



Having chosen this route, and completed the requisite preparations for marching through a desolate country by roads impracticable for wheel-carriages, I began the journey from Mirzapur on the 4th January, 1799, and ascended the Gortola pass on the following day. The road lay over the Bind'h hills, from the ascent of them, within sight of the Ganges, to Nagpur, which is situated among hills that in reality belong to the same cluster of mountains. It may not then be here improper to premise some general observations on the mountainous tract over which I travelled.

Bind'h, in Sanserit named Vind'hya, constitutes the limit between Hindustan and the Deccan. The most ancient Hindu authors assign it as the southern boundary of the region, which they denominate *Áryá bhúma* or *Áryáverta*. Modern authors, in like manner, make this the line which discriminates the northern from the southern nations of India. It reaches almost from the eastern to the western sea; and the highest part of the range deviates little from the line of the tropic. The mountainous tract, however, which retains the appellation, spreads much more widely. It meets the Ganges in several places towards the north, and the Godaveri is held to be its southern limit.

Sanserit etymologists deduce its name from a circumstance to which I have just now alluded. It is called Vind'hya,¹ says the author of a commentary on the *Amera cósha*, because people think (*d'hyayanti*) the progress of the sun is obstructed (*veindd'ha*) by it. Suitably to this notion, the most elevated ridge of this tropical range of mountains is found to run from a point that lies between Chota Nagpur and Palamu, to another that is situated in the vicinity of Ougein. But the course of the Nermada river better indicates the direction of the principal range of Bind'h hills. From Amar-

¹ Derived from *vi*, denoting opposition, and *d'hyai*, to think. This meaning of the name of Vind'hya, or tropical mountain, is confirmed by a verse in an epic poem on the death of S'isupála (6, 4, 2), where mount Raivate is described as emulating Vind'hya again to check the course of the sun.

cantac, where this river has its source, on the same spot with the Sone and the Hatsu, to the Gulf of Camboga, where it disembogues itself into the sea, the Channel of Nermada is confined by a range of hills, or by a tract of elevated ground, in which numerous rivers take their rise; and by their subsequent course towards the Sone and Yamuná on one side, and towards the Tapati and Godaveri on the other, sufficiently indicate the superior elevation of that tract through which the Nermada has forced its way.

I shall have subsequent occasion to mention the lofty ridge that connects Amarcantac with the spot to which the sources of the Damodar may be traced.

If it be true, as appearances strongly indicate, and as tradition partly confirms, that the sea once washed the foot of the Himalaya mountains, Hindustan was then submerged, and the Deccan must have been an island, the northern shore of which was the Vind'hya range.

The uniform flatness of the country, the shallowness of the soil, and its sandy basis, in the whole tract from Janeser, along the banks of the Saraswatí and Yamuná, to both seas, appear to warrant this conjecture, which is rendered still further probable by the sands and fens that lie between Sindhu and Gurjasa, and by the forests in which the numerous mouths of the Ganges meet the sea.

The legend of Bhagirat'ha, assigning a channel to the Ganges,¹ is evidently founded on a tradition, which supposes

¹ [A legend of the Rámáyana. Bhagiratha, the descendant of Ságara, by his austerities brings down the sacred stream from heaven in order to perform the funeral obsequies of his relatives, who had been destroyed by Kapila's curse. The passage describing the descent of the river is well known by Milman's translation. Professor H. H. Wilson, in a note to his translation of the passage in the Vishnu Purána, which relates the legend (book iv. 4), points out that tradition places a Kapilásrama, or hermitage of Kapila, on the shores of the island at the mouth of the Ganges, which still bears the name of Saugar (Ságara). Other legends, it seems, place the abode of the ascetic at the foot of the Himalaya, where the Ganges descends to the plains. Professor Wilson thinks these traditions may be reconciled by supposing, as Mr. Colebrooke had done, that they referred to a period when the ocean washed the base of the Himalaya.—Ep.]



Hindustan to have been once submerged; the legends concerning Paraśu Rāma's extorting the shores of the Cocana and Malabar from the ocean¹ are, in like manner, evidences of a tradition that the sea has receded from the coast of Malabar; and there is direct evidence that it has retired from the eastern coast.

But whether the conjecture that has been just now hazarded be well or ill founded, the notions which it suggests are conformable with a just idea of the northern bounds of the Vind'hya hills. Their southern limit, as already observed, is the river Godaveri.

The vast extent of this mountainous tract, contrasted with the small elevation of these hills, viewed from the plains of Hindustan, has furnished grounds for a legend, to which the mythological writings of the Hindus often allude: Vind'hya having once prostrated himself before his spiritual guide, Agaslya,² still remains in that posture, by command of the holy personage. This humiliation is the punishment of his presumption, in emulating the lofty height of Himalaya and Meru. According to this legend, Vind'hya has one foot at Chunar; and hence the real name of that fortress is said to be Cherenadri.³ His other foot is, I think, placed by the same legend in the vicinity of Gaya. The vulgar, very inconsistently, suppose the head of the prostrate mountain, near the temples of Vind'hya-vasini, four miles from Mirzapur.

If the goddess Bhawāni have, in the present age of the world, fixed her abode on Vind'hya-chula, as the priests of

¹ [Paraśurāma, after his destruction of the Kshattriya caste, makes over the whole earth to Kaśyapa. The latter, in turn, desires him to depart, as there was no dwelling for him in it, whereupon he repairs to the south, and compels, by his arrows, the ocean to retire. A translation of this legend, as told in the Mahābhārata, is inserted by Professor Wilson, in his translation of the Vishnu Purāṇa (book iv. 7), where he subjoins some remarks on the antiquity of this legend. See also Muir's Sanskrit Texts, vol. i. pp. 447, 460.—Ed.]

² Even the name of Agaslya is, by some etymologists, derived from terms which bear allusion to this legend.

³ From Charena, a foot; and Adri, a mountain.



those temples affirm, quoting Purāṇas to prove her predilection for this mountain, she has made choice of an inhospitable region. The vast tract of mountainous country, to which the name of Vind'hya appertains, is mostly covered with forest, or is inhabited by mountaineers, as well as the woods, which they have imperfectly cleared. In few places, within the skirts of the eastern portion of this mountainous region, have the Hindus, and still less the Muslems, intruded much on the possessions of these uncivilized tribes; or where they have done so, they have become almost as savage as the people among whom they have settled. A bad soil and the want of navigation are the chief discouragements to the progress of arts in the eastern portion of that vast tract to which the name of Vind'hya appertains.

From these general remarks, I proceed to more particular observations, made in the progress of my journey, and during my stay among the hills of Bind'h.

In sight of Mirzapur, at the distance of about five miles from it my fellow¹ travellers and myself ascended the Gortola or Gortotwa pass, and encamped about two miles from it, under a dismantled stone fort, near a small village. The pass is steep and difficult; and the road, on the brow of the hill, leads through a forest of leafy *Butea*:² indeed, the whole range of hills, near Chunar and Mirzapur, exhibits the same appearance. The ascent is everywhere steep, and the verge of the hill is either bare rock, or lies near the surface; quarries are easily worked, and they afford excellent sand-stone, which is carried to Benares, and more distant places. It is mostly quarried in the small hills, detached from the Vind'hya range, which are near to the river, and more accessible to carts.

On the table-land the soil is very poor, and, therefore, sparingly cultivated, for eight or ten miles from the brow of

¹ Capt. H. Lennon accompanied me in the command of the escort; and Mr. D. Turnbull, as surgeon of the residency.

² *Butea frondosa*, named Palās, or Dhac.



the hill. Proceeding from the village, where we encamped above the pass, we immediately struck into a forest, consisting chiefly of *Butea*, and of *Embliek Phyllanthus*.¹ We saw no signs of culture for eight miles, except near the depopulated village of Sunri. After traversing a cultivated country of equal breadth, and again passing a forest similar to the first, we reached Gherawel in three days. Thence the road lay through a cultivated country, by the way of Shahgenj and Adilgenj, to Roup, near the head of the Ecpowa pass.

In this tract we remarked much rice had been reaped; we saw fine crops of wheat on the ground, as well as linseed, chiches,² pigeon peas,³ and tares:⁴ we noticed many fields of sugar-cane; and, near the large towns, orchards of mango-trees; but the soil is in general poor; it requires frequent fallows; and, after all, it is said to yield but scanty crops in the best seasons.

On the edge of the forest, towards the cultivated country, peacocks and brown partridges abound; black antelopes range the open country; white-footed antelopes are found in the deepest woods; and tigers infest the skirts of the forest; we found, however, little encouragement to pursue game, during several halts it became necessary to make, for the purpose of giving time to the dealers in corn to collect supplies, before we crossed the Sone, to strike into a desolate forest on the southern banks.

We took advantage of the last halt made on this account, at the head of the Ecpowa pass, to visit the fort of Bejeygerh,⁵

¹ *Embliek Myrobalan*, in Hindî called Aunlâ.

² *Chand*, *Cicer arietinum*.

³ *Arher*, *Cytisus cajan*.

⁴ *Masûr*, *Ervum bispennum*.

