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NARRATIVE

OF VARIOUS JOURNEYS

IN

BALUCHISTAN, AFGHANISTAN,  
AND THE PANJAB;

INCLUDING A RESIDENCE IN THOSE COUNTRIES FROM  
1826 TO 1838.

BY CHARLES MASSON, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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## PREFACE.

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It is hoped that the melancholy interest conferred by events upon the countries bordering on the Indus, may justify the publication of these Volumes.

Should the information afforded increase the stock of knowledge already possessed, my labours may prove neither ill-timed nor unprofitable. Accounts of several of the journeys, &c., performed prior to 1831, differing in no essential manner from those now given, found their way to the government-offices both in India and England. In the course of the work I have expressed regret that this should have been the case, but only under the apprehension that they may have been made to subserve the interested schemes of artful and designing men,—a purpose for which most certainly they were never written.

The late Sir Alexander Burnes, in a letter of 9th March, 1836, wrote to me:—"For some years past I have often crossed your path and I have never done so without finding the impressions which I had imbibed regarding your talents, your honour, and your zeal strengthened." I quote this passage





merely to show that while Sir Alexander could privately acknowledge that he had "often crossed my path, &c.," he found it inconvenient as regarded his pretensions publicly to avow so much; and I am in possession of a letter from England, informing me that my papers were considered valuable at the India House, as "corroborating the accuracy of Captain Burnes' statements." It will be seen that I was guiltless of the wild projects which would seem from the first to have possessed the mind of that unfortunate officer, and which he was mainly instrumental in forcing the Government to attempt, however notoriously the results have been disastrous to it and fatal to himself.

In the concluding chapters of the third volume, I have slightly noticed the commercial mission of Captain Burnes in 1837-38. I have, perhaps, said enough to convey an idea of it; it would have been painful to have said more. The late Dr. Lord was commissioned by Lord Auckland to write a history of it. To have glossed over so flagrant a failure probably exceeded his ability, and the task undertaken with temerity was abandoned in despair.

I have also alluded to the honour done me by Sir John Hobhouse in enrolling me amongst the defenders of Lord Auckland's policy. In declining the honour, I trust I have, although briefly, still sufficiently, shown that I am not entitled to it. I wrote the few remarks I made on this subject with





the speech of Sir John, as it appeared in the "Times," before me. I have now the published speech, which from the very circumstance of its being published, I presume the ex-minister to be proud of. In the "Times" I am quoted as having written: "In the recent efforts of Shâh Sûjah there is little doubt but that if a single British officer had gone with him, as a mere reporter of his proceedings to the Governor-general, his simple appearance would have sufficed for the Shâh's re-establishment." There is no doubt that these observations were made by me in 1835 or 1836 on some occasion, and that they could not have been imagined by the "Times" reporter; therefore it may be supposed they were quoted by Sir John Hobhouse, although they are omitted in the published version of the speech.

It was the general opinion in Kâbal that if a *single* British officer had accompanied the Shâh in 1834, that he would have been successful—and I could understand that there was truth in it. A *single* British officer might have done as much in 1838; and I question whether, if Sir Alexander Burnes had been entrusted with the Shâh's restoration, he would have been accompanied with more than the regiment or two which he considered necessary; but when Mr. Secretary Macnaghten became inspired by the desire to acquire renown and to luxuriate in Kâbal, the extensive armament was decided upon, which was utterly unnecessary, and which has conduced to the subsequent mischief as





much as the incapacity of those directing it—for in the hands of abler men it might have also proved a fatal experiment.

I may here controvert the opinion many entertain that Shâh Sûjah was unpopular with his Afghâns. His career proves that he was not. Repeatedly, with scanty funds and resources, he has been able to collect thousands around him, and, although from his irresolution generally unsuccessful, he never lost this power until the British destroyed it for him. In the misfortunes the remembrance of which still excites our horror, there was no one more to be pitied than the Shâh, for no man could be placed in a more critical or compromised situation. Before leaving Ferozpûr, he remarked that he was conscious that he should acquire a "badnâm," a bad name for ever, but that he should again see Kâbal. There was no reason that the exiled prince should have lost his reputation. A *single* British officer, or even a regiment or two might not have injured it. The envoy and minister and his host ruined it. The Afghâns had no objections to the match, they disliked the manner of wooing.

Even after the entry of the Shâh into Kâbal, had the army retired agreeably to the Simla proclamation, he might still have reigned there; but this did not consist with the views of the government from that time revealed.—It was found requisite to remain in order to keep him on the





throne. Had he dared, he would have deprecated such aid.

Misfortune naturally excites compassion, and this has been shown to Dost Máhoméd Khân, who, strangely enough, in opposition to the Shâh has been supposed to have been popular—yet he was not. Abandoned by his army at Arghandí, he became without a struggle a fugitive. When it was found that the British troops did not retire, and dissatisfaction as the consequence spread amongst the people of the country, he sought to profit by it, and presented himself at Bamíán—for what? to be repulsed and then deserted by his allies. Again he showed himself in the Kohistán, but only to surrender.

In Sir John Hobhouse's published speech my opinions are cited as brought forward by Sir Claude Wade. I believe it would be impossible for the latter individual to act in a straightforward manner. He might otherwise have stated that such opinions were given in 1835 or 1836, and might not be applicable to the state of things in 1838. However, Sir John Hobhouse was in possession of my own recommendation, written in reply to Mr. Secretary Macnaghten, that Shâh Sujah should be restored, but he forbore to notice it, because, perhaps, there was no allusion to the designs of Persia and Russia therein, and that the restoration was urged for the purpose of *sparing expense and loss of life*, not of occasioning both the one and the other.





In my remarks on the mission of Captain Burnes, I have endeavoured to show that the primary cause of its failure, was the neglect of the Pesháwer question. I never had but one opinion on that subject. In Mr. Baillie's speech of the 23rd of June, I was surprised to observe quoted a despatch from Captain Burnes to Mr. Maenaghten, written only the day before the mission left Kábal, and which I introduce here, because, while aware of the interview alluded to, I never knew what passed at it, more than that Captain Burnes himself told me he had rejected every proposal made to him. It also amply proves the correctness of my views, and establishes I should think, pretty clearly, both how easily our affairs in Kábal might have been arranged, and how grossly Captain Burnes suffered himself to be imposed upon from the very first — while it explains the meaning of all the various stratagems put into play to “rouse the mind of Sikander Burnes.”

“On the 25th I received another visit from Sirdár Meher Dil Khân who was accompanied by the Nawáb Jabár Khân, Mírza Samee Khân, and the Naibs of Candahar and Câbul; the deputation was a formal one from both branches of the family. The Sirdar now informed me that *the ameer had agreed to dismiss Captain Vicovitch — to hold no further communication with other powers — and to write to the Sháh of Persia, that he had done with his Majesty for ever.* The sirdárs of Candahar on their part agreed to address the sháh, recal Ullahdad, the





*agent who had accompanied Kambar Ali, and to place themselves along with their brother, the ameer, entirely under the protection of the British Government; in return for which they claimed at its hand two things, — first, a direct promise of its good offices to establish peace at Peshawar, and an amelioration in the condition of Sultán Máhomed Khán; and second, a promise equally direct to afford them protection from Persia in whatever way the British judged it best for their interests, it being clearly understood that Candahar was not to be allowed to suffer injury."*

I can easily imagine that Captain Burnes would conceal from me, on many accounts, the proposals made at this interview; for assuredly had I been aware of them, and that even at the last hour the chiefs had returned to their senses, I might have been spared the disagreeable task of recommending their deposition, under the impression that they obstinately declined any arrangement. The Bárak Zai chiefs have suffered from the errors of Captain Burnes as much as from their own. What Captain Burnes gained we all know.

It is to be hoped that the good sense of the British nation will never again permit such expeditions as the one beyond the Indus, to be concerted with levity, and to be conducted with recklessness; and that the experience acquired from disasters, may be made beneficial in placing the control of Indian affairs in very different hands from those who have so wilfully abused the power





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confided to them, and whose rashness and folly in plunging the country into wars ruinous to its reputation may yet be punished.

