

THE
H I S T O R Y 1772

Towns OF hind. 1772

H I N D O S T A N,

FOR REFERENCE ONLY
FROM THE DEATH OF AKBAR,

TO THE COMPLETE SETTLEMENT OF THE EMPIRE UNDER
A U R U N G Z E B E.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

- I. A DISSERTATION on the Origin and Nature of
DESPOTISM in HINDOSTAN.
- II. An ENQUIRY into the STATE of BENGAL;
With a Plan for restoring that Kingdom to its former
Prosperity and Splendor.

By ALEXANDER DOW, Esq;
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THE COMPANY'S SERVICE.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. BECKET AND P. A. DE HONDT IN THE STRAND,
BOOKSELLERS TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE PRINCE
OF WALES AND BISHOP OF OSNABRUGH.

MDCCLXXII.



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A
DISSERTATION
CONCERNING THE
ORIGIN AND NATURE OF DESPOTISM
IN
HINDOSTAN.

GOVERNMENT derives its form from accident; its spirit and genius from the inherent manners of the people. The languor occasioned by the hot climate of India, inclines the native to indolence and ease; and he thinks the evils of despotism less severe than the labour of being free. Tranquillity is the chief object of his desires. His happiness consists in a mere absence of misery; and oppression must degenerate into a folly, which defeats its own ends before he calls it by the name of injustice. These phlegmatic sentiments the Indian carries

The climate
and soil of
India,

A DISSERTATION *on the*

carries into his future state. He thinks it a mode of being, in which passion is lost, and every faculty of the soul suspended, except the consciousness of existence.

favourable to
despotism.

Other motives of passive obedience join issue with the love of ease. The sun, which enervates his body, produces for him, in a manner spontaneously, the various fruits of the earth. He finds subsistence without much toil; he requires little covering but the shade. The chill blast of winter is unknown; the seasons are only marked by an arbitrary number of nights and days. Property being in some measure unnecessary, becomes of little value; and men submit, without resistance, to violations of right, which may hurt but cannot destroy them. Their religious institutions incline them to peace and submission. The vulgar live with the austerity of philosophers, as well as with the abstinence of devotees. Averse themselves to the commission of crimes, they resent no injuries from others; and their low diet cools their temper to a degree which passion cannot inflame.

Encourage
conquest.

The fertility of the soil, which in other kingdoms constitutes the great prosperity of the natives, was a source of misfortune to the Indians. Notwithstanding their abstinence and indolence, they were in some degree industrious, and, in want of but few things themselves,

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their



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their own arts, and the natural productions of their country, rendered them opulent. Wealth accumulated, in the progress of time, upon their hands; and they became objects of depredation to the fierce nations of the northern Asia. The facility of incursion, among a peaceable and harmless race of men, encouraged conquest. The victors, instead of carrying the spoil into their native country, sat down where it had been found; and added the ministration of the conquered to the other enjoyments of wealth.

Asia, the seat of the greatest empires, has been always the nurse of the most abject slaves. The mountains of Persia have not been able to stop the progress of the tide of despotism; neither has it been frozen in its course through the plains of the northern Tartary, by the chill air of the North. But though despotism governs Asia, it appears in different countries under various forms. The Arabs of the desert alone possess liberty, on account of the sterility of their soil. Independent of revolution and change, they see, with unconcern, empires falling and rising around. They remain unconquered by arms, by luxury, by corruption; they alter not their language, they adhere to their customs and manners, they retain their dress. Their whole property consists of flocks and herds, of their

Asia always
the seat of
slavery.

A DISSERTATION *on the* DISPO

tents and arms. They annually make a small and voluntary present to the chief of their blood. They revolt against oppression; and they are free by necessity, which they mistake for choice. When men are obliged to wander for subsistence, despotism knows not where to find its slaves.

Nature of the
Tartar

The Tartar, though a wanderer like the Arab, was never equally free. A violent aristocracy always prevailed in the country of the former, except in a few short periods, when the fortune of one established a transient despotism over the whole. There man is armed against man, chief against chief, and tribe against tribe. War is no longer a particular profession, but the constant occupation of all. Men are more afraid of men in the solitudes of Tartary, than of beasts of prey. The traveller moves with great circumspection, and hears an enemy in every blast of wind. When he sees a tract in the sand, he crosses it, and begins to draw his sword. Though the barrenness of the country has prevented the growth or introduction of luxury, avarice prevails, and he that has the least to lose is the most independent, where life is invariably risked for a trifling spoil. Robbery acquires the more honourable name of Conquest; and the assassin is dignified with the title of Warrior.

In



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In the mountains which separate Persia from India, the nature and face of the country have formed a different species of society. Every valley contains a community subject to a prince, whose despotism is tempered, by an idea established among his people, that he is the chief of their blood, as well as their sovereign. They obey him without reluctance, as they derive credit to their family from his greatness. They attend him in his wars, with the attachment which children have for a parent; and his government, though severe, partakes more of the rigid discipline of a general, than of the caprice of a despot. Rude as the face of their country, and fierce and wild as the storms which cover their mountains, they love incursion and depredation, and delight in plunder and in battle. United firmly to their friends in war, to their enemies faithless and cruel. They place justice in force, and conceal treachery under the name of address. Such are the Afgans or Patans, who conquered India and held it for ages.

and Afgan
aristocracies.

The despotism which the Patans established in their conquests, partook of the violence of their national character at home. Their government was oppressive through pride, and tyrannical from passion rather than from avarice. Reinforced by successive migrations from the mountains of Afganiſtân, they retained their native

Despotism of
the Patans
different



spirit in the midst of the luxuries of India. When the monarch became voluptuous and degenerate, they supplied his place with some hardy chieftain from the north, who communicated his own vigour to the great machine of the state. The empire was supported by a succession of abilities, rather than by an hereditary succession of princes; and it was the countrymen, and not the posterity of the first conquerors, who continued the dominion of the Patâns over India.

from that of
the Moguls.

The conquest of India by the family of Timur, proceeded from the abilities of one man, and not from the effort of a nation. Baber himself was a stranger in the country in which he reigned, before he penetrated beyond the Indus. His troops consisted of soldiers of fortune, from various countries; his officers were men who owed their rank to merit, not to succession. The religion of Mahommed, which they in common professed, and their obedience to one leader, were the only ties which united the conquerors upon their arrival; and they were soon dissipated in the extensive dominions which their arms subdued. The character of the prince went down on the current of government; and the mild disposition of his successors contributed to confirm the humane despotism which he had introduced into his conquests.

A continued



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A continued influx of strangers from the northern Asia, became necessary for the support of princes who professed a different faith with their subjects, in the vast empire of India. The army was recruited with soldiers from different nations; the court was occupied by nobles from various kingdoms. The latter were followers of the Mahommedan religion. In the regulations and spirit of the Coran, they lost their primary and characteristical ideas upon government; and the whole system was formed and enlivened by the limited principles which Mahommed promulgated in the deserts of Arabia.