⁵ [Bejeygerh, or Bidgegur, as the name appears in maps, was the fortress to which the Raja of Benares retired with his family and treasures on his breach with Hastings in 1781. On the approach of Colonel Popham's force he fled, and the Ranee capitulated after some negotiation. The alleged breach of this capitulation, and the plunder of some members of the Raja's family by a portion of Popham's force, were brought prominently forward in the charges against Hastings.—Ed.]

which is twelve miles distant from Roup.¹ This fortress, famous for the siege conducted by Lieutenant-Colonel, now Major-General Popham, is situated on the highest pinnacle of an extensive range of peaks, which rise considerably above the general level of the table-land; the rock on which the fortress stands is so steep, even on its most accessible side, where the contiguous hills approach nearest to the same elevation, that Bejeygerh seems almost impregnable, unless by famine, provided it be defended by a spirited garrison. On the northern and western sides, the precipice overhangs the plain; to the east, a valley disjoins Bejeygerh from the range of hills lying in that direction. On the southern side, contiguous hills, much inferior, however, to the level of the fort, permit the approach of besiegers within range of cannon; and furnish footing whence the fort might perhaps be escaladed, after damaging its defences. The place is fortified by a wall, built up from the edge of the precipice, with a narrow rampart, whence musketry or wall pieces might be discharged by persons in a sitting posture; there is no room for artillery, and it does not, indeed, appear to have been ever the intention of any possessor of this fortress to defend it by cannon. The wall runs along the extreme verge of the hill, inclosing the whole summit of it; hence it has been often necessary to begin the outer part of the wall forty or fifty feet below the parapet. This, while it gives a stupendous appearance to the edifice, does, in fact, considerably weaken it, and the wall is giving way in many places. Following all the windings of the hill, the fort has some irregular bastions; but, in general, although the parts of the wall do not well flank each other, yet, from the difficulty of access to it, the place can scarcely be taken by a regular siege.

Within the wall is a house built in the Indian style, and adapted for the abode of women; another building, formerly

¹ Bejeygerh, bearing S.E. by E. from Roup, seems distant eight or nine miles, horizontal distance; but the road between these places is circuitous.



allotted for stores and ammunition ; the ruins of some temporary edifices ; three ponds or cisterns cut in the rock ; and a small house near the tomb of a Muslem saint, Zeinee Labden, who is said to have died there three or four centuries ago. Two of the cisterns are named after Rama and his brother Laeshman ; as usual, there is also a Silacund. The fort has a good gateway on the western side, and a small wicket on the southern.

We breakfasted in an apartment over the gateway ; and thence contemplated with pleasure the extensive landscape before us. Close to the foot of the hill, a very small rivulet winds among woods : the Khagher, a more considerable stream, passes at the distance of a mile or two. A bridge, consisting of eleven equal arches, has been built over it ; and forms a contrast with the wildness of the woods contiguous to this rivulet. Towards the north, the country is cultivated. A lofty edifice at Casuma, six miles distant, and some well-built houses near other villages north of the fort, relieve the eye, when fatigued with viewing the barren peaks that bound the western horizon, or the hills covered with forest towards the south. The weather was not clear enough to afford a view of the distant fort of Agori, beyond the Sone, nor of the river itself, where it approaches nearest to Bejeygerh. In that direction, nothing but mountain and forest was visible, excepting a few spots where the mountaineers have cleared small fields for cultivation.

The prevalence of forest renders Bejeygerh a very unwholesome spot. The garrison, placed in it after it was captured by the British forces, was for this reason gradually reduced to a small party of Sepahis, under the command of a Hawaldar, or native serjeant. At length it was found necessary to withdraw this also, and the place is now guarded, for form sake, by a dozen matchlockmen, under the orders of an honorary Keladar, who resides on his own estate a few miles distant from the fort.

I have found no certain information of the ancient history of this fortress. It would no doubt be chosen, for its natural strength, as a stronghold, by the first Hindu, or mountaineers, that settled in the neighbouring plains. Its name does not evidently indicate the founder: Vijaya signifies victory, and is a title of Arjuna, the friend of Crishná, and also the name of a demigod, who is one of Śiva's attendants. The modern history of the place is connected with that of Agori, which we also visited, as will be forthwith mentioned.

At noon we returned from Bejygerh to our encampment near Roup; and the next morning descended the Caimur hills, by the Eepowa pass. Notwithstanding the change of name, we had not found an intervening valley, nor any other line of separation, to distinguish these from the hills we ascended at Gortola. In fact, the double range of mountains, which confines the narrow valley through which the Sone runs, is only a portion of the extensive Vind'hya, though one lofty ridge obtains the name of Caimur.

Two miles from Roup we came to the head of the pass. The descent was very steep and unsafe for about a hundred yards; the rest, for a mile and a half to the foot of the pass, was gradual, and sufficiently safe, except one very dangerous spot near half-way from the brow of the mountain. Here the road turns abruptly twice, on the brink of the precipice, and, being very narrow, is awfully dangerous; but the whole length of this perilous spot, not exceeding fifty yards, might at a very moderate expense be rendered securely passable by splitting a few rocks with gunpowder.

We recommended this expedient to the Rajah of Agori, who had met us on the frontier of his estate near Gherawel, and who still accompanied us. He was professedly anxious to encourage the new commerce opened between Mirzapur and the Deccan, by a route which traverses his estate. But the expedient proposed to him for making the Eepowa pass less dangerous was deemed impracticable without the aid of an



engineer ; because the stone-cutters near Chunar and Mirzapur, being accustomed to quarry with iron wedges, are unacquainted with the mode of splitting rocks with gunpowder. It appears, however, that this method is well known and much practised in the Deccan. An expedient as efficacious, in the opinion of Hindus at least, for obviating the dangers of a road which turns abruptly on the edge of a precipice, had been already adopted. A few stones on the brink of the precipice had been daubed with minium, and thus converted into an idol, representing Bhawáni of Ecpowaghát. A Brahmin stood there, ready to receive the oblations made to the goddess by votaries willing so to purchase a safe passage for themselves and their cattle.

Whether owing to the oblations which our Hindu attendants made there, or to our own good fortune, I will not undertake to determine, but the elephants, camels, horses, and oxen, all reached the foot of the pass in safety. We thence looked up with some awe to the brow of the mountain, whence rocks seemed almost to overhang the road, at the elevation of a quarter of a mile above it.¹

The rock, so far as may be judged from the fragments near the road, and in the bed of the Khagher, which we twice crossed at the foot of the pass, is quartz. Large masses of milky quartz lay in the bed of the rivulet, and exhibited an appearance which was novel to us, and therefore interesting. The overhanging rocks on the brow of the mountain, and the perpendicular wall, which forms the precipice below them, are discoloured, and have almost the common appearance of the exterior surface of milky quartz, when it has been long exposed to the atmosphere.

The banks of the rivulet, and the sides of the road where

¹ By a measurement taken from the opposite bank of the Sone, with a good sextant, and with separate observations for two measured bases, one of fifty, the other of 400 yards, I found the height of a conspicuous peak called Mangeswar to be 480 yards above the bed of the river ; and two miles distant from the place where the observations of its altitude were made.



it did not approach too near the precipice, are covered with thick woods. I did not then remark the different sorts of trees that composed them; but the forest, that occupies the greatest part of the valley in the midst of which the Sone runs, contains *Pterocarpus sisoo*, *sol*, etc., *Siwietenia febrifuga*, *Diospyros*, *Ebenus*, *Sterculia urens*, *Nanelia orientalis*, *Mimosa catechu*, *Butea frondosa*, *Nyctanthes*, *Arbor tristis*, *Bombax heptaphyllum*, *Bombax gossypenem*, *Ficus racemosa*, *Bignonia chelonoides*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Rychnas*, *Nux vomica*, with many other trees of various sizes, from the Indian figtree to the *Rhamnus jajuba*.

We encamped near a very small village, at the foot of the pass. The Rajah of Bejeygerh, who had accompanied us from the neighbourhood of Mirzapur, encamped with the Rajah of Agori, and the respective attendants, on the other side of the village. In the evening we were suddenly alarmed by a noise from their camp, that indicated loud and violent contention among hundreds of persons. We sent to inquire the cause, and were soon relieved from the apprehension of a quarrel having arisen among the attendants of these Rajput chiefs. The two rajahs are allied by frequent intermarriages between their families. It is the custom among Brahmins and Rajputs, belonging to the sect called Mádhyandina,¹ to exchange contumelious language, by way of sport, at the celebration of a wedding. This pastime was now renewed, as is often done at the entertainments of persons allied by affinity.

The contumelious language here alluded to consists chiefly in addressing to each other terms signifying relation by affinity. Such terms convey an insult, because they imply the boast of favours received from the female relations of the insulted party. It is almost needless to add that, in the homely language of the vulgar, the same reproach, by way of boast, or of menace, is expressed in gross and explicit phrases. But I must not

¹ Their religious ceremonies are conducted according to the rule prescribed by Mádhyandina school of the Yajurveda.

conceal that the atrocious practice of destroying female children, which prevails among some tribes of Rajputs, has its source in fastidious pride, which cannot brook appellations absurdly deemed contumelious.¹

The next day, while the baggage proceeded to Canech, on the banks of the Sone, we made an excursion to visit the fort of Agori, at the distance of seven or eight miles from our last encampment. The guides conducted us by a pathway, which crosses the valley obliquely, that lies between the Sone and the hills. Leading from village to village, the path winds through intermediate woods, for it rarely meets cultivated spots, which are but thinly scattered in a valley overspread by forest. The fatigue of our excursion was rewarded by much pleasure, in viewing the picturesque situation of Agori. The citadel is a fortified house, on the summit of a small hill, that rises from

¹ [Sir John Shore, in a paper which appeared in the fourth volume of the Asiatic Researches, "On some extraordinary facts, customs, and practices of the Hindus," says that the difficulty of procuring suitable matches for their daughters is the motive assigned by the Rajputs themselves, in the neighbourhood of Benares, for their resort to this inhuman practice. It seems that the practice was not confined to persons of rank, but existed even among villagers of this caste. Efforts had been made by the Rajputs themselves to put an end to the practice; and a village was pointed out where the inhabitants had sworn among themselves to bring up their female children; but several old maids were said to exist there, affording unfortunate evidence of the difficulty of providing for them, owing mainly, it was said, to the expense which usually attended marriages among this people. Mr. Colebrooke, in a manuscript note to this part of the essay, mentions an interesting case which came under his knowledge in corroboration of Sir John Shore's view. "The custom is very prevalent throughout Hindustan, among various tribes of Rājaputras, besides those which are commonly denominated Rājacumāra. The motive is truly assigned in this discourse. The mode of putting the female offspring to death seems to be optional. Perhaps the withholding of nourishment may be thought by them less atrocious, (as a more indirect method), than poison; which is sometimes employed, if my informant be correct. On the same authority, I have an interesting anecdote of a beautiful young girl who was spared by her mother, contrary to the injunctions of the father, then absent. On his return, the girl had reached her seventh year; he refrained from wreaking his vengeance upon his wife and daughter, but immediately departed again and fled his country. The Musulman noblemen lately offered a subscription of 30,000 or 40,000 rupees for a marriage portion, but no suitable match can be procured, one lacksha being demanded as a marriage portion, besides the expenses of the nuptials. This beautiful young woman was alive in the year 1795, aged thirteen or fourteen."—Ed.]



the southern bank of the river. Walls built around it, on the declivity of the hill, constitute the fort. This contains a hall of audience, between the citadel and the gate, and communicates, by a double wall, with a large well at the foot of the hill. Within the gate stand the remains of an old building, which is said to have been once a lofty edifice. Chet Sinh pulled down the upper stories, and was proceeding to demolish this building with the rest of the fort, until an inscription was found which contained a solemn imprecation on the person who should destroy the place. Superstition compelled the Rajah of Benares not only to desist from his intention, but to repair the fort.

