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NARRATIVE

OF A

JOURNEY FROM YEZD TO CABUL

In 1826

BY

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THE distance from Yezd to Herat is reckoned at 200 *farsakhs*, and the direction of the road as far as the town of Tun is north-east. From here onwards it runs nearly due east, only inclining slightly towards the north on the Gunabad route, while the Birjand route leads first south-east, as far as the town of that name, and afterwards north-east until reaching Herat.

The caravans using this road are made up entirely of camels and perform the journey ordinarily in thirty-five days, or at most fifty days, though travellers on horse-back accomplish it easily in twelve or fifteen.

Though called a road, it is, in reality, nothing more than a foot-path which travellers themselves have worn; but lying, as it does, in a perfectly flat country, there would be no difficulty in making the journey in a carriage. As far as Tun, caravanserais are found at every stage having been founded by pious individuals for the accommodation of Persian pilgrims to the tomb of Imam Raza at Meshed, the capital of Khorasan. Wells, also, are met with at intervals along these desert tracts, which have been established in the same way, for the refreshment of thirsty travellers, but which, at the present day, are all choked up owing to the unconcern of the Government.

The plains travelled over are dry, arid deserts, and from a distance have the appearance of a sea of salt; such, for instance, are the plains of Aliabad, Shah-Abbad, Chahardik and Tarij, where one sees enormous tracts of country whose soil is impregnated with salt and nitre, and where the vegetation consists of a few saline plants, such as the salt-wort, the orach and others. There are also low chains of hills of easy slopes which



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have to be crossed. Up to the sandy ranges known as Reg-i-Shutaran which occur at 40 *farsakhs* north-east of Yezd, one travels through the districts subordinate to that town, having on the right either the vast desert of Karir or the wastes of Kirman, and on the left the great salt desert which figures on the maps of Persia, and which is surrounded by the towns of Kashan, Kum, Simnan, Turshiz, Tun, Tabas. This desert is said by the inhabitants to measure eighty *farsakhs* in length and the same in breadth, and from near its centre rise the Biabanak mountains which astonish the traveller by displaying villages and cultivated lands in marked contrast to the terrible deserts surrounding them.

On emerging from the Reg-i-Shutaran, the southern districts of Khorasan are reached, which continue thence to Herat. The first of these districts passed through are those of Tabas. Perhaps the Tabiene of the Greeks; after these come those of Tun, I presume, constituting, the Parthannisa of the ancients, where there may still be seen the remains of tombs which might easily be those of the Kings of Parthia. After this, one passes through the Kain territory, leaving it again at the Gazik range to cross the vast desert plains which stretch as far as Herat, a distance of forty *farsakhs*.

The chains of mountains crossed by this route are for the most part separated from one another, and with the exception of the Exchda-Koh [*sic*], Khangar-Koh and Gazik hills, are of low altitude and extremely arid; but the absence of vegetation is a strong proof of the presence of mineral wealth. It is much to be desired that an expert mineralogist should travel through these countries, for at every step he would make some useful discovery. Close to the village of Exchkalon, [*sic*—Ashkalan?] which lies six *farsakhs* north of Yezd, there exists a lead mine, while Mount Darind shows many traces of the same metal, and the district of Post-Badam contains a few grains of gold. In the neighbourhood of Tun, there is a lead mine at the village of Khak, a copper mine at the back of the Khangar-Koh, and a silver mine at a place known as Tehianogr  [*sic*]. All these mines were worked in former days, but now they are entirely abandoned on account of the oppression of the Government, which is sufficient to stifle all industry.



YEZD TO CABUL IN 1826.

In the country lying between Bushire and Tun I found some very beautiful agates on the surface of the ground; these are especially abundant at Chak-Guraz.

In the chain of mountains forming the site of the castle of Furk one sees copper mines formerly worked by Mirza Rafik Khan, whence he obtained the metal to found some canon, still in existence at Birjand.

The soil of the Gazik range is of a light red color indicating perhaps a sulphurous nature. On its western slope is the Imamzada Sultan Ibrahim Raza, whence springs a stream of mineral water of tolerably high temperature, used for medicinal purposes by the inhabitants of the country when on pilgrimage there. In these hills, also, one meets with numbers of a kind of snake, whose bite is fatal.

Not far from the ruins of Gaza is a stream of the most bitter water, and near Tabas there is one whose water has such corrosive properties that if a sheep is submerged in it, the wool comes off immediately.

Along all the ranges extending from Rabat to Herat, the inhabitants of the country collect a kind of gum called Taranjubin* much used by the Persian doctors. It exudes from a small thorny bush which grows in tufts, and with shoots much resembling the thorny plant the camel is so fond of. The flower is of a whitish colour, and very like the flower of the lettuce; when picked off, its place is taken by a milky juice which hardens into a yellow drop, and this is the gum. At harvest time the inhabitants cut down the bush, dry it, and beat out the drops of gum which are afterwards passed through a sieve. The natural habitat of the bush is arid country.

The principal harvest for the people of these regions is the *angoza* or *assafœtida* plant which abounds throughout the greater part of these mountains, but especially in those near Kelmers, Tabas Khilikhi [*sic*] and on the ranges stretching to the southward of the town of Herat. It grows only to a height of two or three feet with a straight stem, and much resembles the great Corsican fennel. Its roots are very large and stretch to an enormous distance. To extract the *assafœtida* it is necessary

* Manna.

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at the spring equinox to cut down the stem to the level of the ground in order to prevent its growing; then throughout the fair season a milky juice flows from the stumps and thickens; every evening this is scraped off with the blade of a knife, and every tenth or twelfth day a thin layer of the stump is cut away in order that the juice may flow more freely. The cultivators of this plant take the precaution of covering it up so as to preserve it from the heat of the sun. The assafetida is sold to the Hindus of Herat, who send it to India where their countrymen consume large quantities of it with their food.

Besides the two products, above-mentioned, a few medicinal roots and herbs are also met with, and these are collected annually by the apothecaries of the country.

The only wild animals to be met with in the hills I have spoken of are wolves, goats, and a few hares and partridges; wild pigs are extremely rare on account of the absence of marshes in the country, but I killed two enormous ones at a salt-spring called Kabud. One may see, however, in some places troops of zebras; they abound in Segestan. This animal is smaller than a horse, and in shape has more the appearance of the domestic donkey; indeed it only differs from the latter inasmuch as it is of a redder colour. It has a quick pace and good staying powers, and seldom allows itself to be approached within gunshot. When the Afghans capture one, they invariably make a meal of it.

Among the small number of fruit trees, to be seen in the neighbourhood of the villages, may be mentioned a shrub growing in the Gask and Birjand districts, which produces an acid fruit called *Zerishk*, eaten by the Persians with their *pulaus*. The stem much resembles that of the pomegranate, and in September, the branches are covered with bunches of scarlet berries producing a beautiful effect. In the same region also may be observed quantities of jujube trees and also a few cedars.

