

I found that the mother of Agá Lála was dwelling at it. She sent a message of welcome to me, and informed me that she was going into the city that night, where some one dear to her was indisposed, but would return in the morning, and every attention should be paid to me. The good lady went, and I was told in the morning, she was no more. The cholera had added her to the number of its victims.

The city, I learned, was in charge of Mahomed Akbár Khán, second son of Dost Mahomed Khán, who, with his army, was encamped at Ghazní, awaiting the arrival of his hostile brothers from Kándahár. I determined to lose no time in proceeding to the Sirdár's camp, being as curious to witness the proceedings of an Afghán army, as desirous to escape from the baleful influence of contagion and disease.

IV. — *Memorandum on the Siàposh.*

The Honorable Mr. Elphinstone in the appendix to his admirable work on Afghánistán, has included an account, as given by one of his agents, Múlla Najíb, of the singular and secluded people known to their Mahomedan neighbours as the Síáposh Káfirs, or black clad infidels, and who inhabit the mountainous regions north of Lúghmán and Khonar, and between the courses of the Nadjíl and Kámeh rivers.

It is pretty certain that Múlla Najíb, who is still alive, never ventured into the Síáposh country, as I believe he pretended, still his account is the only tolerable one which has appeared of the customs and usages of the mysterious race. At the period of the Kábal mission in 1809, it was easy for him to learn all that he has recorded, by actual communication with the numerous individuals of their nation, who were wont to visit the towns and villages of Peshatt and Khonar, under protection of Saiyad Najím, then the ruler of those districts, who preserved an understanding with his Síáposh neighbours.

No subsequent accounts have contributed much additional information, being merely hearsay statements given and received at random:—and a little reflection will teach that trustworthy information is scarcely to be expected from casual sources. The Mahomedans, bordering on the Síáposh frontiers, are incompetent to speak accurately of the manners, habits, history or traditions, of tribes, with whom they have no friendly intercourse.

They repeat therefore the wonderous tales they have heard from persons as ignorant as themselves, whence their variance with all probability, and with each other. It also happens that the few Síá-

posh, who are seen in the adjacent countries, are such as have been kidnapped, and generally children or shepherd boys, amongst the rudest and less informed of their own countrymen; and consequently unqualified to give testimony on the topics, concerning which European curiosity desires to be satisfied. The six or seven Káfr youths, I have seen, were obviously in this predicament, and in capable of replying clearly to questions on subjects which they did not comprehend.

For these reasons, we can obtain but vague and defective information as to the Siáposh races, from their neighbours, and even this has been in many cases misunderstood by careless enquirers, who have been therefore led to ascribe to the objects of their researches a descent from the Arabs, from the Korésh, or from other equally improbable stocks.

There can be no doubt, but that great interest attaches to a people on all sides environed by hostile neighbours of a different faith, but whose valour assisted by the strength and intricacy of their mountainous abodes, has enabled them, to this day, to maintain independence, and to baffle the attempts of all invaders to subdue them. To us, this interest is considerably augmented by the knowledge that these indomitable tribes have an unusual fairness of complexion, and a regularity of features which would seem to identify them with the European family of nations. We are not permitted to account for these physiological distinctions by referring them to the influences of climate or of situation, as such influences do not similarly affect their neighbours, in like manner, exposed to them. We cannot behold the fair and regular countenance of the Siáposh, his variously coloured eye, and shaded hair, and suppose for a moment that he is of the same family as the Tájik, or the Hazára, the U'zbek, or the Kirghiz. In proportion as we find it impossible to affiliate him with any of his neighbours, our anxiety encreases to ascertain his origin, and to verify the causes which have enshrouded him with mystery, and isolated him, under the shelter of his inaccessible retreats, from the rest of mankind.

When no one knows, all may conjecture, — but with regard to the Siáposh community, the Asiatic and the European would probably apply very different speculations. The latter might fondly fall back upon the remote period when the son of Philip led his victorious arms into the regions of central Asia, and call to mind the various colonies he planted in them to promote the security and permanent retention of his acquisitions. He might remember the Macedonian colonies of Alexandria ad Caspæm, of Arigæum and Bazira; — the garrisons of Nysa, Ora, Massaga, Peuceleotis and Aornos. He might also

recollect, that a number of sovereigns of Greek descent subsequently ruled in these countries, until they were overrun by the Getic hordes of Scythia. He would not fail to discover that the region now inhabited by the Síáposh, is surrounded by the very countries in which the Greek sovereignty prevailed, and that it is encircled by the colonies, posts, and garrisons, known to have been established in them ; — while it is naturally that, into which the expatriated princes and their subjects would have been driven, or into which they would have retired to escape the fury of their fierce and barbarous invaders. He might farther be pleased to find, that the conclusions which such recollections would tend to suggest, were sanctioned by the recorded traditions existing in these quarters, and that they are strengthened by the fact that, many petty princes and chiefs, some of whom, now Mahomedans, but originally Síáposh, claim descent from the Macedonian hero ; and have preserved vague accounts referrible either to their reputed ancestors marriage with the fair Roxana, or to his amour with the captive queen of Massaga.

But while, if we were enabled positively to pronounce the Síáposh tribe to be descendants of the Greek colonists and subjects, we might plausibly account for their location, and rationally enough for their physical and physiological distinctions and peculiarities ; — it is scarcely allowable, on our scanty knowledge of them, to draw so bold and welcome an inference.

From the period of Getic ascendancy to that of the appearance of Mahomedan armies in the countries bordering on the Indus, we have no extant records to apply to, for any information on the history of the times. The discovery of a multitude of coins, which may be classed into many well defined and distinct series, and which were undeniably current in these countries, yield abundant testimony that not only did they undergo a number of political convulsions, and experience considerable alternations in the authority of various dynasties, but that divers religions were introduced, and patronized by the monarchs of the day. Such testimony is moreover confirmed by slight notices acquired through foreign and indirect channels.

In the absence of positive historical evidence, we need not expect to derive any intimation applicable to the Síáposh tribes, but we may reasonably suppose that, if then located in their present seats, their manners, usages, habits, religious belief and opinions, may have been more or less changed and modified by their intercourse with the several races of people, who of various origin and creed, dominated in the countries adjacent to them : — for it is possible that, until the intolerant and persecuting Mahomedan established his sway, they

were in communication with the inhabitants of the plains ; as they would not have had the same reasons for jealous distrust and hostility.

We know little of the government of these countries under the viceroys of the Caliphs, or how long they continued to exercise it, yet it must have been for a considerable period, if we accept as evidence, the large number of their coins found. It is still certain that the Hindú princes, east of the Indus, recovered the regions west of the river, by the expulsion of the early Mahomedan governors, as we find them in possession, when Sabakhtaghin of the Ghaznavide line of princes, found himself strong enough to undertake their conquest, and to carry his arms to the Indus. His son, the celebrated Máhmúd, distinguished himself in these campaigns, and if we credit tradition, Jelálabád or the province of Ningrahár was the scene of severe contest, while the district of Lúghnán, in particular, immediately to the south of the Siáposh region, became the theatre of a most sanguinary and obstinate warfare, between the Mússúlmán armies and the infidels.