The place is only fortified against musketry; being commanded by a hill whence shot would plunge into the fort, it is not tenable against artillery. But that hill, covered with wood, adds to the picturesque beauties of the spot. A continued range of mountain, in no place very distant from the river, and the Sone itself flowing majestically between banks covered with forest, complete the beauty of the scenery. The *Nilotica mimosa*¹ and shrubby *Lythrum*² cover the hill, both within and without the walls of the fort. They were now in full bloom; and the contrast of colour, together with the fragrance of the Acacia, enhanced the pleasure received from viewing a romantic landscape.

By the route of Agori, we were told, Major Crauford brought the timely reinforcement which he led from Ramgerh to assist in quelling the rebellion of Chet Sinh. His seasonable arrival turned the flight of the rebel, who was already discomfited by the British forces. The expulsion of an oppressive prince and contumacious tributary was effected. And while Chet Sinh received the reward of his offences, the ancient Rajahs, whom he had driven from their possessions, were restored to their estates.

Agori, with the Perganah of Berher, now belongs to Rajah

¹ *Babul, Mimosa nilotica.*

² *Dhau; Lythrum fruticosum.*

Renbehadur, who claims descent from a family of Chandel Rajputs which long flourished in Bundelcund. His ancestor, Rajah Permali, reigned at Mahoba, the then capital of Bundel; but having been much weakened by a war, in which he had engaged with a tribe of Chohans near Dehli, he was expelled in the reign of Sultan-Ala-uden Gauri, and retired to the banks of the Sone.¹ Here his descendants built the forts of Berdi and Agori. The elder branch of the family still enjoys a principality, of which Berdi is the capital. The youngest branch flourished at Agori, and obtained possession of Bejeygerh, with the adjoining districts, which became the separate allotment of a younger brother of this branch of Chandels. By sharing the tribute of Sinhraula, the Rajahs of Berdi and Agori still retain a trace of their common descent from the Chandel prince who first subjected that chiefship to his own domination. While Berdi retained a virtual independence, the Rajahs of Agori and Bejeygerh became subject to the Moghul government. They paid neither revenue nor tribute until they were dispossessed by Belwent Sinh; but their heirs were restored by Mr. Hastings after the expulsion of Chet Sinh, and now hold their respective estates as Zemindars, with their hereditary *jagirs* allotted to them.

Belwent Sinh, and his successor, Chet Sinh, had pursued the same policy throughout the province of Benares, expelling all the Rajahs, and proscribing the very name of Zemindars; Mr. Hastings, on considerations of prudence and justice, reinstated the Rajahs; and Mr. Duncan, under the order of Lord Cornwallis, restored the Zemindars, conferring on them the rights of landholders.

The Rajah of Bejeygerh, who accompanied us to the foot of the Caimur hills, is another instance of tyranny on the part of Belwent Sinh, and equity on that of the British Govern-

¹ The Chohans, expelled from Dehli, by the Muslims, sought refuge in the same mountainous region, and again became the neighbours of their ancient rivals.



ment. Rajah Ramghulam Sinh is the descendant of Jubraj, from whom, as first by birth and rank among the Rajahs of this province, Belwent Sinh himself received the symbol of his inauguration as a rajah.¹ He, nevertheless, expelled the son of Jubraj, and the heirs were not reinstated until after the discomfiture and flight of Chet Sinh.

This very ancient family of Gherwar Rajputs deduces its origin from Jayachand, who reigned at Canauj, and was de-throned during Taimur's invasion of Hindustan. He retired to Benares, where his posterity flourished for several generations, until one of his descendants, being defeated by the Muslems, was compelled to embrace their faith, for the sake of preserving his life. He was permitted to hold the district of Kera-mangror, near Benares. His children retained their religion, and maintained their possession of a tract of country south of the Ganges. This territory, which extended from the neighbourhood of the fort of Chunar to the river Tawns, but which was subsequently reduced within narrower limits, was shared by three Rajahs of the Gherwar tribe. Aiswarya Sinh, the heir of one branch of this family, holds Mara; another branch of it lately possessed the district of Daya, both in the province of Allahabad, and subject to the Nawab of Ayud'h. Ramghulam Sinh, the heir of the elder branch of Gherwars, has the dismantled fort of Bejeygerh, together with a part of the estate of his ancestors, and a *jagir* granted by the British Government.

From this brief abstract of traditions preserved by Chandel and Gherwar Rajputs, and partly confirmed by the general voice, which acknowledges the royal descent and great antiquity of these houses, I return to the narrative of the journey.

Again crossing the Sone, we returned to the high road; and, after once more passing the Kagher, and several times cross-

¹ A circlet on the forehead is the symbol; and it is with his foot, not his hand, that an ancient Hindu prince exalts a plebeian to equal rank with himself.



ing low but steep hills that stand detached from the Caimur range, we reached our encampment at night, drenched by rain, which overtook us on the way. The weather cleared up for a few hours the following day, and we took advantage of that intermission of rain to cross the Sone and encamp at Cothi. As the river abounds with dangerous quicksands, precautions had been taken to ascertain a ford where the bottom was sufficiently firm to bear elephants. The cattle passed without accident, and almost without alarm. The day was followed by a tempestuous night, and, though the weather was clear the next morning, we were obliged to protract the halt, that the tents might dry. At this dismal spot, close to the edge of a vast forest, we received the melancholy tidings of the massacre at Benares.¹ Grief for the loss of friends from whom we had so lately parted prepared us to commence our journey next day through a desolate forest, in a very gloomy temper of mind.²

Before we proceed on this dismal portion of the journey, I must pause to remark, that the Sone is not here deemed navigable, in any season of the year, for boats larger than canoes. Rocks are the reputed impediment to its navigation. The valley through which the river runs is thus deprived of carriage for its productions. Encouragement for the resort of settlers, and for the industry of the few peasants who already inhabit it, is wholly wanting. Excellent timber stands useless in the valley and on the southern range of mountains. Even the more

¹ [By Vizier Aly, the deposed Rajah, on which occasion Mr. Cherry and several other gentlemen perished. Mr. Davis's successful defence of his family is well known. They took refuge on the roof of his house, to which the only access was by a winding stair. His only weapon was a spear, with which he kept his enemies at bay until succour arrived.—Ed.]

² In the preceding year a European adventurer, but of what nation is not known, took this route towards the Deccan, probably with the design of seeking his fortune in the service of native princes. He was assassinated in the middle of the forest, a few miles beyond the limits of the British territories. The circumstance, had it been then known to us, would have added another gloomy tinge to the aspect of the forest.



valuable productions of the hills and forests are but sparingly gathered. Lac, honey, and gums of various sorts, seed *Bambus*, the starch of *Ticór* (*Tikhor*), ginger, and root of long pepper, the nuts of *Chironji*, and many other drugs and condiments, red bole, white chalk, and ore of iron abound in the forest and near the banks of the Sone; but little is exported to the markets of Benares.

For the sake of forming an opinion on the stones that compose the mountains which the Sone has washed before it reaches Agori, numerous specimens of pebble were collected from the sand of the river. The sand itself consists of larger particles of quartz than are found in rivers flowing through a champaign country; the pebbles were much worn and rounded. Numerous specimens, variously coloured, were siliceous, and struck fire with steel; none were obedient to the magnet, even when reduced to dust. Other specimens, also variously coloured, appeared to be fragments of argillaceous stones, that have a laminated texture. Small pieces either of talc or mica were noticed among the sand.

Resuming our journey after a halt of one day, we struck into the forest within a mile of the Sone, and in three days reached the village of Bihrer near Dudhi Pelwa (*Doody Pula* of Rennell's map), situated at the distance of a few miles from the banks of the Canhár river. The road was a continued ascent and descent of hills, through a forest, in some parts thick, in others intermixed with grass, but nowhere exhibiting any signs whatsoever of cultivation, recent or ancient. We twice encamped in the forest on the edge of rivulets, the course of which was already stopped by the dryness of the season. Later in the year it would have been necessary to take another route by the banks of the Canhár for the sake of water, which cannot be procured in this forest after the beginning of the hot season. Tigers are said to infest this tract; accordingly, the guides cautioned us against moving any part of our cattle and attendants before daylight. We did not, however, observe



the signs of any animal whatsoever, not even birds, in the desolate tract which we here traversed.¹

The rock which constitutes the hills on this side of the Sone is not so much exposed as on the northern side of the river. It appears to be quartzose, but not exclusively so; for argillaceous stones occupied the surface of the hills, and even the beds of water-courses in many places. Among the very numerous kinds of trees which compose the forest, the most conspicuous were the *Sala* and *Boswellia*. The fragrant gum afforded by this last tree resembles olibanum, and is, I suspect, sold in the markets of Hindustan for that drug.² *Sterculia urens*, common on the northern side of the Sone, yields a gum which has been mistaken for *Tragacantha*. Specimens of it, which were submitted, in the preceding year, to the inspection of very skilful persons, were pronounced to be exactly similar to the gum of the *Astragalus tragacantha*. But the doubts which were still retained have been since confirmed by the experience of merchants who exported the gum of that *Sterculia* to the markets of Europe.