The whole of the country between Yezd and Herat is subject to violent wind storms from May till October; the heat during this period is suffocating, but it has no evil influence even though one be exposed to it in the burning winds of the desert. The rains take place in March, April and December, and in winter a trifling



amount of snow falls. Although two crops are secured each year, the produce of these scarcely suffices for the consumption of the inhabitants.

That which strikes one as most remarkable on this trying journey is the absence of the smallest stream of water. Here and there a few springs, or *kahrez* are found, but their water is often brackish, and only serves to augment the thirst of the traveller, while the amount that flows from them is only sufficient to water a few acres of land. The inhabitants collect this outflow in tanks which they open two or three times a day in order to distribute it economically. The miserable villages of the country form scarcely any relief to its universal aridity, though a patch of green generally indicates one in the distance. The people are chiefly settled, though nomadic tribes are sometimes met with, such as the Chaudars, the Kazimis, the Bani-Kazails, Bani-Asads and Bani-Kafajis who inhabit the districts of Tabas and Tun. Near the province of Kain are the Falahis, the Sahbis, the Henunis, the Yakubis and the El-Abasides. All these tribes are of Arab origin; the greater part of them being descended from the colonies of Shah-Abbas, while the remainder date from the time of Tamerlane, who established them in these regions on returning from his conquests. These Arabs have retained none of their ancient customs, except that of living in black tents; they have even lost the use of their language. Their cattle form their only wealth: and they enjoy even less comfort than the inhabitants of the villages. These last, steeped as they are in misery, occupy themselves with the cultivation of a few acres of land, the produce of which is scarcely sufficient for their sustenance; or, where no cultivation is possible, they may be seen amusing themselves in spinning wool with a spindle in order to kill time. Famine is not an uncommon occurrence, and is much aggravated by the pillaging of the Turkomans and Beluchis. The crops consist of oats, barley, turnips, beetroot and sesamum oil.

With such dearth of provisions, forage and water, the impossibility of passing troops through the country will be readily seen. Indeed, from time immemorial, only two instances are known of its having been effected. The first who dared it was Shah-Abbas, who

crossed with a portion of his troops when on his return from the conquest of Candahar. The great king was alarmed at the aridity of the sand-hills and at the danger which must be experienced by travellers; he halted therefore and excavated tanks, and put up, at intervals, small conical pyramids to serve as guides to travellers on their trying and perilous passage of five hours duration across these moving sands. The inhabitants of Rabat to the present day show the passer by the plateau on which this restorer of Persia pitched his tent, and from whence he watched, with enjoyment, the progress of the works. A large number of the tanks and caravanserais, met with between Yezd and Tun, owe their existence to him. The sand-hills are formed from the whirlwinds of sand which prevail here during certain fixed seasons, and which heap up the sand of the desert on the slopes of the low chains of mountains running from north-east to south-west. This passage is a means of communication between the great salt desert and the desert of Kariz, which Mir Mahomed had the temerity to cross, in 1722, with a horde of Afghans, when he dethroned Shah Sultan Husain, King of Persia.

The passage of these hills has become very dangerous for caravans, since 1812, in consequence of bands of Beluchis hiding themselves there for the purpose of plunder. Since that date the robberies committed by these brigands amount to enormous sums.

Frequently when not finding any plunder on this route, they have been known to pass over to those of Kirman, Ispahan and Kashan, but there several of their bands have been unfortunate and have been exterminated. As soon as one of these has captured its booty, it retires and is immediately replaced by another. In order to reach these places, they cross the desert of Kariz mounted on camels, and at the rate of 20 or 30 *farsakhs* a day. These bands never consist of less than thirty men or more than one hundred, and they are usually subject to Khan Jehan, the chief of the tribe which lives at the foot of Chakansur on the frontier of Sigistan [Seistan?]. It is he who despatches them on their mission, and who takes one-third of the booty for himself. These barbarous people are of a very swarthy complexion; their costume consists of a long cotton shirt which they tie in at the waist with a camel's hair

rope, and on their heads they wear a turban. It is remarkable that they shave the middle of their mustaches leaving the sides to grow, and that they leave a tuft of hair growing on each side of the head, which hangs down on the shoulder. When they proceed to the sand-hills, they encamp at Chah Bakhtiari, or at a stream two *farsakhs* to the right of the route leading to Shutaran. Here they leave their camels and continue on foot as far as the road when they attack the caravans. Generally they form ambuscades in all directions, but the centre of their pillaging operations is a narrow defile to the north of the sands called Godar Camber [*sic*]. The hidden Beluchis allow the caravans to enter the sands, and then occupying the roads behind them, fall upon them with their swords; should any caravan offer the smallest resistance, its members are massacred and no quarter is given. On account of their unheard-of cruelties, they have inspired such terror that cases have been known where a band of thirty or forty have robbed, with impunity, a caravan of over two hundred people, chiefly armed. The massacres they have committed are numberless. The most terrible was one which took place in 1823 when they cut the throats of a hundred and odd pilgrims on their way from Yezd to Meshed; and the traveller may still see, near the third pyramid, a pile of bricks marking the last resting place of these unfortunate creatures. At the time of my passage I saw the corpses of five travellers who had been assassinated quite recently; indeed, the murderers were still camped at Chah Bakhtiari, but they dared not attack us as they were in small force, while our caravan was numerous and well armed and was accompanied by an escort. One of their detachments, while returning from a marauding expedition, accidentally fell in with our escort which was preceding us and were surrounded and cut down. They were six in number, and two of them were captured alive and taken to Rabat Khan, where they were lashed to a tree and riddled with balls. The people of the village who witnessed this execution manifested their discontent, but they were not listened to,—a circumstance that made me think they were often in league with the Beluchis, and that it was from them the latter derived their supplies when obliged to wait in these parts for a

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favourable moment to make an attack. The Governor of the country, though he has every means at hand for putting down this brigandage, takes no notice of the matter, but contents himself with going through the form of placing a picquet of cavalry at Rabat, whose duty it is to make an occasional reconnaissance as far as the sands. One is also astonished to find that the Prince of Yezd causes officers to be placed at Kharoni, Sagan and other places, more for the purpose of levying a toll on passengers than for any other object. The only care they take of the caravans is to prevent them pushing on into the sands while the Beluchis are actually there. For this purpose they have look-out stations on the tops of hills, which, by means of fire signals, give the necessary warnings for people to retire to the villages. Still, with a better administration, it would be very easy to put an end to this brigandage; detachments of cavalry posted at the most dangerous places would be a guarantee of peace to the inhabitants, while at the same time travellers would be protected and would be relieved from the fear and anxiety which, at present, attends the passage.

