

THE
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FOR

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1826.

MR. MOORCROFT.

It is well known that this enterprising individual has been for some years employed, with daring yet prudent spirit, in persevering efforts to visit every interesting part of Central Asia, and to make researches into the geography, science, literature, manners, and commerce of that secluded portion of the world. We have from time to time collected scattered accounts of his progress and discoveries, and have long indulged the expectation of seeing the result of his labours published in England. Our hopes on this head are, we fear, frustrated by the death of this distinguished traveller. Reports of the event have reached Calcutta by several channels, and it seems, indeed, put beyond a doubt by the following copy of a letter which appears in a Bengal paper :—

Extract of a Persian Letter from Aga Hussein to Moolah Shakoore, dated Umrutur, 22d of the Month of Rubhee, A.H. 1241 (corresponding with the 4th November 1825).

I have had an interview with Meera Mul and Assa Nuna, bankers, at Shekarpoor, who mentioned that they had received a letter from Cabul, from the contents of which it appears that Mr. Moorcroft, who had been to Bokhara, had proceeded to a town near the city called Ankho, to purchase horses, and had died there a few days after his arrival. The chief of Ankho seized nine horses, and all the property belonging to the deceased. The other gentleman who was in company with Mr. Moorcroft [Mr. Trebeck] had gone to Balk, and remained there in a sickly state, having sent information of the conduct of the chief of Ankho to the King of Bokhara.

It is superfluous for us to express our deep and pungent regret at the loss of a person, who seems to have been in every respect so well qualified for the career upon which he had entered.

Just previous to the reports to which we have adverted reaching Calcutta, a letter had been received there from Mr. Moorcroft, dated at Bokhara, June 6th, 1825, giving a long detail of his adventures in Toorkistan. The substance of this communication was published in the Government Gazette, and we think it cannot fail (especially since we have reason to believe the writer of the letter is no more) to inspire our readers with interest. At the time of writing, Mr. Moorcroft was awaiting the return of the King from a campaign against his rebellious subjects, when Mr. M. proposed to cross the Amoo.

“ Mr. Moorcroft and his party, having quitted Peshawur, arrived at the city of Bokhara on the 27th of February 1825. He had been previously warned against the attempt to proceed thither, by his Dooranee friends, on account of the distracted state of the intervening country, and the rapacity and cruelty of the hostile tribes inhabiting the line of his intended route. But nothing could deter him from the prosecution of his favourite enterprize, and the ardour with which his friends endeavoured to make him abandon his purpose, seemed only to increase his eagerness to surmount every anticipated difficulty. Strengthened by the concurrence of his friend and fellow-traveller, Mr. Trebeck, and by the general devotedness of the party, he resolved to pursue his object to the utmost of his power.

“ When Sultan Mohammed Khan was informed of this determination, he lent Mr. Moorcroft a small escort (fifteen horsemen) under the command of a confidential person, provided another considerably larger from Dost Mahommud Khan, and sent along with him an able man to make suitable arrangements should any difficulty arise on the frontier. Mr. Moorcroft was also supplied with a letter of introduction to the King of Bokhara, and another to Mahommud Morad Begh, the chief of Koondooz, into whose country he would

have to enter after passing through Bameean and the adjoining country of the Hazarehs. To Morad Begh Mr. Moorcroft wrote himself, stating his objects, and the motives for the journey. Through the latter province the party passed without the slightest molestation. On the frontier of Ak Roobat, or the White Seraee, they were met by 200 horsemen, commanded by Mahommud Alee Begh, the Tajik chief of Sykan, formerly a servant of Meer Kuleeah Alee Khan, but now compelled, through the fallen fortunes of his master's house, to become a tributary to Morad Begh, the chief of the Kuttaghun Ozbuks, whose principal residence is at Koondooz, in ancient times a part of Budukshan, joining the eastern frontier of Khorasan. Morad Begh, after the death of Meer Kuleeah, had subjugated the whole of the countries on the line of the great caravan-road from Ak Roobat, and extending through Sykan up to the eastern foot of the pass of Muzar.