In our first day's march through this forest, and very soon after quitting the banks of the Sone, we crossed the boundary of the province of Benares; and entered the territories of the Jagirdar of Uthari. The limits indeed are not well defined; but the Rajah of Agori, as a zemindar of the province of

¹ Birds are very scarce in the forests which we passed during this journey. Even in the most cultivated tract, and in the woods contiguous to them, neither the species of birds, nor the individuals, are so numerous in Berar, as in Bengal and Hindustan. It is not improbable that tigers may abound in this vast forest. However, none were seen in the whole journey, except one half-grown tiger that crossed the road near Cotha; and the elephants indicated once only that they smelled the ferocious animal which they dread and abhor.

² [Vide Asiatic Researches, ix. 377, where this subject is fully treated by Mr. Colebrooke. Linnaeus had supposed the plant which produces the Olibanum to be a species of juniper. Travellers had hitherto failed to determine the fruit. Some of the gum, collected by Dr. Turnbull, the surgeon of the residency at Nagpur, was sent to England and offered for sale. It was instantly recognized as Olibanum, though offered under a different name, and was subsequently sold regularly at the Company's sales.—Ed.]



Benares, claims a very small portion of the forest, and seems disposed to acknowledge the rights of the Jagirdar.

At Bihrer a vakil met us on the part of Bhawáni Sinh, who had recently succeeded to his father, Bud'h Sinh, Jagirdar of Uthari. Besides that Jagir in the district of Ramgerh, Bud'h Sinh acquired, by grant or purchase, the Tapes of Dudhi and Berch, from the chief of Sinhraula, and from the Rajah of Serguja. He also enjoyed a lease in perpetuity of Rampur, in Perganah Belonjá, and formerly rented the Chacla of Bendu, in Sircar Rohtas. All these adjoin and constitute a very singular and almost independent property, in a country remote from all commercial intercourse, and thinly inhabited by uncivilized mountaineers.

Round Bihrer, and in other cultivated spots, which we viewed, as we approached the village, from the brow of a hill that overlooks it, the crops, then on the ground, consisted of wheat, barley, and chiches. Rice and flour were purchased in the village; much dearer, however, than might have been expected in so sequestered a place. In the further progress of our journey through the forests of Serguja, rice and tares (*Masúr* or *Ercum bispennum*) were the only sorts of grain which could be purchased. The supplies which we brought from the banks of the Sone could not suffice for all the camp followers, and the want of flour was felt as a serious inconvenience by the servants and porters, who were all accustomed to feed on rice.

From Bihrer we proceeded, in four days, through the Tapes of Dudhi and Berch, to the village of Cóthi, belonging to Bijey Sinh, a disaffected chieftain of Serguja. Very small villages are thinly scattered in this tract, at distances of four, five, and six miles from each other. In the last day's march we proceeded sixteen miles without seeing an inhabited place, or any but slight traces of former culture in a single spot. The intermediate tract is a deep forest, through which a narrow road winds over hills that are accessible, or round such as



are particularly steep. Wherever the road leads to a commanding eminence, the prospect of an undulating country, covered with majestic forests, is strikingly magnificent. In the valleys the gloomy confined view is not unawful.

The tract which we here traversed is thinly inhabited by mountaineers; the inhabitants of Tapesh Dudhi mostly belong to the tribe of Gonds; those of Berch are Kherwars and Paraiyahs; the forests of Serguja are occupied by Cols, Chóros, Kherwars, Bhuyniars, and Ranees. Concerning these and other tribes of mountaineers, little information could be gained. Almost secluded from intercourse with civilized people, they are ignorant and suspicious. In one instance, they even showed a disposition to oppose our encamping near their habitations. And, after we had succeeded in conciliating the chief of the village, they still retained their suspicion, and remained with their wives and children peeping at our encampment from the top of a hill which overhung the village. Even those who conversed most cheerfully with us could not readily apprehend our questions, nor answer them distinctly in the common dialect of India. Their own dialects are peculiar to their own tribes, or common to two or three tribes only.

The Bhuyniars are particularly entitled to the name of mountaineers; they frequent the highest spots and deepest forests, neglect husbandry, and employ themselves in gathering the produce of the woods, especially the resin of the sal, which they exchange for grain and other necessities of life. The other tribes follow the practice of agriculture. The Gonds appear to be most advanced towards civilization, and they imitate the manners and practise the religious observances of Hindus. The Ranees are said to be Mohammedans. Other tribes of mountaineers are not restricted from any particular diet, nor do they seem to hold any animal unclean. They refrain, however, from the flesh of kine.

In answer to inquiries concerning his religious notions, a Kherwar affirmed that he often prayed to Narayan; but he



added, that he worshipped a neighbouring hill called Paspahr; and he showed us the monument as well as the hills above named; he acknowledged that he sacrificed goats on solemn occasions.

By a tacit consent among their various tribes, which are habituated to different pursuits of industry, the Bhuyniars exclusively practise the gathering of the resin of the sal. In the beginning of the rainy season they wound such trees as have been selected by them for the purpose, and take off the bark two feet above the ground, leaving the wood bare the breadth of six or eight inches. The resin exudes with the descending sap, and accumulates in this ring. It is gathered in the winter, and the tree, no doubt, perishes in the same season. So improvident a mode of collecting the resin accounts for the forest containing few besides young sal trees. This fact was particularly remarked by us, and the cause became obvious when we were made acquainted with the motive for barking the trees. After passing the boundary of Serguja, we observed great numbers of sal so barked, and we gathered specimens of the resin, for the sake of verifying a fact which has been contested. After inspecting these recent specimens, I can safely affirm that the resin called Dammer, from the Hindí name Dhúna, is the produce of the sal.

The Kherwars practise, but not exclusively, the preparation of starch from the root of Ticór, which they collect from the forest, without previous culture. The root is ground, and its pulp is mixed with water; and, without further manipulation, the starch settles at the bottom of the vessel. The water is poured off, and the starch is dried in the open air. From eight parts, by weight, of the root, one part of starch is obtained; and is commonly sold for an equal weight of salt.

The gummy resin, improperly called *Terra Japonica*, is prepared by the mountaineers from the *Mimosa Catechu* (should be Cat'h) which abounds in these forests. Gum lac and wild silk are collected in the woods. Crude iron is smelted at



numerous petty iron works in Serguja. Myrobalans and the Chironji nut are gathered in the forest. These, with other articles, which have been already hinted at, are the objects of the little traffic that is carried on between Serguja and Benares. We were informed by carriers, whom we met at different times, that they obtained those returns for salt and tobacco, which they bring from the province of Benares.

From Cóthi, the first village within Bijey Sinh's jurisdiction, we marched in three days to Herikerpur, the southern limit of his possessions; the third march was employed in ascending and descending the Simset pass. At our encampment below the pass I received a visit from the son of Bijey Sinh. This chieftain belongs to the tribe of Gonds, and bears the title of Pówá, peculiar to that tribe; but he has adopted the manners of a Hindu, and is treated as such by the Hindus of Serguja. Though disaffected to the administration of the uncle and guardian of the minor Rajah, he has not thrown off his allegiance. He pays contributions in lieu of revenue, but resists all other interference within his jurisdiction. From subsequent information, it appeared that he is not needlessly on his guard against the violence of the Rajah's guardian.

Throughout Bijey Sinh's territory, as in that of Bhawáni Sinh, which had been previously traversed by us, inhabited spots are thinly scattered in a vast forest. The villages, however, are rather more populous, and the cleared spots are somewhat less confined than in Berch and Dud'hi. The road winds excessively through deep woods and over very uneven ground, close to the foot of lofty eminences.

The road is stony, and the live rock is in many places exposed. From the banks of the Sone to the Simset pass, we crossed numerous rivulets and water-courses, the stream of which is invariably directed to the westward. This fact indicates that the ground is more elevated on the east towards the frontier of Palamú. In one rivulet I remarked blocks of granite, in the banks of another talc was found; mica, in dust, or

cemented in concrete stones, was common in many places, both on hills and in the valleys. On the summit of the Simset pass and on its steep declivities, large pieces of talc, either detached or combined with fragments of silicious stones, were abundant; but quartz is the most common rock throughout the whole of this mountainous tract.

From the 24th of January, when we encamped near the limits of Berch, to the 28th, when we traversed the Simset pass, the cold, which had gradually increased since we quitted the Sone, became intense. A hoar-frost remained on the ground after sunrise on the 25th and 26th. On the 27th at sunrise the thermometer stood at 24° of Fahrenheit's scale, and ten minutes after sunrise it had only risen to 26° . Water had frozen in brass vessels; the pools were frozen in many places, and the frost remained on them and in the shade of the forest for more than an hour, and on grass and trees for more than two hours after sunrise. At noon, the thermometer had risen to 62° ; and at ten o'clock at night had fallen to 31° . A thermometer which had been exposed all night was covered with icicles on the morning of the 28th, and stood after sunrise at 21° . Another, taken out of its case, exhibited $22\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and rose to 24° when exposed for a few minutes to the air. Water had frozen in a leather bag; and the grass and trees were covered with ice. Even after our march through the Simset pass, we found ice still unmelted at nine o'clock in the forenoon. This intense cold between the latitudes of 23° and 24° confirms a received opinion that the climate of uncleared countries is colder than that of cultivated regions. Though we now travelled in a mountainous country, the elevation is quite insufficient to account for so great cold near the tropical limits.

At Herikerpur we met a numerous band of travellers proceeding to Benares. We had already met several other parties in different places. They were mostly pilgrims from various parts of the Mahratta dominions. The insults and even per-



sonal danger to which travellers were, at this time, exposed on all the other routes from the Deccan to Benares, compelled the pilgrims to choose this road, which is secure, though very circuitous and inconvenient.