But the above is not the only danger to be feared on this road; there is also that of the Turkomans which is a much more terrible one, inasmuch as all who fall into the hands of these people are sold into slavery. The Turkomans engaged in this brigandage are usually of the Eimak tribe, the chief of whom resides at Maimena, a town at eight days' distance from Herat. From time immemorial these hordes have overrun Khorasan and Herat with impunity, while the princes who rule these provinces have offered no opposition. They plunder everybody they meet—men, women and children—and carry them off for sale as slaves at Bokhara. It is not only the hope of booty that incites them to this life of brigandage; it is, to a great extent, the hatred they bear towards the Persians, for they are Sunnis and the latter Shias, and they believe it to be a meritorious act, from a religious point of view, to convert the latter to their own sect. The Turkoman danger commences in the neighbourhood of Tun, and extends up to the outposts of Herat; the greatest risk being between the towns of Kain and Khaf. It was for this reason that the leader of our caravan avoided that

route, and took one lying further towards the south and crossing through the dependency of Birjand. The precaution however proved disastrous, for when within three days' journey of Herat, we were attacked by a band of Beluchis, who harassed us, and whom we only succeeded in beating off after an obstinate resistance.

The inhabitants of these regions know neither peace nor security. While tilling their fields they are constantly on the *qui vive*, and are often obliged to abandon their work in order to avoid falling into the hands of the Turkomans. One method they have of obtaining security in cases of sudden surprise, while thus employed, is to take refuge in small earthen towers which they build for the purpose on their farms, and which are only accessible by means of ladders. In travelling through these regions, one never meets with a family which has not to complain of one of its members being in slavery with Turkomans. But it is not a little surprising that those who have once been subjected to this lot never make any attempt to return to their homes; on the contrary, they usually write to their relatives that as they have fallen into comfortable circumstances, it would be a folly on the latter's part to make any sacrifice for the purpose of ransoming them. Indeed, some of these slaves will accompany the Turkomans on their raids in the capacity of guides. At the time of my passage through the country, one of these 'Turkoman' bands was committing great ravages; and Herat was so greatly infested by them that Prince Kamran felt himself obliged to seek the alliance of the Prince of Khorasan in order to put an end to the terrible scourge by joint action. It was this danger which caused one to leave the caravan, I had hitherto accompanied, at Sehdeh, and to proceed to Birjand in order to obtain an escort from the Governor of that place with whom I had been well acquainted at the Court of Teheran. His Excellency was surprised to see me, but received me exceedingly well, and overwhelmed me with presents. He told me that Monsieur Oms who left the Persian service in 1824 for the purpose of travelling across to India, was stopped by his own people, plundered of all his property and shut up in the castle of Furk, whence, however, he had contrived to escape. I obtained from this Gov-

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ernor an escort of horsemen which I sent to my friend Avitabile who, together with the caravan, was proceeding to Avaz by way of Djisk, Gask and Nohkap [*sic*]. In the meantime, I took the road to Furk, accompanied by the son of the Governor, who only left me on arriving at Avaz. While passing through Furk, this latter showed me the copper mine which his Agent had opened, and which had furnished the metal for the construction of some guns now in the castle.

On arriving at Herat we found that province in a state of civil war. In April 1826, Prince Kamran having driven out his father, Mahomed Shah, two parties had sprung into existence and had commenced a bloody war. In June, the King had come to Herat, and with the assistance of Buniad Khan, Chief of the Hazaras, had invested the town, but disaffection having broken out in his army he found himself forced to retire to Farrah, whence he took other measures to expel his son from the province. These had the effect of obliging the latter to seek an alliance with Hasan-Ali-Mirza, Prince of Khorasan, who being flattered at such submission on the part of a prince hitherto in revolt against him, and appreciating also the advantages he might derive from it, sent him reinforcements to the extent of 6,000 men and four guns, under the command of his son Arghun Mirza. The united forces were now encamped on the Murghab river with the object of opposing the Khan of Maimana in coming to the assistance of Mahomed Shah.

The town of Herat, the Aria of the Greeks, is said to have been founded by Alexander the Great. The inhabitants affirm that the plain on which it is built was formerly a lake formed of the waters of the river Hari which were pent up by the Lenghir Djan [*sic*] chain. Alexander cut through this chain, and the lake becoming dry disclosed such a beautiful tract of land that he built a town upon it. At any rate, it is certain that the castle of *Aubée* [Ayub?] ten *farsakhs* east of Herat, was founded by this conqueror. Herat is a small town, surrounded by high earthen walls and flanked by towers which are gradually falling to ruin. A deep wide ditch, always full of water, encircles the wall on all sides. The town comprises 10,000 houses, twenty caravanserais, thirty baths, four bazaars, six col-

leges, and the palace of the prince, which may be considered as his fort. The only remarkable buildings in the place are the palace of Ibrahim Khan Jamshidi, and a vast tank whence the greater part of the inhabitants derive their water, and which is fed by a subterranean stream coming from the mountains. The population amounts to 40,000 souls, of whom two-thirds are Persians and the remainder Afghans, but the large trade carried on with Bokhara, Candahar, Meshed and Yezd attracts a great number of strangers. The products of the town consist of a few silk and cotton fabrics. In the year of the Hijra 619, Herat was sacked by Chingis Khan and subsequently by Tamerlane, whose descendants made it their residence for a considerable length of time. Herat also gave birth to the celebrated historian Khundemir, author of an abridged universal history, and to the poet Jami, who lived during the reign of Sultan Husain Baikara, the monarch to whom he dedicated his "Baharistan."

The environs of Herat are most agreeable, the remarkable objects being the houses and pleasure grounds of Takht-i-Saifur, and Guzargah and the garden of the Shahzada Malik Kasim which are situated in the north-eastern quarter of the town. In the same neighbourhood also stands the famous mosque of Musallah, nearly adjoining the royal garden. At present it is in ruins, but it has been a building of extraordinary beauty for Persia, comprising, as it did, ten minarets and an immense college. The ruins show that the architecture was simple and elegant, and perfectly adapted to the climate, while the richness of the dome and ceilings is astonishing. The walls are chiefly composed of varnished (glazed) bricks whose tints and shades of colour strike the eye most agreeably. The minarets, also, are especially pleasing on account of their graceful lightness and boldness of form. When one of them began to lean in the direction of Meshed, the burial place of Imam Raza,—one of the twelve apostles of the Persians—the fanatics raised a cry of miracle, and to this day take a pride in pointing out the circumstance to the traveller. It was Sultan Husain Mirza Baikara who undertook the erection of this superb building, it having been urged on him by his favourite slave Gauhar Shah. Some, however, attri-

bute it to Gias-ud-din, a Sultan of the dynasty of the Ghaurides. It was destroyed by the Tartars under Chingis Khan.

