

II. — *Narrative of a passage through the Pass of Khaibar, communicating between the plain of Pesháwer and the valley of Jelálabád.*

From Pesháwer to the valley of Jelálabád, there are three distinct routes, all of them leading through the great hill ranges separating the two countries, viz. those of Khaibar, A'bkhána and Karapa. The former is decidedly the preferable from its level character and directness, but the most dangerous owing to the lawless disposition of the predatory tribes inhabiting it. It is therefore seldom frequented, and only by fáquírs, or large bodies of troops; káfilas of traders, and others, passing by the more difficult and tedious, but at the same time, the more secure routes of A'bkhána and Karapa.

Having determined to attempt the Khaibar pass, and having found a Patán of Pesháwer willing to accompany me, I divested myself of clothes and other effects, and clad myself in garments of little worth, as did my associate. This man proved very serviceable, and indeed necessary, from his knowledge of the Pashto or A'fghán dialect.

I bade farewell to my friends at Pesháwer, who strove to induce me to change my intention, by setting forth the dangers of the road, the ferocity of the inhabitants, and the inevitable fate that awaited me, being an European. I had however taken my determination, and the spirit of enterprize had got the better of prudential calculation; — moreover I was of opinion that being an European, which I did not purpose to conceal, would not operate to my prejudice, as ample experience had proved a contrary effect in my intercourse with the tribes of Dámán and Bannú, the latter enjoying no better reputation than the people of Khaibar.

I accordingly started with my companion from Pesháwer before day break, taking with me, besides my mean apparel, nothing but a small book and a few pais, or half-pence, which the better to elude observation were put into a small earthen water vessel. My Patán carried with him two or three cakes of bread, to be provided in case of inhospitable reception, hardly to be expected, and a knife which he tied in the band of his peyjámas or trowsers.

Our course led due west, and four or five cosses brought us to Tákkál, the last village in this direction belonging to Pesháwer, and where the cultivated lands cease. We halted but for a few minutes, and entered upon a barren stony plain extending to the hills. To our right was a large artificial mound called the Pádsháh's Tope, near which the last battle was fought between Sháh Sújah and A'zem

Khán, brother of the Vazir Fatí Khán, when the former being defeated, fled to Khaibar. In crossing the plain, about mid-way we came upon a Dúrání chokí or guard station, where were some half dozen horsemen on the look out. Nearing the hills, we approached the small village of Jarr, at the entrance of the pass, surrounded by a low wall of stones cemented with mud. It may contain fifty or sixty houses, but has no bazár or resident Hindú. We did not deem it prudent to enter the village, and halted during the heat of the day at an enclosed Zíárat, or shrine of a Saiyad, or other saintly character, which lies a little to the right. Here was a masjíd, a grateful shade from a few trees, and a well of indifferent water.

When the fervor of the sun had abated, we continued our journey, but avoiding the high road to our left, and which is practicable for artillery, we entered the hills taking a foot path. After passing for some time over a succession of small rounded hills, covered with many novel plants and shrubs, and particularly with sorrel, we descended into a deep, but spacious water course, down which flowed a fine clear rivulet from the west, and there we fell in with the high road which led up it. In this distance we had passed a scanty spring of water, over which numerous wasps were buzzing. They good naturedly allowed us to drink without annoyance. Hitherto we had neither met or seen any person. Proceeding up the water-course we at length reached a spot, where the water supplying the rivulet, gushes in a large volume from the rocks to the left. I slaked my thirst in the living spring, and drank to repletion of the delightfully cool and transparent waters. This locality is called A'li Masjíd, and is connected by tradition with Házrat A'li, who, it is believed, repeated prayers here, besides performing more wonderful feats. Over the spot where the Házrat stood in the act of devotion, a masjíd is erected, whence the appellation of the place.

Immediately adjacent hereto, were some twenty men assembled, sitting in the shade of the rocks; most of them were elderly, and of respectable venerable aspect. Our salutations were acknowledged, and after replying to their queries, as to who we were, where we were going, and on what business, they invited us to pass the night with them, telling us that we should indeed find a village a little further on, but nearly bare of inhabitants, who had come hither with their flocks, as is their custom, at a certain period of the year. To this village, they themselves belonged. We willingly accepted the invitation, and sitting down with them, I became an object of much curiosity, and as I had conjectured, on leaving Pesháwer, my European birth did not prove to my disadvantage. They spoke nothing

but Pashto, and were amused that I was unable to speak it as well as themselves. My conversation was maintained with them through the medium of my Patán interpreter. The news of the arrival of a Farang or European soon spread, and many persons came, afflicted with disorders and wounds.