The security and prosperity of the Indian possessions are too intimately connected with those of Great Britain, to permit that a minister or ministers of the crown, or a Governor-general, shall again endanger them, or be permitted the power of making aggressive wars on trivial or imaginary pretences, and such wars without the consent of the Houses of Parliament, the sanction of the Privy Council, and, for aught we know, without the knowledge of the sovereign of the realm. If such irregularities pass unnoticed the nation will deserve the misfortunes she may entail upon herself, and will cease to be free.

There is much general information on Afghânistan and its inhabitants, which I could not introduce into the present work, although I may at a future time strive to repair this deficiency. Lamenting to a friend that my contracted space obliged me to omit much that I should have been pleased to have noticed, he said, "I hope you have told us who the Afghâns are." I had not done so, yet the question was so pertinent, that I avail myself of the Preface to answer it imperfectly.

The term Afghân, acknowledged by a multitude of tribes speaking the same dialect,—the Pashto or Afghâni,—has no known signification, and is mani-





festly borne by many people of very different origin. There are, however, several marked divisions, such as the Dúráńís, the Ghiljís, the Jájís and Túrís; the Yusef Zai tribes, the Khaibarís, the Vazírís, with the tribes of the Súlímán range, &c. Amongst these races it is difficult to tell to whom the appellation of Afghân originally belonged. As regards their origin, we may have recourse to the various traditions preserved by themselves, or by the historians who have mentioned them, as well as to other circumstances.

The Dúráńís are known both in India and Persia as the Abdállí or Avdállí, (a plural term,) and when we find that the white Huns of ancient history, the Euthalites of classical authors, were named Heptháls, by Armenian authors, we might infer that the Abdállí or modern Dúráńís, are no other than descendants of that powerful people. The Síáposh Káfirs remember that their ancestors were driven into their hills from the plains by the Odáls,—a term they still apply to the inhabitants of the low countries.

The Ghiljís are undoubtedly a Túrķí tribe, the Khaljí or Khalají of Sherífadín, and other eastern authors.

Ferishta notes a tradition that the Afghâns were descendants of the Copts of Pharaoh's army. It is singular that the Jájís are called in the histories of Taimúr, Kâpt Jájí, seeming to intimate that to





them referred the tradition; it is equally certain that they have precisely the same cast of countenance as the Copt inhabitants of Cairo.

Another tradition describes the Afghâns as descendants of Jews, who accompanied the army of Walid, the general of the Caliphs. This would apply possibly to the Khaibar tribes, who reside in a locality to which they have given the name of a strong-hold or position in Arabia, and who wear locks of hair in a certain manner common to oriental Jews, so that one of the latter on seeing them unhesitatingly pronounces them to be of his stock.

Amongst the Yusef Zai tribes, there are many who may be affirmed, almost with certainty, to be akin to the Rájput tribes of India, and like them, therefore, descended from the Getic invaders of this part of the world, the subverters of the Greek Bactrian monarchy.

The Vazírís and other mountain-tribes occupying the Súlimân-range or Khaisa-ghar are in the position asserted by very general belief to be the seat of the genuine Afghân races,—true is it that they are found where the Máhomedan inroads first brought the name to notice, and their claims to be considered as the genuine Afghâns are, perhaps, better than those of any other tribes.

The introduction of the Máhomedan faith, with the legends and traditions of that religion, has induced all the Afghâns to pretend to a descent from





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the Jewish patriarchs and Kings,—a pedigree, however, only due to their vanity, and which does not require to be too seriously examined.

In another sense they affirm that they are all Ben Israel, or children of Israel, which merely means that they are not heathens; for they affirm Christians, although not acknowledging their prophet, and Shiás whom they revile as heretics, to be equally with themselves Ben Israel, although they exclude Híndús, Chinese, and all idolaters.

LONDON,  
1st August, 1842.





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# JOURNEYS

## IN

### BALUCHISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, AND THE PANJAB.

#### CHAPTER I.

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In the autumn of 1826, having traversed the Rájput States of Shekhawátí, and the kingdom of Bikkánir, I entered the desert frontiers of the



## ARRIVAL AT BAHAWALPUR.

khân of Bahâwalpûr; and passing successively the towns and castles of Pûlarah, Mîhr Ghar, Jâm Ghar, Marût, and Moz Ghar, arrived at the city of Bahâwalpûr.

Although in crossing Râjpûtâna I had met with no obstacles beyond what were presented by the country itself, and its sultry climate, they were so considerable that notwithstanding I had been everywhere civilly received and kindly treated, I was delighted to leave behind arid sandy wastes, and to find myself in a large populous city, surrounded with luxuriantly cultivated fields, and groves of stately palm-trees. As Bahâwalpûr is seated on the skirts of the desert, the transition from a land of sterility and solitude to one of fertility and abundance is very striking to the traveller approaching it from the east, and to myself was particularly agreeable, from my purpose of enjoying within its precincts, the indulgence of a little repose, which I felt to be warrantable after the toils of the journey I had surmounted.

I found, however, that the arrival of a Feringhî, or European, within the khân's territory had been notified by the governor of Pûlarah, and it was wished that I should proceed to Ahmedpûr, that the khân might have an interview with me, as it seemed his curiosity had been so far excited that he had expressed a desire to see me.

At Bahâwalpûr I was the guest of one Khân Mâhomed, a man high in authority, if not the





governor of the place; and in one or two conversations I held with him he acquitted himself very fairly, his themes being politics, medicine, the philosopher's stone, and religion—fashionable topics with great and learned men in the East. I was astonished at some of his questions about Russia, and other European powers, but less so at some curious notions he entertained as to the nature of the Company Sáhib, having previously heard from Salim Singh, an officer of the Bikkanír Rájáh, that the Company Sáhib was a very good old lady, for whom he had a great respect. But the forte of Khán Máhomed was medicine,—and the large quantity of glass bottles ranged around his apartment, and filled with variously coloured liquids, evinced, if not his proficiency as a physician, some little dexterity as a compounder.

He was very anxious to know my business, and could hardly believe that I had none, or that I had not brought some message to the khán, to whom he loyally expressed the devotion of a slave. I had frequently before been suspected to be an elchí, or ambassador, and it was in vain I appealed to the negative evidences of my poverty, and my trudging alone, and on foot. Europeans were considered incomprehensible beings, and the inconveniences I bore from necessity were imputed to choice, or to “ikhmat,” or ingenuity.

I passed three or four days at Baháwalpúr, which gave me the opportunity of inspecting some of the





manufactures of silk and tissue, for which the city is famed, and of making the acquaintance of Nizámádín, the Kázi, a worthy man, who more than once invited me to his residence. I then signified to Khân Máhoméd that I was ready to start for Ahmedpúr; and he commissioned one of his dependents to accompany me, and to conduct me to the house of Máhoméd Khân, the bakhshí, or paymaster of the khân's forces.

The distance between Bahâwalpúr and Ahmedpúr is about twenty cosses, or thirty miles; and we made two journeys, passing the night at Bakhshí Khân ka Masjít, a small village, so called from a comparatively handsome mosque, built by an individual whose name it bears. The heat of the weather was oppressive, but the country was well cultivated and peopled—the villages being usually distinguished by contiguous groups of tamarisk trees, which attain a surprising size. Water everywhere abounded, in wells of slight depth, and is raised to the surface by the medium of wheels, worked by oxen, and sometimes by camels. On one occasion we crossed a nullah or water-course, which I have reason to remember, as the camel I was riding lost his footing, and precipitated me into it; an accident more than compensated by the pleasure derived from immersion,—while so powerful were the rays of the sun, that my apparel—and I was clad in white linen—became dry nearly as soon as wetted.





On reaching Ahmedpúr we proceeded, as had been arranged, to the abode of the bakhshí, who, while he courteously welcomed me, was, setting aside his elevated position, by no means so refined a personage as his colleague and friend at Bahâwalpúr. He informed me that the khân was then at Daráwal, a fortress, eighteen cosses distant in the desert, where, it is understood, he keeps his treasures, as in a safe place, and where he frequently resides. The bakhshí was anxious that I should spend my time pleasantly until the khân revisited Ahmedpúr, which he was expected to do in a few days, and assigned me to the care of Ráhmát Khân, a Rohilla officer, who from long service in Hindostán was supposed to be acquainted with European manners and habits, and therefore competent to attend to my wants.

