hands and feet, was more agreeable to their system of treating fevers; except in *quartan fevers*, when he informed me that cold water was sometimes dashed unexpectedly upon the patient, and cured him. In continued fevers, however, he told me, that he had never heard of it; but in very hot weather, he said, it was admissible, and even proper, to keep the patient cool; and that cold water, in which the willow leaves had been infused, might be sprinkled round where the patient lay. When I mentioned to him the case of Sir John Chardin, and the manner in which he had been so successfully treated at Lâr, he seemed quite astonished, and said, 'It could only have been had recourse to by knowing that Sir John was an European from a cold climate, and that cold, therefore, was congenial with his nature: for if,' added he, 'the same person had been a native of a warm climate, the physician would, in all probability, have ordered him the *warm* bath.' I have heard, however, of one physician in Persia, who allowed his patients with continued fever to eat as much *ice* as they chose; but the use of the cold affusion seems to be quite unknown at the present day.

"According to the theory of the Persian physicians, however, it would appear to be very admissible; for it is a favourite maxim of theirs, that diseases are to be cured by remedies directly opposite in their qualities to those of the disease. Now, as in fever the sensible qualities are *heat* and *dryness*, water, which is *cold* and *moist*, ought to be its antidote. Their theories, however, as I have before remarked, are occasionally very arbitrary, and very erroneous. *Ice* and *snow*, for instance, possess very different qualities, according to their belief. They assert that ice is *cold* and *moist*, and that snow is *cold* and *dry*."

[k] I visited Kerrund twice: in 1800 and 1810. The first time, the chief

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In the higher branches of science, the modern Persians know no more than their ancestors. They have a limited knowledge of mathematics, and they study astronomy chiefly for the purpose of becoming skilled in judicial astrology; a science in which the whole nation, from the monarch to the peasant, has the greatest faith. The system of Ptolemy, both as to the forms and motions of the heavenly bodies, and the shape and surface of the earth, is still believed in. Efforts have recently been made to give them better information. An abstract of the Copernican system, and of the Newtonian proofs of its truth, has been translated into Persian; and several persons have laboured to acquire more correct knowledge on this subject: but it is not probable that these rays will soon scatter the darkness in which a prejudiced and superstitious nation has for centuries been involved.

The Persians can hardly be said to know anything of geography; for, besides their erroneous notions about the form of the earth, their knowledge of its surface is limited to an imperfect acquaintance with the kingdoms in their immediate vicinity; nor do they understand enough of surveying to lay down their own country with any degree of exactness.

of that place, Hedâyet Kooli Khan, saw one of the gentlemen of the mission lying in the tent, ill of a quartan ague: he begged I would allow him to cure him; and, being asked what was his remedy, said he would beat him with sticks till he was well. The invalid declined the experiment; at which the chief was not a little offended, and brought a number of his followers to swear that they had been recovered by his blows. When I last visited this place, Hedâyet Kooli was dead. He had left ten sons; the eldest, Mahomed Ali Khan, was chief of the tribe. I asked him if he had inherited his father's knowledge of medicine. "My practice," he said, "is equally successful. I tie them up by the heels, when the cold fit is on, and bastinado them most severely, scolding them at the same time, so as to produce heat and terror, instead of a cold fit."—"And you succeed?"—"Always."—"Have you any patients but your own followers?"—"A few: those in the neighbourhood who have any sense, come to me when they are ill of the ague." "Can any of your brothers cure fevers?"—"No! no!" replied he quickly, "that is a gift or privilege confined exclusively to the head of the family."

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On the introduction of Mahomedanism, the Persians received all the learning of the Arabians of the seventh century; and soon after, their writers, in every branch of literature, attained an excellence which has not been surpassed by their descendants. Their works on theology are very numerous; and it has already been shown[1] that they are well skilled in all the arts of polemics. The style of their most esteemed historians, though often hyperbolical, is generally correct, and sometimes eloquent. Like all Eastern nations, the Persians delight in tales, fables, and parables: for where liberty is unknown, and power unlimited, knowledge must be veiled[m]. The ear of a despot would be wounded by direct truths; and genius must condescend to appear in the only form in which it would be tolerated.

The Persians derive their ethics from the Greeks. Aristotle is their master; and it would be almost sacrilege to doubt his principles. One of their ablest writers in this branch is Naser-ood-deen, who has been before mentioned[n]. His celebrated treatise on morals contains a series of philosophical dissertations upon wisdom, propriety of conduct,

[1] Vol. II. page 241.

[m] The Persians boast of the great good which their most eminent moralist Sadee has produced, by his rare union of fancy, learning, urbanity, and virtue: his tales, which are appropriate to almost every conceivable event, convey the most useful lessons; and his maxims have acquired an authority almost equal to laws. His great object was to recommend good deeds to men, and justice and clemency to their rulers. In one of his admonitory odes to the former, he beautifully exclaims,

"Haif bur ân ke ruft ou kâr nâ sâkht:
"Kous-e râhillet zud ou bâr nâ sâkht."

"Alas! for him who is gone and has done no good deed:
"The trumpet of march has sounded, and his load is not bound on."

In his lessons to monarchs he has the following impressive stanza:

"Rahim koon ou be fouj der tuskheer bâsh.
"Dilhâee aullum gheer ou Shâhe Aullumgheer bâsh."

"Be merciful, and you will gain victories without an army.
"Seize the hearts of mankind, and become the conqueror of the world."

[n] Vol. I. p. 251.

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happiness, virtue, and the means of averting and of remedying evil. In such treatises by Persian writers, the reader is often amused and instructed by a series of anecdotes so classified as to illustrate every virtue and vice.

The whole Persian nation is devoted to poetry. They are at that stage of civilisation when the mind dwells with the greatest fondness on the visions of the imagination; and their poets are worthy of the admiration they are so forward to grant them. In the noble epic poem of Firdousee, so often referred to in the early part of this history, the most fastidious European reader will meet with numerous passages of exquisite beauty. The narrative is generally very perspicuous; and some of the finest scenes are described with simplicity and elegance of diction. In the opinion of the Persians, his excellence lies in the description of combats and battles: but, to those who are offended by exaggeration, the tender parts of his work will be the most pleasing, as they are the freest from this defect of Eastern writers. The most extravagant flights of Firdousee, however, do not excite that disgust which we receive on reading any of his countless imitators; for so many of his personages are endowed with supernatural powers, that we are almost reconciled to hear their deeds related in a language which appears to be mere bombast, when used of beings of an inferior order.

As an epic poet, Nizâmee is deemed next in rank to Firdousee; and the subject of his principal work, the Life of Alexander the Great, has afforded him ample scope for all the vigour of his genius and the luxuriance of his imagination. Among the didactic poets Sadee certainly ranks the highest: but it is difficult to class the numerous candidates for superiority in those mystical and lyrical productions in which this nation has in all ages delighted. The Musnavee of Jellâl-ood-deen *, the Poems of Jâmi, and the

* He is generally called the Moollah of Room; while Hâfiz is usually

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Odes of Hâfiz, are perhaps the most popular; but the names of Rudiki, Anveri, and several others, stand nearly on an equal rank; and some more modern writers have attained great eminence on this favourite theme. Many of these poems are remarkable for harmony of numbers and richness of fancy; but they all abound with the most extravagant passages; and the enraptured dreams of their authors can only be esteemed beauties by men who deem their poet inspired, and who regard his most unintelligible song as the gleaming of a superhuman knowledge, far beyond the comprehension of the profane and unenlightened. Many discussions have arisen as to the real and mystical meaning of these writers, and particularly of Hâfiz, whose odes are sung to excite the young to pleasure, and chanted to remind the old of the raptures of divine love. Among many classes of Soofees, the natural earthly feelings of man, and the longings of his soul after its Creator, are deemed to be inseparable; and, with a poet of this persuasion, it was easy for the subjects to be so blended, as to render it impossible to distinguish whether he is singing of earthly or of heavenly joys.

Among the innumerable volumes of Persian poetry, there is not one of any length that can be called a satire. This is owing to the condition of society not admitting of that freedom of observation and expression which can alone give excellence to this kind of writing. Firdousee, under the

known by the title of Khaujah. The Persians conceive that the former far surpasses the latter in penetration and judgment. I have heard their opinion of the two Soofee poets illustrated by the following anecdote. "A learned person was asked how it came that the author of the Musnavee and Hâfiz, two Soofees, had, in the commencement of their works, expressed themselves so oppositely on the subject of divine love; Hâfiz having said, 'The path of love appeared at first easy, but afterwards proved full of difficulties:'—while, according to Jellâl-ood-deen, 'Love at first appeared like a murderer, that he might alarm all who were without his pale.' The learned man replied, with a smile, 'That which the Moollah saw at first, was only found out at last by the Khaujah.'"

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impulse of disappointment, wrote some satirical verses upon Mahmood of Ghizni; but they are only remarkable, as showing the keenness with which he felt neglect, and the bitterness of his resentment. Anveri, and several other eminent poets, have written satirical epigrams, many of which have no little point and severity. An unknown author has written a satire of some merit upon money [P], as the universal passion: but even this has no title to the name of a satire. Some of the Persian songs are very beautiful: they are chiefly on local subjects. Many of the lesser odes of the most celebrated poets may be included among their songs, as they are set to music, and sung in all assemblies.

The Persians deem music a science; but they do not appear to have made much progress in it. They have a gamut and notes, and different kinds of melody, adapted to various strains, such as the pathetic, voluptuous, joyous, and warlike: the voice is accompanied by instruments, of which they have a number; but they cannot be said to be further advanced in this science than the Indians, from whom they are supposed to have borrowed it. Their strains are often pleasing, but always monotonous, and they want that variety of expression which is among the charms of this art.

In painting the Persians seem to have advanced little within the last three centuries, for several of the figures in the palaces at Isfahan, built in the reign of Shah Abbas, appear as well executed as those of the most eminent modern artists. Their colours are very brilliant; and in portrait painting they usually succeed in taking likenesses. Some of their lesser drawings, which are highly glazed and painted

[P] In this poem almost every condition of life is described. The satirist, after detailing the professed liberal objects of the persons labouring in their different vocations, concludes every character with the following line:

"Hummâ uz pai een ast ke zer mee khauud."

"It is all from this, that the man wants money."

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on wood, display equal industry and taste; but they are yet unacquainted with the rules of perspective, and the principles of just proportion.

From what has been said about the actual condition of the useful and fine arts in Persia, it appears that the people is neither in a state of improvement, nor has it fallen behind their forefathers. All that men have gained under a powerful and wise monarch, has been lost under his weak or barbarous successors. If a period of peace has invited intelligent strangers to the shores of this kingdom, they have soon been banished by the return of war. Knowledge in Persia has hitherto ebbed and flowed with the changes in its political situation, and it must continue to do so as long as the nation is under the depressing influence of an unsettled despotism.

Chapter XXIII.

THE MANNERS AND USAGES OF THE PERSIANS.

In describing the manners and usages of a nation, we must begin with those exalted ranks, whose example has always so powerful an influence on the rest of the community. The customs and ceremonies of the Persian Court have not undergone any substantial change within the last three centuries. That the reigning family are the hereditary chiefs of a warlike tribe, and still preserve many of the usages of that condition, is almost the only essential difference between their personal habits and the customs of their court, and

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those of the Seffavean kings, whose manners and usages have been minutely described by European travellers [q].

After the time of Shah Abbas the Great, the princes of the blood used to be immured in the haram, where their education was intrusted to women and eunuchs; and, until the death of the king, his destined successor has not been known. The son of the lowest slave in the haram was at the beginning of this period no less eligible to succeed to the throne than the offspring of the proudest princess. In Tartary the usage has always been different. Great respect has invariably been paid there to the family of the mother. For intermarriages are one of the principal means of improving the friendship, and terminating the feuds, between the tribes; and unless the child of a high-born mother, who was a legitimate wife, had prior claims to the child of a common concubine, these relations must have proved sources of discord instead of union. The Kajirs, proud of their Tartar, or, as they term it, Turkish origin, maintain the usage of their ancestors. Mahomed Hoossein Khan, the grandfather of the present king, when he took refuge with a Turkuman chief, proudly refused to wed his daughter [r], because she was not of sufficiently high descent to give birth [s] to a race that were to contend for a throne; and the present king has declared his second son, Abbas Meerza [t], his heir, on the ground of his claims by his mother, who is a high-born female of the same tribe as the sovereign.

According to the modern practice, the princes of the

[q] Chardin and Kæmpfer have both minutely described the forms and manners of the court of Persia under the Seffavean kings.

[r] Persian MS.

[s] It is a common saying among the Tartar tribes, that "a man should choose his wife from a noble family, that his sons may emulate their maternal uncles."

[t] The mother of the king's eldest son, Mahomed Ali Meerza, was a Georgian.

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blood are not immured in the haram any longer than they require female attendance and maternal care. They early learn the forms of their religion: at three or four years of age they can repeat a few short prayers, and are perfect in their genuflections and mode of holding their hands when praying. They are also most carefully instructed in all that belongs to external manner. They are taught how to make their obeisance to a superior; how to behave to a person of equal rank, or an inferior; as, also, how they are to stand in the presence of their father and king, how they are to seat themselves, if desired, and how to retire. These forms are of great consequence at a court where everything is regulated by ceremony; and it is not unusual to see a child five years old as mature in his manners, and as grave in his deportment, in a public assembly, as the oldest person present. When the young prince is between seven and eight years of age, he begins to learn Arabic and Persian. As soon as he knows the alphabet of the former language, he reads the Koran; after which he is instructed in the essential tenets of his religion. He is early imbued with the importance of those doctrines which distinguish the Sheah faith from the Soonee; and one of his first lessons is to regard the latter with abhorrence. When he is considered well grounded in religion, Persian books are put into his hands; and the works of Sadee are expected at once to give him a taste for fables and poetry, and to inspire him with a desire of virtuous fame. He is also led through a superficial course of grammar, logic, sacred law, and philosophy; but his progress in these higher branches of a Persian education depends chiefly upon his own disposition. He does not learn more than to write and read with ease and fluency, unless he is inclined to study, which is not unfrequently the case; for superior attainments as a scholar[u] always add to his reputation.

[u] The reigning king is said to be a good scholar. He is also a poet. I have a dewan, or book of odes, of which he is the reputed author.

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The greatest care is taken to instruct Persian princes in all their bodily exercises. While yet children, they are trained to the use of arms; and when six or seven years of age, will ride with grace and boldness. They are often betrothed when very young, and sometimes married long before they attain the age of puberty: after which, the number of their wives and concubines depends upon their means of supporting them. When a prince is raised to the throne, his time is divided between his public duties, the pleasures of the haram, and his amusements; the portion he bestows on each of these will vary with his peculiar inclinations, his age, and his habits. However, a short sketch of the manner in which the reigning monarch passes his time, will convey a sufficient idea of the habits which are deemed suitable to his station.

His religious duties, which no King of Persia can openly neglect, require him to rise early. As he sleeps in the interior apartments, which no male is allowed to approach, his attendants are either females or eunuchs. After he is dressed with their aid, he sits for an hour or two in the hall of the haram, where his levees are conducted with the same ceremony as in his outer apartments. Female officers[x] arrange the crowd of his wives and slaves with the strictest attention to the order of precedency[y]. After hearing the reports of the persons intrusted with the internal government of the haram, and consulting with his principal wives[z],

[x] There is a number of female officers in the haram, whose titles and duties are nearly the same as those of the persons entrusted with the care of ceremonies, and the charge of maintaining order in the public court.

[y] According to the best account I was able to obtain, the fair strangers, if any have been brought, first pay their obeisance by a low bow, and are placed where their royal master can best view their charms. Afterwards the Georgian slaves and numerous mistresses are ranged before him, agreeably to their respective ranks.

[z] When the king is seated on his throne in the public hall of his haram, none but the most favoured and highest born of his legitimate wives are allowed to sit in his presence. It is said that only two of the wives of the

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who are generally seated, the monarch leaves the interior apartments. The moment he comes out, he is met by officers in waiting, and proceeds to one of his private halls, where he is immediately joined by some of his principal favourites, and enters into familiar converation with them: all the young princes of the blood attend this morning levee to pay their respects. After this is over, he calls for breakfast. The preparing his meals is superintended by the Nauzir or chief steward of the household. The viands are put into dishes of fine china [a], with silver covers, and placed in a close tray, which is locked and sealed by the steward. This tray is covered with a rich shawl, and carried to the king, when the steward breaks the seal, and places the dishes before him. Some of the infant princes are generally present, and partake in this repast. The chief physician is invariably in attendance at every meal. His presence is deemed necessary, the courtiers say, that he may prescribe an instant remedy, if anything should disagree with the monarch: but this precaution, no doubt, owes its origin to that suspicion which is continually haunting the minds of such as exercise despotic power.