Not far from Guzargah, and on the chain of mountains in the rear of this garden, is a ruby mine which was formerly worked, but is now entirely abandoned, because the stones it produces are generally pierced with a number of small holes which detract from their value. In the eastern part of the same chain is a lead mine worked by Prince Kamran on his own account. The hills extending towards the north are said to be well wooded, and to produce, among an infinite variety of trees, the pistachio and other fruit trees in a wild state. They also produce a quantity of medicinal herbs which are gathered by the apothecaries. The dyers also resort to these hills for supplies of those berries and roots used for colouring manufactured stuffs—an art in which they excel Europeans.

The fertility of the basin of Herat is such as I have seldom met with in Asia. On approaching it, the traveller, fatigued with his journey through the desert, is refreshed by the sight of rich cultivation and numerous villages. It measures approximately four *farsakhs* from north to south, and thirty *farsakhs* from east to west. According to the inhabitants, twelve thousand pairs of bullocks are employed annually in its cultivation, and it is estimated that each pair produces twelve *kharwar* of grain. Great quantities of fruit are grown, and of the best quality. There are thirty-two kinds of grapes, the most highly esteemed of which are the *Kayi-Goiaman* and the *Rish-i-baba*, but the peculiar way the vine is cultivated by the natives is remarkable. The valley is everywhere cut up by canals emanating from the Hari river, while the latter is almost dried up in consequence of their continued drainage. The principal canal is the one called *Endgil* which passes through the royal garden, and supplies the city moat with water.

The Hari springs from the mountains to the east of the valley, and after a westerly course loses itself in the desert to the north of Khorasan. Thus those geographers who make it discharge into the Zerah lake are mistaken. On the road to Candahar it is crossed

by a massive bridge called *Pul-i-Malan*, and it is also necessary to cross it several times on the way to Meshed.

After the death of Nadir Shah, Herat was always a bone of contention between the Persians and the Afghans whose disputes resulted in bloody wars, but the latter were almost always victorious. In 1818, when troubles prevailed in Afghanistan, the Persians took advantage of the occasion, and exerted themselves to the utmost to re-conquer the town. The result was a pitched battle at Kafir-Kala, where the Persians were victorious, it is true, but they had subsequently to give up their acquisition. Since that time the place has remained in peaceful possession of the Afghans, because the ever-recurring insurrections in Khorasan act as a constant check to the Persian troops. A short time after the battle of Kafir-Kala the Barikzais dethroned Mahomed Shah, and the town and its dependencies passed into the hands of this unfortunate king who was weak enough to allow himself to be deprived of it by his eldest son, Prince Kamran, who is the present Governor. This prince is about fifty years of age; he is brave, firm of will and full of activity, and leaves no means untried of endeavouring to re-conquer his father's kingdom. A lack of money, however, forces him to await more favourable times; though it would not be difficult for him to gain his end, seeing that the Barikzais who are now in power are entirely wanting in unanimity, and indeed are making war among themselves. Moreover, their misrule is so notorious, and all the tribes are so weary of their cupidity, that these latter are ripe for revolt.

The town of Herat is capable of being better fortified, and if it were in the hands of the Persians, it might, owing to its geographical position, exercise the greatest influence over any expeditionary army which Russia might send to India. As an ally, Persia would conciliate the people of Bokhara, Balkh and Candahar, and would thus make sure of the communications in the Russian rear and allow the latter to pass on boldly to their conquests; but as an enemy she might place insurmountable obstacles in their path.



Itinerary from Herat to Cabul via Candahar.

Two roads lead from Herat to Cabul; one by way of Hazara, requiring from eight to ten days to travel, and the other by way of Candahar which is a great deal longer. As we were desirous of arriving at the end of our journey as early as possible, we chose the first of these, but on taking the advice of some merchants we afterwards gave up the intention, partly because of the difficulties of the road in so mountainous a country, but chiefly because, at the present day, it is unsafe to venture into those regions where the conduct of the rulers towards travellers is arbitrary in the extreme. Thus we took the route through Candahar. This skirts the western slope of the Firuz Koh chain of mountains which extends as far as Candahar, and separates Seistan from the province of Gaur. The distance is 125 *farsakhs*, and the road leads nearly entirely through open plains crossed at intervals by low ranges of hills, the passage of which, for artillery, is in no case difficult. It is remarkable that the country slopes uniformly towards the south; and the only inconvenience it presents for the passage of troops is its dearth of population and consequent lack of provisions. Moreover, water is scarce for some stages, and it would be necessary to march by double stages in order not to suffer from the want of it. The stages at which it is available are Farrah and Girishk. The caravans using this route are composed of camels or horses, but mules are rarely met with. The load of a camel is from 100 to 150 *batmans* of the country, and that of a horse from 20 to 30, the cost of the former being three *sequins*, and of the latter six, besides a present to the leader of the caravan. The time occupied by camels is generally twenty-five days, but horses accomplish the distance in eight or, at most, ten. The horse caravans march day and night, and only halt during the time required for resting the animals; they usually start at midday and march till midnight, halting then at a spot some distance from the line of route in order to avoid robbers who swarm in these regions. At dawn they resume the march and arrive at the end of the stage some two or three hours



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after sunrise. Here each one takes his meal and his rest, and feeds his animals, after which, at midday, they start again and recommence the routine of the previous day. This mode of travelling is a rapid one, but at the same time most arduous for those unaccustomed to the fatigues of Asiatic travel.

Before leaving Herat we discarded our Persian dress and adopted that of Afghanistan. This was a necessary precaution as the Afghans being Sunnis and enemies of the Persians, we should otherwise have found ourselves in perpetual difficulties. The more completely to deceive them, also, we arranged our beards and moustaches in Afghan fashion, and throughout the journey conformed exactly to their practices in the matter of ablutions and prayers.

We took our departure on the 1st October 1826, and made the first halt at the caravanserai of Shahabad which is situated at the extremity of the defile of Mir Daud. On the way M. Avitabile and myself were imprudent enough to go in advance of the caravan, and were consequently nearly murdered by some people of the Nurzais tribe who live in these mountains; we were saved only by the speed of our Arab horses. It is in the gorges of these hills that the middle range of Firuz-Koh commences, and it stretches in a north-west and south-east direction; it is not a remarkable chain when compared with those rising further towards the north. The most elevated point is Mount Firuz, from whence project the Karik and Kusurman chains, which extend towards the west. The lower slopes of this chain are very rugged and arid—indeed entirely bare if one excepts a few patches of scattered weeds and bushes. Some of the gorges and ravines are cultivated, but others are not; they are inhabited by a pastoral people, who live in black tents, and whose encampments are generally situated near the springs or on the banks of the streams. These encampments are connected with one another by an infinity of foot-paths practicable for cavalry.