From this epoch, we have, I believe, tolerably authentic accounts preserved by Mahomedan historians. Their works, relating to the exploits of Sabakhtaghin and his son, merit examination for the purpose of eliciting who these infidels were, who so bravely defended their country, and whether they had any connection with the Siáposh. It will strike any one that if previously there had been no enmity between the natives of the hills, and the inhabitants of the plains, there was now ample occasion to have given rise to it. May it be, that, from this date, exists that hostility which has endured unabated for so many centuries ?

Sabakhtaghin died in 997, A. D. It was somewhat before that time therefore that these events took place. Yet it is not until more than four centuries afterwards that, we find the Siáposh mentioned by name, and as occupying the country they now hold. The conquests of Amír Taimúr brought these people to his notice, and he made an expedition against them which is rather circumstantially detailed by his historian Sherífadín, and contains a few particulars worthy of note.

In 1399, A. D. that conqueror being at Anderáb, the inhabitants complained to him that, they were grievously oppressed by the idolaters of Ketuer, and by the Siáposh. It would appear that the general name of the northern parts of the region of Káfristán, was Ketuer, or Katáwar. The princes of Chitrál, who in the time of Taimúr were no doubt infidels, and who are among those claiming descent from Alexander, being still styled Sháh Katáwar, or the kings of Katáwar. Chitrál is also called in the countries to the

south, Káshghár-l-khúrd or the little Káshghár. It was asserted by the complainants that, the Síáposh extorted excessive sums of money from them, calling it tribute and Karaj, (a term in use at this day) and in default of payment, killed their men and carried off their women and children. Taimúr selecting nearly a third part of his army (or three out of every ten soldiers) marched against the Síáposh. He reached Perjan, said to be a town of Badakshan, two days from Anderáb, whence he detached a large force to the left or north, while he proceeded himself to Kavuk, where finding a demolished fortress, he ordered it to be rebuilt. Neither of these localities are perhaps exactly known, but it may be inferred that Kavuk was in the valley of Panjshír. From Kavuk, Taimúr made the ascent of the mountains of Ketuer. These were the range dividing the courses of the Panjshír and Nadjíl rivers, and this notice substantiates that the country to the east of Panjshír was called Katáwar, and that the term was a general one applied to that part of Káfristán. The passage was difficult from snow, but when the army had surmounted it, they descended upon a river, (that of Nadjíl) where was a fortress on the western bank. This was abandoned by the Síáposh who crossed the river, and occupied the summit of a high hill.

The infidels are described as "strong men, and as large as the giants of Aad:— they go all naked, their kings are named Oda and Odashooh:— they have a particular language which is neither Persian, nor Turkish, nor Indian, and know no other than this." Taimúr passed the river, and attacked the Síáposh position, which defended with singular obstinacy, was at length carried. The males of the infidels, whose souls are said to have been more black than their garments, were put to the sword, their women and children were carried away.

"Taimúr ordered the history of this action to be engraved upon marble. It happened in the month Ramadan, in the year of the Hijra 800, (June 1398) and he added the particular epocha which this people used, that their posterity might have some knowledge of the famous pillar of the ever victorious Taimúr. This pillar so inscribed gave the greater pleasure to the emperor, in that these people had never been conquered by any prince in the world, not even by Alexander the Great."

This quotation comprises interesting details. First, the erection of the marble pillar. — Secondly, the recorded fact that, the Síáposh had a peculiar epocha; — and thirdly, the allusion to their valor and long independence, and to Alexander.

As regards the pillar, it would be satisfactory to ascertain whether it be still in existence. I may note that the extracts from Sherifadín are taken from the English version of the French translation by Petit La Croix. The French author, it is to be feared, has in some instances taken liberty with his original, and the English author may have treated the French one with as little ceremony. Whether a pillar was erected or not, a work requiring some time and labor, there is little reason to doubt, but that some inscription recorded the triumph of Taimúr. To the north of Nadjíl, a district dependent on Lúghmán, and through which the river, named after it, flows, and which river we suppose to be the one, to which Taimúr had arrived, — is a structure, or some other monument, known by the name of Taimúr Hissár. In the ordinary acceptation of the term Hissár in these countries, it would imply a superior fortress, but as the place is, in the Siáposh country, it is not visited by people from without, and all that can be ascertained is that, there exists some token of the conqueror's visit, bearing his name, and which is admitted, by tradition, to relate to him. It might not be inconsistent with probability to believe that by Taimúr Hissár may be known the remains of the fortress on the river, abandoned by the Siáposh, and dismantled by Taimúr. Near it would be, of course, the inscription which it would be so desirable to recover. The Malek or petty chief of Nadjíl, also claims descent from Amír Taimúr, to whom is ascribed an amour, precisely of the same nature as the one attributed to Alexander.

The fact that the Siáposh had, at that period, a particular era, is also important, because it may be hoped that they have preserved it, and that people who have certain ideas on chronology, may not be altogether without them on other subjects.

The allusion to the long independence of the Siáposh, proves that their establishment in their mountain seats was not considered of recent date, and the notice of Alexander, shews that the emperor and his historian were acquainted with his progress in these countries; and it is certain that, although the romances of the poets have superseded, with the vulgar, the rational history of the Macedonian conqueror, still there are persons more correctly informed.

The large detachment sent by Taimúr to the left, met with signal disgrace and discomfiture. It is pretended that a reinforcement partly retrieved it, but it is clear that the success of the emperor himself was rather equivocal, and without attempting to maintain a position in the country of the warlike infidels, he hastily returned to Anderáb, and rejoined the rest of his army.

From this time, it appears to have been the practice of the Mahomedan princes of Türkistán, occasionally to make inroads upon the Siáposh, not so much with the view of reducing them, as of gaining for themselves a reputation, and of meriting the illustrious title of Ghází, or champion of the faith. History notes many such crusades, as that of Súltán Mahomed Mirza of Bokhara in 1453, A. D. who won the honorable title whatever may have been the fortune of his arms. It has however occurred that, combinations of Mahomedan princes have been made against the independence of the Siáposh, and that, armies from different quarters have entered their country. But these have been invariably repulsed, unable to overcome its natural obstacles, and the gallantry of the mountaineers who defended it.

The celebrated Baber, in his memoirs, repeatedly mentions the Siáposh under the designation of Káfrs, yet as his notices are incidental, they impart no light upon their history, religion or other important points, connected with them; — still they are extremely interesting, both as concerns them on minor details, and the neighbouring countries and people to the south; the activity of the observant prince having led him to make frequent excursions amongst the latter. In the sequel we shall have occasion to refer to many of his intimations. In this place, it may suffice to note that the lapse of a century and a quarter, had brought about no change in the nature of the relations between the Siáposh and the people of Panjhír and Anderáb, whose ancestors had claimed Amír Taimúr's protection. Baber describing Panjhír notes that, "It lies upon the road and is in the immediate vicinity of Káferistán. The thoroughfare and inroads of the robbers of Káferistán are through Panjhír. In consequence of their vicinity to the Káfrs, the inhabitants of this district are happy to pay them a fixed contribution. Since I last invaded Hindustán and subdued it, (in 1527) the Káfrs have descended into Panjhír, and returned, after slaying a great number of people, and committing extensive damages."

