

## Journey to Meeankal

by  
William Moorcroft

**Transcriber's Notes:** William Moorcroft and his party arrived at the gates of Bokhara Feb. 25, 1825 and remained there and in the surrounding area until July 22 of the same year. While in Bokhara Moorcroft wrote a series of reports describing the people and various aspects of life in that city. These manuscript reports form part of the Moorcroft archive in the British Library where they are listed under the heading MSS.Eur.D. 254 -- Bukhara and Return from Bukhara.

Janet Rizvi and Dan Jantzen have transcribed these handwritten manuscripts from digitized microfilm images, and arranged them in the approximate order in which they were written. The transcripts of the entire Bokhara journal are being broken into three sections for ease of reading, namely:

1. Reports from Bokhara. These contain descriptions of agricultural and other practices which Moorcroft thinks might with advantage be introduced, or at least tried out, in Europe.
2. Journey to Meeankal.
3. Return to Afghanistan.

of which this is the second section. The remaining section will be published as it is completed.

These journals are clearly uncorrected drafts, which Moorcroft never intended to be placed before the public without extensive editing and polishing. The material they contain, however, was entirely omitted from H.H. Wilson's published edition of Moorcroft's *Travels*. The social and political circumstances in which a coherent revised version would have been relevant no longer exist; the transcribers therefore have felt it appropriate to present it more or less as the manuscript indicates, with only minimal editing. Moorcroft covers a wide range of topics, and often has not finished one when he runs on to a second, with two or more essays continuing in parallel on a single page. The transcripts have been lightly edited to place each topic in sequence and to correct obvious writing mistakes. Individual essays are presented in as near their original order as possible. In his haste to note ideas and observations on paper Moorcroft's handwriting sometimes deteriorates to an imperfect scrawl, and some words and phrases have had to be marked illegible. The interpretation of Moorcroft's spelling of names of persons and places is sometimes only a best guess, as his handwriting does not carefully distinguish individual letters, and it is not possible to find the name by context or dictionary. The transcribers have done the best they can while accepting that complete accuracy is not possible.

I N D I A   O F F I C E   L I B R A R Y

**Moorcroft manuscripts**

**MSS.Eur.D. 254**

**BUKHARA and RETURN FROM BUKHARA**

**BRGINS**

**Microfilmed**

**September 1954**

**(439)**

---

[238]

**Journey to Meeankal**

I was engaged in picking up Horses, although but somewhat slowly in consequence of the condition to which the intercourse between Bokhara and the neighboring countries had been reduced since the defection of Oorgunj; of part of Meeankal and of the Atalik of Ora Tippa which had prevented the breeders or traders from bringing Horses to Bokhara. A temporary peace or rather truce between Bokhara and Oorgunj induced at the instance of the former power had given to the Ameer an interval of leisure which he resolved to employ in endeavoring to reduce the Kathaee Kipchaks who had revolted to obedience. He had made this attempt four or five times without completely effecting his object, the revolters having been generally succoured by supplies of Men and food from Shehr Subz which for a long period before had thrown off its allegiance to Bokhara. Having heard some particulars respecting this people it may better suit the narrative undertaken to detail them here than at a stage farther advanced. At an epoch long past a large body of Kathaees, Subjects of China, for what cause I could not learn emigrated from China to part of the Dushte Kipchak bordering on the Caspian and there forming connections with the nomadic inhabitants of that uncultivated tract. The common progeny acquired the common appellation of Kathaee Kipchaks, the

239

the title of Yoogoor being wholly suppressed in common although recollected in their traditional history. When Ameer Teemoor overran the country of the

Kipchaks, according to a practice not unusual with that conqueror, he transported the Kathaee Kipchaks to the number of about thirty thousand families and settled them upon the borders of two Rivers which proceeding from the Snows of the Mountains to the North of Sumurkund flow towards Bokhara and terminate in a somewhat large lake about two [days, weeks, months?] journey distant from that city and over near the district of Karrakol. This tract, situated between Bokhara and Sumurkund and also within the bend of the range of the mountains before alluded to called Noorata, was named Meeankal or in "the midst" or middle district. The Colony was industrious and mixing with the Oozbuks greatly increased in numbers following a life somewhat more pastoral than agricultural though partaking of both as in the spring and summer part of their families became [illeg.] and in the Kara Col or black Tent tending their flocks and herds of Sheep, Goats, Mares, Camels and black Cattle whilst another part remained in mud walled towns and cultivated land and orchards. It seems unnecessary to touch farther upon their history than what regards their rebellion, which became decided about four years ago when they entered into a kind of

[240]

of alliance with the Chief of Shehr Subz, much to the annoyance of the King of Bokhara who had four times destroyed their harvest of Grain when fit for the sickle by feeding the Horses of his Army upon it but had failed in taking the Fortress of Kathaee Koorghak Yungee or the new Fort of the Kathaee Kipchaks situated at a short distance from the left bank of the Kara Daria or black River, the most southern of the two and longer than the Ak Daria or White River which joins its sister before the common Trunk reaches within a moderate days journey from Bokhara. The most submissive character of the Oozbuks, their excessively servile obedience to the orders of their lord, is adverse to the spirit of free enquiry on any point in which the conduct of the King is concerned, but when asking my guide with whom I had become on a footing of intimacy while traversing the desolate country of the Kathaees what they had done to deserve so severe a punishment as that with which they had been visited he said they had been rebellious and previously had so far drained both Rivers of their contents to employ the water on their own cultivated lands that the inhabitants of Bokhara had been straitened of the supply necessary for domestic purposes and had suffered severely through this want. Another individual whose face I recollect, and who claimed an acquaintance

241

acquaintance of long standing which I was not inclined to dispute, joined company and descended upon the condition of the country. His Master he said had been the Governor of Meeankal when it fell off in allegiance. On my observing that persons happily situated as the Kathaee Kipchaks were reputed to be were not wont to rebel wantonly and as it were without cause. A cause for their rebellion he said was to be found in the oppression they had experienced from their Governors, which they had frequently represented to the King who as often turned a deaf ear to the complaints of the Petitioners and neither removed nor reprimanded these cruel Governors nor enquired into the Causes of their dissatisfaction. It was abundantly clear to me that

the Kathaee Kipchaks had been driven by oppression into rebellion and it now became necessary or expedient on the part of the King to punish the insurgents for a crime to which he himself had been a direct accessory. Several testimonies agreed upon the fact that the Kathaee Kipchaks had been audacious enough to divert to the watering of their lands some of the contents of the Rivers on the banks of which they had been planted and that this diversion had been injurious to the inhabitants of Bokhara who had scarcely possessed a quantity sufficient to supply their wants. The quantity thus diverted must have been very great as I perceived that the Trunk of the Rivers where I passed them was upwards of a hundred feet broad and was apparently in parts very

[242]

deep and ran at the rate of three miles an hour towards the lake after having furnished the lands of Pyushumbe, Ghijde, Ghijdoman, Wabkund and Bokhara, a tract of at least a hundred and twenty miles in length by about two days journey in breadth, with water for irrigation without which their surface would have been a complete bed of nitre, soda and common salt capable of producing only alkalescent or saponaceous plants such as the Salsola, Camels thorn, Samphire &c. &c. It was easy to descry that the very head and front of their offending had consisted in the free use of the water of the Rivers, a crime growing out of their increase and it was equally easy to observe that the Governors had either been encouraged directly to oppress the Kathaee Kipchaks, or that their peculations had been winked at by the King in order that by an act of their own such as emigration he might rid himself of part of the evil without being himself the originator of the measure of transplanting a portion of the colony in another tract which might readily have been found. The Monarch seemed by some traits in his conduct somewhat desirous to gain the character of a just ruler

243

ruler but his education had been defective, he had never learned the value of contradiction[?] in forming the mind to just perceptions and had committed irregularities in early life which at a more advanced period it became difficult to correct. A stranger, though making allowances for the disadvantages necessarily arising out of the want of a suitable education and duly appreciating such good qualities as may have been generated without it, ought to relate strictly characters as he finds them without being led to swerve from exact justice either by a treatment personally friendly or otherwise. Meer Ameer Hydur was actually in rebellion against his father when the latter died. His mind, naturally timid, has not been fortified by the possession of power. He put to death [blank] his cousin by the side of his brother, Juhān[?] Khoja Nukeeb the Hakim of Kurmeena on a suspicion of his entertaining ambitious projects, and has driven his eldest Son by his legitimate wife into a state of imbecility of conduct and of mind by his distrust of his intentions, most certainly in this respect unfounded. Strongly addicted to Wine when he was Heir apparent, and notoriously guilty of a Crime which in European countries is visited with the most severe reprehension of the Public, after gaining the Throne he abandoned or rather commuted [it] for a propensity

[244]

propensity to taste the nameless charms of those Damsels whose beauties his numerous spies reported of advantageously. In the indulgence of promiscuous adventures of this nature he has not neglected to stock his Haram Serai with about a hundred females of good family, yet the latter wean him not from the habit of sending for such Virgins as he learns possess the qualities of which he is an admirer. Avarice is likewise his ruling passion and maintains its superiority under circumstances in which it sometimes releases its hold. So, far from being generous in his amours, the Monarch is less than just. One trait may suffice. Having heard of a female Slave of great beauty he sent an order for her being delivered up to his Messenger who gave eighty pieces of gold as her price. After having been retained during a period of three weeks, the royal lover returned the female to her Master with a message importing coarsely enough that the Damsel no longer occupied a place in his affections and that it was expedient to give back all the money that had been paid for her purchase. The Owner actually came to the Serai in which I lodged and tendered the Damsel who was said to have been very beautiful for thirty pieces of gold. On obtaining the Throne the Ameer not only at once gave up his habits of drinking intoxicating

245

liquors and the other Vice to which he had been a Slave but actually put to death persons whose propensities had thus led them astray from the path of propriety, and his severity extended still further. In the time of his father there had been many houses of ill fame which Shah Murad Begh, with a better knowledge of human nature, had suffered to remain undisturbed, but his Son broke up the Establishments and by this unwise measure actually verified the prediction of Shah Juhun where he understood that Arungzeb was about to suppress places of the like nature. But though the Monarch placed indulgers in fermented liquors under the scourge of the Ulema, he gradually released himself from the thraldom of [illeg.] in his own person having recourse to the exhilarating effects of Mahjoon<sup>1</sup> two days in the week on which delinquents are punished, and it has been observed that the prayers of those petitioners who are unlucky enough to present themselves on these days are seldom granted. The transition from the life of a debauchee to that of a Soofee was sudden, and too great to be permanent, and hence flow some of the irregularities in question. But there are others which perhaps may be traced to a different source, such as the indulgence of fits of laughter without any obvious cause in