On leaving Shahabad we took a cross-road and left the main route on our right, in order to avoid the troops of Mahomed Shah who were camped in the plains beyond, and who were in the habit of committing all

kinds of outrages. The country thus traversed was very mountainous; it is crossed by the two little rivers called Gaz and Adrashkan, which flow from north-east to south-west and are said to discharge into the Farrah. At the time we crossed them, these streams were almost dry, but when the snows melt they become swollen to such an extent that caravans are stopped by them for several days at a time. The country hereabouts is overgrown with pistachio trees which, in autumn, bear a red fruit whose stone has the taste of the pistachio nut. This tree appears to like the most arid spots and gives off a quantity of gum in white drops, of which the inhabitants make no use. They gather a portion of the fruit however, and chew it as a stomachic. There is also to be found on these mountains a quantity of gooseberry-rhubarb (*rhubarbe groseille*).

After two days' march we descended into the plain of Daulat-abad, debouching by a difficult pass in the Karik chain, although there is an easier one on the western side of the chain descending to the great road leading to Farrah—the birth-place of the famous Rustam, the Hercules of the Persians, of whom so much is said in Firdausi's "Shahnamah".

The plain on which Farrah is situated is but little cultivated, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the town itself. It is crossed from east to west by a small river which takes its rise in the Firuz Koh, crosses a portion of Seistan, and afterwards empties itself into the lake of Zerah, where the Aria Palus of the ancients should be found. I presume that the river is no other than the Pharnacotis of the Greeks, and that the town of Farrah is the ancient Phra. There was but little water in it when we crossed, but it is said to overflow enormously in spring; its bed is stony and its current rapid, and along its banks are pitched the black tents of the Nurzais. After crossing the plain we left the main road to the left, and took a cross-road passing through the defile of Panj-angusht—a terrible passage for beasts of burden, and even for men on foot. The remarkable part of this defile is its eastern opening, which consists of an enormous portal formed by two rocks standing one on either side. A small river rises at the spot and completes the picturesqueness of the scene. The main



road passes through the gorge of Kussurman, which lies six *farsakhs* higher up and presents no difficulties to the traveller. From there we entered on a vast plain extending towards the south as far as the eye could reach, and in the middle of which could be traced the course of a little stream, called Ibrahim, irrigating the lands of an isolated village called Bakova. This plain swarms with hares, gazelles, and zebras, the last of which are met with in herds, while from its midst rises the isolated hill of Kunduz. While passing across the northern portion of the plain we were suddenly attacked by a band of Beluchis mounted, some on horses and some on camels, who cut off the rear of our caravan and carried away six of our animals. We rallied, however, and offered resistance while marching along with closed ranks. On their returning to the attack they attempted to cut through us, but were repulsed by the hot fire they met with and finally withdrew, leaving us free to continue our journey as far as the river Kash-rud. After this we took the greatest care how we became involved in the gorges of this mountainous country for fear of encountering more Beluchis, but happily we had no further trouble with them.

We made a halt at Vouachenk, [*sic*],* a village containing about 100 houses and surrounded by a wall, the inhabitants of which are Nourzais, and have the reputation of being crafty robbers. They are in the habit, like the rest of the Afghans, of crowding round a caravan on the pretext of obtaining news, and then seizing the occasion to practise every kind of roguery on the travellers; it is necessary therefore to keep one's eye constantly on them, to avoid becoming their dupe. All the country to the north of this village is uncultivated and uninhabited; it is watered by the Kash-rud which runs from north to south, and which is nothing but a torrent, though nearly dry when we passed it. According to Khundemir these mountains were the home of the famous imposter Hakim-bin-Hashim, who, by natural processes, produced effects which appeared extraordinary in the eyes of the inhabitants, and who regarded him accordingly as one possessed of Divine inspiration.

* Wouacherk on the map.

Every night he caused a luminous body, like the moon, to rise out of a well.

Leaving Vouachenk one crosses a mountainous and uninhabited country, and thence descends into the plain of Lar which is peopled by the tribe of Sabzezais; the Dahar mountains, forming part of the Firuz Koh chain, are continually in sight and are inhabited by the Alizais tribe. It is quite possible that this Dahar country might be the province of Dahce upon which Alexander marched after defeating the Scythians. From here we proceeded to the village of Girishk, and in approaching it met with a new and more agreeable scene consisting of a cultivated district watered by the river Helmand, called by our geographers "Hindmend," and which, I presume, is no other than the Etymander of the Greeks. This river springs from the province of Gaur, and after passing through the Dahar mountains debouches into the plain; its direction in this part of its course is from north-east to south-west, but lower down it flows east, traverses Seistan, and then discharges into the lake of Zerah. Otter is wrong in showing the river divided into several arms and losing itself in the desert. Danville also is in error when he places its source in Ark-Haji. The river Sambara which he traces past Girishk is nothing but a torrent called Sohminar, distant about two *farsakhs* west of the village of Kala-Sadat Khan and between it and Girishk. Indeed the map of this celebrated geographer is so faulty in respect to these countries that it is with difficulty one can reconcile one with the other. At the point where the Helmand debouches from the mountains, its current is very rapid, and its bed being unembanked it is liable to overflow; thus, during the year 1825, it carried away more than ten thousand black tents, together with the inhabitants and their flocks and herds who had formed their encampments on its banks. The bottom being of gravel, the water is beautifully clear, and except during the rainy season, it is fordable in many places. The principal ford—the one by which we crossed—is situated about three miles above Girishk, and may be known by a grove of high poplar trees on the opposite side. There the river divides into three arms, of which the eastern one is the deepest. It may be crossed by guns but not by powder-



waggon (caissons). No ferry-boats exist, which is somewhat astonishing, seeing how easy it would be to build them, while the neighbouring mountains are teeming with wood; but the Afghans are not capable of so much enterprise.

Girishk is a large village, standing about three-quarters of a mile from the Helmand though formerly it stood on the river's bank, and the intervening space is now-a-days covered with paddy fields. It is defended by a castle built on an elevated spot, and in a fairly commanding position, but it is of small importance as its masonry could offer but little resistance to artillery. The side facing the east is perpendicular, but the other three command a hilly tract, the ravines of which enable the place to be approached within a very short distance of the walls, and, moreover, render it liable to be mined. It was built by Purdel Khan, one of the present Governors of Candahar, and is the chief town of the Barikzais who inhabit both banks of the Helmand. At the present day this tribe is the most powerful in Afghanistan; their principal Chiefs having dethroned Mahmud Shah distributed the provinces of the kingdom among themselves and ruled them despotically as independent States. The custom-house authorities of Girishk obliged us to submit to a rigorous examination, even searching the clothes we wore; their custom is to appropriate 5 per cent. of all sequins found on the persons of travellers, while each beast of burden is made to pay two sequins. The villains even use deceitful means for surprising merchants and confiscating their goods.