Ráhmát Khân cheerfully accepted his charge, and conducted me to his quarters, which were, indeed, not very good ones—still a distinct and tolerably fair house was prepared for my reception. The bakhshí was also careful to send after me a variety of provisions, with bedsteads, utensils, and water vessels, as is the usual observance in the case of public guests, amongst whom, I learned, that I was enumerated. Ráhmát Khân was a native of Rámpúr, in Northern India; and I gleaned from his history, that he had been a soldier of fortune, having commanded, in his palmy days, two battalions in the camp of the Mahrátta Sirdár Hírah Singh.





Afterwards he had served under the celebrated Amír Khân, and still later, under the banners of the Bhow Sáhíb, the chief of Jáwad, when, at the capture of that fortress by the British, he became a prisoner of war. When set at liberty he abandoned India, and gained Baháwalpúr, where the command of one hundred men was conferred upon him, with the custody of the gharri of Fázilpúr, on the frontier of Sind. His pay was fixed at two rupees per diem, but I was told he realized about five rupees by false musters, and practices which, if not permitted, are at least tolerated. Unable, however, to forget or to forego the gaities to which he had been accustomed in the Mahrátta camps, he was necessarily involved in debt, to the large amount of six thousand rupees; and during my stay with him we had some nautches, spectacles of which, like most natives of India, he was excessively fond, and concluded that I must be equally so. His men were generally of the same town or province as himself. Many of them were attached to him when in better circumstances, and all of them, according to their own assertions, had been in more honourable and lucrative employ than that of the khân of Baháwalpúr.

It was not long before the khân came to Baháwalpúr, but as he remained only a day or two, and had much business to transact, the bakhshí, bewildered by his accounts, and the clamours of the soldiery for pay, forgot to inform him of my presence, and





ignorant thereof, the khân returned to his strong desert fastness, glad to shelter himself in its solitude from the importunities of his dependents, and the weighty cares of government.

The bakhshí, I found, had been born a slave of the reigning family, and had been promoted to his present office by the favour of the present khân. He is not emancipated, and his pay, as registered, is but eight annas, or half a rupee daily; still, having the management of large funds, he is enabled to enrich himself, and to live luxuriously. I attended at two or three of his levées, and was surprised at the freedom with which the meanest soldier addressed him. No delicacy was observed in the selection of language, and I wondered that he called me to witness, as it were, the torrents of abuse lavished upon him. When he dismissed his contentious clients, he conversed with me, and felt the conviction that I was a sirdar of no small consequence, from the circumstance of having made use of my hand in addressing him. He appeared to have little ability, and although considered the head of the forces, he never commands them on service, the post of honour being reserved for the Vazír Yákúb Máhommed Khán.

I expressed so strongly displeasure at his forgetfulness that we became worse friends than we had before been, and I told him that I should now continue my journey without seeing the khân. Fearful to incur blame, in that case, he replied, that I should





not proceed; which made me ask him, who he was who dared to prevent any one travelling on God's high roads? To which question he had no answer to make, but evasively suggested that I should engage in the khân's military service, as, he said, one Búra Sáhib (some European who had previously visited Bahâwalpúr) had done. To this I gave a peremptory refusal. I had understood from my Ahmedpúr acquaintance that the climate was very hostile to strangers; and I found that Búra Sáhib, the European mentioned by the bakhshí, had died from its baneful effects. Indeed the heat was seriously troublesome; and I was particularly anxious to move forward, which I should have done in spite of the bakhshí's prohibition had I not been seized by an intermittent fever, which entirely prostrated me. This misfortune increased my anger with the bakhshí, whom I reviled as being the cause of it; and he, apprehensive lest the termination should be fatal, sent the khân's hákíms or physicians, whose insignificant remedies I was obliged to reject; and being ignorant myself of the correct mode of treatment, my case became nearly hopeless. There seemed little chance of the khân's speedy re-appearance at Ahmedpúr, and as little that I should recover if I remained there, I therefore decided upon trying a change of air and locality; and from my inquiries, selected Allahabád, a town twenty cosses from Ahmedpúr, on the road to Sind. I accordingly left my effects in the charge of Ráhmát Khân, and





taking nothing but my sword, started, before sunrise, on the road pointed out to me. From the commencement of the fever, the glare of the sun had been peculiarly irksome to me, and I found it impossible to travel after sunrise, when I was compelled, wherever I might be, to seek the nearest shade and throw myself on the ground beneath it. The country through which I was passing was covered with tamarisk jangal, among which the villages and cultivated lands were sprinkled. The former were seldom visible from the road, but I was directed to them by the creaking of the wheels at the wells. At all of them was what is called a *máchi*, a person, generally a female, who provides lodging and prepares food for the stranger and traveller. I made so little progress that it was four or five days before I reached Vární, a large village on the road side, and I was so exhausted that I remained at the *máchi*'s house two or three days, and then proceeded, somewhat recruited, towards Allahabád. The approach to this town was more pleasing than I had anticipated, for the jangal ceasing, I came upon a rivulet of running water, beyond which stretched a large expanse of meadow, and in the distance I beheld the cupola of the principal mosque of the place, embosomed in groves of date-trees. As I neared the town I came upon a veranda, carried around a huge *pípal* tree, which I found was one of the *khán*'s hunting pavilions, and as the shade it afforded was very complete, I re-





posed the greater part of the day under it. I afterwards saw many other such pavilions in various parts of the country; and if simple in construction, they are not inelegant, while admirably adapted for the purpose for which they were formed. Towards evening I moved towards the town, and at its entrance was accosted by a well-dressed person, who at once invited me to his house. I accompanied him, and soon found myself comfortably located.

My new friend was most attentive; nor did his goodness merely extend to my entertainment; he proposed also to remove my disorder. He convened the physicians of the place; but their prescriptions were quite as inefficacious as those of their brethren at Ahmedpúr, and they laboured in vain to persuade me that conserve of roses and sugar-candy could cure inveterate fevers. I had every reason to be grateful for my reception here, but my disease seemed in no wise likely to yield, when in despair I became my own doctor, and, to the dismay of my well-meaning friends, sent for the *ájâm*, or barber, who bled me both on the hands and arms; I likewise drank plentifully of infusions of senna; and whether the remedies were judicious, or from other causes, I had the great satisfaction to find myself without fever, although in a deplorable state of weakness.

My hospitable entertainer was delighted and astonished at my recovery, from remedies he considered





desperate ones, but spared neither pains nor expense in the fare with which he provided me, under the idea of establishing my strength. I had found the cuisine of Khân Máhoméd at Bahâwalpúr a very good one, and that of my Allahabád friend was not less entitled to praise. This commendable person, to whom I owe so much obligation, was Salám Khân, Dáoud putra, a man of affluent circumstances, and the principal authority in his town. I need not testify to his humanity, but may add, that he was extremely mild and modest in manners. I learned from his attendants that he was reputed a kímíá ghar, or alchemist; but more instructed men than he was have their foibles, and with me he never discoursed on the subject.

Finding myself better, I proposed to return to Ahmedpúr, when Salám Khân begged me to stay yet another two or three days, when he would go there himself, and we should go together. In due time, a horse being saddled for my use, we started. My friend made a respectable appearance, and carried on his back a handsome quiver of arrows, the emblem of rank and dignity, and we were followed by some of his mounted attendants. Salám Khân being acquainted with the country, passed by a much nearer route than the high road by which I had journeyed, and skirting the edge of the desert, we were not long in reaching Vární, where we passed the night, and in the morning proceeded to Ahmedpúr. There we separated, Salám Khân re-



pairing to his friends, and I to my former quarters at Ráhmát Khán's. I found that my Rohilla acquaintance was favourably known to Salám Khán for his courteous and sirdar-like demeanour, and I became cognizant that he was generally respected throughout the country for the same reason.

Ráhmát Khán received me most cordially, and I had abundant congratulations on my recovery. I learned that the khán had not during my absence revisited Ahmedpúr, but that he was daily expected. In effect, he very soon came, and I notified to Ráhmát Khán that I intended to pay my respects to him, and he in turn informed the bakhshí, who now said that I should not see the khán, as I would not engage in his service. To which, when stated to me, I said, I would see the khán.

