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Narrative of a journey from Heraut to  
Khiva, Moscow, and St. Petersburg,  
during the late Russian invasion of Khiva,  
with some account of the court of Khiva  
and the kingdom of Khaurism. v.1 (1884)

James Abbott Sir

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SUMMUD KHAUN.

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY  
FROM  
HERAUT TO KHIVA, MOSCOW,  
AND  
ST. PETERSBURGH,  
DURING THE  
LATE RUSSIAN INVASION OF KHIVA;  
WITH  
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE COURT OF KHIVA AND  
THE KINGDOM OF KHAURISM.

BY CAPTAIN JAMES ABBOTT,  
BENGAL ARTILLERY,  
LATELY ON A DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO KHIVA.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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*Third Edition.*

LONDON:  
W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE,  
PALL MALL. S.W.

1884.

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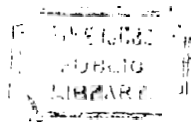


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WRITTEN ON THE SHORE OF THE CASPIAN,  
KHAURISM.

*April, 1840.*

VICTORIA!—From thy thousand isles,  
Thy realms beyond the sea,  
Old Ocean wreathes his brow in smiles,  
To bless, to welcome thee.—  
Throughout each palace crystalline,  
Each far-resounding dome,  
With ocean-pearls the Naiads twine  
Their sea-green locks—they come ;  
They come, light dancing o'er the Deep,  
As motes in sunny beam ;  
In music o'er the waves they sweep,  
Victoria still their theme.  
Queen of the Isles,  
Queen of the Deep,  
Of Freedom, Valour, Beauty, Queen.



No sceptre needs that lily hand,  
 Bend but thy beauteous brow,  
 Old Ocean's thunders shake the strand,  
 They quell each haughty Foe.  
 Forth the white-pinioned squadrons fly,  
 Those eagles of the wave ;  
 The red-cross Banner streams on high  
 Its beacon to the Brave.  
 And at thy glance to light they leap,  
 The war-blades bright and keen :  
 Red roll the Floods, wild curl, and sweep,  
 Hoarse voices chime between—  
     " Queen of the Isles !  
     " Queen of the Deep !  
 " Of Freedom, Valour, Beauty, Queen."

Blessings on Her, whose very name  
 Breathed in the Scythian Wild,  
 The Scythian's stony heart could tame,  
 And free\* sad Slavery's child  
 Britannia's name, till then unheard,  
 With thine sweet union found :  
 Old Oxus own'd the blest accord,  
 And trembled at a sound.

\* See page 163, Vol. I. Journal.

Then clanked the riven chain : the Deep  
 Gave up its dead :—and keen  
 Leapt forth the prison'd fires.—They weep,  
 They bless a power unseen,  
 “Queen of the Isles,  
 “Queen of the Deep,  
 “Of Freedom, Valour, Beauty, Queen.”

Victoria! bid thy standard wave,  
 Fling far each giant fold,  
 Dropp'd with the pearls of Ocean's cave,  
 With India's gems and gold!  
 On that red cross the circling sun  
 Ne'er sets :—and winds that blow,  
 Shake from each fold a blessing down  
 On some sad child of woe.  
 O'er earth and wave, where'er its deep  
 Dread shade of peace is seen,  
 A Heaven on earth the Ransom'd keep,  
 Starr'd in thy ray serene,  
 “Queen of the Isles,  
 “Queen of the Deep,  
 “Of Freedom, Valour, Beauty, Queen.”

But, when its thund'rous folds are freed,  
 When the fork'd fire-bolts glance,  
 'Mid warrior shouts and tramp of steeds,  
 And gleam of serried lance :

When earth and sky its gloom deplore,  
And Ocean's terrors rise,  
And, hurl'd upon a hostile shore,  
Th' Armada shattered lies :  
Whilst surges roar and tempests sweep,  
—Each fearful crash between,  
Justice' dread voice th' accord shall keep,  
And Mercy hymn serene,  
“Queen of the Isles,  
“Queen of the Deep,  
“Of Freedom, Valour, Beauty, Queen.”

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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SINCE the publication of the Second Edition of this Narrative, the conquest of Khiva, commenced by Peter the Great, interrupted and delayed by repeated disasters, and discouraged in 1840 by the decided *veto* of England, but (like all Russia's designs of extension) never for a moment relinquished, has become an accomplished fact. Russia has overpassed the formidable barrier spread by Nature between her own and the coveted land; and has, in twenty-five years, marched fifteen hundred miles upon India.

For, when the army, launched against Khiva by General Perroffski in 1839, had been driven back with terrible loss by the severity of the winter; and when the result of the two missions to Khiva despatched by the watchful promptitude of Major Todd,\* our Envoy at Heraut, had warned Russia that her direct march upon India imperilled her friendly relations with us; far from relinquishing her ultimate purpose, she directed all her energies to the prosecution of that march, by a more circuitous route along the basin of the river Sirr or Jaxartes.

\* The first under Capt. Abbott, the second under Lieut. Shakespeare.

A fortified enclosure was built, one long march beyond the Russian frontier, in the desert appertaining to Kokaun.\* Wells were sunk within it, supplies and muniments were there stored, and in brief space another and yet another such castle was established, each one long march in advance of the other: until a complete chain of fortified posts had been formed between the Russian frontier and the river SIRR; a distance of about five hundred miles. To the States of Europe she explained that she was merely rounding off her boundary, having no design whatever of conquest. Thus, as an engineer sinks his zigzag approaches to the fortress he would besiege; Russia pushed on *her* approaches, year after year, through the formidable deserts of Kokaun, by a process equally secure of success. The Kokaunians, at length aroused to a sense of their peril, attacked the foremost enclosure; but, being profoundly inexperienced in siege operations, were easily repulsed: and Russia, indignantly denouncing the King of Kokaun as the aggressor, in due time possessed herself of his kingdom.

Kokaun subdued, and Russian steamers afloat upon the Sea of Aral, a plea for the conquest of Bokhara was not hard to find. Khiva it was necessary to approach with more ceremony: for not only were the deserts girding that State formidable: but England, having once interfered to save it from destruction,

\* I write it, as it was spelt and pronounced at Khiva when I was there.

was in honour pledged to preserve from overthrow so important a safeguard to her Eastern Empire. But the Russian Cabinet has a solvent for every difficulty, and the event is too recent to need that I should say how this difficulty was solved; how august the agent employed in its solution. The slaughter by Kauffman of the gallant Yahmoot\* Toorcumuns followed; and they being the only fighting men of Khaurism, that principality became part of the Russian Empire.

The Tukka Toorcumuns, warned by the fate of their fellow tribe, stood on their guard against all cajolery; but, after the most gallant resistance, fell before the overwhelming numbers and discipline of their gigantic foe, wielded by the genius of Skobelev. Fast as the advance has been made, railways have been laid to aid it; and by the last report (Mr. Marvin's) had reached Kizil Arvat, one hundred and forty miles to the south-east of the Caspian.

Whether there remain any among the people of Great Britain so simple as to cling to that fond trust in the disinterested philanthropy of the Northern Cabinet, under which they bade Russia "God speed" in her unprovoked murder of Turk and Toorcumun, we cannot say. The *Rational* will regard with other eyes the revelation made by Mr. Marvin and others of the progress of Russia's march upon India, she having, at an enormous expense of treasure and

\* Schuyler, one authority, writes this name "Yomud."

energy, established a system of steamboat and railway communication, by which she can, even now, transport an army, far larger than any we can bring to meet it, from the valley of the Volga, through the ports of Batoum, Baku, and Krasnovodsk, to Kizil Arvat, one hundred and forty miles south-east of the Caspian. From thence, doubtless, she will extend the railway to Heraut whenever it suits her convenience.

And how has this march upon India been allowed? Simply by our unnatural feuds and factions. Our disunion rendered possible the Russo-Turkish war. That war gave Russia the long-coveted port of Batoum on the Euxine, without which her further advance on India had been difficult and hazardous. The voice of united England could have prevented that most unrighteous war. But Russia knew well our national weakness: that the rancour of party spirit can flood our brains with madness. She sent forth her missionaries, male and female, to flatter, cajole, incense. And the result has placed her henceforth and for ever in a position to deride, with calm contempt, the nation which heretofore had impeded her advance to the despotism of Asia.

It has been recommended by certain authorities, that we advance the Indian frontier, or suffer that of Russia to advance, until both be conterminous: arguing that since Germany goes not to war periodically with Holland or with Russia, India and Russia may live peacefully side by side.

To careless eyes this argument may seem fair. But it is in fact no argument at all; Russia and Germany being alike deterred from seizing Holland by the jealousy of the Sister States. In Asia there is no such safeguard. It is quite true that the intervention of Afghaunistan between India and Russia is much more likely to create than to prevent war; but it is equally certain that Russia has not made such enormous sacrifices for the mere purpose of suffering a deficit yearly of several millions sterling, as the mistress of desert sands, nor even for the honour of sleeping peacefully side by side with India; and we well know that contact with India means, as Skobelev himself allowed, the opportunity of dealing with our Indian subjects, as she dealt with the subjects of Turkey during profound peace preceding the Russo-Turkish war.

The same authorities are fond of suggesting another argument equally futile. "If," say they, "we rule so ill that we dare not trust our Indian subjects, let us reform our rule.\* Or if we assert that our rule is good, but that good rule will not prevent ill effects from foreign intrigue, why that is a game which two can play." Are they so profoundly ignorant of the subject as to suppose that in India commotions are ever the work of the people, instead of being confined to the bloodsuckers of the land alone, whether

\* Russia's Lady Missionaries have converted our Sentimentalists to the belief that Russian tyranny is better for India than British freedom.



princes or nobles or soldiers of fortune, from whose tender mercies we have rescued that people, and to whom our justice is a living death? And would they really have us organize a corps of Ghazis, in imitation of Russia's pioneers, the Slavonic Committee;\* to sow treason and to preach to Toorcumun and Oozbeg the duty of rising upon their rulers: or to give their army a watchword of sedition? We see here what nonsense can be made to pass for argument by a clever tongue or pen; when either through terror of doing our duty, or obsequiousness to a mighty patron, or in support of an untenable dogma, we suffer our wits to go astray.

The propounders of these precepts tender them (they assure us) in order to prevent the panics, which from time to time render us so ridiculous. But, begging their pardon, it is precisely such advice that lays the foundation for those panics: encouraging the unopposed advance of a formidable enemy, and holding us careless of his approach until his foot is on our threshold: when we start up suddenly, aware of his presence and of our own unpreparedness to meet him. The nation is never accessible to panic† when assured that its rulers are wide awake.

\* "The non-official action of Russia has centred around the Slavonic committee."—*Wallace*.

† There is a fear more contemptible than panic itself. It is the terror which dares not believe in impending peril, but resolutely shuts its eyes, or, ostrich-like, thrusts its head beneath the sand, to escape the hideous sight. It is this degrading terror that sends the father scrambling blindfold into his grave, and leaving his hapless offspring to face perils enhanced fiftyfold by his father's cowardice.

Whatever the imperfection of our Indian rule, through the introduction by pettifoggers (profoundly ignorant of the natives) of Western ideas into the legal code of an Eastern people; there cannot be a doubt that the benefits conferred on India by England are greater than any ever before or since conferred by one nation upon another. It is the very restraint upon their cruelty and rapacity imposed by our rule that makes it obnoxious to those, by whom alone revolutions are ever attempted in India.

Our present policy seems to be that of trusting for the protection of a neutral territory to the good sense of the Ummeer of Cabul, and of the Afghaun nation; which it is presumed will deter both from accepting the tyrannous protection of Russia rather than the free friendship of the Indian Government. Our invasion of Afghaunistan in 1838 was no doubt a gross blunder (though abundantly justified in regard to equity), and had not this unhappy event fired the Afghauns with an unquenchable hatred of us; their love of freedom might, to a certain extent, have been reckoned on, in aid of our own defensive arrangements. But from that quarter we must now calculate upon nothing but hostility. Russia will no doubt humour them to their hearts' content—promise them all that their wildest wishes can demand, and make use of them as pioneers through the formidable passes of the Tukht-i-Sulimaun mountains: nor let them feel the weight of the fetters they forge for their own limbs, until they be utterly and help-

lessly in her power. Then will they learn, as the Yahmoot Toorcumuns learned, the significance of the phrase, *à la Circasse*: for no half-measures accord with Russian policy.

Although, therefore, it is but justice to treat the Afghauns and their ruler with consideration; to lean upon their co-operation is to fill the cisterns of our fire-engines with alcohol. The Ummeer could not, if he would, control his people: and Russia can always offer *him* and them a higher premium for their aid, than we can for their neutrality. We are attempting, with a view to the above trust, to define the limits of Afghaunistan. When defined, the treaty we shall make upon that definition will effectually bind our own hands and eyes; leaving Russia's as free, as the treaty of Paris left them.

Such are the considerations arising from a rapid glance at the progress of Russia in her march upon India. She is now mistress of Askabad, of Merve, of Sumrkund; Bokhara is a Russian dependency. We have presented to her the all-important port of Batoum, in the Euxine, the acquisition of which alone she deemed cheap at the expense of the last Russo-Turkish War: for without it her march on India was crippled. We have\* allowed, nay, encouraged her, despite all prudential considerations, and in defiance of a thousand warnings, to overpass the natural,

\* A dozen alert Englishmen, with the hearty co-operation of the Toorcumuns, might have frustrated all four expeditions, if allowed by our Government to act.

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almost insuperable, barrier that guarded India, and to establish herself within our outer and most important line of works. To build at Cabul, by Afghaun hands, with Russian gold, fortified barracks for sixteen thousand men, which her troops can, at any time and unknown to us, enter whenever it suits her to advance; and the Afghauns, our natural allies, we have made our bitterest enemies. What steps do we purpose, to remedy (if possible) our past stumbling policy, or fanatic contempt of all rational precaution? The case is urgent, for any misunderstanding in Europe may precipitate matters on our Indian frontier, where Russia, piloted by the Afghaun nation, who will keep open for her the passes, is waiting, and will lose not an hour in her advance, beyond the moment, not of a declaration, but of the probability of hostilities.\*

Is the British Lion prepared (as the Russians boastingly assert) to crouch and lick the feet of the Great White Emperor, and implore his permission to live? or is there still some red blood left in his pampered arteries? If there be, it behoves him by watchfulness and promptitude to atone for his past trance under the influence of Russian mesmerism, to be up and alert in rendering the line of battle he may select infrangible to the assault of a powerful and disciplined army. It will never do to remain wavering in the choice of that line, whether Heraut,

\* As we saw her act during the last Russo-Turkish war.

or Candahar, or the Afghaun passes. For already has Russia prepared in detail her plan of operations for each alternative, and any unreadiness on our part means irreparable damage to ourselves, and to the two hundred millions whom we are sworn to protect.

In the Preface to my Second Edition I concluded as follows: "I would fain advert to the effect produced during the Crimean War by this Narrative. In my passage through Russia the kindest hospitality had been lavished upon me.\* It was, therefore, highly gratifying to find my experience of that estimable people quoted against the attempts of certain writers to sow hatred between two nations, whose earliest acquaintance was that of allies, by imputing to the Russians the most barbarous cruelty to the wounded of the French and English armies. Assuredly, if the mission to which these pages relate had produced no other benefit than to check so mischievous a prejudice, it would not have been in vain."

\* We should be careful not to confound together the action of the Russian Cabinet and the will of the Russian people. The strife between the two is rending the Empire asunder.

1884.

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## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

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WHEN Major Todd, in June, 1839, arrived as Envoy at Herat, he selected Moolla Hussun, a Mahomedan priest of great respectability, as bearer of a letter of friendship to the Khaun Huzurut (Supreme Lord) of Khiva, called also Khaurism Shauh, or King of Khaurism. Moolla Hussun arriving at Khiva when the state was threatened with a Russian invasion, was well received, and on his return was accompanied by an Oozbeg lord, Shookkuroolla Bae\* by name, as ambassador from the Khaun Huzurut to the Indian Government. The letter borne by this ambassador accepted of the tender of British friendship, and made several demands which could not be complied with upon the responsibility of Major Todd. It was in answer to this mission that the envoy deputed me to visit the court of Khiva.

The news brought by the Khiva ambassador rated the Russian force at 100,000 fighting men, who were said to be still in the Kuzzauk country, north-west of the sea of Aral. In return for the envoy's present of a very handsome rifle, he sent a very sorry specimen of the boast of Khaurism, in shape of a broken-down

\* This gentleman is spoken of in high terms by Arminius Vambéry, who met him at Khiva in 1862.



nag. This, however, had probably been substituted by the Minister for the horse originally sent. The presents entrusted to my care were a Persian sabre and a Heraut rifle for the Khaun himself; a rifle for his brother, the Inauk of Huzarusp; and a matchlock rifle for the Governor of Yoollataun. The royal presents were very unworthy of the occasion; but the British Toshchekhaneh\* had been exhausted, and as I was to ride *chuppah* (post), my haste to present myself before His Majesty was to serve as an excuse for their poverty. Such trifling particulars throw light upon the manners and customs of a country.

The kingdom of Khaurism is separated from the Russian district of Orenburgh by a considerable belt of steppe, held by Kuzzauks, whose chief, or Sooltaun, is nominally tributary to Russia. The Russians call this people Kirgheez,† to distinguish them from their own Kuzzauks, or Cossags, who are Christians, but the name is unknown to the people themselves. Khaurism is bounded on the west by the Caspian, on the south-west by Persia and Heraut, on the south-east by Bokhara, on the north-east by Kokaun.

The present capital of Khaurism is Khiva, lying in N. lat. 41° 20', and E. long. about 60°, and about forty miles west of the Oxus. It therefore bears from Heraut about north-north-west, and is distant from it, by the road, something less than 600 miles; of which, after passing the mountain barrier of Heraut,

\* With each British Mission in Central Asia is a magazine of rare articles and dresses of honour, intended as presents to sovereigns and nobles, or rewards for the services of others.

† Kirgheez signifies those who dwell in Khurgah, or tents of felt, derived, say the Persians, from Khur, an ass, and Gah, a place—the place of the ass, or ass' stable. It is probable that this is the real origin of the Persian word, given in derision by the Persians to their foes the Tartars.

nearly the whole is a barren steppe, where even a tent is rarely discovered.

The former capital was Oorgunj, and two towns of this name have successively enjoyed the dignity. A country so cut off from the rest of the world by wide steppes, whose rare inhabitants are plunderers and slave-dealers by profession, was too little known to be correctly designated ; accordingly, Khaurism is a title with which few are familiar ; whilst the capitals Oorgunj and Khiva have in turn given their names to a kingdom, which, whatever its wealth and political importance, is at least sufficiently extensive. Khaurism is about 800 miles in length, north and south, by nearly 600 east and west, comprising an area of nearly 480,000 square miles. It is of much importance to bear in mind, that Bokhara is entirely severed from Russia by Khaurism. The latter kingdom joining Kokaun in the desert, about 360 miles east of Khiva.

The greater part of Khaurism\* (as its Persian name implies), viz., all that is west of the Oxus, belonged to ancient Persia. The descendants of the Persians are still existing under the name of Sart. They are known by their beards ; a distinction for the sake of which the Oozbegs, the present lords of the empire, frequently condescend to intermarry with them. The Toorcumuns who inhabit the steppe between Khiva and the Caspian are more particular ; and accordingly beards are rarely seen amongst them. The Kuzzauks, whose country extends from the northernmost limit of Khaurism to an irregular line from the south of the Sea of Aral, drawn west-south-west to the Cas-

\* Land of the Sun—formerly one of the Eastern provinces of Persia. Khor is the Pehlivi name for the sun.

pian, would in turn be despised by the more polished Sart. The presence therefore of a beard in a Toorcumun or Kuzzauk khail (camp) may generally be traced to some Persian slave of the family. And if we consider the extreme value and importance to the nations of Asia of an appendage, by which they swear, and upon which they pray; we may appreciate the strength of the temptation, under which it has been introduced into any household.

P.S.—The Author in recording conversations held by him with natives of the country, has avoided as far as possible the repetition of the words “I said, he said,” &c., and has given these conversations, not of course in the exact words or phraseology used by either party, but so as to express the substance of the discourse, as he understood it at the time. The conversations were of such peculiar interest, that whenever prudence prevented his recording them at the moment, he referred to them in memory, so as to fix them there.

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## NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY,

ETC.

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### CHAPTER I.

Departure from Heraut — Anecdote of the Poet Jaumie — Arrival and Reception at Purwana — Peer Muhummud Khaun, Commander of my Escort — Parting Benediction — Kyttoo Ridge — Cross-country Path to Khooshk — Valley of the Khooshk — Arrival and Reception at Khooshk, the Jumshedee Capital — Departure — Peril from Petticoats — Reception at a Jumshedee Khail — Translation of Forty Virgins — Kara Tuppah — Singular Sagacity of the Scorpion of Peshawur — Freemason's Hall — Anecdotes — Chummunie Bhayd — Slave-dealing at Heraut — Cause of the Vuzeer suffering it — Sabres of Khorussaun — District of Baudkhiss — Kullah-i-Mowr, Toorkish frontier — Reception by the Yahmoots of Punjdeeh — Inconveniences of Guestship — Dismissal of Peer Muhummud Khaun.