Cause of that difference,

The faith of Mahommed is peculiarly calculated for despotism; and it is one of the greatest causes which must fix for ever the duration of that species of government in the East. The legislator furnishes a proof of this position in his own conduct. He derived his success from the sword, more than from his eloquence and address. The tyranny which he established was of the most extensive kind. He enslaved the mind as well as the body. The abrupt argument of the sword brought conviction, when persuasion and delusion failed. He effected a revolution and change in the human mind, as well as in states and empires; and the ambitious will continue to support a system which lays its foundation

from their religion.

on

XIV
A DISSERTATION *on the*

on the passive obedience of those whom Fortune has once placed beneath their power.

Despotism

The unlimited power which Mahommedanism gives to every man in his own family, habituates mankind to slavery. Every child is taught, from his infancy, to look upon his father as the absolute disposer of life and death. The number of wives and concubines which the more wealthy and powerful entertain, is a cause of animosity and quarrel, which nothing but a severe and unaccountable power in the master of a family can repress. This private species of despotism is, in miniature, the counterpart of what prevails in the state; and it has the same effect, in reducing all the passions under the dominion of fear. Jealousy itself, that most violent of the feelings of the soul, is curbed within the walls of the haram. The women may pine in secret, but they must clothe their features with cheerfulness when their lord appears. Contumacy is productive of immediate punishment. They are degraded, divorced, chastised, and even sometimes put to death, according to the degree of their crime or obstinacy, or the wrath of the offended husband. No enquiry is made concerning their fate. Their friends may murmur; but the laws provide no redress; for no appeals to public justice issue forth from the haram.

Young



ORIGIN of DESPOTISM in HINDOSTAN.

Young men, with their minds moulded to subjection, become themselves masters of families in the course of time. Their power being confined within their own walls, they exercise in private, that despotism which they in public dread. But though they are freed from domestic tyranny, they still continue slaves. Governors, magistrates, and inferior officers, invested with the power of the principal despot, whose will is law to the empire, exercise their authority with rigour. The idea of passive obedience is carried through every vein of the state. The machine connected in all its parts, by arbitrary sway, is moved by the active spirit of the prince; and the lenity or oppressiveness of government, in all its departments depends upon the natural disposition of his mind.

of the masters
of families.

The law of compensation for murder, authorised by the Coran, is attended with pernicious effects. It depresses the spirit of the poor; and encourages the rich in the unmanly passion of revenge. The price of blood in India is not the third part of the value of a horse. The innate principles of justice and humanity are weakened, by these means; security is taken from society, as rage may frequently get the better of the love of money. A religion which indulges individuals in a crime, at which the rest of mankind shudder, leaves ample room for the cruelty

Law of com-
pensation for
murder.



cruelty of a prince. Accustomed to sit in judgment on criminals, he becomes habituated to death. He mistakes passion for justice. His nod is condemnation; men are dragged to execution, with an abruptness which prevents fear. The incident has no consequence, but to impress terror on the guilty or suspected; and the spectators scarcely heed a circumstance, which its frequency has made them to expect.

Bathing.

The frequent bathing inculcated by the Coran, has, by debilitating the body, a great effect on the mind. Habit makes the warm bath a luxury of a bewitching kind. The women spend whole days in water; and hasten by it the approach of age. The indolence of the men, which induces them to follow every mode of placid pleasure, recommends to them a practice which Mahommed has made a tenet of religion. The prohibition of wine is also favourable to despotism. It prevents that free communication of sentiment which awakens mankind from a torpid indifference to their natural rights. They become cold, timid, cautious, reserved and interested; strangers to those warm passions, and that cheerful elevation of mind, which render men in some measure honest and sincere. In the East, there are no public places of meeting, no communications of sentiments, no introduction to private friendship. A fullness, and
a love



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a love of retirement prevail, which disunite mankind; and as all associations among men are prevented, the hands of government are strengthened by the very virtue of temperance.

The doctrine of a rigid fate, or absolute predestination, which forms one of the principal tenets of the Mahomedan religion, has a great influence on the character and manners of men. When this opinion is adopted as an article of faith, the necessity of precaution is inculcated in vain. The fatalist begins an action because human nature is incapable of absolute idleness; but when a love of repose invites him, when an obstacle arises before him to thwart his designs, he has no motive for perseverance. He waits for another day, perhaps for another month: he at last trusts the whole to Providence, and makes God the agent in his very crimes. Miscarriage can be no disgrace where success depends not on abilities; and the general who loses a battle through his own pusillanimity, lays the blame upon Providence.

Predestination.

The extensive polygamy permitted by the law of Mahomed, has a fatal effect on the minds of his followers; but it has its advantages as well as its defects. The peculiar nature of the climate subjects women to diseases,

Polygamy.



eases, and hurries them forward in a few years to age. One man retains his vigour beyond the common succession of three women through their prime; and the law for a multiplicity of wives is necessary for the support of the human race. But the custom weakens paternal affection; for as a husband cannot equally divide his regard among many women, the children of the favourite will be preferred. Even these will not be much beloved. The loss of a child is no misfortune; and the care of preserving it is lessened, by the opportunity which the number of his women furnishes to the father for begetting more. The child himself is no stranger to this indifference; and he fails in proportion in his duty. Besides, the jealousy between mothers in the haram grows into hatred among their sons. The affection between brothers is annihilated at home; and when they issue forth into the world, they carry their animosities into all the various transactions of life.

Concealment
of women.

These religious tenets, which are so favourable to despotism, are accompanied with singular opinions and customs, which are absolute enemies to freedom and independence. The concealment of their women is favoured among the Mahommedans. Brothers cannot visit them in private; strangers must never see them. This excessive jealousy is derived from various causes. It proceeds

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proceeds from religion, which inculcates female modesty ; it arises partly from the policy of government ; it is derived from the nature of the climate, where continence is a more arduous virtue than in the bleak regions of the north. Honour consists in that which men are most solicitous to secure. The chastity of his wives is a point, without which the Asiatic must not live. The despot encourages the opinion ; as the possession of the women of his most powerful subjects is a sufficient pledge for their faith, when absent in expedition and war.

When the governor of a province falls under the suspicion of disaffection for his prince, the first step taken against him, is an order issued for sending his women to court. Even one of his wives, and she too not the best beloved, will bind him to his allegiance. His obedience to this mandate is the true test of his designs. If he instantly obeys, all suspicions vanish ; if he hesitates a moment, he is declared a rebel. His affection for the woman is not the pledge of his fidelity ; but his honour is, in her person, in the custody of his sovereign. Women are so sacred in India, that even the common soldiery leave them unmolested in the midst of slaughter and devastation. The haram is a sanctuary against all the licentiousness of victory ; and ruf-

Its effect



fians, covered with the blood of a husband, shrink back with confusion from the secret apartments of his wives.

on their
manners.