On going, however, to the khán's residence, for the purpose of an interview, I found that the people at the entrance had been instructed by the bakhshí to refuse me admittance. I discovered it was useless to argue with them, and was about to return, when Mútí Rám, the khán's Hindú dewán, or minister of finance, came out. He did not go so far as to act in opposition to the bakhshí, and procure me an interview with the khán, but, contrary to my wishes and expostulations, alighted from his horse, and insisted that I should ride the animal home. The truth was, I was still very feeble, which he observed, and his act at least showed that he was a humane man.





I had now determined to continue my journey westward, and was careless about seeing the khân, as I had really no business with him—thinking only of giving my friend the bakhshí a good lecture before I left. It happened, however, that near the town was a fine meadow, where, now that I felt able, I strolled in the evening; and here by chance, the khân, who never sleeps in Ahmedpúr, passed me, carried in a palanquin, and escorted by a numerous cavalcade. His eye caught me, and he ordered his conveyance to be halted; when he asked, who I was, how long I had been at Ahmedpúr, and why he had not been informed of it, at the same time making a motion with his hand for me to approach. I had not pressed through the crowd, when the khân resumed progress, but one of his attendants, to whom he had whispered something, apprised me that his lord would be glad to see me in the morning at darbár.

I had scarcely returned to Ráhmát Khân, and told him what had occurred, when a messenger came from the bakhshí, praying that I would call upon him. I accordingly went, and Ráhmát Khân accompanied me. We found the great man at prayers. When concluded, he joined us, and we had a long conversation, during which I upbraided him for his conduct in detaining me, and then for preventing my interview with the khân. He entreated me to engage in the service, telling me that the khân would make over to me his seven regi-



ments of infantry, with their guns, and sanction the levy of as many more. I repeated what I had before told him, that I would have nothing to do with them. He urged that Búra Sáhib, had before engaged in the service,—and I said, what suited the convenience of Búra Sáhib might not suit mine. He then recommended me to proceed, and join the Saiyad Ahmed Shâh. And I asked who was Saiyad Ahmed Shâh, and what I had to do with him. I was at this time ignorant as to the Saiyad, and the cause in which he was combating, and knew little more than that he was a deadly enemy of the Síkh's. The bakhshí was then desirous to learn where I intended to go, and whether to Dost Máhoméd Khân of Kábal. I answered, I should go where and to whom I pleased. He was, probably, little satisfied with the result of his interview, but he was so subdued that when I spoke sharply to him he actually trembled, which when we parted afforded a subject of merriment to Ráhmát Khân.

On the morrow I walked to the Killa, or residence of the khân, and was immediately ushered in at the gate. We passed a well-stocked aviary before being introduced to the khân's presence. He was seated, cross-legged, on a carpet, reclining on a large pillow, with his left arm resting on a black shield. He was plainly dressed in white linen, but had magnificent armlets of turquoises, set in gold. Before him was lying a double-barrelled fowling-piece, and on each side of him European





sabres. His countenance was remarkably handsome, and bore every indication of goodness, although I recollected as I beheld it, that his accession to authority had been marked by the slaughter of some of his father's ministers, an usual consequence of the transfer of power in oriental states, yet barely excusable on that account. He was not above twenty-three or twenty-four years of age. He politely welcomed me, and directed his arms to be shown to me, that I might ascertain their fabric, while he explained how he had procured them. He made few other inquiries, either because he knew from the bakhshí, who was dutifully standing behind him, that I was obstinate in refusing to enter his service, or because, aware that I had been recently unwell, he was deterred by good feeling from wearying me. He asked the bakhshí, however, as to my diet, and was told that I ate everything, meat, fish, fowls, eggs, and, as was added, all at the same time, which I doubt not was thought very singular, although I did no more than they do constantly themselves. I soon received permission to depart, the good Mútí Rám mentioning that I was feeble; and I had gone a few paces when I was called back to be told, the khân had ordered a sum of money to be carried home with me for "mímání," or my entertainment; and I saw the khân himself take three double-handfuls of rupees from two heaps which were piled up before him. I was glad to get away, and paid no attention to the present;





therefore, when I regained my quarters I received about sixty rupees, which must have been a small portion only of the sum given.

When again in my quarters, I found myself attended by numbers of the officers and men of the battalions, who it seemed had heard of the khân's wish to place them under me; and they urged me to accept the charge, for then, they said, the bakhshí would be unable to detain their pay, and they should receive it regularly. I expressed my doubts whether I should be likely to reform the incorrigible bakhshí, and assured them, apparently to their regret, that I did not intend to undertake the task. I received also, another application from the bakhshí, who, perhaps, thought the kind reception and liberality of the khân might have softened my resolution; but hearing that I was firm, he signified that I was at liberty to remain as long as I pleased at Ahmedpúr, or to go when and where I thought fit.

Although I had suffered much from fever and its consequences, during my stay at Ahmedpúr and its neighbourhood, I had every reason to be gratified with the civility of all classes of the people; and I found them always disposed to be communicative on points within their knowledge.





## CHAPTER II.

## BAHAWALPUR.

Boundaries.—Extent.—Distinctions of soil, &c.—Domestic animals, &c.—Towns.—Bahâwalpûr.—Barra Ahmedpûr.—Uch.—Khânpûr.—Chûta Ahmedpûr.—Gujargar Wâlla, &c.—Pûlarah.—Murût.—Moz Ghar.—Gúdiána.—Daráwal.—Fazilpûr.—Military strength.—Revenue.—Dâoudpûtras.—Bahâwal Khân.—Sâdat Khân.—Bahâwal Khân.

THE country of Bahâwalpûr is bounded on the north by the Síkh provinces of Múltân, Mankírah, and Líya. To the south it has the great desert, separating it from Jessalmír. On the east it touches to the north on the lands of the Síkh chief of Pátíala, and more directly east, on the frontiers of the Rájput principality of Bikkanír. Westward it is defined by the river Indus, which divides it from Mittan Rote, and a slip of territory dependent on Déra Ghází Khân; and lower down, from Harand and Dájil, provinces of the Bráhuí Khân of Kalât.

From Gúdiána, its frontier town on the Pátíala side, to Chûta Ahmedpûr, where it connects with Northern Sind, the distance is one hundred and eighty cosses, or about two hundred and seventy miles; and from Pûlarah, on the borders of Bikkanír, to Déra Ghází Khân, is computed one





hundred and forty cosses, or above two hundred miles. Its breadth importantly varies, being affected by the course of the Gárrah river to the north, and of the desert to the south. Its greatest breadths are on the extreme frontiers to the east and west. In the centre the pressure of the desert upon the cultivated parts allows but a comparatively small space between it and the river to the north.

In this extent there are some marked distinctions as to soil, character, and produce. The portion between Gúdíána and the capital I have not seen, but have heard spoken of in glowing terms as to fertility and population. The accounts may be credited, as its fertility would be secured by the vicinity of the Gárrah, and fertility would induce population. The portion of desert stretching eastward of Bahâwalpúr to Bikkanír, is of course but little productive, yet, as in many parts of it the surface has more soil than sand, there are, amongst other inhabited localities, the bazar towns of Púlarah, Múrút, and Moz Ghar, which drive a considerable trade in grain with the neighbouring states. In this tract also the camel thrives exceedingly, and finds ample sustenance in the prickly and saline plants which cover the surface. Neither are there wanting numerous herds of horned cattle; which are, however, continually shifting their position, being guided by the convenience of water. Their proprietors, in certain seasons of the year,





abandon their villages, and erect temporary abodes in the spots they select, which, as in Bikkanír, are called kétlís. At them the traveller finds abundance of milk, butter, &c. which at such times he might not procure at the villages they have abandoned. In remote times, rivers flowed through and fertilized this now sterile country; their beds may in many places be still traced; and numerous vestiges remain of ancient towns, in burned bricks and fragments of pottery strewed on the soil. The central districts of Uch, the capital, Khânpúr, Allahabád, and Ahmedpúr are distinguished by a most luxuriant cultivation of the various kinds of grain, of sugar, and of the indigo plant. There cannot be a more gratifying sight than is exhibited by this part of the country before the period of harvest, the whole surface presenting an expanse of standing grain, with villages, neatly constructed of reeds, interspersed, and accompanied with groups of trees, usually of the bér, and date species. As soon as the crops are removed, such is the exuberance of vegetation, that the ground is covered with plants and shrubs, and no one would suppose that the land, now mingled with the jangal, had so lately been under cultivation. Between Uch and Déra Ghází Khân there is much jangal, yet occasionally, or adjacent to the towns and villages, there is a vigorous cultivation of grain, and of sugar-cane, denoting that the soil is rich and prolific. From Bahâwalpúr to Khânpúr the country is rich and well-culti-