ON 24th December, 1839, I quitted Heraut in progress to Khiva, and several trifling arrangements being found incomplete, halted at a village near the Eed-gauh, where I was hospitably entertained by a descendant of the poet Jaumie, whose tomb is at the Eed-gauh. This poet, by birth an Herautie, has a name only less esteemed than those of Haufiz and Saadi. It was related to me by a native of Heraut, that a poet who in his day had some celebrity, came to visit Jaumie, and challenged him to a trial of poetic

skill. They sat on the banks of the Jooe Unjeer (fig canal), a running and pure stream from the Hurrie Rood, and for several days they continued the combat, answering one another in the most beautiful verse. All who loved poetry collected to hear them. But, said the narrator, Jaumie was a *Bul-bul*, and the third evening, when the visitor was in mid discourse with Jaumie, and the verse of the latter continued to improve in power and sweetness beyond the measure of human song, the stranger was observed to betray unwonted languor; his head gradually sank upon his breast; when his answer was expected, he continued silent, and when a friend strove to arouse him, he was found to be—dead. Traditions of this nature are implicitly believed by Asiatics, who would deem the doubt of them akin to infidelity. The belief upon which this tale is founded is universal, viz., that the *Bul-bul*, when out-done in melody, droops its head upon the breast and expires.

I quitted this village the next morning (25th Dec.), and after much delay, occasioned by the falling of the baggage from the pony's back, reached Purwana, in a high valley about eleven miles distant from Heraut. The road lies between close hills, of no considerable height, and ascends the entire distance of Purwana. As it is not my purpose to publish any particulars relative to the practicability or otherwise of this mountain chain, I shall content myself with describing the general aspect of the country. This village is depopulated by forays of the Jumsheedees, a people of Toorkish origin, but tributary to Heraut. These men, encouraged by the connivance of the Vuzeer Yar Muhummud Khaun, are ever on the watch to seize, for sale to the Toorcumuns, the miserable subjects of

Heraut. Here are profuse Kaureeze,\* and a little cultivation. The people, who are Taujiks, received and entertained me very hospitably. Around this village are hills and high plains producing wormwood, which is browsed by the wild antelope. The tombs of the five saints who founded the village are seen in the neighbourhood.

Unless I could deem myself the most interesting personage of the group now proceeding to Khiva, it were unpardonable to omit mention of those who formed my retinue. This I shall from time to time take occasion to do, as any incident happens to bring them prominently forward.

The most important person was the Afghaun, Peer Muhummud Khaun, a relation of the Vuzeer of Heraut. He was given me by the Vuzeer as commander of an escort of five horsemen, to be increased to fifteen on approaching Punj Deeh. The instant I saw him I perceived that he was far too respectable for the petty office assigned, and this threw me on my guard. Peer Muhummud Khaun is a very handsome man ; and his beauty is of a striking character. His features are nobly formed, his eye is large, dark, and expressive. His teeth are of dazzling whiteness. When first he waited upon me at Heraut I was very busy, the twilight was settling into darkness, and I did not observe his approach. When I looked up,

\* Kaureeze are chains of wells, the first dug down upon the stream at the foot of the mountain in a water-course, where the verdure denotes water. On reaching the spring, its course is ascertained, and another well is dug down upon it to make sure of it. The intermediate channel is then cleared, and the direction of the stream further being taken, another and another well is dug, until the number sometimes amounts to hundreds. As opportunity offers, the water is led through an artificial tunnel to the surface of the valley.

I saw before me a figure, which almost startled me by its resemblance to our best portraits of Edward the Third. The effect was increased by the shadow of a large, dark blue turban and a cloak still darker. Presenting himself to me as sent by one, whose cunning is only to be surpassed by his villany; whom I believed by a similar messenger to have contrived the imprisonment of the gallant, but unfortunate Colonel Stoddart; he was regarded by me with singular interest, and that of no pleasing character. He has naturally become the chief object of my attention, and as I can understand his Persian, and he, by dint of excessive intelligence, contrives to make out a good deal of mine; I am in deep conversation with him whenever the road permits it. He has orders to escort me to Merv; to Khiva if I think fit; and as for very important reasons he is extremely anxious to attend me to the latter place, I have an advantage which I shall not for a moment suffer him to forget. Here I received a letter from Major Todd. We separate under circumstances sufficiently gloomy. I leave him in the very stronghold of treachery. I go myself, as agent of the British Government, to a Court of the language and manners of which I am utterly ignorant; and to accomplish that, of which the most sanguine have no hope. It is simply a matter of duty, and as such entered upon cheerfully, and with full determination to carry my efforts to the uttermost.

The man who brought me this note had formerly been in my service whilst marching to Herat. He was one day so extremely insolent that I lifted my riding whip to him; remembering myself, however, I did not strike him, but I perceived that he was highly offended by the menace. On reaching our

camp in the evening, and retiring to bed, I observed that he had not brought me my loaded gun, which he always carried, and which he had orders to place in my bed at night. I also observed that his right hand was bandaged, and that he was very reluctant to let me look at it. I called for the gun; he made a hundred excuses for not bringing it. I went to his bedding, where I found it. I drew it out of the oilskin case, and found the right cock down on the nipple and the left on full cock. I conceived immediately, what his countenance expressed, that he had cocked it with the intention of shooting me; but relenting perhaps, or deferring his intention, had endeavoured to let down the cocks, and had caught his thumb under one of them. I now insisted upon examining the wound, and found it just as I suspected. I took no notice of this little demonstration, nor even condescended to use precaution against a creature so contemptible. Under the influence of a present, he now took leave of me, on the high plain above Purwana, and holding his turban in his hand before his eyes, uttered a thousand benedictions upon me.

26th December.—Avoiding now the more direct and difficult passes of the mountain ridge of Kytoo, we crossed that chain without accident, meeting neither dwelling nor tent, excepting two ruined Rabaht (hospitia) in the valley, and descending some grassy heights, pitched at evening in a hollow, where we found a little water. We were now on the road to Khooshk, the capital of the Jumsheedees, as recommended by Yar Muhummud Khaun, on the plea of my being provided by their chieftain with a farther escort of ten horsemen.

These grassy heights are in spring infested by small



green snakes, not generally deemed venomous. They have a sufficiently desolate aspect; but their grass in some measure relieves this. One solitary flock of sheep in the distance, and the wild antelopes of the wilderness, were the sole living things we saw. Kytoo, covered at the summit with snow, holds awful pre-eminence over the solitude.

27th December.—The clouds collected during the night, and a drizzling shower added nothing to the comfort of my followers, who having no tent, covered themselves with felts as best they could. I heard them, however, making light of it, and whiling the night with laughter and fun. The horses piqueted to short iron pegs driven into the earth (which offered little resistance to any efforts to get free), and unaccustomed to pass the night in the open air, were constantly breaking loose, and I was rather surprised to find the number complete at break of day. It was then that, looking in the direction of Kytoo, we saw that mountain chain covered from summit to base with snow, and congratulated ourselves with no little thankfulness on having already passed this barrier, where travellers every year are lost in the snow. A very distressing cross-country path of twenty miles, over steep hills covered with grass, brought us to the rivulet Khooshk, which we ascended to the capital of that name. The valley here is picturesque and interesting. The low hills which form it, are quite naked, or produce only grass. Not a leaf is to be seen. Yet being fringed with the black tents of the Jumsheedees, and peopled with living things, men, women, horses, and sheep; the contrast to the country just passed was strong and welcome. The women in groups were engaged in working upon the banks of

the stream. Their dress is either a petticoat or very loose drawers, over which the shift falls. On the head is an ugly white cloth wound round the head, under the chin, and falling upon the shoulders. Their faces, therefore, are exposed, being in fact not worth the cost of concealment; but the dresses were sufficient to smother the charms of a Venus. The black tents which form the capital of the Jumsheedees are of thick felts, supported by a light and moveable framework of wood. Their shape is circular, and their dark hue is received from the smoke of fires lighted within; but sometimes from the colour of the wool. Khooshk, however, has a few mud huts and a fort (so called), resembling a dilapidated farm-yard. The Jumsheedees reckon their own number at 15,000 families, or 75,000 souls; but this is probably an exaggeration; for having now passed through about fifty miles of their country, I have scarcely seen a human being.

I had been throughout this march in conversation with Peer Muhummud Khaun, hoping to gain some hint of the Vuzeer's object in sending me hither, Khooshk being two marches off the road. I found, by cross-examination, that he had a letter from the Vuzeer to the Jumsheedee chief; but he believed, he said, that it was merely an order for my escort. I sent him on to announce my approach, and he returned with a single horseman to conduct me to the place prepared for my reception. This was extremely discourteous, for the chief should himself have come to meet me, or at any rate have received me at the threshold. I had, however, no means of enforcing respect, so I alighted at the steps leading to my apartment, which was probably the best he

had to offer, and made myself as comfortable as circumstances would allow. Here I found an unusual thing in the shape of a tolerably wide chimney. Upon applying fire, however, I soon found that it was a luxury only in appearance, as none of the smoke would pass up it. After several hours, Mahomed Zemaun Khaun, the Jumsheedee chief, made his appearance, attended by Peer Muhummud Khaun. He is a man who affects great frankness, and his manners are lively and rather agreeable, although unpolished. He welcomed me to Khooshk; said that he heard I had expressed some distrust of the Vuzeer's motives for sending me thither, and laid his note open before me. This note was certainly all I could desire, but it was probably not the only one. After a very short visit he jumped up, and saying, "Farewell," left the room as briskly as he had entered. To judge by this man's countenance, a physiognomist would give him credit for courage, conduct, decision, and generosity; yet in the late siege of Heraut he betrayed a lamentable want of all those qualities.

During that unfortunate and disastrous investment, the Herauties in vain expected succour from this wild tribe, who, by seconding the efforts of the besieged, might have done infinite mischief to the Persians. Whilst the Jumsheedees seemed to be hesitating, a Persian force was sent to Khooshk to beat up their quarters. Instead of taking advantage of their strong country to harass or destroy the Persians, they fled without resistance to Meroo Chauk, leaving their country and a good deal of grain buried in the earth to the mercy of the Persians. The Jumsheedees are of Toorkish descent, as their habits and physiognomy

imply. They are short, stout, very dark, with decidedly Tartar features. Wherever water and soil are found, a little cultivation is maintained by them, but their wealth consists in flocks of sheep and herds of horses of Toorcumun breed, generally received by them in exchange for slaves whom they capture in the Heraut district. They are arrant cowards, and, like all Tartars, superstitiously fearful of artillery.

28th December.—Whilst I was girding up my loins to depart, the Khaun was announced, and came running into the room with his usual liveliness, saluting me with an air of frank cordiality. After having exchanged with me a few words, he suddenly rose, and proposed that I should resume my journey. My host saw me to the door of my little cell, where he stopped, whilst I stumbled down the broken steps. A large crowd of idlers stood around the gate to see the Englishman depart. I was dressed in the Afghaun attire, consisting of a double set of stiff petticoats. Two or three officious fellows were at my elbow to shove me up into the saddle. The horse was very large, and had no mane, and my petticoats hung around me like so many shirts of mail. A miscarriage I perceived was inevitable. I determined, however, to do my best. With infinite difficulty, I thrust my left foot into the stirrup, and flinging aside my petticoats, made a desperate spring for the saddle. I might perhaps have reached it in peace, and not without glory; but one fellow thrust with a jerk at my elbow, and another gave me a forward impulse from the back, so that my petticoats became entangled with my right knee, and afterwards with the high cantle of my hussar saddle, and I was fairly caught, like a bird upon a lined twig; moreover, my

predicament struck me in so absurd a light, that I was guilty of laughter, to the infinite dismay of all my suite.

"Ullah Kurreem!" (God is merciful), shouted my old Meerza, when he perceived I was actually in the saddle, stroking his beard with the right hand. "Shookkur!" (Thanksgiving), replied old Summud Khaun, the Steward, imitating the action. "Bismillah!" I said, turning my horse's head, and gladly quitting the den of inhospitality. My people begged me to make a short march, as the cattle had been starved. The old Meerza remarked Khooshk (dry) is its name, and dry we have found it. I had not suspected the old fellow of mettle sufficient for so bad a pun.

We passed down the valley of the Khooshk rivulet, averaging about half a mile in width, and bounded on either side by sloping grassy downs, sprinkled with flocks of sheep and goats. Under the low sunny cliffs and hills the Jumsheedees had pitched their black tents in considerable numbers; and in the fields of the valley hundreds of mares and colts were grazing. The scene was extremely pleasing. The valley is highly susceptible of culture, and has once been well tilled. Toward evening we halted at a Khail (camp), at Sir Chushma, and sent for the Khetkhoda. He came, and took my hand between both his own, in the usual fashion, but was evidently reluctant that we should tarry and put his hospitality to charges. "Am I welcome?" I inquired. "You are welcome." "You did not say so at first." "What does it signify?" said a servant of Muhummud Zemaun Khaun; "if he won't make you welcome, I will." "On no account," I replied. "I will have no forced hospi-

tality. Since I am welcome, I will dismount ; otherwise I would have gone elsewhere." It must be observed, once for all, that I always made a handsome present, three or four times exceeding the expense incurred, to any person who lodged or entertained me. I was therefore the less scrupulous about their first inclination, knowing that they would afterwards be very well contented. I wished to have put up in the camp itself to observe the manners of the people ; but, out of respect for me, they brought a tent bodily to the spot where I was seated. The women were the chief locomotives ; and, being inside, the tent appeared to have found legs of its own. One of these women was pretty, and the fair sex here seem to have the advantage of the men in features and complexion. However, there are many slave girls of other nations present, and the females whom I meet are probably of this class.

29th December.—In the morning, resuming my course down the river valley, I passed a scene resembling that of the previous day. A couple of mud huts near the left border of the valley were shewn me as the residence of forty Oozbeg virgins ; and a little rude altar or tomb under the hills, as the place of worship to which they had resorted, when surprised by a force of some neighbouring tribes. In this extremity, the virgins prayed for death, and were instantly translated. The translation of forty fat virgins is nothing to a Moosulmaun's faith ! The place is called Chhehl Dochtur, or "the forty virgins." The tradition, as well as name, is evidently Persian.

Kara Tuppah, the black mound, was now in sight, being an artificial hill about 150 feet in height,

crowned by a ruined circle of defences. It stands in the elbow of the valley, overlooked by lofty hills on the west. The bend of the valley is very wide, and Kara Tuppah was not only girdled by black tents, but crowded by caravans from Merv, proceeding with grain for Khooshk. Here Muhummud Zemaun Khaun's servant was to leave me, after furnishing the escort of ten Jumsheedee horsemen. But I had been pondering the necessity of employing these men. It struck me, that as they would hold themselves in authority to Peer Muhummud Khaun, I should literally become his prisoner, and he might dispute my orders when directed to return. Some excuse for dispensing with their services was necessary. I first objected to the number on the score of provision. A smaller number, they said, could not venture to return by that route, owing to a death feud between Muhummud Zemaun Khaun and the children of Derveish Khaun, late chief of the Jumsheedees, and slain by the present chief. "But I have no death feud with the children of Derveish Khaun, and if ten Jumsheedee horsemen who *have*, and who are the most arrant cowards in the world, can return alone, surely we, who can muster four good sabres, can have nothing to apprehend." It must be observed that Peer Muhummud Khaun, after receiving from the British Treasury allowance for himself and five troopers, had brought not one fighting man with him. I called the chief's servant, gave him a handsome present, and a note to his master, saying, that I did not require the escort; and having dismissed him, passed on.

Beyond Kara Tuppah there are few black tents: but large flocks of sheep are still met with. The shepherds come even from Merv to this pleasant

valley, bringing water and all other necessaries on asses. The men of Kara Tuppah hate the authority of the present chief; and beyond this limit no Jum-sheedee of his following presumes to dwell.

It was my object to keep Peer Muhummud Khaun constantly engaged in discourse, for various reasons. It gave him an idea of my favour and confidence; it improved my miserable Persian; and, as I generally turned the conversation upon the persons composing the Court at Heraut, it served to disclose to me his own character, even when it failed to reveal to me theirs. There was not a person, however insignificant, nor act however trivial, that was not made subject of discussion, and, by returning again and again to the charge, and placing each point in a novel light, I made it extremely difficult for him to prevaricate without detection. I knew that all his future prospects depended upon his accompanying me to Khiva, and that I might depend upon any trifling sacrifice that should give him hope of this; and as it was his own, as well as the Vuzeer's wish that I should suppose him a personal enemy of the latter, he was not scrupulous in revealing his iniquities. At the same time, as he could not tell how much was known to me, he dared not very grossly violate the truth. But sometimes the conversation took a lighter turn, and to-day we had a variety of anecdotes as credible as the relations of the great liar Josephus.

The scorpion of Peshawur, he said, is of great size, and its wit is equal to its bulk. A gentleman of that city, lying one morning upon his bed, with his hand hanging down, saw a portly fellow approach the hand, squint up at it, and then standing a tip-toe, endeavour to sting it. Failing in his attempt, the scorpion



went away, but soon after returned with another, and, standing upon its back, would inevitably have stung the gentleman, had he not in good time withdrawn his hand.

Peer Muhummud Khaun had heard, he said, of a house in England opened once a year for the reception of letters, and where they who were so fortunate as to gain admittance were bound by the most solemn oaths to reveal nothing they should see or hear. That the knowledge there revealed to them in a single hour surpassed the joint knowledge and experience acquired by fifty sages in the course of a long life.

This evidently is Freemason's Hall.

The old Meerza striking in, related, that a poor man having nothing to present to Timoor Lugh,\* brought him the thigh of a grasshopper, saying, "Behold thine ant, O Timoor, hath brought thee according to the measure of his capacity." This anecdote has for foundation the tradition, that King Solomon having been placed by the Almighty in sovereignty of men, demons, and the brute creation, was receiving their voluntary tribute, when the Court was a good deal amused at seeing an ant enter, dragging along the thigh of a grasshopper, which it deposited at the monarch's feet with evident complacency. The elephant turned up his nose, and the hyæna laughed outright at this mighty addition to the royal treasure; for the one had brought him on its back a budding aloe tree, and the other a rich necklace, rent from the throat of a young maiden, whom he had surprised and slaughtered at her mother's tomb. But Solomon

\* Better known in Europe as Tamerlane. Lugh signifies lame, and Timoor alone is the proper name of this king. In Asia he is generally called the Ummir Timoor.

sternly rebuked both, declaring that none that day had honoured him, as he felt honoured by the little ant.

"A particular friend of mine," said Peer Muhumud Khaun, "was one day chasing a fox upon the hill side, when suddenly a snake struck his dog, which instantly swelled to an immense size and began to shake violently. What was the amazement of my friend to see the flesh and skin fall to tatters, and scatter by the shaking on every side, leaving a very perfect skeleton of the dog, which my friend preserved, and still shows as a great curiosity." "The venom of some snakes," I replied, "is very virulent."

Toward evening, we reached a spot fitted for encampment, about two miles short of Kullah Chummunie Bhayd. The jungle grass was here on fire, and a large flock of perhaps 1000 sheep, guarded by three shepherds, stood near. We asked them to sell us a young sheep. They bargained to exchange it for a little tobacco, which one of my servants produced. They long refused, but at length accepted the money I forced upon them. The proper price was five tungas, or about one and nine pence, but an Englishman is never satisfied until he has paid double.

30th December.—Leaving this spot at daybreak, we again followed the Khooshk rivulet. The scene continued unchanged, excepting perhaps that not a human dwelling was visible. Large flocks of white sheep still sprinkled the hills on either side, but those hills were growing more arid and sandy as we advanced. The castle of Chummunie Bhayd is ruined and deserted. It presented a fine effect in the haze of the morning, guarding with its ragged ramparts

the passage of the valley. A few miles further, are the ruins of another castle called Howzi Khaun, or "the cistern of the chief." In a plain near this ruin was fought, a few years since, the battle between Derveish Khaun, late chief of the Jumsheedees, and the Huzaruhs assisted by Mahomed Zemaun Khaun; Derveish Khaun was slain, and Mahomed Zemaun Khaun instated in his authority. Hence the death feud between the latter and the children of the former. The Meerzah assured me that at Khooshk he had seen within the Khaun's enclosure no less than twenty Toorcumuns waiting to purchase the slaves of Heraut as the Jumsheedees bring them in. One of these Toorcumuns was returning in disgust, and had joined my party. He had been offered only two slaves for his horse, a very fine one, which I have since purchased for 30 ducats, or £15. Slaves, therefore, are tolerably cheap. The valley of Heraut, already nearly depopulated by the late Persian invasion, is thus daily deprived of the slender means possessed of recruiting its exhausted numbers. It is natural to inquire what can induce the Vuzeer to a measure of such insane folly. The question has long puzzled me. My late conversations with Peer Muhummud Khaun have, I believe, furnished a solution. The Vuzeer, previous to the Persian invasion, had possessed himself of all but the shadow of the supreme authority. In another month or two he would certainly have deposed Shaub Kaumraun, and have usurped his place. Such views, however suspended by circumstances, are never wholly relinquished; and Yar Muhummud Khaun, having his relations in every important post in the kingdom, is apprehensive only of the opposition of the tented tribes. These he con-

ciliates at every risk of present damage to the state, as well as by profuse liberality. Every rare sword or other costly article that falls in his way he sends to these chiefs, and great part of their wealth being amassed in kidnapping, he winks at the practice, though sensible of its pernicious consequences.

Peer Muhummud Khaun was showing me his sword yesterday. It is an Isfahaunie sabre, of rather coarse workmanship. I asked him what was the highest price he had ever known to be given for a blade. He said that the Vuzeer had possessed one purchased for 9,000 Heraut rupees, or about £300, and that he had given it to the Beegler Beeg of the Huzaruhs. That good blades are now very rare in Heraut, and perhaps confined to the royal treasury.

“What constitutes the goodness and value of a blade in your eyes?”

“It must be finely shaped, finely watered, and handsomely mounted.”

“But do you subject it to no test?”

“None at all.”

“And if it break in battle?”

“It is our destiny.”

I explained to him the proofs to which we subject our blades in Europe, and also those employed in Hindoostan, and shewed him my own sword, making him observe its elasticity.

“But,” said he, “it has no water?”