From Girishk to Candahar is reckoned only twenty *farsakhs*; the journey being made through a most desert country. The Firuz mountains are constantly in view, and it is hereabouts that they rejoin the Shah Maksud chain. From this latter, two arms detach themselves, and, projecting towards the south-west, enclose the district of Maivand, renowned for its fruit, and especially for its pomegranates. Proceeding onwards to Khushk-Nakhud, one arrives in a country offering the greatest advantages for the defence of Candahar on its western side. Here may be seen the Argandab river making a westerly course, and afterwards pouring its waters into the Helmand at four *farsakhs* below Girishk. The

region to the south is that of the moving sands which extend for a distance of over forty *farsakhs* up to the Nushki and Kharan districts of Beluchistan, the country whence the Candaharis obtain their camels and dates; on the right bank of this river stand many rich villages, the most important being Sanghisar, Colk, and Pashe-mur. In examining the course of the Argandab I could not help remarking the serious error into which Danville fell when he made a river which he called the Hir take its departure from Candahar, and after assuming an easterly course, discharge its waters into the Indus. Forster likewise gives a wrong direction to this river. I may here observe that all the rivers that flow through this province, such as the Argandab, the Turnak, the Arkassan and the Dori run westward and discharge into the Helmand. The Argandab, I presume, is no other than the Arachotus of the Greeks, because it is said to have emptied itself into a lake; its source is at the foot of mount Gul-koh in the district of Navor.

After fording the Argandab one arrives at the plain of Candahar through the passage of Chihil-Zina, so named on account of the forty stairs which lead to a grotto situated on the top of a hill and cut out the virgin rock—a work attributed by the Afghans to a descendant of Tamerlane. This point is also a good one for the defence of Candahar, for the net-work of canals around it render it difficult to approach. There still exists, there, the ruins of a small castle which formerly defended the passage. From the top of the hill a beautiful view is obtained, on the one side of a superb valley covered with meadows and groves of trees, and on the other the vast plain of Candahar. Nature has lavished on this country the fertilising influence of the Argandab river which irrigates it through various channels, the chief being those of Nusijan and Patab. The latter, before arriving at the town, passes through the village of Chihil Dukhtaran; it is a stream full of particles of mica.

The town of Candahar was founded by Ahmed Shah, and it is evident from the flimsy and tasteless construction of the buildings that the place was hurriedly built, and no care was taken to embellish it. Two great streets run from one end of the town to

the other, and cross each other in the middle at a point called Chaharsu, which is marked by a vast cupola; they lie in the four cardinal points of the compass, are spacious, and were formerly destined for vaulted bazaars, but the design was never carried out, and miserable huts were erected instead, covered with mats and reeds. The only remarkable edifice at Candahar is the tomb of Ahmed Shah which is embellished with a beautiful octagonal cupola, though the garden that formerly surrounded it is now entirely gone to ruin.

The population of the town may be estimated at twenty-five thousand souls, and is composed of Afghans, Persians, Beluchis and Hindus who may be distinguished from one another by their way of arranging the hair. The first preponderate, and it is remarkable that their women are even more secluded than in Persia; indeed it is very rarely that a woman is seen in the streets. Those who are occasionally seen wandering about belong to the Kaulis [*sic*] tribe whose occupation is surgery and blood-letting for sick people. Among the crowds frequenting the bazaars there are people to be met with who live in perfect nudity; they are usually mad-men, towards whom the Afghans behave with great indulgence, as they consider them to be privileged beings. They are called Aulia, or saints, and at their death special monuments are erected over their graves, which, in the course of time, become places of pilgrimage for the people of the country, thus accounting for the number of these places to be met with throughout the land and especially at Candahar. The principal ones are those of Shah-Maksud, Baba-Wali, and Hazratji, the first of which is situated six *farsakhs* north of the town on the range of mountains of the same name, and whence is derived a yellow transparent stone like amber, much sought after by all Afghans for chaplets. White, black and grey stones of the same kind are also found, but these are not of such beautiful water as the yellow. The more fanatical of the natives grind them to powder and eat them as a means of acquiring strength.

Candahar is not commanded from any point; the town is enclosed by a wall flanked by towers and is in tolerably good repair, though incapable of resisting a bombardment. The ditch surrounding it is not deep

and is supplied by the Patab canal, which might easily be turned out of its course if an attack were to be made. In this way also the inhabitants would be reduced to using the water of the wells, of which there are very few in Candahar. The old town is situated on the eastern slope of the range of hills bounding the plain of Candahar on the west; at the present day it is entirely in ruins and abandoned, but it is conspicuous, even from a distance, by the remains of its old castle or citadel. It was destroyed by Nadir Shah, and one may still see the little fort of Kahi-tul on the top of the hill, from which the king bombarded it with his artillery. The siege had lasted six months, and would not even then have come to an end had not the daughter of Shah-Hussain delivered over this little fort to Nadir; as a punishment for her treachery, however, the latter caused her to be drawn and quartered before her father. From this small fort a number of defensive walls or ramparts extend in various directions over the slopes of the hills, and were originally built for resisting the Persian troops. It is thought that this may be the town built by Alexander in Arrochosia, but if this is not the case, Iskanderganj must unquestionably be it, the ruins of which latter stand four *farsakhs* north-east of Candahar, and are, according to the inhabitants, of great antiquity.

The town built by Nadir Shah is three miles to the south of the modern town, and near the village of Shir-surkh; but it is also destroyed.

The territory of Candahar is very fertile and well adapted to the growth of the vine, though the inhabitants cultivate it but little—even less than at Herat. The chief products are wheat, barley, tobacco, cotton and madder, but rice, maize, millet and beans are also cultivated, and sesamum and rapeseed oils produced. The banks of the fertilising Argandab are rich with orchards which produce quantities of fruit; the pomegranate, the apricot, and the mulberry being the most common. In consequence of this abundance, provisions are cheap, and an army might remain here for months; the spring and autumn are agreeable, though the heat is great in summer, especially when the wind is from the south; the winter is sharp and dry, and it is said that snow falls every seven years. With the exception of



autumn, when fevers are not uncommon, the climate may be said to be healthy, while the fevers are doubtless due to the excessive quantities of melons, water-melons, and cucumbers consumed by the people.

Among the various tribes inhabiting the province, the Barikzais are the most numerous, then come the Alizais, and after them the Popalzais. The first of these are a settled people, the others are nomads, whose property consists of cattle and camels.