[246]

the midst of grave assemblages of his courtiers, a conduct widely at variance with the usually reserved and solemn deportment of Moosulman Princes and greatly scandalizing when individuals of this [illeg.] dare to communicate their sentiments in regard to the conduct of their Lord[?]. The want of stimulus to laughter, the hideous sound emitted, and the want of consistency in actions belonging to one train of objects, suggest to the European a strong suspicion that the thinking faculty

is not perfectly sound. The King made an advance towards peace with the Oorgunjees. The Chief of that country acceded to the proposal, more through the hope of Bokhara becoming an Ally against the Russians from whom he anticipated an attack in retaliation for the numerous outrages committed by the former upon caravans coming from Russia to Bokhara, than out of respect for the power of the King, agreed as to the expediency of the measure and sent to him an Ambassador to treat for an exchange of prisoners and for adjusting other points in dispute. When the Ambassador was dismissed and was about to depart, he purchased three or four Horses and as many camels to transport his baggage to Ourgunj, his own Cattle having been wearied and there not

247

not having been time for their condition to be re-established. A transaction so necessary and so simple could scarcely an European might conceive contain any thing offensive or even objectionable nay it would occur that an opportunity of showing civility at so light a cost would be readily embraced. But this was not the case. I was a witness to the very indecorous manner in which a message from the Minister compelled the Servants of the Ambassador to give up their newly acquired purchases and this at a moment when the Oorgunjees could not but observe that Horses were brought to a Stranger for sale. The King of Bokhara had in his own opinion and in that of his subjects the very greatest possible occasion for peace with the Oorgunjees not only for the encouragement of commerce greatly injured by the latter but for the prosecution of political schemes the Monarch considered essential to his political safety. Yet all this was put to risk for the gratification of a whim to say the least of it. Perhaps because the Ambassador had not asked leave to make the purchases in question, but I do not know this to have been the case. The King of Oorgunj died before the Ambassador returned to the Capital, but his Son and Successor in deputing a second said he could not place much confidence in the friendship of a Monarch who had refused his consent to an act so trifling as the

[248]

the purchase of a few low priced Horses and Camels. The King, freed from apprehension of attacks from the Oorgunjees, marched precipitately upon the Kathaee Kipchaks who shut themselves up in their fort with the exception of some towns whose inhabitants perhaps too distant from a safe asylum preferred throwing their lives upon his mercy and were received into favor. The Ambassador from Oorgunj, not finding the King at Bokhara, followed him to the siege and has there long been detained and will be delayed until the blockade shall be abandoned or be terminated by the capture of the Fort. This stratagem must be seen through at Oorgunj as a measure adopted to prevent Bokhara being attacked during his absence and the King may have credit for never having meant any thing more by his proposition for peace than the opportunity of gaining time. Meer Ameer Hydur affects a character for humanity and a desire to save the blood of Moosulmans which is but strangely supported. It was reported that the King was about to take a journey, a Courtier who heard it intimated to the King his suspicions that mischief might follow if the report were not contradicted or if the Fort or Palace were then

left. The report was traced up to the unfortunate Yesawul who had felt himself justified by what he had heard and seen to mention what

249

what he did. His head was cut off. Immediately after I left the Camp a person confided to me a report of the King being about to raise the siege the next day or that following and stated from whom he had heard it. Although I had not then heard the preceding anecdote I had seen enough of the ticklish temper of the King to be aware that the matter was of a nature too delicate to be repeated with safety. I therefore forbade him to mention to any other individual and three days afterwards I learned that the King having heard of the rumor had had its author very severely punished and had issued a proclamation through the camp, that he meant not to leave the siege for three months if the obstinacy of the besieged should hold out so long. It was stated to His Majesty that the Fort might be carried by assault to which he answered that he could not bear the thought of being instrumental to the shedding the blood of so many true believers. But almost every day two or three persons generally of the Kings army are wounded by the Matchlock Balls of the Kathaee Kipchaks and on my return I found a Meerza of my acquaintance whose office then was to place himself at a certain point of the road by which it was probable that Deserters would pass and whose duty it was to put them to death without form of trial merely on his finding that they had not any official business towards the City or possessed any formal discharge from the King.

[250]

The King trusts no one. The minister told me one day that he was called the Wuzeer but in fact that he only possessed the name of that officer he not daring to transact any business of even trifling importance without special orders.

By some management a letter of introduction to Zoolfookar Sher, the Chief of Sireepol, which I had solicited from the King along with some others was subtracted and the matter was so well conducted that after having counted the letters given upon the spot I was sensible of the mishap only after I had reached Bokhara not having suspected any trick in consequence of having transferred the whole to my Servant who sewed them in a cloth. I proposed as the most candid way to inform his Majesty of the loss and to request he would oblige me by causing it to be repaired. The minister observed that this was wholly unnecessary as he was on terms of friendship with the chief in question and would model a letter from himself upon the contents of the open letters I then held from the King to other Chiefs either tributary or friendly to him. This letter was promised to be given me on the following day but when called for was not ready. It was most[?] written but not signed but sent up to the review departments [?] for a suitable Envelope. Next an alteration was made and finally the Minister stated that it should be the last mark of friendship given by him to me on his reading

the Fatwa or prayer for my preservation and safe return. In a word I found that the Minister had sent four days journey to inform the King and to know his pleasure which was testified in directing him to furnish the letter.

Ibrahim Begh the favorite son of the Minister was seriously ill and his Physicians fearing that he would die informed the Minister of his dangerous condition but who being in close attendance on the King could not go to see his son without special permission from his Majesty. The King demurred, the Minister ventured to state that he should probably die also if he were longer restricted from visiting his Son. The King consented but fined him a thousand pieces of Gold for having dared to persevere in his wish when he found that its indulgence was foreign of the Royal Pleasure.

During the illness of the same person the Minister sent a fine Horse caparisoned with a donation in money to the Mausoleum or Shrine of Bawa or Deen here called a Mazar and of which my friend Shah Uzeez was the Kazee and Mootawalee or Guardian. The King heard of the transaction asked how the Minister had the audacity to dispose of his property which by right belonged to the King alone and fined him largely for this trespass upon the royal rights.

I had been requested by Uzeez Shah the person just mentioned who was connected both with the King and the Minister to visit him for the purpose of examining the nature[?] of a complaint under which he had long labored

[252]

labored and which as he and his friends imagined had bought his life into danger. I had seen him three times but was unwilling to take the responsibility of prescribing for him without he himself would write to the King for an Order directed to me by His Majesty to that effect. And this proposition was made in consequence of the advice of the Minister whom I had consulted on the occasion. The Kazee was sinking in my opinion, partly from an obvious mismanagement and partly from the operation of disease, but I carefully avoided making the slightest allusion to the former cause although much concerned not to possess the power of aiding one of the worthiest and most hospitable men I had seen in Oozbukistan. I ought with more correctness to say among the Oozbuks. The Kazee sent me word after my departure from his house that his confidence in me was unlimited that he should long ago have desired me to prescribe for him and to manage him exclusively but that he was compelled to forego the gratification of his own wish out of respect and friendship to me. "He knew" he said well the "nazook Mizaj" "ticklish temper" of the King. If [he] said I should have recovered this result would be no more than would have been expected, but, added he, if I should die my death might bring you into an awkward predicament among the Oozbuks. I can not persuade myself

myself that I act rightly in exposing a Stranger whose good opinion I seek and for whom I have a regard into such a dilemma". The King, when I afterwards saw him at Camp, asked me what I had heard respecting the Kazees health to which I answered according to the mode previously suggested by the Minster. The Kazee

was then dead, the King had heard of the circumstance but enquired of me what I knew of his disease and when I had last seen him.

Through a variety of circumstances Meer Ameer Hydur was convinced that I was not a Spy and he had foregone in respect to me certain privileges of which he left me the enjoyment and which had only been granted to Ambassadors and to Moosulmans of rank and to Soldiers but never to foreign Merchants. I had perceived a certain degree of favor for a considerable time but with a personage of so delicate and irritable a constitution of temper it was difficult if coming frequently in contact to avoid exciting some irritation. When he declared his intention of proceeding to the country of the Kathaee Kipchaks the Minister [?stated] his persuasion that the King would desire me to accompany him. His Majesty marched however without intimating such a wish and I should have been left almost wholly without Horses for my Servants had not a want of money amongst the Conscripts[?] going to the army compelled many

[254]

to offer some of theirs in the hopes that their sale would furnish some funds for their expenses. These Horses were not of the description I desired but Horses were wanted for my servants and if I neglected this occasion I should lay myself open to the suspicion of my not being a Merchant whose object was to settle a basis for future commerce and to purchase Horses. The argument that the Steeds in question were not exactly such as suited me would not serve my turn. If a Merchant did not meet with the kind of Horse exactly desirable it might answer his end if he could purchase such as would be profitable. On the former principle I acted but according to the account given me confidentially by the Minister expected that the King would return within a month. Finding little probability of this event taking place speedily, long after this period had elapsed, I applied to the Minister for leave to quit the dominions of Bokhara and after a few days received an intimation that His Majesty would be glad to see me at his Camp for the purpose of reading the Fatwa etc. The Minister told me it would be necessary to take a present and this I did to the amount of about a hundred pounds. I was desired to take some Hindoo soldiers of my own as guards on the road to which I objected for reasons of inconvenience

255

to the Soldiers and lest by possibility Sipahees in the British Service should be insulted in an Oozbuk camp. My reasons were approved and Moosulmans were substituted. More stress was laid upon the military talents of the persons who should accompany and of their Clothing and appointments than I quite approved more in my opinion being meant by this note of preparation than actually met the eye. The Districts of Ghijdowan, Wabkund and Ghijde were well watered and cultivated. The number of mulberry trees on each side of the road generally accompanied by a Main of running water from the River was immense and the quantity of silk raised very great. From Bokhara up to the commencement of Meeankal the country was flat and well cultivated. At the entrance of Meeankal was a high tract of desert land then a salt marsh through which though widely separated ran the two Rivers before mentioned. The Ak Daria had laid a large flat tract under

water for the last four years during which period Bokhara and its vicinity have been much more subject to intermitting and remitting Fevers than at any prior period and both more frequently prove fatal lately than formerly. This is one of the punishments decreed to Bokhara through their possessing a superfluity of water. Next we passed through a partially cultivated and pasture country. We then went over a desert of about 18 or 20 miles without a drop of water and

[256]

covered by locusts to a degree that can scarcely be imagined by an European. Thence we came to Metun about a Fursukh from the King's Camp. The whole distance 28 Fursukhs or about 140 or 150 miles.