“No! It was made for use, and not for display; your weapons are toys, ours are instruments. We go to battle to fight, not to play; and would give nothing for a blade, however handsome, that would expose us to the mercy of an antagonist. I once proved one of your finely watered blades upon a steel helmet. It

shivered at the first blow. Your own blade, you perceive, has no elasticity. It is bent, and at present useless. In battle, should it meet another sword, it would either turn in your hand like a piece of lead, or snap in halves."

In fact, I have given much attention to the subject, and am convinced that in this country nothing is known of the true excellence of the sabre.

We now quitted the district called Bankiss, which may be Baudkhiss the Windy, or Baughiss, the Eastern name of Bacchus. The name of the succeeding district is Mowree,\* and here we found the ruined castle, Kullah-i-Mowr, having still one wretched cell capable of sheltering a traveller. An extensive Kawreeze in the middle of the valley remains to attest its former high state of culture, and suggests the notion, that in other days the waters of the rivulet were expended in irrigation, ere they could reach Kullah-i-Mowr; at present this valley harbours not a living soul. We met not less than six or seven caravans of grain from Merv. At this castle commences the kingdom of Khaurism.

I was weak enough to yield to the entreaties of my people, and put up for the night in a reed jungle. We were scarcely settled, when one of them came to report having seen two horsemen mount the high ground above us, and after a careful scrutiny of our camp, retire. I sent a couple of my horsemen to reconnoitre, and prepared for the worst. They soon returned with news that the horsemen belonged

\* It is curious to meet together the names of Bacchus and of his birth-place, Meroo or Meros. It is certain that this tract was overrun by Alexander and his armies; but Arrian and others place Mount Meros and Nusa between the Indus and Koopheen or Loondi Rivers,

to a caravan, and they brought one of them before me.

31st December.—The night passed without accident, and starting with daylight, we tracked the Khooshk, until its valley is lost in that of the Moorghaub, or Awb-i-Mowr. We then ascended the latter river to the largest Khail, or camp of Punj Deeh; passing the ruined vineyard and deserted fields of a once populous and cultivated district. My guide, the Birdler Beeg, who was once petty governor here, was now quite in his element. He sent a man ahead, to apprise the Khetkhoda that a guest had arrived; and a horseman, well mounted, soon approached, quitted his saddle, and took my right hand in both his own, saying, "You are welcome; you are very welcome." We followed him to the Khail, where about three hundred black tents of the Yahmoot Toorcumuns were pitched, in the form of two hollow squares; and I soon perceived one of these tents walking bodily towards me. The Khetkhoda, a tall, sawny, miserly-looking fellow, here made me welcome with a second edition of hand-joining; and, spreading a handsome carpet on the earth, begged me to be seated, until my habitation should be ready. I did so, and soon perceived that we were surrounded by a crowd of curious faces, all decidedly Tartar, yet not generally uncomely. The softness of the eyes, opening with lids equally arched, gives a feminine, and therefore not unpleasing, expression to the countenances of the children, who are sometimes fair as Europeans.

Two or three little girls wore a red cap tricked with gold and silver ornaments, fantastic, but exceedingly becoming; but no adults of the fairer sex

appeared. As the old Khetkhoda and several others understood Persian, we got on tolerably well together, and in about half an hour, the tent was ready for my reception, and I was escorted to it in due form.

I found the floor spread with fine carpets, the manufacture of the Khail. One of these had almost the softness of velvet, and would have sold elsewhere for a high price. These Toorcumun tents are the most comfortable of dwellings in this serene climate. A house cannot be adapted to the vicissitudes of heat and cold which mark the year. Whereas by removing a portion of the felt covering, this tent is open to the air in summer ; and in winter a fire lighted in the centre makes it the warmest of retreats, all the smoke rising through the skylight in the roof. Not to mention the great advantage of being able to migrate, dwelling and all, to a sunny or a sheltered spot.

An unforeseen difficulty now occurred. I required four days' supply of provisions for my people and cattle. Being a guest, I was forbidden to purchase these, and could not possibly accept them ! I made my Meerza represent to the Khetkhoda, that unless he would consent to regard me as a neighbour, and not a guest, I must quit his Khail and pitch elsewhere. After some demur, my request was complied with ; and Summud Khaun, my steward, came to report his success in bargaining. I desired him not to bargain with men who were treating us so liberally, but to give them whatever they might demand. Presently afterwards in came Summud Khaun, and with a wink of the eye, asked whether it were my pleasure to give the price of a camel for a sheep ?

"Certainly not," I replied.

“Then,” said he, “you must allow me to bargain.”

In fact, the scruple as to guestship once removed, each vied with the other to overreach me. Evening was now closing in; my host had left me, but Peer Muhummud Khaun still lingered. I had now satisfied myself, beyond any reasonable doubt, that he was sent to countermine me at Khiva, and that he had despatches from the Vuzeer, to both the governor of Merv and the minister at Khiva. I therefore no longer hesitated to blight his hopes, or to deprive myself of the most agreeable of companions. I had allowed him to fancy himself a great and growing favourite, as by that means I was enabled to pump him the deeper; for I knew that it was worth his while to tell me all he knew, if he could by this means persuade me to take him on to Khiva. I now suddenly addressed him—

“Peer Muhummud Khaun, this is the Khiva territory,—I require your escort no farther. You will return to-morrow morning to Heraut.”

He was thunderstruck; and it was long before he could utter a word. When he recovered, he pleaded hard, but to no purpose; excepting that I gave him a note for the British Envoy, begging that all his expenses might be made good to him, provided all should go right with my mission at Khiva; for I was still apprehensive that he would find means to send on his despatches.



## CHAPTER II.

The Tent of Plenty of the Yahmoot—Gift-Horses—A Toorcumun Breakfast—The Sawny Old Khetkhoda—Peer Muhummud Khaun's Farewell—Extraordinary Power of Yar Muhummud Khaun over his Agents—Valley of the Moorghaub—Junction of the Khooshk Rivulet with that River—Visit from a Panther—Approach to Yoollataun—Reception there by the Governor—Distrust of the Relations between England and Russia—Presents—Muhummud Aumeen Beg—The Zunnuk—Departure—The old Cauzie of Yoollataun—Probable Origin of Col. Stoddart's Imprisonment at Bokhara—Hopes of the Slaves at Yoollataun—Approach to Merv—Want of Courtesy of the Governor in my Reception—The Jews of Merv and Meshed—Insulting Conduct of a Servant of the Governor—My first Turban—Visit to the Governor—Insulting Reception, its Origin and Motive—Preparations for the Passage of the Desert—Jew Merchants—Suspicious Circumstances—Conversation.

JANUARY 1st, 1840.—It was scarcely light, when I observed the curtain of my door moved from time to time, to admit a pair of curious eyes. I therefore threw it up, and soon had a full assembly of rustic figures, in lamb-skin caps, coarse woollen cloaks, and half boots of clumsy shape, secured with thongs of leather. Among the rest came two servants of the Merv governor, plain quiet-looking fellows, whose huge cylindric caps of black lamb-skin denoted their pretensions to rank. After due salutation the company was seated in a circle around the tent, and I observed that Birdler Beeg took a seat above the governor's people. He was here quite in his element; and his

extreme good nature showed to advantage. He chattered alternately in Toorkish and in Persian. He grinned, he laughed, he asked whether the tents of plenty of the Yahmoot were not better than the house of famine of the Jumsheedee. The two cylindrical-hatted gentlemen sate in profound silence, looking their dullest. I called for tea, and having but a single goblet, sent it in turn to the several guests as they were ranged. Presently, in came a Fuqueer, and with a merry countenance, and an abundance of compliment, asked for alms. I gave him a few tungahs, or silver coins, upon which he stood up and formally prayed for my prosperity, in which all present made the usual signal of joining, by presenting the spread hands in front of them, and then collecting from their beards the drops of grace supposed to fall in answer. "It is as the precious ointment which flowed down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, and went unto the skirts of his raiment."

The Fuqueer then departed in great glee. Just as he reached the door, the clown sitting near it gave him a tremendous thump on the back, and a thunder-peal of laughter. This, in an English cottage, would have been sufficiently characteristic.

A tall fellow now insisted upon my acceptance of a horse ; his neighbour pressed upon me another, and all begged I would step out and examine the offerings. After a thousand excuses, I was obliged to comply, and found no less than three fine horses awaiting my acceptance. The owners mounting them, displayed their paces, and then again pressed them upon me. I replied that it was not the custom of my country to accept presents without making some return, and that I was a traveller, and unprovided with means.

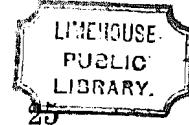
“Never mind,” said the tall fellow, “you shall have my horse, and I will take nothing in return.” “But,” I said, “what am I to do with so many horses on a journey; horses are an encumbrance to a stranger?”

“But you are not a stranger. This is your home, and your country;” replied the sawny old Khetkhoda.

“How would it answer,” insinuated Peer Muhumud Khaun, “to give me one of the horses?”

I replied that he must wait the result of my mission.

Finding it impossible to escape, I accepted one horse, and gave the owner a note to the Envoy at Heraut, begging him to give the Toorcumun an equivalent. The hospitality of Toorcumuns is a sacred form, in which the heart has no concern. They were well pleased with my arrangement; neither am I certain that but for some expectation of the kind, they would ever have been so free with their gifts. The Birdler Beeg was one of this tribe, and extremely anxious that I should form a favourable opinion of his people, as well as of his influence amongst them; and I have no doubt that he incited them to present their horses by his tales of British liberality. The horses presented were a huge chestnut of clumsy figure, which all my servants fell in love with, size being everything in their eyes; a strong, well-compacted white horse, with dark points; and a delicately formed grey, about  $15\frac{1}{2}$  hands high, having an exquisite head and neck, and showy paces. The back sinews of this horse were so distant from the bone, that at first sight I pronounced them to be strained, and it was only after minutest scrutiny that I believed the Birdler Beeg's assurance, that this is a peculiarity



A TOORCUMUN BREAKFAST.

of the breed, and a supposed excellence in the eyes of Toorcumuns. I selected this horse. We adjourned to my tent, and sate a while in discourse. The Toorcumun whose horse I had not taken was a little vexed. "I offered you," he said, "a much finer horse than the grey; but you refused him." "I am a traveller," I replied, "what could I do with so many horses?" He took up one of my pistols. "I have got a pair of flint and steel pistols, would you like to see them?" I assented, and he produced a miserable little pair of pocket pistols, which I well remembered to have been presented to Ubdoolla Sooltaun, one of the Jumsheedee chiefs. "Here," he said, slapping them down upon the carpet, with an assumption of frank generosity that was very amusing, "you shall accept these,—you shall." I declined, however, most decidedly, and just then breakfast was announced. It consisted of macaroni made in the Khail, not fluted, but rolled into broad thin cakes, and cut into thongs by the women, with their husbands' swords. It was stewed with kooroot and milk, and some of the sweet syrup of grapes. It was by no means unpalatable, but a huge wooden ladle, the sole article of the kind procurable, disconcerted all attempts on the part of Peer Muhummud Khaun, to eat it without treason to his magnificent beard. As I had a tea-spoon of my own, I contrived matters pretty well. After this, some stews of mutton and bread were produced. I then rose to take leave. A little boy was hanging about the Khetkhoda: "Is that," I inquired, "your young thing (Buchchha)?" "He is my son (pisr)," replied old Sawny. The distinction is very important in these countries. Another child was mounted upon the Khetkhoda's horse. Thinking this must also be

his son, I was about to slip two ducats into the boy's hand, but asked first, "Is that also your son?" "Naugh!" grunted old Sawny, in evident perturbation. We proceeded. The Khetkhoda kept close to my side, and, watching his opportunity, brought his knee close to mine, and asked in a whisper, "What have you told to be given for the horse?" "What is he worth?" I inquired in return. "Hah!" said the fellow with an abrupt shy, "What is he worth: what is he worth?"

The Birdler Beeg coming up, whispered mysteriously that the agents of the Governor of Merv expected a present of at least a cloak. I excused myself as being a traveller, and at that moment utterly unprovided. I now begged the Toorcumuns not to accompany me farther, and took leave in due form, at a small stream. However, whilst our horses were drinking, I observed that the Khetkhoda was still present, and mysteriously whispering to the Birdler Beeg. The latter, coming up, announced the purport to be a reminiscence of my intended gift to his child. "I do not perceive the child here," I replied, looking round. "No!" said the Khetkhoda, "but I can give him the money." I took out the two brightest ducats and presented them, saying they might serve as ornaments to his child's head. He perused them long, and with evident satisfaction. Something, distantly related to a grin, drew up the right corner of his mouth, contrasting oddly with his habitual sawny sneer. I saw that our friendship was nothing the less; but it was a strange commentary upon the supposed disinterestedness of these wild tribes.

Peer Muhummud Khaun rode very disconsolately at my side. "You have at length thrown off," he

said, "your evil genius. You are as a man who has been haunted by an unclean spirit through the wilderness, and who, reaching at length a place of fountains, by prayer and lustration, rids himself of the fiend." The simile was singularly apposite; Yar Muhummud Khaun had sent this man to be my evil spirit at Merv and Khiva. Had I not suspected his views, my ruin had been certain. A man of this kind, a creature of the Vuzeer, is believed to have contrived the plot to which Colonel Stoddart is still a victim. Peer Muhummud Khaun was eminently qualified for his part. Of the most gentlemanly address, the most pleasing and insinuating manners, he never for an instant forgot his place, but was always watchful and attentive. Then his intelligence supplied half the words my vocabulary wanted, and he seemed the very person requisite upon my forlorn expedition, to give me hints of the customs of the people with whom I was to dwell, and maintain decorum amongst the rest of the establishment. But there was one fatal drawback to all this,—he was the tool of Yar Muhummud Khaun, Vuzeer of Heraut.

The fellow had contrived to gain such a share of my interest, that I found myself devising a thousand little schemes for retaining him, could I but purchase his allegiance, and make him my own by present liberality and future prospects. I remembered, however, too many instances of such attempts proving dead failures.\* Whatever the means employed by

\* This subject has occupied much of my attention; and I am inclined to think that the extraordinary ascendancy of the Vuzeer was maintained by the conviction he contrived by his agents to impress upon all classes, and which certainly was in operation from the hour of our arrival at Heraut, that the instant our treasure was expended he would exclude the mis-

the Vuzeer for securing his instruments, it had hitherto proved most effectual. They often hated him, they were assailed by hopes and prospects on the other side; yet they faithfully served him. Not an instance to the contrary had occurred, although very many such were pretended. In nothing did the genius of the man stand more pre-eminent than in this—that hated and regarded by his countrymen as a monster of iniquity, none dared to betray him. I had questioned Peer Muhummud Khaun upon this secret power of the Vuzeer. He said that ere he entrusted any agent, he got him over to his quarters, and made him swear solemnly upon the Koraun to be faithful to him; but I could not learn what particular solemnity rendered this oath upon the Koraun more binding than others, which the natives of the country are constantly breaking, nor was the explanation otherwise sufficient. It seemed, however, sufficiently certain, that Peer Muhummud Khaun would not have been entrusted with his present mission, were there any chance of his betraying trust. He had probably been chosen, because the Vuzeer had formerly injured him, and words of defiance had passed between them; so that it was easy for him to pass himself as a personal enemy of the Vuzeer.

As I bade Peer Muhummud Khaun farewell, I did not attempt to hide the regret it cost me. I told him that if inclined to serve the English faithfully and

sion from his walls; whilst this feeling prevailed, none would unreservedly embrace British interests. This note and its text were printed in 1841, published in 1843. I need not say that the tragedy has since been acted out, that as soon as Yar Muhummud Khaun had strengthened himself with British gold, he ejected the British mission from Heraut, and some time after murdered his master, Shaub Kamran, and seized the throne.

sincerely, the note I had given him to the Envoy would open to him the fairest prospects. But that we wanted acts, and not professions; that the latter could be purchased anywhere. I told him that his prospects would greatly depend upon my reception at Khiva. Should it prove unfavourable, I should be assured he had sent on the despatches with which the Vuzeer had entrusted him.

My route lay along the left bank of the Moorghaub, and I crossed by a bridge the dry channel of the Khooshk, at its junction with the former river. The cause of this failure of its waters I do not know. The Moorghaub is here a deep stream of very pure water, about sixty feet in breadth, and flowing in a channel, mined to the depth of thirty feet in the clay soil of the valley. The banks are very precipitous, and fringed with tamarisk and a few reeds. The valley itself is, at Punj Deeh, about nine miles in breadth, but narrows as we advance. Here it is about three-fourths of a mile in breadth. On the east bank are sloping sandy hills, about 600 feet higher than the valley. On the west is the desert, a high sandy plain, overrun with low bushes and camel thorn, and extending to the mountain barrier of Persia. The valley of the Moorghaub has once been well cultivated, but is now from Punj Deeh to Yool-lataun utterly deserted, owing to the late distractions of the country. It abounds in pheasants, chuccores, and rock-pigeons. The panther and bear are also to be found. At long intervals are seen the ruins of buildings; but I observed not a black tent in the solitude. Towards evening I chose a spot for my camp amongst the brushwood, bordering the river, and excepting that the horses were occasionally



frightened from their picquets by the sudden whirr of a pheasant, the night passed without accident.

2nd January.—Resuming my course with daylight, I passed by a good and much beaten road down the river valley. Scene as before. All the party are rejoicing to be rid of Peer Muhummud Khaun, who, whilst he made himself so especially agreeable to me, contrived to be hated by every individual of my suite. Instances of his meanness were now related, which to anyone unacquainted with Asiatics, might well seem incredible. At evening I found a well-sheltered spot amongst the tamarisk trees, and settled there for the night. Two large fires were lighted, but darkness had scarcely fallen, when I heard a panther prowling close round the camp, with that mewling cry which I have so often heard from the tigress. It approached so near, that my people fled from it, and came to apprise me. I caught up my gun and a pistol, and went in search of the animal; but the darkness of the night, and density of the jungle baffled me. I therefore made my people light a third large fire, and keep up the blaze throughout the night. But notwithstanding all these precautions, I was prepared for some mischief to the cattle. My people lying close to the blaze of their fires were more secure. Until midnight the cries of this unwelcome visitor continued, and once during the night he again appeared, but morning broke without accident.

3rd January.—At sunrise we pursued the course of the Moorghaub as before. My horse, generally remarkable for his steadiness, was starting at every leaf; he had had a visit from the panther, which had approached him during the night so close, that he had broken from his picquets. My new Yahmoot

horse was led by the groom, riding a Yaboo, or baggage galloway: but although the path would admit of but one horse abreast, nothing can persuade this proud creature to follow in the steps of the Yaboo. We met a caravan at every third mile, laden with wheat and barley from Merv. They take back in exchange slaves of both sexes, chiefly from Heraut.

As I approached Yoollataun, the desert aspect of the country was a little broken by symptoms of recent culture. Three women, one of them mounted on horseback, and all unveiled, met me. No male was at hand to protect them. They have a singular complexion, ruddy, but not fair. Their features are far from agreeable, more particularly their eyes. But the specimens I have seen are not sufficient. After some farther advance, a few mud walls became visible, and amongst them here and there a black Tartar tent. The road was now everywhere entangled amongst canals of running water. The Khails, or moveable villages of black tents increased, and the valley opened widely on either side, being in fact a large plain bounded by the desert. I sent forward my Toorcumun to acquaint the governor of the district, Muhummud Aumeen Beeg, of my approach: and on drawing nearer, five or six horsemen, sent by the Beeg, met and saluted me. We passed large Khails of black tents, whose male inhabitants lined the road to stare upon us. One of these, approaching, kissed my hand, and informed me that he had been a servant to Colonel Stoddart. His name I regret I did not commit to paper.

I was now close to Muhummud Aumeen's place. A few low walls, two or three Toorcumun tents, and

a routie\* of blue cotton cloth, formed the palace of the rustic worthy. Outside I observed a party of horse awaiting my arrival. They advanced as I drew near, and I learned on enquiry that the governor was amongst them. The Birdler Beeg informed me, that it is the fashion here to shake hands without dismounting; but observing that the governor had his hand upon the pommel, as if expecting from me a similar movement, I drew up my horse and alighted. The Khetkhoda of the Khail was there, a venerable man. The Beeg always gave him precedence. We embraced very lovingly, touching alternately the right and left breasts,—a species of exercise infinitely absurd to the beholder, when there are twenty or thirty persons to be embraced in succession. I got off for the present with two. We remounted, and rode together to the mansion. Muhummud Aumeen Beeg was mounted upon a very beautiful bay Yahmootie horse, powerful, active, and full of fire. The path being narrow he abandoned it to me, and spurred over the uneven ground, proud of showing his horsemanship. One of his servants was almost equally well mounted upon a grey. I afterwards ascertained that he had purchased the two horses for 70 and 60 Tillas, 560 and 480 Co.'s Rupees, or £56 and £48† They were horses of considerable size, and are the finest I have ever seen in eastern lands.

I dismounted at the door of a black tent prepared for my reception, and was ushered in by the Beeg and Khetkhoda. A comfortable fire of wood embers burned in the centre. My host insisted upon occupy-

\* A small double-poled tent with gables.

† The ordinary price for a serviceable Tooremun horse of medium height is £15. These were very beautiful animals.

ing the lowest seat, and said, "Khoosh aumudeed," (you are welcome,) several times, and then added in Toorkish, "It is all the Persian I know." I replied, that it was a very pleasant sentence in the mouth of a friend. Bread, raisins, and sugar were now brought, and succeeded by some enormous melons, for which Merv is celebrated, and which I found very refreshing. One or two of the party spoke Persian, so that I got on pretty well. I explained, that the object of my mission was the establishment of friendship between the English and Khivan governments; described to them the state of Europe, and the nature of our jealousy of the aggressions of Russia. An old man present asked, "Have you ever been at war with Russia?" When I replied in the negative, he shook his head. This suspicion of our jealousy being a pretence, originates with the Vuzeer Yar Muhummud Khaun, who, anxious to prevent an alliance between the British and Khiva, has taken this method of disconcerting it.\*

Previous to my arrival here, I had been in some perplexity about the presents I had in charge, viz. three rifles and a sabre. I thought one of these must needs be intended for the governor of Merv; and if so, none was left for Muhummud Aumeen Beeg, for whom, nevertheless, I had a strong notion that something had been sent. Having no means of solving my perplexity, I determined to let the notes explain themselves, and accordingly gave the Beeg his letter from Major Todd, and another sent him by the prince

\* The Vuzeer having from the first determined to make use of British alliance only to recruit his exhausted treasury, and then to thrust the mission from his walls, was extremely anxious to prevent our influence over the neighbouring tribes and states.

