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THE
HISTORY
OF
HINDOSTAN;

TRANSLATED
FROM THE PERSIAN.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED
TWO DISSERTATIONS;
THE FIRST CONCERNING THE HINDOOS, AND THE SECOND ON THE ORIGIN
AND NATURE OF DESPOTISM IN INDIA.

BY ALEXANDER DOW, ESQ.

A NEW EDITION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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TO THE KING.

SIR,

THE History of India is laid, with great humility, at the foot of the throne. As no inconsiderable part of Hindostan is now in a manner comprehended within the circle of the British empire, there is a propriety in addressing the history of that country to the Sovereign.

The success of your Majesty's arms has laid open the East to the researches of the curious; and your gracious acceptance of this first, though small, specimen of the literature of Asia, will excite men of greater abilities than the present translator possesses, to study the annals of a people remarkable for their antiquity, civilization, and the singular character of their religion and manners.

In the History of Hindostan, now offered to your Majesty, the people of Great Britain may see a striking contrast of their own condition;

and, whilst they feel for human nature suffering under despotism, exult, at the same time, in that happy liberty which they enjoy under the government of a Prince who delights in augmenting the security and felicity of his subjects.

That your Majesty may long remain a public blessing, and reign for a series of many years over this happy nation, is the sincere prayer of

Your Majesty's

most dutiful,

most humble,

and most devoted,

subject and servant,

ALEXANDER DOW.

PREFACE.

THOUGH, in an advanced stage of society, the human mind is, in some respects, enlarged, a ruinous kind of self-conceit frequently circumscribes its researches after knowledge. In love with our own times, country, and government, we are apt to consider distant ages and nations, as objects unworthy of the page of the historian. These prejudices are not confined to the vulgar and illiterate : some men of genius and reputation for philosophy, have entertained sentiments upon that subject too narrow and confined for the Goths of a much darker age.

Had the translator of the following History thought so meanly of the affairs of the East as these men affect to do, he might have saved a great deal of time and labour. To unlock the springs from which he has derived his knowledge was not so easy a task, that he would have undertaken it without an opinion, that the domestic affairs of India were, in some degree, worthy of being related. He has the satisfaction to find, from the encouragement given to the former edition, notwithstanding the uncouth form in which it appeared, that the History of Hindostan is an object of attention to many in Great Britain; and this has not

been his least inducement to render it now much less unworthy of the public eye. To translate from the Persian was not the primary view of the publisher of Ferishta's Epitome of the History of the Mahomedan Princes of India. To qualify himself for negotiation, was his first object in learning the language. As he proceeded in his studies, other motives for his continuing them arose. Though the manner of eastern composition differs from the correct taste of Europe, there are many things in the writings of Asiatic authors worthy the attention of literary men. Their poetry, it must be confessed, is too turgid and full of conceits to please, and the diction of their historians very diffuse and verbose: yet amidst the redundancy of the latter, we find that scrupulous attention to truth, and that manliness of sentiment, which constitute the very essence of good history.

The works of Mahommed Casim Ferishta of Delhi, who flourished in the reign of Jehangire, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, were put into the translator's hands by his teachers. As he advanced, a new field gradually opened before him. He found, with some degree of astonishment, the authentic history of a great empire, the name of which had scarcely ever travelled to Europe. Being, at the same time, honoured with the particular friendship of the Emperor, at whose court he had for some time lived, he was induced to listen to that Prince's solicitations, for giving to the English some idea of his predecessors on the throne of India.

Though our author has given the title of the History

of Hindostan to his work, yet it is rather that of the Mahommedan empire in India, than a general account of the affairs of the Hindoos. What he says concerning India prior to the first invasion of the Afgan Mussulmen, is very far from being satisfactory. He collected his accounts from Persian authors, being altogether unacquainted with the Shanscrita or learned language of the Brahmins, in which the internal history of India is comprehended. We must not therefore, with Ferishta, consider the Hindoos as destitute of genuine domestic annals, or that those voluminous records they possess are mere legends framed by the Brahmins.

The prejudices of the Mahommedans against the followers of the Brahmin religion, seldom permit them to speak with common candour of the Hindoos. It swayed very much with Ferishta when he affirmed that there is no history among the Hindoos of better authority than the Mahabarit. That work is a poem, and not a history: it was translated into Persian by the brother of the great Abul Fasil, rather as a performance of fancy, than as an authentic account of the ancient dynasties of the Kings of India. But that there are many hundred volumes in prose in the Shanscrita language which treat of the ancient Indians, the translator can from his own knowledge aver; and he has great reason to believe, that the Hindoos carry their authentic history farther back into antiquity than any other nation now existing.

The Mahommedans know nothing of the Hindoo learning; and had they even any knowledge of the

history of the followers of Brimha, their prejudices in favour of the Jewish fictions contained in the Koran, would make them reject accounts which tend to subvert the system of their own faith. The Shanscrita records contain accounts of the affairs of the western Asia, very different from what any tribe of the Arabians have transmitted to posterity: and it is more than probable, that upon examination, the former will appear to bear the marks of more authenticity and of greater antiquity than the latter.

But whether the Hindoos possess any true history of greater antiquity than other nations, must altogether rest upon the authority of the Brahmins, till we shall become better acquainted with their records. Their pretensions however are very high, and they confidently affirm, that the Jewish and Mahomedan religions are heresies, from what is contained in the Bedas. They give a very particular account of the origin of the Jewish religion in records of undoubted antiquity. Raja Tura, say they, who is placed in the first ages of the Cal Jug, had a son who apostatized from the Hindoo faith, for which he was banished by his father to the West. The apostate fixed his residence in a country called Mohgod, and propagated the Jewish religion, which the impostor Mahommed further corrupted. The Cal Jug commenced about 4887 years ago; and whether the whole story may not relate to Terah and his son Abraham, is a point not worthy of being minutely discussed.

Feizi, the brother of Abul Fazil the historian, was the only Mussulman we ever heard of who understood

the Shanscrita. The fraudulent means by which he acquired it, will be shewn in another place. He never translated any of the Indian histories, excepting the Mahabarit, which, at best, is but an historical poem, in which a great deal of fable is blended with a little truth. We, upon the whole, cannot much depend upon the accounts which the followers of Mahommed give of the religion and ancient history of the Hindoos: their prejudice makes them misrepresent the former, and their ignorance in the Shanscrita language, has totally excluded them from any knowledge of the latter.

The history of Ferishta being an abridgment of a variety of authors, who wrote distinct accounts of the different reigns of the Mahommedan Emperors of Hindostan, he, with a view to comprehend in a small compass every material transaction, has crowded the events too much together, without interspersing them with those reflections which give spirit and elegance to works of this kind: this defect seems however to have proceeded more from a studied brevity, than from a narrowness of genius in Ferishta. Upon some occasions, especially in the characters of the Princes, he shews a strength of judgment, and a nervousness and conciseness of expression, which would do no dishonour to the best writers in the West. What is really remarkable in this writer is, that he seems as much divested of religious prejudices, as he is of political flattery or fear. He never passes a good action without conferring upon it its due reward of praise, nor a bad

one, let the villainous actor be never so high, without stigmatizing it with infamy. In short, if he does not arrive at the character of a good writer, he certainly deserves that of a good man.

The brevity which we censure in Ferishta, is by no means a common fault in the writers of Asia. Redundant and verbose in their diction, they often regard more the cadence and turn of their sentences than the propriety and elegance of their thoughts; leading frequently the reader into a labyrinth to which he can find no end. This is too much the manner of the learned Abul Fazil himself. He wrote the history of the reign of Akbar in two large volumes in folio. The intrigues of the court, and all the secret motives to action, are investigated with the utmost exactness; but the diction is too diffuse, and the language too florid, for the correct taste of Europe.

It ought here to be remarked, that all the oriental historians write, in what they call in Europe, poetical prose. This false taste only commenced about five centuries ago, when literature declined in Asia, with the power of the Caliphs. The translator has now in his possession, books written in the Persian before that period, the diction of which is as concise and manly as that which descended from Greece and Rome to the writers of modern Europe. The learned and celebrated Abul Fazil, instead of correcting this vicious taste, encouraged it greatly by his florid manner, in his history of the reign of Akbar. But this great writer has, notwithstanding his circumlocutions, clothed his

expressions with such beauty and pomp of eloquence, that he seems to come down upon the astonished reader, like the Ganges when it overflows its banks.

The small progress which correctness and elegance of sentiment and diction has made in the East, did not proceed from a want of encouragement to literature. We shall find in the course of this History, that no Princes in the world patronised men of letters with more generosity and respect, than the Mahomedan Emperors of Hindostan. A literary genius was not only the certain means to acquire a degree of wealth which must astonish Europeans, but an infallible road for rising to the first offices of the state. The character of the learned was at the same time so sacred, that tyrants, who made a pastime of embruing their hands in the blood of their other subjects, not only abstained from offering violence to men of genius, but stood in fear of their pens. It is a proverb in the East, that the monarchs of Asia were more afraid of the pen of Abul Fazil than they were of the sword of Akbar; and, however amazing it may seem in absolute governments, it is certain that the historians of that division of the world, have wrote with more freedom concerning persons and things than writers have ever dared to do in the West.

The translator however, being sensible of the impropriety of poetical diction in the grave narration of historical facts, has, in many places, clipped the wings of Ferishta's turgid expressions, and reduced his metaphors into common language, without however swerving in the least from the original meaning of the author.

A frequent repetition of proper names is unavoidable in a work of such brevity, and so much crowded with action. This defect is, in a great measure, remedied in this edition; the titles of the great men are, for the most part, omitted; and the pronouns are more frequently used. The translator, in short, has given as few as possible of the faults of his author; but he has been cautious enough, not wittingly at least, to substitute any of his own in their place.

Ferishta, with great propriety, begins the history of the Patan empire in Hindostan from the commencement of the kingdom of Ghizni. The Mahommedan government, which afterwards extended itself to India, rose originally from very small beginnings among the mountains which divide Persia from India. The Afghans or Patans, a warlike race of men, who had been subjects to the Imperial family of Samania, who, having revolted from the Caliphat, reigned for a series of many years in Bochara, rebelled under their governor Abistagi, in the fourth century of the Higera, and laid the foundation of the empire of Ghizni, known commonly in Europe by the name of Gazna. Under a succession of warlike Princes, this empire rose to a surprising magnitude. We find, that in the reign of Musaood I., in the beginning of the fifth century of the Higera, it extended from Ispahan to Bengal, and from the mouths of the Indus to the banks of the Jaxartes, which comprehends near half of the great continent of Asia.

In less than a century after the death of Musaood, the Charizmian empire arose upon the ruins of the

dynasty of the Siljokides, on the confines of Persia and Great Tartary. It extended itself over Tartary and the greatest part of the Persian provinces; the Kings of the Ghiznian Patans were obliged to relinquish their dominions in the north, and to transfer the seat of their empire to Lahore, and afterwards to Delhi.