"In the towns from the Hazareh frontier up to Tash Koorghan, the population consists almost wholly of Tajiks, or, as they occasionally call themselves, Chagataes; but that of Tash Koorghan is composed of a mixture of Tajiks, Ozbuks, and Caubuliese. The party were received and treated by the Tajiks with much civility.

"To Mr. Moorcroft's letter Morad Begh returned a civil answer, with the assurance that he should be treated as other merchants. At Tash Koorghan, however, there arose strong suspicion of a very different line of conduct. After some delay, Mr. Moorcroft and Meer Izzut Oolah Khan were summoned to attend the chief at Koondooz, a distance of about eighty miles, across a tract of country almost wholly desert, and without water, except rain collected at three different stages in a circular reservoir covered by a dome of brick-work. These wells, still invaluable to the traveller, though going rapidly to ruin, were constructed by Abdullah Khan, the munificent Khan of Kashkar, who was a contemporary and relation of the Emperor Akber. After two interviews with Mahommud Morad Begh, who was not devoid of civility, Mr. Moorcroft was dismissed, in company with a Hindoo, who was deputed to settle the amount of the duty to be levied on his property.

"After the duties (at a heavy rate) had been adjusted, the money paid, and the party on the point of departing, an embargo was laid upon all persons, on the plea of political precaution, to prevent the communication of pending preparations for a foray, directed by Morad Begh against the Hazarehs.

"At this period Meer Izzut Oolah Khan was attacked with a bilious remittent fever, produced on the march to Koondooz by marsh effluvia, and the disease, Mr. Moorcroft says, 'is probably not exceeded by the yellow fever of America, or the fever of Walcheren, though happily the cause, or combination of causes, is limited to a small locality.' As soon as he was sufficiently convalescent the Meer was permitted to return to Hindoostan.*

"Instead of obtaining leave to proceed on his journey, as expected, on the completion of the expedition, Mr. Moorcroft was summoned to Koondooz, and on his arrival there, learnt that his party had also been sent for, together with the whole of the property under his charge. It was then openly asserted by the chief, that Mr. Moorcroft had visited the country merely as a spy, and that he and his party should be detained till a reference could be made to Caubul and to Bokhara, to ascertain whether his views were commercial or otherwise. The answer from Caubul was favourable, and disappointed the chief, who only appeared to want a pretext for confiscating the property. At length, at the cost of a very large fine, the party were permitted to depart. But this was only a prelude to further treachery and extortion; for whilst

loading

* See p. 471.—Ed.

loading the camels to leave Tash Koorghan for Muzar, his progress was again arrested by an order to convey him with all possible speed to Koondooz.

“ The cause of this fresh interruption was the voluntary evidence of a certain Moolah, who had been in the service of the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone at Peshawur, and who subsequently accompanied that gentleman to Calcutta. In this deposition Mr. Moorcroft was charged with having political designs, which induced Morad Begh to demand two lacs of rupees. The purpose of the Begh was now obvious, and it became a vital question how to counteract his intentions. In this difficulty, Meer Wuzeer Ahmud suggested to Mr. Moorcroft, that if he could undertake at one stretch, in the disguise of an Ozbuk, a journey of about 140 miles, he might reach the residence of Kasim Jan Khaja, in Talikan, and by personal application possibly succeed in interesting that individual in his favour.

“ Kasim Jan Khaja is a syyud, descended through a family in Samurkund, from Jenghis Khan, united by ties of a double marriage with Mahommud Morad Begh, and exercising over him the influence which belongs to the head of the priesthood among the Kuttaghuna.