After halting one day to refresh the cattle and people, who wore much fatigued by ten successive marches, we moved to Khergánwán, a village situated a mile south of the Mahánadí river. We this day traversed a cultivated country. Some spots, indeed, were waste; but even there the forest was thin, and seemed to have been formerly cleared and tilled. It exhibited the reverse of the picture which we had lately viewed in forests, where the few cultivated spots that are found are half filled with the stumps of trees recently cut down.

Rice is the chief object of tillage in this tract. Barley and pulse were seen near the villages; but most of the tilled ground had already yielded its harvest, which had evidently consisted of rice.

The natural productions of the forest from which we had now emerged are the same that have been already enumerated on the occasion of our reaching its northern skirt. Among trees not already mentioned, are *Semecarpus anacardium*, *Bassia latifolia*, and *Cratogeomys marmelos*, which are said to grow wild in this forest. Among useful plants, are *Rubia*, *Manjér'h*, and *Genticina charayta*, which the natives affirm to be common in these woods.

We were obliged to halt two days at this place, in consequence of a message received from the guardian of the minor Rajah of Serguja. My escort and retinue had been magnified by common rumour to a potent army, and the Rajah's guardian feared, or pretended to fear, hostile designs. Absurd as were such apprehensions, yet a similar alarm had been taken by the chief of Sinhraula; and the Meksil chief of Chegerh also, whose country lay on the eastern side of our route, had armed to repel an expected invasion. In the present instance the suspicions of the guardian were aggravated by the visit

which I received from the son of his enemy, Bijey Sinh. I therefore sent a confidential servant to conciliate the Rajah's guardian, and to convince him of the absurdity of the apprehensions which he entertained. This was easily accomplished, and after a delay of two days, we proceeded to Persá, and thence, on the subsequent day, to Serguja.

The country which we traversed was populous, and in general well cultivated; but in marches we passed over a considerable tract of forest ground. Persá is a large village, and a mart for grain; and the first place on the south of the Sone to which either term is applicable. It was here that we fell into the route which was formerly travelled by Mr. Chapman, when proceeding to the court of Nagpur on a public mission. Mr. Chapman took the route of Ramgerh; pursuing a track which was then, or but few years earlier, constantly beaten by merchants exporting silk from Bengal to Nagpur. This traffic has now taken a different channel, and Mirzapur is become its mart.

For a short time preceding and following the route in which we travelled, the traders who exported silks, spices, and other valuable merchandize to the Deccan, followed the same track which we pursued. But commerce is now returning to the shorter and more convenient route of Baghelcund.

A fever, with which I had been some days afflicted, rendered it necessary to prolong our stay at Serguja. This disorder did not assume the worst shape of what is denominated the forest fever; and very few persons besides myself experienced any sickness of this kind during our progress. It may, therefore, be safely pronounced, that a journey through the deepest forest is attended with little danger in the dry season. But in the rains it is highly dangerous. In two successive years I received supplies of necessary articles of consumption by this route. The servants and porters, having been each time despatched from Mirzapur at too late seasons, were overtaken by the rains, and all suffered attacks of the forest fever in its



worst form. It became a subject of much regret to me, that several persons lost their lives by sickness contracted in my service, through accidents which disappointed the precautions I had taken to obviate a danger, of which I was sufficiently aware.

The continuance of sickness during my stay at Serguja prevented the inquiries which I intended to make at this place. The productions and commerce of the country, with other objects of research, upon which I could expect accurate information at no other place, were therefore uninvestigated. A few observations only can be here subjoined.

Serguja is tributary to Berar. It belongs to a Rajput family, the heir of which is now a minor. The death of his father and predecessor is said to have been hastened by the uncle and present guardian of the Rajah; and the same fate is supposed to await the young chieftain at the hands of his unnatural kinsman. Serguja is chiefly inhabited by tribes of mountaineers. Hindus are settled in the province, but in no great number, and a few Afghan horsemen find service at this place. They fetch their horses from the annual fair, Beeser, on the Ganges; and the yearly tribute, amounting to the sum of 3,500 rupees only, is partly made good by delivering at Retanpur horses imported from that fair. It was affirmed that an increase of tribute had been lately demanded, and the claim was resisted on the ground of uniform custom. If such a demand was really made, it has not been since enforced. Serguja, situated in the midst of mountains, is naturally strong. It could not, indeed, resist the power of the Government of Berar; but the inhabitants of Serguja, without facing the Mahratta troops, would abandon their huts, and seek refuge, as they had formerly done on similar occasions, in the recesses of the forest. The complete subjugation of the country might be ultimately effected, but at greater cost than the conquest is worth. Annual tribute and the acknowledgement of subjection, but with imperfect obedience, are, for this reason, accepted by the



Rajah of Berar, or rather by his brother, on whose principality it is dependent.

After four days, the fever by which I suffered being then checked, I received a visit from the chief of Serguja and his guardian, and we proceeded on our journey the following day. In five marches we traversed the southern part of Serguja, and the fifth day proceeded towards Retunpur. For more than thirty miles the country was populous; the villages were frequent, and surrounded with arable land, but forest intervened in some places. The tops of the hills appeared to be wholly waste, and the valleys generally well cultivated. The road mostly followed the windings of the valley; it once or twice crossed a ridge of hills.

At our second encampment the tents were pitched near a pond, which tradition makes to be the scene of a celebrated legend.¹ Daśaratha, through an unhappy mistake, slew the son of a blind ascetic, while drawing water from a pond for his helpless parent. The name of the place, And'hala, is said to be founded on this event.

The third day we encamped within three or four miles of a very conspicuous hill, named Ramgerh, which had been seen and remarked from Serguja, and which remained in sight even after we crossed the boundary of Chetesgerh. Annual fairs are held there, which invite a great resort from very distant places. Though esteemed a place of much sanctity, it is uninhabited, and is not even become the abode of a single devotee, or recluse, nor been honoured with a temple or any other edifice. The images of the gods, as we learnt from inquiry (for we did not visit the spot), are left exposed to the inclemency of the weather.

¹ [It forms one of the episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa. Daśaratha, the father of Rāma, is punished for this deed of blood in the banishment of his son, and eventually dies under the curse. A translation of this episode appears, among other specimens of Indian poetry, in the late Dean Milman's works. See also Prof. Monier Williams' Lectures on Indian Epic Poetry. Mr. Colebrooke, in his essay on Sanscrit poetry, inserts the version of the same incident from Calidāsa's Raghuvans'a.—Ed.]



In our fourth march we found the road extremely bad. For nearly five miles it led us over rugged hills, but afterwards through a cultivated valley. Thence we again entered a forest, and encamped on the banks of a rivulet. The fifth march we traversed a steep and difficult pass. The whole tract was mountainous; and the road, through uninterrupted forest, was even more fatiguing to our people and cattle than the worst part of the route between the Sone and Serguja.

We that day pitched our tents within the limits of Chetesgerh, near a small village, in a very confined valley; and thence, in two marches, reached Ch'huri, a populous town three miles south of the Hetsu river. The intermediate day, after crossing very craggy hills, and then passing an equal tract of less rugged country, which is, however, very sparingly cultivated, we encamped on a small hill, at the foot of a more lofty and conspicuous one, named Chendi. It is remarkable for a figure rudely delineated, either by nature, or by art, on a perpendicular precipice, and bears a real or fancied resemblance to a cock. This figure is worshipped under the title of Chendipat. From this place to Ch'huri, the first half of the way is a stony road, through thick forest, in a very narrow valley; the remainder of it traverses a well-cultivated country, interspersed, however, with some barren land, thinly covered with stunted forest.

Throughout the whole of our journey we crossed numerous rivulets and water-courses. But the Hetsu, or Nend-Hetsu, is the first that we saw which could be dignified with the name of river. Its course, from the west to the east, demonstrates that the highest land lies to the westward. In fact, it has its source on the same spot, whence two celebrated rivers, the Sone and Nermada, flow; one towards the north, and the other towards the west. Amarcantac, in which are the fountains of these three rivers, must evidently be the highest ground in the Vind'hya range of mountains. The course of the Nermada shows the direction of the highest range towards

the west. At the Simset pass we crossed that range extending towards the east, and again another branch of it on the confines of Chetesgerh, and Serguja.

The place where we crossed the Hetsu cannot be more than forty miles horizontal distance from Amarcantac. At Retunpur, which is further from that mountain, the computed travelling distance, on a very winding road, was stated at eighteen *gondi cos*, or thirty-six *gao cos*, equal to sixty-five miles of road distance. The mountain is said to be surrounded by forest for several days' journey. The extreme cold, which was attributed to it by the persons from whom we made inquiries concerning that mountain, is a further indication of its great height. It is sometimes visited by pilgrims; but the fables which are recounted concerning the place are too absurd for repetition. Serpents of the boa kind may really abound there; but the size to which they are said to grow is too extravagant for belief. It is pretended that the fountains of all three rivers have been inclosed within one basin of masonry, from which the infant streams are allowed to flow. Whatever credit we might have been disposed to give this asseveration was completely forfeited by subsequent gradations of anility. It is strange that the absurdest fables should be current even among a credulous people, at a short distance from the spot. The only fact which I will venture to affirm, on the authority of answers to inquiries here made, is, that the boundaries of three provinces which had, until lately, three different masters, meet at Amarcantac. They are Garah, Sohagpur, and Chetesgerh.

The Hetsu does not become navigable so near its source for boats larger than canoes; yet the vicinity of the river has probably contributed to render Ch'huri and the surrounding districts a populous and well-cultivated country. Here, for the first time since we crossed the Sone, we obtained supplies of flour, chich peas, and other meal and pulse, which our servants and attendants, being natives of Hindustan, unwillingly forewent while traversing a country in which nothing could

be procured besides rice and tares. Clarified butter, instead of oil of Bassia, which the mountaineers abundantly supplied, was a change that seemed more indifferent to them. That oil, when recent, is a good substitute for butter, in cooking at least, if not for other uses.¹

Ch'huri is one of the thirty-six towns and forts, which give name to the province of Chetesgerh. It is a mart not only for corn and various productions of industry, but also for gum lac, and other produce of the forest. In fact, the district dependent on Ch'huri, though a well-cultivated country when compared with that which we had before passed, contains much forest.