When the great conqueror of Asia, Zingis Chan, invaded and subverted the Charizmian empire under Mahommed, the Patan dominions were entirely confined within the limits of Hindostan. They possessed, however, power sufficient to repel the generals of that great man, though flushed with victory and the spoils of the East. The whole force of Zingis, it is true, was never bent against Hindostan, otherwise it is probable it would have shared the fate of the western Asia, which was almost depopulated by his sword.

The uncommon strength of the Patan empire in Hindostan at this period, may be easily accounted for: it was the policy of the adopted Turkish slaves of the family of Ghor, who then held the kingdom of Delhi, to keep standing armies of the mountain Afgans, under their respective chiefs, who were invariably created Omrahs of the empire. This hardy race, whatever domestic confusions and revolutions they might occasion in India, were, to use Ferishta's words, a wall of iron against foreign enemies.

Our author has not been careful to mark the extent of the empire in every reign. We can only form a general idea of it, from the transactions which he records. The empire we find sometimes reduced to a

few districts round the capital, and at other times extending itself from the bay of Bengal to Persia, and from the Carnatic to the great mountains of Sewalic. In short, the boundaries of the Patan Imperial dominions varied in proportion to the abilities of those Princes who possessed the throne. When the monarchs discovered great parts, the governors of provinces shrunk back from their independence into their former submission; but when a weak Prince sat on the Musnud, his lieutenants started up into kings around him.

The History now given to the public, presents us with a striking picture of the deplorable condition of a people subjected to arbitrary sway; and of the instability of empire itself, when it is founded neither upon laws, nor upon the opinions and attachments of mankind. Hindostan, in every age, was an ample field for private ambition, and for public tyranny. At one time we see a petty Omrah starting forth, and wading through an ocean of blood to the crown, or involving many thousands of indigent adventurers in the ruin which he draws upon his own head. At another time we meet with Kings, from a lust of power which defeats itself, destroying those subjects over whom they only wished to tyrannize.

In a government like that of India, public spirit is never seen, and loyalty is a thing unknown. The people permit themselves to be transferred from one tyrant to another, without murmuring; and individuals look with unconcern upon the miseries of others, if they are capable to screen themselves from the general misfortune. This, however, is a picture of Hindostan

in bad times, and under the worst Kings. As arbitrary government can inflict the most sudden miseries, so, when in the hand of good men, it can administer the most expeditious relief to the subject. We accordingly find in this History, that the misfortunes of half an age of tyranny are removed in a few years, under the mild administration of a virtuous Prince.

It may not be improper in this place, to lay before the public a short sketch of the constitution of Hindostan. The Emperor is absolute and sole arbiter in every thing, and is controled by no law. The lives and properties of the greatest Omrahs are as much at his disposal, as those of the meanest subjects. The former, however, are often too powerful to be punished, while the latter are not only slaves to the King, but to the provincial governors. These governors, distinguished by the name of Nabobs, have in their respective jurisdictions the power of life and death, and are, in every particular, invested with regal authority.

All the lands in India are considered as the property of the King, except some hereditary districts possessed by Hindoo Princes, for which, when the empire was in its vigour, they paid annual tributes, but retained an absolute jurisdiction in their own hands. The King is the general heir of all his subjects; but when there are children to inherit, they are seldom deprived of their father's estate, without the fortune is enormous, and has been amassed in the oppressive government of a province. In a case of this kind, the children, or nearest relations, are allowed a certain proportion for their subsistence, at the discretion of the Casy or judge.

The fortunes of merchants, tradesmen, and mechanics, are never confiscated by the crown, if any children or relations remain.

The King has the extraordinary power of nominating his successor by will. This part of royal prerogative is not peculiar to the monarchs of Hindostan. We find that our own nation, so remarkable for their political freedom, were, not above two centuries ago, made over like a private estate, and that without asking their consent, by the will of a Prince, who neither deserved to be beloved nor admired. According to the opinion of the Indians, the right of succession is vested in the male heir, but the last will of the King very often supersedes this idea of justice. Notwithstanding this prejudice in favour of the first-born, there is no distinction made between natural children and those born in lawful wedlock; for every child brought forth in the haram, whether by wives or concubines, are equally legitimate.

The Vizier is generally first minister of state. All edicts and public deeds must pass under his seal, after the royal signet is affixed to them. The Vizier's office consists of various departments, in every one of which all commissions, patents for honorary titles, and grants for Jagiers, are carefully registered. He superintends the royal exchequer, and, in that capacity, keeps accounts with the Dewans of the several provinces, in every thing which regards the finances.

A Vakiel Mutuluck is sometimes appointed by the King. The power of this officer is superior to that of the Vizier, for he not only has the superintendency

of civil, but also of all military affairs. This last is never any part of the Vizier's office; the Amir ul Omrah, or Buxshi, being independent captain-general, and paymaster of the forces. It is not easy to explain to Europeans the full extent of authority conferred upon the Vakiel Mutuluck; he seems to be an officer to whom the King for a time delegates his whole power, reserving only for himself the Imperial title, and ensigns of royalty.

The Emperor of Hindostan gives public audience twice a day from the throne. All petitioners, without distinction, are, after having gone through the usual ceremonies, admitted. They are permitted to present their written complaints to the Ariz Beg, or lord of the requests, who attends, in order to present them to the King. The King reads them all himself, and superscribes his pleasure in a few words, with his own hand. Should any thing in the petition appear doubtful, it is immediately referred to the Sidder ul Sudder*, whose office answers to that of our chief justice, to be examined and determined according to law.

The Mahommedans of Hindostan have no written laws, but those contained in the Koran. There are certain usages founded upon reason, and immemorial custom, which are also committed to writing. By the latter some causes are determined, and there are officers appointed by the crown, under the name of Canon-goes, who, for a certain fee, explain the written usages to the people. In every district or pergunna, there is

* Judge of Judges.

a catchery, or court of justice, established. These courts are extremely venal, and even the legal fees for determining a cause concerning property, is one fourth of the value of the matter in dispute. Their decisions were, however, very expeditious; and through fear of the displeasure of the King, who invariably punished with the utmost severity corrupt judges, the Casys were pretty equitable in their determinations.

In the declining state of the Empire, the provinces were submitted to the management of Nabobs, or military governors, who farmed the revenues at a certain sum, and reserved the overplus for their own use. Originally the Nabobs were only commanders of the forces, who receiving their orders from court, through the medium of the Dewan, a civil officer who collected all the revenues for the King, paid the just expences of the government of the province, and remitted the surplus to the exchequer. But the Nabobs having the military power in their hands, despised the authority of the Dewans, and purposely fomented divisions, factions, and insurrections, that they might be indulged with great standing armies, to make more money pass through their own hands, and to favour their schemes of independence.

The imbecility of the Empire daily increasing, the nominal authority vested in the Dewan, was not sufficient to contend with the real force in the hands of the Nabob. Continual altercations subsisted between these officers in the province, and frequent complaints were transmitted to court. Ministers who preferred present ease to the future interest of the Empire, curtailed the

power of the Dewan, and, from being in a manner the commander in chief of the province, he fell into the simple superintendency of the collections. He had, it is true, the power to prevent new imposts, and innovations in the law.

When the King took the field, the provincial Nabobs, with their troops, were obliged to repair to the Imperial standard. Each Nabob erected his own standard, and formed a separate camp; subject only to his own orders. The Nabobs every morning attended at the royal pavilion, and received their orders from the Amir ul Omrah*, who received his immediately from the King himself. If we except the army of the great Sultan Baber, there are few traces of real discipline to be met with among those myriads, with whom the Emperors of Hindostan often took the field. The forces of Baber were formed on a very regular and masterly plan. The dispositions of his battles were excellent; and the surprising victories he obtained with a handful of men, over immense armies, are sufficient to convince us, that military discipline has not always been unknown in Asia.

It may, to an European, furnish matter of some surprise, how Eastern armies of two or three hundred thousand horse, and triple that number of soldiers and followers, could be supplied with provisions and forage upon their march, and in their standing camps. To account for this it is to be observed, that every provincial Nabob, upon his taking the field, appoints an officer

* The captain-general.

called the Cutwal, whose business it is to superintend the Bazars or markets, which may belong to his camp. Every commander of a body of troops obtains, at the same time, permission to hoist a flag for a Bazar, and to appoint a Cutwal of his own, under the direction of the Cutwal-general. These Cutwals grant licences to chapmen, sutlers, and corn-dealers, who gladly pay a certain tax for permission to dispose of their various commodities, under the protection of the different flags.

The sutlers and dealers in corn, being provided with a sufficient number of camels and oxen, collect provisions from all the countries in their rear, and supply the wants of the camp. The pay of soldiers in Hindostan is very great, being from 60 to 200 roupees per month, to every single trooper. This enables them to give such high prices for provisions, that the countries round run all hazards for such a great prospect of gain. The fertility of Hindostan itself, is the great source of this ready and plentiful supply to the armies; for that country produces, in most parts, two and sometimes three crops of corn every year.

A
DISSERTATION
CONCERNING THE
CUSTOMS, MANNERS, LANGUAGE, RELIGION,
AND PHILOSOPHY,
OF
THE HINDOOS.

THE learned of modern Europe have, with reason, complained that the writers of Greece and Rome did not extend their inquiries to the religion and philosophy of the Druids. Posterity will perhaps, in the same manner, find fault with the British for not investigating the learning and religious opinions which prevail in those countries in Asia, into which either their commerce or their arms have penetrated. The Brahmins of the East possessed in ancient times some reputation for knowledge, but we have never had the curiosity to examine whether there was any truth in the reports of antiquity upon that head.

Excuses, however, may be formed for our ignorance concerning the learning, religion, and philosophy, of the Brahmins. Literary inquiries are by no means a capital object to many of our adventurers in Asia. The few who have a turn for researches of that kind are discouraged by the very great difficulty in acquiring that language, in which the learning of the Hindoos is contained; or by that impenetrable veil of mystery with which the Brahmins industriously cover their religious tenets and philosophy.

These circumstances combining together, have opened an ample field for fiction. Modern travellers have accordingly indulged their talent for fable, upon the mysterious religion of Hindostan. Whether the ridiculous tales they relate proceed from that common partiality which Europeans, as well as less enlightened nations, entertain for the religion and philosophy of their own country, or from a judgment formed upon some external ceremonies of the Hindoos, is very difficult to determine; but they have prejudiced Europe against the Brahmins: and by a very unfair account, have thrown disgrace upon a system of religion and philosophy which they did by no means investigate.