“ Mr. Moorcroft’s tent was pitched upon the bare plain, and a considerable body of Ozbuk horse had been stationed round it. Towards evening they retreated to the distance of thirty or forty yards in front and rear of the tent, but near enough to see every thing that occurred. Other horsemen patrolled upon the roads, the gates of the town were shut at an earlier hour than usual, and every avenue to escape was guarded, except the road to Caubul. At the close of day, Mr. Moorcroft shewed himself outside of his tent in European attire, which, to that period, he had constantly worn, and, on re-entering, dressed himself quickly in the habit of an Ozbuk, concealing the lower part of his face in the last folds of his turban. Thus disguised, he quitted the tent alone, without detection. Dipping into a ravine, he followed its course along its bed, and by a few windings, reached a burying-ground, where two guides, with horses, provided by Meer Wuzeer Ahmud, were waiting for him.

“ They took the road to Caubul, but soon, by long detours, got into the right direction, and after having travelled for two nights, and until four o’clock in the afternoon of the second day, without giving rest to their horses (which had only taken one feed of barley, carried on the saddles), they reached in safety the house, or rather camp, of Kasim Jan Khaja, situated on the right bank of Furkhar, and in the valley of Talikan: distance probably 150 miles. Talikan, as in the time of Marco Polo, is still distinguished for its mines of salt, and its large produce of wheat.

“ A letter from Meer Wuzeer Ahmud introduced Mr. Moorcroft’s business to the patriarch of the Kuttaghun Ozbuka, and contributed to his kind reception. Finding the door of a large mud-walled court open, he entered, and sent one of the guides to the Peerzada, to whom he was speedily ushered through a crowd of attendants, surrounding a circular house, or tent, made of reeds and mats, with a high dome-roof of the same materials, resembling a gigantic bee-hive. Within this structure he found the Peerzada sitting on a wolf-skin, placed upon a thin cushion of brocade of crimson satin and gold. As instructed by Meer Wuzeer Ahmud, he placed the presented right hand of the Peerzada between his own, and slightly bowed over it; on which he received a welcome, and was desired to sit down. A present, according to the custom of the country, being placed before the Peerzada, Mr. Moorcroft took hold of the skirt of his robe, and stated at length the purpose of his visit. His object, he said, was to introduce the merchandize of the country to which

he belonged into Toorkistan, and to purchase and take back horses into Hindoostan. He gave a brief account of his journey; of his being delayed in Tibet through want of money, occasioned by an unexpected expenditure; of the Chinese authorities of Yarkund having consented to his visiting that city, and afterwards retracting their promise, through the intrigues of the Cashmeer merchants, jealous of competition; of his party reaching Cashmeer, and being detained there in some measure from a desire of procuring shawls as a safe remittance to Bokhara, but principally in consequence of the contest in Afghanistan between Runjeet Sing and the Dooranees; and of his having traversed Afghanistan, and ultimately having arrived in Toorkistan.

“He further observed, that Morad Begh had conveyed to him the fullest assurances of safety, instead of which he had been detained three months, had suffered unreasonable exactions, and was threatened with the loss of property and life unless he would immediately pay an enormous sum as the price of his liberation. The Peerzada pledged his word to prevent, as far as might lie in his power, any further injury to Mr. Moorcroft, or his affairs. Our traveller was then hospitably entertained, and treated with attention and respect. In one of their conversations, the Peerzada informed him that a native of Enderab, named Moollah Mahommud Ameen, had brought against him very grave accusations before the chief, and was surprised to learn that the Moollah was unknown to him. Next day the Moollah made his appearance at Talikan, accompanied by a Hajee, and demanded to be admitted to a durbar of the Peerzada, which happened to be that day very largely attended. His request being granted, he made a long speech, highly injurious to the interests of Mr. Moorcroft, alleging that the Europeans would speedily overturn the religion of Mahomet, and that their conquests were approaching the holy city of Mecca itself. Allusions were made to certain expeditions against Algiers and Mocha, and so strong an impression was produced against our traveller, that, on being informed, though imperfectly, of the proceedings at the durbar, he instantly claimed, as a matter of justice, to be allowed to enter upon his defence at once. On being introduced to the durbar, the Moollah was pointed out to him. Mr. Moorcroft then put to him the following questions:—

“Q. What is my name? *A.* Metcalfe. Q. What is my occupation? *A.* That of a general. Q. You say that I am a general, what number do I command? *A.* You are the head of the whole army. Q. Do you mean that I am the officer known in Hindoostan by the title of Sipur Sala? *A.* Yes. Q. How long have I been absent from Hindoostan? *A.* Seven or eight years.