There were several large towns--as Wabkund, Ghijdowan, Ghijde, before mentioned. Yungee, Konghan, Khatirche, & lastly Metun, the smallest, but Meeankal in its lower parts and till we came near the Country of the Kathaee Kipchaks was well cultivated covered with orchards and had extensive grassy plains [illeg.] stocked with cattle of various kinds and with a great number of good brood mares of which the price I was told was ordinarily as low as from 6 to 10 pieces of Gold each. They were of good size and form and many might have been picked out worth from 6 to 800 Rs each in Hindoostan. The ruined villages, burnt Orchards, and dry lands uncultivated, and of which the harvests had been destroyed and the waters of irrigation turned off, presented a picture of desolation too strong not to indicate their having belonged to the Kathaee Kipchaks and their condition contrasting with green spots near the River and occupied by some of the same Tribe who had submitted evinced[?] the nature of water as an agent of fertility.

On comparing the nature of

257

of the country improved by irrigation with that which had not been subjected to its influence and that again reduced to its primitive condition through being deprived of its water, I saw sufficient reason for believing that if the British Govt will cut Canals and Mains for irrigation not only can immense tracts be rendered secure of the harvests of every description but that Silk may be raised in such a quantity and at so cheap a rate as to supply this material to the looms of Great Britain much lower than any other in the world and thereby give to her a Monopoly in the manufacture of this material. Objections to this, as to every proposition for improving the condition, may be found in the certainty of expense and uncertainty of return, a state belonging to all human operations, but the substantial arguments against its prosecution will probably derive from the absorbing nature of the soil, the risk of the banks being broken by surcharge in the rainy season, and the filling of the Canals by Silt and Sand. The obstacle presented by a long tract of sandy soil is only relative to the quantity of water, assuredly a larger proportion will be absorbed by the bed and banks in the course of the canal through a sandy open soil than when the aqueduct runs through a clayey and stiff soil, but if there be abundance of water in the sources this may take place without disadvantage. The remedy to inundations consists in turning off the source water near the Mountains

[258]

into the great River in the beginning of the Rains, provided there be a prospect of an abundant fall, otherwise the sluices will remain open to the latest[?] Drain at the foot of the Mountains. And as to the Silt and Sand, should there be an injurious accumulation, it must be raised in the ordinary manner employed for freeing canals from this inconvenience. Where water is abstracted from Rivers with great falls in early channels for the purpose of irrigation there may be a diminution of wear of the material of this bed by the diminution of friction but in Rivers which having their source in the Snows and Rivers which fall upon mountains and run through plains of earth without great violence it is suspected that the large abstraction of water from their Trunks at no great distance from their source has the effect of raising their bed and of bringing the current nearly to a level with the bank so as to render the water more shallow and less deep. This effect however must in great measure depend upon the quantity of soil that the water may have detached from the mountains and carry to the plains sustained in its current. The Mains in all the vicinity of Bokhara run through a bed which for the most part at a few feet below the surface consists almost wholly of fine sand the upper stratum having been in process of time mixed with manure as [illeg.] earth and various salts.

259

If a Stranger unacquainted with what has been done in forwarding irrigation in Asiatic Countries were to examine some portions of the land through which Mains have been cut in the neighborhood of Bokhara, he would think there was almost as little prospect of the banks standing against a sudden flush or torrent as the loose sand on many parts of the seashore of Britain resisting high tides without being filled up with the same material if Canals were dug therein. But it is here seen that in process of time the water has actually raised the whole bed so as to have carried it now to stand greatly higher than its original level. The loose material does now and then give way but as this is a matter in which the interest of all the peasantry of the country are concerned breaches are stopped almost as soon as formed and in this point there is matter of commendation in respect to Tajik or Oozbuk activity. The case of the Mains of Bokhara is an extreme, and quoted to shew that nothing in this respect is so desperate as not to be subjected to the enterprise of man when energetically and judiciously conducted. Not only are the Ak and Kurra Daria loaded with sand and silt, and consequently on the abstraction of much of their water near the sources from level bed and currents nearly on a level with the banks, but that which furnishes water to the cultivated lands of

[260]

Kushee and which rises in the Hills of Sumurkund approaches to the same character. Perhaps it may be said that this level quality of bed arises almost wholly from the water being early surcharged with soil which it speedily deposits and the deposits from the flattening effect of water observed in almost all streams, upon slopes annually covered deeply with snow and upon the mode in which stones are deposited in natural drains as upon the Bara Laccha is equally diffused. It may be remarked that the more water is abstracted from the trunk near its source the

greater will be the check to the momentum of the current and consequently the more speedily will the deposition take place. If the condition of the River with a surface of water nearly level to the bank be favorable in some respects to irrigation it has a counterbalancing inconvenience resulting from its aptitude to swell over its banks and to drown neighboring flats and to convert them into marshes if there be any material check to the course of the stream in its lower part. This obstruction is often enough artificially formed by the Oozbuks who little studying the nature of currents generally build bridges in the narrowest and deepest parts of Rivers from which mistake it has naturally followed that when these edifices have been of brick & mortar, for I have not seen any

261

other kind of construction in masonry, the piers become gradually undermined and I have passed few if any large bridges in Tourkistan which have not thus been deprived of part of their run[?] which has been replaced by platforms of wood work. If Rivers with deep beds present some obstacles to irrigation, these are not insuperable as is shewn by the immense pier across the Merghab at Meer e Shah Juhan attributed to Sooltan Sunjer, and which is so lofty so massive and so extensive as to call out the admiration and praise of the incurious Oozbuks themselves. In reference to some of the low bedded Rivers of British India I could much have wished to have seen this splendid remnant of the works, probably of the Hellenic Bactrian Dynasty, but am apprehensive that this justification cannot be indulged except at a risk that would hazard that safety of the expedition as I am personally involved in its issue. I touch occasionally upon the subject of irrigation because daily observation forces upon me the conviction that it is the life and soul of fertility in a hot country, because I see most decidedly that there never could be famine in British India if its facilities for irrigation were rendered duly available, because its employment would render this country the Garden of the World, would increase the territorial Revenue to an immense amount, and

[262]

would give to British industry a material that would secure her fabrics of this article against all possibility of successful competition and that it would serve as a Trophy of British Enterprise and of British Benevolence. Every village supplied with water for irrigation and with Tanks shaded with trees to be the daily resort of the old and of the young at their moments of leisure and of recreation. I have only one great objection to this in the probable generation of millions of the Gordius or Guiney worm which is only a variety of the Knot worm less common but I thought that this evil might be remedied by the introduction of Fish into all the Mains and Tanks than which nothing would be more easy. However on further reflection I perceive that the well water of India, from its greater freedom from impurities and from its greater coolness, will almost always supersede the employment of surface or river water as beverage and to all other purposes the the [sic] latter is safely available. The towns of Oozbukistan have Bazars in their suburbs once or twice every week at which Cattle of every description are exposed to sale along with grain, fruits and raw materials for fabrics as Cotton & Silk. Sheep are killed in great numbers and

belonging to each Bazar are one or more large and deep Ponds or Reservoirs to receive the intestines contents and the blood of the slaughtered Sheep

263

Sheep. The latter are carried with their legs bound to the wall which generally surrounds the cavity, and with their heads hanging over its edge the throats are cut under the never neglected recital of the Bismillah or in the name of the most merciful God, which to an European who dares to use his own judgment seems to be somewhat of a misapplication of sentiment. The intestines are generally devoured by Dogs which have no Masters though frequently disputed by those of the Shepherds who bring draughts from their flocks. The stench from the putrid blood and garbage renders this part of the Bazar in no small degree offensive when sense of smelling is not over delicate, but seems not to have suggested the necessity of any change in this arrangement, and here the Managers do not as in Tibut and at Bokhara mix earth or sand with it to increase the bulk to absorb the humidity and to render it transportable in sacks without being offensive. However the composition becomes a material for Manure. If the British Govt. will adopt a system of irrigation with some police regulations in the shape of public necessaries to be adopted in all towns and villages, they will not only make a vast step towards promoting the interests of Agriculture but will improve the cause of health and of decorum. It is a feature in minds of an ardent or enthusiastic stamp sometimes to expatiate

[264]

too largely upon favorite topics and sometimes to overrun and neglect leading features. This latter fault I may have committed in regard to the influence of irrigation on breeding Horses. This would enable the Horse breeder to raise Lucerne, Shufted[?] and Oats with the most decided certainty, and thus avoid the evils which a somewhat long experience has shown me to arise from the continued use of the Doob grass, managed as it must necessarily be in a large Establishment in spite of every exertion and from the large employment of Gram. Besides possessing the advantage of Crops raised on land without the risk of indisposing Zumeendars by abstracting that produce to which they think they have a just and exclusive right. The command of provision of this nature would lead to changes of system which could not fail to be equally frugal as beneficial to the Hon Company. Reverting to the disposal of the bodies of the sheep which are most numerously slaughtered at the Bazars for the accommod[atio]n of their frequenters, the Carcasses are hung up on iron pins stuck somewhat close together on an horizontal beam slung upon two strong wooden pillars. The fat tail and the fat of the loin are stripped off in one piece, and the fat of the body is raised in stripes from the flesh and these stand hollow[?] from it. This arrangement would not be relished in

265

in Europe and I perceive no advantage deriving from it. The Oozbuk boils joints in plain water makes a soup with fat meat and stewed carrots which by strange misnomer he call Subja or greens. The Pulow common amongst them I have already described and when the Rice is sufficiently boiled it is by no means a bad dish but

the substitution of boiled Potatoes for Rice would be a great improvement. Oozbiks though they will eat five or six times a day if they can do it without expense to themselves, are not delicate in the quantity of their food. On rising from a meal it is customary for each Guest to take a piece of bread and to deposit the fragment carefully in his bosom or girdle. It denotes simplicity of manners to see presents of loaves or cakes and fruit presented to the King at his Durbar and I have seen an Assemblage of five or six hundred Men in the great Court treated with a hand full of Almonds and Raisins, Pistachio Nuts Pomegranates a Melon divided amongst three or four with a loaf of bread to each. After having eaten this Meal and taken a draught of water, they have without a signal put up their hands, prayed for the welfare of the King, stroked their beards and departed from the presence with precipitation. On crossing the Chol or Desert between Katinchee and Metun or Meeankal, an Oozbuk Horseman crossing my path gave me a piece of new bread stroked his beard and wished me a safe journey. Salted Tea and the partitions[?] Cream of which I have elsewhere