The author of this Dissertation must own, that he for a long time suffered himself to be carried down in this stream of popular prejudice. The present decline of literature in Hindostan served to confirm him in his belief of those legends which he read in Europe concerning the Brahmins. But conversing by accident one day with a noble and learned Brahmin, he was not a little surprised to find him perfectly acquainted with those opinions which, both in ancient and modern Europe, have employed the pens of the most celebrated moralists. This circumstance did not fail to excite his curiosity, and in the course of many subsequent conversations he found that philosophy and the sciences had, in former ages, made a very considerable progress in the East.

Having then no intention to quit India for some time, he resolved to acquire some knowledge in the Shanscrita language; the grand repository of the religion, philosophy, and history of the Hindoos. With this view, he prevailed upon his noble friend the Brahmin to procure for him a Pundit, from the university of Benaris, well versed in the Shanscrita, and master of all the knowledge of that learned body. But before he had made any considerable progress in his studies, an unexpected change of affairs in Bengal broke off all his

literary schemes. He found that the time he had to remain in India would be too short to acquire the Shanscrita. He determined, therefore, through the medium of the Persian language, and through the vulgar tongue of the Hindoos, to inform himself as much as possible concerning the mythology and philosophy of the Brahmins. He, for this purpose, procured some of the principal SHASTERS, and his Pundit explained to him as many passages of those curious books as served to give him a general idea of the doctrine which they contain.

It is but justice to the Brahmins to confess that the author of this Dissertation is very sensible of his own inability to illustrate, with that fulness and perspicuity which it deserves, that symbolical religion which they are at so much pains to conceal from foreigners. He, however, can aver, that he has not misrepresented one single circumstance or tenet, though many may have escaped his observation.

The books which contain the religion and philosophy of the Hindoos are distinguished by the name of Bedas. They are four in number, and, like the sacred writings of other nations, are said to have been penned by the Divinity. Bada in the Shanscrita literally signifies SCIENCE: for these books not only treat of religious and moral duties, but of every branch of philosophical knowledge.

The Bedas are, by the Brahmins, held so sacred that they permit no other sect to read them; and such is the influence of superstition and priestcraft over the minds of the other CASTS in India, that they would deem it an unpardonable sin to satisfy their curiosity in that respect, were it even within the compass of their power. The Brahmins themselves are bound by such strong ties of religion to confine those writings to their own tribe, that were any of them known to read them to others he would be immediately excommunicated. This punishment is worse than even death itself among the Hindoos. The offender is not only thrown

down from the noblest order to the most polluted CAST, but his posterity are rendered for ever incapable of being received into his former dignity.

All these things considered, we are not to wonder that the doctrine of the Bedas is so little known in Europe. Even the literary part of the Mahommedans of Asia reckon it an abstruse and mysterious subject, and candidly confess that it is covered with a veil of darkness which they could never penetrate. Some have indeed supposed, that the learned Feizi, brother to the celebrated Abul Fazil, chief secretary to the Emperor Akbar, had read the Bedas, and discovered the religious tenets contained in them to that renowned Prince. As the story of Feizi made a good deal of noise in the East, it may not be improper to give the particulars of it in this place.

Mahommed Akbar, being a Prince of elevated and extensive ideas, was totally divested of those prejudices for his own religion which men of inferior parts not only imbibe with their mother's milk, but retain throughout their lives. Though bred in all the strictness of the Mahommedan faith, his great soul, in his riper years, broke those chains of superstition and credulity with which his tutors had, in his early youth, fettered his mind. With a design to choose his own religion, or rather from curiosity, he made it his business to inquire minutely into all the systems of divinity which prevailed among mankind. The story of his being instructed in the Christian tenets, by a missionary from Portugal, is too well known in Europe to require a place in this Dissertation. As almost all religions admit of proselytes, Akbar had good success in his inquiries till he came to his own subjects the Hindoos. Contrary to the practice of all other religious sects, they admit of no converts, but they allow that every one may go to heaven his own way, though they perhaps suppose that theirs is the most expeditious method to obtain that important end. They choose rather to make a mystery

of their religion, than impose it upon the world, like the Mahomedans, with the sword, or by means of the stake, after the manner of some pious Christians.

Not all the authority of Akbar could prevail with the Brahmins to reveal the principles of their faith. He was therefore obliged to have recourse to artifice to obtain the information which he so much desired. The Emperor, for this purpose, concerted a plan with his chief secretary, Abul Fazil, to impose Feizi, then a boy, upon the Brahmins, in the character of a poor orphan of their tribe. Feizi being instructed in his part, was privately sent to Benaris, the principal seat of learning among the Hindoos. In that city the fraud was practised on a learned Brahmin, who received the boy into his house, and educated him as his own son.

When Feizi, after ten years' study, had acquired the Sanscrita language, and all the knowledge of which the learned of Benaris were possessed, proper measures were taken by the Emperor to secure his safe return. Feizi, it seems, during his residence with his patron the Brahmin, was smitten with the beauty of his only daughter; and indeed the ladies of the Brahmin race are the handsomest in Hindostan. The old Brahmin saw the mutual passion of the young pair with pleasure, and as he loved Feizi for his uncommon abilities, he offered him his daughter in marriage. Feizi, perplexed between love and gratitude, at length discovered himself to the good old man, fell down at his feet, and grasping his knees, solicited with tears forgiveness for the great crime he had committed against his indulgent benefactor. The Brahmin, struck dumb with astonishment, uttered not one word of reproach. He drew a dagger, which he always carried on his girdle, and prepared to plunge it in his own breast. Feizi seized his hand, and conjured him, that if yet any atonement could be made for the injury he had done him, he himself would swear to deny him nothing. The

Brahmin, bursting into tears, told him, that if Feizi should grant him two requests, he would forgive him, and consent to live. Feizi, without any hesitation, consented, and the Brahmin's requests were, that he should never translate the Bedas, nor repeat the creed of the Hindoos.

How far Feizi was bound by his oath not to reveal the doctrine of the Bedas to Akbar, is uncertain; but that neither he, nor any other person, ever translated those books is a truth beyond any dispute. It is, however, well known that the Emperor afterwards greatly favoured the Hindoo faith, and gave much offence to zealous Mahomedans, by practising some Indian customs which they thought savoured of idolatry. But the dispassionate part of mankind have always allowed that Akbar was equally divested of all the follies of both the religious superstitions which prevailed among his subjects.

To return from this digression. The Brahmins maintain, that the Bedas are the divine laws, which Brimha, at the creation of the world, delivered for the instruction of mankind. But they affirm, that their meaning was perverted in the first period of time by the ignorance and wickedness of some Princes, whom they represent as evil spirits who then haunted the earth. They call those evil genii Dewtas, and tell many strange allegorical legends concerning them; such as, that the Bedas being lost, were afterwards recovered by Bishen, in the form of a fish, who brought them up from the bottom of the ocean, into which they were thrown by a Deo, or Demon.

The first credible account we have of the Bedas is, that about the commencement of the period called the Cal Jug, of which era the present year 1769 is the 4887th, they were written, or rather collected, by a great philosopher and reputed prophet, called Beäss Muni, or Beäss the inspired. This learned man is otherwise called Krishen Basdeo, and is said to have lived in the reign of Judishter, in the city of

Histanapore, upon the river Jumna, near the present city of Delhi.

The Brahmins do not give to Beäss Muni the merit of being the author of the Bedas. They however acknowledge that he reduced them into the present form, dividing them into four distinct books, after having collected the detached pieces of which they are composed, from every part of India. It is, upon the whole, probable, that they are not the work of one man, on account of their immense bulk.

The Mahommedans of Asia, as well as some of the learned of Europe, have mistaken Brimha, an allegorical person, for some philosopher of repute in India, whom they distinguish by the disfigured names of Bruma, Burma, and Bramba, whom they suppose to have been the writer of the religious books of the Hindoos. Ferishta, in the history now given to the public, affirms, that Brimha was of the race of Bang, and flourished in the reign of Krishen, first monarch of Hindostan. But the Brahmins deny that any such person ever existed, which we have reason to believe is the truth; as Brimha in the Shanscrita language allegorically signifies WISDOM, one of the principal attributes of the supreme divinity.

The four Bedas contain one hundred thousand ashlogues, or stanzas in verse, each of which consists of four lines. The first Beda is called RUC BEDA, which signifies the science of divination, concerning which it principally treats. It also contains astrology, astronomy, natural philosophy, and a very particular account of the creation of matter, and the formation of the world.

The second Beda is distinguished by the name of SHEHAM. That word signifies piety or devotion, and this book accordingly treats of all religious and moral duties. It also contains many hymns in praise of the Supreme Being, as well as verses in honour of subaltern intelligences.

The third is the JUDGER BEDA, which, as the word implies,

comprehends the whole science of religious rites and ceremonies; such as fasts, festivals, purifications, penances, pilgrimages, sacrifices, prayers, and offerings. They give the appellation of OBATAR BAH to the fourth Beda. OBATAR signifies in the Shanscrita, the being, or the essence, and BAH good; so that the Obatar Bah is literally, the knowledge of the good being; and accordingly this book comprehends the whole science of theology and metaphysical philosophy.

The language of the Obatar Bah Beda is now become obsolete; so that very few Brahmins pretend to read it with propriety. Whether this proceeds from its great antiquity, or from its being wrote in an uncommon dialect of the Shanscrita, is hard to determine. We are inclined to believe that the first is the truth; for we can by no means agree with a late ingenious writer*, who affirms, that the Obatar Bah was written in a period posterior to the rest of the Bedas.

It has been already observed, that the Bedas are written in the Shanscrita tongue. Whether the Shanscrita was, in any period of antiquity, the vulgar language of Hindostan, or was invented by the Brahmins, to be a mysterious repository for their religion and philosophy, is difficult to determine. All other languages, if it is true, were casually invented by mankind to express their ideas and wants; but the astonishing formation of the Shanscrita seems to be beyond the power of chance. In regularity of etymology and grammatical order, it far exceeds the Arabic. It, in short, bears evident marks that it has been fixed upon rational principles, by a body of learned men, who studied regularity, harmony, and a wonderful simplicity and energy of expression.

* Mr. Holwell: the author of the Dissertation finds himself obliged to differ almost in every particular concerning the religion of the Hindoos, from that gentleman.

Though the Shanscrita is amazingly copious, a very small grammar and vocabulary serve to illustrate the principles of the whole. In a treatise of a few pages, the roots and primitives are all comprehended, and so uniform are the rules for derivations and inflections, that the etymon of every word is, with facility, at once investigated. The pronunciation is the greatest difficulty that attends the acquirement of the language to perfection. This is so quick and forcible that a person, even before the years of puberty, must labour a long time before he can pronounce it with propriety; but when once the pronunciation is attained to perfection, it strikes the ear with amazing boldness and harmony. The alphabet of the Shanscrita consists of fifty letters, but one half of these convey combined sounds, so that its characters, in fact, do not exceed ours in number. Some small idea of the Shanscrita may be conveyed by the annexed plate, which contains the alphabet, and the measure of the four Bedas.