vated, although confined on the south by the sandy desert. From Khânpûr to Chûta Ahmedpûr the face of the country changes, and becomes more adapted for grazing; still, even in this direction there is much tilled land near the towns and villages. Although the larger proportion of surface in the Bahâwalpûr territory is spread over with jangal, it must not be supposed that it is unprofitable. On the contrary, it affords pasture to immense numbers of horned cattle, cows, and buffaloes, — sources of wealth and comfort to the inhabitants. Bikkanîr, and other of the Rájput states to the east, mainly depend upon Bahâwalpûr for their supplies for consumption. There are few, if any countries in Asia, where provisions, the produce of the soil, are more abundant or cheaper than in the Bahâwalpûr state.

The domestic animals of Bahâwalpûr are, the camel, the buffalo, the common cow, the gaddî or short-tailed sheep, the goat, &c. The camel is reared in large numbers, as above stated, in the desert to the east, also in the neighbourhood of the capital and of Ahmedpûr. It is employed, to a limited extent, for agricultural purposes, being sometimes attached to the plough, or made to revolve the wheel at wells. In Bikkanîr this animal is universally so employed, and partially in Sind. The buffalo is highly prized for its milk, which is delicious, and its meat is even preferred to that of the cow. Poultry are plentiful, but tame geese, I con-





clude, are rarities, having only seen them at Bakhshí Khán ka-Masjít. Wild fowl are so abundant in the western parts near the Indus, that at Fázilpúr a goose may be purchased for one of the small copper pais of the country, in value less than a halfpenny, and two or three ducks may be procured for the same sum. They are caught by a peculiar race, called Mohánís, who furnish the fishermen and sailors employed on the Indus. The jangals abound in game, as deer and the wild hog. Partridges, quail, bustards, pigeons, &c, are universal.

There are many opulent and commercial towns in the Baháwalpúr dominions. Amongst the first class towns, may be reckoned Baháwalpúr (the capital), Barra, or Great Ahmedpúr, Uch, Khánpúr, &c. Amongst the second class, Chúta, or Little Ahmedpúr, Allahabád, Gugujar Wâlla, Channí Khân di Got, Gházipúr, Kinjer, Púlarah, Múrút, Moz Ghar, Gúdíána, &c. The minor towns, or large bazar villages, are very numerous, and the number of agricultural villages and hamlets exceedingly great.

Baháwalpúr is seated about two miles from the river Gárrah. It formerly had walls, the indications of which only exist, and are used as a walk for the inhabitants. The houses are chiefly constructed of kiln-burnt bricks, and are very much mixed with gardens. The whole is arranged in a loose straggling manner, and is on all sides encircled by groves of date and pípal trees. The public





buildings are not very remarkable, neither are any of the khân's palaces attractive residences. There is, indeed, a handsome stone masjít in progress of erection. This town is the seat of many manufactures, some of them costly, and has a large trade. It is sixty cosses from Múltân, one hundred and twenty cosses from Bikkanír, and sixty from Déra Ghází Khân.

Barra Ahmedpúr from having been merely a cantonment has become an extensive and commercial town, as well as the principal residence of the khân. It is seated on the verge of the desert. The killa, or palace of the chief, is yet unfinished. The houses are generally mean, but the gardens are good. From the favour of the khân, it may be considered a rising town, as Bahâwalpúr is on the decline.

Uch is, perhaps, the more ancient of the towns in the country. The name is borne by two towns contiguous to each other. One of them, Pír-ka-Uch, is bestowed on Pír Nassiradín, the spiritual adviser of the khân. They have both good bazars, and some commerce. Seated upon the Gárrah, grain-boats frequently descend from the two Uchs to Sind. They are principally, however, distinguished by the ruins of the former towns, their predecessors, which are very extensive, and attest the pristine prosperity of the locality. They are eighteen cosses from Ahmedpúr, and about forty cosses from Múltân.





Khânpur is forty cosses from Barra Ahmedpur. It is surrounded by a country amazingly fertile, and is a depôt for indigo, rice, and all kinds of grain. It has no pretensions to be considered a handsome town; neither, judged by its traffic, can it be called a large one. Some of the Hindús have spacious residences, yet, generally speaking, the houses are very indifferent. The ancient walls have fallen down, and have not been replaced. Without their ruins are many dilapidated serais, and other buildings. There is no fort here; nor is it judged necessary to keep a garrison.

Chúta Ahmedpur is a fair-sized town, with good bazar, and surrounded with mud walls. Within them are some more recently fortified erections, but they are detached, and have no connection with each other, so that they seem to have been raised in pursuance of a plan never completed, as is probably the case. Otherwise they are well built, of kiln-burnt bricks. Being the frontier town towards Sind, a regiment of three hundred and fifty men, with six guns, is stationed at Ahmedpur.

Gujugar Wâlla, Channí Khân di Got, Gházípur, and Kinjer, are all small, but commercial towns, principally in grain, the produce of the country.

Púlarah, on the frontier of Bikkanír, has a good bazar, but is not perhaps very commercial. The fortress adjacent has been a superior building, for these parts, but is now sadly in decay. There was once a good trench; the walls are very high, and





the battlements are tastefully decorated. The killedar's house soars above the ramparts, and the whole has an antique and picturesque appearance, particularly from the northern side, where the walls are washed by a large expanse of water, in which is a small island studded with trees. There are three guns at Púlarah.

Múrút is a town of importance, as regards its trade in grain, but of little as to its aspect. It is surrounded with mud walls of considerable extent, and strengthened by numerous towers. It is the station of a regiment, with six guns.

Moz Ghar is not so large a town as Múrút, but its contiguous fortress is a lofty structure, built of kiln-burnt bricks. On the western face the walls have been perforated with cannon balls, which, we are told, happened in the siege it endured from the first Baháwal khán. The apertures have never been repaired, being supposed evidences of the obstinacy of the defence and of the strength of the fortress. They, however, show its weakness, for they enable us to detect the slightness of the walls. East of the fort is a pool of water, shaded by a grove of trees, amongst which is a huge pípal, an object of veneration to the Hindús of the town. At a slight distance to the north is a Máhomedan tomb, handsomely decorated with lacquered blue and white tiles.

Gúdíána being a frontier town, is the station of a regiment, with its attached guns. It is said to have a good bazar and some trade.





The chief fortress of the state is Duráwal, before noted, equidistant from Ahmedpúr and Bahâwalpúr, or eighteen cosses from each. It is represented as strong, and possibly some care has been bestowed upon it, as the khâns have always selected it for the deposit of their hoards, and for an asylum in case of invasion. Its chief dependence in such a case, would appear to be in its situation, and the difficulty a besieging army would find in subsisting near it, there being no water to be procured without the walls at a shorter distance than nine cosses. It has been seen, that the desert between the capital and Bikkanír is abundantly stocked with fortresses, which were formerly more needed than at present. Besides those enumerated, the gharrís, or castles, at Jam Ghar and Míhr Ghar are built of kiln-burnt bricks, but have no longer garrisons. Six cosses from Chúta Ahmedpúr is Fázilpúr, also a gharri, with a garrison of one hundred and fifty men, which furnishes a detachment of fifteen men to Kandéri, a ruinous castle in the desert, in the direction of Jes-salmír. Kandéri is twenty-seven cosses from Fázilpúr, and the limit of the khân's territory.