The manner in which the king discharges his ordinary public duties, has already been described [b]. When these are performed, he usually retires to the haram, where he sometimes indulges in a short repose. Some time before sunset he always makes his appearance in the outer apartments, and either again attends to public business, or takes a ride. His dinner is brought between eight and nine, with the same precautions and ceremonies as at breakfast. He

present king enjoy this privilege; the mother of the heir-apparent, Abbas Meerza, and the daughter of Ibrahim Khulleel Khan, formerly chief of Sheshâh.

[a] It is deemed wrong for a rigid Mahomedan to have his victuals served in dishes of silver or gold: but this rule is not always observed.

[b] See vol. II. page 308.

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eats, like his subjects, seated upon a carpet, and the dishes are placed on a rich embroidered cloth spread for the occasion. Some of the former kings used to indulge openly in drinking wine; but none of the reigning family have yet outraged the religious feelings of their subjects by so flagrant a violation of the laws of Mahomed. Bowls filled with sherbet, made of every species of fruit, furnish the beverage of the royal meals; and there are few countries where more pains are bestowed to gratify the palate with the most delicious viands. After dinner, the king retires to the interior apartments, where it is said that he is often amused till a late hour by the singers and dancers of his haram. It is impossible, however, to speak of his occupations after he passes the threshold of his inner palace. He is there surrounded by a scene calculated beyond all others to debase and degrade the human character. He sees only emasculated guards, and their fair prisoners. He hears nothing but the language of submission or of complaint. Love cannot exist between beings so unequal as the monarch and his slave; and vanity must have overcome reason, before the fulsome adulation of pretended fondness can be mistaken for the spontaneous effusions of real affection. The harams are governed by the strictest discipline; and this must be necessary to preserve the peace of a community, where the arrogance of power, the pride of birth, the ties of kindred, the intrigues of art, and the pretensions of beauty, are in constant collision.

The usual routine of the king's life is often interrupted by urgent public affairs, and sometimes by amusement. The reigning family has hitherto disdained those enervating and luxurious habits which led the last Seffavean monarchs to confine themselves to their harams. They not only attend personally to public business, but are continually practising manly exercises, and engage in field sports with all the ardour of a race who cherish the habits of their

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Tartar ancestors. The present king is an expert marksman and an excellent horseman: few weeks pass without his partaking in the pleasures of the chase [c].

The king has always a historiographer and a chief poet. The one writes the annals of his reign: the other, who has a high rank at court, composes odes in his praise, and, with grateful ardour, celebrates the munificence of his patron. A giant and a dwarf were at one period of the present reign part of the royal establishment; and it is never without a jester, who enjoys an extraordinary latitude of speech, and, both in his dress and manner, assumes the habit and appearance of folly. It is usual to laugh at the witticisms of these jesters, even when they are the most severe; and the sovereign himself respects their privilege. The tribe to which Kerreem Khan belonged, speak a language which, from its rudeness, is denominated "the barbarous dialect [d]." As this prince was one day sitting in public, he commanded his jester to go and bring him word what a dog, that was barking very loud, wanted. The courtiers smiled at this sally of their monarch. The jester went, and, after appearing to listen for some time with profound attention, re-

[c] The favourite game is the deer, of which there are several kinds. That which is usually hunted is the antelope, which may be termed the fleetest of quadrupeds. A common mode of hunting them is with hawks and dogs, which are trained to aid each other. Two hawks are flown when the deer is at a great distance: they soon reach it, and strike one after the other at its head. This annoys and interrupts the rapid flight of the animal so effectually, that the dogs come up and seize it. It is also usual to surround the antelope with a number of horsemen, each holding a dog in a slip. When the antelope tries to escape, the aim is to intercept it; and though no dog, however swift, can reach it at the commencement of the chase, it is turned out by fresh ones being continually slipped. In this mode of hunting, the object is to bring the game near the king, who usually holds a favourite dog in a slip. Hawking is a favourite amusement. Bustards, hares, herons, and partridges, are the usual game. In this sport the king generally carries a hawk on his hand. Shooting game is also very common. The Persian soldiers are excellent marksmen; and this is an accomplishment which it is a disgrace not to possess.

[d] *Kuj subán*, literally "the crooked tongue."

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turned, and said with a grave air, "Your majesty must send one of the chief officers of your own family to report what that gentleman says: he speaks no language except 'the barbarous dialect,' with which they are familiar, but of which I do not understand one word." The good-humoured monarch laughed heartily at this jest, and gave the wit a present. This anecdote, to which many similar might be added, shows that there is little difference between the office of jester at the modern court of Persia, and that which some centuries ago existed at every court in Europe. A resemblance even in trifling forms merits attention, as it may lead to conclusions on the progress of knowledge and the condition of society: and from the character of their amusements we may perhaps judge as correctly, as from their more serious occupations, of the degree of civilization which a people has attained.

In the court there is always a person who bears the name of "story-teller to his majesty;" and the duties of his office require a man of no mean acquirements. Though passionately fond of public exhibitions, the Persians have none that deserve the name of theatrical entertainments: but, though strangers to the regular drama, their stories are often dramatic; and those whose occupation is to tell them, sometimes display so extraordinary a skill[e], and such varied powers, that we can hardly believe, while we look on their altered countenances and listen to their changed tones, that it is the same person, who at one moment tells a plain nar-

[e] Derveish Seffer of Shiraz is one of the best narrators of stories and reciters of verses, that I knew in Persia. In 1800, when he was one day commencing a tale, two gentlemen rose to go away. Seeing him look disappointed, I observed, that the cause of their departure was their inability to enjoy his story, from being unacquainted with the language. "I beg they will stay," he exclaimed, "and you shall see my power reach them in spite of their want of knowledge of Persian." They remained; and the changes of his countenance and tones had the effect he expected. They were delighted with the humourous part of his story, and moved with the pathetic.

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rative in his natural voice, then speaks in the hoarse and angry tone of offended authority, and next subdues the passions he has excited by the softest sounds of feminine tenderness. The art of relating stories is attended both with profit and reputation. Great numbers attempt it, but few succeed. It requires considerable talents, and great study. None can arrive at eminence except men of cultivated taste and retentive memory. They must not only be acquainted with the best ancient and modern stories, but be able to vary them by introducing new incidents, which they have heard or invented. They must also recollect the finest passages of the most popular poets, to aid the impression of the narrative by appropriate quotations. The person whose office it is to amuse his majesty with these stories, is always in attendance. It is equally his duty to beguile the fatigue of a long march[f], and to soothe the mind when disturbed by the toils of public affairs; and his tales are artfully made to suit the disposition and momentary humour of the monarch. Sometimes he recites a story of the genii; at others he speaks of the warlike deeds of former sovereigns, or of the love of some wandering prince. Often the story is of coarser materials, and the king is entertained with low and obscene adventures.

In no court is more rigid attention paid to ceremony. Looks, words, the motions of the body, are all regulated by the strictest forms. When the king is seated in public, his sons, ministers, and courtiers, stand erect, with their hands crossed, and in the exact place belonging to their rank. They watch his looks, and a glance is a command. If he speaks to them, you hear a voice reply, and see the lips move, but not a motion or gesture betrays that there is ani-

[f] In 1810, I had the good fortune to be accompanied during part of my journey by Moollah Adenàh, the king's story-teller. He proved a most agreeable companion; the fatigue of the longest marches was forgotten in listening to his tales.

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mation in any other part of the frame[g]. The monarch often speaks in the third person: "The king is pleased," "The king commands." His ministers usually style him "The object of the world's regard." They are as particular in forms of speech as in other ceremonies; and superiority and inferiority of rank, in all their gradations, are implied by the terms used in the commonest conversations.

Nothing can exceed the splendour of the Persian court on extraordinary occasions. It presents a scene of the greatest magnificence, regulated by the exactest order. To no part of the government is so much attention paid as to the strict maintenance of those forms and ceremonies, which are deemed essential to the power and glory of the monarch; and the high officers[h] to whom this duty is allotted, are armed with the fullest authority, and are always attended by a number of inferiors, who carry their commands into the most prompt execution.

The arrival of a foreign embassy is deemed one of the occasions when the king ought to appear in all his grandeur. The ceremonies of their reception appear to have been substantially the same in all ages; and the present monarch has endeavoured to vie with the most magnificent of his predecessors in this respect. The foreign minister advances with his suite and escort to one of the interior gates of the palace. The moment that he reaches the precincts of the royal abode, all is complete silence: even the horses, as if trained to the scene, hardly move their heads. When he dismounts, he is conducted into a small apartment, where he is met by one of the principal officers of government. After being seated there for some minutes, the king is announced to be upon the throne, and the ambassador pro-

[g] If the king would speak to a person at a distance, he commands him to advance; but this command must be repeated several times, for the person stops at every three or four steps, as if fearful of coming too near.

[h] Their names and duties are little altered since the period of Chardin and Kæmpfer, who have both given minute accounts of them.

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ceeds to the hall of audience. That splendid room, the floor of which is raised about eight feet from the ground, is situated in a garden, intersected by regular alleys and fountains: from the throne to the entrance of the gardens, the princes, ministers, nobles, courtiers, and royal guards, are ranged in their respective ranks; but the splendour of these officers, who are robed in their richest habits, is eclipsed in a moment, when the eye glances at the sovereign, whose throne and dress are covered with the most precious jewels. As the ambassador advances between two officers, whose gold-enamelled wands are the badges of their high stations, he is twice required to make an obeisance[1]. When near the throne, the lord of requests[k] pronounces his name, and that of the sovereign by whom he is sent. The king says, in reply, "You are welcome;" and the foreign minister proceeds to take his seat in the same room, but at some distance from the king. After the ceremony of delivering the letter or credentials is past, the monarch repeats that he is welcome, and generally enters into a conversation calculated to make his visitor feel perfectly at his ease[l], and to substitute more pleasing impressions for those which the imposing pomp of the scene had inspired. If the am-

[1] The Persian officers made a very low bow at two appointed places, before they came to the hall in which the king was seated. I took off my hat at each of these places, and made a bow to his majesty when I entered the hall.

[k] The Yeshkâgâssee-bâshee.

[l] I have exactly described the ceremonies which occurred on my first visit to Persia in 1800. After I had been seated a short time, the king with a smile said, "We will talk of business hereafter; you must now satisfy me, Captain Malcolm, about the correctness of a report which I have heard, but cannot believe. Is it true that the king of England has only one wife?" I told him it was true, and that no Christian prince could have more. "But he has mistresses, then?" he said. I replied, that the king of England was remarkable for his attention to virtue and morality, and had none. He laughed heartily, and said he should not like to be a king where such usages prevailed. This sally was intended to place me at my ease, and to do away the formality of a visit of introduction.

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bassador has any presents to offer, they are received without any show of gratification; the most extraordinary works of art must not appear to excite surprise, or to fix the attention of the monarch, when they are publicly presented. The forms of his condition require that he should display a seeming indifference to all such objects, and should suppress his pleasure or wonder, till he can indulge it without witnesses.

As there are no wheel carriages[m] in Persia, the king always rides[n], unless prevented by indisposition; when, if forced to move, he is carried in a litter[o] suspended between two mules. His tents and portable pavilions are very magnificent. They are surrounded with a high tent-wall, which encloses both the outer and inner apartments. The same forms and usages are observed when he is in the field as at the capital; but on active service his female train is necessarily greatly reduced. Nâdir Shah prohibited the chiefs of his army from encumbering its march with their numerous females[p]; and he himself gave an example of moderation which has been more praised than imitated.

The dress of the Seffavean kings was as splendid as that of the present; but the costume is much changed. It is now the fashion in Persia to wear the beard long, and the head is covered with a cap instead of a turban. The upper part of the garments is made to fit the body very close, but the lower is invariably loose[q].

[m] I made the king a present of a handsome curricle, with which he was at the moment much delighted.

[n] The king has two or three elephants; and for some years past has appeared seated upon one of them, when attending the annual races at the festival of Nou Rôze.

[o] It is in a litter of this kind, called Tekht-e-Revân, and upon large panniers, called Kujâwul, carried by camels, that the ladies who attend the king when he takes the field are conveyed.

[p] According to a MS in my possession, he limited his chief officers to one wife when in the field, and was himself content with two.

[q] The Persians are much disgusted with the European usage of uncovering the head, and of wearing the lower garments tight.

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To no part of the royal establishment is more attention paid than to the horses. They are placed under the charge of an officer of rank, styled Meer-a-Khoor, or "the lord of the stable." The finest colts from every part of the kingdom are sent to the king; and from these he selects what are deemed the best, for his own riding. The charger on which he is mounted is richly caparisoned; and a number of others, with gold-embossed saddles and bits, are led before him[r], and, when he is travelling, form the most magnificent part of his state. The king's stable is deemed one of the most sacred of sanctuaries: this usage continues in force; during the present reign, a nobleman[s] of the first rank, who had aspired to the throne, took refuge in the royal stable, and remained there till he obtained his pardon. The military tribes have always regarded this sanctuary with the most superstitious reverence. "A horse," they say, "will never bear him to victory by whom it is violated[t]."

The kings of Persia have always been very observant of the forms of religion. They say their prayers at the appointed hours: as it is the habit of Mahomedans to do this in public, the neglect of it would excite notice; and nothing would tend more to weaken their authority than a belief that they were irreligious. They sometimes attend divine worship in the principal mosque of the capital; and, like their subjects, pay their devotions, whenever they have an

[r] Every officer of rank in Persia has one or more led horses.

[s] The late Sulimân Khan Kajir, who was first cousin to the reigning king.

[t] In one Persian MS. all the misfortunes of Nâdir Meerza, the grandson of Nâdir Shah, are attributed to his having violated the stable by putting to death a person who had taken refuge there. The same writer remarks, "The monarch or chief in whose stable a criminal takes refuge must feed him as long as he stays there; he may be slain the moment before he reaches it, or when he leaves it; but when there, a slave who has murdered his master cannot be touched. The place of safety is at the horse's head; and if that is tied up in the open air, the person who takes refuge is to touch the head-stall."

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opportunity, at the sepulchres of those sainted persons who are buried within their dominions. As Sheahs, they profess great veneration for the memory of Ali and his sons; but not being able to visit their tombs, which are within the Turkish territories, they content themselves with sending rich presents to those shrines. It is also an object of ambition to be buried at those sacred places. The body of Aga Mahomed Khan, the late king, was sent to Kerbelah, that it might be interred near the dome which canopies the remains of the sainted Imâms, Hoossein and Hussun.

It has been before stated that the Eed-e-Nou Rôze, or "the feast of the vernal equinox," is to this day observed with as much joy and festivity as by the ancient Persians. This single institution of former days has triumphed over the intolerant bigotry which destroyed the religion it was grounded on; and the Mahomedans of Persia have chosen rather to be upbraided with the impious observance of what their enemies term a usage of infidels[u], than to abolish a feast so cherished by their ancestors. They have however discovered another reason for celebrating this day; it is the anniversary of the elevation of Ali to the caliphate. There are many fabulous accounts of the origin of the feast of Nou Rôze. The Guebres, or worshippers of fire, who were the former inhabitants of Persia, computed by the solar and not by the lunar year: theirs was divided into twelve months; and every day of the month, as well as the month itself, was named after one of their angels. The ancient kings used to dress in a particular robe every day. Scarlet, richly embroidered, or rather woven with gold, was the dress for the day Hormuzd[x], the Nou Rôze, or vernal equinox. Many reasons are stated, to show why this day is kept as a festival. God, one author[y] says, began the creation upon it, and ordered the planets to move in their various orbits.

[u] The Turks continually upbraid the Persians with their observing a feast instituted by the worshippers of fire.

[x] Persian MS.

[y] Persian MS.