Before we shall proceed to the religion and philology of the Brahmins, it may not be improper to premise something concerning the most characteristical manners and customs of the Hindoos in general. The Hindoos are so called from Indoo or Hindoo, which, in the Shanscrita language, signifies the Moon; for from that luminary, and the sun, they deduce their fabulous origin. The author of the Dissertation has in his possession a long list of a dynasty of Kings, called Hindoo-buns, or Chunder-buns, both of which words mean, the Children of the Moon. He also has a catalogue of the Surage-buns, or the Children of the Sun, from whom many of the Princes of India pretend to derive their blood. Hindostan, the domestic appellation of India, is a composition of Hindoo, and Stan, a region; and the great river Indus takes its name from the people, and not the people from the river, as has been erroneously supposed in Europe.

The Hindoos have, from all antiquity, been divided into four great tribes, each of which comprehends a variety of inferior

casts. These tribes do not intermarry, eat, drink, or in any manner associate with one another, except when they worship at the temple of Jagga-nat^b in Orissa, where it is held a crime to make any distinction. The first, and most noble tribe are the Brahmins, who alone can officiate in the priesthood, like the Levites among the Jews. They are not, however, excluded from government, trade, or agriculture, though they are strictly prohibited from all menial offices by their laws. They derive their name from Brimha, who, they allegorically say, produced the Brahmins from his head, when he created the world.

The second in order is the Sitrri tribe, who are sometimes distinguished by the name of Kittri or Koytri. They, according to their original institution, ought to be all military men; but they frequently follow other professions. Brimha is said to have produced the Kittri from his heart, as an emblem of that courage which warriors should possess.

The name of Beise or Bise is given to the third tribe. They are for the most part merchants, bankers, and bunias, or shop-keepers. These are figuratively said to have sprung from the belly of Brimha; the word Beish signifying a provider or nourisher. The fourth tribe is that of Sudder. They ought to be menial servants, and they are incapable to raise themselves to any superior rank. They are said to have proceeded from the feet of Brimha, in allusion to their low degree. But indeed it is contrary to the inviolable laws of the Hindoos that any person should rise from an inferior cast into a higher tribe. If any therefore should be excom-

^b Jagga-nat signifies Lord of the creation. This is one of the names of Bishen and the Obatar, or Being, who is said to preside over the present period. He is represented under the figure of a fat man, sitting cross-legged, with his arms hanging down by his side as if they had no strength. This last circumstance alludes to the imbecility of this age. His temple is in the greatest repute of any now in India.

municated from any of the four tribes, he and his posterity are for ever shut out from the society of every body in the nation, excepting that of the Harri cast, who are held in utter detestation by all the other tribes, and are employed only in the meanest and vilest offices. This circumstance renders excommunication so dreadful, that any Hindoo will suffer the torture and even death itself rather than deviate from one article of his faith. This severity prevented all intermixture of blood between the tribes, so that, in their appearance, they seem rather four different nations than members of the same community.

It is, as we have already observed, a principle peculiar to the Hindoo religion, not to admit of proselytes. Instead of being solicitous about gaining converts, they always make a mystery of their faith. Heaven, say they, is like a palace with many doors, and every one may enter in his own way. But this charitable disposition never encouraged other sects to settle among them, as they must have been excluded entirely from all the benefits of society.

When a child is born, some of the Brahmins are called. They pretend, from the horoscope of his nativity, to foretel his future fortune, by means of some astrological tables, of which they are possessed. When this ceremony is over, they burn incense, and make an offering according to the circumstances of the parent; and without ever consulting them, tie the zinar^c round the infant's neck, and impose a name upon him, according to their own fancy.

Between the age of seven and ten, the children are, by their parents, given away in marriage. The young pair are brought together, in order to contract an intimacy with one another. But when they approach to the years of puberty, they carefully separate them, till the female produces signs

^c A string which all the Hindoos wear, by way of charm or amulet.

of womanhood. She then is taken from her parents to cohabit with her husband: nor is she ever after permitted to visit them. It is not lawful among the Hindoos to marry nearer than the eighth degree of kindred. Polygamy is permitted, but seldom practised; for they very rationally think, that one wife is sufficient for one man.

The extraordinary custom of the women burning themselves with their deceased husbands, has, for the most part, fallen into desuetude in India; nor was it ever reckoned a religious duty, as has been very erroneously supposed in the West. This species of barbarity, like many others, rose originally from the foolish enthusiasm of feeble minds. In a text in the *Bedas*, conjugal affection and fidelity are thus figuratively inculcated: "The woman, in short, who dies with her husband, shall enjoy life eternal with him in heaven." From this source the Brahmins themselves deduce this ridiculous custom, which is a more rational solution of it than the story which prevails in Europe; that it was a political institution, made by one of the Emperors, to prevent wives from poisoning their husbands, a practice, in those days, common in Hindostan.

People of rank and those of the higher casts, burn their dead and throw some incense into the pile. Some throw the bodies of their friends into the Ganges, while others expose them on the highways, as a prey to vultures and wild beasts. There is one cast in the kingdom of Bengal, who barbarously expose their sick by the river's side to die there. They even sometimes choke them with mud, when they think them past hopes of recovery. They defend this inhuman custom by saying, that life is not an adequate recompence for the tortures of a lingering disease.

The Hindoos have a code of laws in the *NEA SHASTER*. Treason, incest, sacrilege, murder, adultery with the wife of a Brahmin, and theft, are capital crimes. Though the Brahmins were the authors of those laws, we do not find that they

have exempted themselves from the punishment of death, when guilty of those crimes. This is one of those numerous fables which modern travellers imported from the East. It is however certain, that the influence of the Brahmins is so great, and their characters as priests so sacred, that they escape in cases where no mercy would be shown to the other tribes.

Petty offences are punished by temporary excommunications, pilgrimages, penances, and fines, according to the degree of the crime and the wealth of the guilty person. But as the Hindoos are now for the most part subject to the Mahommedans, they are governed by the laws of the Koran, or by the arbitrary will of the Prince.

The Senasseys are a sect of mendicant philosophers, commonly known by the name of Fakiers, which literally signifies poor people. These idle and pretended devotees assemble sometimes in armies of ten or twelve thousand, and, under a pretext of making pilgrimages to certain temples, lay whole countries under contribution. These saints wear no clothes, are generally very robust, and convert the wives of the less holy part of mankind to their own use, upon their religious progresses. They admit any man of parts into their number, and they take great care to instruct their disciples in every branch of knowledge, to make the order the more revered among the vulgar.

When this naked army of robust saints direct their march to any temple, the men of the provinces through which their road lies, very often fly before them, notwithstanding the sanctified character of the Fakiers. But the women are in general more resolute, and not only remain in their dwellings, but apply frequently for the prayers of those holy persons, which are found to be most effectual in cases of sterility. When a Fakier is at prayers with the lady of the house, he leaves either his slipper or his staff at the door, which, if seen by the husband, effectually prevents him

from disturbing their devotion. But should he be so unfortunate as not to mind those signals, a sound drubbing is the inevitable consequence of his intrusion.

Though the Fakiers enforce, with their arms, that reverence which the people of Hindostan have naturally for their order, they inflict voluntary penances of very extraordinary kinds upon themselves to gain more respect. These fellows sometimes hold up one arm in a fixed position till it becomes stiff, and remains in that situation during the rest of their lives. Some clench their fists very hard, and keep them so till their nails grow into their palms and appear through the back of their hands. Others turn their faces over one shoulder, and keep them in that situation, till they fix for ever their heads looking backward. Many turn their eyes to the point of their nose till they have lost the power of looking in any other direction. These last pretend sometimes to see what they call the sacred fire, which vision, no doubt, proceeds from some disorder arising from the distortion of the optic nerves.

It often appears to Europeans in India, a matter of some ridicule to converse with those distorted and naked philosophers; though their knowledge and external appearance exhibit a very striking contrast. Some are really what they seem, enthusiasts; but others put on the character of sanctity as a cloke for their pleasures. But what actually makes them a public nuisance, and the aversion of poor husbands, is, that the women think they derive some holiness to themselves from an intimacy with a Fakier.

Many other foolish customs, besides those we have mentioned, are peculiar to those religious mendicants. But enthusiastic penances are not confined to them alone. Some of the vulgar, on the fast of Opposs, suspend themselves on iron hooks, by the flesh of the shoulder-blade, to the end of a beam. This beam turns round with great velocity, upon a pivot, on the head of a high pole. The enthusiast not

only seems insensible of pain, but very often blows a trumpet as he is whirled round above, and, at certain intervals, sings a song to the gaping multitude below; who very much admire his fortitude and devotion. This ridiculous custom is kept up to commemorate the sufferings of a martyr, who was in that manner tortured for his faith.

To dwell longer upon the characteristical customs and manners of the Hindoos, would extend this Dissertation too far. Some more particulars concerning that nation will naturally arise from an investigation of their religion and philosophy. This last was the capital design of this introductory discourse; and we hope to be able to throw a new, if not a complete light, on a subject hitherto little understood in the West. Some writers have very lately given to the world an unintelligible system of the Brahmin religion; and they affirm, that they derived their information from the Hindoos themselves. This may be the case, but they certainly conversed upon that subject only with the inferior tribes, or with the unlearned part of the Brahmins: and it would be as ridiculous to hope for a true state of the religion and philosophy of the Hindoos from the illiterate casts, as it would be in a Mahommedan in London, to rely upon the accounts of a parish beadle, concerning the most abstruse points of the Christian faith; or, to form his opinion of the principles of the Newtonian philosophy, from a conversation with an English carman.

The Hindoos are divided into two great religious sects: the followers of the doctrine of the **BEDANG**; and those who adhere to the principles of the **NEADIRZIN**. As the first are esteemed the most orthodox, as well as the most ancient, we shall begin to explain their opinions, by extracts literally translated from the original **SHASTER**^d, which goes by the name of **Bedang**.

^d Shaster literally signifies Knowledge; but it is commonly understood to mean a book which treats of divinity and the sciences.

Bedang, the title of the Shaster, or commentary upon the Bedas, concerning which we are about to treat, is a word compounded of Beda, *science*, and Ang, *body*. The name of this Shaster, therefore, may be literally translated, the Body of science. This book has, in Europe, been erroneously called Vedam: and it is an exposition of the doctrine of the Bedas, by that great philosopher and prophet Beass Muni, who, according to the Brahmins, flourished about four thousand years ago. The Bedang is said to have been revised some ages after Beass Muni, by one Sirrider Swami, since which it has been reckoned sacred, and not subject to any further alterations. Almost all the Hindoos of the Decan, and those of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, are of the sect of the Bedang.