Baber had previously noted that in 1514, A. D. the year in which he took Cheghánserai on the Kámehe river, "The Káfrs of Pich came to their assistance" and adds, "so prevalent is the use of wine among them, that every Káfr has a khig, or leathern bottle of wine about his neck. They drink wine instead of water." At an earlier period in 1507, A. D. he had led a plundering expedition against their rice fields in the valley of Birain, which he thus describes, "Some persons who were thoroughly acquainted with every part of the country, informed us, that up the river of the Tumán of Alisheng, the Káfrs sow great qu-

antities of rice, and that probably the troops might there be able to lay in their winters corn. Leaving the dale of Nangenhar, therefore, and pushing speedily forwards, we passed Saigal, and advanced up to the valley of Birain. The troops seized a great quantity of rice. The rice fields were at the bottom of the hills. The inhabitants in general fled and escaped, but a few Káfrs were killed. They had posted some men in a breastwork on a commanding eminence in the valley of Birain. When the Káfrs fled, this party descended rapidly from the hill, and began to annoy us with arrows. We staid one night in the Káfrs rice fields, where we took a great quantity of grain, and then returned to the camp." — Here is the cool naration of a cool exploit, yet Baber no where speaks of the Káfrs with particular ill feeling, or discovers the slightest ambition to win, at their expence, the title of Ghází, of which Amír Taimúr had been so proud. Their jovial habits, so much in keeping with his own, may have somewhat prepossessed him in their favour. In 1520, A.D. he mentions having sent from Bèdrav, (in the present Taghow) one Haidar Alemdar to the Káfrs. This man on his return met him below the pass of Bádjij, (the present Bád Pash) and was "accompanied by some of their chiefs, who brought with them a few skins of wine." The present probably explains the nature of the mission.

It is singular that Marco Polo, who, if the statement transmitted to us in the twenty-fifth chapter of his First Book, as given by Marsden, be implicitly credited, resided for a year in Balashan or Bádakshan, should not have particularly noticed so interesting a people as the Siáposh. His account of the inhabitants of Bascia in the following chapter is scarcely applicable to them, as he instances that they are of a dark complexion, which assuredly the Siáposh are not.

In 1603, A.D. Benedict Goez, a Jesuit crossed the Hindú Kosh by the pass of Perwán, to Anderáb. He heard of the Siáposh tribes, and being told they were not Mahomedans, and that they drank wine and arrayed themselves in black, inferred that they were Christians. The fanciful notions of the zealous missionary are not more ludicrous than those of later Europeans, who have imagined them to be Arabs.

The reports of Goez must have excited considerable interest and curiosity respecting these tribes throughout Europe, but nothing was done to encrease our knowledge of them, until the mission of the Honorable Mr. Elphinstone in 1809, when the report of Múlla Najíb, gave as much information respecting their manners and usages, as a native could be expected to acquire. It also furnished a vocabulary of their language, I doubt not as perfect as could be composed by a native, recollecting that he heard with the ear of a native of

Pesháwer, and that his orthography may be questionable, because peculiar.

Attaching every value to the report of Múlla Najíb, it must be still conceded that, we have no information of the Siáposh race, which does not require confirmation; — neither are we likely to obtain a sufficient acquaintance with this interesting people, until some intelligent and adventurous European shall penetrate into their sequestered vallies, and by the results of his own observation, and of direct intercourse with the best informed of themselves, enable us to form accurate notions of their present and past state of society, of their religion, language and other matters relating to them: until we have such testimony, we must be satisfied with the dubious accounts of natives, but we, as Europeans, can never from them acquire the knowledge we wish to possess of the Siáposh.

The boundaries of the country, they occupy, are well known, and their limits have been considerably contracted since the period when they were first brought to notice; both by the encroachments of Mahomedan tribes, and by the defalcation of their own people at exposed and accessible frontier villages, who to preserve themselves and their possessions, have professed themselves to be converts to Islám. Such people preserve their original customs and manners, in a great degree, and their religion is so equivocal, that they are termed Nimcha, or half Mússúlmáns. They communicate with Mahomedans and Siáposh, and are therefore, in some degree, useful, but their sympathies are supposed to side with the friends, from whom they have unwillingly, and but nominally, seceded.

Three large rivers flow through Kâfristán, from north to south, and augment with their waters the river of Kábal and Jelálabád, which ultimately falls into the Indus. The two westernly ones unite at Tírgarí of Lúghmán, and the joint stream, after a short course of eight or ten miles, falls into the Kábal river at Kergah, in the same district, about a mile to the east of Mandaráwar. The easternly river, known as that of Kámeh, falls into the Kábal river, east of Jelálabád, and at a distance of about twenty-five miles from Kergah. The Kámeh flows through Chitrál, and its source is more remote. On the east, it may be considered the boundary of the Siáposh territory, as the river of Nadjíl and Alíshang forms the boundary on the west. The sources of the Nadjíl river are said to be not very distant, and it is the smallest of the three rivers. The central river, which joins that of Nadjíl, is more considerable, and is said to have a far longer course. It is the only one which has a peculiar name, or one independent of the localities through which

it passes, and is called Kow, pronounced exactly as the English word cow. It must not be mistaken for the Cow-mull of Rennell, which is the Gomal, a river rising near the pass of Péhwár, at the head of Bangash, and with a course from west to east, flowing through the Súlímání range, west of the Indus, into which it falls a few miles south of Déra Ismael Khán. The river of Nadjíl, we have supposed to be that at which Amír 'Taimúr arrived, and this need scarcely be doubted, as Baber in noting that there are three passes over the Hindú Kosh from Panjhír, calls the uppermost, or the one farthest to the east, by the name of Khewák, clearly the Kavuk of Sherífadín. This river is therefore so far known to history. Of the river Kow, nothing is known, beyond the fact of its junction with the former at Tírgarí, having traversed the eastern part of the valley of Lúghmán, named Alingár.