I could not forbear regretting that I had no knowledge of medicinal remedies, as I should have been gratified to have administered to the wants of these poor people, whose reception of me had so fully belied the reports of their neighbours. I asserted my ignorance of the art of healing, but was not credited, and finding it impossible to avoid prescribing, or to be considered unkind, I took upon myself to recommend such simple appliances as might be useful, while they could do no harm. I particularly enjoined cleanliness, which in all their maladies, seemed to be neglected from principle. For an affection of the eye I contrived a shade which was much admired, and prized as a singular effort of ingenuity. There were three or four cases of sword wounds, in which I advised the removal of the unseemly applications placed on them, to keep them clean, and thereby to allow nature to take her course. Their plaisters were made of mud and salt, a mixture which may or may not be judicious, but which I afterward found was very generally used in all cases of wounds. I presume it to be, if not hurtful in the first instance, of doubtful benefit after a certain time, for nothing is more common than to see wounds continue open after any danger from them is over, apparently owing to the repulsive agency of the dirt crammed into them.

I received many thanks for my prescriptions, and sat with the company until the approach of night, smoking the chillam, and listening to their conversation, at which I appeared to be much pleased, although I understood but little of it. They pointed to an eminence, on which they told me Sháh Sújah had passed the night after his defeat at Ták-kál.

We now ascended the hills, and on the tabular summit of one of them, found the inhabitants of the village in a bivouac. There were but three kháts or couches of these countries amongst them, yet one was abandoned to me, it being urged that I was a Farang, and had prescribed medicines. My companion received a mat. As night advanced, a supper was brought of wheaten cakes, roghan, and milk. The chillam also was furnished, and three or four young men came and sat with me, around my khát, until I felt disposed to sleep, and on being dismissed, they asked me, if during the night they should bring the chillam.

Such was the attention I received from these savages, and I am pleased to record it, as affording an opportunity of doing justice to hospitality and kindness, and as it opposes an agreeable contrast to the treatment I have experienced amongst other barbarous tribes. In the morning my eyes opened upon my friends of the preceding evening, who, anxious to anticipate my wants, were ready with the eternal chillam and a bowl of buttermilk. My departure that day was unwillingly consented to.

Proceeding through the darra or valley, which now widened, and was plentifully garnished with stunted trees, we met two men of the wildest appearance, running in great haste, with the matches of their firelocks kindled, and without covering to their heads. They said they were in search of their enemies, who had paid them a visit in the night. We passed each other, and soon after beheld a man running after us. He was also armed with a matchlock. We were at first dubious as to his intentions, but on his overtaking us, it proved that he had no other motive than to persuade me to look at a sister, who was lying sick in the village, to which we were now near.

I could not but consent, and found a miserable being in the last stage of declining nature. I was told that she had been three years in so deplorable a state. All I could do was to recommend attention to her regimen, and obedience to her wishes whatever they might be, that the few remaining days of her earthly sojourn, might pass as serenely as possible under the circumstances of her case.

This village called Gharí Lála Beg contained perhaps eighty to one hundred houses, composed of mud and stones, and had a substantial-ly constructed búrj or tower.

Leaving Gharri Lála Beg, we entered a plain of perhaps two miles in circumference, on which I counted twenty-four circular and rather lofty towers. To each of them were attached one or more family residences. Such is the nature of society here, that the inhabitants, oppressed with mutual feuds, frequently carry on hostilities from tower to tower, most of which are within musket shot of each other. These erections also serve them to secure their properties, in case of an inroad upon them, or on the march of troops through their country, as they are sufficient against cavalry, or any arm but artillery. On our road, we were accosted by two youths, who begged us to proceed to a house to the left of our path. We were civilly received by a sturdy young man, who instantly produced a cake of bread, and as usual the chillam. He had heard of my arrival in Khaibar, and was overjoyed that I had come to his house, hoping, it turned out, to profit by my medical skill. The skin of my new

client was plentifully sprinkled with eruptive blotches or pimples. He appeared extremely anxious for my advice, yet showed a delicacy in asking it, as if fearful I might not confer upon him so much favor. On telling him, that I thought something might be done for him, he was almost frantic with joy, and expressed his gratitude with much earnestness and eloquence. His father now arrived, a man of respectable appearance and benign features. He was glad to see me, and asked what I considered to be the nature of his son's complaint, adding, and pointing at the same time to his stores piled around the apartment in carpet bags, that he would give all he possessed were his son's disorder removed. I informed him that I supposed the blotches were occasioned by heat and impurity of blood, and that they would gradually disappear if his son took medicine. The old man seized my hand, and asked me if I was certain of his son's disease. I replied nearly so. He was delighted and told me, that it was believed in the valley that his son had the Bád Farang, or venereal affection, that he was shunned by his neighbours, as unclean, and that his wife, the daughter of one of them, had been taken from him on that account, and now lived with her father. I assured them I had no idea that the disorder was the one suspected, and recommended the use of such remedies as could be easily procured. I thought it possible the eruption might be the itch or something analogous, and my Patán prepared a mixture of roghan and sulphur, with which he undertook to anoint the patient. He did so and rather roughly, for he first tore down the skin with his nails until blood appeared, and then rubbed in the ointment. The young man said that when he ran about, his face became flushed and intolerably red, and every one pointed at him. I directed him not to run about, to keep himself quiet, and take simple medicines, and gave him the hope he would speedily be better.

