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BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST

THE EASTERN WORLD AND BRITAIN

INDIA, CHINA, JAPAN, AND THE EAST

BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN ASIA

VOL. II

THE
BRITISH WORLD IN THE EAST:
A GUIDE

HISTORICAL, MORAL, AND COMMERCIAL,
TO
India, China, Australia, South Africa,
AND THE
OTHER POSSESSIONS OR CONNEXIONS
OF
GREAT BRITAIN
IN THE
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN SEAS.

BY
LEITCH RITCHIE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

LONDON:
W. H. ALLEN AND CO., 7, LEADENHALL STREET.

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A GUIDE

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THE
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BOOK VI.

**THE COUNTRIES ADJOINING INDIA, AND THEIR CONNEC-
TION WITH REMOTER POWERS.**

CHAPTER I.

BELOOCHISTAN AND AFFGHANISTAN.

HOWEVER well acquainted we might be with the people of India and their country, we should be able to form but a very inadequate idea of their true position and prospects without some knowledge of the adjoining territories, and the connection of these, if any, with more powerful and civilized nations. We have now attempted to trace—with little attention to details, but some anxiety to bring into view the greater land-marks of history—the fortunes of an ancient and extraordinary people shut up for many ages, by circumstances both

of a moral and physical nature, from intercommunion with the rest of mankind. It is next our business to glance round the entire line of frontier, and endeavour to obtain some distinct notions of the genius and general status of their neighbours beyond.

On the west of Sinde, extending westward to the frontiers of Persia, and occupying the whole of the space between these two countries, from the Indian Ocean on the south to Afghanistan on the north, lies Beloochistan, embracing an area of about a hundred and ninety thousand square miles. The sea-board, although six hundred miles in extent from east to west, affords no good harbour, but in some places the anchorage is sufficiently secure. The surface of the country is in general rugged and elevated; a production of the Indian Caucasus running through its entire breadth to the sea, with branches forming various congeries of hills and mountain-ridges, intermingled with rocky table-lands. Towards the north this character of the country changes. The elevations dwindle by degrees on the west till they are entirely lost in a desert of sand and rocks, near the further border of which lies the course of the Helmund. On the east they sink more suddenly into the plain of Cutch Gundava; and through the mountains between opens the famous Bolan Pass, and more to the southward that of the Moola. These are the names of two torrents, along which the savage route winds which connects Beloochistan with the valley of the Indus. These are the only waters of any magnitude in the northern division of the country, although even they do not reach the mighty river to which they appear to be hastening, but are swallowed up and lost in the burning sands of Gundava. In the southern portion there are many such headlong streams, which in the

wet season carry great volumes of water to the sea, but at other times mark their course only by a bed of dry stones, occasionally covered with the rapid vegetation of India.

It is needless to say, that in a country where the elevations frequently attain, as is the case with Khelat, to a height of six thousand feet above the sea; there is every variety of climate, from intense cold to scorching heat; and so suddenly do the mountains rise, that this variety is sometimes encountered in a journey of a few miles. The western desert is not merely inhospitable, but in some seasons impassable. It is then a moving sea of sand, the impalpable particles of which float in the heavy atmosphere, and unite with the scorching winds for the destruction of animal life.

If travellers are to be believed, Beloochistan is rich in almost all kinds of mineral productions, including the precious metals; but their statements are in general vague, and sometimes contradictory. It has been ascertained, however, that copper, lead, iron, antimony, sulphur, and alum, abound in various parts of the country; while common salt is too plentiful to be advantageous to vegetation.

Little is known respecting the vegetable kingdom; although all writers agree in their report of its riches, including, within a singularly small space, the productions of the temperate and the torrid zones. The tamarind and the date, a species of teak, the babool, the mulberry, the mimosa, the tamarisk, grow to a great magnitude; while the plantain, sycamore, walnut, mango, and other trees, are found in the different regions of the country. Most of the fruits and esculent vegetables of Europe are produced; melons attain to a gigantic size; mulberries are dried and ground into meal for bread; and assafœtida is held in much estimation by the people

as an agreeable food. Wheat, barley, millet, oil-seeds are the principal crops; and, in the hot regions, rice, cotton, indigo, and tobacco.

Besides most of the wild animals common in this part of Asia, there are dromedaries in the low country, and camels in the mountains; and the horses of the north-west, where Arabian blood has improved the breed, are exported to India.

The south-east province, bordering on Sindh and the Indian Ocean, is called *Lass* or *Lassa*. The boundary line between it and the British territory is the *Hubb* river, still more strongly marked on the *Beloochistan* side by the mountain range we have described as intersecting the country. The province, however, is comparatively level, but unproductive, although breeding considerable numbers of cows, buffalos, camels, and goats.

The next province, proceeding northward, is *Jhalawan*, with a mountainous and barren soil, subsisting a pastoral population of only thirty thousand persons on an area of twenty thousand square miles.

On the east the province of *Cutch Gundava*, bordering on *Sindh*, is remarkable as possessing the openings of the *Bolan* and *Moola* Passes, the two great lines of communication between *Khorasan* and *India*. The country lies low, and its few rivers, or rather intermittent torrents, being absorbed by its thirsty sands, the climate is excessively sultry, and the desolating *simoom* is of frequent occurrence. The soil is a hard clay, deposited at some early period by the torrents, and then baked by the burning sun. Towards the south-east all traces of vegetation gradually disappear, and the desert of *Shikarpoor* stretches away towards the *Indus* for a distance of forty miles. *Cutch Gundava*, notwithstanding, is the

most populous province of Beloochistan, and its unpromising soil amply repays the trouble of irrigation, yielding two crops of grain in the year, besides cotton and sugar, and all the fruits of a warm climate.