This commentary opens with a dialogue between Brimha^d,

There are many Shasters among the Hindoos; so that those writers who affirmed that there was but one Shaster in India, which, like the Bible of the Christians, or Koran of the followers of Mahommed, contained the first principles of the Brahmin faith, have deceived themselves and the public.

^d Brimha is the genitive case of BAHM, which is a primitive signifying God. He is called Brimha or Wisdom, the first attribute of the supreme divinity. The divine wisdom, under the name of Brimha, is figuratively represented with one head, having four faces, looking to the four quarters, alluding to his seeing all things. Upon the head of this figure is a crown, an emblem of power and dominion. He has four hands, implying, the omnipotence of divine wisdom. In the first hand he holds the four Bedas, as a symbol of knowledge; in the second, a sceptre, as a token of authority; and in the third, a ring, or complete circle, as an emblem of eternity. Brimha holds nothing in the fourth hand, which implies, that the wisdom of God is always ready to lend his aid to his creatures. He is represented riding upon a goose, the emblem of simplicity among the Hindoos. The latter circumstance is intended to imply the simplicity of the operations of nature, which is but another name for the wisdom of the divinity. These explications of the insignia of Brimha, were given by the Brahmin, and are, by no means, conjectures of the author of this Dissertation.

the Wisdom of the Divinity; and Narud^e or Reason, who is represented as the son of Brimha. Narud desires to be instructed by his father, and for that purpose, puts the following questions to him.

NARUD.

O father! thou first of God^f, thou art said to have created the world; and thy son Narud, astonished at what he beholds, is desirous to be instructed how all these things were made.

BRIMHA.

Be not deceived, my son! do not imagine that I was the creator of the world, independent of the divine mover^g, who is the great original essence^h, and creator of all things. Look, therefore, only upon me as the instrument of the great WILLⁱ, and a part of his being, whom he called forth to execute his eternal designs.

NARUD.

What shall we think of God?

BRIMHA.

Being immaterial^k, he is above all conception; being invisible^l, he can have no form^m; but, from what we behold

^e Narud literally signifies REASON, emphatically called the son of THE WISDOM OF GOD. He is said to be the first-born of the MUNIS, of whom hereafter.

^f Brimh. ^g The supreme divinity. ^h Pirrim-Purrus; from PIR first, and PURUS essence or being.

ⁱ ISH-BUH; from ISH will, and BUH great: commonly pronounced ISHUR. This is one of the thousand names of God, which have so much perplexed the writers of Europe. In the answer of Brimha, mention is made of the first three great deities of the Hindoos; which three, however, they by no means worship as distinct beings from God, but only as his principal attributes.

^k Nid-akar.

^l Oderissa.

^m Sirba-Sirrup.

in his works, we may conclude that he is eternal^a, omnipotent^b, knowing all things^c, and present every where^d.

NARUD.

How did God create the world?

BRIMHA.

Affection^e dwelt with God, from all eternity. It was of three different kinds, the creative^f, the preserving^g, and the destructive^h. This first is represented by Brimha, the second by Bishenⁱ, and the third by Shibah^j. You, O Narud! are taught to worship all the three, in various shapes and likenesses, as the creator^k, the preserver^l, and the destroyer^m. The affection of God then produced powerⁿ, and power at a proper conjunction of time^o and fate^p, embraced goodness^q, and produced matter^r. The three qualities then

^a Nitteh. ^b Ge-itch. ^c Subbittera-dirsi. ^d Surba-Birsi. These are the very terms used in the Bedang, in the definition of God, which we have literally translated in the text. Whether we, who profess Christianity, and call the Hindoos by the detestable names of Pagans and Idolaters, have higher ideas of the supreme divinity, we shall leave to the unprejudiced reader to determine.

^e Maiah, which signifies either affection or passion. ^f Redjogoon, the creative quality. ^g Sittogoon, the preserving quality. ^h Timmugoon, the destructive quality. ⁱ The preserver; Providence is personified under the name of Bishen. ^j Shibah, the foe of good. ^k Naat. ^l Bishen. ^m Shibah. The Hindoos worship the destructive attribute of the divinity, under the name of Shibah; but they do not mean evil by Shibah, for they affirm, that there is no such thing but what proceeds from the free agency of man. ⁿ Jotna. ^o Kaal. ^p Addaristo. ^q Pirkirti, from *Pir* good, and *Kirti* action. God's attribute of goodness, is worshipped as a Goddess, under the name of Pirkirti, and many other appellations, which comprehend all the virtues. It has been ridiculously supposed in Europe, that PURRUS and PIRKIRTI were the first man and woman, according to the system of the Hindoos; whereas by PURRUS is meant God, or emphatically, *the Being*; and by Pirkirti, his attribute of goodness. ^r Mohat. In other places of the Bedang, matter is distinguished by the name of Maha-tit, *the great substance*.

acting upon matter, produced the universe in the following manner. From the opposite actions of the creative and destructive quality in matter, self-motion^b first arose. Self-motion was of three kinds; the first inclining to plasticity¹, the second to discord², and the third to rest¹. The discordant actions then produced the Akash^m, which invisible element possessed the quality of conveying sound; it produced airⁿ, a palpable element, fire^o, a visible element, water^p, a fluid element, and earth^q, a solid element.

The Akash dispersed itself abroad. Air formed the atmosphere; fire, collecting itself, blazed forth in the host of heaven^r; water rose to the surface of the earth, being forced from beneath by the gravity of the latter element. Thus broke forth the world from the veil of darkness, in which it was formerly comprehended by God. Order rose over the universe. The seven heavens were formed^s, and the seven worlds were fixed in their places; there to remain till the great dissolution^t, when all things shall be absorbed^u into God.

God seeing the earth in full bloom, and that vegetation^x was strong from its seeds, called forth for the first time, In-

^b Ahankar. The word literally signifies self-action. ¹ Rajas. ² Tamas. ¹ Satig. ^m A kind of celestial element. The Bedang in another place, speaks of akash as a pure impalpable element, through which the planets move. This element, says the philosopher, makes no resistance, and therefore the planets continue their motion, from the first impulse which they received from the hand of Brimha or God; nor will they stop, says he, till he shall seize them in the midst of their course. ⁿ Baiow. ^o Tege. ^p Joal. ^q Prit-tavi. ^r Dewta; of which Surage the Sun is first in rank. ^s The names of the seven heavens are, Bu, Buba, Surg, Moha, Junnoh, Tapu, and Sutteh. The seven worlds are, Ottal, Bittal, Suttal, Joal, Tallattal, Rissatal, and Pattal. The author of the Dissertation, by a negligence which he very much regrets, forgot to get the proper explanation of those names, or the uses^{to} to which the seven heavens were converted. ^t Mah-pirly. ^u Mucht. ^x Birgalotta.

tellec⁷, which he endued with various organs and shapes, to form a diversity of animals⁸ upon the earth. He endued the animals with five senses, feeling, seeing, smelling, tasting, and hearing^a. But to man he gave reflection^b to raise him above the beasts of the field.

The creatures were created male and female^c, that they might propagate their species upon the earth. Every herb bore the seed of its kind, that the world might be clothed with verdure, and all animals provided with food.

NARUD.

What dost thou mean, O Father! by intellect?

BRIMHA.

It is a portion of the GREAT SOUL^d of the universe, breathed into all creatures, to animate them for a certain time.

NARUD.

What becomes of it after death?

BRIMHA.

It animates other bodies, or returns like a drop into that unbounded ocean from which it first arose.

NARUD.

Shall not then the souls of good men receive rewards? Nor the souls of the bad meet with punishment?

BRIMHA.

The souls of men are distinguished from those of other animals; for the first are endued with reason^e, and with a

⁷ Mun. ⁸ Jount. ^a The five senses are, Suppursina, Chowkowna, Nasiga, Rissina, Kurnowa. ^b Manua. ^c Nir and Madda signify male and female. ^d Purmattima literally signifies the great soul. ^e Upiman.

consciousness of right and wrong. If therefore man shall adhere to the first, as far as his powers shall extend, his soul, when disengaged from the body by death, shall be absorbed into the divine essence, and shall never more re-animate flesh. But the souls of those who do evil^f, are not, at death, disengaged from all the elements. They are immediately clothed with a body of fire, air, and akash, in which they are, for a time, punished in hell^g. After the season of their grief is over, they re-animate other bodies; but till they shall arrive at a state of purity, they can never be absorbed into God.

NARUD.

What is the nature of that absorbed state^h which the souls of good men enjoy after death?

BRIMHA.

It is a participation of the divine nature, where all passions are utterly unknown, and where consciousness is lost in blissⁱ.

NARUD.

Thou sayst, O Father! that unless the soul is perfectly pure, it cannot be absorbed into God: Now, as the actions

^f Mund. ^g Nirick. The Hindoos reckon above eighty kinds of hells, each proportioned to the degree of the wickedness of the persons punished there. The Brahmims have no idea that all the sins that a man can commit in the short period of his life, can deserve eternal punishment; nor that all the virtues he can exercise, can merit perpetual felicity in heaven. ^h Machtii. ⁱ It is somewhat surprising, that a state of unconsciousness, which in fact is the same with annihilation, should be esteemed by the Hindoos as the supreme good; yet so it is, that they always represent the *absorbed state*, as a situation of perfect insensibility, equally destitute of pleasure and of pain. But Brimha seems here to imply, that it is a kind of delirium of joy.

of the generality of men are partly good, and partly bad, whither are their spirits sent immediately after death?

BRIMHA.

They must atone for their crimes in hell, where they must remain for a space proportioned to the degree of their iniquities; then they rise to heaven to be rewarded for a time for their virtues; and from thence they will return to the world, to reanimate other bodies.

NARUD.

What is time^k?

BRIMHA.

Time existed from all eternity with God; but it can only

^k Kaal. It may not be improper, in this place, to say something concerning the Hindoo method of computing time. Their least subdivision of time is, the Nemish or twinkling of an eye. Three Nemish's make one Kaan, fifty Kaan one Ligger, ten Liggers one Dind, two Dinds one Gurry, equal to forty-five of our minutes; four Gurries one Pâr, eight Pârs one Dien or day, fifteen Diens one Packa, two Packas one Mâsh, four Mâshes one Ribbi, three Ribbis one Aion or year, which only consists of 360 days, but when the odd days, hours, and minutes, wanting of a solar year, amount to one revolution of the moon, an additional month is made to that year to adjust the calendar. A year of 360 days, they reckon but one day to the Dewtas or host of heaven; and they say, that twelve thousand of those planetary years, make one revolution of the four Jugs or periods, into which they divide the ages of the world. The Sittoh Jug, or age of truth, contained, according to them, four thousand planetary years. The Treta Jug, or age of three, contained three thousand years. The Duapar Jug, or age of two, contained two thousand; and the Kallé Jug, or age of pollution, consists of only one thousand. To these they add two other periods, between the dissolution and renovation of the world, which they call Sunde, and Sundass, each of a thousand planetary years; so that from one Maperly, or great dissolution of all things, to another, there are 3,720,000 of our years.

be estimated since motion was produced, and only be conceived by the mind, from its own constant progress.