The trees that compose the woods between Serguja and this place belong to the same kind which were noticed in the former part of the journey. Some have been already enumerated; others, the botanical names of which have not been ascertained, would be needlessly mentioned by appellations which they bear in the vernacular dialects, or even in the Hindu language. The most common trees were the *Sal Boswellia* and *Piyal*: many noble climbers, mostly belonging to the convolvulus kind, add greatly to the beauty of the forest.

On the hills, which we passed after entering the limits of Chetesgerh, argillaceous grit seemed to be the most common stone. But, after crossing the Hetsu, we found on its southern bank low hills, that consisted of micaceous rock. Within the limits of Serguja, the prevailing stone is pure quartz, and fragments of it are often found in concrete stone combined with micaceous and argillaceous cement. Not a single specimen of calcareous stone was observed.

It was found necessary to halt at Ch'huri for the sake of refreshing the people and cattle, and to collect supplies of grain. During two days that our encampment remained there the

¹ It is probably the same which Mr. Park found in the internal parts of Africa, and which he names the *shea*, or butter tree. His description of the fruit corresponds exactly with the drupe of the Bassia.

curiosity of the inhabitants seemed unsatiated. A crowd of spectators continually surrounded the tents. The sight of Europeans must have been more novel and extraordinary to the mountaineers in the former part of our journey; yet they rarely approached the encampment. Their fears probably overcame their curiosity. But at populous places, such as Serguja, Persá, and Ch'huri, the inhabitants gathered confidence from their numbers, and ventured to view us at leisure.

From Ch'huri we reached Retunpur in three days. The first day we travelled through a cultivated country interspersed with tracts of waste land, covered with grass and with stunted trees. Among these the leafy *Butea* was most conspicuous. The practice of annually burning the grass during the dry season, for the sake of obtaining younger shoots for the pasture of cattle, is the probable cause that the forest is here stunted. The effects of fire were plainly marked on the trunks of the trees. In open plains, covered with grass, when fire is communicated to standing hay, in the dry season, and whilst a strong wind blows, the flame rages with so much fury and rapidity, that persons travelling in narrow paths are exposed to great danger. At different places in the course of the journey, the baggage and attendants were, from this cause, endangered. In one instance the peril was imminent, but followed by a happy escape.

The second day we traversed an extensive forest, over ground very stony and uneven. A chain of lofty hills, which we observed the preceding day on our right, and another, less elevated, which we noticed on the left, are connected by a low ridge, which we this day crossed. The stone was quartzose, with some siliceous grit. A few specimens of this last sort had been also noticed in the valleys of Serguja.

The third day we travelled over a well-cultivated and populous plain. We were welcomed by the Subahdar of Retunpur, who met us at the distance of three or four miles from the town; and we encamped on the skirts of it, at the foot of a

small hill, which bears the name of Ramtec, from a temple erected upon it by the late Bimbajee, in imitation of one that stands near Nagpur. The image of the founder has been placed in a building similar to the temple. The figure stands in a praying posture, opposite to the idols of Rám Lacshman and Sita. This method of placing a marble representative, to continue the devotional practice of the principal, after his decease, has been adopted by Mahratta ladies and chieftains in many other places.

Bimbajee was uncle of the present Rajah of Berar, and had, for his appanage or separate allotment, Chetesgerh, and other eastern provinces, in the same manner that Vincajee, the Rajah's brother, now holds them. Bimbajee made Retunpur his constant abode; and his widow still resides here. We received from her, and returned, compliments and civility, and paid a visit to her, at her abode within the fort, which very ill deserves to become the habitation of a prince.

Retunpur is the chief town of the northern half of Chetesgerh, as Rayapur is of the southern portion of the same province. It was formerly held by an independent prince belonging to the Hacheya, or Harho tribe of Rajputs. One branch of the family held Retunpur, another Rayapur. Both were subjugated by the Mahrattas, about the time when these were accustomed to make annual incursions into Bengal. One branch of that ancient family is extinct; the other enjoys a very small provision for its maintenance, and has sunk into obscurity. The former proprietors of Retunpur have left manifest traces of their religious devotion in the numerous temples erected by them, and the ponds, excavated for the gratification of piety, rather than for public use. No fewer than seven hundred ponds are reckoned in the vicinity of Retunpur.

The town is not large, but is populous in proportion to its precincts. It contains edifices of masonry; some of which are dwelling-houses, but none are temples. It is entirely sur-



rounded, at the distance of one or two miles in every direction, by very low hills, which, in some places, do not exceed twenty feet, in none seem to rise above sixty. A chain of similar low hills takes an easterly direction. The whole province of Chetesgerh is mountainous; and, though some tracts are well-cultivated, it is too remote from great markets for its produce to find a profitable vent.

The husbandry in the immediate vicinity of the town exhibited traces of a crop of rice. The standing fields consisted of wheat, chich peas, linseed, and some coriander. At the distance of a few miles, several sugar-mills were noticed.

More birds were found near Retunpur than in the former part of the journey. In the forests scarcely a single bird of any kind was ever seen. But here, snipes, wild ducks, teal, gallinules, and other sorts of water fowls, were found in the ponds, or on the edges of them. Quails abounded in the fields: a single bustard (*Otis Indica*) was seen. Kites and crows were sufficiently numerous near the town.

On the edges of the ponds we noticed many rude furnaces, or boiling places. There exists an economical practice, which I have not seen in any other part of India; namely, the washing of clothes in boiling water. Everywhere else, linen is washed in cold water, and beaten on stones or boards. The example of Retunpur might be advantageously copied in other Indian towns.

Necessary arrangements detained us three days at Retunpur. Resuming our journey, we reached Déocar in seven days, including one half, after a forced march. The road passes the towns of Tekhtpur, which are reckoned among the thirty-six forts or towns that give name to the province. The country is a plain, gently undulated, and is watered by numerous rivulets, which all flow in an easterly direction.

A chain of hills on the right, gradually recedes from the road. The country is open, and, by comparison with other tracts which we traversed, may be termed populous and well cultivated.



But the waste ground, covered with grass, and, in some places, with stunted trees, much exceeds the arable land. The soil is clayey; argillaceous stones were remarked in the banks of the rivulets. In a few spots on the plain the base rock, consisting of siliceous grit, was exposed to view; in one rivulet, calcareous stones were remarked, and small pieces of talc were found in the beds of most rivulets, both in this tract and in that which we had before traversed.

The population consists chiefly of mountaineers, belonging to tribes which have adopted the manners of Hindus, and have even assumed the sacerdotal thread. In the wilder parts of the province, the mountaineers are said to retain their original manners. The industry of the peasant is employed in cultivating wheat, linseed, chiches, pigeon-peas, kidney beans, and tares. All these were now on the ground. Rice had been reaped in its season; and also maize, panic, Indian millet, and other sorts of grain. Some sugar-cane, tobacco, and saf flowers, were noticed near the villages. We here remarked, with pleasure, that the harvest is transported on carts from the field to the village. The same practice prevails near Nagpur. It is unaccountable that it should be universally neglected in Bengal and in Hindustan.

Scarcely a single plant of cotton was seen. But we twice met, on the road, carriers conducting loads of raw cotton towards Catalu, a mart near Cuttack. They had provided the loads at places not very distant from the spots where we met them, but situated in the hilly parts of the province. It is strange that they should load cattle with raw cotton, which, by their own account, will only account, when cleared of seed and dirt, one-third its weight in cotton wool. They stated the prime cost of each load at six *rupiyas*, the charge of transport at five, and their expectation of the market at twenty. The profit would be still greater upon cotton wool.

The produce of cotton in Chetesgerh cannot be considerable; for great quantities of cotton wool are annually transported

from Nagpur. At this last-mentioned place it is sometimes laden on canoes and small boats, to descend the Mahánadí; but the navigation is not so advantageous as to render the practice of it general.

Chetesgerh exports to Nagpur rice and wheat by land carriage; but the charges of transport are so great that the traders cannot afford a large price to the peasant. Grain is very cheap in this part of the province. But the exactions of rent, if the peasants may be believed, are exorbitant. According to information received from them at Newagerh, Mungeli, and other places, confirmed too by subsequent inquiries at Nagpur, the rents are here regulated by the number of ploughs: and no land measure of any kind is employed or even known. Four oxen are allowed for each plough; and a tax is levied at rates varying between ten and sixteen *rupiyas* for the plough. Near Nagpur the rate of the tax is more considerable, but is regulated in the same manner. We were already acquainted with this mode of adjusting rents, for it also prevails in Serguja, and in Dudhi and Berch.¹ But the tax in these last-mentioned districts was stated at no more than one *rupiya* for each plough.² In answer to inquiries concerning the produce of land tilled by one plough, the peasants at Newagerh stated the quantity of seed, usually sown at four measures, and the produce at sixty. The measure contains about a hundred avoirdupois pounds.

The other exports, besides grain, are oil, clarified butter, starch of Tikhor, gum lac, resin, wax, and honey. We met carriers returning with unloaded cattle, which, as they informed us, had conveyed resin and lac from Oh'huri to Nagpur. Another and more numerous party, was returning with unloaded oxen to Mirzapur. They had conveyed a very valuable adventure of silk.

¹ It prevails also in the northern provinces of Bengal, on the frontiers of Assam, Bhotan, and Moran.

² The Vakil of the proprietor, while he furnished this information, added, in a significant manner, that the peasants abscond whenever it is attempted to raise the rent or impose new assessments and taxes.