Muhummud Yoosuph. Both were carried off to be read and translated to the Beeg, whilst I continued to chat with those left in the tent. Presently the Beeg returned, bringing with him an old gentleman, the Cauzie or Judge of Yoollataun. The excessive politeness of this worthy, assured me that he had some mischief in view. The Beeg's face also was full of busy importance, and a kind of dogged resolution that boded me no good. The Cauzie produced the letters I had just delivered. The Beeg desired him to read them aloud. He did so, and I was pleased and relieved to find that one of the rifles was intended for Muhummud Aumeen Beeg. "Now," said the Cauzie after a deep pause, "the Envoy says he has sent the Beeg a rifle. Where is the rifle? Let us see the rifle." It was evident that all present thought I had intended to defraud the Beeg. I could scarcely forbear laughing, but calmly ordered the gun to be produced. The Beeg seized it as if in terror that it might yet escape him. He tore off the cloth case, and examined it with intense scrutiny. When he came to the lock and found a matchlock, he muttered, as if he thought I had palmed off upon him some inferior article.

On my first arrival at the tent, whilst sitting in a circle with my entertainers, a servant had brought in my holster pistols, and some other articles, which I had hastily made him carry away, lest he should disturb the company. This had evidently excited the suspicion of the Beeg; for he now said, "The prince Muhummud Yoosuph informs me that Major Todd has sent me a brace of pistols; but I do not see them." "His information was not good," I replied; "the Envoy had intended to send you a brace of

pistols instead of a matchlock, but Cauzie Moollah Hussun assured him that they would not be valued, as they were destitute of ornament." "The Cauzie said very wrong; there is nothing we value more." I replied that I would write for a brace for him, and that if there were any other respect in which my government could oblige him I trusted he would let me know.

Muhummud Aumeen Beeg is a short, stout, round-faced Oozbeg, of the family of the reigning Khaun Huzurut. He is said to be a worthy man, and well inclined toward the English. He is very hospitable, but full of peculiarities characteristic of country life, and is in fact an Oozbeg squire. He gave me the option of having my provisions sent me raw, or dressed in his kitchen. To save him trouble, I preferred the former arrangement. I slept comfortably in the Oozbeg tent. In the morning some of the wretched loops and buttons of my Afghaun attire having given way, I sent Nizaum to get them mended, and this being accomplished, desired him to call the tailor to be rewarded. He was horrified at the idea. "It's a woman," said he. "Well then let her send some one for the present." Off went Nizaum, but soon returned with the lady herself, who came smirking and half covering a face, which, sooth to say, was not worthy of the pains. I gave her a ducat, which quite reconciled her to having borne the glance of an unbelieving eye. She had scarcely gone when Birdler Beeg came breathless with haste to ask what in the world I had been at with the Zunnuk. Zunnuk is the contemptuous epithet for woman, the feminine of mannikin.

5th January.—Breakfast was brought, and having

discussed it, I prepared to depart. I repeated my proffer of writing to Heraut for any thing that would please the Beeg. He replied, I require nothing but a brace of flint and steel pistols, rather short in the barrels. This was the exact description of my own weapons, which he had been overhauling, and which he still persisted in thinking intended for himself. I would have taken leave of him at the door; but he insisted upon escorting me a fursuk, and off we started.

Perceiving that the old Cauzie was a man of consequence in the household, I had been paying his child great attention; and now took the opportunity of slipping five gold piécés into his hand. The old gentleman was delighted, and as I have since heard, proclaimed my praises at the top of his gamut.

Colonel Stoddart's old servant also accompanied us, following me to some distance after I had taken leave of the Beeg. I fell into conversation with him, and found it to be his firm conviction that the imprisonment of Colonel Stoddart, was owing to a letter written by the Vuzeer Yar Muhummud, to the Ummeer of Bokhara. This man has since visited Bokhara with the view of effecting Colonel Stoddart's release. His opinion jumps with a conviction I have long felt. It is well known that terms of defiance had passed between Colonel Stoddart and the Vuzeer, which the latter was the last man in the world to forget or forgive. An outward reconciliation had taken place, but such could but serve to inflame, by suppressing the resentment of such a man as Yar Muhummud. It would appear also that the Vuzeer, in addition to his letter to the Ummeer, sent a man of his own in company with Colonel Stoddart; and

to this man's advice is attributed all the evil consequences that fell upon Colonel Stoddart, whom he had persuaded to believe him an attached follower.

In pursuing this conversation the man winked at me, and said in a low voice that he could not speak his sentiments before the Birdler Beeg. I made the Birdler Beeg ride on, and asked why? He replied, "He is a bad man. I have had much dealing with him." I demanded facts: but he would say no more. There seems to be, amongst Asiatics, a natural hatred and jealousy of one another; which will not suffer them to rest, so long as by any means they can injure one another's reputation or interests. The Birdler Beeg I knew to be a rogue of the first water in money matters; but although I have by cross-examination made him confess that he has a letter from the Vuzeer to the Mehtur, and that the former gave him twenty ducats, which assuredly he would not have bestowed without hope of profit; yet, as the Birdler Beeg has received already six times as much from us, and has hope and promise of more in case of proving useful; the motive to treachery is not easily conceived; excepting indeed that there is a natural bias that way in all Asiatic minds.

I find that my arrival caused many delusive hopes amongst the slaves of my host's household. The notion that I was on a mission for the freedom of all the captives at Khiva had got abroad, and fearing that the slaves should seek my protection, their masters had them chained, until my departure. Sumnud Khaun, amongst others, saw a poor fellow of his own tribe, whom some time ago I had unwittingly affronted, and who now implored me to release him. I assured Sumnud Khaun that I would not forget



the poor fellow at a more seasonable moment; but that at present to release captives would seriously prejudice my mission; as, should an idea that such was the object of my mission reach Khiva, the whole population would be in alarm, their wealth consisting chiefly of slaves. I desired him and my other servants, therefore, to discountenance this notion to the utmost of their power.

Continuing to pass over the sandy plain, I arrived shortly after noon, near the castle of Merv, where resides the governor. I had the night before sent to warn him of my approach. I now despatched a man to certify him of my arrival. Yet he suffered me to approach the castle without any symptom of a greeting. I therefore determined upon shaming him by pitching outside, and chose a spot for the purpose. In the course of half an hour, a party of horsemen approached, headed by three confidential servants, whom the governor has the impudence to call his Vuzeers. They saluted me, apologised for delay, saying that their master was abroad when my messenger arrived, and begged permission to escort me to a Seraie prepared for my reception. I replied that they found me pitching my tent, under the idea that I was not welcome to the Bae. That I could still make myself very comfortable here, if the governor were less than friendly in his feeling. That I had sent a messenger the night before, and another this morning, so that the Bae could not fail of being apprized of my arrival, and any tardiness of hospitality must therefore be imputed to his disposition.

The messengers in reply, entreated me not to disgrace their master by pitching outside; assured me no messenger had arrived the night before; and that

the messenger of this morning had found the governor superintending the work of a canal. It was not my object to drive matters to extremity; I therefore mounted and accompanied the messengers. A large crowd of people had collected to gaze. The horse-men of the escort, to the number of thirty, galloped to and fro, flourishing and firing their arms. A black tent was hastily erected within an enclosure for my accommodation. In the meanwhile I sate in a routine of canvass. The governor did not make his appearance; otherwise, there was much shew of respect and attention.

The usual repast was set before me—bread, raisins, melons, and apples. Evening closed, the governor had not appeared, and I felt that I was slighted. Birdler Beeg now entered, saying that one thing would be expected of me. That as the Bae had lately lost his brother, the late minister of Khiva, it would be proper for me to pay the first visit, and say the *fat'h* or blessing. I objected that this custom could not apply to guests, far less to strangers, since the one *had* actually called, and the other could not be supposed to know anything of the family afflictions of his entertainer. That, nevertheless, as I would not on any account seem to fail in any token of attention or good will, I would humour the fancy of the Bae.

I had sent for Moolla Haroon, a Jew merchant, who was to cash my bills on Merv. He now came, and I had some chat with him. He had entertained the Missionary Joseph Wolff, in his passage through Merv, and spoke of the kindness he had heard designed for his nation by British benevolence. The subject is always a touching one. The condition and history of this people have deep claims upon public

sympathy ; and just now they have been subjected at Meshed to a fresh and fearful persecution. A rumour during the Mohurrum was spread, that the Jews had killed a dog in ridicule of Hussun and Hosein, grandsons of the Prophet, whose death is at that time celebrated. The consequence was a massacre, and the complete spoliation of the Jews ; their wives and daughters being sold as slaves. It appears that Muhamud Shauh has sent a nobleman to Meshed to order restitution of the plunder. Alas ! who shall restore their insulted honour to the wives and daughters of Israel, or their blood, spilt in the streets of Meshed ! Several of the Jews of Meshed had fled hither and found protection. Haroon described the governor of Merv as a just man, but admitted that he was no friend to the English. Whilst he was yet engaged in conversation with me, some person came to the door and called him, and almost instantly after, entering, struck him on the head and carried him out. I was extremely angry, but had sufficient reflection to refrain from using my sword. I called my people, and ordered them to ascertain from whence this outrage came, that I might quit so inhospitable a roof if necessary. They brought the Jew back, and with him an officer of the governor, who assured me, the offender had acted without orders, and that he, the officer, had instantly rebuked him. I was far from satisfied with such an excuse, but, sending for Birdler Beeg, bade him inform the governor of the outrage committed upon his guest, and insist that the offender should be punished. He replied, that he was ready to obey, but knew that the governor, on getting my message, would decapitate the offender. That he was quite certain that the outrage did not proceed from

the Bae himself. This assurance, ill-founded as I have now cause to believe it, calmed me for the time. I know the horrible barbarity of native punishment, and could not risk the life of a fellow creature upon such a quarrel; so I consented to drop the matter, until some fresh shew of discourtesy should render it incumbent upon me to seek redress.

Next morning (6th January), after having wound on, with aid of my Meerza, my first turban, being about twenty mortal yards of white muslin, to which I verily thought there was no end, I mounted my horse to call upon the Bae.\* I entered the mud castle of Merv, and found a black tent pitched in the enclosure. In this were seated three Oozbeg gentlemen; but, as I had never seen the Governor, I was at some loss to distinguish him. He sat lowest. They saluted me by taking my hands between their own, and then motioned me to the highest seat. Bread and a mixture of syrup and ghee were brought, and I ate a few morsels. My next neighbour, a greybeard, acted interpreter, and commenced in a strange way, by asking my age. I stared. He repeated the question. Not understanding enough of the manners of this barbarous country to be prepared to take offence slightly, I informed him. He next asked my name. I again stared, but answered the question. I did not perceive, until afterwards, that these queries had been put designedly, under the impression that I was hot-headed, like many of my countrymen, and would commit myself by some act of resentment, that should place me in the power of my enemies. It was thus that Yar Muhummud had contrived Colonel Stoddart's captivity.

\* Pronounced always "Boy."

They then inquired the purport of my mission, which I explained; and afterwards whether the English and Russians had ever been at war. I replied in the negative. Whether we spoke the same language. No! the languages were entirely dissimilar. "Pray," inquired the Bae, "what is the English for Doost?" "Friend." Upon this the Bae spoke in Toorkish, and as it seemed to me, was calling in question the accuracy of my reply. "What," I demanded, "is the Russian for Doost?" He answered "Baat'h." I therefore easily saw through the snare laid for me. The governor had expected me to translate Doost by our word "brother." Had I done so, I should have been proclaimed a spy, for no assurances would afterwards have sufficed to persuade my enemies that the languages of England and Russia differ. Several incidents that had occurred at Heraut previous to my departure, enabled me to trace this little stratagem to Yar Muhummud Khaun.\* I did not until evening know, that his despatches had arrived at Merv before me, carried by a Toorcumun, who passed me in the night.

The party repeated several times the Khoosh Aumudeed, but accustomed to the long formal visits of the Herauties, I did not take the hint to move. I observed the governor whisper Birdler Beeg, who rose and looked at me. I looked inquiringly at my next neighbour, who had the insolence to say "Rooksut," a form of dismissal applied only to inferiors. I walked out of the tent in no good humour, but knew not how to resent the affront, from ignorance of the

\* I had heard Major Todd, at Heraut, mention to Yar Muhummud this word Baat'h as one of the Russian words having an almost parallel meaning in English. I cannot answer for the correctness of the assertion.

habits of the country. I therefore deemed it wiser not to appear sensible of it, than to make myself ridiculous by any impotent ebullition of indignation.

I sent my Meerza to the Khaloofah, a priest of great reputation, with a polite message, saying, that I had brought him, from the British Envoy at Heraut, a beautiful Book of Prayers, in Arabic, which I begged him to send a trustworthy person to receive. He sent accordingly his eldest son, a fine youth of about twenty-two years, to whom I delivered the exquisite little volume. In return he invited me to dine with him the following day.

I was now busied with preparations for crossing the desert. As water must be carried sometimes six marches, or even ten, when the wells happen to be dry, camels are requisite for any number of persons exceeding four. I hired accordingly six fine camels, at two Tillas (about fourteen shillings) each, purchased ten skins of water, and laid in a store of Jowarr\* for twelve days, at the rate of 12 lb. for each horse daily, there being no grass in the desert. I took bread ready made, and plenty of tea, sugar, and raisins for my servants. I here exchanged my Jum-sheedee cap for a cylindric† hat of black lambskin, such as is worn by the Oozbeg.

Determining that no personal pique should prevent me from conciliating, as far as possible, the governor of Merv, whose good offices it was of importance to secure, I purchased here a handsome Persian sabre and Toorkish firelock, which I sent as presents to him. My Meerza came back most gaudily attired in a robe of honour, formed of sarsnet, covered with

\* *Holcus sorgum.*

† It is more properly the frustrum of a cone inverted.

broad flowers of gold and silver thread. The material resembles kinkaub, but is said to be made in Russia, and is brought from Bokhara. It is often very handsome.

Finding, here, that there is not the slightest prospect of negotiating bills at Khiva, I have been endeavouring to raise a little money here. But the Jew, Moolla Haroon, who was to have assisted me, dares not, without the governor's permission; and the governor will not grant it, upon the plea that Haroon is dishonest and a beggar; I am therefore obliged to use the services of a Jew whom he employs and favours, Ibraheem or Ismaeel by name. He commenced by making difficulties; but at length promised me 200 ducats. I conversed with him whilst the money was coming. He said he had lost all his property in the last massacre at Meshed. He then prayed for the success of the British arms. I told him we had no longer any enemies; that all was now as we could desire. He laughed, and immediately added, "May your sabre be prosperous." Knowing that he would not dare use this language in an open tent, unless assured of the support of the governor, I began to feel seriously uneasy. He now complained of his condition, to which I replied by the reports I had had of the justice of the governor. "Very true," he said, "but these people account us infidels. They regard you in the same light. Don't you wish *this name* were for ever extinct?" "What name?" I inquired in surprise. "The name of Muhummud," he replied in a low cautious voice, fixing his eyes upon mine. I saw the extreme peril of my position, and that this old fellow had been sent to pump some mischief out of me, or to entangle me in my talk.

"That is a bad speech of yours," I replied, and immediately changed the conversation. But I confess I have not so easily got rid of my uneasiness, to find myself so surrounded with spies and other miscreants of the governor.

A young Jew now entered, of the most prepossessing countenance, features beautifully regular, and an eye corresponding in beauty of form and in lustre, the most clear and guileless that could be conceived. I looked upon him with much interest. This was a son of Israel. How lovely must not her daughters be! This was one of that scattered and persecuted race, erst the chosen of Heaven, and now the scorn of the World. The young man, as he seated himself, said, pointing to the old man, "This is my father;" and the old man replied, "This is my son." I believed neither; yet it was impossible to meet the youth's eye with distrust. A mystery there was, unexplained; but its nature I could not conjecture. When I asked on what terms I was to have the gold, the young man refused to make any; saying, that it was quite sufficient to have done me a service. "But what," I inquired, "do you know of me?" "We know that the English are everywhere kind to the Jews, and we have heard that your people are striving to collect together our scattered race, to restore them to their kingdom."

I have met with deceit in so many forms, that I am not easily duped. I was on this occasion particularly jealous of any emotion, because I believed the old Jew to be acting a dishonest, if not a treacherous part towards me; and the young man had voluntarily identified himself with the senior, by calling him his father, when I felt certain no such relationship sub-



sisted. Yet I could not see here the object of deceit, where I was the person to be obliged, and had no prospect of serving either of the Jews. If they hoped to win my confidence to the betrayal of any secret, their labour was lost, as I had no secret to betray. I replied, that the English did indeed feel a strong interest in all relating to the Jews. That many of our people devote their lives to the good of this persecuted race. That in England we granted them all the rights of free citizens, including a share in offices of state and legislation.\* That there, they form a most respectable and powerful body, and are amongst the richest of mankind. That we believe the Jewish Scriptures, and that Jesus Christ was of the house of David, and of the family of Israel. I assured him, that his brethren should never repent any service rendered to the English. That our views in these countries were quite free from guile. That we desired neither territory nor to promulgate our opinions by the sword. That we wished to see good faith and justice prevail, and security of life and property, and should use to this end the utmost influence of our example; but that we had no views of conquest or self-aggrandisement. That these countries were not worth our acceptance, and that our empire was already too extensive. That our views being such as I declared, it was the interest of every creature, whether Jew, Muhummudan, or Hindoo, to aid us and make much of us.

\* I reprint this, as it appeared in the first edition. The reader will remember that I left England a boy of sixteen years, and had been living mostly in the Jungles since.

## CHAPTER III.

Jew Merchants—Their estimation at Merv—Visit to the Khà-loofah—Atmosphere of Merv—The Son of the Soofie ool Islaum—Dinner—Ignorance of the state of Europe—Gifts—The Gift Horse—Visit from the Governor, Nyaz Muhummud Bae—Nature and Properties of a Gift in Eastern Lands—Saleh Muhummud—My Prepossession in his Favour—Persian Ambassador to Khiva—Merv—Departure from its miserable and inhospitable Plain—Aspect of the ancient Site—Slave Caravans—Condition of the Victims—Toorcumun and Oozbeg Women—Economy of a Toorcumun Tent—Objection to too much Bosom—Preference for broken-in Partners of the Yoke—Other Toorcumun Habits—A Day's March in the Wilderness of Kara Koom—Landmarks—Sagacity of Camels—Instance of the Excessive Cold at Cabul—Toorcumun Notions of the Glory of the Heels—Aspect of this Wilderness.

**N**EXT morning (6th January)—for this conversation passed in the evening—the Jews brought me a shawl and several cloaks, &c. The price demanded was absurdly small, not above a third of that charged at Heraut. I remarked this to the Jews. The reply was, “We have told you, according to promise, exactly how much these articles cost us, and we never lie.” It is indeed a singular fact, that the Jews in these parts have a character for truth, which gives their word more weight than the oath of a Moosulmaun. “At Heraut,” I said, “this shawl, for which you ask eight Tillas, would cost thirty.” “Yes!” replied the old Jew, “and we were about to send it to Heraut.” “No! no such thing,” interrupted the youth, “the gentleman has heard the

price. He shall have it for that, or if he likes to make us some trifling per-centage for profit, well and good." It was a singular and novel position in which I found myself. The absurdly small price asked was sufficient assurance of the sincerity of the Jews. It is true, they had nothing to apprehend in trusting an Englishman's honour ; but they might have asked double the sums they placed upon their goods, and still have got the credit of dealing honestly by me. When I had selected such articles as were requisite for the 'Tosheh Kaneh, I placed a handsome per-centage on the amount, that they might not be losers.

At noon I mounted my horse and rode over to the Khàloofah's abode. I had a rare specimen of this abominable plain, passing through an atmosphere of dust that almost stifled me. My road lay through the Bazaar of low huts, which constitutes the present city of Merv. I issued from thence into the plain of deep fine sand, shewing not in the whole of its wide extent of some three thousand square miles a blade of any herb, far less the leaf of any tree, but raked up by the lightest wind, until the sky is blotted out by the dust. I found the Khàloofah's black tent pitched on the banks of a sluice from the main canal. On entering, the inmates rose to receive me. I was greeted first by the son of the Soofie ool Islaum, and afterwards by the Khàloofah. The former is a guest of the latter. The Soofie ool Islaum, a man of very extensive power in the spiritual world, had conferred the title of Khàloofah upon the father of the present incumbent. The son of the Soofie, persecuted by Muhummud Zemaun Khaun, and forced to fly from Khooshk, has found refuge here, and is treated with the highest consideration.

After some discourse, water and a basin were brought round, and we washed our hands, drying them, as usual, on our handkerchiefs. Then a filthy cloth of chintz, greased to the consistence of leather, was spread on the ground before us. It is considered thankless to wash from a table-cloth the stains of former banquets, or to suffer a crum to be lost. Upon the table-cloth metallic trays were set, containing pilaus, hot and very greasy. Tucking up my right sleeve, I set to work, spilling half the rice into my lap, and making little way against the practised fists and elbows of the priests. As for the Khàloofah, he shewed himself a man of might in the mysteries of the table; tearing large handfuls of mutton from the bone, as a bear might claw the scalp from a human victim, and plunging elbow-deep into the hot and greasy rice. Seeing how little progress I made, he said, laughing, "We have a proverb, that you should never spare the cates of the Derveish. They come from heaven, you know, and cost nothing."