NARUD.

How long shall this world remain ?

BRIMHA.

Until the four jugs shall have revolved. Then Rudder¹ with the ten spirits of dissolution shall roll a comet under the moon, that shall involve all things in fire, and reduce the world into ashes. God shall then exist alone, for matter will be totally annihilated^m.

Here ends the first chapter of the Bedang. The second treats of Providence and free will ; a subject so abstruse, that it was impossible to understand it, without a complete knowledge of the Shanscrita. The author of the Bedang, thinking perhaps, that the philosophical catechism which we have translated above, was too pure for narrow and superstitious minds, has inserted into his work, a strange allegorical account of the creation, for the purposes of vulgar theology. In this tale, the attributes of God, the human passions and faculties of the mind, are personified, and introduced upon the stage. As this allegory may afford matter of some curiosity to the public, we shall here translate it.

“ BRIMHA existed from all eternity, in a form of infinite dimensions. When it pleased him to create the world, he said, *Rise up, O Brimha*ⁿ. Immediately a spirit of the colour of flame issued from his navel, having four heads and four hands. Brimha gazing round, and seeing nothing but the immense image, out of which he had proceeded, he travelled a thousand years, to endeavour to comprehend its dimensions. But after all his toil, he found himself as much at a loss as before.

¹ The same with Shibab, the destroying quality of God.

^m Nisht.

ⁿ The wisdom of God.

“ Lost in amazement, Brimha gave over his journey. He fell prostrate and praised what he saw with his four mouths. The almighty, then, with a voice like ten thousand thunders, was pleased to say: Thou hast done well, O Brimha, for thou canst not comprehend me!—Go and create the world!—How can I create it?—Ask of me, and power shall be given unto thee.—O God, said Brimha, thou art almighty in power!—

“ Brimha forthwith perceived the idea of things, as if floating before his eyes. He said, **LET THEM BE**, and all that he saw became real before him. Then fear struck the frame of Brimha, lest those things should be annihilated. O immortal Brihm! he cried, who shall preserve those things which I behold? In the instant a spirit of a blue colour issued from Brimha’s mouth, and said aloud, **I WILL**. Then shall thy name be Bishen^o, because thou hast undertaken to preserve all things.

“ Brimha then commanded Bishen to go and create all animals, with vegetables for their subsistence, to possess that earth which he himself had made. Bishen forthwith created all manner of beasts, fish, fowl, insects, and reptiles. Trees and grass rose also beneath his hands, for Brimha had invested him with power. But man was still wanting to rule the whole: and Brimha commanded Bishen to form him. Bishen began the work, but the men he made were idiots with great bellies, for he could not inspire them with knowledge; so that in every thing but in shape, they resembled the beasts of the field. They had no passion but to satisfy their carnal appetites.

“ Brimha, offended at the men, destroyed them, and produced four persons from his own breath, whom he called by four different names. The name of the first was Sinnoc^p,

^o The providence of God.

^p Body.

of the second, Sinnunda¹, of the third, Sonnatin², and of the fourth, Sonnikunar³. These four persons were ordered by Brimha, to rule over the creatures, and to possess for ever the world. But they refused to do any thing but to praise God, having nothing of the destructive quality⁴ in their composition.

“Brimha, for this contempt of his orders, became angry, and lo! a brown spirit started from between his eyes. He sat down before Brimha, and began to weep: then lifting up his eyes, he asked him, “Who am I, and where shall be the place of my abode?” Thy name shall be Rudder⁵, said Brimha, and all nature shall be the place of thine abode. But rise up, O Rudder! and form man to govern the world.

“Rudder immediately obeyed the orders of Brimha. He began the work, but the men he made were fiercer than tigers, having nothing but the destructive quality in their compositions. They, however, soon destroyed one another, for anger was their only passion. Brimha, Bishen, and Rudder, then joined their different powers. They created ten men, whose names were, Narud, Dico, Bashista, Birga, Kirku, Pulla, Pulista, Ongira, Otteri and Murichi⁶: The general appellation of the whole, was the Munies⁷. Brimha then produced Dirmo⁸ from his breast, Adirmo⁹ from his back, Loab¹⁰ from his lip, and KAm¹¹ from his heart. This last being a beautiful female, Brimha looked upon her with amorous eyes. But the Munies told him, that she was his own daughter; upon which he shrunk back, and produced a blushing virgin called Ludja¹². Brimha thinking his body

¹ Life. ² Permanency. ³ Intellectual existence. ⁴ Timmugoon. ⁵ The weeper; because he was produced in tears. One of the names of Shibab, the destructive attribute of the divinity. ⁶ The significations of these ten names are, in order, these: Reason, Ingenuity, Emulation, Hamility, Piety, Pride, Patience, Charity, Deceit, Mortality. ⁷ The Inspired. ⁸ Fortune. ⁹ Misfortune. ¹⁰ Appetite. ¹¹ Love. ¹² Shame.

defiled by throwing his eyes upon Kâm, changed it, and produced ten women, one of which was given to each of the Munies."

In this division of the Bedang Shaster, there is a long list of the Surage Buns, or children of the sun, who, it is said, ruled the world in the first periods. But as the whole is a mere dream of imagination, and scarcely the belief of the Hindoo children and women, we shall not trespass further on the patience of the public with these allegories. The Brahmins of former ages wrote many volumes of romances upon the lives and actions of those pretended kings, inculcating, after their manner, morality by fable. This was the grand fountain from which the religion of the vulgar in India was corrupted; if the vulgar of any country require any adventitious aid to corrupt their ideas upon so mysterious a subject.

Upon the whole, the opinions of the author of the Bedang, upon the subject of religion, are not unphilosophical. He maintains that the world was created out of nothing by God, and that it will be again annihilated. The unity, infinity, and omnipotence of the supreme divinity, are inculcated by him: for though he presents us with a long list of inferior beings, it is plain that they are merely allegorical; and neither he nor the sensible part of his followers believe their actual existence. The more ignorant Hindoos, it cannot be denied, think that these subaltern divinities do exist, in the same manner, that Christians believe in angels: but the unity of God was always a fundamental tenet of the uncorrupted faith of the more learned Brahmins.

The opinion of this philosopher, that the soul, after death, assumes a body of the purer elements, is not peculiar to the Brahmins. It descended from the Druids of Europe, to the Greeks, and was the same with the *εἰδωλον* of Homer. His idea of the manner of the transmigration of the human soul into various bodies, is peculiar to himself. As he holds it as

a maxim that a portion of the GREAT SOUL, or God, animates every living thing; he thinks it no ways inconsistent, that the same portion that gave life to man, should afterwards pass into the body of any other animal. This transmigration does not, in his opinion, debase the quality of the soul: for when it extricates itself from the fetters of the flesh, it re-assumes its original nature.

The followers of the BEDANG SHASTER do not allow that any physical evil exists. They maintain that God created all things perfectly good, but that man, being a free agent, may be guilty of moral evil: which, however, only respects himself and society, but is of no detriment to the general system of nature. God, say they, has no passion but benevolence; and being possessed of no wrath, he never punishes the wicked, but by the pain and affliction which are the natural consequences of evil actions. The more learned Brahmins therefore affirm, that the hell which is mentioned in the Bedang, was only intended as a mere bugbear to the vulgar, to enforce upon their minds the duties of morality: for that hell is no other than a consciousness of evil, and those bad consequences which invariably follow wicked deeds.

Before we shall proceed to the doctrine of the NEADIRSEN SHASTER, it may not be improper to give a translation of the first chapter of the DIRM SHASTER, which throws a clear light upon the religious tenets common to both the grand sects of the Hindoos. It is a dialogue between Brimha, or the wisdom of God; and Narud, or human reason.

NARUD.

° O thou first of God! Who is the greatest of all Beings?

° Brimha, as we have already observed, is the genitive of BRIMH; as WISDOM is, by the Brahmins, reckoned the chief attribute of God.

BRIMHA.

BRIMH; who is infinite and almighty.

NARUD.

Is he exempted from death?

BRIMHA.

He is: being eternal and incorporeal.

NARUD.

Who created the world?

BRIMHA.

God, by his power.

NARUD.

Who is the giver of bliss?

BRIMHA.

KRISHEN: and whosoever worshippeth him, shall enjoy heaven^f.

NARUD.

What is his likeness?

BRIMHA.

He hath no likeness: but to stamp some idea of him upon the minds of men, who cannot believe in an immaterial being, he is represented under various symbolical forms.

NARUD.

What image shall we conceive of him?

BRIMHA.

If your imagination cannot rise to devotion without an

^f Krishen is derived from Krish giving, and Ana joy. It is one of the thousand names of God.

image; suppose with yourself, that his eyes are like the Lotos, his complexion like a cloud, his clothing of the lightning of heaven, and that he hath four hands.

NARUD.

Why should we think of the almighty in this form?

BRIMHA.

His eyes may be compared to the Lotos, to shew that they are always open, like that flower which the greatest depth of water cannot surmount. His complexion being like that of a cloud, is an emblem of that darkness with which he veils himself from mortal eyes. His clothing is of lightning; to express that awful majesty which surrounds him: and his four hands are symbols of his strength and almighty power.

NARUD.

What things are proper to be offered unto him?

BRIMHA.

Those things which are clean, and offered with a grateful heart. But all things which by the law are reckoned impure, or have been defiled by the touch of a woman in her times; things which have been coveted by your own soul, seized by oppression, or obtained by deceit, or that have any natural blemish, are offerings unworthy of God.

NARUD.

We are commanded then to make offerings to God of such things as are pure and without blemish, by which it would appear that God eateth and drinketh, like mortal man, or if he doth not, for what purpose are our offerings?

BRIMHA.

God neither eats nor drinks like mortal men. But if you love not God, your offerings will be unworthy of him; for as all men covet the good things of this world, God requires

a free offering of their substance, as the strongest testimony of their gratitude and inclinations towards him.

NARUD.

How is God to be worshipped?

BRIMHA.

With no selfish view; but for love of his beauties, gratitude for his favours, and for admiration of his greatness.

NARUD.

How can the human mind fix itself upon God, being that it is in its nature changeable, and perpetually running from one object to another?

BRIMHA.

True: the mind is stronger than an elephant, whom men have found means to subdue, though they have never been able entirely to subdue their own inclinations. But the ankush^s of the mind is true wisdom, which sees into the vanity of all worldly things.

NARUD.

Where shall we find true wisdom?

BRIMHA.

In the society of good and wise men.

NARUD.

But the mind, in spite of restraint, covets riches, women, and all worldly pleasures. How are these appetites to be subdued?

BRIMHA.