“Mr. Moorcroft observed to the Peerzada, that his accuser was wholly unacquainted even with his name, and that the idea of a commander-in-chief descending to the humble occupation of an itinerant merchant, and absenting himself from his army for seven or eight years, was too ridiculous to require any comment! The Moollah was not to be put down. He poured forth other charges which, for a time, made a deep impression upon the Peerzada, and seemed to ensure a victory. Mr. Moorcroft, however, repelled them successfully, and the Moollah was so mortified and enraged, that he threatened to assail him with accusations at every stage on his journey to Bokhara, for the sole purpose of frustrating his views. ‘If you will not listen to my first advice,’ said he to the Peerzada, ‘at least make him go back, for if you do not, Toorkistan will inevitably fall into the hands of the English.’

(The remainder next month.)

MR. MOORCROFT.

[Concluded from p. 612.]

“After the durbar, the Peerzada spoke to Mr. Moorcroft with great candour and kindness. He said that he was placed in a situation of much difficulty. If, in virtue of the office which he held, he should command Mahommud Morad Begh to desist from persecution, he must obey; but such an exertion of authority would break up the friendship between them, and render him personally obnoxious to all the heads of the Kuttaghuns. It might suffice, he thought, that on paying the further sum of 2,000 rupees, he would engage for the safety of all his party and property. To this proposition Mr. Moorcroft assented. The result, however, when made known to Morad Begh, produced so much dissatisfaction, that he repaired to Talikan, and on the night of his arrival the Kazee waited on the Peerzada to announce that there had been a large meeting of the heads of the Kuttaghuns, who, deciding that our traveller was a spy, had persuaded the chief to insist upon the Peerzada abandoning his cause. Morad Begh repeated the decision of the heads of the tribes, and his conviction that Mr. Moorcroft was nothing but a spy. Kasim Jan Khaja was extremely embarrassed. He had gone farther than was right in countenancing the payment of another sum of 2,000 rupees, and he conjured the chief to be satisfied with this concession. Morad Begh at last yielded a reluctant consent, but only on the condition that Mr. Moorcroft should remain in his territories until his return from an expedition he was about to undertake, with the option of joining the party at Koondooz, or of remaining at Talikan. Mr. Moorcroft preferred the sanctuary of the Peerzada, and passed a month of agreeable intercourse under his roof. Kasim Jan Khaja would not accept of any presents of value, and would only receive a bedstead, recommended to prevent the repetition of attacks of rheumatism, to which he was subject, from sleeping on the ground; a case of razors, &c., some ottur of roses, and a few scissars and knives to bestow upon his dependents. When Mr. Moorcroft departed, the Peerzada prayed for him in public, embraced him in the Ozbuk fashion, and sent him a roll of black China satin, another of crimson, gold brocade, and some pieces of green silk, for dresses, which he hoped our traveller would wear for his sake.

“Kasim Jan Khaja thought it unnecessary for Mr. Moorcroft to see Morad Begh on his return; but on his reaching Koondooz, the latter expressed a wish to see him. After enquiring respecting his health, he declared that in the late transactions he only wished to make trial of his firmness, having no intention whatever of hurting him. When Mirza Abool Toorab, on Mr. Moorcroft's taking leave, read the *Fateea*, or prayer, for the safety and prosperity of his party, Morad Begh joined in the ceremony, and stroked his beard with great solemnity and apparent fervor.