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Another affirms, that Jemsheed[z] built the palace of Persepolis, and entered it on this day, which he ordered in future to be kept as a joyous feast. Many other equally fabulous accounts are given of the origin of this festival; but the fact is, it is the opening of the spring, the day on which winter is over, and the season of gladness commences. It is the custom for the king to march out of his capital on the Nou Rôze, attended by his ministers, nobles, and as many of his army as can be assembled. The ceremonies of the day commence with a review; and then the tribute and presents of all the rulers and governors of the different provinces are laid at the foot of the throne, which is placed in a magnificent tent pitched for the purpose in an open plain. The king remains in camp several days, which are passed in joy and festivity. Horse-races[a] are among the amusements; and the monarch, whose favourite horses generally win, gives presents to the fortunate riders: he also confers dresses of honour on all the chief nobles and officers of his government; who give similar marks of their regard to their servants and dependants. This feast is kept with equal demonstrations of joy in every part of the kingdom. It continues nearly a week[b]; but the first day is the most important.

[z] According to another account, equally fabulous, Jemsheed, whose name was originally *Jum*, one day pitched his jewel-ornamented throne on an eminence, in the province of Aderbejan; and, after placing the crown upon his head, sat down with his face towards the rising sun, the reflection of which, from the jewels of his crown, shed a lustre that dazzled all around, and they exclaimed *sheed*, *lustre*. This title was added to his name; and the day was kept as a feast.

[a] Horse-racing has always been deemed worthy of the patronage of the Kings of Persia; and there are annual races, not only at the capital, but in all the principal cities. The distance is according to the age of the horses; but it is seldom less than seven miles, or more than twenty-one. The object is not so much to try the speed as the strength of the horses, and to discover those which can be depended on for long and rapid marches. They are always ridden by boys between twelve and fourteen. Mares never run, nor are they used in Persia for military purposes, except by the Arab tribes, who, like their brethren in Arabia, give them a preference.

[b] The exact time of its continuance does not appear fixed. The rejoicings sometimes last six days, at others only three; and those who have

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On this all ranks appear in their newest apparel; they send presents of sweatmeats [c] to each other; and every man kisses his friend on the auspicious morning of the Nou Rôze.

The Persian kings have always attached great importance to the privilege of having a band of musicians, and of displaying particular banners at their festivals, and when encamped with their army. One of the standards of the ancient monarchs was the apron of Kâwâ, the blacksmith, who rebelled against Zohâk, and placed Feridoon upon the throne [d]. Since the introduction of Mahomedanism a variety of colours or flags has been adopted, which have in general been ornamented with symbols allusive to the deeds of the prophet or his descendants. The commonest has been a representation of the Zulfekâr, or two-edged sword of Ali; but, notwithstanding the attachment of the Persians to this sacred banner, their sovereigns have for many centuries preserved, as the peculiar arms [e] of the country, the

neither money nor time to waste, are content with observing the first day, that of the vernal equinox.

[c] There is perhaps no country where the inhabitants live so much upon sweetmeats as in Persia. The finest is the guzangabeen, made of the honey of the gus, or tamarisk tree, mixed with some flour and sugar. This honey is produced by an insect or small worm, which resembles a white thread. It lies on the leaf of the tree, and appears inert. During forty days in summer the insects are brushed off the leaves every three days, and they always collect again in astonishing numbers. The guzangabeen is chiefly found in Irak. I received the above description of it from an English gentleman, who saw the insect on the tree when travelling through that province.

[d] Vol. I. page 13.

[e] The causes which led to the sign of Sol in Leo becoming the arms of Persia cannot be distinctly traced; but there is reason to believe that the use of this symbol is not of very great antiquity. We meet with it upon the coins of one of the Seljookian princes of Iconium; and when this family had been destroyed by Hulakoo, the grandson of Chenghiz, that prince, or his successors, perhaps adopted this emblem as a trophy of their conquest; whence it has remained ever since among the most remarkable of the royal insignia. A learned friend, who has a valuable collection of oriental coins, and whose information and opinion have enabled me to make this conjecture, believes that the emblematical representation of Sol in Leo was first adopted by Gheat-ood-deen Kai Khoosroo-ben-Kaikobad, who began to reign A. H. 634, A. D. 1236, and died A. H. 642, A. D. 1244; and this

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sign or figure of Sol in the constellation of Leo: and this device, a lion couchant and the sun rising at his back, has not only been sculptured upon their palaces [f] and embroidered upon their banners [g], but has been converted into an Order [h], which, in the form of gold and silver medals, has been given to such as have distinguished themselves against the enemies of their country [i].

The nature of absolute power requires that it should be supported by a continual revival of the impression of its high and almost sacred character. Many of the usages of Persia are calculated to produce this effect: every thing connected with the royal name or authority is treated with a respect increased by the form which attends it. If the king sends an honorary dress, the person for whom it is intended must proceed several miles to meet it, and clothe himself in his robes of favour, with every mark of gratitude and submission [k]. If a firmaun, or mandate, is written by

emblem, he adds, is supposed to have reference either to his own horoscope, or to that of his queen, who was a princess of Georgia.

[f] Hanway states, Vol. I. p. 199, that over the gate which forms the entrance of the palace built by Shah Abbas the Great, at Ashrâff, in Mazenderan, are "the arms of Persia, being a lion, and sun rising behind it."

[g] The emblem of the Lion and Sun is upon all the banners given to the regular corps of infantry lately formed. They are presented to the regiments with great ceremony. A moollah, or priest, attends, and implores the divine blessing on them.

[h] This order, with additional decorations, has been lately conferred upon several ministers and representatives of European governments in alliance with Persia.

[i] The medals which have been struck with this symbol upon them, have been chiefly given to the Persian officers and men of the regular corps who have distinguished themselves in the war with the Russians. An English officer who served with these troops informs me, that those on whom these medals have been conferred are very proud of the distinction, and that all are extremely anxious to obtain them.

[k] The princes of the royal family are not exempted from paying this mark of respect. There is in general a place in the vicinity of the provincial capitals called Khelât-posh, which means "putting on the honorary dress;" to which the governor, or other officer, who receives it, must proceed to be invested with it. The Khelât-posh, near Shiraz, is four miles from it on the Isfahan road.

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the monarch to one of the officers of government, this also is met at a distance by the person it is addressed to; who, after raising it to his head, gives it to his secretary to read, and all stand in respectful silence till the perusal is finished. If a minister has occasion to mention the king, it is not unusual, after inserting all his titles, to leave a blank, and to write the royal name at the top of the letter, lest it should be degraded by having even a word above it. A short time ago a picture of the reigning monarch was sent to the ruler of Scind. It was enclosed in a case, and nailed down on a litter carried by two mules: but, though invisible, it was deemed entitled to the respectful homage of his subjects in the countries it passed through. On its approach to Abusheher, the governor, with all his troops and attendants, went a stage to pay his obeisance [l]. When it came near, they dismounted from their horses, and walked forward to meet it on foot: the governor kissed the conveyance, in token of his devotion to that which it contained, and accompanied it to Abusheher, where it was welcomed with salutes; and the inhabitants were commanded to show every demonstration of joy [m] upon this happy occasion. There can be no doubt that this whole ceremony was conducted in exact conformity to orders from the court; for so great is the attention to minute forms in all points connected with the king or his family, that it is usual, when an officer is sent on any public service, for some person in authority to direct, by letter [n],

[l] This occurred in January, 1810. Major C. Pasley, who was then residing at Abusheher, in a high public station, was requested to aid at this ceremony, but declined the invitation.

[m] The trowsers and shifts of the females were exhibited on almost every house at Abusheher, as a sign of their joy. This extraordinary custom prevails among all the Arab tribes settled in Persia.

[n] The following is a translation of a letter from the vizier, Mahomed Nubbee Khan, at Shiraz, to his brother, Jaffier Khan, Governor of Abusheher, conveying instructions for his reception and treatment of the nobleman who was appointed mehmander, or "entertainer," to the mission under my charge:— "My

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the exact ceremonies and attentions with which he is to be received and treated.

The mode of introducing a foreign minister at Court has been described. The forms observed in his intercourse with the viceroys of provinces and governors of cities, before he reaches the capital, are deemed equally important. The manner of meeting him before he enters a town, and of his reception at the houses he visits, are subjects of the most minute arrangement. The rank and number of the persons sent to welcome him, the distance they go, and the time at which they dismount, mark the degree of respect and consideration he is held in: and at his first interviews with princes of the blood or nobles of high rank, the inclination of the head, the rising from the seat, the advancing to the edge of the carpet, to the door, or even beyond it, and the place where he is to be seated, are always settled by previous agreement. Ceremonies of this kind have every where some importance; but they are most attended to by a people who, like the Persians, have no correct knowledge of the character and condition of distant nations, and whose impressions are chiefly formed from the appearance and conduct of their representatives. If an ambassador assumes great state, his nation is considered to be wealthy and powerful: if he exacts attention, and resents neglect, his monarch is believed to be

"My dear brother!—Hoossein Khan Kajir, who is appointed mehmander to General Malcolm, is a nobleman of the first rank and family: he will keep you informed of his progress. When he arrives at Dalkhee, fifty miles from Bushire, he will send on this letter, and write to you on the subject of his waiting upon the General. The day he comes to camp you will proceed to meet him, attended by all the garrison of Bushire, as far as the date trees on the borders of the Desert: you will accompany him to General Malcolm's tent; and when he leaves it, you will proceed with him to his own tent, which must be pitched, as the General desires, on the right or left of his encampment. If Hoossein Khan Kajir arrive in the morning, you will stay and breakfast with him; if in the evening, you will dine with him. Your future attentions to him will be regulated by your politeness and good sense; and you will always consider him as a noble guest, who should be entertained in a manner suitable to his rank, and to the distinguished situation of mehmander to General Malcolm."

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lofty and independent, and worthy of that friendship which he disdains to court by any sacrifice of dignity or honour; while a contrary proceeding is certain to lead to opposite conclusions. It is not unusual to hear a Persian nobleman or minister pass a eulogium on the extraordinary knowledge, firmness, and spirit, of an ambassador of his own country, or of a foreign state; and when you expect to be told of some remarkable negotiation or treaty that he conducted, you are informed that his great knowledge was displayed in not being overreached in some point of form, and that his firmness withstood every effort to make him contented with one shade of attention less than his due. The conduct of individuals on these occasions is deemed connected, not only with their own fame, but that of their country; and the best Persian historians have recorded, with honour, the names of the ambassadors who have been most alive to what their station demanded on these essential points of etiquette. We may complain of all this, and deem it at variance with sound reason, which considers the substance more than the form, and is better pleased with manly simplicity than vain pomp and display; but it would be as rational to expect that the Persians should understand the beauties of our language on first hearing it, as that they should appreciate, at the first stages of our intercourse with them, the superior value of our customs. Besides, in a community where every thing is personal [o], high rank, to support itself, must always assume an imposing attitude. The natives of the east term the magnificence which surrounds their kings and chief rulers "the clothing of the state [p]."—"You may speak to the ears of others," was the reply of a very sensible Persian to a European gentleman, who asked him some question on this

[o] When I have spoken to sensible Persians on the difference between their government and institutions and those of England, I have always received the same answer: *Kár-e-shoomá bá hikmut ust; kár-e-má bá sât;* i. e. "With you, every thing is by science, or systematic; with us, every thing is personal."

[p] Lebâs-e-dowlut.

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subject; "but if you desire to be understood by my countrymen, you must address their eyes."

The princes, nobles, ministers, and high public officers imitate the king in many of their usages. All the respect they pay to him, they exact from their inferiors: each in his rank has a petty court, with forms regulated in nearly the same manner, and by officers bearing the same names, as those who attend the monarch. Every chief, or officer of elevated station, has his haram, his secretaries, his officers of ceremonies, his master of horse, and sometimes his poet and jester; and in his house there is as strict an attention to punctilio as in the palace of the sovereign. Sensible of their precarious condition, these persons appear alike desirous of obtaining money and of spending it. They seem eager to crowd into their hour of good fortune all the enjoyments they can. They lavish their wealth in much the same manner as those of the same rank do in other countries: women, horses, rich arms, and dress, are the principal objects of their desire. Their splendid apartments are ornamented with rich carpets, and are generally so situated as to be perfumed by flower gardens, and refreshed by fountains. One of their pleasures is to sit in these enjoying their coffee and tobacco, and feasting their friends. The ministers breakfast and dine almost every day in a large party. Their meals are always abundant, and sometimes sumptuous; and they often invite persons of the lowest condition to partake of them[q].

The higher ranks are in general educated in the same manner as the princes of the blood; and they are carefully

[q] I have dined with the Prime Minister when nobles of the highest rank, inferior meerzas, or clerks, merchants, mendicant poets, and astrologers, have been of the party. When Captain Stewart, Secretary to the British Mission in 1810, was sitting with the present minister, Hajee Mahomed Hoossein Khan, in his tent, a poor old countryman brought three combs for sale. The Hajee examined them, and was settling the price as breakfast was served up: he left off making the bargain; but, with that condescending affability for which he is celebrated, desired the peasant to sit down and take his breakfast, which he did at the same *fursh* (or cloth on which the dishes are placed) with the minister.

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instructed in all that belongs to exterior manner and deportment. Nothing can exceed their politeness; and in their social hours, when formality is banished, their conversation is delightful. It is enlivened by anecdotes; and their stories and observations are improved by quotations of beautiful passages from their best poets, with whose works almost every Persian of intelligence is acquainted.

The chiefs of the military tribes may be termed the hereditary nobility. The monarch, by his influence or direct power, may alter the succession, and place an uncle in the situation of a nephew, and sometimes a younger brother in that of an elder; but the leader of the tribe must be of the family of their chiefs. The title of khan is conferred on such persons as a matter of course. A son born to a noble of high rank is often honoured with this title when his birth is announced at court. The younger sons or nephews of a chief seldom receive it till they are enrolled in the king's guards, or have performed some service. This class are most tenacious of their descent; and the succession is regulated by the rank and birth of the mother. The son of a military khan by a concubine is never placed on a footing with his legitimate offspring: if parental fondness attempted to do so, it would be resented by the relations of his legitimate wives, and would outrage the feelings of his tribe[r]. The manners of this class, even when softened by long residence at court, always retain a good deal of haughtiness. They are (with some remarkable exceptions) not so polished and well educated as the civil officers; and much of their time is devoted to martial exercises and field sports.

[r] In 1810, when I visited Mehrab Khan, the chief of a small branch of the Affshár, at his family residence, two of his sons, very richly dressed, were introduced: the eldest was between eight and nine. When we were seated, a fine boy, between twelve and thirteen, in plain clothes, seated himself at a distance, below the other boys. I asked the khan who he was?—"He is my son," said he, "and he is a fine lad; but his mother was only a jeweller's daughter, to whom I was not regularly married. The other boys are descended from a high-born mother, and consequently are my heirs."

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The ministers of state and the secretaries of the various departments of government generally bear the name of meerza. This term, which is a compound of two words, signifies the son of an ameer, or lord; but at present, when prefixed to a name[s], it does not denote high birth. It may be translated *civilian*, as the habits it implies are altogether of a civil nature: all who assume it are understood to have been well brought up, and devote themselves to those duties which require education[t]. They should be able to read and write well, to keep accounts, and be thoroughly versed in all the rules and forms of epistolary correspondence, which are considered by men of rank no less essential than the ceremonies with regard to their personal intercourse. Meerzas are in general citizens, though sometimes they belong to warlike tribes. The fact is, every person who has received the slightest education, and who, for any reason, prefers civil occupations to military, becomes a meerza, and is a candidate for the employments usually given to persons of this description. These employments are very numerous: every officer in the army, every magistrate of a village, has his meerza. This class may be said to fill the highest and the lowest offices in the government: they are usually distinguished by wearing a kullumdân (or small case containing pens and ink) in their girdle; and, however wealthy, they seldom dress with splendour, or assume the state and equipage of the chiefs of tribes. Their manners, from their occupation, are mild and polite; and some of them are highly polished and accomplished. Generally speaking, they are careful not to offend the arrogance of the rustic tribes, by adopting their habits. They rarely follow the sports of

[s] *Meerza* is derived from *meer*, or *ameer*, "lord," and *za*, a form of *zada*, "son." When it follows the name, instead of being prefixed, *meerza* always denotes a prince of the blood royal.