If they cannot be overcome by reason, let them be mortified by penance. For this purpose it will be necessary to

^s Ankush is an iron instrument used for driving elephants.

make a public and solemn vow, lest your resolution should be shaken by the pain which attends it:

NARUD.

We see that all men are mortal, what state is there after death?

BRIMHA.

The souls of such good men as retain a small degree of worldly inclinations, will enjoy Surg^b for a time; but the souls of those who are holy, shall be absorbed into God, never more to reanimate flesh. The wicked shall be punished in Nirick¹ for a certain space, and afterwards their souls are permitted to wander in search of new habitations of flesh.

NARUD.

Thou, O Father, dost mention God as one; yet we are told, that Râm, whom we are taught to call God, was born in the house of Jéssarit: that Kishen, whom we call God, was born in the house of Basdeo, and many others in the same manner. In what light are we to take this mystery?

BRIMHA.

You are to look upon these as particular manifestations of the providence of God, for certain great ends; as in the case of the sixteen hundred women, called Gopi, when all the men of Sirendiep² were destroyed in war. The women prayed for husbands, and they had all their desires gratified in one night, and became with child. But you are not to suppose that God, who is in this case introduced as the actor, is liable to human passions or frailties, being, in himself, pure and incorporeal. At the same time he may appear in a thousand places, by a thousand names, and in a

^b Heaven.

¹ Hell.

² The island of Ceylon.

thousand forms; yet continue the same unchangeable, in his divine nature.—

Without making any reflections upon this chapter of the *DIRM SHASTER*, it appears evident, that the religion of the Hindoos has hitherto been very much misrepresented in Europe. The followers of the *NEADIRSEN SHASTER*, differ greatly in their philosophy from the sect of the *BEDANG*, though both agree about the unity of the supreme being. To give some idea of the *Neadirsen* philosophy, we shall, in this place, give some extracts from that *Shaster*.

NEADIRSEN is a compound from *NEA*, signifying right, and *DIRSEN*, to teach or explain; so that the word may be translated an *exhibition of truth*. Though it is not reckoned so ancient as the *Bedang*, yet it is said to have been written by a philosopher called *Goutam*, near four thousand years ago. The philosophy contained in this *Shaster*, is very abstruse and metaphysical; and therefore it is but justice to *Goutam* to confess, that the author of the *Dissertation*, notwithstanding the great pains he took to have proper definitions of the terms, is by no means certain, whether he has fully attained his end. In this state of uncertainty he chose to adhere to the literal meaning of words, rather than, by a free translation, to deviate perhaps from the sense of his author.

The generality of the Hindoos of Bengal, and all the northern provinces of Hindostan, esteem the *NEADIRSEN* a sacred *Shaster*; but those of the Decan, Coromandel, and Malabar, totally reject it. It consists of seven volumes. The first only came to the hands of the author of the *Dissertation*, and he has, since his arrival in England, deposited it in the British Museum. He can say nothing for certain concerning the contents of the subsequent volumes; only that they contain a complete system of the theology and philosophy of the Brahmins of the *Neadirsen* sect.

Goutam does not begin to reason *a priori*, like the writer

of the Bedang. He considers the present state of nature, and the intellectual faculties, as far as they can be investigated by human reason; and from thence he draws all his conclusions. He reduces all things under six principal heads; substance, quality, motion, species, assimilation, and construction¹. In substance, besides time, space, life, and spirit, he comprehends earth, water, fire, air, and akash. The four grosser elements, he says, come under the immediate comprehension of our bodily senses; and akash, time, space, soul, and spirit, come under mental perception.

He maintains, that all objects of perception are equally real, as we cannot comprehend the nature of a solid cubit, any more than the same extent of space. He affirms, that distance in point of time and space are equally incomprehensible; so that if we shall admit that space is a real existence, time must be so too: that the soul, or vital principle, is a subtle element, which pervades all things; for that intellect, which, according to experience in animals, cannot proceed from organization and vital motion only, must be a principle totally distinct from them:

“The author of the Bedang^a,” says Goutam, “finding the impossibility of forming an idea of substance, asserts that all nature is a mere delusion. But as imagination must be acted upon by some real existence, as we cannot conceive that it can act upon itself, we must conclude that there is something real, otherwise philosophy is at an end.”

He then proceeds to explain what he means by his second principle, or Goon, which, says he, comprehends twenty-four things; form, taste, smell, touch, sound, number, quantity,

¹ These are in the original Sanscrits, Dirba, Goon, Kirmo, Summanis, Bishresh, Sammabae.

^a A system of sceptical philosophy, to which many of the Brahmins adhere.

gravity, solidity, fluidity, elasticity, conjunction, separation, priority, posteriority, divisibility, indivisibility, accident, perception, ease, pain, desire, aversion, and power^a. *Kirmo* or motion is, according to him, of two kinds, direct and crooked. *Sammania*, or species, which is his third principle, includes all animals and natural productions. *Bishesh* he defines to be a tendency in matter towards productions; and *Sammabae*, or the last principle, is the artificial construction or formation of things, as a statue from a block of marble, a house from stones, or cloth from cotton.

Under these six heads, as we have already observed, *Goutam* comprehends all things which fall under our comprehension; and after having reasoned about their nature and origin in a very philosophical manner, he concludes with asserting, that five things must of necessity be eternal. The first of these is *Pirrum Attima*, or the GREAT SOUL, who, says he, is immaterial, one, invisible, eternal, and indivisible, possessing omniscience, rest, will, and power^o.

The second eternal principle is the *Jive Attima*, or the vital soul, which he supposes is material, by giving it the following properties; number, quantity, motion, contraction, extension, divisibility, perception, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, accident, and power. His reasons for maintaining that the *vital soul* is different from the *great soul*, are very numerous, and it is upon this head that the followers of the *Bedang* and *Neadirsen* are principally divided. The first affirm that there is no soul in the universe but God, and the second strenuously hold that there is, as they cannot conceive

^a The twenty-four things are, in the Shanscrita, in order, these: *Rup*, *Ris*, *Gund*, *Supursa*, *Shubardo*, *Sirica*, *Purriman*, *Gurritte*, *Dirbitte*, *Sinniha*, *Shanskan*, *Sangoog*, *Bibag*, *Pirrible*, *Particca*, *Apporticta*, *Addaristo*, *Bud*, *Suc*, *Duc*, *Itcha*, *Desh*, *Jotna*.

^o These properties of the divinity are the following in order: *Nidakaar*, *Akitta*, *Oderisa*, *Nitto*, *Apparticta*, *Budsirba*, *Suck*, *Itcha*, *Jotna*.

that God can be subject to such affections and passions as they feel in their own minds; or that he can possibly have a propensity to evil. Evil, according to the author of the Neadirsen Shaster, proceeds entirely from Jive Attima, or the vital soul. It is a selfish craving principle, never to be satisfied; whereas GOD remains in eternal rest, without any desire but benevolence.

Goutam's third eternal principle is time or duration, which, says he, must of necessity have existed while any thing did exist; and is therefore infinite. The fourth principle is space or extension, without which nothing could have been; and as it comprehends all quantity, or rather is infinite, he maintains that it is indivisible and eternal. The fifth eternal principle is Akash, a subtile and pure element, which fills up the vacuum of space, and is compounded of purmans or quantities, infinitely small, indivisible, and perpetual. "God," says he, "can neither make nor annihilate these atoms, on account of the love which he bears to them, and the necessity of their existence; but they are, in other respects, totally subservient to his pleasure."

"God," says Goutam, "at a certain season, endued these atoms, as we may call them, with Bishesh or plasticity, by virtue of which they arranged themselves into four gross elements, fire, air, water, and earth. These atoms being, from the beginning, formed by God into the *seeds* of all productions, Jive Attima, or the vital soul, associated with them, so that animals and plants, of various kinds, were produced upon the face of the earth."

"The same vital soul," continues Goutam, "which before associated with the Purman of an animal, may afterwards associate with the Purman of a man." This transmigration is distinguished by three names, Mirt, Mirren, and Pirra-purra-purvesh, which last literally signifies *the change of abode*. The superiority of man, according to the philosophy of the Neadirsen, consists only in the finer organiza-

tion of his parts, from which proceed reason, reflection, and memory, which the brutes only possess in an inferior degree, on account of their less refined organs.

Goutam supposes, with the author of the *Bedang*, that the soul after death, assumes a body of fire, air, and akash, unless in the carnal body it has been so purified by piety and virtue, that it retains no selfish inclinations. In that case it is absorbed into the GREAT SOUL OF NATURE, never more to reanimate flesh. Such, says the philosopher, shall be the reward of all those who worship God from pure love and admiration, without any selfish views. Those that shall worship God from motives of future happiness, shall be indulged with their desires in heaven for a certain time. But they must also expiate their crimes, by suffering adequate punishments; and afterwards their souls will return to the earth, and wander about for new habitations. Upon their return to the earth they shall casually associate with the first organized Purman they shall meet. They shall not retain any consciousness of their former state, unless it is revealed to them by God. But those favoured persons are very few, and are distinguished by the name of *Jates Summon*².

The author of the *Neadirsen* teaches, for the purposes of morality, that the sins of the parents will descend to their posterity; and that, on the other hand, the virtues of the children will mitigate the punishments of the parents in *Nirick*, and hasten their return to the earth. Of all sins he holds ingratitude to be the greatest. "Souls guilty of that black crime," says he, "will remain in hell while the sun remains in heaven, or to the general dissolution of all things."

"Intellect," says Goutam, "is formed by the combined action of the senses." He reckons six senses: five external³,

² The acquainted with their former state.

³ *Mitterdra*.

⁴ *Chakou, Shrabaa, Basan, Granap, Tawass*.

and one internal. The last he calls Manus, by which he seems to mean conscience. In the latter he comprehends reason, perception, and memory: and he concludes, that by their means only mankind may possibly acquire knowledge. He then proceeds to explain the manner by which these senses act.

“Sight,” says he, “arises from the Shanskar, or repulsive qualities of bodies, by which the particles of light which fall upon them are reflected back upon the eyes from all parts of their surfaces. Thus the object is painted in a perfect manner upon the organ of seeing, whither the soul repairs to receive the image.” He affirms, that unless the soul fixes its attention upon the figure in the eye, nothing can be perceived by the mind; for a man in a profound reverie, though his eyes are open to the light, perceives nothing. Colours, says Goutam, are particular feelings in the eye, which are proportioned to the quantity of light reflected from any solid body.