In the silence which attends despotism, every thing is dark and solemn. Justice itself is executed with privacy; and sometimes a solitary gun, fired at midnight from the palace of the despot, proclaims the work of death. Men indulge themselves under the veil of secrecy; and rejoice in their good fortune, when their pleasures can escape the eye of their prince. Voluptuousness is, therefore, preferred to luxury. The enjoyment of the company of women is the chief object of life among the great; and when they retire into the sanctuary of the haram, they forget, in a variety of charms, their precarious situation in the state. The necessary privacy enhances the indulgence; and the extreme sensibility, perhaps, peculiar to the natives of a hot climate, carries pleasure to an excess which unmans the mind. Men are possessed of something which they are afraid to lose; and despotism, which is founded on the principles of fear and indolence, derives stability and permanency from the defects and vices of its slaves.

Reflections

The seeds of despotism, which the nature of the climate and fertility of the soil had sown in India, were,



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as has been observed, reared to perfect growth by the Mahommedan faith. When a people have been long subjected to arbitrary power, their return to liberty is arduous and almost impossible. Slavery, by the strength of custom, is blended with human nature; and that undefined something, called Public Virtue, exists no more. The subject never thinks of reformation; and the prince, who only has it in his power, will introduce no innovations to abridge his own authority. Were even the despot possessed of the enthusiasm of public spirit, the people would revolt against the introduction of freedom; and revert to that form of government, which takes the trouble of regulation from their hands.

The simplicity of despotism recommends it to an indolent and ignorant race of men. Its obvious impartiality, its prompt justice, its immediate severity against crimes, dazzle the eyes of the superficial; and raise in their minds a veneration little short of idolatry for their prince. When he is active and determined in his measures, the great machine moves with a velocity which throws vigour into the very extremities of the empire. His violence, and even his caprices, are virtues, where the waters must be always agitated to preserve their freshness; and indolence and irresolution can be his only

A DISSERTATION *on the*

only ruinous vices. The first indeed may injure the state; but by the latter it must be undone. A severe prince, by his jealousy of his own authority, prevents the tyranny of others; and, though fierce and arbitrary in himself, the subject derives a benefit from his being the sole despot. His rage falls heavy on the dignified slaves of his presence; but the people escape his fury in their distance from his hand.

of despotism.

The despotic form of government is not, however, so terrible in its nature, as men born in free countries are apt to imagine. Though no civil regulation can bind the prince, there is one great law, the ideas of mankind with regard to right and wrong, by which he is bound. When he becomes an assassin, he teaches others to use the dagger against himself; and wanton acts of injustice, often repeated, destroy by degrees that opinion which is the sole foundation of his power. In the indifference of his subjects for his person and government, he becomes liable to the conspiracies of courtiers, and the ambitious schemes of his relations. He may have many slaves, but he can have no friends. His person is exposed to injury. A certainty of impunity may arm even cowards against him; and thus, by his excessive ardour for power, he with his authority loses his life.

Despotism



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Despotism appears in its most engaging form, under the Imperial house of Timur. The uncommon abilities of most of the princes, with the mild and humane character of all, rendered Hindostan the most flourishing empire in the world during two complete centuries. The manly and generous temper of Baber permitted not oppression to attend the victories of his sword. He came with an intention to govern the nations whom he subdued; and selfish motives joined issue with humanity in not only sparing, but protecting the vanquished. His invasion was no abrupt incursion for plunder; and he thought the usual income of the crown a sufficient reward for his toil. His nobles were gratified with the emoluments of government; and, from disposition, an enemy to useless pomp and grandeur, he chose that his treasury should be gradually filled with the surplus of the revenue, than with the property of individuals, whom the fortune of war had placed beneath his power. Awed by his high character, the companions of his victories carried his mildness and strict equity through all the departments of government. The tyranny of the family of Lodi was forgotten; and the arts, which had been suppressed by a violent despotism, began to rear their heads, under the temperate dominion of Baber.

Mild under
Baber.

Humaion,



Humaioon.

Humaioon, though not equal in abilities to his father, carried all his mild virtues into the throne. He was vigilant and active in the administration of justice, he secured property by his edicts; and, an enemy to rapacity himself, he punished the oppressive avarice of his deputies in the provinces. The troubles which disturbed his reign were the effect of the ambition of others; and his expulsion from the throne was less a misfortune to him than to his subjects. When he returned with victory, he left the mean passion of revenge behind. He punished not his people for his own disasters; he seemed to forget the past, in the prospect of doing future good. The nations of India felt, by the benefit received from his presence, how much they had lost by his absence. Though worn out under a succession of tyrants, during his exile, Hindostan began to revive when he re-mounted the throne. His sudden and unexpected death portended a storm, which was dissipated by the splendid abilities and virtues of his son.

Akbar,

Akbar was possessed of Baber's intrepidity in war, of Humaioon's mildness in peace. Bold, manly, and enterprising, he was an enemy to oppression; and he hated cruelty, as he was a stranger to fear. In the more splendid business of the field, he forgot not the arts of peace. He



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He established, by edict, the right of the subject to transfer his property without the consent of the crown, and by ordering a register of the fixed rents of the lands to be kept in the courts of justice in every district, he took from his officers the power of oppressing the people. Severe in his justice, he never forgave extortion. He promoted just complaints against the servants of the crown, by various proclamations. He encouraged trade, by an exemption of duties through the interior provinces; and by the invariable protection given to merchants of all nations. He regarded neither the religious opinions nor the countries of men: all who entered his dominions were his subjects, and they had a right to his justice. He issued an edict which was afterwards revived by Aurungzêbe, that the rents should not be increased upon those who improved their lands, which wise regulation encouraged industry, and became a source of wealth to the state.

Jehangire, though unfit for the field, trod in his father's path in regulating the civil affairs of the state. Impressed with a high sense of the abilities of Akbar, he continued all his edicts in force; and he was the invariable protector of the people against the rapacity and tyranny of his own officers. In his administration of justice, he was scrupulous, severe, and exact; and if he

Jehangire.



at any time gave a wrong decision, it proceeded from a weakness rather than from a vice of the mind.

Shaw Jehân.

His son, Shaw Jehân, was possessed of better parts, and was more attentive than Jehangire to the business of the subject. He was minutely acquainted with the state of the empire, and being free from that caprice and whim which threw a kind of disgrace on the authority of his father, he rendered his people happy by the gravity, justice, and solemnity of his decisions. The empire flourished under his upright and able administration. Oppression was unknown from the officers of the crown, on account of the vigilance of the emperor; and the strict impartiality which he established in the courts of justice, diminished injuries between man and man.

Aurangzêbe.

Aurangzêbe, to whom business was amusement, added the most extensive knowledge of the affairs of the empire, to an unremitting application. He made himself minutely acquainted with the revenue paid by every district, with the mode of proceeding in the inferior courts, and even with the character and disposition of the several judges. He ordered the register of the rents to be left open for the inspection of all, that the people might distinguish extortion from the just demands of the crown. He commanded, that men versed in the usages
of

ORIGIN *of* DESPOTISM *in* HINDOSTAN.

of the several courts, in the precepts of the Coran, and in the regulations established by edicts, should attend at the public expence, and give their opinion to the poor in matters of litigation. He established a mode of appeal beyond certain sums; and he disgraced judges for an error in judgment, and punished them severely for corruption and partiality. His activity kept the great machine of government in motion through all its members: his penetrating eye followed oppression to its most secret retreats, and his stern justice established tranquillity, and secured property over all his extensive dominions.