[t] A meerza may be called a man of business. Some of this class are men of learning, which is certainly not required to qualify them for their occupations. Learning and science, which always imply a knowledge of Arabic, are deemed more necessary and appropriate accomplishments for the moollahs, or higher classes of priesthood.

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the field, or practise martial exercises; and they hardly ever pretend to military skill: but their modesty does not prevent their being treated with slight, if not contempt, by haughty nobles, their relation to whom is not unlike that in which the clerks stood to the knights and barons under the feudal system. The monarch often raises them to the dignity of khan: but they are looked upon as a mere court nobility; and the lowest chieftain of a clan considers himself superior in real rank to the most favoured meerza.

The priesthood have few distinct usages. Their occupation enjoins plainness of dress, and forbids the vanity and display to which their countrymen are so much attached. They are almost all Syuds, which marks their claim to a descent from the prophet. The lower ranks are seldom so respectable as the higher; and the order is degraded by a crowd of persons, who are, or pretend to be, Syuds, assume the name of Hajee, (which denotes "a pilgrim to Mecca,") and that of Moollah, or "learned man;" and beg, or rather demand alms, on the strength of their holy character. These persons, who are remarkable for their low cunning and impudence, may be said to live upon the charity of the rest of the community, by whom they are feared and despised. In every tale of roguery we meet with a Moollah, Syud, or Hajee. One Persian writer relates, that a man purchased a fine bunch of grapes of a person who was sitting behind a small window. After he had paid his money, he took hold of the ends of the bunch, but, in pulling it through the lattice, every grape fell on the inside, and he had nothing but the bare stalk. "Oh Syud! O Moollah! O Hajee!" he exclaimed. The man within opened the door, and said, "You know me then, friend?"—"I never saw you before," said the person; "but I was convinced no one who had not a right to all these sacred titles could ever have played me such a trick." Like anecdotes are repeated in every company; and this proves, that though many of the priesthood are respected for their personal merit, they do not, as a body, enjoy the same consideration as in some other Mahomedan

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nations. But the respect which is denied to the order collectively, is granted to individuals. The estimation in which the principal Mooshtâheds, or high priests, are held has been before noticed. The most powerful, as well as the weakest Persian monarchs have sought to conciliate them. We read, in the History of Abbas the Great, of a person complaining to Moollah Ahmed, the Mooshtâhed of Ardebil, that the king had taken his sister by force into his haram. The holy man gave him the following note: "Brother Abbas, restore the bearer's sister." The king commanded her to be instantly given up; and, showing the note to his courtiers, said, "Let this be put into my shroud: for, on the day of judgment, having been called brother by Moollah Ahmed will avail me more than all the actions of my life." The most cruel among the successors of Abbas were only merciful at the solicitation of their chief priests. Aga Mahomed Khan allowed them to approach him when no others dared; and they sometimes pleaded with success for those whom he had doomed to destruction. The reigning monarch has shown them even greater attention; and as long as they abstain from meddling in political affairs, and disregard worldly honours and wealth [u], they will in all probability preserve the influence they have established.

There are a number of persons who pursue their studies till they are entitled to the name of Moollah, and to all the honours of a Persian college, without classing themselves

[u] Their avoiding intercourse with persons high in station, and being slow to cultivate the acquaintance of foreigners, does not always arise from the bigotry it is usually imputed to. Understanding that Shaikh-ool-Islâm, the chief judge of the court of Sherrâh, at Shiraz, had weak sight, and wished for a pair of spectacles, I made him a present of a pair handsomely mounted; but they were returned, with a request for one of less value. Some time afterwards I met him, and he said to me, "You must have been surprised at my giving you so much trouble about a trifle; and, I fear, you thought I showed an unnecessary affectation of humility about the spectacles; but, in my situation, every trifle is of importance; and I must not give the slightest grounds for a suspicion of my being actuated by the cupidity so common among my countrymen. It is this that has prevented my cultivating your acquaintance so much as I desired."

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with the priesthood. These follow various occupations. Some devote themselves to study; and to the most eminent of those who follow literary pursuits a very high rank in society is assigned. An author, who has acquired fame as a historian, an astronomer, or a poet, is respected by all, and has a place of distinction in every company in which he mixes. Every prince and noble desires to be considered a patron of genius; and this feeling secures to men of learning a very fair share in the enjoyments of their fellow countrymen. They are not only esteemed as authors, but as agreeable companions. Their reading furnishes them with anecdotes, which amuse and instruct; and some of them are alike remarkable for the excellence of their writings, and the sprightliness of their conversation. Even the common pretenders in this class, who are very numerous, are in general men of good manners and ready wit.

A very slight knowledge of astronomy is sufficient to allow a student to profess the occult science of judicial astrology. If he can take an altitude with an astrolâbe, knows the names of the planets, and their different mansions, with a few technical phrases, and understands the astrological almanacks which are annually published, he deems himself entitled to offer his services to all who wish to consult him; that is, to every person in Persia who has the means of rewarding his skill. Nothing is done by a man of any consequence or property, without reference to the stars. If any measure is to be adopted, if a voyage or journey is to be commenced, if a new dress[x] is to be put on, the lucky or unlucky moment must be discovered, and the almanack and astrologer are consulted. A person wishing to set out on a journey will not allow a lucky day to escape, even though he is not ready to start. He leaves his own house at the propitious mo-

[x] I was surprised to see the prime minister, Hajee Ibrahim, consulting a Persian about the fortunate moment for putting on a new dress. Seeing me smile, he said, "Do not think, Captain Malcolm, I am such a fool as to put faith in all this nonsense; but I must not make my family unhappy by refusing to comply with forms which some of them deem of consequence."

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ment, and remains, till he can proceed, in some incommodious lodging; satisfied that, by quitting his home, he has secured all the benefit which the influence of good stars can afford him.

In 1806[y], when a Persian ambassador was about to proceed to India, he was informed by his astrologer of a most fortunate conjunction of the stars, which, if missed, was not likely to occur again for some months. He determined, that though he could not embark, as the ship was not ready, to move from his house at Abusheher, to his tents, which were pitched at a village five miles off. It was discovered, however, by the astronomer, that he could neither pass through the door of his own dwelling, nor the gate of the fort, as an invisible, but baneful constellation[z], was exactly opposite, and shed dangerous influence in that direction. To remedy this, a large aperture was made in the wall of his house; but that opened into his neighbour's; and four or five more walls were to be cut through before the ambassador and his friends (including the principal men who were to accompany him) could reach the street. They then went to the beach, where it was intended to take a boat, and proceed two miles by sea, in order that their backs might be turned on the dreaded constellation; but the sea was rough, and the party hesitated about encountering a real danger to avoid an imaginary one. In this dilemma, the governor was solicited to let a part of the wall of the town be thrown down, that a mission, on which so much depended, might not be exposed to misfortune. The request, extraordinary as it may appear, was complied with, and the cavalcade marched over the breach to their tents. The astrologer rode near the ambassador, that he might continually remind him to keep his head in

[y] I write from the MS. Journal of Mr. Jukes, who was on the spot, and an eye-witness of all that is stated.

[z] The Persians call this invisible constellation Sukiz Yeldoz. It consists of a cluster of eight stars.

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one position; by his aid, he reached his tents without any occurrence to disturb the good fortune which was augured to result from his having left his home at the propitious moment. The ambassador's conduct, while it satisfied his own mind, met, no doubt, with the highest approbation of the court, and it gave confidence to his attendants[a]; for the Persians, from the highest to the lowest, put faith in this delusive science. Many, however, of those whose occupation is to observe the aspect of the stars, and to calculate nativities, are by no means the dupes of their own knowledge. Their object is gain; and they make their art subservient to it. They flatter the ruling passion of those who consult them; and if apparently compelled to foretell a misfortune, it is often with no other view than to point out how it may be averted[b].

[a] Almost all the Persians in my camp were satisfied that the success or failure of my mission in 1800, would depend, in no slight degree, upon my entering Teheran at a fortunate moment. One of my Persian secretaries, who had consulted an astrologer, rode near me, as I approached the gateway, with a watch in his hand; and as I did not refuse to gratify him, by moving quicker or slower as he wished, my horse stept over the threshold at the right instant. This gave great joy to all the Persians who were friendly to the mission, as they anticipated more success from my attention to this trifle, than from all the other efforts I could make.

[b] On my return from Teheran in 1800, I fell into company with an astrologer, who insisted upon taking my horoscope, and foretelling my destiny. After the usual forms and calculations, he told me, that on my voyage to India, I should meet with a violent storm; and, after escaping it, should be made a prisoner. I observed, it was fortunate I had no belief in his skill; otherwise I should be unhappy in looking forward to misfortunes, from which I concluded there was no escape. There I was mistaken, he said; and, to satisfy me of the manner in which misfortune was to be averted, he would tell me a story. "When Jesus was sitting at the gate of Jerusalem, he saw a wood-cutter pass out of the city, carolling as he went along. 'How ignorant man is of his destiny!' said the son of Mary to his disciples. 'That poor fellow, who appears now so happy, will to-day perish in the wood.' When evening came, however, the man returned, singing louder than before. The disciples looked at each other, and at their master. Jesus, reading their thoughts, said, 'O ye of little faith! you doubt my knowledge: but know, that the man whom you see, carried only one small loaf of bread

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The poets in Persia are still greater flatterers than the astrologers: but their occupation is less profitable. A few fortunate votaries of the muses enjoy the smiles of fortune: but the great majority of poets here, as in other countries, is poor; and, from their numbers, it is impossible they should be otherwise. Every person who has received a moderate education may, if he prefers a life of idleness to one of industry, assume the name of a poet; and the merest rhymer receives some additional respect from that honoured appellation. While some favoured poets are chanting the wonderful deeds of the king, or of the principal chiefs; or composing dewans, or "collections of odes," on the mystical subject of divine love; others are contented with panegyrizing the virtues, wisdom, bravery, and discernment, of all who bestow their bounty upon them, or allow them to partake of the good things on their table. They also make epigrams to amuse their patrons; and are alike ready to recite their own verses, or to quote the finest passages of their national poetry. The facility with which a certain degree of education is obtained at the colleges in the principal cities, and the indulgence to which their usages invite, produce a swarm of students, who pass their useless lives in indolence and poverty. Isfahan in particular abounds with these literary mendicants: and it is chiefly from the scholars educated at its colleges, and those at Shiraz, that the kingdom is inundated with vagrant poets, who lie in wait, not only for the high officers and wealthy men of their native country, but for all strangers whose rank or appearance afford them the slightest prospect

for his dinner; and when entreated by a person in distress to relieve him, he gave him half his loaf. God was pleased with this act, and saved his life. But go, and examine his bundle of wood, and you will find there the very snake which was appointed to cause his death.' They went, and saw the snake as Jesus had told them. You see," said the astrologer, "how it is possible to avert the decrees of the stars." I could not refuse that trifling reward to his ingenuity, which I had been prepared to deny to his pretended skill.

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of a return for their venal lays. A professed ignorance of their language, or the expression of dislike for their productions, is no defence against their importunity and assurance. A poet, who came fifty miles from Shiraz, to welcome me with a complimentary ode, beautifully written upon ornamented paper, was told that the person he had so praised could hardly comprehend his lines, and had no taste for such compositions. "I must tell him a story, then," said he, "which will shew him how unnecessary the knowledge and taste he wants is to the fulfilment of my object.—Some years ago, when the Affghans had possession of Persia, a rude chief of that nation was governor of Shiraz. A poet composed a panegyric upon his wisdom, valour, and virtues. As he was taking it to the palace he met a friend at the outer gate, who inquired where he was going. He told him his purpose. His friend asked if he was insane to offer an ode to a barbarian, who hardly understood a word of Persian. 'All that you say may be true,' said he; 'but I am starving, and have no means of livelihood but making verses. So I must proceed.' He went, and stood before the governor with the ode in his hand. 'Who is that fellow?' exclaimed the Affghan; 'and what is that paper which he holds?'—'I am a poet,' replied the man; 'and the paper contains some poetry.'—'What is the use of poetry?' said the chief.—'To render great men, like you, immortal,' he replied, making a very profound bow.—'Let us hear some of it.' The poet began to read his composition aloud; but he had not finished the second stanza, when he was interrupted. 'Enough!' exclaimed the governor. 'I understand it all. Give the poor man some money; that is what he wants.' The poet received his present, and retired, quite delighted. He met his friend at the door, who accosted him again. 'You are, no doubt, now convinced of the folly of carrying odes to a man who does not understand a word of them.'—'Not understand!' he replied; 'you are quite mistaken. He has, beyond all men I ever met, the quickest apprehen-

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sion of a poet's meaning.'" This story produced, in part, the effect which the poet had expected from his ode; but what he received had the common effect of exciting, instead of allaying cupidity; and the witty rhymer made several ingenious, but unsuccessful efforts to obtain more.

The art of printing is unknown in Persia; beautiful writing, therefore, is considered a high accomplishment. It is carefully taught in the schools, and those who excel in it are almost classed with literary men. They are employed to copy books; and some have attained to such eminence in this art, that a few lines by one of these celebrated penmen are often sold for a considerable sum [c].

The merchants are all taught to read and write, and some of them are men of learning. Their better acquaintance with foreign countries renders them free from prejudice; and their manners, though not so highly polished as those of the principal nobility and courtiers, are in general equal, if not superior, to those of the rest of their countrymen. The society of merchants of information and education is courted by the first nobles and the highest officers of the government, but the former, in general, avoid any political connexions: and this rule is recommended by the almost invariable ruin of all who forsake the path of profit to pursue that of ambition.

The principal merchants carry on all their mercantile correspondence in cipher, and every person has a different one. For in a country where there are no regular posts, their letters must be trusted to couriers, whom a small sum would bribe to betray their secrets to commercial rivals; and it is of great consequence that they should have the first intelligence of political changes, about which they would fear to write openly. The authenticity of a merchant's letters, as of his bills, depends entirely upon the seal. It is not usual to sign either; and they are not often written in the hand of

[c] I have known seven pounds given for four lines written by Derveish Mujeed, a celebrated penman, who has been dead some time, and whose beautiful specimens of writing are now scarce.

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the person who sends them; so that it is the seal which is of importance: engraven upon it is the name and title, if he has one, of the person it belongs to, and the date when it was cut. The occupation of seal-cutter is one of much trust and some danger: he keeps a register of every seal he makes, and if one is stolen or lost by the party to whom he sold it, his life would answer for the crime of making another exactly the same. The person to whom the seal belongs, if in business, is obliged to take the most respectable witnesses of the occurrence, and to write to his correspondents, declaring all accounts and deeds with his former seal null from the day upon which it was lost.

Among the lower classes of the citizens there is not much perceptible difference of manner. That which exists arises from the nature of their respective occupations, and from the partial diffusion of knowledge. Almost all the tradesmen, and many of the mechanics, have received some education. There are schools[d] in every town and city, in which the rudiments of Persian and Arabic are taught. The child who attends one of them, after learning the alphabet, is made, as a religious duty, to read the Koran, in Arabic; which he usually does without understanding a word of it. He is next taught to read some fables in Persian, and to write a legible hand: here his education commonly ends; and unless he is led by inclination to study, or his occupation requires that he should practise what he has learnt, his lessons are soon forgotten. But this education, slight and superficial as it may seem, has the effect of changing the habits, and of introducing a degree of refinement among those who receive it, unknown to their ruder countrymen.

[d] The schools have been described by Chardin, and other travellers. They are so reasonable as to admit of the poorest tradesman sending his children to them; but are often under the management of ignorant pedants. It is not to be expected that a government like that of Persia should ever pay attention to the education of its subjects, though that is evidently the root from which all improvement must spring.