With the river of Kámeh, we are better acquainted, there being a route along its course, by which Káfilas sometimes, but not often, pass from the valley of Jelálabád to Chitrál. The route leads through Bísút, and by Shéghí, Bazárák, Kallatak, Shéwah, and Killa Pádsháh, to Islámpúr, at the head of the valley of Búdíálí, leading to Bar-kot, Daminj, and the Dara Núr. From Islámpúr, where the valley of Khonar also commences, constantly tracing the river bank, the road passes Kandí and Núrgal to Pattan, where the stream is crossed, and then tracing the opposite bank conducts by Khonar, and Kúlígrám to Peshatt; thence to Dúnáhi, lately taken from the Peshatt chief by Mír Alam Khán of Bájor, who keeps a garrison there, as it is at the foot of the pass of Shammatak, by which the great mountain range stretching from Khonar to Chitrál is crossed to Bájor. From Dúnáhi the road leads to Sirkaní, and Hindú Ráj, dependent on the Bájor chief, beyond them are Shígal and Asmár inhabited by Shínwáris; and again beyond them, are Síáposh villages, which passed, the valley of Chitrál is entered. Above Asmár is a large cataract, and the river above Peshatt is, in some places, narrow enough to be bridged;—from Peshatt, jálas or floats of inflated skins pass freely down it. From Pattan, where it is usual to cross the river, as is done for convenience, and a regard to safety, there is still a road along the western bank, which passes many villages, as Niází, Sháhkhúti, Kúlmání, Kotgáhi opposite to Peshatt, Noreng Páyán opposite to Dúnáhi, Noreng Bálla opposite to Sirkanní, and Téshtar opposite to Hindú Ráj. There are also many small rivers or rivulets which fall into the Kámeh from the west in this part of its course. They generally flow down vallies inhabited by Mahomedans or Nimchas, who are immediate

neighbours of the Síáposh, and with whom, as the case may be, they are in hostility, or on amicable terms. Of these the daras or vallies of Mazár, Péch, Shínaghám, and Chághanseráhí, are the most remarkable. The Síáposh, in this route, between the Shínwáris and Chitrál, exact Karaj or a tax from Káfilas, but do not otherwise molest them, although the traders are glad to get through them. Owing to this distrust, or that the road is penible, as it is said to be, and probably that the Shínwáris, a lawless tribe, are more to be dreaded than the Káfrs, this route is not much used, and Káfilas generally prefer crossing the hills at Dúnáhí to Bájor, whence they proceed northerly to Dír, beyond which they have to recross the same range, descending into the valley of Chitrál.

To the north, the limits of the Síáposh are defined by the line of road leading from Chitrál to Faizabád of Bádakshán. This appears to extend from east to west, and crosses a high mountain range, probably the true Hindú Kosh, the third or fourth march from Chitrál. From the valley of Panjshír, they are separated by a lofty range, the principal peak of which is called Koh Kohwand, and on the south, it has been gleaned that they border on the districts of Nijrow, Taghow, Nadjíl, Lúghmán and Shéwah. From Lúghmán they are separated by a high mountain, Koh Karinj, and from Shéwah by that of Núrgal.

From the summit of Koh Karinj, a most extensive and commanding view is obtained of the region inhabited by the Síáposh. The eye wanders over an immense space of low rounded hills, with few prominent ranges or any particular mountains of great elevation.

The impression derived from the coup d'œil coincides with the understood nature of the tract. It being represented as hilly, and traversed by innumerable narrow and rugged vallies and defiles, the roads chiefly leading along the brinks of precipices, and frightful chasms, while it is amply supplied with rivers, rivulets and torrents, but the abundance of water is unfortunately unaccompanied by any extent of cultivable soil. The table spaces which seem to prevail, may be presumed alike unavailable to agriculture, whether from the rocky character of the surface, or from the absence of moisture. It is allowed that no practicable spot is neglected, and that júári mæk-káhí or Indian maize, is the grain usually cultivated, and frequently on terraces, artificially constructed.

The unfitness of the country for the purposes of tillage is so evident, that the principal attention of the inhabitants is directed to their orchards, which yield them amazing quantities of fruits; found also, in the wild state, in the greatest profusion over their hills. It is known that they have vines and walnut trees, and it may be pre-

sumed peach, almond and pistachio trees, which abound in the hills of their neighbours. They do not however procure grain from the adjacent tracts, which is accounted for, by the fact, that their diet consists principally of meat, cheese, curds and fruits, both fresh and dried. The quantity of cheese made and consumed by them is said to be surprising. The natives of the Kohistán of Kábal, and of the dependent vallies of Sir Auleng, Panjshír, Nijrow, &c. subsist much in the same way, and although they can obtain more easily grain, they have a remarkable predilection for cheese and dried fruits. Kábal is supplied with cheese from those parts, and the people of Nijrow are very expert in its manufacture. Dried túts, or mulberries, which are no doubt abundant with the Siáposh, are a favorite food of the Kohistánís, and much used by them in lieu of bread. They devour them by handfuls, washing them down with water, and travel with bags of them, as regularly as the Siáposh do with khigs of wine.

Horned cattle are said to be scarce among the Siáposh, as are sheep, but they have numerous flocks of goats. These besides supplying them with food, furnish them with clothing, and from the circumstance of wearing the prepared skins with the hair outside they have gained the name of Siáposh or black clad.

Little is known of the vegetable productions of the country. The river Kow when swollen by the melting of snows or by rains, brings down to Lúghmán branches of an odoriferous wood, supposed to be sandal, but which is likely the juniper cedar. The Siáposh hills are popularly thought the locale of the meher ghíya or plant of affection, the possession of which, is said to secure the love of any one to its fortunate owner. As so valuable a plant would be in high request, it is ingeniously assigned to an inaccessible region.

It is also universally believed that gold is found in large quantities in this country, and it is fancied that it grows with the grain. The metal is pale coloured, and called Tilla Káhí, or straw coloured gold, of the same quality as, I believe, Chinese gold generally is. The rivers flowing through Káfristán, undoubtedly bring down gold with them. There are constantly numbers of gold washers employed near Peshatt on the river of Chitrál and Kámeh. The metal is also found in the rivers of Lúghmán, and in the river of Kábal, into which they fall, and is sometimes collected near Kergah and Chahár Bagh of Lúghmán, and again near Jelálabád. On the joint river of the Kohistán of Kábal, before it enters the Sáfi hills, there is a spot, preserving the name of Zir Shuí, though now unfrequented, and it is certain that, all or nearly all the rivers flowing from the north have auriferous sands, as quantities of the metal are procured in the Yúsafzai districts. It may

be worthy of note, that the people who search for the gold, are not of the countries, but of the Panjáb ; many are natives of Jélam on the river of that name. It is not improbable that the rivers of Káfristán when increased in volume, may pass over soils enriched with gold and carry down the precious particles with them. At such times, they necessarily flood the narrow vallies through which they pass, and the little patches or plots in them, sown with maize or other grain. On their subsidence, it is possible that grains of the metal may be found adhering to the roots of the plants, which have arrested their progress ; whence the fiction of the growth of gold with the grain of the country.