When Baber, at the head of his army, took possession of the dominions of the Imperial family of Lodi, he continued to the crown the property of all the lands. These being annually rented out to the subject, furnished those immense revenues which supported the unequalled splendor of his successors in the throne. The property of individuals consisted, at first, of moveables and money only; and the officers of the crown could not even dispose of these by will, without the written consent of the prince. Time, however, wrought a change in things. The posterity of Baber alienated, for particular services, estates from the crown in perpetuity; and these descended in succession by will, or if the pro-

State of land-
ed

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prietor died intestate, by an equal division to his children, according to the law of the Coran. This kind of property was also transferable by sale; and it has been judged, that one third part of the empire was given away by this species of grants from the crown.

property.

These grants, however, were not always a sufficient security against the violence of the crown. Some of the emperors found themselves obliged to resume many estates by an edict; and it must be confessed, that political necessity justified the measure. Princes who contended for the empire were lavish in their donations; and, had not an act of resumption sometimes taken place, the revenue of the crown would, in process of time, have been annihilated. There was, however, a kind of equivalent given to the proprietors; a pension was settled upon themselves, and their children were received into the service of the government. The wealth of the officers of the crown is, after their death, considered as Imperial property; but unless it is immense, it is never appropriated by the prince; and even in that case a proper provision is made for the children, and they have, by an established custom, a right to be employed in some of the departments of the state. The women of the deceased receive annual pensions according



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ing to their rank ; and they may either live in widowhood, or make new alliances by marriage.

The Mogul system of government admits of no hereditary honours. Every man must owe his preferment and rank to himself, and to the favour of his prince. High birth, however, was respected ; and, to a person of abilities, it was a great recommendation at the court of princes proud of their own noble origin. The ranks and degrees of nobility were for the most part official, excepting those of the military kind. Judges, men of letters, and eminent merchants, have been frequently dignified with titles, and admitted into the circle of the principal nobles in the Imperial presence. The nobles consisted of three orders. The EMIRS, who were the first officers of state, and the viceroys of provinces ; the CHANS, who held high posts in the army ; and the BAHADURS, who may in some measure be compared to our knights. The number of which these three orders consisted was arbitrary, and each of them had peculiar privileges in the empire, and a demand on the respect of the undignified part of the subjects.

Of titles of honour.

The course of justice ran through the same gradations, which the general reason of mankind seems to have established in all countries subject to regular governments.

Form of



ments. The provinces were divided into districts; in each of which a judge, appointed by the emperor, decided in criminal as well as civil affairs. He pronounced judgment on capital offences, but his sentence was never put in execution without the consent and warrant of the governor of the province. In disputes concerning property, there lay an appeal to the supreme court, in which the viceroy presided in person. Every province was, in miniature, a copy of the empire. Three principal judges, with high titles of dignity, sat, with many assessors, in the capital. They not only decided upon appeals, but suits might originate before them. The emperor himself, in the presence of his nobles, presided almost every day in this court, which generally sat for two hours in the hall of public justice.

Justice.

When the matter appeared clear, the prince, without much hesitation, pronounced judgment; when it was doubtful, witnesses were examined, and the opinion of the judges asked on the point of law. Should the suit appear intricate, it was referred to the judgment of the court in their own common hall; but the subject might appeal from their decision to the emperor and his assessors in the chamber of audience. These courts, both when the monarch was present and when he was absent, were left open to the people. No judgment was ever pronounced

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nounced secretly, except when the power of the delinquent rendered a public trial dangerous to the state.

The great officers of state, by a kind of prescription, formed a council which answers to our cabinet. The emperor asked their advice upon affairs of moment; he heard their sentiments, but nothing came ever to a vote. They were his advisers, but they had no controul on his power. He frequently called to this council men in inferior departments; and when the deliberation concerned any particular province, the nobles best acquainted with that part of the empire, were admitted into the cabinet. The offences of the first rank of nobility came under the cognizance of this council, as well as other matters of state. They were a kind of jury, who found the matters of fact, and the sovereign pronounced the sentence. He might, by his despotic power, issue out a warrant of death without their advice; but the known opinions of mankind on that subject bound him like a law.

Council of
state.

To these great lines of the government of the Moguls, some reflections may be joined. Reflections
Conquests made by incursion, rather than by war, must be retained by violence. The sword, which obtained the empire, supported it under the house of Timur. Their subjects obeyed them



them from necessity more than from choice; and the lenity of their administration arose more from the mildness of their disposition, than from the spirit of their regulations. The despotic principles of the Tartars, ingrafted upon the Mahommedan tenets of religion, led to force; and seemed to recognize no obedience but that which proceeded from fear. This circumstance obliged the despot to invest his deputies in the provinces with a great part of his power; and when they left his capital, they only did not absolutely rise from subjects into princes.

on the communication

This communication of power, though in some measure necessary to command the people, became dangerous to the prince. The Imperial deputies began to lose their allegiance in proportion to their distance from the throne. The governors became, in some measure, independent, though they professed obedience to the Imperial edicts. A certain portion of the revenue was remitted to court; and the deputy, in a venal court, found frequently means to retain the favour of his prince, when he disobeyed his commands. Every idea of loyalty was, towards the decline of the empire, destroyed among the people of the distant provinces. They heard of an emperor, as the superstitious hear of a guardian angel, whom they never behold. An indifference for his fate succeeded to his want of power. A peasant, at the end of many months, was informed of a revolution

at

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at Delhi. He stopt not his oxen, nor converted the plow-share into a sword. He whistled unconcerned along his field; and enquired not, perhaps, concerning the name of the new prince.

Notwithstanding this indifference in the inferior fort, of power. the emperor every day extended symptoms of his superior power to the very extremities of his empire. His edicts were transmitted to every district; they were publicly read, and registered in the courts of justice. They became a security to the people against the impositions of the governor. An appeal lay from his decisions, by a petition to the emperor in the hall of audience. This doctrine was inculcated by the edicts; and some of the oppressed took advantage of the promise of justice which they contained. Their petitions, whenever they found access to the throne, were heard with the attention which a jealous prince pays to his own power; and there are many instances in which the governors of provinces have been severely punished for an act of injustice to a poor peasant. Never to forgive oppressions against the helpless and low, was an established maxim among all the princes of the house of Timur.

The power of disposing of the succession naturally belongs to a despot. During his life, his pleasure is the On the rules of
VOL. III. d law.