On the west lies the small province of Khelat, piled on mountains never less than five thousand, and sometimes six thousand feet above the sea. The consequence of this elevation is, that in a latitude which elsewhere gives excessive heat, there is frost for five or six months in the year; and in winter and spring a cutting north-easterly wind, accompanied by snow, sleet, or rain, blows almost without intermission. This province is the seat of Khelat, the capital of Beloochistan, and the only town of any magnitude in the country, although it does not contain more than twelve thousand inhabitants.

The most northerly province is Sarawan, with a rugged and elevated surface, rising with a peak twelve thousand feet high, where the Beloochistan and Affghan mountains begin to intermingle. On the west are the Sarawancee ridges, on the east those that overhang the Bolan Pass, and on the south the highlands of Khelat. It forms, therefore, an irregular table-land, interspersed with level and fertile tracts, of which the principal are the valley of Shawl and the plain of Moostung. On the west the elevations of this province sink into the Desert, and the few mountain streams it has are lost in its burning sands. In the opposite direction its only considerable torrent, the Bolan, is in like manner absorbed in the plains of Cutch Gundava; and there the climate is distinguished by a general aridity, which, except in some places where this is counteracted by local circumstances, represses vegetation and confines population.

The only remaining province, Mekran, is the most extensive of the whole, being bounded on the west by

Persia, and extending northward from the sea to Affghanistan. This region is in the greater part still unexplored, and will probably long remain a wilderness, inhabited by wild beasts and tribes of as savage men. It is in general rugged and elevated, and is almost completely bordered by mountain ranges, except on the south, where the tract along the sea-shore is low and level. On the north it is protected by the Wushutee chain from the sandy desert. It has no great rivers, but numerous water-courses run from north to south, expanding into wide and deep channels as they reach the plain on the coast. The beds of these torrents become dry in the hot period, and are immediately filled with the rank and rapid jungle of the region, and their never-failing inhabitants—wild beasts. A portion of the wet season exhibits all the fury of the south-west monsoon; and in a portion of the dry season, described as the "date-ripening," the sun is so scorching that the inhabitants are confined to their huts. The date, indeed, which flourishes in the fiercest heat, forms an important article of food; while along the coast the people—descendants of the Ichthyophagi of Alexander's historians—live like their ancestors upon fish.

Such is Beloochistan in its physical aspect, and its moral is not more inviting. The nominal king of the country is the Khan of Khelat; but the first-mentioned province, Lussa, has a hereditary prince of its own, the vassal of the Khan; and the last, Mekran, for the reason, we presume, that it is not worth a contest, has succeeded in throwing off the yoke of legitimate authority altogether, and is divided, or rather torn asunder, by numerous petty chiefs. The government of the Khan is absolute, or in other words,—for there is perhaps no really despotic authority in the world,—it is regulated by transmitted

custom, and is kept in the beaten track by fear. He has the power of life and death as regards all his subjects, but he cannot tax directly the Beloochees or the Brahoes, who are the ruling tribes. His revenue is insignificant, little more than 30,000*l.* a year, and is derived from his resources as a landed proprietor, from dues on trade, and from arbitrary exactions on the industrious portion of the people (or those able to answer them), chiefly the Parsees, and Jat cultivators.

We have already described the struggle of the late Khan with the British, which ended in his death; and the paltry number of troops he was able to raise in so imminent a peril, shows that real power and theoretical despotism are very different things in such eastern governments. The Beloochees are heavily armed with matchlock, spear, sword, dagger, and shield, and they were never averse to closing with the British troops; but no advantage, as we have seen, can compensate for the want of discipline. "The brave Beloochees," says Sir Charles Napier, in one of his despatches, "first discharging their matchlocks and pistols, dashed on the bank with desperate resolution, but down went their bold and skilful swordsmen under the superior power of the musket and bayonet."

The inhabitants are usually divided into Beloochees and Brahoes; but the former are in reality composed of numerous tribes, each distinct from the others. The Brahoes may be described as the Tartars of Beloochistan, wandering about the country, as the seasons vary, from pasture to pasture, and in winter squatting under tents of felt or goats' hair. Civilization, such as it is, appears to diminish as the distance increases from Hindostan; and in its extreme west, the people are freebooters by profession, and scour the country at the rate, it is said, of seventy or eighty miles a day. The love of highway

robbery, indeed, appears to be a national taste, for even amidst the comparative civilization of Sinde, it is said the Beloochee chiefs disguise themselves, and go forth to plunder for amusement. Besides the native tribes, there are Hindoos almost everywhere to be met with, who manage the monetary concerns of the people, but, influenced by the savageism around them, retain few of the characteristics of Brahminism. The whole population is supposed to be considerably under half a million.

Hospitality, courage, excess in sensual pleasures, polygamy at will, the purchase of women like articles of mere luxury—all things, good and bad, that distinguish man in the lower stages of civilization, are to be found among the Beloochees. They pass most of their time in smoking tobacco or hemp, and chewing opium; and besides warlike exercises, their principal amusement is gambling. The men wear a cotton tunic, either blue or white, something shorter than those of the English peasants, with loose trousers drawn in at the ankles, and a scarf or shawl wound round the waist. In winter the upper class have an additional tunic of quilted cotton, the lower, a capote of felt or coarse cloth. Their cap is round, with a projecting crown, and beneath it their hair falls in dark masses upon their shoulders, unmixed at any age with grey, as both sexes use a dye of henna and indigo. The women have wider trousers, and their tunic is open nearly to the waist, exposing the bosom; but when they go abroad, they are enveloped in the shroud-like drapery of the Affghan women. They are, as among all barbarous nations, the drudges of the men, but still they have a certain weight in the counsels of their masters, and may be said, upon the whole, to be treated with more distinction than in most Mahomedan countries.