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The Persians of all conditions are fond of society. Their table is in general well furnished; as the extraordinary cheapness of provisions of every kind, and the great plenty of fruit, enable even the lowest order of citizens to live well. The hog is the only animal they are positively forbidden to eat[e]. They are also, as Mahomedans, prohibited from tasting wine: but this rule is often broken; and as, to use their own phrase, "there is as much sin in a glass as in a flagon," they usually, when they drink, indulge to excess. Indeed, they are so impressed with the idea that the sole pleasure of this forbidden liquor lies in its intoxicating effects, that nothing but constant observation can satisfy them that Christians are not all drunkards. "It is," they often remark, when speaking to one, "a privilege of your religion to be so, and therefore neither attended with shame nor disgrace." An English naval officer had come on shore at Abusheher, and mounted a spirited horse to take a ride. The awkwardness of the rider, who was nearly falling at every bound the animal took, amused a great number of spectators. Next day a Persian, who supplied the vessel with fruit and vegetables, came off, and seeing the officer, said to him, "I have saved your reputation; not a man who laughed at you yesterday has the least suspicion that you are a bad horseman."—"How have you managed that?" said the gentleman. "I told them," he replied, "that you, like every Englishman, ride admirably, as becomes a nation of soldiers, but that you were very drunk, and that was the reason of your not keeping your seat so firmly as you otherwise would have done." If told that, though we are permitted to use wine, excess is considered as degrading, and often, when it incapacitates for duty, as criminal, they listen with a smile of incredulity; for they believe it impossible that men, who are not withheld by religion, can deny themselves what they are led by the restraint imposed upon them to deem one of the most delightful of all enjoyments.

[e] There are several other meats, such as the hare, &c. which are deemed improper to be eaten.

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The Persians wear hardly any under-linen; among the lower classes the clothes they once put on are seldom taken off till worn out. Nothing could preserve the health of a people, with such habits, but the ablutions enjoined by their religion, and the constant use of the hummums, or hot-baths, which are to be found in every city, town, and village. Some of these buildings are very splendid; and they are almost always clean, and well supplied with fresh water. A few pieces of the smallest copper coin of the country enable the poorest traveller, or labourer, to indulge in this delightful luxury.

The lower classes are entertained by the same exhibitions as the higher. Illuminations, fire-works, wrestlers, jugglers, buffoons, puppet-shows, musicians, and dancing-boys, amuse all ranks at public feasts: while riding on horseback, visiting, walking in gardens, and sitting in groups at their houses, or under the shade of a tree, to listen to a tale or poem, are the usual occupations of their idle hours. Dancing-girls were once numerous; and the first Persian poets have celebrated the beauty of their persons and the melody of their voices. They formed a part of the amusement at every entertainment till the reigning family ascended the throne; but at present they are not allowed at court, and are seldom seen, except in provinces at a distance from the capital; in Kûrdistan and Khorassan.

Nothing is of more consequence, as connected with the character of a people, than the laws and customs which regulate the relative situation and intercourse of the sexes. On it, perhaps beyond all other causes, depends the moral state of a country, and its progress in general improvement. Many nations, who have allowed their women to be publicly seen, have still remained in a barbarous state[f]; but in no instance have the inhabitants of a country where it was the

[f] Among the wandering tribes the females are unveiled. The lower Mahomedans in India do not veil; and the late Captain Grant, who travelled through Mekran in 1809, states, that it is not the custom in that country for the women to veil.

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custom to immure them, and to deny them the benefit of education, ever attained a forward rank in civilized life. The influence of women, where they hold their just station in society, is not more calculated to soften the rough manners and to subdue the angry passions of man, than to stimulate him to generous, brave, and noble actions. The admiration of highly cultivated females is more rarely given to personal beauty, than to valour, virtue, and talents; and the hope of obtaining it constitutes one of the purest and highest motives to good and great actions. The religion of Mahomed sanctions, if it does not inculcate, usages which keep the female sex in a subservient state. The followers of this faith, therefore, may be pronounced to be strangers to this refined but powerful motive of human action. In Persia the lower classes deem females important in proportion as they are useful in domestic life: the higher consider them as born for their sensual gratification. Women have, in fact, no assigned place, but are what their husbands, or rather lords, may choose to make them. A favorite, by the power of her mental or personal charms, may establish an influence over her domestic tyrant; or a woman may obtain peculiar respect on account of her superior birth, and the consequent dread her husband entertains of her relations. Other ties may produce still more remarkable effects: and habit and affection may lead a son to maintain an attention or obedience to his mother, that gives her an importance beyond the walls of the haram. But these rare instances, though they shew that there may sometimes be women of superior knowledge and character, cannot counteract the evil consequences which their exclusion from society has upon the manners and morals of men.

The Persians, like all Mahomedans, consider themselves entitled to an unlimited indulgence in the pleasures of the haram: and though restrained by religion from marrying more than four wives, they conceive themselves at liberty to increase the number of females in their family to any extent

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that suits their inclination or their convenience. The priesthood are expected to be the most moderate in their use of this indulgence: and we may judge of their habits, from the remark of a very grave historian [g], who, after an animated eulogium on the character of a priest of high reputation, concludes by saying, "the continence of this virtuous man was so extraordinary, that it is affirmed, that during his life he never had intercourse with any other females than his four legitimate wives!!"

The Persians are entitled, by law and usage, to take females, not within the prohibited degrees of kindred, in three different ways: by marriage, by purchase, and by hire. Their marriages are made according to prescribed forms. The female is betrothed [h] by the parents: she may, however, refuse her consent when the priest comes to require it; and the marriage cannot proceed if she continues averse to it: but this rarely happens, as the parties never see one another before they are united, and seldom hear any reports of each other but what are favourable. A woman has this and many other rights according to the Mahomedan law: but a being, who is first immured by her parents, and afterwards by her husband, and whose name it is almost a crime to pronounce, can practically have little protection from these useless privileges. The nuptial ceremony must take place before two or more witnesses [i]. The contract is regularly made out by an officer of the law, who attends. It is then attested and given to the female, who preserves it with great

[g] Sherrif-ood-deen, author of "The History of Kûrdistan."

[h] Persons, both male and female, are often betrothed in infancy. If this is done by their parents, the marriage must be confirmed when they attain the age of puberty: but if by any other than parents, the most respectable Mahomedan doctors maintain it is null, if either both, or one of the parties desire that it should be cancelled.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. i. page 102, 103.

[i] There must be two male witnesses, or one man and two women. These must be freemen, sane, adult, and Mahomedans.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. i. page 74.

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care, for it is also her title to her dower [k], which is the principal part of her provision in the event of her husband's death, and her sole dependance [l] if she is divorced. Marriages in Persia, as in all eastern countries, are very expensive. It is not unusual for a man to waste the means he has spent his life in acquiring on his wedding day. The display made on this occasion is thought a point affecting personal reputation, and every one endeavours to surpass his equals with a ruinous spirit of emulation.

A Persian may purchase as many female slaves as he likes: and their condition is no way altered by the manner in which they live in his family. The sweeper of his house, and the partner of his bed, are alike exposed to be sold again if they have been purchased: but this right is seldom exercised, it being at variance with the jealous sense of honour felt by almost all Mahomedans with regard to females with whom they have cohabited.

[k] There is no point deemed of more consequence by the Mahomedan law than the dower. The most learned doctors, however, have disagreed widely on its interpretation. A marriage, some hold, is valid, even though there is no dower; but in such cases, as also where an excessive one has been agreed upon, the law may interpose and settle it upon just and rational principles. The lowest dower that can be legally given is ten dirhems, or between four and five shillings.—*Commentary on Mahomedan Law*, vol. i. page 122.

[l] The right of the female to this settlement is guarded, not only by law and usage, but by the protection of her male relations, who are in general the witnesses. It is made payable from the property of the husband; and if he has none, the wife's portion is secured upon whatever he may hereafter possess. The dower is made over to the female, or her assigns, before the consummation of the marriage. It becomes her entire right: and it is not unusual for a mother to give a favorite son her dower; which, when vested with her authority, he can compel his father to pay. The law on dower constitutes, as was no doubt intended, a considerable check upon the men of every Mahomedan nation; and it is one of which the women of Persia are very jealous. A woman, according to the Mahomedan law, may exonerate her husband from any part, or even from the whole, of the dower. There are, however, rarely instances of the whole being restored, though the wife sometimes gives up a part at the earnest solicitation of the husband or his friends.

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The marriage by contract, and for a limited period, is peculiar to the Persians. It is said to have been a custom in Arabia when Mahomed first introduced his religion there: but though he tolerated it, Omar abolished it as a species of legal prostitution, inconsistent with good morals: the Turks, therefore, and other Soonees who respect the decrees of this caliph, hold it in abhorrence. The parties agree to live together for a fixed time, which varies from a few days to ninety-nine years. The sum agreed upon as the lady's hire is mentioned in the contract, which is made out by the cauzee, or a moollah, and regularly witnessed. The man may dissolve the contract when he chooses; but the female has a right, from the hour when the deed is signed, to the whole sum agreed to be paid to her. If the parties are willing, the deed is renewed when it expires. This contract conveys no rights to the female beyond the sum specified as her hire. Under no circumstances is she deemed entitled to share in the property left by the person she is contracted to. This engagement usually takes place between persons of very unequal condition. The woman is generally of a very inferior family; and her state can only be termed one of legal concubinage [m].

A man can divorce his wife at pleasure: but there is an expense and scandal attending it, which renders it very unfrequent. It may be said never to occur but among the lower classes: a man of rank would consider himself disgraced by what would expose a woman, who had been his wife, to be seen by others. The forms of divorce among the Sheahs differ in some trifling points from those of the Soonees. Divorces are never on account of adultery, as that crime, if proved, subjects a woman who has been legally married to death. The general causes are complaints of badness of temper, or extravagance, on the part of the husbands; and

[m] The law provides for the support of children born in this state of legal concubinage; and a woman is prohibited, after parting from the person she was contracted to, from forming a new engagement till a period has elapsed sufficient to secure a man against being burdened with spurious offspring.

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of neglect, or cruel usage, on that of their wives. If the husband sues for a divorce, he is compelled to pay his wife's dower; but if she sues for it, her claim is cancelled. Hence it is not unfrequent among the lower orders, when a man desires to be rid of his partner, to use her so ill, that she is forced to institute a suit for separation; which, if granted, abrogates all her claims upon her husband.

Some peculiar usages of the different cities have been noticed, particularly the right of insurrection, claimed by the inhabitants of Cazveen, when driven to it by oppression [n]. The division of the chief cities into wards, with the names of Hyderee and Neâmuttee, which one author [o] has ascribed to Shah Abbas the Great, still exists, and continues to excite as much animosity as formerly. There is at all times a jealousy between these parties; but during the last three days of the Mohurrum they attack each other with violence. The object they contend for appears to be merely the honour of triumph. If a mosque is decorated by one party, the other, if they can, drive them from it, and destroy their flags or ornaments. If they force their opponents from their houses, they do not enter or plunder them, but make a mark on each door with a hatchet, as a token of victory. These frays are often very serious, and many lives are lost [p]; but no effort is made to abolish a usage which divides those whose union might make them formidable to government.

[n] Vol. i. page 443.

[o] *Hanway*, vol. ii. p. 104.—Hanway terms these parties Peleuk and Feleuk, names now unknown. Langlés, in his edition of Chardin, vol. ii. p. 321, concludes that these opposite sects derive their name from Shaikh Hyder, the ancestor of the Seffavean family, and from Neâmutullah, the name assumed by the adherents of the dynasty of the White Sheep, which was destroyed by the sect of Hyderee, or adherents of Ismael Soofee.

[p] I find it stated in a Persian MS. which gives a particular account of several of these frays, that a kind of account-current is kept of the men of the different parties killed. The ward, the inhabitants of which have slain the greatest number, are fined the price of blood for the balance, whatever it may be; and the sum collected is divided among the widows and children of the deceased.

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The dress of the Persians has been often described, by ancient and modern travellers. That of the men has changed materially within the last century. The turban is now worn by none but the Arabian inhabitants. The Persians wear a long cap covered with lamb's wool, the appearance of which is sometimes improved by being encircled with a Cashmere shawl [q]. The inhabitants of the principal towns are fond of dressing richly. Their upper garments are made of chintz, silk, or cloth, and are often trimmed with gold or silver lace: they also wear brocade: and in winter their clothes are lined with furs, of which they import a great variety. It is not customary for any person, except the king, to wear jewels: but nothing can exceed his profusion of these ornaments; and his subjects seem peculiarly proud of this magnificence. They assert, that when the monarch is dressed in his most splendid robes, and seated in the sun, the eye cannot gaze on the dazzling brilliancy [r].

The slaves are not numerous, and cannot be distinguished by any peculiar habits or usages, further than that they are generally more trusted and favoured by their superiors. The name of slave may be said to imply confidence on one part and attachment on the other. They are mostly Georgians or Africans; and, being obtained or purchased when young, are usually brought up in the Mahomedan religion. Their master, who takes the merit of their conversion, appropriates the females to his own haram, or to the service of his wives: and, when the males are of a proper age, he marries them to a female slave in the family, or to a free woman. Their children are brought up in the house, and have a rank only

[q] This custom was very general; but a late mandate has prohibited shawls being worn round the head, except by persons who have a special privilege from the king to do so. This order was given with a view to encourage the Persian manufactories, and to lessen the importation of Cashmere shawls.

[r] Perhaps no prince possesses jewels of equal value with the King of Persia. The finest of these were plundered by Nâdir Shah from the monarchs of Delhi.

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below relations. In almost every family of consequence, the person most trusted is a house-born slave; and instances of their betraying their charge, or abusing the confidence placed in them, are very rare.

These observations apply peculiarly to the inhabitants of cities, towns, and villages. Many of the customs of the wandering tribes are different, and merit a distinct notice. Their chiefs during peace usually reside at court, or at provincial capitals; and leave their followers, whom they occasionally visit, to be governed by the elders of the different branches and families. The number united into one body is regulated by the means of subsistence. They in general change their residence with the season, and may be said, throughout the year, to enjoy a fine climate. They pitch their dark tents on the finest of the plains over which they have a right of pasture; and the encampment is usually on the banks of a rivulet, or stream. It is commonly in a square; and the abode of the principal elder is only to be distinguished from that of the lowest man in the tribe by its size. All are of the same coarse materials, and in the same shape. The horses, mules, and sheep, are turned loose, to feed around the encampment. While the young men, if not hunting, are generally seen sitting in circles, smoking, or indulging in repose, the women are busily occupied with their domestic duties, or aiding aged men and boys in tending the flocks. These tribes, unless very strong, are wont to pitch their tents near mountains, that their flocks and families may be within reach of a place of security on the occurrence of danger. Along the base of the hills which divide Kûrdistan from Aderbejan and Irak, every valley is occupied, during the spring and summer, by the camps of these wanderers[a].

[a] Small encampments of gypsies are frequently met with in Persia, particularly in Aderbejan. The habits and occupations of the families we saw in that country appeared very similar to those of the vagrant tribes in England.

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The men of some of the rudest tribes are accused by the other natives of paying hardly any attention to the forms of religion, or to its prescriptions concerning food; and there is no doubt that the accusation is in some degree just. They openly eat the flesh of the hare[t], which is classed by Mahomedan divines among meats, not indeed legally prohibited, but deemed abominable; and there is reason to believe, that many of them are not deterred by the Koran from feasting, when they have an opportunity, upon swine's flesh. A Kurd of some respectability said to an English gentleman, that he thought the tribe he belonged to resembled Europeans more than Mahomedans. He was asked how?—"Why," said he, "we eat hog's flesh, keep no fasts, and say no prayers[u]." He had seen no acts of public worship among the few Europeans he had met with, and he was unacquainted with the maxim, which teaches them not to pray in the streets, "that they may be seen of men."

Though the chiefs of the principal tribes, from being brought up at court, or at the capital of a province, are often as well educated and as polished in their manners as the higher classes of the other Persians; and though some of their followers, who accompany them amid scenes compa-

The Persians call them Kârâchee; a Turkish term, which may be translated "the black people;" and which, probably, has been given to them from their complexion being darker than that of the natives.

[t] In 1800 I one day ran a hare near the encampment of some Affshâr families: a number of young men sprung upon their horses, and joined in the chase. One, who was well mounted, and had a fine dog, rode very hard over some rocky ground, and his dog caught the hare, which he immediately tied to his saddle. I asked him, why he did so? "You cannot eat the hare," I said, "as you know it is *mukrooh*, or 'abominable.'"—"Do you think," he replied, "I would have hazarded my life, and half killed my horse and my dog, to be deterred, after all, by what some fool of a moollah has said, from eating this hare? I would eat his father!" and he rode off, delighted with his prize.

[u] I received this anecdote from Mr. Jukes, to whom the Kurd (the commander of a party that attended the mission as a guard at Kermanshah) addressed himself.