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law. When he dies his authority ceases; but the strength of custom has made his will, in favour of any of his sons, a superior title to primogeniture. The power is, in some measure, necessary. A prince having an independent right of succession to the throne, might be very troublesome to his father in an empire established on the principles which we have described. The weight which he might derive from his hopes, would clog the wheels of government, which, under a system of despotism, can admit of no delays, no obstructions, no divided or limited power. Personal abilities, under such a system, are more necessary than under established laws. A weak prince brings more calamities than a civil war. A minority is dreadful; and it can scarce exist, where the voice of the prince is the living law, which moves the whole machine of the state.

Succession to
the throne.

Necessity frequently excuses, in the eyes of mankind, the worst of crimes. A prince of abilities, who mounts a throne in the East by the exclusion of an elder brother, escapes the detestation of his subjects from the good which they hope to derive from his superior parts. Even fratricide loses its name in self-preservation, combined with the public good. The greatness of the crime is eclipsed by the greatness of the object. Success is a divine decision; and the state gives up the lives of the unhappy



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happy sufferers, as a sacrifice to its own repose. To be born a prince, is therefore a misfortune of the worst and most embarrassing kind. He must die by clemency, or wade through the blood of his family to safety and empire.

The Hindoos, or the followers of the Brahmin faith, Mildness are in number far superior to the Mahommedans in Hindostan. The system of religion which they profess, is only perfectly known in the effect which it has upon the manners of the people. Mild, humane, obedient, and industrious, they are of all nations on earth the most easily conquered and governed. Their government, like that of all the inhabitants of Asia, is despotic; it is, in such a manner, tempered by the virtuous principles inculcated by their religion, that it seems milder than the most limited monarchy in Europe. Some of the reigning princes trace their families, with clearness, above four thousand years; many of them, in a dubious manner, from the dark period which we place beyond the flood. Revolution and change are things unknown; and assassinations and conspiracies never exist.

Penal laws are scarce known among the Hindoos; of the for their motives to bad actions are few. Temperate in

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their



their living, and delicate in their constitutions, their passions are calm, and they have no object but that of living with comfort and ease. Timid and submissive, from the coldness of a vegetable diet, they have a natural abhorrence to blood. Industrious and frugal, they possess wealth which they never use. Those countries, governed by native princes, which lay beyond the devastations of the Mahommedans, are rich, and cultivated to the highest degree. Their governors encourage industry and commerce; and it is to the ingenuity of the Hindoos, we owe all the fine manufactures in the East. During the empire of the Moguls, the trade of India was carried on by the followers of Brahma. The bankers, scribes, and managers of finance were native Hindoos, and the wisest princes of the family of Timur protected and encouraged such peaceable and useful subjects.

Hindoo government.

The nation of the Mahrattors, though chiefly composed of Rajaputs, or that tribe of Indians whose chief business is war, retain the mildness of their countrymen in their domestic government. When their armies carry destruction and death into the territories of Mahomedans, all is quiet, happy, and regular at home. No robbery is to be dreaded, no imposition or obstruction from the officers of government, no protection necessary but the shade. To be a stranger is a sufficient security.



city. Provisions are furnished by hospitality; and when a peasant is asked for water, he runs with great alacrity, and fetches milk. This is no ideal picture of happiness. The Author of the Dissertation, who travelled lately into the country of the Mahrattors, avers, from experience, the truth of his observations. But the Mahrattors, who have been represented as barbarians, are a great and rising people, subject to a regular government, the principles of which are founded on virtue.



AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
STATE OF BENGAL:

WITH A
Plan for restoring that Province to its former
Prosperity and Splendor.

STATE OF BENGAL UNDER THE MOGULS.

Preliminary Observations.

THE affairs of India, though long of great im-
portance to this kingdom, have only very lately
become objects of public attention. Facts coming
from afar made little impresson: their novelty could
not rouse, nor their variety amuse the mind. With a
self-denial uncommon in a spirited nation, we heard,
without emotion, of the great actions of some of our
countrymen; and, if we listened to any detail of oppres-
sions

Reflections.



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fions committed by others, it was with a phlegmatic indifference, unworthy of our boasted humanity. A general distaste for the subject prevailed ; an age, marked with revolution and change, seemed ready to pass away, without being sensible of events which will render it important in the eyes of posterity.

Design of the
author.

The current of public opinion has, at length, taken another direction. Men are roused into attention, with regard to a subject which concerns the welfare of the state. They begin to decide, in their own minds, upon affairs which stand in need of the interposition of the nation ; and they shew an inclination to be informed, as well as a willingness to correct mistakes and to redress grievances. This consideration has induced the author of the following observations, to submit them, with all due deference, to the public. He has been, for years, a silent spectator of the transactions of the British nation in the East ; and it is, from the means of information which he has possessed, that he hopes to give something new to the world. With hands guiltless of rapine and depredation, he assumes the pen without prejudice, and he will use it with all decent freedom without fear.

A brief ac-
count

The empire of the Hindoos over all India, came down from the darkest and most remote antiquity,



to the 170th year before the Christian æra, when it was dissolved by civil discord and war. Bengal, like many other provinces, started up into an independent kingdom, and was governed by successive dynasties of Rajas, who chiefly resided at the now deserted capital of Ghor. Under these princes, it continued a powerful and opulent kingdom, to the beginning of the thirteenth century, when it was first invaded by the Mahommedans, under a prince of the race of Chillagi, who possessed the countries near the source of the Oxus. The name of this Tartar invader was Eas-ul-dien; but he was soon after reduced to subjection by Altumsh, the Patan emperor of Delhi, who formed Bengal into a province, governed by a lieutenant, who derived his authority from the conqueror.

Bengal, during the dominion of the Patans in India, was frequently subject to revolution and change. When a prince of abilities sat on the throne of Delhi, it held of the empire; when the emperor was weak, it became an independent sovereignty under its governor. When the valour and conduct of Baber put an end to the government of the Patans at Delhi, some of that race remained untouched in Bengal. The misfortunes of Humaioon, in the beginning of his reign, not only prevented him from extending the conquests of his father, but deprived him even of the throne which Baber

of the various
revolutions



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had acquired; and death followed too soon, upon his return, to permit him to reduce the wealthy kingdom of Bengal by his arms. The glory of this conquest was reserved for his son, the illustrious Akbar, who, by the expulsion of Daoôd, the last king of Bengal of the Patan race, annexed it in the year 1574 to his empire. Viceroys from Delhi governed the kingdom, from that period, till the debility of Mahommed Shaw gave scope to the usurpation of Aliverdi; and now, by a wonderful revolution of fortune, the sovereigns of that distant province are created by the deputies of the East India company.

of Bengal.

To give an enlarged idea of the subject, it may not be improper to enquire into the mode of government, which the Moguls established in the important province of Bengal. To impose nothing merely speculative upon the public, the Writer of the Dissertation has endeavoured to derive his information from undoubted authority. He has, therefore, translated and annexed to his work, the commissions granted by the court of Delhi to its principal officers in the provinces: From which it will appear, that the despotism of the house of Timur was circumscribed by established forms and regulations, which greatly tempered the rigid severity of that form of government.