We were treated with kindness by the old man, whose name was Khair Mahomed, and he would not allow us to depart until we had partaken of a repast of cakes and butter. His wives prepared the food, set it before us, and attended upon us. He wished us to stay the day, but we decided to go on.

We had scarcely regained the high road, when we were hailed by some people sitting beneath one of the towers. On going to them, I was asked to advise for one of them who had a pain in his belly. I directed the employment of the seeds of panírband, a plant growing abundantly in the hills, which are much prized in many countries, for their salutary virtues, and which I had found serviceable in a similar affliction. A man was dispatched to procure some, and

soon returned with a quantity of them, which having identified to be the genuine thing, I departed. We again followed the road, and approached the last house in the plain, enclosed within square walls but without a tower. Observing three or four persons seated at the gateway, we went towards them, deeming it advisable, that it might not be supposed we were clandestinely passing. We saluted with the ordinary *Salám Alíkam*, and received the invariable responsive gratulation of *Alíkam Salám*. We found the house, to be the abode of *Aláhdád Khan*, one of the most influential men in the valley, and known both in and out of it, by the name of *Aláhdád Khán*, *Chirssi*, being a great smoker of chirs, a deleterious composition of hemp resin. He said, he recognized me to be a *Farang*, in the distance, by my step, and asserting that some day his country would be under European authority, begged me to remember him if it should so happen in his time or mine. I had here to personate a physician for the last time, my patient being either the wife or the sister of *Aláhdád Khán*. She was in the last stage of atrophy or decline. I was asked if I thought it probable she would recover. I replied in the negative, as the disorder had grown superior to earthly remedies, and that God only could effect a cure. My host, who was a man of sense agreed with me, and after smoking the *chillam*, I departed.

Not far from this house we were met by a man, who observing the water vessel carried by my companion asked for water. It will be remembered, that in this vessel, were the *pais* or copper money we had with us. The *Patán* told him that his people were near, and that we had far to go, and might not find water, but the savage insisted that he would drink. Other reasons were urged, in vain, and finally the one that the vessel and water belonged to me, who was not a *Mússúlmán*. The man then swore he would drink if it killed him. The *Patán* finding him obstinate, desired him to place his hand under his mouth, into which he poured the water, and so dexterously, that the *pais* were not discovered. The fellow drank, and went satisfied away. I know not however how the fluid, in which thirty or forty *pais* had been soaking for as many hours, may have afterwards agreed with his stomach or digestive powers.

In this small plain is another of those monuments called the *Pádsháh's Topes*. It is in good preservation, and consists of a massive rectangular basement, on which rests a cylindrical body terminating in a dome or cupola. It is erected on the summit of an eminence. I have noted the existence of another in the plain of *Pesháwer*, and I have heard of others in the *Panjáb*. The inhabitants of these part

refer these structures to former Pádsháhs or kings, sometimes to A'h-med Sháh, but I judge their antiquity to be remote. The stones employed in the Khaibar monument are of very large dimensions, and the whole has a grand and striking aspect.

At the western extremity of the plain is a burial ground, and the surface of the soil is a little broken. Making a slight turn in the hills, we entered another plain of much the same extent inhabited by Shín-wáris. The people who had so much need of medicine were A'frédís. The houses here were enclosed in walls of roughly cemented stones, such erections being substituted for the circular towers of their neighbours. We left these houses to the right, and had traversed the extent of the plain, and were about to descend from it into the valley or defile beneath, by a small pass called Landí Khána, when two men, with kárds or long knives in their hands, rushed upon us from the rocks and stopped our progress. Neither of us had before seen these fellows, who pounced upon us as if from the clouds. One of them with a peculiarly evil countenance proceeded to rifle my companion, and the other, milder favored, examined me. The pocket knife of the Patán was soon wrenched from the band of his trowsers, and my cháddar, a long piece of cloth I wore loosely thrown over my shoulder, was taken. In one corner of this was my book, which as well as I could I signified to my despoiler, and told him it was Múlla-kí-Kítáb, a múlla's or a pious book. He untied it, and returned it to me. I thereupon shook his hand, on which he was also willing to have returned my cháddar, but his fiercer colleague would not permit him. This fellow fancying I had been too leniently examined, left the Patán and came to me, and very severely scrutinized me. He found nothing, but clearly did not know what to make of me, my color probably perplexing him. At the onset my Patán had put the water vessel containing the pais on the ground; this did not escape the vigilance of the sharper of the ruffians, who took out a tuft of grass inserted in its mouth as a stopper, very carefully observed it, and than replaced it, but not thinking of taking up the vessel, he missed the copper money. He also made the Patán untie the package containing the cakes of bread, and on finding what they were, he shook his head, implying that he did not rob bread. A comb taken from one of us was also returned. At the close of the affair, a youth joined alike armed with a long knife. About to leave, my companion expressing his anger rather too honestly for the occasion, and comparing our treatment with that we had met with from the A'frédís, knives were brandished, and many threatenings uttered. I desired my Patán to forbear useless reproaches, and the milder of the