“Morad Begh, in his conquests, appears to have had no notion of the wealth that is derived from the soil, and the employment of his new subjects in agriculture and commerce; for in the course of last year, it is said, the treasury of Kuttaghun received four lacs and a half of rupees from the sale of slaves, on a contract with his minister, at the rate of fifteen tilas, or about six rupees, per head.* The fertile and salubrious valleys of Budukshan have been robbed

* Here is evidently some mistake: in p. 714, the tilla is said to be equal to six rupees; here the rupee is supposed to be worth two tilas and a half. The price paid for the slaves must be more than six rupees per head, which would make the number of slaves purchased 75,000!—Ed.

robbed of their inhabitants, for the purpose of transplanting them into the marshy lands of Koondooz, and upon the barren tracts of Talikan. The effluvia from the putrefaction of vegetable matter in summer, with the simoom from the desert, generates a fever of a very destructive nature. The African slave in the West-Indies is fed, clothed by his master, and has medical aid when afflicted with disease. The Budukshanee slave in Koondooz experiences nothing of this care; and the reduction of the families to one-fourth in six years exhibits a waste of human life not often known in other parts of the world. 'Vicissitudes in the condition of life in this country,' says Mr. Moorcroft, 'are great and sudden. Those inhabitants of Khorum who were at ease when we passed through that town, since transplanted by force into Talikan, asked for a piece of bread from individuals of our party, to whom they had tendered refreshments at their homes three months before.'

"When Mr. Moorcroft returned to Tash Koorghan from his second journey to Koondooz, he was hailed with exclamations of joy on account of his safety. He did not stop a single day at that place, and set off, with his party, and traversed the dangerous pass of Muzar, without any interruption. Shooja-ooden, the chief of Muzar, despatched his secretary to meet the travellers, and to conduct them to a convenient house, sending them at the same time sheep, rice, fuel, and whatever else he thought might be acceptable. Next morning Mr. Moorcroft, accompanied by Mr. Trebeck, waited upon the chief with a present, which was well received, and he observed, that they had experienced a treatment that would bring a bad name upon every chief of Toorkistan. On account of very bad weather the party remained four days with this hospitable man, who wrote a letter to the King of Bokhara in their favour, and sent a person to accompany them to Bulkh. At Bulkh they were received with civility by Eshan Khojee, who commented severely on the perfidious behaviour of Mahommud Morad Begh.

"After crossing the Jehoon, Amoo, or Oxus, the party were met by a person from Tora Bahadur Khan, the second son of the King of Bokhara, who conducted them to Kurshee, of which town he is the governor.

"At Bokhara, the Serace Oorgunjee was appropriated for the reception of the party, but the baggage was carried direct to the custom-house, where it was placed under lock and seal for two days. In the first interview with the Kosh Beghee, or lord of the household, it was explicitly stated, that Mr. Moorcroft came as a private English merchant, was not charged with any political mission or message to the King of Bokhara, and had no intention of entering into his Majesty's service in any capacity whatsoever. He only wished to obtain permission to sell such merchandize as he had brought, to invest the produce in the purchase of horses, and to establish a foundation upon which English merchants might trade with Bokhara in future.

"The Kosh Beghee explained, that the Shirra, or written law, enjoined Musulman princes to levy upon foreign merchants, not professing the faith of their Prophet, one-tenth of their property, as duty. But the payment of this rate was suspended until the return of the monarch from an expedition against the Kuthay Kepchaks, who had rebelled against him. On the Kosh Beghee seeing two small pieces of cannon among the baggage, he wished to forward one of them to the King, with which his Majesty was so much pleased that he intimated a desire to possess both, and they were accordingly presented, along with the chests of ammunition prepared for them.