The two sons of the Khàloofah were the only attendants. This, I find, was ordered as a compliment. It recalled sundry remembrances of the patriarchal histories. At length even the Khàloofah's arm waxed faint, and his jaw wagged more slowly; and then, with fists greased above the wrists, we sat waiting for the water which was to laugh at the slush upon our fingers, and eventually be absorbed, with a large mass of highly-scented mutton fat and gravy, by our handkerchiefs; haunting us for the rest of the day, with the stale smell of pilaus. And then we all joined in the fat'h, or grace, and swept the descending benediction off our beards.

Conversation ensued; questions regarding Europe

were asked and answered. The existence of more than one European nation was a novel idea. When I assured the company that there were some thirteen, the least far more powerful than the King of Persia, I was heard with civility, but probably with very little credence. As the British had entered Candahar from the South, it was scarcely possible to persuade them that London, as they term England, lies not in that direction, but North-North-West.

The son of the Soofie is a handsome and gentlemanly man, and far better informed than the generality of his countrymen. I explained to him the system of British policy in Asia, and the objects of my present mission. These are quite incomprehensible to most of those in whose society I am thrown. They cannot understand two nations, both called Christian, both Feringees, who have never been at war, becoming in Asia, the one invader, the other benefactor of a Mahomedan power.

In this country of Tartar caps, the turban is confined to the priests, and is small and ungraceful, being a tight thong of muslin, wound upon a cap fringed with black lambskin, which gives it a singular appearance.

After dinner, a chogah, or cloak of camel's hair, was placed before me on a charger by one of the Khàloofah's sons, being designed as an offering of hospitality; and the Khàloofah informed me, that the son of the Soofie had a horse for my acceptance outside. This was a hint to take leave. The Soofie's son was too holy a man to move from his place, but the Khàloofah saw me to the door, and followed me outside, where a fine-looking grey horse was held by a groom, awaiting my acceptance. This was led



before me to my abode. I fancied it had rather a lame gait, but it was in high spirits, and extremely frisky. I had been previously informed of the intended gift, and it was hinted to me, that as it might prove an encumbrance to my march, the Khàloofah would send it for me to Heraut; where it would a second time serve as a gift, and greatly multiply the Soofie's credit for liberality. As, however, Major Todd had already too many of these wretched gift-horses, and Birdler Beeg's tit had broken down, I disappointed the holy man by taking on the horse.

The governor, Nyaz Muhummud Bae, had expressed his intention to return my call, and was now announced. Impoliteness is difficult to an Englishman; and I several times detected myself offering the surly old bear more attention than he deserved. We sat together at the upper end of the tent in profound silence, which I broke by some indirect remarks and questions. The Bae did not, I think, utter above two words during the interview. I had called for tea, and there being some delay in serving it, and the fellow becoming fidgety, he was so impolite as to issue orders himself for it. He then rose without any salutation, and marched to the door. I, of course, condescended him none.

My Meerza now received a message from the Khàloofah requesting his attendance, and on his return asked mysteriously whether I had written to the British Envoy to inform him of the Soofie's gift. Finding that I had done so, he begged, in the name of the Khàloofah, that I would not entrust the note to his particular friend and guest, Saleh Muhummud, but send it to him. I gave the note accordingly. Then the Meerza whispered, "What have you valued

the horse at?" "Why do you ask?" "The Khàloofah is anxious to know." "What do you think it worth?" I said. "Forty ducats." "Very well, I have said forty ducats." Off the old Meerza trudged to deliver the note and the information. Such is the nature of a gift amongst this people. It is as the meat we generously fling to the ocean with a large barbed hook in the centre. Such, too, is the friendship and good faith between them. Saleh Muhummud, son of the principal Cauzie at Heraut, a very gentlemanly young man, had extolled to the skies the Khàloofah and Soofie's son. But they could not trust him to deliver a note, from which they expected profit. They were right, too; for his father, the old Cauzie, would certainly have taken his per-centage. This youth, Saleh Muhummud, so pleased me by his intelligence and alacrity, that I have begged Major Todd to send him to me at Khiva, if he thinks Government will sanction to him a suitable salary. It seems to me that I could make important use of him in sounding others, and gathering the information requisite to enable me to steer with security.

I learned at Merv two facts of importance. First, that the Persian ambassador has just passed through Merv in great state, charged with costly presents for the Khaun Huzurut. Secondly, that Peer Muhummud Khaun, whom I dismissed at Punj Deeh, has actually sent on to the governor of Merv, by the hand of a Toorcumun, the despatches he received from Yar Muhummud Khaun. All this bodes me no good.

Merv was one of the most ancient cities of Asia. It was situated in the plain, about twelve miles east of the little Bazaar which at present bears its name,

and was watered by a canal from the Moorghaub, or Awb-i-Mowr. It was founded by fire-worshippers, of whose fort, called Kullah Ghubbah, there are yet remains. And it long formed a portion of the Persian empire, whose boundary on the east was the river Oxus. Its vicinity to this boundary, and its disjunction from the inhabited parts of Persia by wide deserts, must have early rendered it obnoxious to molestation from the Toorkish and other tribes; and Merv has probably changed masters as often as any city in the world. Latterly, as the Persian dominions have shrunk upon their heart, Merv has always belonged either to the Toorks or to some of the petty principalities of the neighbouring mountains. It has within a few years been wrested from Bokhara by the Khaun of Khiva, and forms one of the most important districts of Khaurism. During the misrule and anarchy of the last sixty years, the ancient dam of the Moorghaub was neglected and carried away. The city, in consequence, became uninhabitable, and was utterly abandoned. The dam is again set up, and the lands are brought under culture, but the ancient site continues a deserted ruin. The present Merv is an assemblage, upon the Moorghaub, of about one hundred mud huts, where a considerable Bazaar is held. The entire waters of the Moorghaub are dispersed over the sandy plain for the purposes of irrigation. This profusion of water renders the soil productive; but it has not strength to bear any but the poorer kinds of grain. The plain is perhaps an area of sixty miles by forty, or 2,400 square miles, running on every side into the desert. About 60,000 Toorcumuns are said to live upon this plain, chiefly as cultivators. And the revenue in land and other



taxes amounts to about 30,000 Tillas, or 2,10,000 Co.'s Rupees, or about £21,000.

The trade passing through Merv is very considerable; Merv connecting Bokhara and Persia, Khiva and Afghaunistaun. Indeed the position of Merv is so important, that it never will be long abandoned, and might, with judicious care, rapidly rise from its dust into wealth and consequence.

7th January.—My arrangements completed, I bade farewell to Merv with no wish ever again to behold it. I had not proceeded a mile, ere I discovered that the gift-horse of the holy man was dead lame, of an old and incurable strain. We crossed the dry channel of the Moorghaub, and proceeded by a well-beaten road in direction East-North-East. I soon perceived, upon the Eastern horizon, the ruins of the ancient Merv, of which a mosque and several forts form the principal features. The city is said to have been smaller than Heraut, *i.e.* less than four miles in circuit. From this distance I might have estimated it at eight times the dimensions. The fact seems to be, that several sites have in turn been occupied and abandoned, retaining each some vestige of its former fortifications; and these lying, in a continuous line, give an impression of vastness to the deserted site. I regarded it with much interest, and regretted the haste which prevented me from visiting it. On the horizon around us were many tuppahs, or artificial mounds, of considerable elevation. These are supposed to have been forts.

I was glad to quit this wretched, though much vaunted plain, and enter the desert, which is a paradise in comparison. To the north of the ancient city is said to exist the tomb of the hero Ulp

Urslaun,\* one of the most remarkable characters in Asiatic history. I could, however, learn no particulars relative to it. At our halting ground, I discovered that we have two caravans in company. They had brought grain from Khiva, and are returning thither laden with slaves, many of whom are natives of Heraut. The whole number, men, women, and children may be about twenty-five. Some of the women are very decently clad, and seem to have been in good circumstances until seized for this inhuman traffic. One poor female was mounted astraddle upon a camel behind her master. Her child, an infant, was lodged in a grain bag hanging from the saddle. This poor wretch has an inhuman master, and is the picture of misery. Her master has lost two children to the Persians, and is trying by this horrible trade to raise money for the purchase of their freedom. The other women put the best face upon their condition. Their masters have no object in treating them harshly. At night they share with them their blankets and cloaks, and in the day-time I often observe the women laughing with their captors. The children also, having plenty to eat and nothing to do, probably rather enjoy themselves. But the men are chained together by the throats at night, so that rest is scarcely possible, whilst the contact of the frozen iron with their skin must be torture. For them

\* I write this name (generally spelt Alp Arslan) as it is pronounced: the rather, that, knowing only the incorrect spelling of the name, I could learn nothing about the Conqueror or his Tomb whilst in Toorkestan. His tomb is said to have borne this epitaph—"Ye who have seen Ulp Urslaun's grandeur exalted to the heavens, come to Merv and behold it buried in the dust." He was slain by his prisoner Yoosuf Kotwâl, whom he had just sentenced to a death of torture for having defended his castle and his name fearlessly.

also no carriage is found, they walk the whole way, every step of which renders their captivity more hopeless. These poor fellows look very wretched, and unfortunately, any attempt to render their lot less terrible, would expose them to suspicion and to fresh hardships. My heart is full of heaviness, when I think of all the heart-rending misery of which this system is the cause.

On the road I stopped at some black tents to make inquiries. I heard the inhabitants busy within, but all our calling was long in vain. At length Birdler Beeg entered one of the tents and brought out from it a man, who came and saluted me with much show of cordiality; although he had been deaf enough, so long as there was any hope of escaping the hospitable claims of strangers. From him we inquired the road, and procured a draught of water. The women, so curious in cities, did not even peep. Birdler Beeg boasts the beauty of the Toorcumun women; but it probably consists of small, sparkling eyes and a rosy complexion. Their features can seldom be regular or very delicate. The women of the Oozbegs are said to be lovely, but neglected by their brutal lords. Peer Muhummud Khaun declares that they are not without their revenge, being allowed to drive where they like, in covered carts, with the male slaves of the family; and having entire charge of the purse. That a handsome male slave will, in consequence, often refuse his freedom when it is offered him. All this, however, Birdler Beeg, as in duty bound, strenuously denies.

The Toorcumun women are by all accounts modest, and not concealed. When a traveller enters a Yahmoot Khail, he is accommodated in the public guest tent, if there be one. If the camp is small, there is

probably no guest tent, in which case he is admitted into the family tent of his host, where he finds the wife and children. At night, under veil of darkness, the several parties undress. The children are early married, the boys at the age of fourteen years, the girls at that of eleven or twelve years, and before the age of puberty. The marriage is immediately consummated, and a tent is provided for the young pair, which is pitched near that of the boy's parents. It is considered a reproach to have an unmarried daughter to the age of twenty years, and such ladies are little in request as wives; for, said Birdler Beeg, their bosoms become so large. I have in Hindoostan seen a girl of nine years, living as wife with a man of thirty; but the practice is uncommon in that country, where marriages are seldom consummated until both parties have attained puberty.

The daughters of Toorcumuns are always purchased. If respectable, at not less than 100 Tillas, about 700 Co.'s Rupees, or 70%. If the first wife die, the widower must pay double for a second, although the husband should be still a child. In return for the price bestowed, the bride is generally provided by her parents with furniture of proportionate value. A widow, if young, fetches a higher price, as being broken in to the manège. Strange as it may appear, men and women never eat together. I asked Birdler Beeg the reason. "Is woman an unclean animal?" "No!" he said, "but a man would be laughed at who should eat with a woman; he would be called 'a pretty Miss.'" He was much astonished at learning that we suffer our women to eat from the same dish with ourselves. He asserted that some liberty of choice is allowed the young people; but I have heard

this denied, and believe, that as a general rule, it may be said to be quite unknown.

I was describing England one day to Birdler Beeg, if indeed a process, in which every idea is to be created ere it can be applied, can be termed description. He asked, "And what could induce you to quit such a paradise?"

"The hope of making myself a name."

"What! your King I suppose will make much of you?"

"No! without being known to my King, I may win myself a name!"

"Oh! yes! yes! your King being a woman, cannot of course confer honour, but her Vuzeer will."

When I informed him, that beside the honour which the Queen and her Ministers confer, there was a society, a public, whose opinion was of the utmost consequence to an Englishman, the idea was incomprehensible; there being in Toorkestaun neither aristocracy nor people, nor any right nor honour but the King's pleasure.

Our camp was at Kara Tuppah, where was a small Khail (or camp) and a sluice of pure water from one of the canals. Early next morning, January 8th, I resumed my march over a plain, encumbered by sand-hills, and sprinkled with low jungle. The lower lands are occasionally cultivated, and have old water-courses and remains of habitations, speaking of a more prosperous period. The country is rather a wilderness than a desert, produces an abundance of dry fire-wood, and plenty of camel-thorn, but no grass whatever. I met an old Toorcumun gentleman riding a fine horse, and followed by a young girl of about sixteen years, riding astraddle, fair, with feminine features, but insipid.

Her head-dress was remarkable, being adorned with silver ornaments, fantastic and pretty; but I was too much occupied with the face, to retain any distinct impression of the shape. The sight of the most ordinary female countenance is a rarity not to be neglected. We had filled the water-bags at Kara Tuppah, so were independent, when at noon we sat down in the wilderness and awaited the arrival of the camels.

It is needless to detail each several stage, where all were precisely alike; but it may be interesting to sketch a single day's trip, with all its pleasures and inconveniences. I rise then at midnight, and sit at a blazing fire, sipping tea without milk, until the camels are laden and have started. I then mount and follow them; and as camels walk about two and a quarter miles an hour, soon overtake them. As the cold is intense, and our feet are by this time fully numbed, I alight and spread my carpet; and a large fire is soon made, around which we all sit half an hour. Wood is very abundant, and so dry, that when the hoar frost or snow is shaken from it, it kindles instantly. It is likewise so brittle that a stem, the thickness of a man's body, is torn up by the roots without difficulty.

We now mount again, and proceed in silence, for the path admits not of two abreast; and the freezing of the vapour of the breath, upon one's beard and mustachios, renders the motion of the jaw singularly unpleasant. Indeed, in raising the handkerchief to one's face, it is tangled in a disagreeable manner with the crystals, and the chin has become so brittle, that a very slight tittilation is painful. Jupiter is now far above the horizon, and Venus is shining gloriously upon the desolate wild. And by degrees,

we perceive the day itself slightly winking in the east, and again we pull up, to light a fire, and to thaw our frozen extremities. We sit until day is fully confirmed, when the Birdler Beeg and my Meerza, and sometimes Summud Khaun spread their cloaks, ascertain the true position of Mecca, and duly say their prayers. The other servants do not seem to think the ceremony expected from them, as they have less title to consequence. One day, when Birdler Beeg and the Meerza had both risen from their knees and were approaching the fire, the Meerza said to the Toorcumun, "Salaam alikoom," which was as much as to say, I hail you a brother.\* The other, however, did not condescend to answer the salutation, thinking himself far too orthodox to own such fraternity. I have witnessed the same scene acted over a purer faith, and in a better land. The High Churchman speaks with infinite scorn of the humble Methodist, the zealous puritan. The very enthusiast, upright of heart and gentle of spirit, whose words are sincerity, whose soul glows with the least earthly love; yet deems himself entitled to speak of "poor dear such an one," and to mourn the condition of many a perverse brother and sister, over whom, perchance, the angels are rejoicing.

When shall we behold the bequest of Jesus pervading the hearts, and directing the conduct of all? When shall we see the will to do good, divested of the proneness to think evil of our neighbours? If, indeed, so great a blessing is yet in reserve for man's perverted race, the prayer which those pure lips have taught us, will be robbed of its foremost petition.

\* Birdler Beeg was a Sooni, the Meerza a Sheeah.

The kingdom of Heaven will be amongst us, and the hope of it shall be swallowed up in sight.

Ere the sun breaks from the horizon, we are once more mounted and away. The profusion of hoar frost upon the leafless jungle sheds a glory over the desolate scene. It is a sight unwitnessed by me for seventeen years, and brings back many pleasant remembrances tinged with sadness. Now we are close upon the traces of the camels. The slave caravans keep them company. The hardy Toorcumuns, as they trudge along in their clouted, laced boots, and legs wound around with woollen cloths, and their white sheepskin caps, heavy with hoar frost, have no cause to envy us, whose knees are cramped with the saddle, and whose feet are again freezing in the morning air. How frosty their cheeks and sharp noses appear, peeping above the cataract of ice which clings to their scanty beards, and below the snowy mass which overhangs their brows. The captive ladies are wisely invisible. They have tucked themselves below the felts of their Kujawurs,\* and yet I fear, in spite of all their management, have but a chilly berth. But there is one poor wretch, who has no such defence against the weather. Whose knees, like ours, are cramped with the saddle of her camel; but who has not, like us, a sufficiency of clothing, nor the option of alighting to renew life at the fire. What is her condition, and what the hope which supports her under her misery? Is it hope of escape? Alas! he who once enters Khiva abandons all such hope, as surely as he who enters hell. His prison-house is girdled with trackless deserts, whose

\* Large crates, thrown across a camel, one balancing the other. Some are used for merchandize, some for travellers.



sole inhabitants are the sellers of human flesh ; escape is as impossible from Khiva, as to the wretch thrice-girdled in the black folds of Styx. If she has still a hope left to support her spirit, it is the chance, faint and dim, of falling into hands less cruel, than those which now oppress her. Her home, her country, her husband, her friends, are lost, and for ever ; and the child which hangs like some worthless article of merchandise from the camel's side, shall, if it continue to live, know neither home, nor country, nor one right that should be common to the human race.

The magnificent camels, in their long shaggy fur, little heed the weather. The icicles hang from their beards, and hoar frost garnishes their heads. Their large, full, lustrous eyes, seem acquainted with hardship, but not with trouble. They are the very philosophers of patience, who conquer all things by tranquillity of spirit. Many a "Salaam alikoom" is wished me as I pass, and Birdler Beeg has just stopped to take a puff of the kullyaun, and exchange a lighted-hearted laugh with his countrymen. On we march with lengthened pace, and at ten o'clock strike off the road to seek a hollow, convenient for a halt. We choose that which is sheltered from the wind and exposed to the sun, and has, besides, an abundance of firewood ; as for camel-thorn, there is never lack of that.\* My carpet is spread, and Skakespeare is open, and this is real enjoyment ; for the cramped limbs may now extend themselves, and the warmth of the sun and of the fire are equally agreeable. But this is not all, for the camels have now arrived, and I see

\* The sandy tracts produce camel-thorn. The high hard steppe, farther north, only wormwood.

Nizaum, my Nazir, under way to my carpet, bearing hot bread and the concremented juice of grapes ; and having been nine hours in the frosty air, the appetite is something whetted. My people also have made themselves tea, and a stew swimming in the fat of ram's tails. By degrees the warmth and ease of my position "steal my senses, shut my sight," and I am not sensible of external objects, until the loud "Bismillah" awakens me to see the caufila depart.

Then it is once more "Mount and go," nor do we draw rein until four o'clock, when we again choose a position of bivouac and collect fire-wood for the night. Again come the camels, and now my funny little tent is pitched, and I instal myself within it; in due time devour the fat stew they have made me, and sleep until midnight; when I rise, and call the people who have crept under their thick felt coverings, and are well wrapped in furs.

Such is a life in the wilderness, sufficiently tedious and irksome at first, and painful until habit has accustomed the limbs to the constraint of the saddle, for so many hours daily. This constrained posture, aided by the excessive cold, so paralysed the nerves of the legs, that for twenty days after my arrival at Khiva I had scarcely the use of my right foot; and all my servants complained of constant pain in the extremities. Unfortunately my old Meerza having lost just forty of the two-and-thirty teeth he once boasted, and having moreover an all-of-a-heap manner of speaking, so that the first word of his sentence runs down the heels of the last, all conversation with him is out of the question; and Birdler Beeg understands just enough of Persian to misinterpret mine. I there-

fore feel doubly the loss of Peer Muhummud Khaun, who spoke the language well, and caught my meaning readily.

After the second march, the path became both vague and difficult as the sand-hills increased, and the track was often quite effaced by the wind. In this difficulty we looked for oeks, or landmarks, generally the skeleton of a camel hung upon a bush, but often, masses of dark wood, piled upon some conspicuous point. At night, it need scarcely be observed, these are utterly invisible. They are also few and far between, but whenever a camel's bone is to be found in the sand, you may be sure you are not far from the true route.

One night, when I rose as usual for the march, I found the earth a foot deep in new-fallen snow. I confess I thought it madness to proceed until daylight; but Birdler Beeg assured me there was nothing to apprehend. "But," I said, "you lost your way, just now, in broad day-light, and but for my compass, would never have recovered it." This was fact. The air was foggy; we wandered off the road, made a fire, sat down, forgot our bearings, and sent men due North, instead of South, to look for the camels. Their errand failing, I had recourse to my compass, and recovered the path by it. The features of this irregular plain are everywhere precisely similar, and nothing is easier than to go astray. "What are we to do?" I inquired of Birdler Beeg.

"We must follow the camels!"

"The camels! and who are they to follow? There is not a star visible, and the night is pitchy dark."

"Oh!" said Birdler Beeg, "the camels never go astray."

I was far from satisfied, but had no alternative, so followed the track of the camels, which, without turning head to the right hand or left, followed all the windings of the invisible path through the deep snow, as confidently as in day-light. This faculty is very wonderful, and utterly unaccountable by any knowledge we possess, of animal sensation.

One night, when I had dismounted to thaw my feet, my Meerza asked me how I found them. I replied, that if he asked after my knees or my calves, I could give him some information, but that beyond them I could not speak, not being very certain that I possessed feet.