[266]

spoken are used by every family in Bokhara, tea sweetened with loaf Sugar being a luxury too expensive, but sometimes employed in formal Dinners under the name of Chokee chogulzi[?]. Cassia buds or Cinnamon are frequently introduced to heighten the flavor and and [sic] Tea is always boiled, never infused, except by persons who have been in Russia. In the later instance the Tea Urn or Keletun [is] called a Sumavar. This is made of brass, but instead of a base[?] for an iron heater a hollow cylinder runs up its middle. At the bottom is a flue with holes on the side in which lighted charcoal is laid and on the principle of Argunds lamp the supply of air causes the ignited material to burn fiercely as heated air ascending in the tube keeps the water constantly boiling. The Teapot is placed upon the top of the Tube in cold weather, as it is thought this Tea cannot be drank too hot. The Elats use milk largely, both in its fresh state, in that of buttermilk, and in Kooroot. The Milk of Mares is manufactured into Kimmiz. Wheat flour boiled in buttermilk makes a kind of thick Porridge much in use amongst the Elats. The churn in ordinary use has a trunk of Willow or Poplar, hollowed without a top, and the Churn Staff is worked with one hand only. The skin churn as in Tibut is not in use here and the Butter and Milk is better tasted and more free from Hairs. Amongst the Elats I had sufficient opportunity of observing the raising of the black tent which is simple enough and strictly resembles the description given by Pallas of the Nomadic Tribes

267

Tribes on the Dushte Kipchak. The women are not concealed as in towns. Their summer clothing is slight, a Turband or Kerchief of printed Silk or Muslin bound round the head, and in Matrons with one twist under the throat lying in semicircular folds on the upper part of the Chest as is seen in some of the statues of females executed by Greek Sculptors. I cannot directly charge my memory with the name of the figure but think it was Niobe. In the assemblage of the Court of the Raja of Daba an old woman was thus represented in a carving of wood and the wife of Ameer Timoor in the Akber Nama possessed by me when holding her husbands horse is

thus decorated. The lower part of the Dress consists of a trowser reaching to the instep and the exterior portion is a white Shift drawn rather tight round the neck slit in front very low indeed nearly as far as the waist and bound generally with black Silk. The sleeves long and large. The Hair is [illeg.] and tressed. The Women are fond of beads and ornaments of every description. The dress of the Men little differs from that of the same seen in towns except in being coarser and ruder. The people however give a more advantageous idea of their manners through being more frank more courteous and more hospitable. I went into their tents, examined their processes of milking, churning, baking, cooking, was treated with courtesy and respect called Sahib[?], Aga Khan and Begh by both women and men

[268]

and to these appellations the term Mehman or guest was generally affixed. The women were generally fair, many of the children with brown or reddish hair. The men were dark colored from greater exposure to the weather. They seemed moderately at ease in their circumstances through possessing flocks and herds. Wheat was the only material used for bread, barley being employed merely as food for Cattle. Several families seem to join in the construction of an Oven, and the women conduct the processes of baking and of cooking as well as of milking and the management of the Dairy, as a Kind of Cheese is prepared better than that of Tibut. With what foundation I know not these people reject the fluid which flows from the buttermilk which suspended in a large bag from two poles drops into a vessel whilst the curd intended for Kooroot remains in the bag, and afterwards being pressed by the hand into round balls is dried and kept for domestic use or sold at the Bazars for such cloth as the family may stand in need of. I drank some of this liquid and found it lightly acid and refreshing. It is held to be injurious and indeed so generally that I conceive there must be some foundation for the assumption although I experienced no inconvenience from

[269 no number given]

from drinking it freely. The method of breaking down Kooroot for drinking, by rubbing it in hot water, was so far detailed in my notes on the practices of the Wuzeerees as to render further mention here unnecessary. Every where I found the bread good as to taste and readily digested but it struck me as a curious fact that amongst the Oozbuks, who are so little advanced in civilization, the flour of wheat alone should be employed as bread whereas amongst Europeans that of Barley and of the Oats should be in use. I gave a little of the coarse tea I had brought from Tibut to an old woman and the present was most acceptable. Some Oozbuks of my party had applied to the Tents for Butter milk of which the Stock of the preceding day had been exhausted and could not obtain any, but when it was asked for in my name it was given. The Small Pox sometimes commits great ravages amongst these people but is ordinarily not so fatal as a disease which the Minister represented to me as Measles, but which appeared to be Scarlet Fever with particular determination to the Throat and for which the Natives are not acquainted with any suitable treatment. I saw few instances of Itch[?] but [illeg.] is very common. The Elats

seemed less subject to the Guiney worm and Sore on the face than the citizens or inhabitants

[269a no number given]

of towns. The practice of milking Sheep and Goats is so general that it can scarcely be objected to on any account in a country where lambs and kids are not fattened for sale but kept for stock. It is obvious from the very healthy condition of the lambs and kids that they suffer little if at all through being disbarred access to the teat during the day time and perhaps hardiness of constitution may be conferred by the practice, at all events it is a frugal one and millions of human beings subsist [on] it who could not find food were it abolished or did not exist. The Goats through the whole of Turkistan are more or less nearly allied to the Shawl Wool breed. The Sheep are Kuzak, Karakolee or Oozbukee and Arabee. The first are the largest with pads and no pendent tail. The Karakolee or second are smaller but padded and without tail. The Arabee is the smallest has a pad and a short pendent tail. The Kuzak is nearest the wild breed. The outer growth of his Coat is hard stubbly[?] and almost bristly the inner one is of a fine fibre but rather hard and dry from having little Oil or Yolk. That of the Karakolee resembles the former but is some what finer. The Arabee has only one Coat finer than the Stubel covering but scarcely

[269b no number given]

scarcely as fine as that of the inner growth. The fleece in some individuals covers the cheek and nearly conceals the eyes. The bones are remarkably fine. The neck is long and handsome. A Kafila Bashee dealing in Asiatic exaggeration, observing my disposition favorable to certain forms, said he would procure for me Arabee Sheep with Necks a yard long. Few are horned in these breeds. I find it impracticable to bring any specimens and am obliged to abandon my design of bringing young [illeg.] in Panniers through not having persons enough to take care of them. On the left bank of the Oxus I shall endeavor to procure some Sheep from the country of the Kutrughurs which seem originally to have been a member of the Kazak and Karakol or Oozbuk race. If I cannot effect this object now I shall endeavor to obtain them at a future time through my connection with Kasim Jan Khoja of Tobjha where are the best and cheapest.

The Neat Cattle of this country are like those of Europe in their shape, and not of the Zebu variety, but they are small and clean with well filled udders of good form. On the large plains the cows are pastured at liberty, that is let loose, but in the cultivated country when turned into the fields they are uniformly tethered to a peg. However they are for the most part kept in the house or in the hot weather

[270 no number given]

tied under the shade of trees. The practice seems judicious with two exceptions, one regarding the skin and the feet, the state of both of which is neglected, the former being sometimes filled with scurfy or mangy eruption and the latter running to a preposterous length of toe whilst the animal treads on the heel.

The country of Meeankal is well provided with Canals and mains for irrigation. The houses of the farmers who are permanent look like Forts, being

surrounded by high walls with crenated[?] summits, strong Gates or Doors, and when furnished with Wells or large Tanks are capable of standing a siege against Cavalry. The Country was also liberally sprinkled with the Camps of the Elats composed of the Karra Omé or Kirgash. The soil of Meeankal, originally alluvial, is strongly impregnated with salt. The roads are often deeply miry but as I went into this country there was little wet mire except in low spots. This however is of a nature almost caustic and its [illeg.] was such as to blister the back part of the pasterns of all my horses, however the inconvenience was removed by washing with soap and water and when dry filling the hair thoroughly with the fat of the tail of the Sheep. If the wash and sores be neglected the [illeg.] of the leg inflame and suppurate so largely that the animal dies or is left with one or more

(271)

more thick [illeg.] heavy legs. The thickness remains for about a year when the leg gradually becomes fine but ordinarily scars and some thickening betray the former instance of the disease which is extremely common. A strange notion obtains that if a Horse has had the [illeg.] once and becomes cured he will never be subjected to another attack of this complaint.

On the road I had abundant opportunity for considering what might be the causes for which the King had directed me to visit him. I was well acquainted with his avarice, the gratification of which might be amongst his motives, but the desire expressed by the Minister that the men I should take should be fully accoutred and that they should be Hindoos denoted something more. He gave up the latter point apparently not without reluctance and requested they might be replaced by my best men. On the King at a former occasion directing a dozen of my men to be exhibited fully armed the Minister particularly examined them in an outer court previously to their appearing before the King and remarked that the Hindoos were in his opinion the most perfect in their exercise. The King saw the Men in question in the midst of a long large body of his own Soldiers. The very respectable military appearance my men made contrasted greatly with that of the Oozbuks. The eyes of the latter were directed upon them with an attentiveness that was not overlooked by the King. I observed by the change in his countenance that

[272]

that some working was taking place in his mind. Instead of ordering the men to perform their exercise in preparation [illeg.] through a space in the court having been freed from the persons by which it was crowded.<sup>2</sup> When my people were drawn up in line he desired a Musket to be brought to him, took it, affected to perform some of the Manual, and dismissed my people. I saw most clearly that they had made an impression upon him as well as upon all the Oozbuks present, and it occurred to me that the King wished not this to be carried further. He was then in daily expectation of a visit from the Russians and it might have occurred to him that it was not prudent to encourage an exhibition that by its regularity could not fail to prove imposing. If the number of the persons who accompanied me had not been thus small it would have let me to suspect that some design was entertained of them being useful in the siege. At Metun, a small town about a Fursukh from the Kings

Camp, I was desired to stop until I should be further apprised of the Royal Pleasure respecting me. The Kazee of the town came to visit me and finding that I had been in correspondence with Meer Zuluck Alee Khan, of whom he was a relation, began to converse with some appearance of friendship. Zuluck Alee he said was such a

(273)

a man as seldom appeared amongst the Oozbuks. He had expressed his wish that the Kazee would come to Khoolloom but the latter did not venture to intimate his desire to comply with it lest he should incur the displeasure of the King whose temper he observed was readily moved to suspicion. In regard to me he said that a popular expectation had been raised of my being able in some degree or manner to afford assistance to the King in taking the Fort and that in fact he had [been] present when a conversation to this effect had taken place. On the following [day?] I was escorted by about twenty Horsemen to the Camp and forded the water up to the saddle skirts, the Karra Daria running at the rate of about three miles an hour, and afterwards crossed another branch. The River had, it was said, been higher although there were no marks of inundation and it was bankful. Its breadth did not exceed 150 feet. It contains many Fish and from the specimens I saw I should think the Carp fine. After about an hours ride I was told that the Kings Tent was pitched on an eminence or small Hill, nearly covered with men in the midst of which there was a small Tent of a Pea green color. Whilst proceeding along a path half stifled with the dust kicked up by my companions one of them pointed out the Fort which the King was then occupied in besieging. Having heard that it was strong, knowing that the King had failed in several attacks upon it, and had now been above 40