"The Kosh Beghee remarked that the number of soldiers which accompanied Mr. Moorcroft, had given rise to exaggerated reports of the military strength

strength of his party, and to other conclusions at variance with commercial views. This observation was met by referring to the dangers of the journey, and reminding him that the caravans, which now arrived at Bokhara, might truly be said to fight their way to that city. Mr. M. added that, first proceeding upon the road of Tibet, which was tolerably safe, he had only a small guard; but that, thrown by adverse circumstances on the countries of the Punjab and Afghanistan, he was compelled to increase the number of armed men; and that unquestionably the safety of the party mainly consisted in the generally received ideas of its strength. These arguments were admitted to be satisfactory.

“On the second day after the return of the King, Mr. Moorcroft and Mr. Trebeck were summoned to the fort, or palace, for the purpose of being introduced to his Majesty. At the door of the great court, the Shagawul and Yesawul Bashee, who ushered them into the presence, directed them to follow with their arms folded across the breast, and on coming to a particular place to make the usual salute. The Ameer, or Commander of the Faithful, was seated in a small room, about fifteen feet higher than the area of the court, dressed in a plain drab-coloured coat of broad-cloth, with a large loosely-folded turban of white muslin, having a narrow gold border, and before him was a large book, the leaves of which he frequently turned over with apparent earnestness.

“Meer Ameer Hyder is about forty-eight years of age, of a complexion somewhat olive, and rather dark than fair. His features partake of the Ozbuk character, in some degree, and the deep lines on his face, with the rapid change of expression from lively to serious, seemed to indicate a mind of great activity, in which benevolence and good temper are said to be strangely mixed up with distrust and hauteur. He inquired after the health of the visitors, their names, ages, country, and occupation; and from the long intervals between the questions, it was suspected that a secretary, concealed behind, was occupied in committing the dialogue to writing. He asked the name of the King of England, and was curious to know why he was called George the Fourth. Report, he said, had swelled their property to a vast amount, but an examination had reduced it to a very moderate value. To this observation it was remarked, that the journey was merely an experimental one, and that when better informed as to the nature of the articles most in demand, commercial intercourse with this country, on a large scale, would be established. His Majesty adverted to the unjustifiable and treacherous treatment which Mr. Moorcroft had received from Mahommud Morad Begh, and trusted that nothing of that kind would happen at Bokhara. Our traveller was then invested with full liberty to sell his property, and to purchase in return whatever articles he might think necessary. The King now explained the written law, prescribing the amount of the tax to be levied on foreign merchants, not Mussulmans, frequenting Bokhara, and according to which he had directed one-tenth of the property to be exacted. The inquiries he had made, he said, had not entirely satisfied his mind as to the amount of duties charged on the frontier of India, from Mussulman merchants; but whenever he learnt that the British Government levied only one-fortieth part upon such property, he would reduce his customs upon merchandize, brought by its Christian subjects, to the same amount.

“Mr. Moorcroft and Mr. Trebeck had been directed to stop at the distance of about twenty paces from the window, near which his Majesty was seated,

but after a time the King beckoned them to approach nearer, and indeed as close as they could conveniently get to the window, which they afterwards understood was to be held as a special mark of condescension, favour, confidence, and honour.

“The King directed Mr. Moorcroft to be seated in a situation from which he could see the mode of despatching business, which was summary and rapid. To the petitions of those whose claims were admitted the King himself affixed a finger seal, which a secretary occasionally smeared with ink from a stick of that substance prepared in China. His Majesty frequently assigned reasons why he rejected the suit of the petitioner, and in every instance the rejected petition was torn up. At the conclusion of every decision the master of ceremonies repeated a short prayer in Toorkee, for the preservation of his Majesty’s impartial administration of justice; at the end of which the whole assembly joined in approving by stroking their beards. There was much of respectful solemnity in the whole proceeding, and the King delivered his commands with great promptitude and rapidity.

“At Bokhara, foreign merchants have never been allowed to ride on horses in the streets, but this rule was dispensed with in regard to Mr. Moorcroft and Mr. Trebeck, and they were the first foreigners who had ever enjoyed that privilege in the city of Bokhara.