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ratively civilized, cannot be distinguished from the inhabitants of the cities, whose manners they adopt, and among whom they frequently intermarry and settle; the bulk of the tribe, who remain always in tents, or in their rude villages, continue in a state of the most barbarous ignorance. They circumcise their children at the proper age, and contract marriages according to the prescribed customs: but they are said, and probably with truth, to be very neglectful of the other Mahomedan regulations. Though some, who desire a character for superior piety, go through the regular ablutions, and the forms of prayer, they are, in general, entirely ignorant of the words they ought to repeat. A Persian writer, who has related some curious facts on the manners of this class, states[x], that, when a young man, he was saying his prayers at the appointed time, before a person of the tribe of Shah Sevund[y]. Observing that this man did not do the same, he asked him if he never addressed the Almighty according to the forms prescribed by the holy prophet? "I now and then bend my head, and raise it again," was the reply, "as I have just now seen you do; but I repeat no prayers, and never, indeed, learnt any." The same writer informs us, that a citizen, the guest of a member of some tribe, to whom he had been useful in disposing of his sheep, when he began one morning, according to his practice, to read a chapter of the Koran aloud, was assailed with a stick by his hostess, who asked him in a rage if he conceived one of the family was dead, that he thought it necessary to read that book. The husband, though he reproved his wife's violence, told his friend he should have known better than to anticipate misfortune, by going through a ceremony only used at funerals. This rude race seldom receive any religious instruction. If a priest of

[x] Persian MS.

[y] This tribe has been before mentioned: (vol. i. page 369). They are still numerous.

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a neighbouring village visits their tents, and summons them to prayers, they listen to him with impatience; and, if any accident happens to their flocks while they are attending divine worship, they load him with abuse, and reproach him with being the cause of the misfortune[z].

The wandering tribes are all plunderers; and glory in acknowledging it. They are continually recounting their own successful acts of depredation, or those of their ancestors; and from the chief to the lowest man, they boast openly of deeds for which men would be capitally punished under a better ordered government. Every sentiment that escapes them evinces their attachment to their predatory habits. They often regret the tranquillity of their country; and speak with rapture of those periods of confusion, when every man who "had a horse, a sword, and a heart, could live in comfort and happiness." When on the march towards the royal camp at Sooltaneah, I asked a chief of a tribe, what ruins those were on the right of the road? His eyes glistened. "It is more than twenty years," he said, "since I accompanied my uncle in a night attack to plunder and destroy that village, and it has never been rebuilt. Its inhabitants are a bad race, and our enemies; however, they have settled near it, and are again become rich. I trust in God," he added with emphasis, "that the present tranquillity will not last; and if old times return, I will have another blow at these fellows before I die." A still more remarkable instance occurred on my first mission. When hunting one day near the line of march, we came to a deep ravine: as we were crossing it, an old Persian of the tribe of Lac, then in my service, turned round, and said to me with a smile:—"In this ravine, sir, about twenty years ago, I, and ten others of my tribe, lay in wait for a caravan. We attacked them, and killed five or six useless fellows of

[z] This was stated to me by a moollah, who was in the constant habit of visiting these tribes.

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merchants and mule-drivers: the rest ran away, and we found plenty of plunder. I lived gloriously for some years on the produce of the shawls that fell to my share; but all my cash is gone, and I am now a poor old fellow. Yet, after all, it is some consolation to think one has had a taste of the good things of this world." This race, as may be concluded from these anecdotes, are strangers to the causes which promote civilisation and improvement, and insensible to the blessing of security and good order. They view every thing through the medium they have been accustomed to; and power only possesses charms in proportion as it ministers to their passions. But this observation may perhaps be applied with equal justice to their superiors. The reigning king, when I endeavoured to explain to him the nature and operation of the various checks in the British government, exclaimed, after listening with great attention, "Your king then appears to be no more than the first magistrate of the state! So limited an authority may be lasting, but can have no enjoyment! My power is very different: it is real enjoyment! I can elevate or degrade all the high nobles and officers you see around me at pleasure: but then, it is true, there is no security for my family possessing the throne. Right in Persia always has and always will belong to the sword." It is not surprising that the military populace, where the monarch professes these sentiments, should measure their title to consideration, and their power of attaining enjoyments, by their means of pillaging or oppressing. If a prince or chief of high rank evince a contrary disposition, his conduct excites very opposite feelings to admiration. A man of one of these tribes, who was sent to accompany two English gentlemen [a] through a part of Persia, contended that a prince of the blood whom he served had better claims to the crown, because he was more dreaded than one of his royal brothers, whom they had extolled for his humanity,

[a] Mr. Ellis and Captain Macdonald, who were travelling from Sennah in Kûrdistan to Hamadan in Irak in 1810.

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virtue, and intelligence. "You see," he said, "that small village before us. If the prince you praise were where we are, the inhabitants would be at this moment running to meet him, and be eager to pitch his tents: whereas, if my master were here, so great is the terror of his name, they would already have fled to the summit of the neighbouring hills. Now, I ask you, which is the most proper of these two to govern Persia?" The same person, who was an intelligent man of his class, was very inquisitive about the condition of England; and, after listening with delight to their accounts of the richness of its fields, the beauty of its towns, and the great wealth of its inhabitants, he exclaimed, "What a number of plunderers you must have there[b]!" On being informed that the laws restrained men from plundering, he asked with astonishment, "What then can be the occupation of so numerous a population?"

Though the members of the military tribes are proud of being called plunderers, they hold the name of thieves in abhorrence. Force implies strength, fraud weakness. There are, however, some of the lesser clans whose occupation is avowedly theft; but even these pretend to honour. When the British mission passed through Kûrdistan, the camp was one day pitched near the huts of some families of the tribe of Ghishkee. The women were employed in baking, spinning, and weaving carpets; while the men were, as usual, wandering idle, or in search of game. The English gentlemen, who had been told that this tribe were the greatest thieves in Persia, and that the children were beat daily by their mothers to accustom them to pain, that when they were caught stealing they might not be intimidated by blows into confessing their accomplices, asked an old man if these accu-

[b] When I returned from Persia in 1801, a man of some rank belonging to a tribe in Khorassan, who desired to visit India, accompanied me. I was anxious that he should see and admire Calcutta, and sent a person to show him every part of it. When he returned, I asked him what he thought of it. "Ajab jaêê buraee chapou ast!"—"It is a noble place to plunder!"

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sations were true. "We are abused," he said, "more than we deserve; for, after all, our theft is only a kind of war. We never rob or steal, except from those with whom our ruler, the Waly of Sennah, is on bad terms. When Persia is in confusion, then is our harvest: but now these Kajirs have every thing their own way, and we are likely to be ruined." Some suspicion being expressed as to the truth of his statement, the old man said with animation, "that his tribe had been appointed to guard the English camp, and that we should have an opportunity of judging of their honesty, when trust was reposed in them, by their manner of performing that duty." He had a right to boast that they were faithful guards, for not an article was lost while they attended the mission.

The Persians have always been famed for their hospitality to strangers; but the chiefs of the warlike tribes are beyond all others remarkable for it. The Khan of the tribe of Karagoozoloo had prepared, for the British mission[c], his own house in the town, and removed to a country-seat at some distance. To this he one day invited the whole party; and, at his particular desire, every person, from the highest to the lowest, went. The train of the English envoy was increased by that of a Persian ambassador and his suite, who were proceeding to India. The cavalcade reached the Khan's abode at an early hour, and stayed till near midnight. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the entertainment. They were not, however, aware, till they had taken leave, of the extent of the attention they had been treated with. When they mounted to return home, they were informed, that while they had been at dinner, a sudden and severe frost having come on, every horse and mule of the party, amount-

[c] I left Teheran in January, 1801, and arrived at Hamadan, on my way to Bagdad, on the 11th of February. The cold was excessive, and the whole country was covered with snow about four feet deep. The Governor of Hamadan was Mahomed Hoossein Khan Karagoozoloo.

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ing to nearly two hundred, had been rough shod, to prevent any accident occurring to the guests of the khan.

The tribes of Persia, as well as of Arabia, boast, that when once they pledge themselves to give protection, their word is inviolable: but the faithless barbarity of Kulb Ali Khan, of the tribe of Fylee, has injured, if not destroyed, the claim, which even the worst of these plunderers had before established to the confidence of the defenceless stranger. This villain invited two English officers [d], who were travelling near his camp, to be his guests, and murdered them. His crime appeared to excite at the moment a very general indignation; but, to the reproach of the government and of his countrymen, he has hitherto escaped punishment, and continues to commit depredations amid the mountains between Khuzistan and the Pashalic of Bagdad.

The attachment of the tribes to the families of their chiefs has been noticed. They will seldom consent to obey any other person; and instances often occur, where an infant is carried into the field, to obtain the services of those who consider him as their only lawful leader. If a general levy of the tribe be required for the service of the state, it is effected with difficulty and delay; but a call, connected with their own safety, or that of their chieftain, is promptly obeyed. On such occasions, the signal to assemble flies, to use their own phrase, "from tent to tent, from hill to hill." We are struck at meeting, among these rude families, with so many usages familiar to us; and the interest we take in inquiring into their customs is increased by the recollection that they are those of our forefathers.

The wandering tribes maintain a constant intercourse with the principal cities and towns. They generally carry on a petty commerce in horses and sheep, which they breed; and in carpets, which are woven by their females. In return,

[d] Captain Grant and Lieutenant Fotheringham. The indignation which all felt at this crime, was greatly increased by the high character of its victims.

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they receive grain, cloth, money, and articles of hardware. The unwarlike part of the population are termed Taujeck, which means a person of civil occupation. But this class are not confined to cities. They are often attached to the wandering tribes, and employed by them to cultivate their fields, and to tend their flocks. The tribes have not, however, at present, many subjects of this description. They decrease as the government advances in vigour, and can release them from a dependance upon their rude masters. It is remarkable, that all the Taujecks in Affghanistan and part of Tartary speak Persian; and this fact, while it aids us in fixing the ancient limits of the empire, appears to support a conjecture before made [e], that though these countries have been overrun by martial tribes at different periods, those races of their inhabitants who pursue the occupations of civil life, have remained unchanged, amid all these revolutions.

The ceremonies practised by the wandering tribes on the circumcision of their male children, on giving a name to a child, or in the burial of the dead, are substantially the same as those of the citizens, and of all other Mahomedans; but they continue to preserve, at the funerals of chiefs and soldiers of high reputation, the usages of their more remote ancestors. The charger of the departed warrior, carrying his arms and clothes [f], accompanies the procession; and those who desire to show their respect for the deceased, often send a horse without a rider, but with arms upon his saddle, to swell the train of the mourning cavalcade [g]. Every trace of these rude rites is interesting, as it marks the origin of customs still observed by the most civilized nations.

[e] Vol. I. p. 98.

[f] His clothes and arms are put upon the favourite horse; the cap he wore is placed on the pique of his saddle; the cloth with which he girded his loins is bound round the horse's neck, while the boots are laid across the saddle.

[g] I find from the MS. of Meer Yusuph-ood-deen, that the same usages prevail in Tartary.

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The principal ceremonies of marriage among the tribes are the same as those observed by the inhabitants of the cities and towns. In like manner they settle a dower upon their wives. The ring is sent in all due form, and presents are interchanged between the families. They also stain their hands with a red dye [h] the day before the marriage; and, like the citizens, squander their property on their nuptial feasts. These feasts, among men of rank or wealth, are protracted to thirty or forty days; and with the poorest person they continue three. Indeed, that period is requisite for the observance of the established forms. On the first day the company are assembled; the second is appropriated to the important ceremony of staining the hands; and the third to the marriage. Among all ranks the bridegroom appears, on his wedding-day, dressed in all the finery he can obtain; and on that day he receives from his relations and friends the same obsequious attention which is paid by inferiors to a superior of elevated rank. All who come into his presence sit below him [i]; offerings are brought to the bridegroom from his relations; and these are received with great ceremony by some of his friends, who act on that day as his servants. Two persons, generally near relations, are appointed to carry his orders into execution: these are termed his right-hand man and left-hand man [k]; and if the bridegroom is a child, or bashful, these men act for him, and increase the mirth of the wedding by a thousand tricks they play on his relations and friends. They pretend to receive the bridegroom's commands as those of a monarch, to seize one person, to fine another, and to flog a third. These marriage pranks are usually preconcerted; but even when not, they never give offence, as instances of bad humour at

[h] This dye is called hennah.

[i] If the governor of a province were to attend the marriage ceremony of his servant, he would sit below him.—*Persian MS.*

[k] The bridegroom's right-hand man is, in Turkish, called *sákdesh*; and his left-hand man *soldesh*.

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a nuptial festival are very rare. The joys in the bride's house are more moderate: the lady is bathed, perfumed, and dressed in the richest clothes her family can afford. She also sits in state; and, before she leaves her own house, or tent, she receives presents from a number of her friends. When this ceremony is over, she is covered with a scarlet veil, mounted upon horseback, and conveyed to her husband's dwelling, who receives her at the threshold. These usages are now almost as common among the citizens as among the wandering tribes. It remains to speak of those customs which are more peculiar to the latter; several of which, from their character, probably existed among them long before the introduction of Mahomedanism.

On the morning that the bride is to be conveyed to the house or tent of the bridegroom, her friends assemble. If she is the daughter of a chief, or of an elder, she is accompanied by all the horsemen whose attendance he can command: the party proceed, accompanied by dancers and music; and, if the place of their destination is near, they take a circuitous road to it, that this part of the ceremony may be prolonged. When they appear at a distance the bridegroom mounts his horse, and, attended by his friends, proceeds to meet the cavalcade. He holds an apple or an orange[1] in his hand, and, when sufficiently near to be certain of his aim, he throws it at her with considerable force, it being deemed fortunate to do so. All is silent attention from the time that the parties come near each other till this act, which is the signal for general uproar and confusion. The bridegroom wheels his horse round, and rides at full speed to his place of abode. Every horseman of the bride's party endeavours to seize him; and he that succeeds has his horse, saddle, and clothes as a reward. This, however, is only the case where the party is wealthy: among the poorer a few

[1] The usage of throwing the apple or orange is also common among citizens, who throw it at their brides from the threshold or balcony of the house.

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pieces of silver are paid as a fine to the successful pursuer. The bridegroom however is not often taken; for, as it is a point of honour to escape, he rides the fleetest horse of his tribe, and his friends endeavour by every means to favour his retreat.

When the bride arrives at her future residence, the women by whom she is attended entreat her not to alight. The husband's relations crowd around her, and beg that she will. This is the moment of her power: every male of the family she is about to enter brings her presents proportionate to his ability, or his regard to her husband. They also solicit her to give up part of her dower, and their instances are afterwards repeated by the husband: but the women of Persia are naturally tenacious of their only security against bad usage or accident; and, though they sometimes return a part, they usually reserve enough to render it a check upon those to whom they intrust their future comfort and happiness. At these marriages the men and women dance[m]; and the most polished chiefs, though they may conform, in the marriages of their own family, with the usages of the cities in which they live, are in the habit of visiting the tents of their followers on these joyous occasions; and of contributing, by their munificence, and their unreserved hilarity, to the mirth of these wedding feasts.

The usage of divorce among the tribes is the same as among the inhabitants of cities, but is of still rarer occurrence. This may be ascribed to various causes. The virtue of the females is more strict: they are, from their labour, more valuable to their husbands; and the poorer class have seldom the means of paying a dower to a wife whom they divorce. It is dangerous, too, in such a community, to offend a female of a respectable family: for, though her relations are prompt to be her executioners if she is proved

[m] They stand in a line or ring and join hands, while the music plays, and a person sings in cadence with it. The whole party join in a rude chorus.

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guilty of adultery, they are her strenuous supporters as long as she is innocent of that crime. We are told by an intelligent Persian [n], who has written a short treatise upon the manners of these tribes, that the deepest pledge they can give of their resolution to conquer or perish in any enterprise they are engaged in, is to go through the ceremony of a conditional divorce. They pronounce their wives divorced unless success crowns their efforts. "In former days," he observes, "a man would have been deemed despicable who outlived defeat after this ceremony: but it is now too often an empty boast; and men are not ashamed to fly the moment after they have uttered a vow deemed by their ancestors the most sacred that a man of honour could make."