*Various Tenures under the Moguls.*

THE Mogul Tartars, when they conquered India, carried a system of necessary policy through the countries which their arms had subdued. Instead of seizing the lands of the vanquished, they confirmed them in their possessions. The number of the conquerors bearing no proportion to the conquered, self-preservation obliged the first to adhere together, and to hold the sword in their hands. Had they attempted to settle in different provinces, they would have soon ceased to be a people; and their power would have been broken by separation. They retained, therefore, their military character; and, when they reduced a province, they made the taxes paid to former princes, the invariable rule of their imposts. The people changed their lords, but if their government suffered any change, it was in the substitution of a milder despotism, in the place of the fierce tyranny of the Patans.

Policy of the Moguls.

Many of the Rajas, or indigenous Indian princes, had, from the first establishment of the Mahommedans in India, been permitted to retain a great part of their ancient possessions, which they continued to govern by their own laws, without any appeal from their jurisdic-

Tributary Rajas.



tion to the courts of justice established by Imperial commissions. The only mark of homage paid by the Rajas, was a certain annual tribute. The house of Timur, no less remarkable for their prudence than for their clemency and justice, never encroached upon the privileges of the tributary princes. They found, that though the Rajas paid not to the crown above half the sum raised upon the subject, their policy, industry, and good government, were so much superior to those of the Moguls, that the countries which they possessed, yielded as much in proportion to their extent, as those which they had farmed out to Zemindars of their own nation and faith. In the two provinces which the British nation now possess, and which, for the future, we will distinguish by the general name of Bengal, many districts of greater extent than any county in Britain, are still possessed by the aboriginal Rajas. But we are more rigid than the Moguls: we have encroached on their privileges, and annihilated their power. During the domination of the house of Timur, one fourth of Bengal was subject to these hereditary lords.

Mahommedan
Zemindars.

The division of the province which was more immediately under the Mahomedan government, was parcelled out into extensive districts, called Chucklas, resembling, in some measure, our counties; and into lesser divisions,



divisions, like our ancient tithings. These were lett to Zemindars, or farmers of the Imperial rents, who sometimes possessed a whole district, or Chuckla; as the Zemindar of Purnea, who assumed the style and state of a Nabob, though only a farmer of the revenue, under the unfortunate Surage-ul-Dowla. The court of Delhi, under the best princes, was venal. A sum of money, secretly and properly applied, often secured the possession of his office to the Zemindar during life; and he even was sometimes enabled to transmit it to his heirs, till, by length of time, they were, in some measure, considered as lords of their respective districts.

The farmers, however, had no lease from the crown of the lands over which they presided. Their authority for collecting the rents from the inferior tenants, was derived from a written agreement, for a certain annual sum to be paid to the treasury, exclusive of the Imperial taxes. To prevent imposition on the poorer sort, in every district there was established a register, in which the rents and imposts upon every village and farm were entered, and open to the inspection of all. The registered rents and imposts were collected by the *Crorie* of the district, who was established in his office by an Imperial commission. He was accountable for the whole, even to the last *Dâm*, as the commission expresses it, to the *Fotadâr* or treasurer of the district, who paid

Their power



paid them into the hands of the Dewan, or receiver-general of the Imperial revenues in the province.

restricted

The rights or dues of the Dewanny, or the revenue paid to the crown, did not amount to above half the sum raised upon the subject by the great farmers. These were, from time to time, permitted to raise the rents upon the inferior tenants, in proportion to the general improvement of the lands. The surplus, which was known to government from the public registers of the districts, was, in part, allowed to the general farmers, for the purpose of building houses for the husbandmen, for furnishing them with implements of agriculture, for embanking to prevent inundations, for making reservoirs of water for the dry season; and, in general, for all expences attending the improvement and cultivation of the lands; which otherwise would have rendered the accounts of government intricate and perplexed.

by the crown.

The great farmers, however, were not permitted to oppress the tenants with exorbitant rents; neither was it their interest to extort from the husbandmen sums which would render them incapable of cultivating their lands, and of living comfortably upon the fruits of their toil. In the Imperial officers of the revenue, the poor had



had friends, and the Zemindar spies upon his conduct. They were such checks upon him, that he could conceal nothing from their observation. They transmitted monthly accounts of his transactions to court. If the tenants were able, without oppression, to pay the additional rent, the demands of the crown rose at the expiration of the year upon the farmer, in proportion to the new impost; if they were found incapable of bearing the burden, the Zemindar was turned out of his office for his avarice and imprudence.

A double revenue, it appears from what has been already observed, rose to the crown from the lands; the ancient rent, established at the conquest of India by the Moguls, and the sums which proceeded from the annual contracts with the great farmers. The viceroy of the province was vested with the power of letting the lands; and he was obliged to transmit to the receiver-general a record of the sums payable by each Zemindar. The cause of this mode of raising the revenue is obvious. The detail of accounts, the making of contracts with the inferior tenants, would have rendered the business of government too minute and too expensive; and to have permitted the general farmers to manage their districts without either check or controul, would have given birth to scenes of oppression, which

A double
revenue.



which Fate had reserved for an unfortunate people, to our times. The Mogul empire is now no more; and the servants of the freest nation upon earth have left the body of the people to the mercy of the Zemindars.

Various Zemindars.

The general farmers of districts were not the only persons known by the name of Zemindars. Men, who possessed estates for life, and sometimes in perpetuity, free from all taxation, by virtue of Imperial grants, were distinguished by the same title. These grants were generally given to learned and religious men, to favourite servants at court, to soldiers who had deserved well of their prince, and they were respected by succeeding emperors, and seldom revoked. One sixth part of the lands in Bengal had been conferred, in perpetuity, by different princes, on their favourites and adherents. Many of these estates have fallen into the East India Company, from a failure of heirs; and others daily fall, as the property is not transferable by sale. A minute enquiry might greatly increase our revenue. Many grants said to be derived from the emperor, are only from the governors of the province; many are in the possession of men who cannot trace their blood to the original proprietors. A succession of revolutions has rolled one part of Bengal upon the other; and it is not hitherto settled from confusion.

Lands



Lands were held by a tenure less permanent, of the Different emperors of Hindoostan. A firmân or Imperial mandate, called by the name of Jagieer, was issued frequently to particular men. This species of grant was for no term of years. It was given through favour, and revocable at pleasure. When any person was raised to the rank of an Omrah, it was an established rule to confer upon him an estate, for the support of his dignity. This, however, was nothing more than an assignment on the revenues of the crown, arising from a specified tract of land in a district, named in the body of the grant. The grantee had no business with the tenants, as he never resided on the estate allotted for his subsistence. He sent his agent every season to the public officers of the district; and his receipt to them, for his allowance, was received by the Dewan, as a part of the Imperial revenue. No conditions of service, none for the maintenance of troops, was annexed to this grant. These are the fables of men who carried the feudal ideas of Europe into their relation of the state of India. The armies of the empire were paid out of the public treasury. Every province had its particular establishment of troops, which the governors were impowered to augment in times of rebellion and commotion.