Mekran, in the time of Marco Polo, must have been in a very different condition. The people, he tells us, were idolators, and raised abundance of rice, carrying on a great trade both by sea and land. He calls the country Kesmacoran, interpreted Kedge-Mekran, from the name of the capital town. Kedge, which gives its name to the surrounding district, is near the Persian frontier, and stands on the Mooleanee river, reported by Pottinger to be an abundant and never-failing stream. In recent times it carried on a considerable trade with Candahar, Khelat, Shikarpore, and the coast; but owing to the distractions of the country, in which its chief threw off his allegiance to the Khan of Khelat, the place has decayed, and its merchants removed.

The Beloochees are fond of bardic songs, and it is the profession of one of the tribes to scream forth the genealogies of their entertainers to the discordant music of the tom-tom, the cymbals, and a rude guitar. Colonel Pottinger inclines to the opinion that they are of Jewish origin, and traces several customs, particularly those concerning marriage, adultery, and divorce, to the institutes of Moses. The personal appearance of the people would seem to favour this hypothesis; but they themselves repudiate it as a reproach, and assume to be of Arab ancestry. They are Mahomedans of the Sooni sect, and the Shia doctrine is rejected with detestation even by the descendants of the Persians. The attempt of Nadir Shah to introduce uniformity in religion throughout the whole Mussulman world is characteristic. Among the proofs he affected to examine were the sacred books both of the Jews and Christians; but when the Shia high priest protested against such an exercise of temporal power as he contemplated, Nadir had him strangled on the spot, and all difficulty for a time was at an end.

Having thus thrown down the gauntlet to the established church of Persia, he confiscated its revenue, to the extent of three millions sterling, for the purpose of reconciling the rest of his subjects to his interference, by paying the army its arrears and reducing the taxes of the people. But all was unavailing. The two great sects are as hostile as ever, and in Beloochistan more especially, a Christian would meet with far more toleration than a Shia.

Industry may be supposed to be in a very low state in a country like Beloochistan. They spin the hair of goats and camels into ropes, and weave it into coarse fabrics; and the wool of their sheep they manufacture into garments, colouring them with madder and other native dyes. Some matchlocks and other arms are made at Khelat. Horses, as we have mentioned, are exported to India; and as vessels are unable to reach the beach, the animals are made to swim out to them at spring tides. They exchange also some butter, hides, wool, drugs, dried fruits, &c., for rice, spices, dye-stuffs, a small quantity of British and Indian manufactures, and slaves from Muscat.

Beloochistan is supposed to have been one of the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of that potentate who "reigned from India even unto Ethiopia," and who divorced his queen because she refused to humour a drunken whim by transgressing the rules of modesty prescribed to eastern women. Alexander traversed it on his way back to Persepolis, and Arrian describes the tract with great correctness; its desolation and aridity—the necessity of digging in the beds of torrents for water—the food of the inhabitants, dates and fish—the violence of the monsoon in Mekran—and the impossibility of subsisting a large army on such a route, which led to

the destruction of a great part of the expedition of the Greeks.

Beloochistan was also traversed by the armies both of the Caliphs and Moguls ; and it became, though little more than nominally, a portion of the empire of Akbar. In the middle of the eighteenth century, it was tributary to Nadir Shah, who bestowed upon the great-grandfather of the present ruler of Kelat the office of commander-in-chief.

On the north of Beloochistan lies Affghanistan, extending westward to Persia, eastward to the Indus, and bounded on the north by an undefined line including the country of the Huzareh and Eimauk Tartars. Its superficial area is about two hundred and twenty-five thousand square miles. Four-fifths of this extent consists of rocks and mountains, rising in elevation till they reach the stupendous height of twenty thousand feet. The Cabool river runs eastward into the Indus, and the Helmund is the grand duct of the west, carrying the waters of that part of the country into the extraordinary swamp of Hamoon. The permanent portion of this expanse of waters is seventy miles long by twenty in breadth, though rarely more than three or four feet deep. From its eastern bank, a path, upwards of a mile long and about a yard wide, cut through the reeds, leads to a hill rising from the bosom of this shallow sea, and crowned by a fort. The lower classes of the inhabitants wade through the thick waters, while others are pushed on rafts to their strange resting place, from which a view, thus described by an eye-witness, is beheld. "Immediately beneath me," says Conolly, "lay a yellow plain, as level as a calm sea, formed by the tops of reeds, and extending north and south far beyond the reach of vision. On the east it was bounded by a pale yellow marking the boundary of the lake, where the less-thickly growing

weeds are annually burned down, and a few poor Khuls clear away the ground for the cultivation of water-melons. Beyond, again, in this direction, appeared the dark green tamdrisks, whole forests of which fringe the lake. Here and there, as we looked around on every side, were seen patches of blue water, and on the west a large clear lake swept away until out of sight." The waters of western Affghanistan have no visible outlet from this lake, but are carried off by evaporation; although it is conjectured by Pottinger that at some early period there was a communication with the river Mooleanee (called by different names in its earlier course), and that they were thus conducted to the ocean.

On the other side the Cabool river carries the waters of a portion of the Hindoo Koosh, and of the elevated country it traverses in its after career, into the Indus. Swollen by the number of tributaries it receives, it sweeps along the northern base of the Khyber mountains a fierce and abounding stream, which it is impossible to cross otherwise than on such coracles as are used in the Deccan. At Dobundee it becomes navigable for boats of forty or fifty tons to Attock, a distance of forty miles.