The male part of the tribes pass their time in riding, military exercises, and hunting. Their fare is coarse and moderate: they now and then feast upon meat; but their general diet is a hard black bread, sour milk, and curds. They do not often indulge in intoxicating liquors: their chief delight is to sit together, smoking their pipes, and listening to songs and tales, or looking at the tricks, grimaces, and witticisms of buffoons [o], (who are to be found in every quarter of Persia,) and some of whom are perfectly skilled in their art. A Persian chief [p] of a Kurdish tribe who remained several days with the British mission, near Kermanshah, in 1801, had in his train a jester, who possessed very versatile and extraordinary talents. One day upon the march, this fellow, addressing the English envoy, said, "You are, no doubt, very proud of the discipline you have established among your

[n] Persian MS.

[o] The Persians say, that a good Loottee, or "buffoon," ought to be able to laugh, cry, weep, sit still, and dance at the same moment. Some of these jesters approach very near this idea of perfection.

[p] Mehdee Khan Kulhoor, the chief of a tribe, who can mount four thousand horse. This nobleman possessed more accomplishments than any I met with in Persia. He was not only a scholar, but a poet and a painter; and he had the reputation of being a good soldier.

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Persian servants, who march in your front in as regular a style as your own soldiers. How long, Sir, has it taken you to introduce this order among my countrymen?"—"About six months," was the reply. "Now," said he, "if you will permit me, you shall see that I will, in less than six minutes, destroy all that you have done in six months." Leave being granted, he rode near the Persian horsemen, who were leading the state-horses, and who had strict orders not to leave their ranks. He had noticed that they were almost all of the Lac and Fylee tribes, whose chief residence is among the mountains of Louristan; and he began to sing, as if to himself, but in a clear and loud voice, a song, which commenced, "Attend to me, ye sons of Louristan; I sing of the glorious deeds of your forefathers." Before he had finished his song, to which all were listening with attention, the whole cavalcade was thrown into confusion by the kicking of horses, the Persians having broke the line of march and crowded round to hear him more distinctly. The jester laughed heartily at the success of his joke, and said to the envoy, "Do not be distressed at the fate of your fine discipline: I have heard of a man who, with nothing but the song I have just sung, collected an army, and was called a king [q] for several weeks."

The men of the wandering tribes delight to tell or listen to romantic tales: some of them not only make themselves masters of this art, but learn to recite verses, particularly those of Firdousee. A person who has cultivated this talent enjoys great respect among his associates, who frequently call on him to amuse an idle hour by transporting his hearers into the regions of fancy, or to excite their minds to deeds of valour, by repeating lines which celebrate the renown of their ancestors.

[q] This, I am assured, was the fact. A chief of no pretensions had, during the confusion after the death of Nâdir Shah, gone about Louristan with some musicians and singers, who continually played and sung this favourite air; and he by this means collected about five thousand followers, and proclaimed himself king.

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The women of the tribes are more respected than those who dwell in cities, because they are more useful to the community. They not only share the bed, but the fatigues and dangers of their husbands; and the masculine habits they acquire are not displeasing, for they seem suited to their condition of life. If they are not of high rank, they perform all the domestic and menial offices of their home; and strangers who visit their houses and tents receive the kindest and most hospitable welcome from them. But there is nothing in their manner that can be mistaken: it is fearless, but not forward, and proceeds from the consciousness of security, not the absence of shame. Though in general their complexion is dark and sun-burnt, they have sometimes, when young, considerable beauty: a sense of their free condition gives lustre to their eyes; and they often add to fine features a very graceful form. But, among the lower orders, such beauty is destroyed by hard labour, and continual exposure to the climate.

A Persian gentleman[r], remarkable for his polished manners and the gaiety of his disposition, describes his entertainment by the females of one of these tribes in a very characteristic manner. "When I arrived at the village of Sennah[s], which is inhabited by the Turkish tribes of Khuzâl and Affshâr, I was invited to take up my abode in the house of one of the chiefs of the latter, and received the greatest attention from all his family. The ladies, who, according to custom, were unveiled, were particularly kind. The daughter of my host was about fifteen years of age, and more beautiful than I can express. When I said I was thirsty, she ran and brought me a cup of pure water. It was a draught from the fountain of life, brought by an

[r] Mahomed Hoossein Khan, son of the late Mehdee Ali Khan, who was sent by the Government of Bombay on a missiou to the Court of Persia in 1798.

[s] In Irak. The name is the same as that of the capital of Ardelân.

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angel: but it increased, instead of extinguishing the flame her bright dark eyes had kindled in my breast[t]." After describing the pain it gave him to depart from this dwelling without daring to show, even by a look, the passion he entertained for this young beauty, he very sensibly observes—"A vain and uninformed man might have mistaken the manner of my fair cup-bearer; but I had experience of these Eellyât ladies, and well knew that nothing was meant but that kindness and hospitality with which they treat all strangers who visit their tents or houses. I believe they are virtuous beyond all other women in Persia; and the man who should even attempt seduction, would be sacrificed to the implacable honour of their male relations." The habits of these females fit them for the scenes they are occasionally exposed to. When riding near a small encampment of Affshâr families, I expressed my doubts to a Persian noble, who was with me, as to their reputed boldness and hardihood, and particularly their horsemanship. He called to a young woman of a handsome appearance, and asked her in Turkish if she was not a soldier's daughter? She said she was. "And you expect to be a mother of soldiers?" She smiled. "Mount that horse," said he, pointing to one with a bridle, but without a saddle, "and show this European envoy the difference between a girl of a tribe, and a citizen's daughter." She sprung upon the animal, and, setting off at full speed, did not stop till she reached the summit of a small hill, covered with loose stones: when there, she waved her hand over her head, and then came down at the same rate she had ascended. Nothing could be more dangerous than the ground she galloped over: but she appeared quite fearless, and seemed delighted at having an opportunity of vindicating the females of her tribe from the reproach of being like the ladies of cities.

The poverty and usages of the wandering tribes often

[t] Mahomed Hoossein Khan's MS. Journal.

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prevent the men from marrying even the number of wives allowed by the law. Many have only one; unless she is old, barren, or unfit to work, they do not marry another. For they can seldom afford to support more than one wife: and, from the liberty which the females enjoy, their quarrels, were there several in a family, would be embarrassing; thus marriage, which is considered as one of the chief bonds of union between the men of a tribe, would become a constant source of discord and contention. The practice of hiring wives for a certain period, which prevails in the cities and towns, is held in abhorrence by the females of tribes; and they have frequently been known to attack priests in the most violent manner, whom they believed to have sanctioned a usage so degrading. But though these women enjoy more freedom and consideration than others in Persia, they are still far off from the rank assigned to the sex among the civilised nations of Europe: they toil, while the lord-like husband spends his hours in indolence, or amusement, and they are regarded more as servants than associates. If a man of a wandering tribe has not so many wives and slaves as his religion permits, or as his brother of the city, it is merely because his poverty, or the condition of the society he belongs to, limits his desires. The moment his situation alters, he is prompt to riot in every kind of dissipation; and the partner, who more than shares his toils, has no chance of an equal participation in the good fortune that may attend him. If he is raised to a high station, he deems an increased indulgence of his sensuality one of the chief pleasures of advancement; and when he settles in a city, he at once adopts the customs of a citizen. His first wives, if he has more than one, are compelled to sacrifice the liberty they before enjoyed, and to endure the neglect which naturally arises from his power of obtaining younger and more beautiful females. Among these tribes, however, maternal claims are always respected. The mother's influence over her son usually continues through life; and she is ready to maintain

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that authority, which is grounded on habit and affection, by ministering to his gratification. It is her duty to preside over his family; and, if he is rich, he usually intrusts her not only with the choice of his female partners, but with their management. The anticipation of this power makes the women anxiously desire to have male children: the birth of a son is hailed with joy; that of a daughter is always a disappointment.

These observations on the wandering tribes chiefly apply to those of Persian and Turkish origin. The Arabian tribes subject to Persia, inhabiting the shores of the Gulf, are more assimilated in their habits to the people they are derived from, than to that amid which they dwell. They continue to speak Arabic, and preserve almost all the customs of their original country. In general they dress like the Arabians, wearing, instead of the Persian cap, a light turban, and they are usually covered with a flowing cloak. Their manners, though less rude than those of the other tribes, retain much of the wildness and independence of their ancestors.

The diet of the Arabian tribes is more frugal than that of any other of the inhabitants. It consists chiefly of dates. But what others would consider a hardship, habit with them has converted into an enjoyment; and the Arab deems no food more delightful. Some years ago a woman, belonging to one of the Arab families at Abusheher, had gone to England with the children of the British resident at that place. When she returned, all crowded around her, to hear her report of the country she had visited. She described the roads, the carriages, the horses, the wealth and splendour of the cities, and the highly cultivated state of the country. Her audience were full of envy at the condition of Englishmen, and were retiring with that impression, when the woman happened to add, that the country only wanted one thing to make it quite delightful. "What is that?" was the general inquiry. "It has not a date tree in

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it," said she. "I never ceased to look for one, all the time I was there, but I looked in vain." The Arabs no longer felt envy, but pity, for men, condemned to live in a country where there were no date-trees.

The Arabian tribes possess the power of flying from oppression when they cannot resist it. The sea is always open to them, and they are accustomed to it. Not only the islands of the Gulf, but the neighbouring territories of Turkey, and the opposite coast of Arabia, are inhabited by their brethren: and this, combined with their original habits, gives a freedom of sentiment and expression to them which is very striking. When a party of English gentlemen, who were hunting near Abusheher, were preparing to slip an English and an Arabian greyhound at a deer, to see which was the fleetest, one of them said the English dog would beat. A poor Arab, who had accompanied the party in hope of obtaining a trifling present for leading a dog, sprung forward, and exclaimed, with all the energy of his race, "You are wrong, sir! by Heaven, the Arab dog will win!"

The manners of some of the mountain tribes who inhabit the great ranges in the south of Persia, cannot be described, for they are hardly known: but we may conclude, that their usages are as little changed since the time of Alexander, as their relations to their sovereign are; and these, from the description of them by the historians of the Grecian conqueror, appear to have been exactly the same then as at present. Alexander is represented as having pursued the same policy toward them which the modern Kings of Persia are necessitated to adopt. He endeavoured to make them husbandmen and feeders of cattle, that, "having property of their own to defend, they might refrain from encroaching upon their neighbours[u]."

These rude tribes are no way envious of that civilisation

[u] Translation of Arrian, vol. ii. page 280.

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of which we are so proud. We may wonder at their ignorance and prejudices; but we must recollect that men are formed by habit, and that all their sufferings and enjoyments are comparative. How often do we see them rejoicing under hardships and bondage, and repining at their lot when courted by liberty and fortune! The feelings imbibed from living in one state of society, disqualify us from judging of another: but he who has travelled over the greatest space will be most struck with the equal dispensation of happiness and misery; and his value for knowledge will not be diminished by his observing, that its possessors are not always the happiest. We should be grateful for the blessing of civilisation; but we should not assume too great a superiority over those who continue in a more barbarous state. A study of their manners, of the causes of their misery, and the sources of their happiness, may teach us many useful and important lessons. Human nature is always the same, in whatever garb it is clothed: and there can be none to whom it is of more consequence to contemplate society in its rudest state, than a nation which continues, amid luxury and refinement, to cherish an individual independence and a political freedom, grounded upon the institutions of a race of brave, but turbulent warriors; and not to be maintained except by the constant readiness to suffer every privation, rather than slavery.

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Chapter XXIV.

ON THE CONDITION OF PERSIA, AND THE CHARACTER OF ITS INHABITANTS.

Though no country has undergone, during the last twenty centuries, more revolutions than Persia, there is perhaps none less altered in its condition. The power of the sovereigns, and of the satraps of yore; the gorgeous magnificence of the court: the habits of the people; their division into citizens, martial tribes, and savage mountaineers; the internal administration; the mode of warfare; have continued to be essentially the same: and the Persians, so far as we have the means of judging, are not at present a very different people from what they were in the time of Darius, and of Noosheerwan.

There is no example, during more than twelve centuries, of any Mahomedan nation having attained a high rank in the scale of civilisation. All who have adopted this religion, have invariably been exposed to the miseries of an arbitrary and unsettled rule. Many reasons have been urged to account for this; especially the example of the prophet, and the nature of some fundamental tenets of his faith. The life of Mahomed, after he declared his mission, was passed in constant warfare; and he is scarcely more revered by his followers on account of his sanctity as "the deputed of God[x]," than for his personal courage and his skill as a general. Every Mahomedan ruler has consequently been able to plead, as a lawful excuse for his ambition, the desire of emulating the earthly glory of his prophet: and the Koran[y] has con-

[x] Russool-ollâ, or "the deputed of God," is his most common title.

[y] The Koran, which was composed by a martial leader during his contest for power, being recognised as the only source of written law in Mahomedan nations, may tend in no slight degree to keep them in comparative bar-

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continually been quoted to shew, as applied to the friends or enemies of the faith, the necessity of obedience, and the virtue of violence.

Polygamy, and the seclusion of the female sex, which Mahomed practised and recommended, have no doubt had an influence, scarcely secondary to that of any other cause, in retarding the progress of civilisation. The mind is formed by its domestic habits: and every Mahomedan is a despot in his own house. From childhood to old age he hears of and sees nothing but arbitrary power. Accustomed only to obey or to command, he cannot understand what is meant by individual or political freedom: and he recognises in his monarch the same absolute power as he claims over all whom nature or fortune has placed under his own authority.

Other causes might be discovered in the ancient and present condition of the great kingdoms of Asia, to account in some degree for their never having attained a state of improvement comparable to that enjoyed by almost all those nations which form the present commonwealth of Europe: but the reasons already stated will fully explain that apathy on all points connected with the shape of their government, which is characteristic of every country inhabited by Mahomedans. Chiefs of tribes have combined to preserve their independence. Their followers, from their love of natural liberty, have clung to the habits of savage life rather than submit to oppression: but there has never been among those who professed this religion, one effort made for rational freedom, nor a desire shewn to impose any salutary and permanent check upon the absolute authority of the sovereign. If his cruelty occasions a revolt, the only use made of success is to set up another tyrant in his stead; whose first

barism. Commentaries may be written to explain the text in the manner best suited to those to whom the law applies; but the principle can neither be changed nor set aside: reason is fettered by faith; and men are condemned to receive their laws as articles of belief, on which it is impiety to exercise their judgment.

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exercise of his power is in subduing the spirit of turbulence to which he has owed his elevation.

The history of Persia from the Arabian conquest to the present day proves the truth of these observations: and while the same causes continue to operate, no material change in its condition can be expected. Its prosperity will still depend upon the personal character of its monarchs: nor can the best of kings do more than promote it during the uncertain period of his own life. What consequences the recent approximation of Russia may have upon the future destiny of Persia, cannot easily be foretold: the Turks, wrapt up in the habits of their ancestors, and defended by their religious prejudices, have for ages resisted the progress of that civilisation with which they were surrounded: and this example might lead us to conclude, that vicinity of territory, and the consequent collision of opposite habits and creeds, is more likely to increase than to diminish those obstacles which have hitherto prevented any intimate social intercourse between Mahomedan and Christian nations.

Before I conclude a work in which an attempt has been made to convey to the English reader fuller information than he has hitherto possessed on the past history and present condition of Persia, it appears right to offer some reflections on the general character of the different classes of its inhabitants.

The personal characters of the Kings of Persia have been given in the course of this history: what remains to be said relates more to the qualities connected with their condition, than to their personal disposition or talents. Almost all have been religious, or at least punctual observers of the forms of their religion. This is essential (even if they are not sincere) to their power; and its necessity is inculcated from infancy. Morality is not thought of equal importance. Every Monarch is considered at liberty to indulge, from his earliest youth, in the grossest sensuality. The boundless

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gratification of his passions is deemed a privilege of his condition: and this may be the main cause of the constant change of dynasties we meet with in this history. Families are elevated to power by the efforts of some great and extraordinary man: his immediate successors, stimulated by his example, and by the necessity of exertion to maintain and extend the dominion that his courage and talents acquired, pursue the same path: but their descendants are ruined by the fame of their forefathers. Instructed to believe themselves born to rule, they conceive that they have only to enjoy the power which they inherit. They give themselves up to the luxury by which they are courted; listen to the flatterers by whom they are surrounded: till, enervated and subdued by a life of indolence and vice, they fall before a popular native chief, or a foreign invader.