AN ENQUIRY INTO THE

tenures

During the domination of the house of Timur, there was no transferable landed property in Hindoostan; excepting gardens, orchards, houses, and some small portions of ground, in the environs of great cities, for which merchants and wealthy tradesmen had obtained particular grants, distinguished by the name of Pottas. This species of property was repeatedly secured by general edicts, for the encouragement of building, for the accommodation of citizens, and the improvement of towns. Grants of this kind did not always proceed from the crown. The governors of provinces were empowered to issue Pottas, under certain limitations and restrictions: the principal one of which was, that the usual rent of the ground should be paid regularly by the proprietor, to the collectors of the Imperial revenue.

under the
empire.

Tenures of other various kinds were common in Bengal, as well as in the other provinces of the empire. An assignment was frequently granted, upon a specified tract of land, for the discharge of a certain sum; and when the sum was paid, the assignment expired. Particular farms were burthened with pensions, called Altunga, to holy men and their descendants, without their ever having any concern in the management of the lands. The despot reserved the people entire to himself, and



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and established his power by preventing oppression. Certain imposts were also appropriated for the maintenance of Mullas or priests, for the support of places of worship, public schools, inns, highways, and bridges. These imposts were laid by the receiver-general of the revenue, upon the different husbandmen, in proportion to the rent which they paid; and the tax was distinguished by the name of the impositions of the Dewan.

Civil Officers and Courts of Justice.

IN states subject to despotism, the legislative, the judicial and executive power are vested in the prince. He is the active principle which exists in the center of the machine, and gives life and motion to all its parts. His authority and consequence, however, depend, in a great measure, on the degree in which he communicates his power to his officers. If he gives them all his authority, the reverence for his person is lost in the splendor of his deputies. If he bestows only a small part of his power on his servants, that terror, which is the foundation of his government, is removed from the minds of his subjects; and a door is opened for commotion, licentiousness, and crimes. The emperors of India, of the house of Timur, had, for two centuries, the good fortune to clothe their officers

Despotism
limited



AN ENQUIRY INTO THE

with that happy medium of authority which was sufficient to govern, without the power of oppressing the body of the people.

among the
Moguls.

The despotism of Hindostan, it ought to be observed, was never a government of mere caprice and whim. The Mahommedans carried into their conquests a code of laws which circumscribed the will of the prince. The principles and precepts of the Coran, with the commentaries upon that book, form an ample body of laws, which the house of Timur always observed; and the practice of ages had rendered some ancient usages and edicts so sacred in the eyes of the people, that no prudent monarch would chuse to violate either by a wanton act of power. It was, besides, the policy of the prince, to protect the people from the oppressiveness of his servants. Rebellion sprung always from the great; and it was necessary for him to secure a party against their ambition, among the low.

Nabob,

The Imperial governor of a province, known by the corrupted name of Nabob, in the East as well as in Europe, was an officer of high dignity and authority; but his power, though great, was far from being unlimited and beyond controul. He conferred titles below the rank of an Omrah; he was permitted to grant



grant estates till they should be confirmed by the crown. He appointed and dismissed at pleasure all officers both civil and military, excepting a few, whom we shall have occasion to mention, who acted by commission, under the seal of the empire; and some of these, upon misbehaviour, he could suspend till the emperor's pleasure was known. He let the lands to the general farmers, in conjunction with the Dewan; but he bore no part in the collection of the revenue, but by aiding the Imperial officers with the military power. The Omrahs, who served under him in the army, having generally, on account of the convenience, their allowance from the emperor on the rents of the province, he had the power, for disobedience or notorious crimes, to suspend them from their Jagieers, until he should receive an answer from court, where the dispute was examined in the cabinet. In matters of justice, there rested an appeal to his tribunal, from the Cazi or chief-justice, though he seldom chose to reverse the decrees of that judge. Disputes where property was not concerned, and where the established laws had made no provision, were settled by his authority; but he was instructed at his peril not to turn the subjects of the empire out of the lands, tenements, or houses, which they themselves either possessed or built, or which descended to them from their ancestors.

The



Dewan,

The Dewan was the officer next in dignity to the viceroy, in the province. He derived his commission from the emperor, as receiver-general of the revenue. His office was altogether confined to the administration and collection of the Imperial rents and taxes. He corresponded with the minister; he audited the accounts of the governor; and as he had entire to himself the charge and disposal of the public money, he might, for good reasons, refuse to discharge any extraordinary and unprecedented expences; or to issue out pay to new troops, raised without apparent necessity. He presided in the office called Dafter Ali, or over all the Mutasiddies, or clerks of the cheque; the Canongoes or public registers; Cories, or collectors of the larger districts; Fufildars, or collectors of the lesser districts; Fotadars, or treasurers; Chowdries, or chiefs of districts; Muckuddums, or head-men of villages; and in general over all the officers of the Imperial revenue.

Corie,

The Corie of every Pergunna or larger district, derived his commission from the emperor. His office, though in miniature, was the exact counterpart of the Dewan; being the receiver-general of the county, if the name may be used, as the former was of the whole province. He was immediately accountable to the



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Dewan, in whose office he passed his accounts. He produced the receipts of the Fotadar or treasurer of the Pergunna or district, for the sums which he had paid into that officer's hands, from the collections made by the Fuzildars, who, in the subdivisions of the Pergunna, held offices, each of which was a counterpart of his own.

The Carcûn of the larger districts was an officer commissioned by the emperor, to settle all matters and disputes between the tenants and the officers of the revenue, and to preserve the ancient usages of the Pergunna. He was also a kind of spy upon all their private as well as public transactions; he audited their accounts publicly, transmitting copies of them monthly to court, attested by the Sheickdars, Chowdries, and Canon-goes of the district. These accounts being entered with great regularity in the visier's office at Delhi, the emperor had an immediate view of the collections in the province, before the general accounts of the Dewanny were adjusted; and this was also a great check upon the office of the Dewan.

The view already presented of the mode of collecting the Imperial revenue, renders it unnecessary to descend through all the inferior offices in the department of the receiver-
and other officers.



receiver-general. The revenues, it must be observed, were never transmitted entire to the Imperial treasury in the capital of the province, much less into that of the empire. The expences incurred in every district were deducted from the receipts of the Fotadar or treasurer of the district; and the disbursements of the province in general from those of the Dewan. The surplus alone, which was more or less according to accident, found its way to the Imperial exchequer. The estimates of the Imperial revenues are, therefore, not the sums received in the exchequer at Delhi, but the gross collections in every province.

Chief-justice.

The courts of justice in Bengal, distinguished by the general name of Cutcherries, were of various kinds. They generally received their designation from the officer who presided in each, or within whose jurisdiction they were comprehended. The Author of the Enquiry is not fully informed concerning the powers of the different judges, or the mode of proceeding in their courts. There arose a chain of appeal from the lowest to the highest. An action might be removed from any of the courts below before the Cazi of the province, commonly called Daroga Adalit, or chief-justice; and from him there lay an appeal to the tribunal of the viceroy.