[274]

forty days before it, I was prepared to expect a Fortress naturally or artificially strong and was therefore surprised to behold only a town surrounded for a considerable extent by a wall apparently about twenty feet high and at one extremity a small building with Turrets and a wall somewhat higher. It did not diminish my surprise at finding that the King had taken up his residence behind the town portion instead of the front of the Fortress and when I came close to the Camp which surrounded the Kings Tent I had more to marvel at in observing that a wall about five feet high had been raised along the whole flank nearest the Enemy. These appearances did not indicate an extreme degree of courage in the besieging army. I was directed to proceed into the quarters of the Park of Artillery which was placed within the Area of a large fortified house of which the buildings save the Wall had been destroyed. Many yoke of Oxen, in a country in which there are hundreds of thousands of Horses and in which Bullocks are scarce, had just brought in some long 18 pounder Brass Artillery cast by Nadu Shah, after their mornings work. For I was told that every morning the

(275)

Cannon were drawn out to the face of some redoubts constructed on some low eminences, fired three rounds each every morning, and at about ten oclock were drawn back again and safely laid up in the Court lest the Kathaees should sally in the

night and take them -- or at least lest their safety should be endangered by the invitation held out to attack. A Yesawal from the King came to enquire if I came to petition "Vez Bundigee" or to fight. On stating that I came for neither of these purposes but because I was sent for by the King, the Messenger seemed disappointed and went off. I had desired the guide sent along with me by the Minister to enquire when I should present myself, or whether I should wait till the Royal Pleasure should be satisfied but he could not gain information. A person who said that he was the Son of a Slave of Shah Murad Begh was himself a former Slave of the Ameer, and thoroughly acquainted with Court Etiquette stated as information for my guidance that although I had been called for by the King I was not to be sent for, the rule being that every person who wished to present himself at the Levee was permitted so to do without introduction, the Kings Tent Door being always open, as he said, to every one the moment his Majesty had taken the field.

(276)

In the evening I received an intimation from Mookoom Jan the Dustar Khanchee or Kufir of the Nopkeirs that I was expected. Two hundred yards brought me to the foot of a Mount about two hundred feet above the level of the plain with a small area in which the King had taken up his residence. The Area had been surrounded by a Mud wall with one opening by which people entered and departed and another in front of the Fortress and close to the tent from which His Majesty could discover the progress of the siege. A little lower than this, and cut out of the side of the Hill, was another Area and Tent from the former of which the King was addressed by his courtiers in the morning. I had gone there first as a place somewhat similar to the audience court at Bokhara, but was called up to the small court where I found the King sitting on his Knees on a thin silken Cushion in a small Tent of green cloth lined with [illeg.] or shot silk and having a small Telescope and Watch lying before him, where two or three people were sitting also on their knees and touching the tent with their backs.

I was accompanied to the middle of the Area by the Vez Beghee but the King called me to the Door of the Tent and enquired after my health. After answering I enquired respecting his answer[ing] which he replied to by expressing his

(276a)

thanks to God in Arabic<sup>3</sup>. His Majesty then asked if I had come to take leave, which I answered that in obedience to his commands I had come thus far, and was in hopes that he would furnish me with letters of introduction to the Prince his Son at Kurshee, to Eshan Khoja at Akebeh, to Alee Yar Khan the Chief of Mymuna, to Shah or Deen the Khan Bucha of Muzar, to Zoolfookar Sher the Chief of Sareepol, and and [sic] to Munowar Khan of Shibhergan, of which the object was to express that I was proceeding to Hindoostan, that the King would be glad if I were treated with respect and allowed to proceed by whatever road I thought fair. He asked if I meant to try my fortune with the Kuttagheen again to which I observed that His Majesty being acquainted with what I had before experienced could scarcely think that I should again seek the territory of Muhummed Murad Begh. He next said will you take the road to Herat, to which I observed that we should shortly see Eshan Khoja who was

a well informed respectable man possessing good judgment, a knowledge of the relative condition of the roads and my friend. He said I was right, and ordered a Secretary to take the names of the several Chiefs as I gave them, and indicated the contents as I had expressed a wish for them to be.

H M pointed out certain persons

(276b)

persons who he said were engaged in transacting his business, a matter I thought neither very relevant nor much concerning me. My name was the subject of enquiry and I exhibited my seal and mentioned the letters, which according to custom [illeg.] were repeated. He ordered an impression to be taken, was surprised the date to be that of the Hejira. The health of the Minister became the next subject of his attention, to which I answered as I had been directed by that personage. He afterwards asked when I had seen Uzeez Shah the Kazee of Bowa or Dun and what I had heard respecting him to which I answered and mentioned that report stated his health to be greatly declined. It appeared afterwards that the King then knew of his death however he limited his curiosity to the nature of his disease, and I gave it as my opinion that he was suffering under an affection of the Liver and Stomach. I represented that I had been led to believe there were many very fine horses at Bokhara but that few had as yet fallen into my hands. I was willing to hope that as His M- had called me thus far he would permit me to purchase some Horses in the Camp where I had heard there were many which would suit my purpose as Stallions. He said Purchase, Purchase. I thanked him and said I should make a point of making known in my country the civilities I have experienced from his

(277)

Majesty. He seemed well pleased at this remark and asked if I had any more Quick Match similar to those he had received from me, and in reply I stated that I had given all I had. He asked if I was acquainted with their composition and I declared my ignorance, upon this point stating with truth that they were made for me at Peshowr. I then took leave but found a man in attendance who took me to a person in a Cave laboring under an acute attack of strangulated Hernia. I explained my opinion as to his case and stated that I had not instruments at hand fit for the operation necessary, and feared that Purgative Medicines would not pass through him as the patient was beginning to vomit. I was I said a traveller and that if the person should not get well under my treatment my reputation would suffer. An old man stated that the patient in respect to me had better take his chances and I left him probably to die. The King has a rupture and I was aware that the case of this man would interest his Majesty. I was then taken to see several persons wounded by balls, and feared that surgical treatment of the wounded might be amongst the motives which induced the King to send for me to Camp. I had instructed a Barber Surgeon in the treatment of the Guiney worm in the secondary stage and my suggestions

[278]

literally pursued had proved successful. He was accordingly directed to be at my tent at daylight the following morning when I gave him some simple rules for the treatment of Gunshot wounds. When I had just concluded my instructions a person came from the King to desire me to see a soldier or rather Officer of some consequence just wounded. A ball had entered one side of his neck at its base struck the spinal process of the third vertebra passed round and lodged itself deeply in a muscle on the opposite side close to the Carotid Artery. I cut open and extracted the ball and afterwards attended the Scene[?] when the ball was handed to him His M, who seeing its burned state asked if it had struck upon the bone. This idea was suggested by my having extracted at H Ms wish another ball which had long been burned in the neck of a Hafiz or religious disciple and which had been in a like manner torn by the bone. I informed the King that I had found Meerza Omr intelligent and had furnished him with instructions for treating Gunshot wounds. He appeared pleased with this, asked if I had learned in what Oorangh[?] or Tribe Horses likely to suit me were to be met with, in reply to which I mentioned Mohammad Yar Abe but that there were many more

(279)

whose names I did not recollect but that I expected to see them in my search. Would you, said the King, give two or three hundred pieces of Gold for a fine Horse. I would, I answered, give a price fitting the value of the animal. I will shew you a Toorkoman, said the King, and ask what you think of him. I had noticed a fine brown Horse with a man on his back about three hundred yards below, and in the King beckoning, the Horseman urged his Steed into a full gallop so instantaneously on the signal being given as to convince me that he had posted there in readiness to act upon it. The Dust on the Hill resembled the finest flour in lightness and was nearly a foot in depth but the horse preceded the thick cloud he had raised until he stood before the King after he and his rider were hidden by the mass that arose. When it subsided I saw by the head that this was the Horse of Ayas Tookhaba which I had hoped to obtain and for which the Minister in a private conversation [said] I ought to give 150 Tilas. The King asked the value of the Horse in my estimation, to which I said from 100 to 150 pieces of gold, but however I might be mistaken being but moderately acquainted with the price of Horses in this country I deferred to H M['s] better judgement to correct my mistake. We, said the King,

[280]

should sell him at a hundred pieces of Gold, why should you give a hundred and fifty? Relying with the utmost confidence on his Majesty's judgement I replied I was willing to pay the value he had stated. But, said the King, the Owner cannot part with the Horse in consequence of his having been given by His Majesty. But said I in reply, His Majesty can dispense with the observation of this rule, and I should esteem it a mark of especial favor if this Horse came into my possession on my paying any sum he should think proper to say was his value. But, continued the King, are you aware that he has a hole in his foot? Be this as it may I am willing to abide by my proposition. I wish him not to serve as a Riding Horse but for the

purpose of breeding him. The King laughed and asked if he would be worth 300 pieces of Gold in Hindustan, and I gave an opinion in the affirmative provided he should arrive in his then condition. He sent the Horse away and I entertained hopes that he would under some shape become my property. What, asked the King, have you seen in Bokhara which is likely to meet a market in Hindoostan. I answered Horses and probably Lambskins, but of the later I was not certain, and

(281)

Horses the surest remittance were subject to great risk in their transport to market, and the demand for those of indifferent quality was by no means assured but for those of a superior quality was certain and hence arose my anxiety to obtain a small number of the latter description in preference to many of the former. But even in this matter my powers were bounded by price for if this were high price the present cost added to the expense of transport would render the acquisition dangerous to a Merchant who in the first adventure had experienced great misfortunes and sunk a very large Capital. The King asked if I could come a second time, to which I replied that I could not make a decided promise. I had committed mistakes as to the nature of the Goods fitted for the market from my own ignorance and through information received from others which experience had proved to be erroneous, but that having seen the articles furnished by Russia I had taken samples which would be laid by me before merchants of large Capital in Calcutta and on their decision would depend whether the commerce of which I had endeavored to lay the foundation would be continued or abandoned. The King appeared to approve of what had been said when one of two persons who sat behind him asked me what salary I gave to the Sahibzada who are accompanied me. I answered not directly to the question but said the Sahibzada was a friend to whom I owed owed [sic] many obligations. The same person enquired how the Sahibzada became