As regards the division of the Síáposh into tribes, no one knows or pretends to know any thing about them. Nearly as little can be ascertained of their towns and villages. On the Khonar frontier, where they have more intercourse with their neighbours than on any other, the nearest of their villages are Kattár, Gambír and Dèh Uz, said to be near to each other, and on the crest of a table land. There are also in that quarter Arans, Tshúmía, Amísúz, Pandít and Waigal, and all of these are said to be on the ridges of table lands, at the extremities of vallies. The three first villages are said to have one thousand houses each, and maleks or principals with the names of Udúr, Erakán, Kerim Bátúr and Kodála. The two last belonging to Dèh Uz. Arans is said to have three thousand houses, Tshúmía, Amísúz and Pandít, one thousand houses each, while Waigal is supposed to have six thousand houses, and to be the largest town in these parts. It may be reasonably suspected that these calculations are above the truth, still when it is known that there are large and populous villages in a country, it is difficult to reconcile the fact with so complete a state of barbarism as is imputed to the Síáposh, or to avoid the impression that, men assembled in such communities must have a certain kind of order prevalent amongst them, and be subject to some of the influences inseparable to society. It may be remarked that they appear to have condensed themselves at the heads of the vallies which they have lost, and by taking up a position on the edges of their table lands strive to oppose the farther progress of the Mahomedan. Saíyad Najím of Khonar strove to force this barrier but ineffectually. In the time of Baber, they still held the vallies, as he notices that of Pích (now called Péch, or the tortuous.) The natives of Pèch now call themselves Sáfís, and are independent, but avow themselves to be Mahomedans. It is strange that their neighbours of Dara Núr, and the remoter inhabitants of Taghow, who are expressly stated by Baber, to have been, in his time Káfirs, alike call

themselves Sáfis, which may be a Síáposh appellation, and there is a village called Sávi, still belonging to them, at the head of Dara Níá-zí, leading from Lúghmán. Báber unfortunately gives few items of intelligence respecting Káfristán. Describing the boundaries of Kábal, he says, "In the hill country to the north east lies Káfristán, such as Kattor and Gebrek." Kattor may be either the Ketuer of Amír Taimúr, or Kattár, which we have noted as one of the villages west of the valley of Khonar. In the latter case, Gebrek might be Gambír, easily transformed to Gaber-ak, if otherwise, the name is singular. In describing Nijrow, he states that, "Behind it in the hill country, all the inhabitants are Káfirs, and the country is Káfristán." The inhabitants of Nijrow, would seem to have been in the transition state, for Baber, after noting that they boil their wine in making it, and fatten cows in the winter season, goes on to say, that they, "are wine bibbers, never pray, fear neither God nor man, and are heathenish in their usages." A good Mahomedan would now make exactly the same remarks of the Sáfis of Dara Núr, who have continued for above three centuries in the same state, as Baber notes, that during his time only, they discontinued the practise of eating hogs.

In speaking of Alísheng, he informs us that the part of Káfristán nearest to it, "is called Meil," and "that the river of Alisheng comes down from Meil." It has been already seen that he has mentioned a foray from Alísheng upon the valley of Birain. Neither it or Meil can be exactly identified, but Nadjíl is about twelve miles north of Alísheng, and I believe there is no place of the least note between them. Again in speaking of Alingár, the eastern Tumán of Lúghmán he notes, that, "The part of Káfristán that is nearest to Alingar is Gewár, and the river of Alingár comes down from Gewár." I can offer no illustration of Gewár. No boundaries to the Dara Núr are mentioned, but we are told that "Kúner and Núrgil form another Tumán. It is situated in the midst of Káfristán, which forms its boundary." Baber correctly states that "Núrgil lies on the west, and Kúner on the east of the river," and a little farther on that "the lower part of this Tumán is called Milteh-Kendí, below which the country belongs to the Dereh Núr, and Ater." His succeeding description of Chághánseráhi is entirely applicable to the place at this day. "Another Balúk is Cheghanserai, which contains one village only, and is of limited extent, lying in the very jaws or entrance of Káfristán. As its inhabitants, although Mussulmans, are mingled with the Káfirs, they live according to the customs of that race." Three centuries have in this instance produced no difference in the

relative condition of this place; it is now, as formerly, the boundary between the Mússùlmán and Káfr, and its inhabitants under the rule of Bájor, are compelled to live on a good footing with their formidable infidel neighbours. They call themselves Tájiks, and trace their origin to the Kaián heroes. In the year 1519, A. D. Baber took by assault the citadel and town of Bajor, and massacred the ruling chief or Súltán, with the greater part of his family, and about three thousand of his ill-fated subjects. This wanton sacrifice of human life, in conformity with the barbarous spirit of the age, and intended as a severe military example, seemed to require extenuation, and in showing the reasons which actuated him, Baber plainly intimates that the devoted people were what would now be called Nimcha Mahomedans. He says "As the men of Bajour were rebels, to the followers of Islám, and as, beside their rebellion and hostility, they followed the customs and usages of the infidels, while even the name of Islám was extirpated from among them, they were all put to the sword, and their wives and families made prisoners. Perhaps upwards of three thousand were killed." This slaughter occurred on the 7th January, and on the 12th January, Baber records that, "The Káfrs in the neighbourhood of Bajour, had brought down wine in a number of skins. The wines and fruits of Bajor are wholly from that part of Káfris-tán which lies about Bajor." This notice exemplifying the familiar intercourse of the Siáposh with the invader's camp, points out likewise that the country north of Bajor, and east of the great mountain range of Chitrál and Khonar, was then possessed by them; that the Shínwáris had not then intruded themselves, and that the natives of Dír were not then converted. There is nothing more evident from all Baber's details than the fact, that the countries of Kábal, Nangenhár, Lughmán, &c. were in his days infinitely less populous than they are at present, and we find him constrained to remedy the loss he had inflicted upon the population of Bajor, by the location in it of the people of Bísút. On the 30th January he dispatched "Yusef Ali Bekawel to collect them and remove them to Bajour," and he prefaces this announcement by informing us that "the people of Bísút are connected with those of Bajour," in itself, a fact of some consequence.

As regards the language or dialect spoken by the Siáposh, there can be no doubt but that they have one, which as Sherifádín has recorded, is neither exactly Persian, nor Turkí, nor Hindí. It is remarkable that on the south western, and southern borders of the Siáposh country, or in those points where it connects with the actual limits of the Kábal and Jelálabád territories, there are four distinct dia-

lects spoken, independently of the more prevailing ones of Persian, Afghání, T'úrkí and Hindí. The dialects in question are called Peráncheh, Pashai, Lúghmání and Kohistání. The Peráncheh is spoken by a few families of the same name resident in or near Panjshír, the Pashai, by a few families also of the same designation, occupying some half dozen villages in the hills east of Nijrow ; — by the inhabitants of Nijrow generally, and by those of Panjshír. The two latter people are however acquainted with Persian, which the few Pashai families are not. The Lúghmání is spoken by the T'ájik inhabitants of Lúghmán, who also speak Persian. The Kohistání is spoken by the Sáfi inhabitants of Dara Núr, Dara Mazár, Dara Péch, &c., who know no other dialect. It is said, and with every appearance of probability, that these several people are able to hold converse with the Síáposh. On a comparison of their dialects, although they by no means coincide, there is sufficient similarity to authorize the assumption of their affinity, and the conjecture that they are the remains of some old language once general in this country, before the introduction of Persian, Arabic and T'úrkí, and that they have a close resemblance to that spoken by the Síáposh. The Kohistání of these four dialects, most nearly approaches to Hindí, and on listening to people conversing therein, I was able without comprehending the whole of what was said, to understand the general purport of their discourse. There are also other dialects spoken by various people in the valleys of Kábal and Jelálabád, descended from the same original stock, and the natives of Dír and Chitrál have alike dialects unintelligible to their neighbours, but which it may be presumed are understood by the Síáposh. Mahomedans conversant in Arabic have recognized in the dialect of Chitrál many Arabic terms, and they as well as Persian terms, are to be found in the other dialects I have mentioned ; which is no subject of wonder, considering that for a long period the Caliphs dominated in these countries, and that the Arabic language and literature must have been very generally introduced. The language of the Síáposh will be more or less blended with Arabic terms, as their settlement in their present abodes, may have happened before or after the first Mahomedan invaders ; and this test may be advantageously applied both to determine that period, and the antiquity of the several dialects, of which the one most free from foreign terms may reasonably be concluded to be the most ancient, and that most resembling the original language. It will be observed that the names Lúghmání and Kohistání merely refer to the localities in which certain dialects are spoken, and I notice this to suggest, that of these several dialects spoken on the Síáposh borders,