The true national character of the Afghans is visible at Candahar rather than at Herat, Cabul or Peshawur, for in the three last the stream of foreigners constantly flowing through has somewhat obliterated it. In comparing their manners and customs with those of the Persians, one finds many points of resemblance, especially that both follow the precepts of the Koran; but as a nation one cannot help remarking that they are much rougher and coarser than the Persians. This defect in their civilisation is to be accounted for by the fact that their rulers have always been occupied in defending the country against the attacks of their neighbours, and have never had leisure to think of improving the laws. The Afghan has neither the pride nor the bad faith of the Persian, and so far, is he from resembling the latter in his cringing and empty compliments that his manners are earnest and frank, and his politeness is even tinged with coldness and roughness. With the exception of his masters he respects no one more than another, but regards all as his equals and treats them without ceremony; thus when a European visits Afghanistan he is struck with the familiarity existing between high and low. Nevertheless, the Afghan is the slave of his master, as far as it is possible to be so under a despotic government, but in spite of this he loves liberty to such an extent that he would prefer to forfeit his life rather than submit to foreign servitude. Being of nomadic origin, he practises hospitality to the same extent as the Arab. He is brave, and thinks himself the best soldier in the world; indeed so rooted is this conviction that it is impossible to shake it; still it is a fault not only of the Afghans but of all nations, and especially of Asiatics. Hence they love to recount the exploits of the Durranis who formed the flower of Nadir Shah's armies, and conquered a portion

of India during the reign of Ahmed Shah. As a pastoral people, the Afghans love disorder, for by means of it they find it possible to indulge their taste for rapine. In fanaticism and superstition they equal the Turk and the Persian; they are Sunnis in every sense of the word, and detest the Shiah Persians accordingly. Still they are tolerant towards men of other religions, and especially towards Christians, because the latter believe in the Gospel which they regard as a sacred book. Like the Persians, the Afghans believe in astrology and share all the prejudices which characterise Mahomedan nations generally, but they have no objection to eat with those of different sects to themselves. They have no education; their books are in Persian, and the only people among them who can read and write are the chiefs and the priests. From their youth upwards they are taught the use of the lance and the sword, to shoot and to ride well,—in fact this constitutes their education.

The Afghans are a sober people, though they are excessively fond of the beverage called "Bang" and of smoking "chars," which is prepared from hempseed, and produces a sort of intoxication, giving rise to delicious dreams; if smoked to excess, however, it brings on a state of moral imbecility. The dwellings of the Afghans are the same as those of the Persians, but are more simply furnished, while, as regards personal luxury, it consists, with the Afghan, in handsome horses, brilliant harness, rich robes, and, above all, a numerous attendance. Their dress is nearly the same as that of the Persians, with the exception that the skin hat of the latter is replaced by a cap with an enormous blue turban wound round it. It is by this turban that the men of one tribe—and men of one town—are distinguished from those of another. But the size of it accuses them great suffering during the hot weather, and is the reason of their shaving the head completely. The beard is regarded as sacred, but instead of allowing it to grow naturally, they cut it into the shape of a fan, while the moustache is shaved everywhere except at the sides.

Since 1818, the province of Candahar has been governed by five brothers, *viz.*, Shirdil Khan, Purdil Khan, Kohandil Khan, Rahmdil Khan, and Mihrdil Khan. The principal power is now in the hands of Pur-



dil Khan, who replaced his brother Shirdil Khan, on the latter's death, in August 1826. Their forces number 6,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry, but with a better revenue they might double their numbers. The Candaharis make fairly good soldiers in hand-to-hand fighting, but being irregulars, they are undisciplined, receive but little pay, and only appear with the colours when they are called out. The infantry soldier is armed with a sword and a gun, the latter heavy and strongly made, but of small calibre and long range, and usually a matchlock. The artillery consists of twenty field pieces mounted on unserviceable carriages and without gunners to serve them; the whole being under the direction of an English half-caste.

The rulers of this country seem to have adopted as a maxim that no other law shall be observed than that of their own free will, and moreover they place no restraint on their passions. Greedy, as they are, of gain, there is no exaction they are not capable of enforcing. With them to be rich is to commit a crime, which may be punished by total confiscation of property. They have so altered the coinage that most of the pieces are now made of copper with only a small alloy of silver, and when foreign traders wish to circulate *sequins*, which are current coin in the country, they have first to get them stamped, at the same time paying five per cent. upon them. Contraband goods are entirely confiscated. Merchants or workmen who wish to sell their goods must first have them marked, piece by piece, by an agent of the Government who levies a fixed tax, and the slightest infringement of this law entails confiscation and perhaps the ruin of the party concerned. From all this it follows that the trade of Candahar is now-a-days almost *nil*, though formerly it was a very flourishing one, the city being the entrepôt for merchandise coming from India and Persia. Those from India come by way of Shikarpur, and the shawls of Cashmere, which are afterwards sent to Persia, come through Cabul where they pay an arbitrary transit duty. The silk and cotton stuffs manufactured in Candahar amount to such a small quantity that they barely suffice for the use of the inhabitants; in fact, the chief trade of the place is in madder, tobacco and dried fruits, all of which are despatched to India.

The route leading from Shikarpur is only frequented by merchants during the spring, and is said to be excessively arduous; the distance by it is 360 *krohs*, and at the end of this paper will be found an itinerary which was compiled for me by a merchant of Candahar who had often made the journey. It does not appear that it is practicable for an army on account of the want of water in summer; but if attempted, it would be necessary to establish depôts of provisions at several points in advance. Every soldier ought to carry a small iron plate to enable him to make his bread after the manner of Orientals, and each detachment should be provided with a portable mill for grinding flour; indeed without these precautions, the men would be liable to die of hunger after the first stage or two. The difficulties of this route have caused the merchants to seek another, further towards the north; this passes through Kelat Nasir Khan, traverses the country inhabited by the Brahuis, and strikes the right bank of the Indus at Dera Ghazi Khan. The road from Candahar to Cabul offers no difficulties, except that in winter it is encumbered with snow, and is then impracticable; at other times, though it runs entirely through a mountainous country, it presents no obstacles to the passage of artillery. Its course lies through a rich valley hemmed in by two parallel chains of mountains extending in a south-west and north-east direction the whole way to Cabul, and varying little in distance one from the other. The northern chain is no other than the Paropamisadae of the Greeks, and is much higher than the southern one, which is also less picturesque, though it appears to abound in metals. The valley is extremely fertile and from Mukur downwards contains the river Turnak, which discharges its waters into the Argandab. The air is sharp and wholesome, and hence a pile of ruins which one passes between Poti and Jaldak are said to be those of an ancient town called *Shehr Safa* or "town of health."

The mountains bounding the province of Candahar on the north, and the moving sands which stretch along its southern frontier, give to the town the position of a *tête de pont* in relation to the two routes leading to India—i. e., the Cabul and Shikarpur routes. Any army from the north proceeding to the conquest of



India must necessarily pass it, and must stop there to make its dispositions for a further advance.

After a halt of fourteen days, a caravan for Cabul was starting, and we eagerly availed ourselves of the opportunity. We left on the 25th October, and accomplished the forty-five *krohs* between Candahar and Mukur in four days. In the country passed through, villages were scarce, but on the other hand there were large numbers of black tents belonging to the pastoral and agricultural tribes of Sadozai, Ali-Kozai and Ghilzai—tribes whose women do not veil themselves with the same care as those of other parts. Their costume and head-dress is also peculiar; the former has something European about it, while the different modes of arranging the latter serve to distinguish the married from the unmarried. The latter do not appear before strangers.