[282]

my friend. I related that I was accompanied from Hindoostan by a Syeed called Meer Izzut Oollah Khan whom formerly came originally from Bokhara who was a very respectable and well informed person and from whom I expected assistance in a country new to Europeans. The King nodded as if acquainted with what I had stated. This Syeed I observed was taken ill at TashKorghan in consequence of having experienced fatigue mortification and the bad air of Koondooz in repeated journeys to that place, and found himself under the necessity of returning to Delhi, his strength being so far reduced as to render him incapable of performing those duties of which he had taken charge. He had met with the Sahibzada Meer Wazeer Ahmud at Kabool with whom he had contracted a friendship and he, going to Bokhara, had taken charge of a letter &c. to His Majesty. On determining to return Meer Izzut Oollah Khan requested that Meer Wuzeer Ahmud, as an act of friendship to him, would stand in his place in respect to me in Toorkistan which he had consented to do. This was the nature of the connection in question. The King then inquired the name of His Britannic Majesty and the same person who had before questioned me as to the Sahibzaada now asked me what religion I professed to which I answered that of Jesus Christ as delivered in

(283)

in the Gospels. The same person asked if I believed that Jesus Christ was seated alive in the fourth Heaven, as was written in the Koran, and would again come upon the Earth. I answered that I received the contents of the Gospel with the same confidence as the Mohometans received the Book delivered to them by their Prophet. Did I believe continued the same questioner [that Jesus Christ] was the Son of God. Before I could answer fully by repeating my belief in what was recorded in the Gospel the King interrupted me by entering into an explanation of the various ideas entertained respecting the nature of Jesus Christ which I could but imperfectly understand his language being much mixed with Arabic terms, but I could collect sufficient material for discovering his distinctions between the creature and the Son of God. How asked H M could Jesus Christ be the Son of God? I replied that when[?] the creature of God, with all the Science he possessed, was but very imperfectly informed respecting the nature of the things which existed upon the earth and were the immediate objects of his senses. For instance, said I, this clod, taking up a piece of clay that lay at my feet, appears to be nothing more than a bunch of clay to people in general. It happens that I know it to contain Salt but what is the precise nature of this salt I cannot without much labor determine. If, continued I, Man cannot clearly understand the nature of such a thing as this so naked and so exposed to his examination as it appears to be, how is it to be expected that he can

[284]

can understand the secrets and mysteries of Heaven except through the medium of that Book in which he is taught to believe. The King threw up his hands, turned to the person behind him, spoke with much animation, and again looked at me as if expecting me to proceed. I am, continued I, a very indifferent Theologian and no Moollah, besides possessing a very imperfect knowledge of the Persian language I am apprehensive of expressing what I do not mean and therefore I hoped H M would pardon me if I expected not to be pressed in discussing a subject so grave and respecting which I was apprehensive of committing mistakes. The person who had conducted part of the conversation observed, you say that you are no Moollah but what you have stated and other circumstances give reason to suspect that you are a Moollah of a very superior order. I made no answer. The King enquired the amount of wages I gave to my Servants. I answered that this had some reference to their ability but mentioned the pay of the Sipahies. Did I give them food likewise? I answered in the negative. He again addressed himself to the Courtier who had taken a large a share in the dialogue. A country man now presented to the King two Kukrees (*Cucumis uslatissima*) and a

(285)

common Cucumber. The King asked if these vegetables were in my country and on my answering in the affirmative he enquired if they were forbidden to be eaten or allowed. I observed that our religion left the food of man to his own discretion and judgment. Did we eat Hogs flesh? I repeated that this was not forbidden. Would I eat some if he would order it to be procured? I replied that it was not the custom of

Englishmen to do anything that was contrary to the custom of the people among whom they chanced. That eating Hogs flesh was offensive and abhorrent to Moosulmans and that therefore according to the rule of conduct I had before mentioned I should abstain from indulging in such diet. The King now addressed the Courtier who I afterwards understood was stated to be a learned Khoja or Sahibzada and who afterwards remained silent. Are you, said H M, well acquainted with the management [of cannon?] I answered not at all. Are any of your men skilled in this matter? None. I had a Servant who was moderately conversant in the use of Artillery but on my arrival at Bokhara he applied for his discharge in order to enter into your Majesty's Service and I have since lost sight of him. It may here be remarked that Meer Khan a smart [illeg.] under the inducement held out to him by a Servant of the King actually did what has been stated. He was promised a wife, a garden, a hundred pieces of Gold per annum, and [illeg.] in [illeg.]. His comrades dissuaded him

[286]

as much as possible, and a Servant of the Daughter of Shah Zuman stated in plain terms that he would soon regret the change of masters, for that instead of receiving coin at the end of every month, he would be paid in grain, in clothing and that the fine promises would never be realized. Not receiving wages at the end of a month he petitioned the King for a settled[?] Salary and on H M telling him that he should have 15 Tunga a month until[?] the value of his services should be recognised which was about one half of the pay received from me he begged to be discharged. Through an Afghan he applied to me for forgiveness which was granted but requested that I would ask him to come back which I refused and as he was afraid that he should be subjected to taunts from his fellow servants he went off to Meshed. This occurrence took place exactly when the Ameer was making preparations for the campaign and under circumstances evinced no proof of extraordinary foresight. I may here remark that

---

X Shah Zuman after having been deprived of sight visited Bokhara. Meer Ameer Hyder heard that his Daughter possessed great beauty and intimated a wish to receive her in marriage. The Ex King declined the honor but on its being intimated that perseverance in refusal might entail further misfortunes greater even than the loss of sight [he agreed to it]. The Commander of the Faithful on some caprice repudiated the Princess but at a subsequent period wished to renew the severed connubial tie. The lady however on her part gave a most determined refusal and has maintained her resolution ever since. She has not given any issue. The other legal wives, the daughter of the King of Hissar, of the Chief of Sheher Subz, of the Atalik of Ora Tippah, have been equally infertile but a Khojazadi of the house of Joehar has produced his only legitimate son Mahumud Hosen by title Tora Khan. The Harem Seraee consists of about a hundred females and Tora Bohadur, the Governor of Kinshee the favorite, Omar Khan the Governor of Karmeena and Tora Zobeyd are the Sons of Slaves.

(287)

that I was present when the King was inspecting the Troops preparatory to taking the field. He read from a Roster the names of the persons ordered to serve which the Jurchee Busher or Crier repeated in a loud voice and the men called out "Huzur" but in fact there was no inspection of arms. It is stated that every person keeping a Horse is liable by that circumstance to serve in the army and the individual who wishes not to submit himself to this inconvenience must keep only asses. Returning from this digression to the matter of conversation the King said your men are extremely expert in the use of the Gun putting himself in a position as if firing a Gun. They can hit a mark well. "They are" I observed "fit for repelling the attacks of Thieves, are tolerably well suited for the purpose of a Merchant who travels, but they are not Sipahees for regular battles. His face which when I began to speak was bedecked with smiles had its features deformed by a fierce frown which gradually abating left the countenance overspread with a deep gloom. I saw that I had

(288)

had lost my influence and after a short period of silence the King gave a signal to the Viz Beghee who told me that I might return. I was now convinced that I had been invited to come under the expectation that I would have volunteered such assistance as my men could have afforded against the Fortress. The King had thought that by the sight of the horse I had admired and by the prospect of purchasing others I should have been [illeg.] to do that his pride would not allow him to ask. I hastened to procure my letters which the Meerza or Secretary said he would write in the most favorable terms possible. I requested that he would just employ the language and substance dictated by the Ameer in my presence. When I had reached my Tent a Servant from the Meerza brought six letters in a brocade bag with a seal of common Bees wax directed to the Tora Hakim of Kunshee and five others to Eshan Khoja and the other Chiefs on the frontier. On my offering two pieces of Gold as a compliment for the Writer his servant expressed his surprise that I had not given nor bargained for some money for his own labor which had consisted in bringing them two hundred yards and desired he might carry a loaf of sugar to his master. He received a gratification, was told that I have not a loaf of sugar for my own use which was strictly true as I had given the five largest to

(289)

the King who is fond of this kind of gratification. When H M had examined my present he expressed himself highly pleased with the Shawls and as the fabric of those of England called imitation shawls was new to him desired an explanation of it. In reply it was stated that the weft [sic] was of the wool of a particular kind of sheep a certain powerful king in Europe had given to the King of Great Britain and that the web [sic] was of silk. Another message was sent to know why it was of Silk to which I replied that the introduction of this material amongst other advantages gave a greater firmness of structure which would ensure to the cloth greater durability. This was followed by a third message that the King appeared highly

pleased to learn there would be more wear in these than in Kashmeer shawls and hoped that the Scarlet Shawl the color of which he much admired for its lightness was of the same description. I employed my time in passing through a portion of the Camp and marked some Horses for purchase. I had occasion to return along the road near the besieged Fortress and expected to have been saluted by a few balls as my dress distinguished me from an Oozbuk however I was noticed by this compliment, but on reaching the quarters of Rujub Begh the Purwanachee his men fired

[290]

fired from a small redoubt 250 yards in advance upon some of the Garrison for notwithstanding what I had heard of the besieged having blocked up the principal Gate of their Fortress, I perceived both Horsemen and Footmen go in and out. The insult on the part of the King's sharp shooters called oddly enough Meer Gun was returned by balls which struck the branches of the tree under which we were sitting. I casually asked the distance from the Wall of the Fortress and was answered a thousand paces however in taking a distance near us and trebling it I convinced him that it was only 750 paces. It was said that the besieged had offered to give up the Fortress if the King would allow them to retire from his territory altogether but he had refused unless they would give up four of their Chiefs whom it was his intention to put to death. The besieged declared that they would not do this on any account but admitting that they were somewhat straitened for provisions, a fact decidedly known, they would stand out to the last man rather than betray those who had stood forward in their behalf.

---

Note--I cannot find a safe Etymology for Meer-Gun but the pronunciation is exactly thus. Ed.