the Pashai may be the more original. We are enabled to trace a people of this name, although now obscure and nearly forgotten, throughout the whole country from Panjshír to Chitrál. In Nijrow are still a few Pashai families, — in Lúghmán, a village at the foot of Koh Karinj, preserves the appellation of Pashai — in Khonar, the actual town of Peshatt retains a nominal memento of the Pashai race, as in Bajor does the village of Pash-grám. The inhabitants of Panjshír and Nijrow, speaking the Pashai dialect, although now calling themselves Tájiks, may not unreasonably be supposed to be of Pashai descent, and the same remark may apply to the Sáfís of Taghow, the Dara Núr, &c. and to the inhabitants of Lúghmán. The testimony of Baber is positive that these several people as well as those of Bajor, &c. were in his time, either Káfirs, as he styles the Siáposh, or Nimcha Mahomedans in state of transition, which some of them continue to be to this day.

The Peránchehs, besides the few families at Panjshír who preserve their ancient dialect, are found over a large tract of country, and it is well known that their conversion to Islám is of comparatively recent date. At the city of Kábal some of the more eminent merchants are Peránchehs — they occupy a considerable village in Kámeh, — they also inhabit Makkad on the Indus, and again are found at Atak, and the towns between it and the Jélam river. In all situations they are a commercial people.

The natives of Nijrow, who have assumed the name of Tájik, have become better Mahomedans than they were in the time of Baber, and their valour and difficult country have been sufficient generally to preserve their independence. They are numerous and well armed, having all musquets. The Pashai families in the vicinity of Nijrow, are a distinct community, but on a good understanding with their neighbours. Their largest village is Hishpí, and they are represented as extremely hospitable. Their females wear rú-bands, or veils of horse hair, covering merely their faces. Belonging to Hishpí are numerous orchards well stocked with walnut, mulberry, pomegranate trees, and vines. Their mountains are covered with the jelgozeh pine, and the balút or holly trees.

The Sáfís, or people so called, are widely spread. It has been noted that they inhabit Taghow. They now speak the Afghán dialect, but I am not certain that they do not also speak Pashai. Baber distinctly notes that the people of Taghow were in his time Káfirs. Under their present name, they became known to Nádir, who cultivated a friendship with them. They then inhabited a larger tract of country, and were in hostility with the Ghiljís, who had previously expelled them

from the lands to the south of T'aghow and between Kábal and Jelálabád. On this account Nádir regarded them favorably. The inhabitants of Dara Núr, Dara Mazár, Dara Péch, and of all the vallies opening upon the Khonar river, who, originally Káfrs, have for security or convenience, professed themselves Mahomedans, are in like manner called Sáfis; these speak a dialect called Kohistání, and no other. Their situation enables them to maintain independence, and prevents much intercourse with them, whence they preserve nearly all their ancient manners and usages. In the hills, south of Bájor, in a district called Súrkh Kamar, we again find Sáfis, who are most likely converted infidels, and south of them at Báhi, are a people called Yeghání, who consider themselves Afgháns, but speak a peculiar dialect which no Afghán can comprehend. At Báhi are many caves and ancient vestiges. It is the first march from Goshter, on the Jelálabád river, on the road to Bájor. I have intimated that Sáfi may be a Siáposh appellation, it however occurs, seeing it borne by people, in all instances, seceders from the Siáposh community, that it may have been conferred upon them in consequence of that secession; for Sáf signifies pure, and in separating themselves from the impure idolaters, they would have merited from Mahomedans the distinguishing name of Sáfi, or the pure people.

It is agreed that the Siáposh place their corpses in deal boxes, and without interring them, expose them on the summits of hills; but it is not explained whether this is a final disposition. There can be no doubt but that the usages of a people with regard to their dead, are important evidences of the faith professed by them; or if not clearly indicating it, that they may shew what faith is not professed. Thus we are not permitted to consider a race that does not burn its dead of Hindú faith, and the rule of semi-exposure adopted by the Siáposh, has contributed probably to their being suspected to be a remnant of the Gebers, or followers of the reformer Zerdeht. I had at one time this opinion, but could not conscientiously adhere to it, for in no account did I ever hear the least mention of fire-worship amongst them. There is the certainty that within the last three centuries there were people called Gebers in the Kábal countries, particularly in Lúghmán and Bájor, also that in the days of Baber there was a dialect called Geberí. We are also told that one of the divisions at Káfristán was named Gebrek. But it does not follow that the people called Gebers, then professed the worship of fire, they may have merely preserved the name given to their ancestors who did so. The dialect called Geberí is at present unknown, nor can it be decisively assigned to any one of the various dialects still spoken,

although possibly due to one of them. Baber enumerates "Arabic, Persian, Tùrkí, Mogholí, Hindí, Afghání, Pashaí, Paráchí, Geberí, Berekí, and Lamghání." This list would still stand good, substituting for Geberí, Kohistání, while it might be augmented by adding the various dialects spoken in the hill countries encircling Bájor. Of ancient dialects, or languages, known by name to the well informed Natives of Central Asia, are, it may be noted, Húnání, (Greek) Híbráíní, (Hebrew) Súríaní, (Syriac) and Páhlaví (Páli). That in former times, fire-worship existed to a certain, if limited, extent in Afghánistán, is evidenced by the pyrethra or altars still crowning the crests of hills at Gard-déz, at Bámíán, at Séghán, and at other places. Near Bámíán, is also a cavern, containing enormous quantities of human bones, apparently a common receptacle of the remains of Geber corpses. At Múrkí Khél, in the valley of Jelálabád, and under the Saféd Koh, human bones are so abundant on the soil, that walls are made of them. There is every reason to suppose it a sepulchral locality of the ancient Gebers, and as if to leave no doubt of it, coins found in some number there, are invariably of a Geber line of princes, and have the distinguishing fire altar on them.

It is farther agreed that amongst the Siáposh, the females are separated from the community, and located in a house set apart for them, during the periods of childbirth and menstruation. In the former event, a seclusion of forty days is considered necessary. It is possible that these observances may be in force with Gebers, but they are also adopted by certain classes of Hindús, and by other people, and are not therefore to be accepted as testimony to a particular faith.