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Inferior



Inferior judges were appointed by an Imperial Judges. commission, in every large district, and in every considerable city, with whom appeals rested, from the courts in the country, and from the decisions of Cutwals, or mayors of towns. These Cazis, or judges, were vested with power to summon before them all persons, to examine records, public registers, grants, and witnesses. They were, at their peril, to pass judgment impartially, according to the laws of the Coran, and the canons and regulations of the empire. They were impowered to make and dissolve marriages, to execute contracts of every kind between individuals, to inflict punishments, which did not extend to either life or limb. They took cognizance of all riots, disorders, and tumults; and they were denominated the general guardians of the morals of the people. They were provided with an establishment of clerks, registers, and officers of the court. They passed judgment in a summary manner, and their legal fees were one fourth of the matter in dispute, equally levied upon the plaintiff and defendant. This regulation was intended to prevent vexatious law-suits, as well as to bring them to a speedy issue. During the vigour of the Mogul empire, capital punishments were hardly known in India. When a crime which merited death was committed, the Cazi, after a full proof of the fact, by witnesses,

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pronounced



pronounced sentence against the guilty person; but, without the confirmation of the viceroy, it could not be put in execution. Though the empire sometimes abounded with treason, it was never punished but in the field.

Inferior
officers.

In each subdivision of the Pergunna or district, subject to the jurisdiction of the Cazi or judge, there was an inferior officer called a Chowdri, similar to our justice of the peace. Every village had its chief-man, who was the constable of his own department. A Fogedar was, properly speaking, the commander of the troops, in every military station. He sometimes farmed the lands in the neighbourhood; and being the immediate representative of the viceroy, he was considered as the principal officer in his district. But he did not sit in judgment, the civil being always kept distinct from the military department, under the government of the Moguls, as long as it retained its vigour. The Zemindars or general farmers, were sometimes entrusted with the command of the troops in their own districts; but in their courts they decided only upon trivial disputes between the inferior husbandmen.—Such was the government of Bengal, under the empire of the house of Timur.

Revenue

*Revenue and Commerce.*

A Brief, but it is hoped a comprehensive, idea being given, in the preceding section, of the government of Bengal under the Imperial house of Timur, the Author of the Enquiry will proceed to explain the Revenues and Commerce of that once flourishing and opulent kingdom. In the reign of the emperor Jehangire, the revenues of the provinces of Bengai and Behâr, both which, for the sake of brevity, we comprehend under the name of the former, amounted to £ 2,796,719 13 2 Under his grandson Aurungzêbe

Revenue of
Bengal and
Behâr.

they encreased to - - - 2,911,866 7 6

Mahommed Shuffia, who wrote an abridgment of the History of the Empire, from the death of the illustrious Akbâr to the fatal invasion of Nadir Shaw, where he mentions the provinces which revolted during the indolent reign of Mahommed Shaw, estimates the revenues of Bengal at sixty crores of Dâms, or one crore and fifty lacks of roupées, which sum is equal to £ 1,875,000

The revenues of Behâr, according to the same writer, amounted to forty-five crores of Dâms, or - - -

1,406,250

£. 3,281,250

g 2

It



AN ENQUIRY INTO THE

Increase under the empire.

It appears, from the above calculation, that the revenues of Bengal had been gradually increasing, in the progress of the empire, through time. They continued still to increase, under the revolted Nabobs, some of whom brought into their treasury four millions of our money, but not without distressing the subject, and plundering him of a part of his wealth. It may be necessary to repeat an observation, already made, that not above half the sum raised upon the people came into the coffers of government. The exact sum transmitted annually to Delhi, before the dissolution of the empire, is not easy to ascertain; but we can form some judgment of the amount, from the ruinous policy of the Imperial court, when its ancient vigour began to decline. The provinces of Bengal and Behâr, during some years of indolence and debility, were farmed out to the viceroys, who paid into the treasury, one million two hundred and forty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence of our money.

Sum annually remitted to Delhi.

This sum, it is supposed, was a medium struck, upon an average of years, of the money remitted to the treasury at Delhi, when the empire retained its force. But this stipulated revenue, as might have been foreseen, was never regularly paid. The viceroys acquired an independent



pendent power, by a regulation which threw the whole management of the province into their hands, without controul; and the vigour of the Imperial government, in proportion, declined. The country profited, however, by the refractoriness of its governor; if his avarice prompted him to raise more on the subject, the latter was more able than before to pay the additional impost, from the revenue being kept and expended in the province. Bengal began to flourish, under an additional load of oppression. It yielded more to a severe Nabob, than to the milder government of the empire; and being relieved from an annual drain of specie to Delhi, it became opulent under a degree of rapine.

Though despotism is not the most favourable government for commerce, it flourished greatly in Bengal, under the strict justice of the house of Timur. Sensible of the advantages which they themselves would derive from a free commercial intercourse between their subjects, they were invariably the protectors of merchants. The military ideas which they brought from Tartary, prevented the principal servants of the crown from engaging in trade; and, therefore, monopolies of every kind were discouraged, and almost unknown. No government in Europe was ever more severe against forestalling and re-

Commerce of

grating,



grating, than was that of the Moguls in India, with regard to all the branches of commerce. A small duty was raised by the crown; but this was amply repaid, by the never-violated security given to the merchant.

Bengal.

Bengal, from the mildness of its climate, the fertility of its soil, and the natural industry of the Hindoos, was always remarkable for its commerce. The easy communication by water from place to place, facilitated a mercantile intercourse among the inhabitants. Every village has its canal, every Pergunna its river, and the whole kingdom the Ganges, which falling, by various mouths, into the bay of Bengal, lays open the ocean for the export of commodities and manufactures. A people, from an inviolable prejudice of religion, abstemious, were averse to luxury themselves; and the wants of nature were supplied almost spontaneously by the soil and climate. The balance of trade, therefore, was, against all nations, in favour of Bengal; and it was the sink where gold and silver disappeared, without the least prospect of return.

Balance of
trade in its
favour.

All the European nations carried chiefly on their commerce with Bengal in bullion. The Dutch, at a medium



STATE OF BENGAL.

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dium of ten years, threw annually into the bosom of that kingdom, in bullion	- - - - -	£ 475,000
The English	- - - - -	192,500
The French, Danes, and Portuguese	- - - - -	250,000
The exports of Bengal to the gulphs of Persia and Arabia, were very great. She supplied Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, and the lesser Asia with her manufactures, and brought home annually, into her coffers, of gold	- - - - -	375,000
Her trade in opium and piece goods to the eastern kingdoms of Asia, to the Malayan and Philippine islands, brought yearly a balance in her favour of	- - - - -	150,000
The inland trade of Bengal, with the upper Hindostan and Affam	- - - - -	250,000
The coasting-trade with the coasts of Coromandel and Malabâr	- - - - -	160,000
		<u>£ 1,852,500.</u>

The above estimate is made designedly low; for were we to argue from general principles, a greater sum must have been imported annually into Bengal. The twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds remitted annually to Delhi,

Observations.