The troops consist of seven regiments of infantry, of three hundred and fifty men each, forming a total of two thousand four hundred and fifty. To each regiment are attached six guns, which may suppose some four hundred artillerymen. There are, besides, foot companies of Rohillas and Patáns, of fifty, one hundred, and two hundred men each, under





their respective officers, having, each one, two or three nishâns, or standards, as the case may be. These men possibly amount to one thousand. There are, moreover, horsemen in regular pay, who can scarcely exceed in number from two to three thousand. The grand total of the army may be from six to seven thousand men. They are badly equipped, irregularly paid, and, I suspect, not very warlike. The regiments have no sort of discipline. The natives affirm the military force to consist of fourteen thousand men, which I think can only be correct as including all the jághírdárs, and others, whom it might be possible to assemble in case of emergency.

The annual revenue is estimated at eighteen lakhs of rupees, one half of which is paid to the Sikhs. But then the khân rents from them the city and territory of Déra Ghází Khân, for three lakhs of rupees; and it is believed that he gains two lakhs thereby.

The reigning chief at Bahâwalpúr is of a Jet family, called Dáoudpútra, or the sons of David. They formerly lived about Shíkárpúr, but becoming numerous, and perhaps refractory, they were expelled; and crossing the Indus, possessed themselves of the country, where they established separate and independent chiefships. Many of their leaders built towns, to which they gave their respective names; hence Bahâwalpúr, the town of Bahâwal; Ahmedpúr, the town of Ahmed; Fazilpúr, the town of Fázil; Sabzul Kot, the kot or fort of Sabzal; &c. &c.





There is mention in the history of Amír Taimúr, of a notorious freebooter named Dáoud, in the vicinity of Shikárpúr; and this good man may have been the ancestor of the present Dáoudpútras. I know not how long the various leaders may have subsisted in a state of independence, or subject to the sovereignty of Delhí, but the dislocation of the Chághatai empire permitted Baháwal Khân, the grandfather of the present khân, to reduce them all, and to make himself absolute. He grew so powerful as to be the terror of his neighbours, and to resist the claims of tribute made on him by the Duraní monarch of Kâbal, Taimúr Sháh, who found himself compelled to enforce it with an army. Baháwal Khân died full of years and renown, and was succeeded by his son, Sâdat Khân, favourably known to Europeans by his cordial reception of the British embassy to Kâbal in 1808. At a subsequent period he compromised himself with Máhárájá Ranjit Sing, whose conquests had extended his authority over Múltân; and Sâdat Khân, unable to oppose him, was constrained to purchase peace by submission, and the payment of an annual tribute. He died soon after, and left his enfeebled sway to the present Baháwal Khân.

This chief, I have before observed, has a prepossessing appearance, and I believe is generally popular. His ministers relieve him, in great measure, from the toils of government, and his time is principally occupied in amusements, of which shikár, or





the chase, is the most prominent. He has, however, other accomplishments, and is a very tolerable mechanic.

Since my visit to Bahāwalpūr, the train of events in these quarters had brought about a treaty between the khân and the government of India, by which his relations with the Sîkhs were placed on a secure footing, and a British resident, or agent, was located at his court. In the commencement of the unfortunate expedition against Kâbal in 1838, the awkwardness of the political officer employed to procure the coöperation, so far as necessary, of the khân, had nearly involved that chief in embarrassment with the British government, and, in despair, he was thinking of terminating his existence by a dose of poison. Luckily, Sir Henry Fane proceeded down the Satlej and Gárah, in his route to Bombay, and visited Bahāwalpūr. His straight-forward manners dispelled the doubts and apprehensions of the bewildered chief, and Sir Henry had the gratification to save a good man from the evils which threatened him.





## CHAPTER III.

Departure from Ahmedpúr.—Country between Ahmedpúr and the Indus.—The Indus.—Déra Ghází Khân.—Christmas-day.—Departure from Déra Ghází Khân.—Baháwalpúr army.—Arrival at the Sang Ghar frontier.—Alarm in camp.—Arrival at Sang Ghar.—Assad Khân.—Sang Ghar.—Revenue of Assad Khân.—His bravery.—His fate.—Country between Sang Ghar and Déra Fatí Khân.—Déra Fatí Khân.—Superstition of Ranjit Sing.—Gerong.—Déra Ismael Khân.—Destruction of old city.—Progress of the new one.—Its fortress.—Revenue.—Military strength.—Former Nawáb dispossessed by the Sikhs.—Country around Déra Ismael Khân.—Its capabilities.—Origin of the three Déras.—The Nawáb Shír Máhomed Khân.—His amusements and character.—Sherín Khân, the vazír.

I HAD arranged for departure from Ahmedpúr, when I learned that Yákúb Máhomed Khân, the khân's chief minister, or vazír, was proceeding to Déra Ghází Khân and Sang Ghar, with an army, for the purpose of compelling the petty chief of the latter place to pay tribute. It became, therefore, partly necessary to shape my course according to the vazír's movements, as both the places lay in my route, and it might not be prudent to enter the Sang Ghar district until some arrangement had been made. I consequently kept myself informed of Yákúb Máhomed Khan's plans; and when he finally marched from Ahmedpúr, I did so likewise.





The distance from Ahmedpúr to Déra Ghází Khán is computed at sixty cosses, or ninety miles. Numerous villages and small towns occur on the road, and two or three considerable ones, as Uch, Kinjer, &c. Some of them are held by the Síkhs, whose territory on this frontier is curiously dovetailed into that of the khân of Bahâwalpúr; and I noted, that all those under Sîkh rule were more flourishing in appearance than those under the Máhomedan government, as well as being much more cleanly, which I accounted for by supposing that the Hindús, always the principal inhabitants, felt themselves at liberty under Sîkh sway to display their wealth, whereas under Máhomedan masters they were studious to conceal it. The surface of the country was generally covered with jangal, of long grass, and tamarisk trees, in some places so dense, that it was difficult to pass through it. I, however, suspect that we were conducted by a circuitous route, and that there was a much better and more open route by which the army marched. The jangal swarmed with wild hogs and deer, and in many spots we remarked the grass trodden or beaten down, indicating they had been scenes of the khân's hunting exploits. On such occasions, a large tract is enclosed by multitudes, collected from the country around. They gradually close in upon the pavilion in which their ruler, with his favoured attendants, is seated, driving the animals, hemmed in within the circle, before them, when he deliberately aims at





them, and estimates his triumph by the number of the helpless victims he brings to the ground.

It was not without emotion that I approached the river Indus, hallowed by so many historical recollections, and now the boundary, as once possibly the parent seat of the Hindú races. I found it, perhaps, nearly as low as it could ever be; still its bed was most extensive, and at the point we crossed must have been three miles in breadth. There were two or three boats at the ferry, but the wide expanse of sand, and the scanty reeds and shrubs fringing the opposite shores, gave a feature of loneliness to the prospect, which required the strength of associations to relieve. Numerous, on the borders, were the tracks of tigers, which, from such tokens, must be very common, although they are seldom seen, and, I learned, seldom do harm. I felt, however, a deep interest of another kind, in reflecting on the people and scenes I was about to leave behind, and on the unknown lands and races the passage of the river would open to my observation. If a feeling of doubt for a moment clouded my mind, one of pride at having penetrated so far removed it, and encouraged me to proceed farther.

Three or four miles beyond the river we entered the immense assemblage of date groves and gardens, amid which the large, populous, and commercial town of Déra Ghází Khán is situated. In the town itself, we were provided with good quarters, and were not sorry that we should be obliged to halt a





a few days at it, as Yákúb Máhoméd Khân required some time to complete his arrangements, before making his offensive demonstration against Sang Ghar, now thirty cosses distant.

The town of Déra Ghází Khân, but a few years before the residence of a Dúrání governor, contained within its limits numerous vestiges, which denoting its present depressed political condition, also pointed to its former prosperity. Such were large brick-built residences, with extensive gardens, either desolated or occupied by humble tenants, and the public mosques, neglected and falling to decay. The bazars, with no pretensions to appearance, or even cleanliness, were still capacious and well supplied, and the merchants carried on a good trade, Déra being one of the commercial marts visited by the Lohání merchants of Afghánistân, while it does good business with the immediately adjacent parts.

During our stay here we spent our Christmas-day, and the abundance of every thing enabled us to regale ourselves bountifully, while we enjoyed the luxuries of fresh grapes, pears, and apples, brought by the traders from the orchards of Kábal. The nights here were particularly cold, and the days equally warm; indeed the vicissitudes of temperature at Déra render it an unhealthy place, and strangers are liable to intermittent and other fevers.

