

THE
SERVANTS OF INDIA
NARRATIVE
SOCIETY
POONA.
A VISIT

3

TO THE

COURT OF SINDE

AT

HYDERABAD ON THE INDUS ;

ILLUSTRATED WITH PLATES AND A MAP ;

WITH A SKETCH

OF THE

HISTORY OF CUTCH,

AND

AN APPENDIX.

BY

JAMES BURNES, K.H. LL.D. F.R.S., &c.

BOMBAY ARMY.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF DURHAM, G. C. B.

&c. &c. &c.

THIS WORK IS GRATEFULLY

INSCRIBED BY THE

AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

Bhoj Residency, 10th June 1828.

TO THE BRITISH POLITICAL RESIDENT IN CUTCH.

SIR,—I have the honor to submit to you some observations on my late visit to Sinde, together with a few remarks, which may probably be considered of importance, on the actual government of that country. As I have had an opportunity which no European officer ever before enjoyed, of being intimately acquainted with their Highnesses the Ameers, and as I was at some pains, during my residence at their capital, to ascertain their character and habits, I am not without the hope of bringing to the notice of government some new and interesting particulars regarding the singularly constituted court of Hyderabad.

I was indeed allowed little leisure for writing while in Sinde; and as I left that country under an impression that I should immediately return to it, I was less minute in my inquiries than I would have otherwise been; though I had nevertheless collected a small stock of information, which I flattered myself might be of some importance to government. Since my return to Cutch, however, I have had an opportunity, through your kindness, of perusing several documents on the subject of Sinde, and I have been

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surprised to find, that most of the matter relative to its history, resources, &c. which I proposed to communicate as new, is already on record, in a form which I have no expectation of equalling, in the various reports of Messrs. Crow, Seton, and Ellis, and also in Pottinger's Travels in Belochistan.

Under these circumstances, I fear that little more remains for me, than to give a mere personal narrative of my proceedings. But, even in pursuing this apparently easy course, I shall encounter some difficulty. An official form is certainly not the best suited for detailing the impressions made upon my mind, by the scenes through which I passed; nor ought these probably to constitute the subject of the following pages. Still, as government, by their letter of the 23d April last, have left the nature of my report in a great measure to myself, I must rely on the kind consideration of the Honourable the Governor, to pardon the introduction of matter, which, although unnecessary in a public point of view, may not, I hope, be devoid of interest to himself and his colleagues.

I have the honour to be, &c.

JAMES BURNES, M. D.
Residency Surgeon.

PREFACE.

THE following narrative, which consists simply of an official report on a country till of late years little known, was originally printed, at the public expense, by the Government in India, and first issued from the press at Bombay in 1830. During the following year it was republished in England, and attracted a degree of consideration which had never been anticipated, having been not only warmly praised in many of the foreign and British periodicals, but even partly incorporated into some of the great standard works of the day. The second edition has long been exhausted; and, considering the interest that has lately been directed to the regions bordering on the Indus, it is believed that a third will not prove unacceptable to the public.

When the author indulged in the speculations which will be found in this volume, he little foresaw that his visit to Sind would be followed by such a train of stirring events, in reference to the Indus, as the course of ten years has developed. In 1831, the river was successfully navigated, from the Ocean to Lahore, by his Brother;—during 1832-3 and 4, negotiations were in progress, and treaties entered into with the Ameers,

under the direction of Colonel Pottinger, for the free opening of it as a channel of trade; and in the end of 1835, Messrs. Heddle and Wood had the gratification of exhibiting to the astonished natives of Hyderabad the first steam-boat that had ever entered the Indus. Vessels laden with rich wares from Bombay and Moultan, have now hailed each other on its waters; and while the bazars of Western India are already teeming with the shawls of Cashmere, and the products of the Punjab, received by the long forbidden route, not only from private speculators, but in large investments from Maharaja Runjeet Sing himself, the recent engagements concluded at the Court of Lahore, and the intended elevation, as now announced, of a prince selected by the Governor-General, to the throne of Cabul, accompanied, as it must be, by the occupation of the countries bordering on the Indus by British armies, will leave us little to wish for in the extension of our power along the whole course of that river, and render it certain that, ere long, the manufactures of Manchester, Glasgow, and Birmingham, will be as common in Bokhara, Candahar, and Samarkand, as in the chief cities of Europe and Anglo-Asia.