"That," said the Meerza, "reminds me of a tale relating to Cabul, which, as everyone knows, is excessively cold in winter. Two men were sleeping there, wrapped in the same cloak. In the morning, one of them awaking, commenced as he supposed to scratch his head. Finding very little benefit from the operation, he dug his nails in, pretty deep; and was ploughing away in great contentment, when his friend, starting, asked him, what the deuce he was at?"

"Scratching my head to be sure."

"*Your* head. What, do you mean to say this is your head that you are tearing to pieces, like a great tom cat, with your infernal claws?"

"Of course I do," replied his friend, continuing the operation with a yawn.

"The devil it is!" replied the other, seizing the scratching fingers between his teeth, and speaking through his nose. "If this is your head, these are your teeth."

And he bit him until he roared a confession of his error.

The hoar frost upon the bushes greatly delighted me. I had not seen it since leaving England. I robbed the bushes of their crystals as I passed them, to quench my thirst. When the wind, which is generally N.N.East, changed to West, it brought clouds from the Caspian, which always fell in snow. The air at other times was excessively cold; we preserved our noses, only by constant manipulation. A case of felt on the outside of the boot is the only thing that will effectually protect the feet. No provision, inside the boot, will avail, if the leather be exposed to the air; for its pores become saturated with vapour, and in this state it is instantly converted into a mass of ice.

The greater part of this tract is safe to travellers, provided with passes; but, at about the fourth march, we approached a well, where, Birdler Beeg informed me, caution was requisite, as the Persian, or rather Toorcumun horsemen, subjects of Persia, make occasional forays hither from Dèrèguz. We therefore remained at this well only long enough to procure a supply of water. Several marches here are considered perilous from the above cause.

The next morning, taking precedence of the camels, we pushed on for a couple of hours in silence, when it appeared that Birdler Beeg had lost his road. This was awkward, and every attempt to recover the track involved us in hollows, which were as lakes of dense camel-thorn, extremely annoying to the horses, whose legs they lacerated. Moreover, every now and then, I found myself on the brink of a deserted well, so walled in with thorns, that I was saved only by the sagacity of my horse, from falling into it. It was very dark, and I knew not what means Birdler Beeg might have

of finding the path, in a country so destitute of features. He went on, however, confidently, through jungles of camel-thorn and thickets of tamarisk. At length we heard voices a-head; and loosened our sabres. Birdler Beeg coming up, asked in a whisper what I should do, if they should prove to be Koozulbaush. I replied, that an Englishman had but one way of proceeding in all cases,—and that was to advance. But he replied “They may be ten to one. In such cases it is the Toorcumun fashion to run; no shame attaches to it; I myself have often run.”

I perceived that he was not to be depended upon at a pinch. We, however, approached the voices with some caution, but soon recognised our own people, whom we were right glad to find.

Another night when we had as usual dismounted, and Ali Muhummud, my interpreter, had made a fire of brushwood, three horsemen, whose hoof-sounds had been lost in the deep sand, suddenly stood at my elbow. I seized my weapons, but Birdler Beeg found that they were friends; Toorcumuns travelling from Khiva, with despatches for the governor of Merv. This was a warning of the ease, with which even horsemen may at night, in this desert, surprise an unwary foe. These men had no camels, but carried water for themselves and cattle, their own and their horses' food and clothing on the crupper of their saddles, making the whole distance of about 360 miles in six days. If it is considered that the horses' barley alone for this journey, weighs 60 lb. and the horse clothing at least 20 lb. more, this will not appear a very light feat. It is constantly performed, however, by the Toorcumuns.

The aspect of the desert, or rather wilderness from

Merv to Khiva, is that of a sandy plain, broken into the most irregular surface by deep pits and high mounds, the whole thinly sprinkled with bushes of three several kinds, between which grow wormwood and the camel-thorn. On approaching Khiva, the surface is often ploughed into ravines and ridges, whose course is nearly north and south; giving some idea of abandoned water-courses, and traditionally reported to be old channels of the Oxus. It is more possible, that they may have served such purpose to the Moorghaub, when, previously to the monopoly of its waters at Merv, it flowed into the Oxus: but my observation was too limited to enable me to decide the question. The ridges are gravelly, but there is no want of sand. Wells on this route are found at long intervals, in one case of 160 miles. The water is generally brackish, but there are exceptions; on approaching Khiva, there appeared a very thin sprinkling of grass, which our horses eagerly devoured. But no dependence is to be placed upon the pasture of this wilderness, and the traveller must provide barley or jowarree,\* sufficient to supply the place of fodder. The latter is preferable when the horses have been trained to eat it, 10 lbs. of jowarree being, in respect of nourishment, equal to 12 lbs. of barley.

\* Jowarree—large millet.

## CHAPTER IV.

Reception at the House of an Oozbeg Gentleman—Message to the Khaun Huzurut—Ram Fight—The Light of Mutton Tails—Birdler Beeg's Return—Reception of my Message by the Khaun Huzurut—Escort sent to conduct me to my Lodging—Aspect of Khiva and its Suburbs—Dress of Oozbeg woman—My Quarters—Extreme Jealousy of this Government—Arrangements for my Accommodation—Indelicacy of the Mehtur or Minister—Ruminations—Anecdote of Hajji Feroozooddeen—Summary of Difficulties—Difference between Fate and a Razor.

**J**ANUARY 18th, 1840.—The plain of Khiva is visible from some distance, lying much lower than the surface of the wilderness. It has no beauty, and yet the sight of trees, in which it is wealthy, is ever pleasing to the wanderer of the desert. At about 2 o'clock P.M. we had reached a large pool in the cultivated plain. It was so hard frozen, that attempts to get at the water failed, although we assailed it with our battle-axes. Birdler Beeg recommended me to halt here whilst he rode on to announce my arrival at Khiva. He accordingly solicited a night's lodging at a respectable dwelling in the neighbourhood. The reply was as kind as could be desired. The father and five or six grown-up sons came forth, saluted, and conducted me to the guest chamber, receiving and disposing of my servants and cattle with much attention. The guest chamber was the first apartment, on the right-hand side as I entered the rude portico. It had neither window nor chimney, things



unknown in Khaurism. The place of both was supplied, by tearing a small hole in one corner of the roof; a hearth near the centre of the room was speedily supplied with a large heap of live charcoal. A heavy door of coarse wood, turned upon wooden pivots, let into the masonry above and below. It was such a place as an English farmer would use as a wood or coal house. But it sheltered me from the wind, and was not unwelcome.

Bread, raisins, melons, and grapes were instantly set before me, after an invariable custom of the Oozbegs. I found the melons delicious. My people were cheered at the sight of these dainties, of the value of which, only the traveller of the desert can form a proper notion. I now sent on Birdler Beeg, desiring him to see the Khaun Huzurut himself, if possible, and as it was important at the outset to secure for the mission a footing suitable to the power and character of the British Indian Government, I desired him to dwell upon the vast superiority of Great Britain over Persia (the ambassador of the latter having been received with distinction), and to procure for me as handsome a reception as possible. It may appear strange that such a suit was to be made to the throne direct, but at this primitive court the king is the only real man of business, settling with his own fiat the ceremonies that at other courts devolve upon ministers or officers of state.

Toward evening, my host came to beg me to come outside, to witness the combat of rams trained for the purpose. This is a common pastime in some parts of India, but I had never witnessed it. I was rather disappointed in the force put forth by the animals, and in their power to resist the concussion of meeting

heads. After several severe shocks, one of them was evidently the worse for it. He appeared stupefied, sneezed very often, and shewed no desire to renew the fight, which the other pressed upon him. It is a spectacle not worth seeing, but it is always something, to have proved by personal experience so much, of any exhibition.

As the evening closed, large lumps of fat from the tail of the sheep were brought by my host to supply the iron pan, which propped upon a greasy and very filthy pedestal of wood, served as a lamp to the apartment; and soon afterwards a pilau of mutton was served up.

19th January.—In the morning, Birdler Beeg returned, saying that he had seen the Khaun Huzurut himself the evening before. Being anxious to gain as much knowledge as possible of the forms of this Court, I desired him to relate exactly what had happened. The Khaun Huzurut, he said, was seated in his black tent, transacting business. Birdler Beeg informed the Mehtur of his arrival as my guide, and found that intelligence of my approach had already reached Khiva. The Mehtur waited upon the Khaun Huzurut with the information, and Birdler Beeg was almost immediately summoned to attend the Khaun. “When I approached the tent,” he said, “I trembled.”

“Why? have you not often appeared before the Khaun Huzurut?”

“Yes; but a king’s a king. He is not like other mortals. He has the power of life and death, and a single word or nod of his suffices for either. I left my shoes at the door, lifted the curtain, entered, and joining my hands in front bowed my body, and said,

‘Salaam alikoom ;’ but my agitation was so great, that I could scarcely muster breath for the words. The Khaun Huzurut received me very graciously, and I delivered your message. He smiled, questioned me about the journey, but more particularly of the doings of the English at Heraut. I said that the English had done everything for the Herauties. That an alliance had taken place between them and Shauh Kaumraun, but that the Vuzeer still sells the people into slavery. After many inquiries I was dismissed, and learned from the Mehtur, that orders had been issued to receive you with distinction. Accordingly, a guard of horsemen has been sent in front, and the master of ceremonies follows with about a hundred more; \* quarters are assigned you in one of the Vuzeer’s palaces beyond the town.”

I dressed accordingly, and was scarcely ready when the master of ceremonies arrived, with his Oozbeg and Toorcumun horse. He was a fine man, tall and stout, with squarish face, a ruddy complexion, long half-closed eyes, good features, and, merit of merits, a decent beard. He is an Oozbeg, and a good specimen of his race. After an interchange of civilities, we mounted and proceeded toward the city. I had exchanged my Afghaun dress for my only full-dress suit,—an embroidered surtout with golden epaulettes. The master of ceremonies rode beside me, and the horsemen followed in close column, some of them from time to time dashing from the ranks, discharging their fire-arms, and wheeling their horses at speed; my impression of their horsemanship was not favour-

\* At my Audience, the Khaun assured me that he had sent 100 more horsemen to meet and join me on the way, but that taking the wrong road, they had missed me.

able. Many of the bridles were richly decorated with gold, silver, and precious stones, which gave them a splendid effect ; there were, also, some very handsome matchlock and firelock rifles, the fabric of Heraut and Persia. The horses greatly exceed in size those of Hindoostaun. But some were disproportionately small, and I observed none that I should have valued very highly. The Oozbegs and a few of the Toorcumuns wore the high cylindric Oozbeg cap of black lambskin. I call it cylindric, but it is generally rather larger above than below, so as to be the frustum of a cone inverted. The larger the cap, the more dignified is it considered. The Toorcumuns, however, generally wear their own black, lambskin cap, which is smaller, sits close to the head, and ends above, not like the Persian in a point, but slightly rounded. It is a far more convenient head-dress than the Oozbeg, but is not so graceful as the Persian cap. The horsemen rode in a dense mass, which would have had a more military effect, had there been any uniformity in their arms. But some bore spears, others sabres alone, and a few carried rifles.

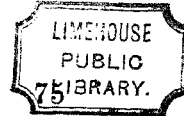
After riding a couple of miles, the town of Khiva appeared on our right, and we entered a country, laid out in gardens and dwellings of the gentry. The houses have all one character, being an enclosure of very lofty clay walls, flanked by ornamental towers at the angles, which give them the appearance of castles. This name (Gullah) they bear at Khiva. The exterior has but one visible opening, which is the entrance, lying generally between two towers, and being a spacious gateway, flat above, and roofed throughout, to its termination in the court behind the house, or rather within the enclosure. On one side of this, a

door admits to the men's apartments, and on the other side, the women's quarters are constructed. The walls, built with great regularity of rammed clay, are generally fluted, an effect given them perhaps by the hurdles of straight branches, between which the clay is supported whilst soft, and during the process of ramming. The gardens are surrounded by very low walls of similar construction, allowing the eye to command many estates from a single point of view. The trees\* are apparently a species of elm, wide, and very shadowy; the poplar, and the plane tree. The appearance of the country is pleasing, but it is too flat for beauty, and I observed that neither grass, weed, nor wild flower will grow upon the banks, although canals from the river plentifully irrigate the whole valley.

The population of the neighbourhood turned out to stare at the Feringee Eelchie. The men wore the Oozbeg attire. The women's dress differed from that of the men, in the substitution of a species of cylindric turban for the cap; and a cloth, which after passing over this turban, was gathered under the chin. In other respects, there seemed a strange confusion of attire, the women wearing a chogah, or cloak, of quilted chintz, precisely similar to that of the men, with Wellington boots and very loose drawers. The complexion of the women was very ruddy, shewing more red than white. Their countenance too round or square for beauty, and their shapes (unless indeed they owe the effect to their apparel) clumsy in the extreme. Their eyes are dark, long, and ill-opened. The brow delicately

\* The trees being out of leaf, I could only guess of their nature, from the figure of their stems and branches.

A KHIVIAN "PALACE."



pencilled. They are accounted beauties, in a region where fair complexions are at a premium ; many of them showed their faces boldly, others muffled the lower part of the visage, in the white cloth which passes under the chin.

I was not long in reaching the house—or as they were pleased to term it, palace—prepared for my reception. It was a large building, having several miserable rooms, ill-shaped, ill-proportioned, unfloored, unplastered, and having neither window nor chimney. The smallest of these had been spread with felt. It was about twelve feet square ; had a heavy rough-hewn door turning on pivots ; and a hearth in the centre for charcoal : a small hole had been broken in the roof to let in light and let out smoke. I received here the master of ceremonies, made him partake with me of the refreshments provided, and then explored the premises. I explained to Birdler Beeg, that I must have one of the largest apartments for the reception of the nobles and chiefs, when they visited or dined with me. He opened wide his eyes. "Therefore," I continued, "pray look out for carpets and felts, and other suitable furniture without delay, for I suppose the Mehtur (Premier) will call immediately." He answered me with another broad stare, and when the master of ceremonies had left me, explained that it was quite unusual for Eelchies to hold intercourse with the inhabitants of Khiva. Whether or not the Mehtur would call, he could not say ; but had never heard of such a ceremony, and was sure that the Mehtur would not dare to do so, without orders from the sovereign. I asked, whether the nobles and gentry held no social intercourse, entertaining one another at their several

abodes. He said, "No;" that Government, *i.e.* the Khaun, was jealous of any such meetings.

I soon found that I was not alone in the house, but that the distant apartments were occupied by an officer of the Mehtur's household, placed there, avowedly, to attend upon me and supply my wants, but really, as a spy upon my actions. He came to ask me, on the part of the Mehtur, how I would like to arrange my table. Whether he should send me the money allowed by the Khaun Huzurut for my expenses, about 2 Tillas, or 28 shillings daily; or whether he should send me the provisions undressed, or whether they should be sent ready cooked. I replied, that being the Khaun Huzurut's guest, I could not refuse any food His Majesty might be pleased to send me. At the same time I could not presume to arrange the mode of furnishing it. Only I begged to be excused from receiving gold for the purpose, the very spirit of the relation between host and guest seeming to be violated by such an arrangement. That if the provisions were to be purchased by me, I had brought with me the requisite funds. If the Khaun Huzurut should be pleased to send me provisions, I should receive them as a compliment from His Majesty.

The Mehtur was well contented with an arrangement, by which he gained about 14 shillings daily. Such are Premiers at Asiatic Courts. The day had not passed ere Birdler Beeg came to say, that the Mehtur was impatient to see the shawls, which he had heard I had brought for him. This was the more indelicate, that the shawls were not sent him from Heraut, but purchased by me at Merv, and therefore he could only *guess* that they might be in-

tended for him. I replied, that I expected the usual compliment of a visit from him, after which, I should think of sending him any present I might think fit to offer him. He replied, that the Mehtur dared not call upon me, unless expressly sent by the Khaun Huzurut ; that if, therefore, I should wait for a visit, I should, in all probability, have no opportunity of presenting the gifts. All this was excessively indelicate, but it may once for all be observed, that the delicacy which is occasionally affected in other countries of Asia, is here never dreamed of. Perceiving this, and not feeling at liberty to make an enemy of the Prime Minister, I sent him the pair of shawls by the hand of Birdler Beeg. The latter worthy, in answer to my queries, said he did not think I should be summoned to an audience until the day ensuing, the interval being allowed me to recruit my strength, after the passage of the desert.

In the evening, Nizaum cooked for me a pilau of pheasant with rice and raisins. This bird is killed in large numbers during winter, when the snow exposes it to view. For dessert I had good grapes, some indifferent apples, and delicious melons. After dinner, I went out into the court. I gazed upon the stars, my companions in so many wanderings. Clime, people, manners, language, laws, how often had they changed : but this page of heaven, those bright and glorious intelligences, remained as before, unimpaired and unchanged ; excepting that the planets in their courses moved from house to house, presaging happiness or woe to the sons of men. Was I really at Khiva, that capital so famous, yet so little known, of which half the existing accounts are fabulous ? Travellers presuming upon its separation from the



civilised world, to hang upon it their wildest marvels. And in what did this city differ from others, familiar to the traveller and the merchant?

The sky was remarkably pure and brilliant; the air piercingly cold. I drew closer my posteen, or cloak of fur. I thought of the fanciful story which Summud Khaun had related, when I purchased that cloak.

“Feeroozooddeen\* was one night seated in durbar at Heraut. The night was excessively cold, the teeth of his people chattered, in spite of themselves. He looked round upon them with a smile, and said—‘We will soon teach you to bid defiance to the cold.’ He signed to his steward, and bade him bring from the store-room a number of posteens,† corresponding to the number of his attendants. When these were distributed, and each had wrapped himself up, he said to one of these, now Daood Khaun, ‘Take a light, give my compliments to the cold, and beg him to enter.’ The servant obeyed, but returned immediately with the candle extinguished. ‘The cold,’ he said, ‘in answer to your hospitable invitation, has rudely blown out the light.’ ‘Indeed,’ said Feeroozooddeen, ‘then give the light a posteen (fur cloak), and now go and usher in the cold.’” These posteens are generally of doombha’s skins; the fur inside, the leather tanned to the consistence of wash-leather, stained a buff colour, and beautifully embroidered with floss silk. The price at Heraut was about eight ducats, or £4 each. The more wealthy, however, wear cloth cloaks, lined throughout with furs from Siberia.

\* I insert this anecdote from memory, and am not quite certain I have attributed it to the proper person.

† Cloaks of ram-skin, the wool inverted.

I have said that the sky was brilliant. It was now the hour of repose, and the busy murmurs of the neighbouring city had ceased. The light breeze of night, blowing from the frozen wastes of Siberia, cut like the keenest sabre, whenever it found contact with the skin. Yet I lingered long in the open air, to listen to a singular species of melody with which the air was filled; and which resembled the distant music of a hundred Eolian harps. It was singularly pleasing. To my ear, separated as I was from home, friends, country, the conveniences, comforts, endearments, and security of civilised lands, the pleasure was intimately tangled with pain. I could not conjecture its origin: but I was not in a mood to ask questions of my people, and postponed the elucidation to a more prosaic hour. The difficulties of my position occupied my thoughts until midnight. I had been sent to execute an arduous mission, without knowledge of the language or manners of the people or Court, without instruments and without funds. Yet, strange to say, the sense of difficulty rather inspired than discouraged me. I have felt the same through life—a deadness and want of enthusiasm for tasks of easy accomplishment: a self-confidence and energy, awakened by the presence of difficulty. I stripped off my heavier garments, and lay down upon my carpet; commending myself and my concerns to the care of HIM, who had been from childhood my never-failing refuge; and slept in peace, until day dawned through the miserable aperture in the roof of my apartment.

Nizaum, the toughest and slowest of sleepers, was stirred, after a quarter of an hour's bellowing in his ear, and sundry punches in the ribs, from the chief

of the foot-fingers. He sleeps like one under the influence of opium. I have seen nothing so helpless. He and the rest of my little suite occupied one of the largest rooms, if room it could be called, that had floor, walls, and roof of mud, unwhitewashed; and rafters unhewn. The Old Meerza, it appeared, had been in much apprehension for his throat; which Summud Khaun endeavoured to assuage, by reminding him that whatever is to be, *will* be. That if his throat is to be found some morning disunited, disunited it will be found. This argument, an unfailing sedative to Summud Khaun's own mind, was not always so effectual in the case of the Old Meerza, who could not perceive the especial advantage enjoyed by him whose throat is cut by destiny, over him whose throat is cut only by a razor. He was, however, ashamed to yield in piety to a man who received forty rupees a month less than himself, so put the best possible face upon the matter.

## CHAPTER V.

Glistening Atmosphere and excessive Chill of the Air at Khiva  
 —First Audience at the Court of Khiva—Town—Artillery—  
 Palace—Minister's Levee—The Mehtur—Khojeh Mhirahm  
 —Interpreter—Nobles of Khiva—Access to the Royal Pre-  
 sence—Black Tent—Audience—Ullah Koolie Khaun, King  
 of Khaurism—Dismissal—Suspicious of the Khaun Huzurut  
 —Restrictions upon Ambassadors at Khiva.

HAVING dressed, and being restricted to a single apartment (the others being too cold and comfortless to be inhabited), I took a walk in what was ingeniously styled—the *Garden*, being a high-walled enclosure, stuck here and there with a leafless shrub. The walls would not admit of my seeing anything beyond the area, and indeed there was no outlook afforded from my miserable palace. The air was searchingly cold. In England, nothing is known approaching to the chill of the Khiva winter. My towel, hung up to dry in the small room warmed with a large fire of charcoal, instantly became a mass of ice. If the door was left open, the passage of the wind was detected, as it blew over any liquid, by its sudden conversion to a solid form, and there was no thaw excepting in spots where the sun-beams accumulated. In the shade, the snow always lay feathery and gra-

nulated, incompressible into masses, so that snow-balls could not be formed.