(291)

The Purwanachee told me that they had ground dry Mulberry leaves to powder and mixing the flour with water made a paste of it to satisfy their hunger. And I [illeg.] a trail[?] of their endeavor to cause the King to make some enquiry into their grievances which was gallant enough. They offered alone to go against the Oorgunjees and attack their Capital provided only that the King would condescend to alleviate their burdens and on his refusing to do this they rose in rebellion as the last resource. The Ameer was therefore now engaged in quelling an insurrection which his own mismanagement, not to say tyranny, had excited. The Governors sent to the Kathaee Kipchaks were favorite Slaves of the King and these individuals employed all their power to enrich themselves. It seemed almost certain that the King had employed this policy to drive the Kathaee Kipchaks to measures in punishing which he could compel them to leave his country by which expedient Bokhara would have water in abundance. An Englishman could not but wish well to a tribe thus circumstanced and the favorable feeling was not diminished by hearing that there were not above three or at most four thousand men in the Fortress. The besieged were good marksmen, a day seldom elapsing without three or four of the Kings Troops being wounded by their balls, but I remarked in those I was desired to

[292]

to see only a single instance in which the ball had passed through a limb though I saw many instances of their having been buried deeply. Either therefore the powder of the besieged was weak, little was employed, or the besiegers maintained a respectable distance. As I had been detained till near Noon in seeing wounded and sick persons ,I had as before mentioned done little more than obtain indications of a few Horses fit to be purchased as Stallions, but saw a possibility of obtaining fifteen or twenty in the course of the following day. However on reaching my Tent I was told that the Yesawals had delivered a message from the King to my Servant for me, importing that such Horses as I might have purchased I might take, but that I must return to Bokhara with a Messenger from the Minister on the following day. This was a thunderstroke as I had made only conditional bargains and not paid any money. I went instantly to the Kings Tent but was prevented entering the enclosure by crowds of persons who were pushing forwards for admittance. One of the Yesawals had stated that the King was displeased at my having traversed the camp, a circumstance that appeared to me astonishing as at his desire I had actually done so in the morning and had been as much in different directions in going to see sick and wounded persons as in looking for Horses. Omar Khan

(293)

the Hakim of Konmeena the third son of the King by a Kalmak Slave had sent a Horse of his own for sale and as I was standing near the gateway asked if I had any Guns or Pistols for sale[. I] answered in the negative but afterwards recollecting that my Servant had in charge a very handsome double barreled one with twisted barrels and highly ornamented stock I went with it to the Prince's Tent and said that though I had no Pistols for sale I had one for his acceptance. He was highly pleased at this unexpected civility, but started back when the Lock was snapped. He was a short Youth of dark complexion, large head, Kalmuk features, about 15 years of age. My Mokim afterwards bargained for the Horse which was a noble Toorkman six years old sixteen hands high strong action and a fine gait. The price was 130 pieces of Gold. I bought in order to present to Raja Runjeet Singh a more elegant grey Horse for 90 pieces of gold from the son of Alim Khan, the King of Kokan, prior to the accession of Omar Khan and who after the murder of his Father by his exasperated soldiery fled to Bokhara. Altogether I had secured four Horses as I thought. At night a Meerza of a chief called Bughee Jan, a brother in law of the King and who had dined with me the day before, came to my Tent. On inquiring if he had heard the cause of this sudden change he observed that nothing in the country

[294]

ought to surprise me, that nothing was to be relied upon. An Order issued in the morning by the King was often reversed before evening, as in my case. The King had caused a consultation of Mollahs to take place at his Tent, to whom he mentioned that I had brought him a very splendid present of articles, some of which he had not seen before, and that it was his intention to make me a return suitable to his dignity. Her had intended he said to have given me a very fine Horse, but it had occurred to

him that morning as a doubt whether this was not against this Shuria, for as there was continual War betwixt the Kafirs or Unbelievers (, a position by the bye not wholly true and which bespeaks some want of acquaintance with the present political condition of the world) it did not consist with the situation of the Ameer ool Momeneen to furnish such arms[?] as the Horse to an Enemy. The doubt in the mind of the Commander of the Faithful was converted into a verity by the general opinion of the Moollahs, who discerned that it was not the wish of the King to give the Horse they all knew to have been exhibited in the morning and as every one conceived to ascertain whether he would be acceptable to me. In this dilemma of difficulty the King asked what should be given as a substitute, when one Moollah either a simpleton or a wag said that it

[295]

it was lawful to throw stones at enemies, that Rubies Diamonds or Emeralds are but Stones and he therefore submitted whether it might not meet the Shuria as well as his Majesty's wish to give me a Ruby fully equal in value to my present. The King, whose avarice was probably startled at this ingenious proposition which was received with nods of approbation from the whole assembly, observed that this idea had occurred to his own mind, that its realization would have been easy at Bokhara but that in Camp he had not the means of enforcing it. Another substitute was looked for and found in the Gift of a very rich Khilut or Dress of Honor. The Meerza said that was the final determination. Mockum Jan the friend and Deputy of the Minister sent word to me privately that he would wish and advise me to leave the Camp without delay. I had had sufficient experience of the value of Oozbuk judgment to [not] confide in advice so weak timid and of a nature so inculpatory. If I had not known that the man really meant well I should have thought him treacherous, however I resolved to attend the Levee of the King in the morning for a younger Prince, with whom I had before conversed and who appeared a smart boy, said putting his thumbs under his ears the King is gone to do this after which he goes to his private apartments

[296]

apartments. He meant that he was going to say his Evening Prayers. "You have left" continued the Prince "your soldiers at Bokhara. There they are of no use". I made no reply but his observation served to confirm my suspicions as to one cause of my being called to the Camp. By day break the following morning I attended the Levee to which great crowds of persons were pressing. The King said, You will prepare to accompany a Servant of the Minister to Bokhara. I replied that I was ready but I wished to speak further, to which the King said that when I came to read the prayer previous to departure I should have sufficient opportunity, and I perceived that the number of persons anxious to bow to the Monarch and to catch a look was too great to admit of my engaging the latter in conversation. On reaching my Tent I learned that the King had in the night sent for the Horse of the Kokanee and admired him greatly. He is really, said he, a fine animal. He has been sold for 90 pieces of gold but is worth a hundred. The Kokanee now told my agent that if I would give 100 he would return five. It was in vain that my Man said the bargain was struck. I gave

five more, when my agent went to fetch him the Ameer said he must have 120. His steward observed that he was ashamed of his masters conduct and I gave up the Horse. On sending for the horse of the Tora, or Prince Omar Khan, my Agent was informed that the King had signified to his Son that the Horse could not be spared, and my Man stated that the other persons from whom I had purchased Horses had returned the amount they had received through him [for fear] of incurring the King's displeasure. On my round from the Tent of the King, people called out in every direction to me to buy their Horses, to have a little patience and I should have as many as

(297)

as I could wish. In fact in consequence of having given a liberal price for the first Horses I had bargained for and through the want of money I might, had leisure been allowed, have secured the best Horses of the Camp. I had been pressed by a Mahrum or Officer of the King, perhaps he might be called Inteligencer, to prepare to march and on hearing what had happened I directed my Tent to be struck and my men to saddle and mount immediately. I told the Mahrum that people had said the King had broken up all the bargains I had made. That I could not believe H M was capable of acting with such inconsistency after having given me full permission to purchase. That I considered it the duty of this man to carry the report immediately to H M lest the people should receive an opinion disadvantageous to H Mys consistency. The man trembled, turned pale, and became as humble as before he had been arrogant. I said that from friendly motives, out of respect for the King, I had gone so far out of my way as to mention the circumstance in the light it presented myself to me. It was for him to determine. In about an hour I found the good effects of my observation, in that tone of the people near me as to salutations and other demonstrations of respect and I was no longer pressed to depart. However at about noon the Servant of the Minister Moollah Hussun, a man I knew, came to say he had received orders from the King to attend me. H M seemed to have forgotten that I had been accompanied by Shahee Begh, another Servant of the Minister, who was thus superseded, though as I conceive more from inadvertency than design.

I was called to read the Fatwa but the King directed me to sit down at the door

[298]

of his tent and asked what I had to say. I observed that he had been pleased to give me permission to buy Horses, that I had been so much occupied in seeing wounded people in the course of yesterday as to have been able to procure only four, and I trusted he would allow me to make up the number to twelve. He said that he was in want of Horses against the Rebels, that I need be under no apprehensions, as to the Horses I required I should find abundance at Kurshee, at Lubee ab, at Akche and other places in my return. I next observed that I had been led to expect the Turkmen Horse I saw the day before yesterday. He answered that this could not be as he had been given to Ayas. I next observed that it only remained for me to say the usual prayer and to take leave. His countenance was less stern than in the morning,

in the first instance was covered with a smile of complacency when he desired me to mention what I had to communicate, and again resumed an expression of sternness when he found that I said nothing except what related to Horses, for on the first day I had thanked him for his general civility and protection. It seems scarcely necessary for me to enter into a defence of my conduct in regard to the assistance presumed to have been required. In the first instance I am not a military man, and the next nothing was required specifically,

(299)

and to have volunteered under my circumstances would have been in my conception an act of the very highest imprudence. I had only about thirty five or forty men and a few of them were the Servants of the Govt. I had asked for them as a defence against Banditti but not for offensive warfare. But if contrary to all probability an attack had been made by them and the Fort carried, so inconsistent, capricious and jealous is the temper & conduct [of] Meer Hydur that it would not have surprised me if something adverse to our interest would have arisen out of it. And had I ventured to offered advice unasked then I should have exposed myself to the imputation and consequence, belonging to impertinence. Had I thrown out the slightest hint of a desire to have interfered I should have been delayed another year at an expense that would have ruined me with from fifty or sixty horses & nearly as many men to support, for as to receiving any assistance from the King as a return for services the idea is preposterous. Tora Khan, the oldest Prince, and who must be the successor to Meer Hyder has an Estate in sight of his Mother but the King appropriates almost the whole of its proceeds and allows the Prince scarcely any thing, if indeed he does furnish any money for his subsistence. Tora Khan has only one Horse and four or five Servants. The principal Courtiers send to him, unknown to the King, small sums of money for his support. This trait may suffice or many others might be added.

[300]

Nothing in fact however would have been more easy than to have taken the fort by storm. The entire Walls of the town were not more than twenty feet high. There was an abundance of young Poplars and Willows for scaling ladders. The possession of the town would in all probability have caused the Fortress to surrender immediately or if not it would have afforded the means of bringing the battering Cannon to within fifty yards of the back part of the Wall of the Fort where attack would certainly not have been expected. The fall of the Crest of the Wall would have filled up the Ditch and there would have been an end of the defence. A battalion of British Sipahees would certainly have taken the place in three hours but Oozbuks are ill calculated to attack Forts. What little they may have known of military Science is now confined to the use of the Gun and of the Horse.