Since the Narrative was first submitted to Government, many important changes have taken place in the Court of Sinde; and death has been busy in the halls of the Ameers. As stated in the original postscript to the work, Meer Kurm Ali Khan died soon after the author's visit; and, in October 1833, Meer Mourad Ali Khan, the

last of the four brothers who founded the Talpoor dynasty in Sinde, also passed from this mortal stage. In 1832, the Vizier, Wullee Mahomed Khan Lagharee, dropped into the grave full of years and honour, having retained the confidence of his masters, and the love of the people, to the last. To give an idea of the wealth of a Beloche chief of the highest rank, it may be added, that the whole annual revenue of the possessions transmitted to his heir did not exceed £3000 sterling. His death left the arena open to his supple adversary, Meer Ismail Shah, who, aided by his sons, still pursues an active career of ambition, sharing, with Mirza Khooshroo Beg, the chief influence at Court. Bahadoor Khan Cokur, "the bravest of the Beloches," has likewise perished; and, amongst others who have been swept away in the stream of fate, we may enumerate Meer Sohrab Khan, Meer Thara Khan, and his son Meer Ali Mourad, Kheir Mahommed Khan Tora, Ghoolam-Ulla Khan Lagharee, and Moonshee Khoosheram, all stubborn supporters of the opinions of the olden time. The removal of so many stern opponents of the British power, together with the death of the old Ameers, has no doubt paved the way to the arrangement lately promulgated by the Governor-General, for the appointment of a permanent British Resident, in the person of Colonel Pottinger, at the Court of Hyderabad.

Consistent to the last in prosecuting the original policy of his house, of avoiding all political communication with Europeans, and striving to

maintain a national independence apart from that mighty power, whose gigantic strides filled his mind with constant apprehension, Meer Mourad Ali Khan only yielded reluctantly to the force of circumstances in entering into the proposals for opening the Indus, but expired before the arrangements for that purpose were completed, leaving it for others of a different spirit and age to cultivate a friendly intercourse with the new allies. At the period of his death, Shah Shuja Ool Moolk was at the head of an army at Shikarpoor, engaged in one of his many attempts to recover the crown of Cabul; and to this circumstance, those who had prognosticated great commotions in Sinde on the demise of the Ameer, attribute the non-fulfilment of their anticipations. The government, in truth, devolved quietly on his two sons, Meers Noor Mahommed Khan and Nusseer Khan, who in co-operation with their relatives, Meers Mahommed Khan and Sobdar Khan, have ever since carried it on, so that we have thus again the country of Sinde ruled, as of yore, by four Ameers.

The military establishments, and also the revenues, with the exception of a portion set apart for the support of the dignity of the Hyderabad durbar or court, are equally divided amongst these princes; nor do the present potentates of Sinde, now no longer Beloche barbarians, appear unworthy of comparison with their predecessors, in the one grand redeeming virtue of the Talpoor family, to which it owes its prolonged power and existence, their attachment to each other,—else

how can we account for Meer Nusseer Khan's moderation under the greatest temptations. This chief, now in the prime of life, is still the universal favorite; liberal, intelligent, and cheerful; he has become extremely fond of the society of Europeans, and has much in his power for good or evil, yet his whole energies and influence are directed to the support of the joint government, and the two brothers have been lately described to me by an officer serving on the frontier as "devotedly attached to each other." From their characters, Meers Mahommed Khan and Sobdar Khan are less prominent; but it is in the power of both, and especially of the latter, who has always had a strong Beluche party in the country, to give loose to ambition, and the fact of their not having done so is corroborative of the opinions which have been expressed in this volume.

No attempt has been made by the author to alter materially the following Narrative, so far as relates to the detail of circumstances connected with his visit to Hyderabad; but some mistakes have been corrected, and he has in the present edition availed himself of various public records and manuscript reports, obtained either from official sources, or through the favour of the Geographical Society of Bombay, but which are not generally within the reach of the English reader, to introduce some recent information on the statistics of Sinde, which will be found in the Appendix, or added in the form of notes. Instead of the maps and memoir, &c. that accompanied the second edition, a new map, comprising

the recent discoveries, has now been appended to the narrative. For the drawings attached to this volume, the author is indebted to his accomplished friends, Captains W. C. Harris, and E. P. DelHoste, of the Bombay Army.

BOMBAY, *April* 1839.

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