But the sun now shone cheerily through the cutting air, lighting in its passage myriads of minute particles of mist (small as the motes of the sunbeam, and invisible, like them, excepting in the brightest light), which the intense chill of the air was continually freezing, and which, falling in an unceasing shower of light, gave a sparkle to the atmosphere, that savoured of enchantment. This effect I have observed only at Khiva. Mixed as it was with the sounds of ærial music, of the origin of which I was long ignorant, it lent an air of poetry to the spot, which was welcome to an existence so dull and prosaic.

Nizaum now summoned me to breakfast, formed of the flat Afghaun bread, and the concremented juice of grapes, of the consistence of treacle; and being now in the land of cows and goats, I had bargained for a daily supply of milk for my tea, which was accordingly brought me in form of a thick mass of ice, solid throughout. Half-dried grapes and melons were produced in abundance. Both these fruits are hung up by the stalk, and thus preserved throughout the winter. The melon is long in form, very large, and of the deep green of the water melon. It is a delicious fruit. The grape is probably inferior to that of Heraut, Furrâh, and Candahar. The bread of Khiva is unpalatable, and it was long ere I discovered, that butter is made and preserved fresh throughout the winter. It is abundant, and of excellent quality. The secret of its preservation is to melt it over a very low fire, and constantly to skim the surface. The particles more subject to decay are thus separated from the butter, which instantly re-

covers its firmness, and does not at all resemble the ghee of India.\* It is poured whilst melted into large jars, which are then closed. In this state it remains fresh and sweet almost any number of months, often retaining its golden hue to the last.

After breakfast, Birdler Beeg called to say, he thought I should be summoned to an audience that evening. I spent the day in arranging my thoughts, and endeavouring to mould into Persian such phrases as I thought I might have occasion for. It was not until evening had well set in, that the arrival of the master of ceremonies summoned me to attend the Khaun Huzurut. I exchanged my Afghaun attire for my only suit of uniform. Unfortunately, the cocked hat and plume, the most indispensable portion of an Eelchie's attire in Eastern lands, were absent without leave. Instead of a sash I tied a shawl round my waist; and learning that it was unusual to brace on a sabre at audience, carried, instead, a handsome Persian dagger.

I ordered all my available servants to attend, bearing the sabre and rifle to be presented to the Khaun, and preceded by the master of ceremonies, rode slowly toward the palace. A large number of natives, despite the lateness of the hour, had collected on either side of the road, to gaze at me. I afterwards learned that death had been publicly denounced upon any who should molest me by word or deed, and was assured that nothing less would have secured me from insult. I know nothing of

\* I have since learnt, that Indian ghee is prepared in the same manner. It receives its disgusting odour from the fresh goat or sheep-skin, into which it is poured, and which putrefies around it. Ghee not thus tainted may be kept sweet twenty years.

the people of Khaurism that can warrant such an assertion. On approaching the town we entered a considerable suburb, and afterwards passed through a miserable bazaar to the gateway; for Khiva is fortified. The house-tops were covered with women, collected to stare at a figure sufficiently monstrous in their eyes. It was not long before we reached, through some very poor streets, the citadel, within which resides the "Father of Victories," the king of Khaurism.

It is a poor brick building, forming an angle of the city defences. Near the gate stood the artillery of Khaurism, consisting of about 22 brass field-pieces, of from 6 to 12 pound calibre, very indifferently mounted upon carriages having wooden axles. One or two tumbrils were also to be seen. These guns are objects of extreme veneration to the people of Khiva. At the gate, the master of ceremonies dismounted, and begged me to do the same. I then marched through the dense crowd collected to see me, and ascended, through the gateway, the pavement leading to the Vuzeer's Hall. Not being advertised of the locality, and having no one near me from whom to inquire, the master of ceremonies being ignorant of Persian, I naturally concluded that this was the royal apartment; so leaving my shoes at the door, I entered, and looked around me, to discover which of the assembly was entitled to homage. A row of common-looking figures, in the Oozbeg dress, were seated opposite. The chief of these might be old King Cole himself, for aught I knew; however, there was no time for inquiry, so I bowed to the chief person, and said "Salaam Alikoom" (Peace be upon you). There was a smile, for they all conjectured

the fact, that I had mistaken the Prime Minister for the King; however, no harm was done, and I seated myself at the minister's side.

I sat kneeling, to my infinite discomfort; good manners prescribe this posture, and to sit cross-legged (which to an European is comparatively easy) is regarded as boorish, unless permission of the company be first asked. The Mehtur, or Premier, a little, dark, high-featured, long-bearded man (who always reminded me afterwards of the knave of clubs), dressed in a huge Oozbeg cap and cloak of quilted chintz, said, "You are very welcome," and instantly a piece of greasy chintz was spread before me as a table-cloth; and bread, raisins, loaf sugar, and fruit were placed before me. Not yet habituated to this custom, I asked the Mehtur to partake; but he excused himself; it being unusual for the host to eat with his guest the first meal. I therefore broke off, and ate a small piece of bread, and the cloth and refreshments were removed. This hospitable ceremony is invariable amongst the Oozbegs, from whom, I believe, it is derived, even where practised by the Toorcumuns. The Mehtur now addressed several compliments to me, and was evidently nettled at my slowness of reply. The fact is, that his pronunciation of Persian is barely intelligible, and my own ignorance of Eastern idiom, makes me unready in any exchange of compliments. A messenger from the Khaun Huzurut now summoned the Mehtur. He rose, beckoned me to remain seated, and left the hall. I had leisure whilst he was absent to look around me. Next and above me sat the Khojeh Mhirahm, a handsome old man, who, having been an instrument of the last Khaun's de-



graded pleasures, retains considerable influence at Court, and is accounted a man of talent. Parallel with him, but upon the left of the Mehtur's seat, was a young priest, who, owing to his knowledge of Persian, acted as interpreter, and was also one of the Mehtur's secretaries. On my right, at some distance, sat about twenty loutish-looking fellows, in the usual Oozbeg attire. These were the nobles of Khiva. They took no share in the conversation, either then or on about a dozen other occasions, when I met them at the Mehtur's palace. At the door sat my own and some of the Mehtur's suite.

In about half an hour, during which I found my posture, dressed as I was in the tight attire of Europe, scarcely supportable, the Mehtur returned, and begged me to follow him to the royal presence. We proceeded through some dark and uneven passages crowded with guards, until we reached a small court in which a black tent was pitched. The Mehtur entered, and I followed, leaving my slippers as I lifted the curtain. I bowed, and said "Salaam Alikoom," and then stood in the prescribed form, which resembles the military posture of ease. The Khaun returned the greeting, "Alikoom Salaam," then assured me I was welcome to his Court, and asked the nature of my mission. I replied, that I had been sent by the British Envoy at Heraut, in answer to His Majesty's mission thither. That I bore credentials from the British Envoy, and also some very unworthy presents, my haste to present myself at the Court of Khiva not permitting me to bear anything more bulky. That I had instructions to promote, to the utmost of my power, the friendship that had so happily sprung up between the

British and His Majesty's government, and to place at His disposal whatever knowledge I possessed. I made a lame business of it; but the Khaun, an amiable and good-tempered man, smiled at my mistakes, and listened patiently to my explanations. It is to be observed, that as the Khaun understands very little Persian, I communicated by means of the young priest before mentioned, who understands about as much Persian as myself, but speaks with an entirely different accent, so that the difficulties were manifold.

It is not my purpose to touch upon political matters discussed at this audience: a reserve which may abate the interest of my narrative.

The letter from the British Envoy was received by the Mehtur, and read aloud to the Khaun Huzurut, who again assuring me I was welcome, dismissed me.

Ullah Koolie Khaun, the present king of Khaurism, is about 45 years of age, and so far as I can judge, rather under the middle height. His face is round. The features are high and regular; the expression is the most amiable possible; but there is an absence of vigour, for which, at the present crisis, nothing can atone, unless it be the powerful interposition of some foreign power. His eyes are long, and not well opened. His beard is decent; his family having some mixture of Sart blood. He is inclined to be stout. He was seated upon a carpet; and supported by cushions. Before him a wood fire blazed up, sending its smoke and sparks through the skylight of the tent. He shifted his posture from time to time. It was always ungraceful and unkingly. Sometimes cross-legged, sometimes kneeling, sometimes half reclining. His dress was a green cloak, fringed and lined with

dark sables, and shewing at the waist a gold chain, the exact use of which I know not. On his head was the Oozbeg cylindric cap of black lambskin. He wore no ornament, and his sole insignium of office was a large dagger in a sheath of gold, which lay before him. No guards were visible about the tent; but the doors of the court were guarded. The black tent of felt which he occupied was of the usual dimensions, *i.e.*, about 24 feet in diameter, and quite unadorned, its sole furniture being the carpet and cushions, on which he reclined. His attendants were the Mehtur, the young priest who interpreted, the Khojeh Mhirahm, the Sheikh ool Islaum, and the Nuqqeeb (I think he is called). The two latter are the heads of the priesthood in Khaurism. None of these men are of distinguished appearance, nor is their dress many degrees finer than that of the yeomanry of the country. The Mehtur brought the Khaun his kuliaun (or pipe) whenever it was called for. This, say the strict Mahommedans, is Ullah Koolie Khaun's only vice; for he neither snuffs nor drinks, and has no more than four wives at a time.

I mounted my horse at the gate and rode quietly home, musing upon my interview. The night was excessively cold, and my clothes were scarcely sufficient protection against the chill of the air.

In the morning Birdler Beeg came to me, and was very anxious to know how I liked my reception. As I conjectured, that whatever I might say to him would be borne straight to Court, I was guarded, and asked how the Persian ambassador had been received. He assured me that the Persian was not admitted into the royal tent, and that my admission was a mark of particular favour. I remarked, that

at other Courts British Eelchies were allowed a seat. That at Tehraun a chair is set for the Eelchie. He protested that such was never the case here, and I believe he is right, and that only the Khaun's brother and certain priests are ever allowed a seat in the royal presence. He said that the Khaun was disappointed that I had said so little. I replied, that with us it was considered disrespectful to speak much, without special injunction, in the presence of a monarch.

The Khaun Huzurut, he said, had desired him to ask me for a letter and the rifle, which he heard I had brought for his brother, the Inauk of Huzarusp. I learned, upon questioning the Birdler Beeg, that the Khaun had some suspicion that the contents of the letter might not be agreeable to himself. I was therefore happy that he had taken this unkingly precaution, and delivered the letter and gun, begging that His Majesty would cause both to be delivered to the noble hands for which they were destined.

When next I saw Birdler Beeg, I told him that I wished to look about me, and desired him to order my horse, and be himself in readiness to attend me in my ride. He appeared perplexed, and at length said, I had better first ask the Khaun Huzurut's permission, as ambassadors at Khiva are expected to confine themselves to their own abodes. I argued the point, but he brought instance upon instance, and assured me that the Persian ambassador was under the same restraint. Soon after, my servants came to report, that, wishing to visit the Bazaar, they had been checked by Yakoob Bae, the officer living on the premises. I summoned this worthy. He said, that it was usual to restrict the servants of Eelchies to their quarters for the first two or three days, and until permission for

them to go abroad had been asked and granted. I therefore desired Birdler Beeg to step over, and present my compliments to the Mehtur, and say that I felt very unlike a British functionary, and much more like a state prisoner, under such restrictions; and begged him to use his influence with the Khaun Huzurut for their removal. That the Khaun Huzurut's ambassador at Heraut was free from the moment of his arrival, to go and to send whithersoever he pleased, and that I claimed a like freedom. The Mehtur replied that I must address myself personally to the sovereign. Birdler Beeg was, however, in the course of the day, summoned to attend the Khaun, and being asked how I was satisfied with my reception, replied bluntly, that I complained that I had got into a prison instead of a guest chamber. The Khaun laughed, and sent me word, that I was at liberty to send my people abroad, and myself to ride out.

## CHAPTER VI.

Second Audience—The Russians—Persians—Bokharians—Colonel Stoddart—Treachery of the Cauzie Moolla Hussun—Message from the Minister—Visit to him—Reception—Bokhara—Colonel Stoddart—Plan for his Rescue—Particulars of the late Skirmish with the Russian Force N.-West of the Sea of Aral—Ignorance and Timidity of the Minister—Extreme Difficulty of Negotiation with such a One—Messenger from the Khaun Huzurut to the Ummeer of Bokhara, for the Release of Colonel Stoddart.

THAT night, I was again summoned to attend the Khaun Huzurut. He received me as before. Asked me, whether I was very indignant at being a prisoner, and whether there were any objects in the neighbourhood that I wished to examine. It never enters the head of an Asiatic, that a man may go abroad for the sake merely of air and exercise. I replied that I was the first British Eelchie, that had ever been thus restricted. That if the usage of the country demanded it, I would comply without a murmur. I named his garden palace as an object of curiosity, and he gave orders that it should be opened for my inspection. He then pressed me very hard upon the subject of his requests of the British Government. I answered, that the points in question involved considerations too important to be decided upon by Major Todd. That even Sir W. M'Naghten would probably not act without reference to the

Governor General. That I could not be certain that the Governor General himself would decide, without consulting Her British Majesty. That they were questions that could not be anticipated, and had therefore not been provided for in the instructions issued to our ambassadors.

His Majesty was not satisfied. "You call yourselves my allies," he said, "yet you refuse every one of my requests, at the moment of my utmost need."

He then discussed the subject of my journey to Russia, and afterwards asked whether the Russians are idolaters. This was an awkward question: for a Mahomedan cannot understand the exact difference between bowing the knee to images and pictures of the Deity, and the breach of that second commandment which says, "Thou shalt *not* bow to the image of any thing in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth." Poor ignorant creatures! I therefore answered with some caution. "They do not consider themselves such."

"But they worship pictures and images?"

"They do."

"Are they Christians?"

"They so term themselves; but are of a different faith from the English, who use no images nor pictures in their worship, accounting the practice sinful."

"Is their language the same as yours?"

"No! entirely different. We cannot understand one another in our several tongues."

"Then how are you to speak to them?"

"In French, another language of Europe."

"Is there another European language?"

"There are upwards of thirteen, belonging to separate kingdoms."

“Is Russia the most powerful of these kingdoms?”

“By no means. England is first in extent of dominions, number of population, and in wealth. If your Majesty\* will permit me, I will prepare in Persian a brief account of the political divisions of Europe, and of British policy in *these* countries. As I *speak* Persian so imperfectly, this may be more intelligible to your Majesty, than any attempt to give these particulars verbally.”

The Khaun Huzurut nodded, and smiled his consent. He then inquired,

“Are you the enemies of Persia?”

“Far from it. We are the natural allies of all Moohummedan states, because they intervene between Europe† and India. It is therefore our object to preserve their independence. Your Majesty must have heard all we have done for Persia, and that we once interposed to save her from imminent destruction.” I here gave the particulars of Sir J. M’Neil’s interposition. It was very evident, that this was the first the Khaun Huzurut had ever heard of the threatened destruction, and unexpected rescue of the adjoining kingdom. I continued—“We have at present some differences with Persia; Muhummud Shauh opened our ambassador’s despatches, an insult of which we insist upon redress.” This I particularised, as a hint to the Khaun himself, that he might not do the same lightly or unwarily. “When our demands

\* I have used here and elsewhere the words “your Majesty” as simpler than the form in which I actually addressed the Khaun, which was in the third person, *e.g.* “If the Khaun Huzurut will permit me.”

† I must observe, once for all, that I do not feel authorized to publish the explicit terms, by which I found it necessary to make my meaning understood at this simple court.



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are complied with, I have no doubt the Queen of England will again admit the king of Persia to her alliance."

"My ambassador at Heraut tells me, you understand by looking at a hill, whether or not it contains gold."

"I know a little of the science to which your Majesty alludes; but could not say certainly, that such and such a hill does or does not contain gold. I could only, by examining the rocks, pronounce whether gold is ever or often found in rocks of that character."

"I have some hills that formerly produced gold; can you tell me anything regarding them?"

"If your Majesty will allow me to see them, I will do my best."

"Are you friends or enemies of Bokhara?" was his next query.

"We sent an ambassador to Bokhara, to offer the Ummeer friendship. He was afterwards to have proceeded, I believe, to Khiva, with similar offers to your Majesty; but the Ummeer, violating the laws of nations and the rites of hospitality, seized and imprisoned him. Such an act, unless speedily redressed, may bring the vengeance of my Government upon Bokhara. Your Majesty must have influence with the Ummeer, and would do an important benefit to the Moosulmaun world, in exerting it for the liberation of Colonel Stoddart; for the British are extremely reluctant to enter into war with any of the Moslem States, their natural allies."

"I am on terms of defiance with the Ummeer; he will not listen to me."

"But his ambassador was lately at Khiva?"

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“He departed without obtaining his object. The Ummeer is mad.”

“Your Majesty is a friend and ally of the king of Kokaun. If both yourself and that monarch should urge the release of Colonel Stoddart, the Ummeer would not dare to refuse.”

“The Ummeer thinks, from the pains you take for Colonel Stoddart’s release, that he is some very great man; and as he fears you will some day molest *him*, detains him to exchange for some city, or some high ransom. Would your Government give any high sum for his release?”

“My Queen has thousands of subjects, the equals in birth and rank to Colonel Stoddart. Had Colonel Stoddart been taken in war, a ransom might probably be thought of. But he was the Ummeer’s guest, and the representative of my King at the time of his seizure. The insult, if not redressed, may be avenged. So far from the Ummeer gaining a city in exchange for Colonel Stoddart, were he to ask only a single rupee, the British Government would refuse the demand with scorn. The pains we have taken for Colonel Stoddart’s release proceed from our reluctance to war with any of the states of Islaum. But for this reluctance, we had long ago sent a couple of thousand soldiers, to drive the Ummeer out of his kingdom.”

After some time the Khaun asked, “Do you know Cauzie Moolla Hussun?”

“Yes! well!”

“Do you consider him your friend?” with a slight smile.

“He has always so professed himself, and has received many benefits from the English.”

The Khaun laughed. The cause I did not comprehend until the day following. I was now dismissed, and returned to my miserable quarters. The next day Birdler Beeg called. "I have just seen," he said, "a letter from Cauzie Moolla Hussun to the Khaun Huzurut; that is, I have heard the Mehtur read it aloud. He says, 'Your Majesty desired, that if anyone was sent as Eelchie to Khiva, I might be selected. I told this to Major Todd; but he has disregarded your Majesty's request, and sent Abbott Sahib. I therefore recommend your Majesty to be on your guard; for had the purpose of the mission been honest, why was not I selected as Eelchie?'"

I now comprehended the Khaun Huzurut's smile, when asking of the Cauzie's friendship. I remembered, also, that the day I was selected for the mission, the Cauzie had said in my presence to Major Todd, "The Khaun Huzurut requested, that if anyone was sent back to Khiva, I might be the person." Major Todd did not remark the tone in which this was said. But when the Cauzie departed, I pointed it out to him, saying, "That is a disappointed man, and will do all in his power to thwart my mission." Afterwards, the Cauzie entered with such apparent heartiness into every arrangement for my comfort, and gave me such solid and valuable advice respecting the people of Toorkestaun, that I accused myself of having harshly misjudged him, and felt double gratitude for his supposed good offices. My first judgment, it will be found, was correct; and to all persons dealing with Asiatics, and especially with natives of Afghaunistan, I would recommend, as the only safeguard to the duties entrusted to them, the harshest possible construction of motives. Such will be found,

in the end, harsh only as applied to the nations of Europe; but just, and therefore charitable, in their present application.

This Cauzie Moolla Hussun is the father of Saleh Muhummud, the youth to whom I took such a liking at Merv, and whom I had begged Major Todd to send me to Khiva, if he could be spared. Saleh Muhummud was destined to play a conspicuous part in the sequel. I now added to the letter I was writing Major Todd, a request, that whomsoever he might send with the cash necessary for my expenses, it might *not* be Saleh Muhummud, nor any other member of the Cauzie's family, detailing my reason for this wish. This letter was not received (it will afterwards appear) until, providentially, Saleh Muhummud had been despatched to me.

Knowing that the discovery by the Khaun of any secret correspondence with Heraut, would awaken his distrust, to the injury of my mission, I had, at the last audience, begged His Majesty to allow me the means of sending letters to Major Todd, and he readily promised me a Toorcumun horseman for that purpose.

The next day I rode over to the Mehtur's palace. A large number of Oozbeks and Toorcumuns were seated at the entrance. They rose as I approached, and helped me to alight. Birdler Beeg ushered me through the house, to the apartment occupied by the Mehtur. I entered and saluted him. He did not rise, but returned my salutations with a clumsy nod: for his manners (if indeed they deserve such a title) are the most bearish possible. I sat at his side by his invitation. He then said, "Khoosh Aumudeed" (You are welcome); the usual bread and fruits were

set before me, and a basin of horrible tea, being a strong decoction made over the fire without milk, and with little sugar. Some nobles of the Court, who were seated at a distance, were signalled to withdraw. I am recording, after a considerable lapse of time, conversations and events well remembered, but not in the exact order in which they occurred. Nevertheless, I conceive it better to endeavour to arrange them, because, in so doing, many particulars are brought to remembrance, which might otherwise escape me, or find no convenient place of insertion.

The Mehtur inquired through his interpreter, what were our dispositions towards the Ummeer of Bokhara.

I replied, that they had been friendly until he seized our ambassador. The natives of these countries, be it observed, have but one name for all Government Emissaries, viz. Eelchie, which we may intrepert as we please, ambassador, envoy, or agent. They themselves do not understand the difference of grades. The messenger of a sovereign is, according to their notions, an Eelchie or ambassador, however high or low his rank otherwise, and to attempt to make distinctions, would only subject our agents to be treated with neglect, as less than the ambassadors of all the petty states around. A British agent is therefore obliged to assume both the title and the consequence of an ambassador, and to insist upon all the rights accorded to such functionaries. But to continue. I added, "How would the Khaun Huzurut like to see a British army at Bokhara?"