On the primary subject of religion, reports and opinions are too vague and various, to admit even a plausible conjecture to be made. The furious Mahomedan will not concede that they have any; while the less zealous pretend that they reverence trees, and other inanimate objects. The Hindú believes them to cherish, in their retreats, his own anomalous creed, and that they perform púja on altars. From the testimony however of the Siáposh, whose fate has made them captives, it is clear that they have some kind of worship, and that their deity is named Dágon. The topic is one on which they dislike to be questioned, either that they are incompetent to reply, or that amongst Mahomedans they feel delicacy in expressing their sentiments. It may be supposed that a strange medley of rites and superstitions prevails amongst them. While as tenacious of their religion, whatever it may be, as of their liberty, in their mountain fastnesses, the Siáposh captive without hesitation becomes a Mahomedan, and mani-

feels no aversion to abandon his old faith. It need not be remarked how different would be the conduct of the most wretched Hindú on such an occasion.

It is generally supposed that chastity is not an accomplishment of the Siáposh ladies, or that a deviation from it, is lightly regarded and easily compensated. Mahomedans also insist that their high notions of hospitality, and of the attentions due to their guests, induce the Siáposh to resign their wives to those who reside under their roofs. It is moreover affirmed that marriage ceremonies are extremely simple, consisting merely of procuring two twigs or rods of the respective heights of the bride and bridegroom, and tying them together. They are then presented to the couple, who preserve them with much care, as long as they find it agreeable or convenient to live together. If desirous to separate, the twigs are broken, and the marriage is dissolved. Whatever degree of truth may attach to such stories, there is some reason to believe that the Siáposh, in this respect no worse than Mahomedans, do not allow their females an equal rank with themselves in society, and it is commonly credited that the weaker and fairer part of the community undergo many unusual labours, and carry on even all the duties of agriculture. Married women are distinguished from virgins by wearing a ring in the right ear.

The Siáposh are affirmed to build their houses of wood, of several stories in height; it is also said that they are much embellished with carving. These accounts are trustworthy, as we witness that the Sáfis of Kázíabád in the hills west of Lúghmán, and who have been converted, actually reside in such dwellings, and we observe a great taste for carving in the present inhabitants of Lúghmán, who always elaborately decorate the wooden frame work at the entrances of their dwellings and castles. From some of the hills of Lúghmán, the tall houses of the Siáposh may be distinguished on a clear day. While they are skilful as joiners and carvers, they are equally so as smiths, and are regular customers for the raw iron smelted from the sand ores of Bájor. Whenever mention is made of their drinking cups and bowls, it is always added that they are ornamented and embossed in a costly manner.

The testimony of Baber and of Benedict Goez, that they are a social race, and indulge freely in wine, is amply confirmed by the general reports of the present day, and by the fact that their wine is easily procurable. All that I have seen of it was brought in skins, and so sour as to be undrinkable. It is said, however, that they have good wine, and that the better classes, in default of jars, preserve it

in cisterns hewn in the rock. Their neighbours the Nimchas, and Sáfís of Dara Núr also make wine, and large quantities of vinegar, the latter being an article of trafic, and prized. These people also hive bees, and have many peculiar customs, which are probably those of the Siáposh. The natives of Nadjíl fatten capons, which it may be gleaned from Baber, the people of of Nijrow did in his time.

Amongst the singularities imputed by the Mahomedans to the Siáposh, is their objection to sit on the ground, or to take their repasts on it, and the custom they have of using chairs or stools. That such conveniences are in vogue, seems sanctioned by the presence of a low chair in the houses of the poor throughout Lúghmán, and likewise in the houses of the Kogíánis, an old tribe dwelling about Gandamak, and thence to the Saféd Koh, and once more extensively spread over the country. It is possible the custom of sitting in chairs was formerly general in the vallies of Lúghmán and Jelálabád.

They are said to shave the hair of their heads, allowing only a tuft to remain on the crown. In this, they assimilate indeed to Hindús, but there are also many Mahomedan tribes that do the same. Chiefs and sons of chiefs insert their tufts in leathern rings, a token by which it is believed they may be distinguished.

War is said to be determined upon in a general council of the chiefs and elders, when a cow is sacrificed, and the meat distributed to all present. The ratification of a truce or treaty is signalized by kissing the nipples of their antagonists, and as usual in all matters of ceremony, is solemnized by a feast. They are said to eat raw meat, or rather meat slightly cooked, the Mahomedan, whose viands must be overcooked, considers it a proof of barbarism. If true, it would be only a matter of taste in cookery.

The arms of the Siáposh are bows and arrows, the latter thought to be poisoned, with long knives and daggers. With the bow they are very expert. Those, contiguous to the Mahomedans, are gradually providing themselves with fire arms, and procuring coarse cotton cloths and lúnghis, are assimilating also in dress to their neighbours.

The Mahomedans in their wars and forays, are glad to secure the persons of the Siáposh, the latter are said almost invariably to slaughter the Mahomedans. In these days, the Múllas or priests of Lúghmán occasionally preach a crusade against the infidels, and in small bands venture on the limits of their lands. Success does not usually tempt a frequent renewal of such expeditions, while they are not generally countenanced, as they lead to severe retaliation. With the Shínwáris of Shígal on the river of Khonar, and with the Sáfís

of Dara Péch, the Síáposh are on very hostile terms ; with the Tájiks of Chághan Saráhlí, they are on a good understanding, exacting karaj or tribute, but granting in return perfect security. The Tájiks, on their part, if they have notice of an intended foray by the Shínwáris, will inform the Síáposh, whether actuated by fear or inclination. With the natives of Chitrál, it is believed, they are on a friendly footing, and it is related that they respect heralds and carriers of letters, who pass unmolested through them, having their letters in a bag suspended from the top of a pole, with a wreath of flowers attached to it.

If they have no direct trade with their neighbours on the plains, they have an indirect and trifling one through the medium of the neutral Nimchas, by which they supply themselves with salt, coarse lúnglis and cotton fabrics, knives, needles, fire arms, gunpowder, &c. giving in exchange dried fruits, honey, vinegar, wine, &c. From such of their neighbours, who from weakness are compelled to give them karaj, they exact some of the above articles with earthen jars, which are desirable to them. They formerly collected karaj from many of the towns and villages of Lúghmán, and even now have not entirely desisted. They choose the time when the rivers are swollen, and when the inhabitants of one part cannot cross to the assistance of those in another. They then descend in large bodies, and it is usual to comply with their demands, which are not very serious, to get rid of them. They regulate their conduct according to their reception, and if unopposed employ no violence. Chahár Bágh of Lúghmán was constantly exposed to their visits, until it was given to Háji Khán, as a portion of his jághír. He deemed it disgraceful to permit such exactions, and by locating, in the town, a competent garrison, prevented them.