Between Hamoon and the Cabool river, the Abistada Lake is another receptacle for the waters of Affghanistan. No two authorities agree about its extent, which no doubt varies with the seasons; some describing it as being in appearance an inland sea, while others confine its diameter to a few miles.

The natural divisions of the country are too confined, and the political divisions too little known and too unimportant to render a brief description very intelligible. Its more prominent features, however, are these:—To the north of Cutch Gundava is the extensive territory of Sewistan, but little differing from the former in its

character. It is to this day, however, almost unknown. It is bounded on the east by the Suliman mountains, between which and the Indus stretches due north for three hundred miles the flat tract of Daman, or Derajat. These mountains are supposed to be the ancestral seat of the Affghans, and are remarkable for their varied and vigorous vegetation. The soil of Daman is of the indurated clay already described, which becomes prolific when subjected to cultivation; but Derajat, the line next the Indus, is fertile and populous. It is at present in the clutches of the Sikhs, who do their best to neutralize the gifts of nature by tyranny and oppression.

To the west of Sewistan is the valley of Pisheen, a lofty table-land, with a fertile soil and moderate climate. It is traversed by the great route from Sinde by the Bolan and Kojuck passes, and the inhabitants employ themselves in the carrying trade, as well as in agriculture and the rearing of horses. Proceeding in a north-easterly direction from the Amram mountains, the upper barriers of Pisheen, we find an extensive country overspread by the Toba and other mountain ranges, in the midst of which lies the Abistada Lake.

The Toba mountains, although bleak and barren in winter, have a delicious climate in summer; and the inhabitants, while bearing an infamous character among Europeans, realize, as regards themselves, the pleasures if not the innocence of Arcadia. The plateaux of their hills are furnished with springs in abundance, and we are told the water is like running diamonds, the verdure as a carpet of emeralds, and the air perfumed like musk. "The shepherds of Toba," as Conolly was informed, "pitch their camps together, and entertain each other for joy of the increase which the new year brought to them; feasting on lamb and fresh curds, and

all the varieties which their wives made with milk; hunting with hawks and greyhounds during the day, or, perhaps, following a wolf or a hyena to his lair and tying him there; while at night they would sit out late in social parties, conversing and telling stories, or dancing the attun."

This region is bounded on the west and north by the comparatively well-known tract between Candahar and Ghizni, and Ghizni and Cabool. The great road from India leads in a north-westerly direction from the Pisheen valley to Candahar.

Candahar is a populous town, situated on a small but fertile and well-watered plain, producing grain and fruits in abundance. Commanding the southern route from the Indus to the western countries, it has fallen a prey by turns to most of the invaders of India, and, in 1842, its fortifications were destroyed by the British. The houses of the poorer classes are mud hovels, while those of the wealthy occupy a great space with their numerous courts surrounded by walls. The walls of the large rooms are adorned with pictures and mirrors; and the space between, instead of being painted or papered as in Europe, is covered with what resembles a frost-work of silver, consisting of talc finely powdered, and sprinkled over a varnish of size while wet. Candahar, being the head quarters of the carrying trade of western Afghanistan, is thronged by foreigners of all costumes and complexions, in the midst of which the native women glide like spectres, enveloped from head to foot in their long white veils, and a piece of net-work before their eyes, enabling them to see. The population is variously stated, but supposed by Mr. Thornton to amount to about fifty thousand.

The valley of the Turnuk extends from Candahar to Ghizni, a distance of two hundred and twenty-five miles,

during which it gradually contracts from a width of thirty miles to half a mile. The lower part of the valley is in general a barren waste, but some portions are open and level, and well cultivated; and the higher districts especially are much more fertile than the lower, being watered by canals; and are also more populous, being studded with numerous villages, protected by walls and small forts, and encompassed by fine orchards of fruit trees, with many clumps of willows and poplars, and large fields of corn. The canals are brought with great labour from the higher portions of the river; the stream throughout a considerable part of its course being enclosed between steep banks, and on a lower level than the surface of the country through which it flows.

The Turnuk valley is closed by a range of hills which separate it from the Cabool valley; and on an isolated ridge of this range stands the celebrated town and fortress of Ghizni. The population, including the garrison, has been estimated as high as ten thousand, but half that number may perhaps be nearer the truth. It is, however, an entrepôt of trade between the Indus and Cabool; and the neighbourhood, which is well studded with villages, yields abundance of supplies. The site of the place being seven thousand seven hundred and twenty-six feet above the sea, the cold is intense in winter; and it is said that the population has been more than once destroyed by snow-storms. At three miles' distance are the ruins of the ancient city which was destroyed by the Ghorî prince in the twelfth century, sparing only the humble tomb of Mahmood of Ghizni and its sandal-wood gates.

From Ghizni to Cabool the distance is ninety miles, during which the route slopes gradually from the pass in

the hills above the former place. Occasionally, however, it is blocked up by rugged eminences, which leave only a narrow gorge for the passage of the river. The Cabool valley is rugged and barren in the upper part, but about twenty miles from the city it opens into the rich and beautiful vale of Maidan, appearing a continuous range of gardens and orchards, intersected by numerous streams and enclosed by lofty hills.