"Not at all. Is the seizure of an Eelchie a sufficient cause of war?"

"Ample! Have you not heard that we are on

terms of defiance with Persia, because Muhummud Shauh presumed to open a letter, addressed to our ambassador at Tehraun? Now, as the Khaun Huzurut would ill like to see our troops at Bokhara, and we are reluctant to war with the kingdoms of Islaum, I trust he will prevent the necessity, by inducing the Ummeer to release Colonel Stoddart."

"Has any army advanced towards Bokhara?"

"That I cannot say; but it is a thing that may happen any day, unless Colonel Stoddart be released. It is a thing which would long since have happened, but for the reluctance above mentioned: for we are the natural allies of the Muhummedan states."

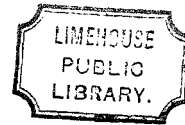
He replied, "The Ummeer will not listen to the Khaun Huzurut. But the Khaun proposes the following plan for Colonel Stoddart's rescue. The Colonel is allowed to ride about Bokhara" (of this I had some doubt). "The Khaun will send thither a small party of Toorcumuns, provided with a note from you to Colonel Stoddart. These men will meet him on any day he may appoint, carry him by force, on a swift horse, through the gates of the city, and not pause until they are beyond pursuit; a stronger party will meet and protect them, and they will bring the Colonel to Khiva. What say you to this proposal?"

The proposal was so far tempting, that I knew no other possible method of effecting Colonel Stoddart's release. But when I considered that the execution was to be entrusted to men, of whose sagacity, courage and fidelity, I knew nothing; that Colonel Stoddart might be so closely guarded, as to render the scheme impracticable; and that a hint of such a design being on foot, might cause the Ummeer to

take the Colonel's life, or at any rate to subject him to fresh hardships and indignities; moreover, that it was highly probable this high-spirited officer might refuse to make his escape; I rejected the proposal with grateful thanks to the Khaun, upon the plea of the peril in which it might involve that gallant, but ill-fated officer.

The Khaun Huzurut had instructed the Mehtur to give me all possible information respecting affairs upon the frontier. I now proceeded to inquire more minutely into particulars, of which I had already gathered the substance from Birdler Beeg and the Toorcumuns we met in journeying to Khiva. The Mehtur's statement was elicited at the expense of much cross-questioning; I shall therefore couch it in my own words. The Khaun Huzurut had despatched an army of 40,000 horse, under command of the Ghoosh Beegie,\* the second officer of the state, to repel the Russian invasion. The invaders, the Mehtur persisted in estimating at four or five hundred infantry and a few guns. This absurd estimate had undoubtedly in view, to make British aid seem matter of little consequence. It had, however, a grotesque effect, when the result was understood. The Ghoosh Beegie advanced with the utmost resolution as far as the N.-Western angle of the sea of Aral. It then suddenly occurred to him, that five or six hundred Koozulbaush and Toorcumun horse would answer the purpose of sweeping the idolaters from the face of the earth, fully as well as 40,000. So halting in his position, about 120 miles short of

\* Lord falconer, literally lord of the winged things. He is second in dignity of state affairs, as the Mehtur, or Groom, is first. So simple is the construction of a Toorkish Court.



the small advanced post of the Russians, he despatched a party, with orders to seize the Russian cattle, and do any other mischief in their power. This party, finding the snow five feet in depth, were obliged to drive before them unladen Kuzzauk gallo-ways, to beat a path or channel through it. Through this track they advanced, the snow standing high on either side. They fell valiantly upon the cattle of the Russians, and were carrying them off in triumph, when the Russians perceiving them, sent in pursuit a party of about one hundred fusiliers, who coming up with the frozen horsemen, and warmed with their own exertions shot them like sheep. The Toor-cumuns fled, leaving some thirty or forty of their party on the field, and bearing with them the con- soling hope, that one Russian had been hurt. The Russian field-pieces opened upon the fugitives, who never drew rein until they reached the main army.

The Ghoosh Beegie, from this little affair, con- ceived so supreme a contempt for the enemy, that he immediately wrote the Khaun Huzurut, saying, that he and his horsemen found the weather very cold; that the Russians were a miserable set of wretches, in all not exceeding three or four hundred half-starved, pig-eating, idol-worshipping sons of burnt fathers; and that, as the Khaun Huzurut could, at any leisure moment, give them a brush with the besom of destruction, he humbly opined that it was quite needless to expose 40,000 men and horses to the rigour of the season, and that he should be very much obliged to His Majesty for permission to return. The Khaun Huzurut, on hearing this, very good-naturedly recalled the force to winter



quarters at Ghoonguraut, near the southern border of the sea of Aral. They had returned in a miserable condition: many of them mutilated by the frost; some had lost one, some both hands; others the feet, the nose, the ears, the lips, the whole cheek, in some cases even the tongue; for the intense chill so paralyzes the nerves, that those subjected to it are unconscious of the state of the members of their body; the tongue at night finds its way out of the mouth, and is instantly frozen and destroyed. The troops, however, had not yet returned to Khiva; they came in previous to my departure from that city.

Such, amid a thousand hesitations and contradictions, I learned to be the state of things on the frontier. The Russians had advanced from Orenburgh, and occupied a fort, or, as I conjectured, an intrenched camp upon the Yem (called by the Kuzzauks Djem, and by the Russians, Embah), a small brackish stream, forming, with the Irghiz, the northern limit of Khaurism. They had also pushed on a detachment, which was intrenched half way between the Yem and the sea of Aral, and it appeared to be with this detachment that the skirmish had taken place. The Mehtur believed that there were about 12,000 troops at Orenburgh, as a corps of reserve. He had heard of no advance from Astrakhan.

I then questioned him as to the limits of the frontier of Khaurism.

"You must ask the Khaun Huzurut," was the reply. It would, of course, be impossible for the Mehtur to conjecture where it might seem good or convenient to the Khaun to fix the boundary of his kingdom. All other geographical queries were equally unsatis-

factory. It was evident that the Mehtur knew next to nothing of the features of his country, and that he was in terror of disclosing even that nothing, lest it should in any way clash with the Khaun's will and pleasure. To transact business with such a man was next to impossible. This he didn't know; that he would not answer; and the other I must ask the Khaun at my next audience. Great part of what he told me I knew to be false, and being restricted from all intercourse with other natives, it was extremely difficult to me to form a satisfactory judgment of the real aspect of affairs. Two Kuzzauks had, I was secretly informed, estimated the Russian force at 100,000 men, which was the estimate brought by the Khivan ambassador. The Ghoosh Beegie had killed another Kuzzauk who had just reconnoitred the Russian camp, because he had openly declared their numbers 10,000 just as the Ghoosh Beegie had written the Khaun, rating them at 300 or 400. The Khaun himself called them between 4,000 and 5,000, and my best intelligence estimated them at 7,500 fighting men. Yet the Mehtur insisted that they were no more than 400 or 500. I was afterwards told by a soldier who affected to have been upon the expedition, and who had either contrived to enter my room at Ooralsk, or been sent purposely; that, including the reserve, they did not exceed 7,500; a force too small for the purpose, yet which I was inclined to believe to be all employed until General Perroffski, their commander, a man of the strictest honour, asserted, as a reason that Great Britain should take no umbrage at such an expedition, that his entire force did not exceed 10,000 fighting men.

I asked the Mehtur whether the Russians had issued

any proclamation previous to the invasion, informing him that such was an invariable custom amongst the nations of Europe.

He replied in the negative. This however was not true; for Russia printed and issued a statement of her grievances, declaring that she made war, not with the people of Khaurism, but with Ullah Koolie Khaun, and inviting his subjects to rise against their lord; a proclamation, be it observed, which entitled the Khaun to treat every Russian captive as a common robber, and hang him without trial. I am not sure, however, that the Mehtur was aware of this proclamation. I was not, until I reached Nuov Alexandrof (Dahsh Gullah).

I asked what the Mehtur believed to be the plea of Russia for this invasion; but he referred me to the Khaun.

“When was the invasion first reported?”

“The Russians have been always encroaching, and building forts on our frontier. This year they have come in greater force and a little farther than usual.”

I told the Mehtur that I must urge, in the strongest terms, the speedy delivery to Russia of all her subjects enslaved in Khaurism; that, without this act of justice, they could expect no assistance from us in the adjustment of their quarrel; that justice was a sacred law, which we could not infringe for any consideration; that the reason we were the greatest nation on earth was, that we were the most just, and had therefore the confidence of all other nations.

He assured me that the Khaun would release all the captives.

Afterwards, our discourse took a turn which need not be detailed. Suffice it that, when I had been

obliged to excuse myself from directly answering any one of the demands of the Khaun, the Vuzeer bluntly asked me, "What then *have* you come hither for? If you will grant none of our demands, of what use is it to call yourselves our allies?"

I replied that, if I had come in vain, the loss was my own, and not his, nor his master's; and that I was quite ready to return. But that I offered them, what none had ever repented of accepting,—the good offices of the greatest nation on earth. It was for the Khaun to judge whether he should accept or reject them, or whether, without them, he could secure his kingdom against a Russian invasion; or whether the deeds of arms lately exhibited gave him any confidence of success in a struggle with Russia. I begged him to remember that the late result was from the opposition of 40,000 troops of Khiva to 400 Russians,\* and asked what he purposed doing, if Russia should appear 40,000 strong, as she easily might, and *would*, if necessary. This lowered his assumed tone. I enquired whether the Khaun purposed using my services. He replied, "Yes! yes!" and was evidently alarmed at the picture I had drawn.

The result I derived from this interview was simply that the Vuzeer was bent upon deceiving me, with a view to hold cheap the assistance of England. Information I had gained none; all that was true I had previously heard, and the greater part I knew to be false.

That night I was awakened by a messenger from the Khaun Huzurut, who informed me that he was to proceed in the course of an hour towards Bokhara,

\* I here used the Mehtur's own estimate against him; the numbers of the Khivan army were much smaller.

with a letter for the Ummeer, urging the release of Colonel Stoddart. It was hinted to me that the Khaun had written in terms which the Ummeer would not dare to disregard. I gave this messenger a handsome present, and I believe he was sent me for the purpose of receiving it, as much as with the view of satisfying me of the Khaun's solicitude for the release of Colonel Stoddart.

## CHAPTER VII.

Third Audience of the Khaun Huzurut—Explication of British Policy in Afghaunistan—The Great Mogul—Dismissal—Proposal that my Letters should be read by the Khaun Huzurut—Difficulties of Correspondence—Rapacity of the Minister—Fourth Audience—Promise to restore the Russian Captives—My Objection to their unconditional Release whilst a Russian Army was advancing upon the Capital—Nature and Origin of the Misunderstanding between Russia and Khiva—Russia the Aggressor—Estimated Strength of the Army of Invasion—Its Arrest by the Snow—Skirmish—Terrors of a 6-lb. Shot—Ruminations.

AT my next audience, I read, at the Khaun's desire, the sketch I had drawn up of the political divisions of Europe, with which I deemed it important he should be acquainted—showed him how a nation, politically allied to us in Europe, had, in Asia, interests separate from ours. I presented the Khaun with a map of the world, wherein I had inserted, in Persian characters, the names of the principal states and cities—shewed him how important to the interests of our Indian Empire was the integrity of Khaurism and Persia, yet how useless to us would be the lands of those states, too poor to pay the expense of occupation, and a stronger barrier to India in their independence than they could be in our hands. I painted to him, in strong colours, the horrors of war between the higher powers of Europe, costing the lives of millions, the trampling to dust of

lesser states, the expenditure of endless treasure. I shewed that true policy consisted in avoiding such wars, by timely measures in preventing the approach of a mighty nation, whom, nevertheless, we did not fear.

I then gave a brief narrative of the late campaign in Afghaunistan. His Majesty Shah Shoojah-ool-Moolk had been our guest the last twenty years. We protected and supported him; but to his entreaties for an army to recover his possessions, we had replied, that we had no quarrel with Doost Muhummud Khaun, and the chiefs of Candahar. That we could not constitute ourselves judges of the affairs of neighbouring states, so long as they did not molest us. But that when we discovered that the Ummeer and the chiefs had entered into a compact with our enemies, to admit through their territories an army for the invasion of India; the aspect of the case was changed; and giving His Majesty Shah Shoojah an army of 20,000 men, we resealed him upon the throne of his ancestors. That it was our system never to break a treaty, nor to be the aggressors in a war. That in the heart of our Indian possessions existed several Muhammedan and other states, having rich lands and revenue, and no armies for their protection; that, nevertheless, we never had molested nor ever should molest them,\* unless they should become the aggressors. That our empire was built on justice and good faith, and the confidence which those principles begot for their possessors.

When I had concluded a paper, of which the above contains but the heads of matter, and which was

\* How little did I foresee that this statement of national probity was to be falsified by the annexation of Oude.

therefore somewhat lengthy, His Majesty inquired, "Of whom did you conquer Delhi?"

"Of the Mahrattas, a race of Hindoos who had wrested it from the Moguls."

"Does not a Mogul king still reign there?"

"Yes! on taking Delhi we guaranteed to the Emperor, whom we found beleaguered there, all the territory left him by the Mahrattas. He enjoys it still. The revenue is twelve lacs."

After some enquiries as to the military force of Russia, the Khaun inquired, "How many guns has Russia?"

"I cannot form an idea, but the number is great."

"I," said the Khaun, "have twenty, how many has the Queen of England?"

"The number is too great to be reckoned, and therefore no account is kept of them. The seas are covered with the ships of England, each bearing from twenty to one hundred and twenty guns of the largest size. Her forts are full of cannon, and thousands lie in every magazine. The very posts in our streets are often made of guns, which, in Persia and Afghaunistan would be considered excellent. We have more guns than any nation in the world."

I was now dismissed, but not until I had again urged the necessity of conveying my letters to Heraut, and had again been promised an immediate opportunity. When I afterwards urged this subject upon the Mehtur, he said, "Cannot you write your letters in Persian, and submit them, in the first place, for the perusal of the Khaun Huzurut?" I replied that such an indignity would not, I was assured, be put upon an agent of the British Government. That my services were not forced upon the Khaun, who



was at liberty to trust or distrust me, as he thought fit. That if he trusted me, he would not distrust my letters. If he distrusted me, the sooner he dismissed me on my return to Heraut, the better.

The Mehtur said, "Very well, prepare your letters as you please, they shall be sent forthwith." Nevertheless, no orders were issued for their conveyance, and I was still reluctant to engage in secret correspondence with Heraut (a matter of the utmost difficulty from a position so isolated by deserts), because, the discovery of such a system would increase tenfold the suspicions, already haunting the Khaun's mind.

I once more urged the Mehtur to remember his promise of giving freedom to Ummeer Beeg, a Goolaum, or Government officer attached to the Persian mission; who had been taken prisoner and made a slave by Toorcumuns, whilst carrying despatches from Colonel Stoddart, at Heraut, to Sir John M'Neil. He promised that the man should be speedily released.

Birdler Beeg, a few mornings after my arrival, came to me with a message from the Mehtur, asking whether I had not got some little presents for him, such as a brace of pistols, penknives that cut steel, telescopes, and watches?

"You, of course, assured him that I had not. That I travelled Chuppah (post), and could with difficulty carry the few presents destined for the Khaun Huzurut."

It was sufficiently manifest, from Birdler Beeg's manner, that he had told a very different tale.

"Your watch," the Mehtur says, "will do very well."

“Tell him he cannot have it. It was the gift of a brother no longer living. And besides, I cannot march in any comfort without it.” The fact is, that all my distances were estimated by the watch, and when, afterwards, I was deprived of it, I had the utmost difficulty in calculating them.

“The Mehtur,” replied Birdler Beeg, “has set his heart upon it.”

“He cannot have it. I will procure him one from Heraut or Cabul.”

“Then your pistols.”

The pistols also were a gift. They had their history. I was most reluctant, of course, to part with them. Fortunately, their extreme simplicity rendered them valueless in the eyes of men with whom decoration is everything. Even my telescope was an old and tried companion: but it was necessary to produce something, so I gave it and my thermometer, and several other trifling articles. The Mehtur, I found, dared not to keep to himself the telescope and thermometer. They became the property of the “Father of the conqueror of Heroes, the Father of Victory, the King of Khaurism.”

At my next audience, I commenced by a serious remonstrance upon the delay attending the transmission of my letters. “It is now,” I said, “several weeks since my arrival at your Majesty’s capital; and my Government knows not whether I am alive or dead. Whether I have been received hospitably, or as Colonel Stoddart was received by the Ummeer of Bokhara.”

“What,” said the Khaun with a smile, passing the edge of his right hand across the top of the middle

finger of the left, "does Major Todd think I would treat you so?"

He then desired me to be seated. I obeyed, but almost immediately rose, saying that I thanked him for this attention to my Government, but that, as his prime minister and all the nobles were standing, with his permission I would do the same.

Some very important arrangements, respecting my farther proceedings, were then made and discussed. During which I urged, as a *sine qua non*, the surrender of all Russian slaves.

The Khaun said that he was ready to restore them, and asked, whether I thought they should be sent with me to meet the General commanding the Russian expedition. "In that case," he said, "what security have I that he will not keep the prisoners, and continue to advance upon my capital?"

I could offer him none, I had no power that could have sufficed to arrest the progress of a Russian invasion. I had been sent on the spur of the moment without even credentials from the head of the Indian Government. I saw the full delicacy of the case. That it was almost a certainty, that this tardy surrender of captives would only hasten the march of the Russian army upon Khiva; and that my share in the release of the captives would then naturally be regarded by the Khaun and all the Tartar states, as a connivance with Russia; a notion that would blast all our influence in these countries. I was even now labouring under some lingering suspicion of being a Russian spy; a character which Yar Muhummud Khaun had prepared for me at Khiva, before my arrival, and which several persons had attested on oath before the Khaun; and there was

a panic in these countries, waiting only some similar plea for gaining full activity, founded upon the belief, that Russia from the North, and England from the south, (both nations of Christendom, and Feringees,) were advancing in concert, to sweep the religion of Muhummud from the face of the earth. It was for this cause that, in speaking of our alliance, I was careful to make it embrace all the Muhammedan states, lest we might be thought to be playing one against the other, and weakening all. I need not say, that I most strictly adhered to fact in this representation; for the grasping policy of our neighbours has rendered all these kingdoms the barriers of our security. Bearing these reasons in view, I declined urging the immediate and unconditional surrender of the captives, although I insisted, in the strongest terms, upon the necessity of their ultimate and unreserved restoration; for which the Khaun gave his ready promise. I also shewed the necessity of furnishing me with every minute particular, relative to the misunderstanding with Russia, from its earliest origin to the present moment. The Khaun assured me I should know all, offering himself to supply the greater number of particulars, and referring me for the rest to the Mehtur. He desired me to question him freely, and I took advantage of the permission, of the result of which the following is an abstract.

“In the days of my father, Madreheem Khaun, there was friendship between Russia and Khiva, a free interchange of commerce and civilities. Khiva was at war with Bokhara, and, you are aware that my territories separate Bokhara from Russia, so that caravans, passing between those countries, are obliged to pass through Khaurism. About twenty

years ago, during the war of Khiva and Bokhara, Russia sent a rich caravan to Bokhara, escorted by two hundred regular infantry and two guns. Should this force have joined the Bokhara army, the reinforcement, owing to the discipline of the Russians, had been formidable to Khiva. Madreheem Khaun therefore sent the commander a polite message, saying, that he could not suffer any troops or reinforcements to pass through his territories to his enemies, but that the road to Khiva, his own capital, was free to the Russians, who should receive protection and hospitality. The Russian commander refused the invitation, and endeavoured to force a passage through the Khaun, my father's, territory, thus flagrantly violating the subsisting peace. Madreheem Khaun, of course, ordered that he should be opposed by the Toorcumun and Kuzzauk horse, just after his passage of the Sirr, or Jaxartes. But the Russians, drawing up in a compact body, and stockading themselves, made a most desperate resistance, so that after much loss, the Toorcumuns and Kuzzauks contented themselves with plundering the caravan. The Russians, however, retreated, losing many of their men, to their own frontier. Thus originated the first breach between the states, which has widened, gradually, by petty aggressions on both sides; the Russians enticing over to their country my subjects, who are the wealth of my land; and my Kuzzauks and Toorcumuns, on the frontier, occasionally capturing Russians. About five years ago, the Russians built Dahsh Ghullah (literally the stone fort, which I afterwards found to be Nuov Alexandrofski, on an inlet of the Caspian), within my territories; and three years after

they seized my caravans, trading in their country, and five hundred and fifty of my merchants, whom they retain prisoners in Russia."

"And what steps has your Majesty taken for their release?"

"I sent, three years ago, an ambassador with letters for the Emperor, begging him to exchange captives. The governor of Orenburgh (not the Emperor) wrote me in reply, that I must first release every Russian in slavery, and that then he would release my merchants. I sent again an ambassador, and with him, in earnest of my intention to release the captives, six of the Russian prisoners; begging that an equal number of my own people might be returned, in proof of the Emperor's willingness to exchange; and promising, in that case, to surrender all the Russians. The Russians kept the captives, imprisoned the brother of my ambassador, and sent the ambassador back with a verbal message to my letter, to the same effect as the former. The relations of my merchants assailed me with petitions, and yielding to them, I condescended to send a third ambassador with 110 captives, and a letter as before. The Russians retained these, but rendered no return. Another verbal message from the governor of Orenburgh was the sole answer to my letter to the Emperor. I therefore perceived that Russia was only playing upon my credulity. It is six months since the return of my last ambassador."

"And how long has your Majesty known of preparations for the invasion?"

"It has sometime been reported to me, that the governor of Orenburgh had promised the Emperor of Russia possession of Khiva in the space of seven