At Tekhtpur we met a very large caravan of pilgrims, on their way to Benares. Many covered litters conveyed females belonging to respectable families. Others, of less rank, rode on ponies. It is, however, common, though we did not then observe a single instance of the custom, for ladies of high rank amongst the Mahrattas to ride on horseback. The caravan came from Puna, but was augmented by the junction of some pilgrims at Nagpur. In the subsequent years, caravans, still more numerous, passed Nagpur, on their way to Benares, by the route of Serguja; and many pilgrims from Nagpur itself took the same road. The annual resort of devout persons, from all parts of the Deccan, and especially from the Mahratta territories, to Benares, Allahabad, and Gaya, is great. Other roads being now unsafe, this route, though circuitous, is preferred by most pilgrims, as well as Hindus, from the Deccan to Benares, as Mohammedans, from Bengal towards Surat, on their road to Mecca.

It had been intended, in conformity with the advice received at Retunpur, to proceed by the way of Dhemdha; but, for the sake of pursuing the shortest route, if it should be found practicable, we were induced to continue in the direct track towards Nagpur. We accordingly proceeded from Déocar to Khairagerh. This employed two days. In the latter part of the first day's march the chain of hills, which disappeared near Newagerh, was again in sight. The second day we gradually approached the same range.

At Khairagerh it forms an amphitheatre, turning from a south-westerly to a southerly direction. The country is cultivated and populous; not, however, without some tracts of waste land covered with grass, interspersed with leafy *Butea*, *jeoubé*,¹ and *Rhammes*. Khairagerh, like Mungeli, and Newagerh, is surrounded with acacia. But the gum and bark do not become objects of trade; they are only used on the spot. As we approached Khairagerh, we found fields of cotton. The

[¹ Probably Jujube, the *Zizyphus Jujuba* of India.—ED.]

plant was intermixed with the pigeon-pea and *Palma Christi*. On the edge of the rivulet, that runs by Khairagerh, we remarked the culture of melons; and on its banks egg plants. A small field of the somniferous poppy had been noticed at Mungeli.

The choice of four roads was now offered to us. The shortest was not deemed the most eligible, because steep passes and a wide forest intervene. By the advice of a person who met us at this place, on the part of the Amil of Lanji, to whose jurisdiction Khairagerh appertains, we chose the route which was described as most practicable, and consequently most expeditious, though somewhat circuitous. It was further recommended, by the example of the mother of the Rajah of Berar, and his brother, Vincajee Bhausla, who were then proceeding by that very route to Retunpur, on their way to the temple of Jagannath, in Cuttack.

We moved from Khairagerh on the 3rd of March, and fell into their track, at Bergaon, on the 5th. They had encamped at this village three days earlier; and we found, in our subsequent progress, their march imprinted by the desolation of all the small villages through which they had passed. The inhabitants had fled from the depredations of their camp followers, and from the oppression of compulsory labour. This must be imputed to their attendants only; but military execution against some Zemindars of Chetesgerh, for a trivial offence, and confiscations against eminent chiefs in Cuttack, on a flimsy pretence, were subsequent acts for which the prince himself, or his royal mother, must exclusively answer.

The highest extremity of the hills, which took a southerly direction from Khairagerh, bore due north from our encampment at Bergaon; detached hills occupied the western horizon, and, on the south, a distant range of mountains could be perceived, and its direction was judged to be south-east.

Several chains of rocks cross the plain; they were, at this time, decorated by numberless trees of *Bombax gossypium*, in

full blossom ; and the yellow hue of these flowers was beautifully contrasted with the flame-coloured blossom of *Butea frondosa*, equally abundant on the plain. The *Boswellia* added, by its own beauty, and by the fragraney of its gum, to the delight which the elegance of the scenery afforded ; and which consoled us for this approach to another forest, after marching three days through a populous and well-tilled country.

Proceeding from Bergaon, we crossed a low range of hills by a stony, but very practicable pass, and marched three days through a forest, which is intersected by several rivulets ; but rarely interrupted by culture. The few villages that were scattered in it had been recently desolated, as already mentioned. The face of the country is undulated ; but the road is covered with soil, and has few loose stones. However, the additional fatigue now sustained by the cattle made us experience, with accumulated weight, the consequence of the hardships which the cattle had borne, in the very difficult roads before travelled by us. Two elephants had been left lame at the different places ; four were disabled, by the galling of their backs, from carrying their usual burdens ; several camels had died, and most of the rest were now either lame or galled by their saddles. By assigning a part of their loads to the healthy cattle, and by fresh aid of hired oxen, we were enabled to proceed, notwithstanding these increasing difficulties. We overtook, in the forest, carriers conducting towards Nagpur numerous droves of oxen, loaded with grain, especially linseed, sesamum, and wheat. At Deori Cishori, where we encamped on the third day from Bergaon, several large droves of cattle were detained for the adjustment of a petty duty of custom, levied then at the rate of one *ana* per load. Similar duties are collected at many other stations.

The loss of time and the vexations, not to mention undue exactions, to which traders become thus exposed, are far more burdensome than the amount of the taxes so collected. No intermediate customs should ever be exacted within the terri-

stories of the same sovereign, between the place where the merchandize is purchased and the market where it is sold. This obvious principle of finance is unknown to the government of Berar, and to most other native governments in India; and the carriers are exposed to exactions, more or less heavy, once, or even oftener, in every day's journey.

On the skirt of the forest we met traders going to Rayapur, to load with cocoa-nuts for Nagpur. The nuts are brought from the neighbourhood of the sea, where this sort of palm thrives better than in mountainous and inland countries. At Rayapur they are laden on oxen, at the cost of twenty to twenty-five *rupiyas* for the load, and are sold at Nagpur for twenty-seven to thirty *rupiyas*. Such, at least, is the statement that was given by these traders.

At Deori Cishori we halted an additional day, for the double purpose of giving rest to the cattle, and allowing the Muslems in our camp to celebrate the great festival;¹ which they did, by erecting a temporary edgah,² where a couple of chapters of the Koran were read, for their edification, by one of my attendants, who had used foresight and precaution in obtaining the necessary instructions and authority from the cazi of Retunpur.

Leaving Deori Cishori on the 10th of March, we traversed the remainder of the forest, and encamped near a small village, at the foot of a pass, which was crossed by us the next morning; and we thence proceeded to Sundregaoon, passing numerous villages, intermixed, however, with patches of forest.

Here, and in the whole tract from Bergaon to this place, the great *Tectona*,³ is a common tree; and the inhabitants of

¹ So the festival that follows the Mohammedan lent is called. The people assemble at a place allotted for the purpose, where the head of the law reads two chapters of the Koran, the first, and another; and afterwards recites the usual orison.

[² See p. 176 of this Vol.—Ed.]

³ Sagun, *Tectona grandis*, called teak by Europeans in India. From what language this name was borrowed is uncertain. The Hindu name, Sagun, prevails in the Deccan, and on the western coast of India.



the province are well acquainted with the value of its timber. Besides this, we found many old acquaintances among the plants of the forest.

At Sundregaoon we took leave of the hills, and proceeded to Sangerh, over a gently-undulating country, well tilled, with only a few patches of forest interspersed. Here, as at Sundregaoon, and at several intermediate spots, large ponds have been formed by a simple expedient, which will be more fully noticed in another place. On the edge of the pond, and almost surrounded by its water, stands the fort of Sangerh, an old building, and, seemingly, in bad repair. It is contiguous to a large village, which contains some neat houses; and the roads, that lead in various directions, were thronged with carts and carriages, and exhibited an active scene, which excited a pleasing sensation arising from the thought, that we had at length emerged from deserts and forests into an inhabited and civilized country.

Here we were welcomed by a person of rank, deputed for that purpose by the court of Nagpur. He accompanied us during the remainder of the march. The same person, Shekh Mohammed Ali, had executed the same office on former similar occasions. It was, he said, his privilege to welcome British ministers to the court of Berar. This venerable old gentleman was (he is since deceased) more than eighty years of age, but active and capable of undergoing much fatigue. On this, and on examples of longevity in his family, he confidently relied for a much longer life; but, in the subsequent year, succumbed under the fatigues of a winter campaign against a marauding partisan.

At this time, notwithstanding Mohammed Ali's hopes of long life, he did not neglect the means usually employed, by very old men, to atone for the sins of their youth, and to reconcile themselves with heaven, on the brink of the grave. The Shekh, to the punctual recitation of the five daily prayers, added frequent repetition of passages from the Koran. On



horseback, in a chair, or wherever placed, he muttered the holy sentences, without hindrance to conversation. He readily stopt the recital to make a lively remark or to return a prompt answer; and as readily resumed his devout muttering. But his devotion, nearly exempt from bigotry, had not damped his cheerfulness, which maintained its uniform tenor, notwithstanding a copious dose of opium, swallowed by him twice in each day.

The venerable Shekh conducted us, on the 13th of March, to Lakhni, where we were tempted, by the shade of a large and well-grown orchard, to halt a second day, for the sake of giving repose to our jaded cattle. This was the first shelter which we found since the weather had grown sultry. In the forest, the underwood prevents the traveller from taking shelter under the trees; and in the cultivated tracts through which we had since passed, orchards, and even single fruit-trees, were almost wholly wanting. This want indicates the deficiency of encouragement for agriculture and population. Wherever peasants become confident of transmitting their farms to their posterity, their earliest care is to plant trees for the benefit of their children. Both reason and religion dictate this duty to a Hindu peasant; when it has been uniformly neglected, the administration of the country must have been uniformly faulty.

We were here entertained with an exhibition, common in the Deccan; a series of pictures, (if pictures they may be called) figuring the fabulous horses of the Bhárat. The exhibition was accompanied with unmelodious song, and with the music of a drum, and of an instrument consisting of a brass plate, on which a waxed stick is held perpendicularly, and rubbed, to excite vibrations on the plate.

Leaving Lakhni, on the 15th of March, we forded the Banganga, and encamped near the fort of Bhandara, after passing some hilly and unequal ground, and subsequently traversing a very open and well-tilled country. The towns

and villages are populous, and surrounded with fruit-trees, especially *Eugenia jambos*. Fields of kidney-beans, (*dolichos*) of safflower, and of sugar-cane, indicate the varied husbandry of populous districts. I noticed, as a singular mixture of crops, kidney-beans and chiches, in fields of sugar-cane.