Some few years since, a Geber of Yezd, named Sháhríár, visited Kábal, and went in pilgrimage to Lálander, where agreeably to tradition, Rústam is believed to have been slain. He thence proceeded to Káfristán, under the conviction that the Káfrs were Gebers. Malek Osmán, the chief of Nadjíl, to whom he carried letters from Kábal, expedited him into the country, and enjoined him, for some reason, to return by the same route as that by which he entered. Sháhríár neglected this advice, and coming back was intercepted, and slain by a Mahomedan party from Kázíabád. Previous to this affair, there had been a feud of old standing between the Tájiks of Nadjíl and the Sáfís of Kázíabád, which for some time had been suffered to lie dormant. On this occasion, the Sáfís fancied that if they could contrive to kill this Geber, the guest of Malek Osmán, the odium would fall

upon the Malek's head. They succeeded only in part. The Malek indignantly resented the murder of Sháhriár, the old feud was revived, and continues in full force.

Amongst the many people, I have discoursed with, who pretended to have had intercourse with, or, to have visited the Sáposh; I know but one to whose narrative I felt inclined to give any confidence. This was one Malek Mannír, who had been in the employ of Akram Khán, a son of the Sirdár Mahomed Azem Khán, and was stationed in Khonar, after the seizure, by the Sirdár, of the famous Saiyad Najím. Malek Mannír's account I have heard repeated at intervals of two and three years between, without variation. It does not contain so much exaggeration as we usually hear, and as his statements on other matters connected with that part of the country, I have always found to be correct, it may be worthy of a place here. The Malek, a sensible and observant, was not a literate person, and I give his narration in the unconnected manner in which I received it. — "In company with Malek Sir Ballend of Chághansaráhí, I went to the Káfr town of Kattár. Káfrs call Mahomedans Odál, and say they have driven them to the hills, usurping the plains, and eating their rice. The men wear tufts of long hair on the crowns of their shaven heads. Married women wear a ring in the right ear. Corpses are placed in deal boxes, and exposed on a hill. Poles are placed on the boxes, and smaller sticks are made to cross them, if the deceased have slain Mahomedans. The number of cross sticks denoting that of Mahomedans slain by the parties when living. The houses of the Káfrs are five or six stories in height, and the men are fond of sitting on the tops of them, singing and drinking wine. Adjacent to the town of Kattár was a house set apart for the accommodation of their females during menstruation and childbirth, who, under such circumstances are not allowed to remain at their homes. When I asked if they believed in a future state, they laughed, and asked in turn, in their own language 'tát múj, bút jú', literally 'father dead, rice eat?' In reply to another question, they said their God was at Kábal, and paid them a visit once a year on a horse. Asking if they had seen their God, they said they had not; and then asking how they knew that he came, I was answered that their priest, or guardian of the idol, told them so. I was conducted without any reserve to the bhút Khána, (house of the idol) at the door was seated a very aged man, the guardian. He rose and opened it. I was led through three or four apartments filled with articles of raiment, swords, shields, knives, &c. the consecrated spoils of Mahomedans. From them I passed into the chamber of the idol, an erect image of black or dark

coloured stone, of the ordinary size of a man. The bad odour proceeding from the apartments filled with the raiments was such, that I could not stay long. Incredulous as to a future state, the Káfrs believe that sins are visited by temporal calamities, amongst which they reckon drought, pestilence, hail, &c. On the return of a party from a *dárra* or foray upon Mahomedans, such as have slain an enemy, brandish in triumph over their heads, sticks or poles called *shánt*, with the clothes of their victims on them. The less fortunate hold their poles behind them. The maidens of the villages issue forth to meet them, their bosoms filled with walnuts and dried fruits, which the victors are permitted to retire, while those who have brought no trophy have their faces pelted with ashes and cow dung. A feast is prepared, and cows are slain, the meat is cut into slices, and par-boiled in a large vessel. The lucky individuals receive shares in proportion to the number of Mahomedans they have slain, the others receive single shares over the shoulders of the person presiding at the feast, and who distributes the contents of the vessels. Broth is unused by the Káfrs, who say it produces flatulency. Besides meat, they feed largely on cheese. The Káfrs are very social and hospitable. We had brought as presents to Malek Udúr, salt and lúghis, and when we departed, a collection of dried fruits was made from every house in the town for us ”

As to the possibility of opening a communication, and establishing an intercourse with the Siáposh, it is allowed by respectable Mahomedans, that there would be no difficulty, provided the capture and conversion of them were discontinued. The late Saiyad Najím of Khonar proved that it was easy to make them peaceable neighbours, and to be respected by them, even although he had waged wars against them. Neither is his instance a solitary one. When Sháh Máhmúd, of Kábal released the imprisoned princes of his family, and appointed them to offices and to governments, one of them, to whom Lúghmán was given, became on very good terms with the neighbouring Siáposh. He wished to have erected a fortress at some point within their frontiers, and they acquiesced. The Vazír Fattí Khán grew jealous of the prince and of his intentions, and deprived him of the province. Some eight or nine years since, the late Amír Mahomed Khán, brother to Dost Mahomed Khán, being in Lúghmán, a deputation of the Siáposh waited upon him, under the guidance of Malek Osmán of Nadjil. They represented to the Sirdár that some Siáposh chief, their enemy, had great wealth, and proffered that if the Sirdár would attack him, they would serve as guides and otherwise

assist him. They were treated civilly, but the wary Amír Mahomed Khán distrusted them.

I shall here close a subject, which has drawn me to greater length, than I had contemplated when I commenced to discuss it, and I fear I have added little to our knowledge of the Síáposh. It will be something, if I have succeeded to shew the interest attaching to these singular people, not merely as regards their own history and origin, but in connection with those of their neighbours; and how worthy the attempt would be to dispel the mystery which envelopes so interesting a portion of the human race.

V. — *Narrative of adventures in a Journey from Kándahár to Shikárpúr.*

I proceeded alone from Kándahár with the intention of overtaking a káfila, which had left two days before in progress to Shikárpúr. Although perfectly aware of the danger of travelling in these countries, particularly for a stranger, understanding that the káfila would march slowly, being burthened with women and children, and judging the danger would not be excessive within two or three days from the capital, I started in the expectation of reaching the káfila the second march.

Arriving at the last of the villages in the neighbourhood of the city, I entered it with a view of procuring food, but could prevail on no one to prepare it. At a short distance from the village, I observed a black tent, which I presumed was occupied by a pastoral family, who being more hospitable than the fixed inhabitants, I repaired to it, and found people who could not speak Persian, and I being ignorant of Pashto, we were mutually at a loss. I succeeded in conveying the information that "doudí" or bread was required, and that they should be paid for it. To this they agreed, and while the wife was kneading the dough, the husband's attention was attracted by the sight of a drinking vessel which I had purchased at Kándahár, and he took or rather seized it, returning me the few pais I had previously given him. Nor did he stay here, but absolutely searched me, and my coin which I had bound in the webcord of my perjámas underwent his inspection; — the vicinity of the village alone deterred him from making it booty. Bread was at length served; while eating it, I could comprehend the discourse of the family related to me, and I heard the word káfila pronounced several times, which encouraged me to