The Máhomedan inhabitants complained much of their misfortune in being under Síkh domination, while the Hindús joined with them in deprecating





the rapacity of the Baháwalpúr chief, who farms the revenues from Máhárájá Ranjit Singh. Both parties also united in regretting that the Dúraní power had passed away. And amongst their ancient governors they affectionately remembered the Nawáb Jabár Khán, extolling his liberality and his humanity.

The vazír being at length prepared to march, we started with him, and contrived to pass the night in the village near to which he encamped with his troops. We had now a better opportunity than before of observing his little army, and its composition. There were about three thousand men, horse and foot, with six guns. The appearance of the soldiers told little for them; and if by that test their prowess in the field might have been estimated, I should have thought them lucky to escape collision with a determined foe. On inquiry as to the means of opposition at the command of the khán of Sang Ghar, I was told, that he was personally a brave man, and that he had a body of seven hundred good horse, mostly Afghâns, and more than a match for the whole of the vazír's force, besides the less esteemed foot levies, from his raiyats, or subjects.

It was not, however, expected, by the best informed, that a contest would take place; but that, after a little blustering the khán would submit with the best grace he could, and pay the tribute, thirty thousand rupees, demanded of him; for, even should he succeed in discomfiting the vazír, he would be





apprehensive of drawing down upon him a large Sikh force, when he would be compelled to abandon his country.

We marched through the lands dependent on Dera Ghází Khán without much order or precaution; but on entering the domain of Sang Ghar the vazír observed greater vigilance, especially as reports were rife that the khán's intentions were warlike. Indeed, we halted at the first village, and Yákúb Máhoméd Khán showed no disposition to advance, seeming to await the arrival of his opponent, who, it was said, was advancing to his encounter. We were accommodated in this village, placed on a mound, and had an excellent view of the camp on the plain beneath. The delay became so tedious, that we heartily wished matters would be settled one way or the other, that we might continue our journey; which, so far as security was concerned, we might no doubt have done, but the vazír did not appear to wish it. It chanced, that one afternoon an alarm was raised in the camp, that the Sang Ghar force was in full advance, and had interrupted the foragers. Yákúb Máhoméd Khán immediately mounted, and rode towards his foe, followed by horse and foot, in the greatest possible disorder. The guns were left in the camp, which was entirely deserted. About sunset the force returned, having met with no enemy, whom probably they did not seek; but the nagáras, or kettle-drums, were beaten before the vazír with as much noise





and parade as if he had gained a victory. Two or three days after, a settlement was effected, the Sang Ghar chief paying, or engaging to pay the sum required of him, and Yákúb Máhoméd Khán retired from his frontier.

We now followed the road to Sang Ghar, where we were courteously received and hospitably entertained by Assad Khán, the chief who had so lately been pugnaciously inclined. He was, I found, a Baloch by nation, and a stout well-looking man of about forty-five years of age. He complained of the encroachments of the Síkhs, and lamented he had not more powerful means to resist them. He was, moreover, very anxious to be supplied with restorative medicines. With these I was unable to oblige him; and as to his position with the Sikhs, I could comprehend that it was unfortunate, for it required little foresight to feel the conviction that, enclosed as was his small territory by the confines of those powerful neighbours, it would hardly elude their grasp eventually, and that the chief would be fortunate, if he avoided being cajoled into captivity, to become a fugitive in the hills, where, if he lost the possessions of his ancestors in the plains, he might preserve at least his personal freedom.

The khán resided in a mud fortress of some extent, but with very dilapidated defences. Contiguous were the mean huts of his soldiery, and at a trifling distance the bazar village of Mangalot. The term Sang Ghar, (the stone fort,) is applied, if





unappropriately, to the mud fortress. It implies, however, merely a strong place, which Sang Ghar is supposed to be by the people of this country, and who were often displeased to find that I could not concur with them. The revenue of the state was said to be one lakh and twenty thousand rupees, of which, it has been seen, the khân of Bahâwalpûr, at the instigation of the Sîkhs, or in exercising the privilege of the stronger party, enforces the payment of thirty thousand rupees.

It is due to Assad Khân to record that he has, in more than one encounter, proved himself a brave soldier, and on one occasion he gained a splendid advantage over the Sîkh governor of Mankîrah in an action fought on the banks of the Indus. Some years after I saw him, it became the policy of the Sîkhs to possess themselves of Sang Ghar, and they did so after a well contested struggle, in which Assad Khân sustained his former reputation, and gave them two or three defeats. He sought refuge in the hills, and has since been little heard of.

In continuing our journey from Sang Ghar to the north, we passed through a tract of country compressed between the river and the hill ranges to the west, the road sometimes nearing the one and the other. The skirts of the hills presented a change in the vegetable productions, and we were pleased to breathe a purer atmosphere. Villages were less numerous, and very meanly constructed; the inhabitants were Patâns, and the Pashto dialect was





spoken by them, although they generally understood that of the Panjâb. The cultivated produce was similar to that of the southern parts, and turnips of large size were largely grown as food for cattle. Herds of buffaloes were everywhere grazing in the rank pastures of the jangals.

Thirty cosses of road distance led us beyond the khân's frontier, and we entered a more fertile tract, dependent on the town of Dera Fatí Khân, held by the Sikhs. It is smaller than Dera Ghází Khân, but is clean, and has a good and well-supplied bazar. Cultivation around it is not only general, but choice, as, besides some sugar-cane, there were fields of poppies, from which some opium is extracted. The villages have an appearance of greater comfort than those of Sang Ghar, evincing at least the mildness and protecting influence of the Sikh government—although no advantages can compensate, to their Máhomedan subjects, the idea of subjection to infidels, and the prohibition to slay kine, and to repeat the azân, or summons to prayer.

The district attached to Dera Fatí Khân extends some ten cosses to the south, and about five cosses to the north, where it connects with the territory of Dera Ismael Khân. It is worthy of note, that it is the only tract west of the Indus *boná fide* retained by the Máhárájá Ranjit Singh, although he has reduced all the countries immediately bordering on that river to a state of tributary allegiance. I have heard it observed, that he has a superstitious





notion which renders him averse to establishments on the western bank. That he has overcome such prejudices, or departed from his prescribed policy, in this instance, may be owing to the superior fertility of the district, and that it was deemed advisable to occupy Gerong, a fortress reputed strong, about three cosses west of the town, and where are a few guns and a garrison of three hundred men. At Déra Fatí Khân there were no troops.

From Déra Fatí Khân our road mostly led along the river banks; the jangal became more intricate, and the villages farther apart, and more rudely built, for we were now in the territory of another Máhomedan ruler, the nawâb of Déra Ismael Khân. The cultivation, when occurring, was wheat and turnips. At this season the wheat had just appeared above the surface; and it is the custom to allow cattle to graze the rising crops, which, so far from causing injury to them, is said greatly to increase the vigour and productiveness of the mature plants.

Forty cosses brought us to Déra Ismael Khân, immediately before reaching which we passed the large village of Morad Alí. This Déra is a newly built town, about three miles from the river, its predecessor seated thereon, having been carried away, about three years since, by an inundation. So complete was the destruction, that of a large and well fortified city no token remains to testify that it once existed. Two or three date-trees have only survived the wreck of its groves and gardens,





and in graceful majesty exalt their heads amongst the surrounding desolation.

The new town promises to become very extensive. The bazar is already spacious, and of commodious breadth, an improvement on the general arrangement of Indian towns, where bazars are mostly, of all parts, the most narrow and confined. On the destruction of the old town the village of Morad Alí became of consequence, being the temporary resort of the nawâb and inhabitants; and, the new town lying about two cosses from it, they will likely in time become incorporated. Indeed, the various buildings, with the serais, already nearly fill the intermediate space. Déra Ismael Khân is one of the greatest marts on the Indus, and an entrepôt for the merchandize of India and Kho-rasân passing in this direction. Few sites have a greater commercial importance. The customs levied form the chief source of revenue. The new fortress is not one of strength, the Sîkhs forbidding the erection of too substantial a place of defence. It is small in extent, of a rectangular form, with angular towers, on which are mounted six pieces of ordnance, taken in an engagement with the chief of Ták. The walls are high, but there is no trench. The inner fort, or fortified residence of the nawâb's family, is protected by a ditch; the walls are lofty, and the several faces are defended by jinjâls.