“Until lately, Bokhara was the great emporium of central Asia; but within the last few years the commerce of the whole of Oorgunj has been lost to it, in consequence of the prince of that country having thrown off his allegiance, and the chief of Shuhr Subs and the Kuthay Kepchacks have followed the example. The minister acknowledged that formerly he had received, as duty, upwards of twelve lacs of rupees from one caravan, and now the whole of the customs are farmed at little more than one-third of that sum. ‘Nor is the amount first mentioned so very large,’ says Mr. Moorcroft, ‘considering the enormous number of camels in the caravans from Meshed, Russia, and China, which, at Bokhara, were accustomed to sell and exchange the merchandise of almost every part of the world; and that specie and bullion are subject to duty. In a caravan now on the road from Russia the letters of merchants announce twenty-five byjooons, or lacs, of sequins, or gold ducats of Holland.’

“Two large caravans from Russia have been plundered in succession by the Oorgunjees, and five years have now elapsed since a caravan arrived from that country.

“The mountains in the neighbourhood of Bokhara are said to contain inexhaustible mines of fossil-salt, and Budakshan is rich to profusion in all the mineral productions of the earth, and in other products of a most valuable nature. Almost all the varieties of bread-corn are raised with facility; the orchards are fruitful to a degree seldom known in Europe; indigo may be successfully cultivated in certain places; and there exists a substitute for the sugar of the cane, so rich, so fine, so wholesome, and so cheap, as to leave nothing to be wished for in its manufacture, except its reduction to a solid form for the convenience of transport. At the lowest calculation, the towns depending on Bokhara, not including those of its immediate vicinity, yield about 70,000 maunds annually, and there are not, apparently, any bounds to the power of raising it. The ordinary price is about two rupees a maund, and it forms the basis of a sweetmeat greatly in use among the lower classes. It may be a mortifying reflection to men of science, especially in France, that whilst a host of French chemists, at the command of Buonaparte, were long employed

employed in ransacking the vegetable kingdom for a sweet juice, which, converted into sugar, might serve as a substitute for the sugar of the cane, when that substance bore a very high price in France, and could find nothing more productive than the parsnip and beet—the Ozbuks and Afghans, who are completely ignorant of the elements of chemistry, and even of the term, except as applied to the art of transmuting metals, should have stumbled upon a discovery which converted a substance, which France possesses in profusion, into syrup so excellent, as to leave little to regret in being deprived of the sugar cane; and which, by a cheap, easy, and obvious management, may be made at least to rival that article in regard to quality. Mr. Moorcroft does not divulge the name of the substitute.

“The cotton-wool of Toorkistan is beautifully soft and fine, and the nankin-coloured is probably little inferior to that of Khoten, or China Proper. The silk of Toorkistan is plentiful and good. Vast quantities of shawl-wool might be raised, but in several parts of the country it is suffered to rise and fall disregarded by the owner, whilst the fleece of the Arab variety of the broad-tailed species of sheep, capable of being appropriated to the manufacture of woollen cloths, is made only into ropes and felts; and the Kuzak and Oozbuk breeds of this animal yield in their tails a marrow, like fat, little inferior to the butter of the cow.

“The vine breaks into numerous varieties. The red grape of Shitbergan; under a process practised by a Georgian, yields a wine in quality between the best port and the red hermitage. Another, under the management of Jews, gives a liquor that may rival the finest red Burgundy; and the Sheer Takh, and other luscious grapes, would furnish dessert wines as rich as those of Alicant, Malaga, Lachryma, or Tokay.

“By some Russians who had escaped from slavery, Mr. Moorcroft was told that there is the extraordinary number of from four to five thousand Russian Christians in slavery at Oorgunj and its dependencies. It appeared that some of them had been taken by the Yemoots, on the shores of the Caspian, and that several had been in slavery nearly forty years.