the robbers deprecating violence, we departed. I was surprised at this adventure, inasmuch as I had been given to understand that if I could pass unmolested through the A'frédís, there was less to be dreaded from the Shinwáris, who from their commercial pursuits are not so savage. These people breed numbers of mules, and are engaged in the carrying trade.

We had not gained the valley, when we were hailed by other armed men tending flocks of goats on the hills, and had we not been plundered before, we must have resisted, or submitted to it here. As it was they did not come to us, my Patán holding up his packet and hallooing Dáodí or bread, and I showing my book, and shouting out Múlla-kí-Kítáb. In our passage along the valley, we were ordered to halt by fellows on the ridges of the hills, but they were too distant to cause us apprehension, or to induce us to comply, so we allowed them to bawl away unheeded. We at length reached a spot, where a rivulet crossed our track, the water was excellent, and there was a small plot of rice. Here an armed man presented himself, he looked very suspicious, and, undecided whether to interfere with us or not, but let us go in peace. From this place the valley widened, and we passed the ruins of rather an extensive fort, constructed on an eminence or mound in the midst of it. Near it are a series of wells of small depth, in two or three of which only, we found a very little water. The fortress is called Haft Cháhí or the seven wells, and is probably one of the old Chaghatai castles, so numerous erected in these countries for the protection of the roads. It is said to be a dangerous spot in the season of hot winds, which rage here with fatal fury.

From Haft Cháhí, the valley much more open, became sandy, and so continued until we reached Dákka, a small fort and village dependent on Jelálabád. Evening had overtaken us before we cleared the darra, and it was night when we reached Dákka. We still found the people seated in a circle near the masjíd, and although it was too late for a regular repast to be prepared, barley cakes were brought us, which were so disagreeable that I could not eat them.

Throughout the whole extent of the pass or darra of Khaibar, on the crest of the hills, there are the remains of ancient forts and buildings, whose extent, neatness, and solidity of structure, evince that their founders must have been much more enlightened and opulent than the present inhabitants of these countries. The usual reply to any question, as to their origin, is that they were built by infidels or by demons. There are some of them of remarkable extent, and must have been once most important works. I much regretted the impos-



sibility of closely inspecting them. There are also amongst these hills a great number of artificial caves.

I missed my cháddar at night, for its employment was to cover me when I slept, yet on the whole I was well pleased with my passage through Khaibar. My companion had instructed me on all occasions to appear pleased and chæterful, a salutary counsel, and one which stood me in good stead, as did the indication of perfect tranquillity, and most implicit confidence in the good faith of those I fell in with.

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### III. — *Narrative of Journey from Dákka to Kábal.*

[Amongst the papers presented to the Bombay Geographical Society, was a very brief one headed "Notice on the province of Jelálabád and on the Síáposh." This was altogether unworthy of being published. I have therefore substituted for it the following "Narrative of a Journey from Dákka to Kábal" and "Memorandum on the Síáposh. This explanation is necessary, as the latter document is entirely a new composition.

C. MASSON.]

Bombay, 5th June, 1841.

I have noted arrival at Dákka. This village situated about half a mile from the great river of Jelálabád, is also at the western entrance of the pass of Khaibar. The Ab-khâna route, to and from Pesháwer, alike commences and terminates at it. From its position, it is therefore a constant kâfila stage, and is the station of a guard of Momands, who levy transit fees on passengers and merchandize. There are two villages of the name, Kalân and Khúrd, or the great and little. The last is passed on the Ab-khâna route. We had halted at the former.

We left Dákka at day break, and for some time passed over a well cultivated plain until we made the small village of Ghirdí, seated immediately on the river. Hence the road led through low bare hills to Hazár Noh, (the thousand canals) a large straggling village placed on the brink of small eminences, which fringe the plain stretching from them to the river. Hazár Noh is considered equidistant from Dákka and Bassowal, and four cosses from each. The high road skirts the plain to the south, extending beneath the eminences on which the village stands, but we followed a path intermediate between it and the river, and intersecting the plain, which together with marshes, has a great proportion of meadow, and land