The district belonging to Déra Ismael Khân





extends about forty cosses to the north, and thirty-five cosses to the south. The nawâb, moreover, exacts tribute, either on his own account or on that of the Sîkhs, from most of the petty rulers around him, such as those of Kalaichî, Darraband, Marwat, Isâ Khél, and Kâlabâgh. His gross revenue may be about three lakhs of rupees, of which the Sîkhs take one-half. His military retainers are few, but in occasions of need; he calls forth a levy from his country and his neighbours. While I was in the country it became necessary to assemble a force to proceed against Marwat, and I was astonished to see collected on the plain an array of two thousand horsemen, comparatively well mounted and equipped.

The father of the actual nawâb, who was visited by Mr. Elphinstone in 1808, possessed a fertile country east of the river, comprising the rich and populous districts of Bakkar, Líya, and Mankírah, —while on the western side his authority extended to Sang Ghar. He was dispossessed by the Sîkhs, and died shortly after. The conquerors have assigned the son, the present Nawâb Shír Máhomed Khân, a slip of land west of the Indus for the support of himself and family.

Seven cosses north-west of Déra is the small bazar town and detached castle of Kúyah. It has a garrison of fifty men, and is the frontier post on the side of Ták. Twelve cosses north is the town of Pahárpúr, situated, as its name implies, under





the hills. Besides these there are no other places deserving the appellation of towns, if we except Morad Ali, before-mentioned. The water of the new city is supplied from wells, and is reputed unwholesome. The country about Dera Ismael Khan might be rendered highly productive, were it possible to divert upon its ample and level surface canals from the Indus. The neglected waste would become a garden of cultivation, and the copious returns would speedily repay the outlay. It is said that the nawab was anxious to have supplied his new city with good water by bringing a canal from the Gomul river, which runs through the Tak territory, but the chief of that place, whose sanction was necessary, withheld it. There can hardly be said to be jangal in the immediate vicinity of Dera Ismael Khan, the wide open plain being merely occasionally sprinkled with karita bushes, whose red blossoms have a delightful appearance in the spring season. Near the villages are always a few ber trees, the fruit of which is eaten, and sometimes the palma ricinus, with its tufts of scarlet flowers; but no other trees. Tuberoses are indigenous here, and springing up unheeded in the jangal, they are, when cultivated, the favourite flowers of the parterre.

It may be noted, that the three Deras west of the Indus have an antiquity of nearly three hundred years, superseding necessarily more ancient towns. They were originally Deras, or camps of



chiefs, whose names they now bear, a mention of whom occurs in Ferishta, and is thus stated in Dow's History:—"In 1541, or thereabout, Ismael, Ghází, Fatí, and Billoca Duda, (Doda Baloch?) all governors of various provinces in that part of the country, acknowledged the title of Shír."

The Nawâb Shír Máhomed Khân is about thirty-five years of age. Although believed to feel keenly his dependent situation on the Sikhs, his chagrin does not prevent him from being corpulent, as becomes a nawâb, or from amusing himself with many childish diversions. Indeed it seems the principal business of those about him to find subjects fit to excite his mirth, and to enable him to wile away his existence. Hence he entertains fiddlers, wrestlers, keepers of bears and of monkeys, and often enjoys the spectacle of ponies fighting in his flower-gardens. When one of the animals gives the other a good shake of the neck the nawâb claps his hands, and cries Wah! wah! His attendants do the same, and the apartments resound with clapping of hands and shouts of Wah! wah! It is wonderful how all seem to delight in the sport. He is fond of hunting, and is very dexterous with his bow. He also prides himself on his strength, and it is asserted can break the horns of an ox from the living animal. Overlooking these foibles, he is kind and good-natured, and pays great attention to his mother. His minister was Sherín Khân, a Dúrání, whose power was so great as to





be irksome to the nawâb. There was great distrust between them; and when the nawâb entertained men, the minister, who lived at Morâd Alî, did the same. The latter commanded the force which discomfited the Tâk army some time since, and is said to have received one lakh of rupees from Sirwar Khân as a bribe to conclude peace. While I was at Dêra, Ranjit Singh ordered the nawâb to repair to Lahore. He accordingly made preparations for the journey, and called upon Sherin Khân for funds to defray the outfit and expenses. The minister alledged inability to meet the demands; whereupon high words arose, and the nawâb determined to institute an inquiry into his accounts. I left before the matter was settled, but learned that Sherin Khân thought fit to retire to Bahâwalpûr.



## CHAPTER IV.

Interview with the nawâb. — Sârkis, an Armenian. — Amusements. — Hindû Gosén. — Sîkhs. — Máhá Singh. — The Húli. — The bazar. — Kaisa Ghar. — Departure from Déra Ismael Khân. — Táék. — The citadel. — Fáquir's prediction. — Fruit. — Bazar. — Revenue. — Military force. — History of Sirwar Khân. — His sons. — Alladád Khân. — Darbarra. — Insalubrity of Táék. — Beauty of the gardens. — Introduction to Sirwar Khân. — Interview with Alladád Khân. — Carousals of Alladád Khân. — Introduction of Immat Khân, vakíl of Sind. — Sîkh party. — Aneecdote of Sirwar Khân. — Departure from Táék.

THE nawâb was soon informed of my arrival, and as soon conveyed his desire to see me. In the interview which followed he was very gracious, and at its close gave particular directions that every attention should be paid to me; while apologizing that the unfinished state of the buildings prevented the assignment of a house for my abode, he ordered tents to be pitched within the citadel in which he resided. I remained some time his guest, saw a good deal of him, and always found him most affable in manners and remarkably free from any affectation of form or state. One day he produced a variety of articles, belonging once, he said, to Sarkis, an Armenian merchant or traveller, who was murdered within his territory by Afghân or





Rohilla servants. Amongst them were Armenian Bibles and Prayer Books, sundry accounts, and many English quack-medicines, the virtues and properties of which the nawáb was very anxious to learn. I explained to him the miracles they professed to perform, according to the labels and papers attached to them, but conjured him to be considerate enough not to employ them, as age had probably impaired their efficiency, if ever they had any. He also introduced a former slave of the unfortunate Armenian, who detailed the mode of assassination of his master.

The nawáb never failed to send for me when any amusements took place; and they were so incessantly repeated, that some little philosophy was requisite to sit patiently during their exhibition. When nothing more unusual was at hand, recourse was had to his musicians and minstrels; and their concerts, although highly charming to him, were of all things the most distasteful to me. He sometimes intimated a wish that I would remain with him, and his people would endeavour to persuade me to engage in his service, but I gave them to understand it was impossible; and the nawáb, perhaps conscious there was little inducement, did not press the matter. As Europeans are considered necessarily expert artillerists, he more than once ordered his guns to be taken on the plain for practice, at a mark. He was himself, however, their sole pointer, and when he made a tolerably good



shot he toddled away, as if deterred by modesty from listening to the plaudits which burst forth.

There was living at Dera a Hindú Gosén of great repute, upon whom I called, as he sent me a message that Elphinstin Sáhib had paid him a similar compliment. However that may have been, the sage of Bráhma was a bland old gentleman. He received me very politely, and sent a tray of sweetmeats home with me on my departure.

Two Sikh retainers of Harí Singh, Máharájá Ranjit Singh's viceroy, on his western frontiers, were also resident at Dera. They occupied a large house in the town, and once or twice I visited them. In one of their apartments was the Granth or sacred book of the Sikhs; and many of the Banyas were accustomed to attend and read it, which they always did aloud. It was preserved with great care, and approached with reverence. I was yet in this town when Máhá Singh one of Harí Singh's officers, arrived, with sixty horsemen, demanding the sum of sixty thousand rupees, and bearing a summons upon the nawáb to attend the Máharájá at Lahore. These men crossed the river, and suddenly one morning entered the citadel, before the nawáb had risen. They talked very loudly, asking what sort of a darbár was that of Dera, there being no one to receive them. The claim could not be evaded or resisted, and Máhá Singh and his party were stationed in the town, and provided sumptuously at the nawáb's charge, until he should be able to pay