The next day we found good shelter in an orchard, near the village of Merore, contiguous to a garden of plantations and a field of tobacco. We here noticed, for the first time, a very simple contrivance, which is adapted to all deep wells in this part of the Deccan. It consists of a hose attached to the bottom of the bucket, and drawn over a roll into a trough. By duly proportioning the height of the pulley above the well, and the length of the ropes which pass over the pulley and roller, none of the water is wasted; and no other attendance is required but that of a driver to guide the oxen in their alternate walks to and from the well.

On the 18th of March, having rested the preceding day in a garden at Umri, and traversed an open country, which is grazed by wild antelopes, though not ill-cultivated, we encamped on the banks of the Nag, in sight of Nagpur, and at the distance of two miles from it. The son and grand-children of our Shekh, and the principal officers of the corps of Arab infantry, which he commanded, visited him at this place. The joy with which they welcomed the return of the patriarch, after his short absence, pleasingly demonstrated the affection which they bore to an indulgent parent and a mild commander.

The next morning, agreeably to a previous appointment, and conformably with arrangements now concerted, I paid my first visit to the Rajah of Berar; his eldest nephew welcomed me in my tents, which were purposely pitched in a garden contiguous to the town. He himself received me in his own palace. I reserve the description of the edifice, and of the style and manners of the court, for another place; and I shall here close the journey; adding, that three days after my arrival, at the pressing instance of the rajah, I took up my

abode in the place allotted to me, a garden and summer-house, which belonged to his deceased brother, Chimnaje.

HOMEWARD JOURNEY.

Having received letters of recall on the 8th of May, 1801, I expedited the preparations of the journey homewards, and taking leave of the court of Nagpur on the 18th, moved the next day to Comté, on the banks of the Cand'hán river, the junction of the Colár, and half a mile below that of the Peck. On this holy spot,—for the Hindus attribute some sanctity to the places where even unhallowed streams meet,—Vincagee Bhausla has built and endowed a temple, dedicated by him to Siva. The unfinished building contains a sacred type of that deity, fetched from the Nermada, a river which, like the Gandhac, has the happy privilege of furnishing idols, shaped without the aid of a sculptor's hand; for, near Omcar, it possesses an inexhaustible treasure of stones, abraded by the stream to the form assigned for the type of Siva. An Omcar Maheswara has been translated, by the piety of Vincagee, to the banks of the Cand'hán.

A second day was passed at the same place, assembling the camp-followers and attendants, who are always tardy in a first march. On the 21st we proceeded to Ramtec, the Rámagiri of the Indian theogenies. Here, Ráma, with his wife Sita, and brother Lacshman, halted in their way from Ayud'h towards the southern promontory; and here, Lacshman, influenced by the soil, became enamoured of his brother's wife. The ground is more truly classic, as the spot which the anonymous author of the Még'hadúta chose for the scene of his poem. A celestial spirit of an inferior order, banished upon earth, and separated from a beloved wife, makes this hill his abode; and here he vents, to a passing cloud, his tender regrets and amorous impatience. The chaste love, which is the subject of that beautiful little poem, contrasted with the



incestuous desires of Lacshman, and all the licentious legends of the voluminous Puráns, may suggest, that preference is due (and assuredly it is) to the profane before the sacred poetry of the Hindus.

The hill of Rám is the highest among a chain of peaks, which is continued, with a few breaks, both in the easterly and westerly directions. Its summit is covered with temples and other buildings consecrated to Rám, and the accustomed associates of the worship paid to that deified hero. Opposite to it, on a rival peak, is the tomb of a Mohammedan saint; and the foot of this hill is connected by a long dyke with another immense dyke about a mile distant. The lake, formed by this dam, covers many hundred acres in the early months after the rains, but was now almost dry.

On the 22nd, we traversed a forest, and encamped at Dungartál, a village which the lake takes its name from, formed by a wall of masonry, across a very narrow gorge between steep and rocky hills. The scene is picturesque: but the sight of a decaying village detracted from the pleasure with which the landscape might be viewed. Since the province of Garah has been re-united to the dominions of the Rajah of Berar, the frequent passage of troops, and of persons belonging to the brigade, stationed in that province, subjects the villages, situated on the side of the road, to almost daily calls for compulsory, and sometimes gratuitous, labour. The practice of pressing people for the conveyance of baggage from village to village, would not be tolerated by a well-regulated government. Its effects were seen by us in every subsequent march, demonstrated by the evident decay of many villages, and the total desertion of others.

Dungartál was the first acquisition of a Patán family, which now holds an extensive jagir, reaching from this place to the confines of the province of Garah. The present possessors of the jagir descend, in the fifth degree, from Raja Khan, an adventurer from the north of India, who obtained

service with the then chief of Déogerh, and left to his posterity this estate with the title of diwan. A substantial house, the ancient residence of the family, yet remains; but the more eligible abode of Shínni and Ch'hépára has drawn the descendants of Raja Khan to the banks of the Bán Ganga.

From Dungartál, we proceeded, in two days, to Mehgaon, traversing a forest which is rarely interrupted by tillage, and ascending a very steep and rocky pass. An undulating country, clothed with thick and lofty woods, exhibited much beautiful scenery, which reminded us of our former journey. The forest contains leafy *Butea*, and long-leaved *Bassia*; some *Sal* and *Catechu mimosa*; the three sorts of *Myrobalan*; the great *Tectona*, *Chelonoid bignonia*, and *Fistular cassia*; the fragrant *Boswellia*; a beautiful climbing *Bauhinia*; the Indian, and religious fig-trees; and many other conspicuous plants.

The stone is everywhere siliceous. In some places the road is reddened by the decomposition of a siliceous grit; but the rocks seem mostly quartzose. However, specimens of a sandstone, both red and white, were noticed in several spots. These observations, with the preceding remarks on the plants of the forest, are not restricted to the woods and hills between Dungartál and Mehgaon.

The last-named village is neatly built, and has a constant market for the supply of the wants of travellers. It stands on table-land, gently undulating, and which is sufficiently wooded, with majestic trees scattered on the plain. Several other villages in sight of Mehgaon indicate extensive culture.

We were here compelled to halt one day, to refresh the cattle and people; some of whom, having missed the way, added needless fatigue to a forced march. Our good fortune exempted us from a frequent repetition of the same accident, to which we were much exposed. At most seasons, the night is the proper time for travelling in India; the intense heat of the weather made it now peculiarly necessary to avoid march-



ing in the day.¹ Long stages were expedient, because the commencement of the rainy season was at hand. To reach the Ganges, even by forced marches, was almost hopeless, but to make every exertion for that object was indispensable. A single fall of rain would fill the rivers, and render even brooks and rivulets impassable. To halt until the torrents had passed would then become unavoidable. With every such interruption, the season would advance, and our difficulties would increase; entangled among forests, in a mountainous country covered with woods, we should soon be surrounded with disease; for, in the rainy season, the air of such countries is pregnant with the seeds of a fatal distemper,—*the fever of the forest*. It was, therefore, our constant and anxious wish to make as long marches as the people and cattle could perform; but it was not found easy so to regulate the stages.

At an advanced period of the dry season, when pools and rivulets are mostly dry, convenient stages would not always bring us to a spot where water could be procured. Shade was, in this very sultry weather, almost as necessary as water for the attendants and camp-followers. Fodder for numerous cattle, and supplies of grain for a large camp, always require provident care. The difference of a smooth or rugged road makes the same distance an easy journey in one case, and a laborious one in the other. In regulating our stages by all these considerations, we fully experienced the uncertainty of estimated measures, the unit of which is too large. The road measure of this part of the Deccan is the *gondi cos*, reckoned equal to two (others say three), *megheli* or *gao cos*, which are a little shorter than the *benjari cos*. Four if not five different measures, bearing the same denominations, become the source of constant perplexity; and, in so large a unit, as the equivalent of four or five miles, the error or uncertainty of a *fourth* part must be apprehended in the computed distance of

¹ During the middle of the day, a thermometer, in the shade, varied from 100° to 105° of Fahrenheit's scale.



one day's journey. We sometimes experienced the variation of a *third*, and often found the journey of the day exceed or fall short of the expected distance in the proportion first mentioned. Throughout Hindustan, where distances are generally reckoned by the *common cos*, computed distances are not found to differ so widely from actual measurements.

I resume the narrative.—From Mehgaon we proceeded through a well-cultivated country, by a good road, to Nariara. We crossed one running stream, and many dry beds of rivulets, and left on our right the town of Sioni, where the jagirdar, Diwan Mohammed Zeman Khan, usually resides. His house is a large and lofty edifice, which was a conspicuous object from the road, though distant four or five miles from it.

A second march brought us to Ch'hepára. We traversed a forest of thinly-scattered trees, crossed many beds of rivulets, and descended several declivities into the valley, in which the Bán Ganga runs. This valley is well tilled, and, jointly with the rest of the jagir, furnishes Nagpur with much wheat and other grain, conveyed thither upon oxen.

The town of Ch'hepára is large and populous. The Bán Ganga passes (I cannot say flows) through the middle of it; on the banks of the river, whose stream was now suspended by the dryness of the season, stands a large house, the abode of the younger branch of the Jagirdar's family. The town contains few other buildings of masonry, but many spacious though unsubstantial houses, thatched, as is usual in the Deccan, even for the smallest cottage. Ch'hepára is adorned by two cypress gardens; it was at this time decorated by temporary buildings, in which the wedding of the Jagirdar, who espoused the daughter of his uncle, had been celebrated a few days before with much splendour. This nobleman, the head of a numerous clan of Patáns, settled on his jagir, maintains the princely state of a grand feudatory, and, like an ancient baron in the feudal days of Europe, renders military service to the paramount. He had just received a summons