The city of Cabool is encompassed by hills on three sides, that on the south being the closest and steepest, and being defended by walls along its summit and sides, intended to repel the Ghiljies, although now suffered to fall into ruins. The town itself, which contains a population of sixty thousand, is surrounded by a mud wall; and on a rocky eminence on the east is the Bala Hissar, or citadel, with the king's palace and gardens on the slope of the acclivity. The great bazaar, destroyed by the British in their unthinking rage, was the most remarkable object in the city. Travellers are eloquent in describing the varied and bustling picture it presented—the heaps of delicious fruit—the masses of snow for sale sparkling in the sun—the shops rising in terraces one above the other—the goods intermingled with the buyers and sellers, arranged in long moving lines—the strange faces and strange costumes peopling the scene—and the confused din of all the languages of the East. Among the crowd, the women, as in most of the towns of Affghanistan, were seen clad in their shroud-like veil, beneath which the imagination might picture, and it is said truly, both beauty of feature and elegance of form.

Among the goods exposed in the shops were those of Great Britain, India, and above all, Russia. Gold is received from Russia and Turkistan, and silver from Russia and China, to the amount of about 30,000*l.* in the

in the year, all of which is sent to India. Raw silk from Turkistan, to the amount of 50,000*L.*, has for the most part the same destination.

The transit trade, and the supply of the extensive valley of Cabool, seem to engross nearly all the industry of the inhabitants; for their rude manufactures are almost confined to leather and iron, with some weaving of cotton and wool. They have nearly everything, however, at hand which can contribute to animal enjoyment: fruits and flowers in unparalleled abundance; provisions, abundant and cheap, with the exception of grain; spirits, distilled by the Armenian inhabitants from grapes; and tobacco, the produce of their own fields. Their long and severe winter, however, appears to freeze up the energies of the people; who in the day-time sit on the floor, cowering over a low table with a fire beneath it, and at night lie back and compose themselves to sleep, merely drawing more completely around them the thick cloths with which the table is covered. Their unglazed windows, in the meantime, admit through the shutters and blinds sufficient air at once to keep them uncomfortable and preserve their lives from the fumes of the charcoal which is their only fuel.

Cabool is divided into numerous little sections, each with small gates of its own, which are built up in times of tumult. This city of fortresses, however, has been repeatedly taken, as we have elsewhere shown, from the year 977 to 1839. The other chief towns in the district are Ghizni, Istalif, and Jellalabad.

Eastward of Cabool are the district of Lughman and vale of Jellalabad; and beyond them Bajour and the Eusufzye country; the former a fertile plain, enclosed by nearly inaccessible mountains, covered with forests of oak and cedar, and abounding in iron ore; and the

latter an almost unknown territory, inhabited by tribes intermingling the Tartar and Affghan character. To the south of these countries lies the rich plain of Peshawur, now in the hands of the Sikhs,—with its uncultivated fields and half-tenanted villages bearing eloquent testimony to the mildness of their sway: and on the north the Affghan territory is bounded by Chitral and Kafiristan, extending along the declivity of the Hindoo Koosh.

Westward and northward of the grand highway we have described from Candahar to Cabool is the Hazareh and Eimauk country, extending from Cabool to Herat. These are the names of two Tartar tribes, the former inhabiting the northern, and the latter the southern portion of the belt of mountains. Although this territory occupies a fourth part of the entire area of Affghanistan, the people suffer themselves without resistance to remain tributary to their surrounding neighbours; Cabool, Candahar, Herat, Bokhara, and Koondooz grasping at the portions nearest them. The tyranny of these masters, some of whom, to the north, exact their tribute in slaves, is seconded by the severity of their long and dreary winter; and the Hazarehs are, in consequence, in a state of the most hopeless poverty. Although so low are they in the scale of civilization, that it is the custom, of at least one of the tribes, for the husband to exercise hospitality by consigning his wife to the embraces of his guest, a very agreeable picture is given by Wood, both of their social manners and personal appearance. The Hazarehs are Mahomedans of the Shia sect,—the Eimaaks, Soonis; and both speak the Persian language.

On the west of the Hazareh country, and on the frontiers of Persia, are the valley and city of Herat.

The city, which contains a population that has been variously stated at from forty to one hundred thousand, is enclosed by a mound of earth from forty to sixty feet high, surmounted by a wall strengthened by bastions. On the exterior slope of the mound of earth (which is one hundred feet wide at the bottom) there are two deep trenches, and surrounding which is a wet [ditch thirty feet wide. From the extent of the fortifications, it has been calculated that it would take a garrison of twenty thousand men to defend, and an army of thirty thousand men to invest it; and even after the fall of the town the citadel would be susceptible of defence for a considerable time, being flanked by lofty towers, and surrounded by a wet ditch thirty-six feet wide, crossed only by a slight bridge. From a small covered square in the middle of the city four ranges of bazaars diverge at equal distances, dividing the place into quarters. Not an inch of ground is lost; the houses are closely packed together; and some of the small streets, branching from the main ones, are built over so as to resemble tunnels. The result is darkness and almost inconceivable filth; but everything here is sacrificed to the compactness requisite for military defence. In Europe, the towns of the middle ages when surrounded by walls grew upwards since they could not extend laterally, story upon story being piled upon the houses; but in Asia the increase of population in such circumstances is usually provided for by encroachments on the space already occupied, till the inhabitants might seem to burrow in their own abominations.

The ruins in the neighbourhood testify that Herat was formerly of much greater magnitude, and they also indicate its misfortune in being the outpost of Afghanistan on the side of Persia. War and misrule have had

their effect upon this city, which in the time of Baber was reckoned the finest in the eastern world: but still its situation in a valley luxuriant in corn and wine, and on the highway from India to the west, will always render it a place of interest and importance. "The space between the hills," says a traveller, "is one beautiful extent of little fortified villages, gardens, vineyards, and corn-fields; and this rural scene is heightened by many small streams of shining water." In time of peace it is the most bustling emporium of Central Asia; receiving for transit, besides its own sumptuous carpets, the shawls, indigo, sugar, spices, hides, muslins, chintzes, and brocades of the east; and the tea, porcelain, glass, silk, hardware, woollen cloths, and bullion of Persia, Turkey, and Russia. The Persian inhabitants are, as usual, Shias; the Affghans, Beloochees, and Tartars, Soonis; and besides these are Hindoos, the merchants and bankers of the place; and a small number of Jews.