I returned to Bokhara in four days. The Minister had written to Kabil Begh, his Dadur or elder Brother and Hakim of Katushee, to show me such attention as he could with propriety. He sent his Meerza with refreshments as Meat Rice Bread Ice &c. to a Garden but caused the Meerza to intimate that he did not dare to invite me

to a meeting lest the King whose temper was "nazook" should take umbrage at it.  
But on my return I called at the house

(301)

of a person called Waees Baee[?], who had been as ambassador from Bokhara to Sooltan Seleem at Constantinople, had been as a Merchant at St. Petersburg, had been introduced to the Empress Catherine, to the Emperor Paul Petrowitz, to his Successor Alexander Pavlowitz, to the Arch Duke Constantine Pavlowitz &c.. He was between 70 and 80 year of age, was disappointed when he learned that I could not pass the night with him, but insisted on cutting the first Melon of his field for my use. His country men he said must appear to me extremely ignorant and he regretted that his Son and myself had not become acquainted. His conversation and manners shewed him to great advantage when compared with the highest Oozbuks in Bokhara.

It may be said truly of commerce that "Emollite mores nec sunt esse feros" but a long process of time is required. On my return to Bokhara I waited on the Minister and communicated my wish, indeed[?] intention, to depart immediately. He answered that two days would be required for preparations, disapproved of the day I had appointed, and fixed upon [one] more distant as particularly fortunate.

The Tora Zobeid had pressed Mr. Trebeck in my absence to buy his horse, which had before been repeatedly tendered and rejected. He now sent for me and with Ibraheem Begh, the son of the Minister and his Assistant, pressed the purchase in such a manner as to induce me to comply. The Horse was the finest in Bokhara but he was lame in the foot, he had been seized with a cough, and

[302]

and with an itching in the Skin which made him almost mad through the irritation it occasioned. His condition I saw was considered as nearly desperate. I observed that I would not buy him without previously speaking to the Minister. The Prince and Ibraheem Begh said this was unnecessary, however I went to his House but found he had retired to his private apartments for the day. At the most urgent request of the Prince and his friend I bought the Horse, had him properly shoed by my own Nalbund, took him to the Garden in which my Horses were, had his body well washed with Soap and water and in a few hours brought him into a condition that apparently surprised the Groom who came to receive his piece of Gold as his fee on furnishing the body clothes belonging to the horse. The day following the purchase I took the money and informed Ibraheem Begh that I was prepared to pay the price. He took me to the Tora who was sitting in the Mint house where Gold was prepared for stamping. It had been first drawn into cylindrical bars--each of which was shoved through a hole in an anvil block against a perpendicular stop between the face of which and of the anvil an upright hand[?] chisel was struck down and cut cylinders which were weighed against a [illeg.] weight. The accuracy

(303)

of the weight of the pieces was extraordinary as during half an hour I did not see a single piece that required alteration. The Gold was said to consist partly of the

Dutch Ducat called here Bajokee, and partly of Gold in grains and dust collected in the River of Sumurkund and especially near Ora Tippeh. Budukshan furnishes a small quantity which is sold with great secrecy lest the transaction should reach the ear of Mah<sup>d</sup> Murad Begh who might convert[?] a search for it into a source of oppression.

Ibraheem Begh now told me that the Minister did not approve of the sale of the Horse and that he must be given back again. Subsequently on that day I had an audience of the Minister who desired me to go every day. After I had departed one day a Moollah observed to the Minister that I committed to writing every thing that I saw or that I thought of importance. [illeg.] said the Minister-[8 words illeg., seemingly transliterating the local language] This speech displayed his fears for the safety of Bokhara and in degree explains his frequently touching upon the possibility of seeing Hindoostan and finally England. The Minister has been heard to say that, though the arrival of my Caravan was so injuriously distressing to him that if another similarly circumstanced were to arrive it could go near to kill him, yet that it was the happiest occurrence possible for the country of Bokhara.

(304)

He alluded to the reports made to the King of the Minister having received a bribe of ten thousand pieces of Gold in the first place and secondly to the political condition of Bokhara. It was conceived by the Oorgunjees that the arrival of my party was arranged in concert with the Russians and that if they proceeded further in their designs against Bokhara they would be attacked both in front and rear by the Russians and the Firingees, an apprehension which had materially promoted the hasty truce with Bokhara. The day following the Minister said that the Prince could not dispose of his Horse without the permission of his Father to which I observed that he thoroughly well knew my reluctance to purchase the Horse in question and that I had been forced by importunity to purchase him but had personally gone to the Minister's house without being able to find him. The conversation ended here. The Minister had written to the King for permission to sell to me the Horse he had previously promised unquestionably to cede to me with an intention to cede the price to the King and that settled by the Minister was 1200 pieces of gold. However as he said nothing upon this point on my observing that I was disappointed at my not finding more fine Horses to purchase I concluded that the King had directed him not to sell as a punishment to me for my contumacy. I might have obtained fifteen or twenty of the finest horses in Toorkistan but I might have compromised British

(305)

character in a cause which independent of other objections appeared to me not wholly honest. I have certainly injured my own being but am consoled by my motives. Had I obtained the Horses I had purchased and hoped to have purchased, I would have submitted that one should have been sent to England as a Stallion to the Hon Court of Directors which might have induced them to reinstate their Home Stud. Tora Khan or the Crown Prince, if he may be so called, had a black Horse of exquisite beauty and great speed but rather small. He was of the Tuka breed and I had heard that the Prince was somewhat disposed to sell him.

On the morning of my departure Mahummud Umar, a Kashmeeree who had been useful to us in several respects and who occasionally paid a visit to the Prince, stated that he was charged with a message from the Tora to me. He had desired him to present his Salaam and his best wishes for our safe return. He had much desired, he said, to have conversed with me on various subjects regarding our King, the system of our government, the Army, the produce of our country, our relations with other countries, the road, and so many other matters in which he took an interest. He regretted that he had not been able to gratify his inclinations as he received an advantageous idea of my character which was given in terms perhaps furnished by the Minister and certainly too flattering for me to

[306]

to relate, but I could not be unacquainted with the state in which he stood with his father. He could not have had the pleasure of conversing with me, he said, except in private and that could scarcely have been so managed as not to have been discovered and probably, nay almost certainly, to have produced an effect disadvantageous to my interests. I was a traveller and a stranger and it would ill become him to have been the means of involving me in his fortune. He thought it better to forego his own gratification. He had heard, he added, that I had admired his Horse. He possessed only one but that should have been completely at my service as a Burgh Subz, green leaf or Token of the friendship of the Prince of Bokhara, could its transfer have been safe and substantial[?] but having heard of a bargain of sale with the Tora Zobeid having been broken by the Minister it could not be expected that his intervention if acted upon could have had a more favorable issue. He wished us well. I returned for answer that I was fully sensible of his Highnesses kindness and had experienced much mortification and disappointment in not having been able to have paid my respects personally to him. Englishmen were not wont to make promises but I could promise that I would not forget the nature of the assistance[?] received nor the nature of those pursuits

(307)

in literature which I understood engrossed much of his Highnesses attention. This was the most civil act I experienced at Bokhara and if the Prince do not sacrifice his tone of mind and health to the use of Majoon there may be hope for Bokhara in his attaining the crown.

He goes to court not oftener than once a year, and has never been admitted to friendly or affectionate treatment by his Father since the time at which he ventured gently to remonstrate upon the misapplication of his treasure. Before that period the Prince had been active and was said to have [been] able. He wished to make himself acquainted with the condition of the neighboring kingdoms & states of Kokan, Hissar, Shehr Subz, &c. and for this purpose and mounted on an Ass as a Fuqeer with two or three companions in similar guise attained his object. The Govt of Sumurkund was offered to him and declined as being inferior to that of Balkh. This therefore was tendered and accepted but the Sum of Money allowed by his Father appeared to him so extremely small as not to meet the necessity of giving dresses of honor to the principal persons of that District. And when the King saw

that the footing on which he was about to act would disadvantageously eclipse the Court of Bokhara it was stated that the King dispensed with his services in respect to that government and to other political objects. He has many partisans but his exact condition

(308)

of mind or [illeg.] seems not to be thoroughly known. It might be worth while to send to him all the Persian and Arabic books which have been printed in the Calcutta Press, a business that might readily be transacted through the medium Aga Ganjeen[?] or of Mohummud bros.[?]

Russians. Agreeably to my promise I caused application to be made to the Minister for the three Russians I had before purchased, and the applicant, a Khojazada, was instructed to proceed as far as a hundred and fifty pieces of Gold instead of 105[?] or 135 at which they first sold. And in a second channel an attempt was sett on foot through another quarter. The answer given was that they could not be sold and I am willing to hope that the King will cause them to be returned, but instead of doing this in a handsome manner by forwarding them with a letter to the Emperor by a Caravan, he seems waiting as if in expectation of a Russian Caravan arriving at Bokhara or the coming of a Russian Force under perhaps some notion of such an act so deferred would have an influence in averting any designs of the Russians on Bokhara should they have such a view. One of the Russians came to the Garden the morning of my departure and was thrown into the agonies of despair on learning the infructuous result of my application. I went however to Goorgeen, who used arguments to console them and to

(309)

to shew them the strong probability of their being released. In the mean time it remains a matter of astonishment that the Russians should so long have deferred to attack Oorgunj. Reports from Kuzaks continue to state that the Caravan still remains at Eerghus near the Siri and it appears that some Chiefs of Kuzaks, subjects of Russia, have come to Bokhara to solicit the interference of the King in their behalf with the Emperor in warding off the punishment with which they expect to be visited, from having suffered themselves to be tempted by the appearance of commodities without an owner to carry off Iron and Copper left by the Caravan on its retreat through their inability to take them back. And it appears that they were slack in supplying Camels to aid the Russians in their retrograde march.

The King, it is reported, has consented to interpose his good offices. In the space of two months longer it will be seen whether Russia will enforce the threat so long held out. If she do not she will be considered here as unable so to do and if the expedition take place at a future period Bokhara, reasoning in false premises, may be led to take a part in the defence of Oorgunj when the Mahometan Power will certainly receive a heavy blow. According to the accounts of all travellers, Russia is in general greatly inferior to Toorkistan in climate and productions and the occupancy of Oorgunj would speedily lead to their re-establishment of [3 words illeg.] which requires merely a Dam to be thrown

(310)

across the new channel cut round the flank of the great Dam, to render the waters of the Moorghab again available to the irrigation of lands so fertile and yielding a produce so luxuriant that a blow from an ear of ripe Wheat was said to be capable of breaking a mans head.

---

<sup>1</sup> Majoon: 'an intoxicaing confection of hemp leaves &c., sold in the bazar'. Yule and Burnell: *Hobson-*

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this sentences is not clear. The transcription is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> This sentence apparently sic.