A Monarch of Persia acknowledges nothing as obligatory upon him but the ritual observances of his religion. Mercy, generosity, and justice, he admits to be virtues; but considers them as royal qualities, not duties. Accustomed to have every look obeyed, and to complete submission to his authority, he is as impatient of any obstacle to the fulfilment of his desires, as he is insensible to the value of devoted service. We discover from their history, that the Kings of Persia have, with some remarkable exceptions, almost always chosen their personal companions from among men of low birth and mean attainments. Those who exercise absolute power, and whose only title to be called great is derived from the splendour of their station, hate to be approached in their unreserved moments by men who have high pretensions, either from hereditary rank, or superior talents and virtue. They feel happier and more at ease when surrounded by a circle of an opposite description: and the pride of despotism is never so much gratified as when it can look around and see nothing but what rests entirely on its favour, and what consequently can be destroyed with the same breath that created it.

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Few things can be more difficult than for a Monarch of Persia to continue humane, even if such should be his natural disposition. The constant habit of directing and witnessing executions must harden his nature: and the persons intrusted with the education of the princes, as if apprehensive that their tender feelings should interfere with the performance of their future duties, take them, when almost infants, to witness scenes at which men would shudder. These early lessons appear to have been almost uniformly successful; for we have hardly an instance of a King of Persia evincing any uncommon degree of humanity: while there are many to prove, that the habit of shedding blood often becomes a passion; by a brutal indulgence in which, human beings appear to lose the rank and character of their species.

The Sovereigns of Persia are sometimes compelled to devise the means of secretly destroying those powerful subjects whose allegiance they suspect, but whom they fear openly to accuse or to attack. Policy, and indeed self-preservation, may palliate such proceedings; but the necessity of having recourse to them cannot prevent their baneful influence on the mind, nor alter the impression they are calculated to make. Cruelty never excites more indignation than when combined with art; and the undisguised violence of tyrannical power appears like virtue when compared with the treacherous acts of its timid weakness.

These observations apply to all despots who have similar power: but, fortunately for mankind, in few nations is the authority vested in the chief ruler so absolute. We cannot be surprised, when we consider their condition, that the monarchs of this kingdom have, in general, been careless of the rights of others, tenacious of their own; that they have recognised no limit to their oppression but apprehension of revolt; that they have only measured their indulgence in pleasure by their power of enjoying it; that they have sought to amass treasure by all the means which did not violate such laws and usages as it was deemed dangerous to

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infringe; that they have entered on wars with no views but those connected with personal glory; and that they have not considered the prosperity of their country an object of their care, except so far as it was calculated to promote their individual interests and reputation.

The character of the princes of the blood in Persia can never be correctly known. They always act under great restraint. Their manners are in general kind and prepossessing; as their principal object is to attach their associates, and to gain a popularity which may promote their future advancement. Though their situation should impress them with the necessity of great prudence, if not of dissimulation, flattery and the arrogance of high birth frequently counteract these salutary impressions: and, when intrusted with authority, they often display as much violence as if their brows were already encircled with that crown which is to invest them with despotic power.

The ministers and chief officers of the Court are almost always men of polished manners, well skilled in the business of their respective departments, of pleasant conversation, subdued temper, and very acute observation: but these agreeable and useful qualities are, in general, all that they possess. Nor is virtue or liberal knowledge to be expected in men whose lives are wasted in attending to forms; whose means of subsistence are derived from the most corrupt sources; whose occupation is in intrigues which have always the same objects, to preserve themselves, or ruin others; who cannot, without danger, speak any language but that of flattery and deceit; and who are, in short, condemned, by their condition, to be venal, artful, and false. There have, no doubt, been many ministers of Persia whom it would be injustice to class under this general description; but even the most distinguished for their virtues and talents have been forced in some degree to accommodate their principles to their station; and, unless where the confidence of their sovereign has placed them beyond the fear of rivals, necessity

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has compelled them to practise a subserviency and dissimulation, at variance with that truth and integrity which can alone constitute a claim to the respect all are disposed to grant to good and great men.

The characters of the governors of provinces and cities are in a considerable degree formed on that of the sovereign: but the system of the government must always dispose them to abuse their brief authority. From their situation, however, they are in general more manly and open, both in manner and conduct, than the ministers and courtiers: and therefore, as a body, are entitled to more respect; for violence and injustice do not debase the nature of man so much as deceit and falsehood.

The religious orders are divided into several classes. The few who attain very high rank, are usually men of learning, of mild temper, and retired habits. They are very careful to preserve the respect they enjoy, by cherishing the impressions entertained of their piety and humility. It is rare to see them intolerant, except where they deem the interest of that religion, of which they are the head, in danger. The lower classes of the priesthood are commonly of a very opposite character. With little knowledge, and great pretensions, they demand a respect which they seldom receive; and so are among the most discontented of the community. The general disposition of the Persians to treat strangers of a different religion with kindness and hospitality, is a subject of constant irritation to them. They rail at all communication with infidels, and endeavour to obtain an importance with the lower orders by a display of their bigotry and intolerance. This class are often accused by their countrymen of indulging the worst passions. To say a man hates like a moollah, is to assert that he cherishes the most inveterate hostility.

There is a considerable difference of character among the inhabitants of the various cities and towns, originating in the opposite feelings and habits which they have derived from

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their ancestors. The natives of Cazveen, Tebreez, Hamadan, Shiraz, and Yezd, are as remarkable for their courage, as those of Koom, Cashan, and Isfahan, are for their cowardice. The former are chiefly descended from martial tribes; the forefathers of the latter have for many centuries pursued civil occupations. But, though some of the citizens are less warlike than others, their shades of character are not of so much consequence as to prevent their being included in a general description. The whole of this community may be deemed, as far as regards their personal appearance, a fine race of men: they are not tall; but it is rare to see any of them diminutive or deformed, and they are in general strong and active. Their complexions vary from a dark olive to a fairness approaching to that of a northern European: and if they have not all the bloom of the latter, their florid healthy look often gives them no inconsiderable beauty. As a people, they may be praised for their quickness of apprehension, their vivacity, and the natural politeness of their manners. They are sociable and cheerful; and, with some remarkable exceptions, as prodigal in disbursement as eager of gain[s]. The higher classes of the citizens are kind and indulgent masters; and the lower ranks are, as far as respects the active performance of their duty, and the prompt execution of the orders they receive, the best of servants. In countries where the law grants equal protection to all ranks, and where servitude does not imply dependence, the master and servant are much more separated than in despotic states. In the latter, where there are no middle classes, the servant is often the humble friend, and lives in habits of intimacy which can only exist where the distinction is so great as to remove all danger of either forgetting his condition.

The falsehood of the Persians is proverbial; nor are they forward to deny this national reproach: but they argue, that this vice appertains to the government, and is the

[s] The lower classes of merchants are often very avaricious and sordid.

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natural consequence of their condition: and there can be no doubt that, when rulers practise violence and oppression, those who are oppressed will shield themselves by all the means in their power: and when destitute of combination and strength, they can only have recourse to art and duplicity. Nor is the moral character always debased by the use of this defence: instances continually occur in Persia, as in other countries subject to an arbitrary government, where the head of a village, or the magistrate of a city, entitles himself to gratitude and admiration, by a virtuous and undaunted perseverance in falsehood, at the peril of his own life and property, to save others who consider him as their guardian and protector.

The frame of private society is, perhaps, still more calculated to render men artful and false. The wives and slaves of a despotic husband and master must have all the vices of their debased condition. The first lessons their children learn from the example of the persons they love, is to practise deceit; and this early impression is confirmed by all their future habits. They may hear and admire moral sentences on the beauty and excellence of truth; but prudence warns them against so dangerous a virtue. The oaths they constantly use to attest their veracity, are only proofs of their want of it. They swear by the head of the king, by that of the person they address, by their own, by their sons, that they are not asserting what is false: and if a stranger should continue to evince suspicion, they sometimes exclaim, "Believe me; for, though a Persian, I am speaking truth." There are, no doubt, some of the Persians who do not deserve to be included in this general description, and who are distinguished by their regard for truth: but their numbers are too inconsiderable to save their countrymen from the reproach of falsehood, as a prevalent national vice.

The citizens of Persia are not subdued by their situation into a submissive temper. They are easily inflamed into passion, and act, when under its influence, like men careless

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of the result. A stranger, unacquainted with the nature of the government, and the latitude of speech which it permits in the persons it oppresses, is surprised to hear the meanest inhabitant of a town venting imprecations[a] against his superiors, nay, sometimes against the king himself. These extraordinary ebullitions of passion, which are very common among the lower orders, generally pass unheeded. Sometimes they may provoke a reproof, or a few blows; but they never receive consequence from the unwise interference of power.

Many of the inhabitants of the principal cities are men of some education: but even those who are not so, are remarkable for the fluency of their language. They express themselves with a freedom and boldness not always restrained by the disparity between them and the person they are addressing. Hajee Ibrahim, formerly prime minister, who gloried in the name of citizen, used to delight in relating a dialogue between his brother, who was Beglerbeg, or Governor of Isfahan, and a seller of vegetables in that city[b]. An extraordinary impost having been laid on every shop, the latter forced himself into the Governor's presence when he was giving public audience, and exclaimed, that he was totally unable to pay the tax. "You must pay it, or leave the city," was the reply. "I cannot pay it," said the man; "and to what other place can I go?"—"You may either proceed to Shiraz, or Kashan, if you like those towns better than this," said the governor. "Your brother," replied the shopkeeper, "is in power at one of these cities, and your nephew at the other: what relief can I expect in either?"—

[a] The Persians not only vent their abuse on the person who has offended them, but on his whole kindred, and particularly his female relatives. Their abuse is generally very obscene.

[b] Hajee Ibrahim repeated this anecdote to me with great animation. He, indeed, particularly delighted in mentioning any thing that reflected honour upon the spirit of the citizens of Persia, whom it was his policy through life to support aainst the wandering tribes of that country.

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"You may proceed to court," said the ruler, "and complain to the king, if you think I have committed injustice."—"Your brother, the Hajee, is prime minister," said the man. "Go to hell!" exclaimed the enraged governor, "and do not trouble me any more!"—"The holy man [c], your deceased father, is perhaps there," said the undaunted citizen. The crowd could not suppress their smiles, and the governor, who shared the general feeling, bade the complainant retire, and said he would attend to his case, provided he would not bring a curse upon his family, by insisting that they shut him out from all hopes of justice, both in this world and the next.

The character of the military tribes differs essentially from that of the other Persians. The chiefs are often as much distinguished for their generosity as their courage. From their condition they are less artful than the ministers and principal civil officers. But they are not exempt from that vice, though it is corrected by their pride and violence. Arrogant from birth, and surrounded from infancy by devoted dependents, their minds are habituated to overrate their own pretensions, and depreciate those of others. When inflamed with passion, they lose the courtly manner which they are accustomed to assume, and give way to the most ungovernable rage. They seldom suffer from the bold imprudence of their language on these occasions, as they can always plead in excuse the habits of the rude class they belong to [d];

[c] The name of the father of the governor was Hajee Hâshem. The expression used by the shopkeeper was Hajee-murhoom, which means the deceased hajee, or "pilgrim."

[d] I one day heard a nobleman of one of these tribes use the most violent and insulting language of the prime minister. His imprudence appeared the greater, as some of the minister's particular friends were present. Apprehensive of the consequence, I next day asked him, if any thing had happened. "It is all settled," he said; "I have made an apology. I told the minister I was an Eellyatee, (a man of a wandering tribe); and that, you know, is an excuse for any thing a man can say or do."

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and the allowance they demand upon this ground, is hardly ever refused, even by the monarch himself, if he has been the object of their intemperance. The character of these military nobles may be said to change with the state of their country: when that is settled for any long period, they lose a great deal of their native honesty and violence. Educated at the capital, where, in youth, they are generally kept as hostages for the good conduct of their fathers; and compelled to constant attendance on the king after they have attained manhood; they become in time courtiers, and except in being more haughty are not materially different from the other nobles and principal officers. We can neither praise them, nor any other of the higher ranks in Persia, for their strictness in either moral or religious duties: to the former, they do not even pretend to give much attention; and though they are careful to observe all the forms of the latter, they often seem indifferent to the substance, and are in the habit of discussing the tenets of their faith with a freedom sometimes bordering upon profaneness*.

* Religion is a favorite topic of conversation, particularly when a stranger of an opposite faith is of the party. It is not unusual to hear the subject treated in a manner which proves at least that there is the utmost latitude of speech. I have frequently listened to these discussions with some surprise. I heard a person of high rank one day exclaim, in a mixed company, where some priests were maintaining the sacred claims of the descendants of the prophet—"This is all very well for superstitious fools who know no better: but I have travelled and read, and have more than once met with a dog of a Syud, and an angel of a Jew!" This speech produced a hearty laugh at the expense of the holy man. I find in one of my manuscripts a very ludicrous instance of the open impiety of a nobleman now living in Khorassan. He heard a moollah describe, in the pulpit, the manner in which the angels Monker and Nakir visit the grave the moment after the corpse is deposited in it. He went away, determined to satisfy his mind by a physical experiment: and the next time he heard the priest mention the subject he exclaimed, before the astonished congregation—"All that fellow says is a lie! My servant died four days ago; and as I was resolved to discover the truth, I stuffed his mouth quite full with dry grain. I have since opened his grave, and the grain is exactly where it was placed: it is therefore quite impossible that he should have either spoken to man or angel!"

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The Eellyâts, as a body, have the virtues and vices of their condition; are sincere, hospitable, and brave; but rude, violent, and rapacious. They are not in need of falsehood and deceit, and therefore not much in the habit of practising them: but if they have fewer vices than the citizens, it is evidently the absence of temptation, and the ignorance of luxury, which give them their superiority; for it is remarked that they never settle in towns, or enter them as victors, without exceeding the inhabitants in every species of profligacy [f].

The females who dwell in towns are usually placed in the situation of slaves; and, therefore, have many of the qualities which belong to that condition. The character of a race which can hardly be said to have any influence in the community, is of little importance; and if it were otherwise, we cannot have sufficient information to form any correct judgment upon it. If we believe common report, or the tales of Persian writers, the art and ingenuity of the women are often successful in eluding the jealous vigilance of their domestic tyrants. Of the females of the wandering tribes I have already spoken: they enjoy a fair portion of liberty; and if they are inferior to the natives of cities in beauty of person and softness of manner, they are superior to them in industry, in chastity, and many other virtues. We meet with frequent examples among this class of an elevation of sentiment, and an heroic courage which nothing but freedom could inspire.

In speaking generally [g] of the Persians, we may describe

[f] It would be disgusting to enter into a catalogue of the vices of a people among whom the indulgence of unnatural lust is not considered a crime.

[g] This only applies to the Mahomedan population. The Armenians who live in Persia are a submissive and humble race, endeavouring by their industry to obtain a livelihood among a people by whom they are treated with harshness and contempt. The Jews are much more despised, and their character and condition are more degraded. I have before spoken of the few families of Guebres, or "worshippers of fire," who remain, and whom their Mahomedan conquerors seem to tolerate, that they may enjoy their triumph by protracted oppression.

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them as handsome, active, and robust; of lively imagination, quick apprehension, and agreeable and prepossessing manners. As a nation they may be termed brave; though the valour they have displayed, like that of every other people in a similar state of society, has in a great degree depended upon their leaders, and the nature of the objects they have fought for. Their vices are still more prominent than their virtues. Compelled by the nature of their government to have recourse on every occasion to art or violence, they are alternately submissive and tyrannical. Many of their more serious defects may be attributed to the same cause; and there is no country in which so much of the immorality of its inhabitants can be referred to a bad system of internal administration. This reflection, though it may mitigate our sense of the depravity of individuals, leaves little hope of their amendment; for it is evident that this cannot be effected except by the concurrence of many radical changes, with a complete alteration in their political condition; an event which neither their past history nor present state can lead us to anticipate.

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* In consequence of an oversight at the time this work was sent to press, an incorrect spelling of many proper names has been followed, from the former edition, throughout the first volume of the present one; in the second volume, as well as in the Index, this has been corrected.

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