North of Herat is a narrow district, inhabited by the Toorkish tribe of Jumshedees, and then the kingdom of Khaurism, the capital of which is Khiva, extending from south to north eight hundred miles. This is separated by a considerable belt of steppe from the Russian province of Orenburg; and Bokhara, lying more to the east than Khaurism, is entirely severed by the latter country from Russia. Khiva is six hundred miles north-north-west of Herat, nearly the whole of which, as Abbott informs us, is a barren steppe where even a tent is rarely discovered.

The high road from Herat to Candahar runs south for about a hundred and forty miles through an unimportant country, and then turns off in an easterly direction to Giriskh and Candahar. Giriskh is on the Helmund, which, skirting the great desert separat-

ing Affghanistan from Beloochistan, traverses the low swampy territory of Seistan—a debateable land between the Persians and Affghans—and falls into the lake of Hamoon.

Affghanistan may be described, generally, as an Asiatic Switzerland, the physical properties of which are exaggerated into the extravagance of the east; while Beloochistan, less stupendous in its forms, may be likened in the same manner to the Tyrolese continuation of the Alpine line. The mineral productions of the former already ascertained are gold, silver, iron, copper, antimony, zinc, lead, and coal. In the vegetable kingdom there are some noble fruit-trees, of which a magnificent species of pine inhabits an elevation extending to ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. There are two harvests in the year; one of wheat, barley, beans, peas, &c.; the other of rice, jowarree, maize, and other grains. Cotton, sugar, safflower, madder, and tobacco are productions of the lower lands; and though esculent vegetables are inferior, fruits of almost all kinds are more plentiful and excellent than in perhaps any other country in the world. The domesticated animals are camels, sheep, and goats; the two first yielding valuable fleeces, which are manufactured by the people into fabrics of various kinds. About 500,000*l.* worth of British and Indian goods are imported in the year, and these are paid for chiefly in madder and other dye-stuffs, drugs, fruits, silk, tobacco, wool, sulphur, alum, zinc, lead, horses and camels.

The leading divisions of the people are Affghans, whose language is Pushtee; Tanjiks, or those who have Persian as their vernacular tongue; Hindoos, or their descendants; and Hazarehs and Eimauks, of Tartar ancestry. But, besides these, there is such a variety of

racés in smaller numbers, that at least eleven dialects are spoken vernacularly in Affghanistan. The Affghans appear to be a distinct race—not only from their speaking a peculiar language, but from their manners and institutions being entirely different from those of the neighbouring nations. They form a political confederacy; and such was in some degree the nature of their government even when they apparently submitted to Ahmed Shah, the successor of Nadir Shah, who ruled from the Oxus to the sea. Their national institutions were of a kind which could resist the influence even of an absolute monarchy. Divided into tribes, and these again into clans, the system of internal government was partly elective and partly patriarchal; with minor peculiarities keeping each chieftainship separate and distinct without destroying the general uniformity of the whole. A nation like this, so long as it remained in a state of semi-civilization, could only be united in war; and those rulers, therefore, were the most fortunate who, without tampering with their domestic institutions, led the Affghans to foreign conquest. The successor of Ahmed Shah, however, wanted energy; and after him the elevation of one of his younger sons, by means of intrigue, to the throne, was the signal for general insurrection. The eldest son, assisted by Futteh Khan, the chief of the great Barukzye tribe, became sovereign of Herat; but proving cruelly ungrateful, a feud arose between the two tribes, which resulted in Dost Mahomed, and the other brothers of Futteh Khan (who was blinded by his quondam protégé), seating themselves in three little separate thrones. We have already recorded the fortunes of Shah Soojah, the representative of the younger branch of the other, or Suddozye tribe; and it will now suffice to say, that the Dooranee empire of Ahmed

Shah, which ever since his death had continued to crumble, fell entirely to pieces in the struggle; and that its poor remains are now governed by Dost Mahomed and his family in Cabool and Candahar,—while in Herat the throne is still filled by the elder, or legitimate branch of the deposed dynasty of the Suddozye kings of Affghanistan.

The most remarkable feature in the Affghan character is its wild spirit of independence. "We are content with discord," said an old man, in reply to the appeals of Mr. Elphinstone,—“we are content with bloodshed,—but we will never be content with a master.” They are reported to be sober, social, steady, and cheerful; fond of tales of love and war, and devoted to the chase. Elphinstone sums up their character in these words:—“Their vices are revenge, envy, avarice, rapacity, obstinacy; on the other hand, they are fond of liberty, faithful to their friends, kind to their dependants, hospitable, brave, hardy, frugal, laborious, and prudent; and they are less disposed than the nations in their neighbourhood to falsehood, intrigue, and deceit.” In person they are robust, lean, bony, and muscular, with high noses and cheekbones, and long faces; they are lower in stature, taking them generally, than the English, but of great strength. The women are large, fair, and handsome, and their lords do fitting homage to their charms. “I am not sure,” says the same writer, “that there is any people in the east, except the Affghans, in whom I have seen any trace of the sentiment of love according to our ideas of the passion.”

CHAPTER II.

CASHMERE AND THIBET.