At Tazi we were stopped by the Chief of the Ghilzais, who is independent, and arrogates to himself the right of levying a transit tax on caravans. The rate at which this is levied is not fixed, but depends on the caprice of the Chief, who, on this occasion, extorted a most arbitrary due from ourselves in the shape of some of our arms to which he took a fancy, and appeared, afterwards, much astonished at our taking offence. The plain of Tazi was shortly before this, the scene of a bloody battle between Zaman Shah and Mahmud Shah, sons of Taimur Shah, who fought, here, for the throne of Afghanistan. The former lost the battle and with it his sight, for his brother put out his eyes.

A traveller passing through this country at the approach of winter will be struck with the quantity of poles, to be seen in the villages, at the top of each of which hangs one or more sheep, flayed and salted and exposed thus to the frost. This meat is eaten during the winter, and is much prized by the Afghans who appear to have acquired a taste for it from contact with their Tartar neighbours.

The village of Mukur is situated almost on the southern slope of the Gulkoh chain, which screens it from the north wind, and close by is the source of the Turnak river, whose waters produce quantities of excel-

lent fish. The inhabitants of the village are very hospitable and will entertain the traveller in their houses, the rustic cleanliness of which astonishes him as a phenomenon rarely met with in Asia, and makes him think the people foreigners in the country.

Six *krohs* beyond the chain of hills bounding the plain on the south, lies the salt lake of Zurmat, whose water, when ruffled at night, gives out phosphorescent sparks like the water of the sea. From Mukur we proceeded to Ghuzni across the plains of Karabagh and Nani. The whole of this country is covered with detached villages, each one enclosed in a square of high earthen walls with a tower at each corner. This system of defence is common in many Asiatic countries but especially in Afghanistan, and the civil wars to which the people are so often exposed, may be regarded as originating it. In times of danger, these villages afford not only a refuge for the inhabitants, but for all their possessions.

On arriving near Ghuzni, and hearing that the state of the country thereabouts was unsettled, our caravan avoided the town, and halted at a village about six miles distant. Early the next morning, we found the village surrounded by large numbers of horsemen, who under orders from their chief closed in upon the people of our caravan, took possession of all arms and effects, and after loading the animals conducted them and ourselves to Ghuzni as prisoners. Here they locked us up and subjected us to a searching examination, appropriating every piece of money we possessed, though leaving untouched our papers which fortunately comprised some bills of exchange we had procured at Candahar. The next day the Governor of Ghuzni sent for me and asked me who I was, whence I came, where I was going, &c.: I answered with firmness and assurance that I was a Georgian, going to India to seek for one of my relatives, upon which he sneered in such a way as to indicate that he had no doubt of my being a European, and immediately ordered to be spread before me my papers, watch, mathematical instruments, &c.; which had been found among my baggage, and which to these people were objects of curiosity. He then asked the uses of these things which



I affected to ignore, and replied that I had received them from an Englishman at Teheran who had commissioned me to deliver them to a friend of his in India. On this he became serious, and ordered me, under threats of the most severe punishments, to declare where my money was, to which I answered that having been surprised, made prisoner and searched, I had nothing left, while he himself was master of my property. This appeared to satisfy him, and he dismissed me, sending me back to the caravanserai under an escort. Here I was glad to find my friend Avitabile who, like myself, had been taken and secretly questioned. Our answers, however, had been corroborative, and this for the reason that ever since leaving Ispahan we had arranged to tell the above story, and had also impressed it upon our servants. The following day we arranged to send an Indian servant to Nawab Jabbar Khan at Cabul who was known to be amicably disposed towards us, and our companions in arms in India, and on whom we counted to extricate us from our difficult position. To make sure of success, M. Avitabile made his escape from the town unperceived and accompanied the servant to Cabul, whence, after eight days, letters were received by the Governor of Ghuzni ordering me to be released and sent on to Cabul.

From Ghuzni to Cabul is reckoned only four stages by caravan, the stations being Chashgao, Shekhabad and Maidan. At the second of these, a small and clear river is crossed which comes from the Hazara country, and after irrigating the district of Logard falls into the Cabul river. Further on—at Maidan—one comes upon this latter, at a point where its passage might be easily defended. The position might however be turned if, in coming from Ghuzni, the precaution were taken of sending some troops by way of Gurdiz and Logard.

It was at Shekhabad that Fateh Khan, the Minister of Mahmud Shah, was murdered; Prince Kamran having taken umbrage at his conduct profited by his defeat at Kafir Kala to put out his eyes, but not satisfied even with such vengeance, he had him murdered at this spot by his own generals while on his return

30 ITINERARY FROM HERAT TO CABUL VIA CANDAHAR.

from Cabul. To the present day Fateh Khan is much regretted by the Afghans, who pride themselves on his bravery and on the way in which he directed the affairs of Government. He was born a Barikzai, and though he ascended to the pinnacle of greatness, he always retained the patriarchal customs of his tribe and a demeanour which charmed the people and won their hearts. To these qualities, also, he added that of unbounded liberality. At his death, his twenty-one brothers, most of whom were at the head of affairs, revolted, raised the Barikzai tribe of which they were Chiefs, and assumed the Government by dethroning Mahmud Shah. Since that they have distributed the provinces of Afghanistan among themselves, and govern them now without fear of opposition.

Itinerary from Shikarpur to Candahar.

To Jiakand	... 10 krohs.*	Little water.
„ Makam Bili	... 20 „	Very little water.
„ Vestiaji	... 21 „	Twenty wells on this stage.
„ Pakab	... 16 „	A single well ditto ditto.
„ Sheraji	... 15 „	A town with good supplies.
„ Dadar	... 15 „	Little water and country liable to pestilential winds.
„ Diri Putani	... 16 „	Rough country. The passage of a river is a refuge of robbers.
„ Yanani	... 15 „	Plenty water. Country infested by robbers.
„ Pai Kajur	... 14 „	Water in moderate quantities.
„ Dasht-i-Miamand	... 16 „	A number of springs.
„ Kot Nasir Khan	... 18 „	A town with good supplies.
„ Shal Miamand	... 14 „	A well populated district.
„ Haidarzai	... 15 „	<i>Ibid.</i>
„ Wali	... 15 „	<i>Ibid.</i>
„ Haram	... 17 „	<i>Ibid.</i>
„ Kunduh	... 15 „	Country covered with verdure.
„ Bik Kuchak	... 10 „	A desert district.
„ Shiokhi	... 12 „	Many fields.
„ Kohti	... 15 „	Mountainous country and little water.
„ Khalijia	... 12 „	A single well.
„ Mil	... 15 „	Wells numerous, but the water low down.
„ Khares	... 15 „	Country covered with nitre.
„ Laili Majnun	... 12 „	Well populated district and good supplies.
„ Kushab	... 10 „	<i>Ibid.</i>
„ Candahar	... 10 „	<i>Ibid.</i>

* 1 kroh = about 2 miles.

1503

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