“Whilst looking for horses in the city one day, Mr. Moorcroft saw three persons, whose features and complexions resembled those of Europeans. They were stated to be Russians who had escaped from slavery with the Oorgunjees, and had, under great difficulties, made their way to Bokhara, where they now waited the determination of the king respecting their fate. A few days afterwards a person, who said he was a slave-broker, went to our traveller with two of these Russians, whom he declared he had bought, and was about to send into the country; but, on their stating that Mr. Moorcroft might possibly ransom them, he had been *touched with compassion* at their distress, and had accompanied them to witness the result of the appeal. Inquiry was made to know what had become of the third Russian; who, after some frivolous excuse on the part of the broker, was then brought, and Mr. Moorcroft procured a bargain of sale, with an order signed by the minister that no one should hereafter set up any claim upon the Russians now transferred to him. The ordinary price of an able-bodied slave is twenty pieces of gold: Mr. Moorcroft gave thirty-five for each man, and five pieces to the broker. The Russians were then clothed, taken into the serae where he lodged, and treated as servants. They had been traders: two of them had been taken in a skiff on the Caspian by some armed crews of Yemoots, who had put off from Munkishlak on the former dropping anchor near that town. They had been sold to

to the Oorgunjees; had been in captivity nine years, during which time they had been employed in tending sheep and camels, and brood mares, and in other works of agriculture. In the depth of winter they had dared to attempt an escape, without provisions or knowledge of the road; they were reduced to great distress by hunger, one man eating part of the felt of his sheep-skin cloak, and the others supporting themselves by the dry bones of animals, which they pounded with stones. They were now delighted with the prospect of again reaching their native country, by the way of Hindoostan, and were abundantly grateful for the treatment they had experienced. Shortly afterwards, however, at day-break, a message was brought from the minister, conjuring Mr. Moorcroft, if he had any regard for him, to send back the Russians. Mr. Moorcroft refused; but went to the fort to inquire the cause of this request. The Kosh Beghee was closeted with the King; but in an hour a secretary came out with a repetition of the first message; and a solemn pledge being given that they should not be re-sold, Mr. Moorcroft gave up his claim. Whatever may have been the cause of this departure from former usage, the purchase money was returned, and a royal order subsequently issued, prohibiting, in future, Russians, that is Russian Christians, to be sold in Bokhara.

“Meer Ameer Hyder is said to take credit for being more learned in the Mahomedan law than any other individual in his dominions, and occasionally gives lectures in theology. And, as chief magistrate, were he to relax for a few days only from that system of restraint and punishment, which is supported, as it is stated, by the vigilance of about 600 spies, and if the Meer Shub and Mohteseb were to slumber at their posts, there would be wild work in Bokhara. But the activity of the former is unceasing, and the drum of the Meer Shub, beginning immediately after night-fall, interdicts communication by the streets just as effectually as the tolling of the Curfew-bell served to extinguish all fires in a remote period of English history.

“The annual revenue of the King of Bokhara does not exceed three lacs of tilas, or about eighteen lacs of rupees. One-third of the population of the city consists of slaves.

“On the subject of horses, Mr. Moorcroft says, that the country, up to Meshed and Herat inclusive, and the whole space between the Oxus and the Ochus, extending even to the banks of the Caspian, contain the very best breeds. But vast numbers of Toorkmun families, report says from 30,000 to 40,000, who were breeders of horses, and used to bring their young stock to Bokhara, have, since the defection of Oorgunj, and the death of Meer Kuleech Alee Khan, fallen off from their allegiance, and for the last five years have not been able to send a single horse to the usual marts, but have employed their cattle in warfare. Shuhr Subz, which had an excellent breed of horses, Kuthay Kipchak, and Meeankhal, near Samurkund, are similarly circumstanced; and the market of Bokhara has been in consequence nearly as much ruined in this as in all other branches of its commerce.”

We have yet received no confirmation of the report of Mr. Moorcroft's death, as stated in our last number; but it is to be feared that it will prove too well-founded.