THE most eastern portion of Affghanistan, as we have seen, is the Eusufzye country; and the tribes which inhabit it are also found among the neighbouring mountains on the left bank of the Indus, where their wild habitat resembles the bed of an exhausted torrent. They are nominally under the rule of the Sikhs, who have overrun the whole territory to the north of the Punjaub, and even climbed into the celebrated and secluded vale eastward of the Eusufzyes, Cashmere.

Cashmere, ever since its *discovery*—for it is inseparably associated with ideas of romantic mystery, and takes its place in the imagination with those far and solitary isles that were for ages hidden in the bosom of unknown seas—has been the dream and the spoil of warriors. The Affghan, the Mogul, the Sikh, have by turns burst into its solitude, to revel with ruffian violence in its charms, and lose on its betraying smiles and vengeful

caresses, their pride, their courage, and their strength. It must have been an adventurous foot that first stumbled upon this enchanted vale, enclosed from the outer world by a barrier of mountains, thirteen or fourteen thousand feet in height, and some considerably more; their summits covered with perpetual snow, and even their practicable passes presenting faces of smooth perpendicular cliffs, a thousand feet high. And when the loftiest ridge was gained the mystery only became more dreadful, for no human being could have imagined that there lay, embosomed in the vast and terrible abyss beneath, a region of such supernatural loveliness as to bring the traveller Bernier to the conclusion that it was actually the site of the Garden of Eden. "From these summits," says Hugel, "one can seldom see anything of the valley, as it is concealed under the perpendicular brow which first rises from the plain. Wherever the view is directed, little can be seen but endless snow. I know scarcely any prospect more gloomy; no tree, no bird, no living creature can be beheld. Everywhere there reigns a terrific silence, and the name of *Raan*, 'the waste,' which the natives have given it, is admirably just."

But as the traveller descends the sights and sounds of animal life break gradually upon the stillness of the air. A huge cloud-like vulture perhaps rises heavily from some mountain-peak, reminding him of the roc of Arabian romance; and by-and-by the black variety of Hindostan, or a deep brown eagle, or the bearded vulture of the Himalaya, sails majestically past, shrieking as he flies. A brown bear, of the length of a tall man, looks down upon him from the steep, but turns quietly away if unmolested; or the smaller, but fiercer black species leaps upon his path as if to dispute with him the pass. Presently a

gay-coloured leopard is seen glancing through the trees; or a herd of large stags, startled by his footsteps from their sequestered valley, bound wildly through its gorges; or the gazelle, the ibex, and the musk-deer, alarmed perhaps by the cry of the felon jackal, fly upwards or downwards, as their habits lead them; while the wild goat climbs out of sight more slowly, encumbered as he is by a pair of horns four feet long, and of a weight which a man can with difficulty carry on his shoulders.

Nor is the vegetable kingdom found less interesting. Birch and alder trees meet so closely the limits of perpetual congelation that their branches are weighed towards the side of the steep with snow. At twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea, the Himalaya cedar begins, attaining at a lower altitude a circumference of more than thirty feet, and gilding the whole forest with its rich yellow garlands, which in turn, scattering their dust upon the ground, carpets it with gold. Numerous other pines present themselves in turns, together with the wild chestnut tree far exceeding these in height, and the poplar and lime rising likewise to a gigantic size.

Numerous gorges are now seen opening from the mountains above into the abyss, and projecting long smoothly swelling undulations of land between; and here and there water-courses, from the rill to the torrent, glitter through the trees, and break drowsily the stillness of the air. But the mystery is still unsolved; the valley, for aught the traveller can discover, may be either the crater of some vast volcano, or the bed of some dark and silent sea; for it is now the season when the enchanters, described by Marco Polo as inhabiting it, hide the face of nature by their sorceries. The sun shines intensely bright in the heavens, and the snowy moun-

tains return the blaze as if from polished silver; the edges of the rocks, and the tops of the forest trees, are sharp and crisp in the clear atmosphere; but an impenetrable haze overspreads the gulf into which the traveller is descending.

At this moment some rain falls—or some snow, melted and evaporated, perhaps, before it gains the ground—and the spell is broken. The haze is not torn and scattered by the wind, but suddenly disappears, as if by the magic to which its origin is ascribed by the Venetian traveller, and discloses a rich plain at the bottom, of an emerald green, variegated by lakes, and threaded by a hundred streams, into which the mountains, or the hills supporting their bases, sweep undulatingly down, covered with rich groves or verdant pasture, and conferring a romantic grace upon a scene which would otherwise be only beautiful.

But this picture, it will be observed, can only give an idea, faint though it be, of a scene in small enough compass to be taken in by a single sweep of the human vision. The mere plain of Cashmere, however, is seventy-five miles in length, by forty in breadth; and this forms but the bottom of a stupendous basin, of which the top—or the culminating ridge of the mountains which surround it—is a hundred and twenty miles long, and seventy miles broad: the whole having a superficial area of between four and five thousand square miles. This basin, according to the most minute, and therefore perhaps the most accurate, of its observers, forms a regular oval of snowy summits; although, for about a fifth part of the circumference, its higher edge is interrupted and continued by a lower range. Some writers suppose the valley to have been originally formed by the falling in of an exhausted volcanic region; while others

recognise in its conformation the truth of a popular tradition, that it was once the bed of a lake. Both hypotheses may be true, though referring, of course, to different eras of the globe; but this at least is certain, that the frequent earthquakes experienced in our own day, and described by Abul Fazel two centuries ago, attest the continued agency of volcanic fire.

The plain being almost perfectly level, is completely irrigated by the windings of the Jailum, one of the Punjaub rivers forming ultimately an important part of the Indus; but connected with this stream are three lakes, one of which is nearly twenty miles long, by about half that breadth. Besides these waters there are the numerous streams that feed the Jailum descending from the snowy mountains, and various small and beautiful tarns dotting here and there the emerald green of the plain with silver. The general character of these waters is profound repose—for rarely a breath of wind disturbs the slumber of Cashmere. The extensive surface even of the Walur lake, a traveller tells us, “is at no time rippled by a wave; and a boat passing over its mirror-like surface leaves a trace extending for miles, until lost on the distant bank.” It does happen, notwithstanding, that an exception occurs to this calm of nature. An instantaneous blast descends from the mountains, and lashes lake, river, or tarn—whichever it strikes—into a sheet of foam as white as the crests of the Panjal; and then, dying as suddenly as it was born, leaves everything as calm, and silent, and slumbrous, as before.

But although the atmosphere is in general still, Cashmere is by no means the sleepy paradise of the merely voluptuous. Its greatest charm consists in its variety. On the northern side of the basin, the mountains fling

themselves into the vale in terrific precipices, down which the torrents from the region of perpetual snow rush headlong, or plunge over the steep in waterfalls; while on the southern side the ridges gradually descend, crowned with their gorgeous trees, and with green tablelands between, as smooth and level as an artificial lawn, and carpeted with grass of astonishing richness and verdure. In addition to the animals we have mentioned as inhabiting the higher lands, the flying squirrel is here seen darting from branch to branch; the aristocratic heron, whose feathers distinguish the turbans of the Sikh chiefs, is kept in colonies; the gigantic crane stalks along the banks of the Jailum; the notes of the bulbul, here the friend and fearless associate of man, are heard ringing through the groves, rivalled, and perhaps outdone, by the song of a beautiful kind of thrush. A thousand other small birds people the woods; but the purple butterfly of Cashmere, "the insect queen of eastern spring," appears to be only a figment of the imagination.

The lowlands are also adorned by trees, some indigenous, that are not found on the mountains. Of these the chunar is the most common, a grove of them intermingled with poplars having been planted by the Mogul emperors in every village. Roses and other flowers are reared in endless profusion, and a vast variety of annuals spring wild from the sod. Most of the fruits known in Europe attain to perfection, except the orange, lemon, fig, and olive. Of the water-nut that grows in the Walur lake, sixty thousand tons are raised every year. They are eaten raw, and dressed in a variety of ways, and form from choice the food of twenty thousand healthy persons, who sicken on any coarser fare. Cucumbers and melons are cultivated on floating islands on the lakes, and great numbers live entirely on them during the season.

The beans of the water-lily are also eaten in great quantities; but rice is the general food of the people.

Saffron is produced from the crocus in such quantities as to supply nearly the whole of Hindostan: but the fleece of the goat and sheep, both of home and foreign produce, and even of the yak and dog of Thibet, afford the most celebrated article of Cashmerean traffic. It is only the soft down under the hair which is used in the manufacture of shawls, a pair of which of the finer kind, according to Hugel, amounts at prime cost to 200*l.*, viz., 80*l.* for the labour of twenty-four artisans for twelve months; 30*l.* for materials and dyeing; 70*l.* for duty; and 20*l.* for the charges of the establishment. Gun and pistol barrels, of extreme beauty and great value, are also manufactured here; leather of excellent quality prepared for saddlery; and paper finer than any in India made of the filaments of the wild hemp-plant. The attar of roses, composed of the oil which floats on the doubly distilled water, is the finest in the world, but never finds its way into Europe. Six hundred pounds weight of the flowers are required to produce a single ounce. These and other exports to Ladakh, Afghanistan, the Punjab and other parts of India, are estimated at 400,000*l.*, while the imports are set down at only 50,000*l.*

The natives of this celebrated region are the finest specimens extant of the Indian race to which they belong. The men are tall and symmetrically formed, and, in consequence perhaps of their symmetry, immensely strong. The women are voluptuously full in the figure, but exquisitely proportioned; in complexion they are delicate brunettes, but with cheeks blooming like their own roses; their teeth are remarkably fine, and their eyes are large, clear, and dazzlingly bright. Both sexes are

ingenious, lively, and good humoured, fond of amusement and devoted to pleasure; but, on the other hand, they are said to be insensible to manly honour or womanly virtue. In summer, the females bathe twice a day in the nearest water, on which occasions they merely wreath their light loose dress round their heads in the form of a turban, and go in naked, if it should be in the midst of a crowd of spectators. One is sorry to believe that a moral taint contaminates the physically beautiful; and it gives us pleasure to remember that the men were once bold and warlike, till their spirits were broken by foreign tyranny, and they gradually acquired the vices of slaves. As for the women, their beauty has not been their own since it first attracted the ruffian lust of the conquerors of their country; but in the matter of taste referred to, it is wonderful how ductile are the laws even of female delicacy. We have ourselves seen the same exhibition made by the Russian women, not merely in the neighbouring ponds and lakes, but within the precincts of the crowded city of Moscow.

In 1586, Cashmere was conquered and annexed to his dominions by the emperor Akbar; and its pleasures, it may be supposed, contributed not a little to enervate the Moguls, and render them incapable of retaining the throne of the east. Ahmed Shah followed in 1752; and it was wrested from the Affghans by the Sikhs in 1819. The last-mentioned conquerors found a population of eight hundred thousand; but since then an earthquake swallowed up twelve hundred persons—a pestilence followed, which carried off one hundred thousand more; and a famine last, so late as 1833, which reduced the total number to two hundred thousand.

The Cashmerians are Mahomedans, chiefly of the Sooni sect, with about twenty-five thousand Hindoos of