Goutam defines hearing in the same manner with the European philosophers, with this difference only, that he supposes, that the sound which affects the ear is conveyed through the purer element of akash, and not by the air; an error which is not very surprising in a speculative philosopher. Taste he defines to be a sensation of the tongue and palate, occasioned by the particular form of those particles which compose food. Smell, says he, proceeds from the effluvia which arise from bodies to the nostrils. The feeling which arises from touching, is occasioned by the contact of dense bodies with the skin, which, as well as the whole body, excepting the bones, the hair, and the nails, is the organ of that sense. There runs, says he, from all parts of the skin, very small nerves to a great nerve, which he distinguishes by the name of Medda. This nerve is composed of two different coats, the one sensi-

* Onnuman, reason. Upimen, perception.

tive and the other insensitive. It extends from the crown of the head down the right side of the vertebræ to the right foot^c. When the body becomes languid, the soul, fatigued with action, retires within the insensible coat, which checks the operation of the senses, and occasions sound sleep. But should there remain in the soul a small inclination to action, it starts into the sensitive part of the nerve, and dreams immediately arise before it. These dreams, says he, invariably relate to something perceived before by the senses, though the mind may combine the ideas together at pleasure.

Manus, or conscience, is the internal feeling of the mind, when it is no way affected by external objects. Onnuman, or reason, says Goutam, is that faculty of the soul which enables us to conclude that things and circumstances exist, from an analogy to things which had before fallen under the conception of our bodily senses: for instance, when we see smoke, we conclude that it proceeds from a fire; when we see one end of a rope, we are persuaded that it must have another.

By reason, continues Goutam, men perceive the existence of God; which the Boad or Atheists deny, because his existence does not come within the comprehension of the senses. These atheists, says he, maintain that there is no God but the universe; that there is neither good nor evil in the world; that there is no such thing as a soul; that all animals exist by a mere mechanism of the organs, or by a fermentation of the elements; and that all natural productions are but the fortuitous concourse of things.

The philosopher refutes these atheistical opinions by a long train of arguments, such as have been often urged by European divines. Though superstition and custom may bias

^c To save the credit of Goutam, in this place, it is necessary to observe, that anatomy is not at all known among the Hindoos, being strictly prohibited from touching a dead body by the severest ties of religion.

reason to different ends, in various countries, we find a surprising similarity in the arguments used by all nations against the BOAD, those common enemies of every system of religion.

“Another sect of the BOAD,” says Goutam, “are of opinion that all things were produced by chance.” This doctrine he thus refutes. “Chance is so far from being the origin of all things, that it has but a momentary existence of its own; being alternately created and annihilated at periods infinitely small, as it depends entirely on the action of real essences. This action is not accidental, for it must inevitably proceed from some natural cause. Let the dice be rattled eternally in the box, they are determined in their motion, by certain invariable laws. What therefore we call chance is but an effect proceeding from causes which we do not perceive.”

“Perception,” continues Goutam, “is that faculty by which we instantaneously know things without the help of reason. This is perceived by means of relation, or some distinguishing property in things, such as high and low, long and short, great and small, hard and soft, cold and hot, black and white.”

Memory, according to Goutam, is the elasticity of the mind, and is employed in three different ways: on things present as to time, but absent as to place; on things past, and on things to come. It would appear from the latter part of the distinction, that the philosopher comprehends imagination in memory. He then proceeds to define all the original properties of matter, and all the passions and faculties of the mind. He then descants on the nature of generation.

“Generation,” says he, “may be divided into two kinds; Jonidge, or generation by copulation; and adjonidge, gene-

ration without copulation. All animals are produced by the first, and all plants by the latter. The purman, or seed of things, was formed from the beginning with all its parts. When it happens to be deposited in a matrix suitable to its nature, a soul associates with it; and, by assimilating more matter, it gradually becomes a creature or plant; for plants, as well as animals, are possessed of a portion of the *vital soul* of the world."

Goutam, in another place, treats diffusely of providence and free will. He divides the action of man under three heads: the will of God, the power of man, and casual or accidental events. In explaining the first, he maintains a particular providence; in the second, the freedom of will in man; and in the third, the common course of things, according to the general laws of nature. With respect to providence, though he cannot deny the possibility of its existence, without divesting God of his omnipotence, he supposes that the deity never exerts that power, but that he remains in eternal rest, taking no concern, neither in human affairs nor in the course of the operations of nature.

The author of the Neadirsen maintains that the world is subject to successive dissolutions and renovations at certain stated periods. He divides these dissolutions into the lesser and the greater. The lesser dissolution will happen at the end of a revolution of the Juga. The world will be then consumed by fire, and the elements shall be jumbled together, and after a certain space of time they will again resume their former order. When a thousand of those smaller dissolutions shall have happened, a MAHPERLEY or great dissolution will take place. All the elements will then be reduced to their original purmans or atoms, in which state they shall long remain. God will then, from his mere goodness and pleasure, restore Bishesh or plasticity. A new creation will arise; and thus things have revolved in succession, from the beginning, and will continue to do so to eternity.

These repeated dissolutions and renovations have furnished an ample field for the inventions of the Brahmins. Many allegorical systems of creation are upon that account contained in the Shasters. It was for this reason that so many different accounts of the cosmogony of the Hindoos have been promulgated in Europe; some travellers adopting one system, and some another. Without deviating from the good manners due to those writers, we may venture to affirm that their tales upon this subject are extremely puerile, if not absurd. They took their accounts from any common Brahmin, with whom they chanced to meet, and never had the curiosity or industry to go to the fountain head.

In some of the renovations of the world, Brimha, or the wisdom of God, is represented in the form of an infant with his toe in his mouth, floating on a comala or water flower, or sometimes upon a leaf of that plant, upon the watery abyss. The Brahmins mean no more by this allegory, than that at that time the wisdom and designs of God will appear, as in their infant state. Brimha floating upon a leaf shows the instability of things at that period. The toe which he sucks in his mouth implies, that infinite wisdom subsists of itself; and the position of Brimha's body is an emblem of the endless circle of eternity.

We see Brimha sometimes creeping forth from a winding shell. This is an emblem of the untraceable way by which divine wisdom issues forth from the *infinite ocean of God*. He, at other times, blows up the world with a pipe, which implies, that the earth is but a bubble of vanity, which the breath of his mouth can destroy. Brimha, in one of the renovations, is represented in the form of a snake, one end of which is upon a tortoise which floats upon the vast abyss, and upon the other, he supports the world. The snake is the emblem of wisdom; the tortoise is a symbol of security, which figuratively signifies providence; and the vast abyss is the eternity and infinitude of God.

What has been already said has, it is hoped, thrown a new light on the opinions of the Hindoos upon the subject of religion and philosophical inquiry. We find that the Brahmins, contrary to the ideas formed of them in the West, invariably believe in the unity, eternity, omniscience, and omnipotence of God: that the polytheism of which they have been accused, is no more than a symbolical worship of the divine attributes, which they divide into three principal classes. Under the name of BRIMHA, they worship the wisdom and creative power of God; under the appellation of BISHEN, his providential and preserving quality; and under that of SHIBAH, that attribute which tends to reduce matter to its original principles.

This system of worship, say the Brahmins, arises from two opinions. The first is, that as God is immaterial, and consequently invisible, it is impossible to raise a proper idea of him by any image in the human mind. The second is, that it is necessary to strike the gross ideas of man with some emblems of God's attributes, otherwise, that all sense of religion will naturally vanish from the mind. They, for this purpose, have made symbolical representations of the three classes of the divine attributes; but they aver, that they do not believe them to be separate intelligences. BRIMH, or the supreme divinity, has a thousand names; but the Hindoos would think it "the grossest impiety to represent him under any form. "The human mind," say they, "may form some conception of his attributes separately, but who can grasp the whole within the circle of finite ideas?"

That in any age or country, human reason was ever so depraved as to worship the work of hands for the Creator of the universe, we believe to be an absolute deception, which arose from the vanity of the abettors of particular systems of religion. To attentive inquirers into the human mind, it will appear, that common sense, upon the affairs of religion,

is pretty equally divided among all nations. Revelation and philosophy have, it is confessed, lopped off some of those superstitious excrescences and absurdities that naturally arise in weak minds upon a subject so mysterious: but it is much to be doubted, whether the want of those necessary purifiers of religion ever involved any nation in gross idolatry, as many ignorant zealots have pretended.

In India, as well as in many other countries, there are two religious sects: the one look up to the divinity through the medium of reason and philosophy; while the others receive, as an article of their belief, every holy legend and allegory which have been transmitted down from antiquity. From a fundamental article in the Hindoo faith, that God is *the soul of the world*, and is consequently diffused through all nature, the vulgar revere all the elements, and consequently every great natural object, as containing a portion of God; nor is the infinity of the supreme being, easily comprehended by weak minds, without falling into this error. This veneration for different objects, has, no doubt, given rise among the common Indians, to an idea of subaltern intelligences; but the learned Brahmins, with one voice, deny the existence of inferior divinities: and, indeed, all their religious books of any antiquity confirm that assertion.

A.

CATALOGUE

OF THE

GODS OF THE HINDOOS.

To prevent future writers from confounding themselves and others, by mistaking synonymous names of the Gods of the Hindoos for different intelligences, we here present the public with a catalogue of them, as taken from an original book of the Brahmins. A list of proper names, especially in a foreign language, is so very dry of itself, that it is superfluous to advise such as are not particularly inquisitive upon this subject, to pass entirely over this list, as it can afford very little amusement.

BRHM, or the supreme being, is distinguished by a thousand names in the Shanscrita, according to the Brahmins; but it is to be observed, that in that number they include the names of all those powers, properties, and attributes, which they conceive to be inherent in the divine nature, as well as the names of all those symbols and material essences under which God is worshipped. Those commonly used are, Ishbur, the great will; Bagubaan, the receptacle of goodness; Narrain, the giver of motion; Pirrimpurrous, the first essence; Niringen, the dispassionate; Nidakar, the immaterial.

BRIMHA, or God in his attribute of wisdom, is worshipped under the following names. Attimabah, the good spirit. Beda, science. Beddatta, the giver of knowledge. Bisheshrick, the flower of the creation. Surrajist, Purmisti, Pitamah, Hirinagirba, Lokessa, Saimbu, Chottrann, Datta, Objajoni, Birrinchi, Cömmalasein, Bididi.

BISHEN, or God in his providential quality, is worshipped under the following names. Krishana, the giver of joy; Bishana, the nourisher. Baycanta, Bitara-sirba, Dammudar, Bishi-kesh, Keseba, Mahdob, Subdub, Deitari, Pöndericack, Gurrud-idaja, Pittamber, Otchuta, Saringi, Bis-sickson, Jannardan, Uppindera, Indrabah-rajä, Suckerpani, Chullerbudge, Puttanab, Mudcripu, Basdebo, Tribickerna, Deibuckinindan, Suri, Sirriputti, Purusittam, Bannumali, Billidinsi, Kangsarratti, Oddu-kego, Bissimber, Koitabagit, Sirbassa, Lanchana.

SHIBAH, or as it is generally pronounced, **SHIEN**, and sometimes **SHIEW**, emblematically, the destructive power of God, is known by the names of Mahoissur, the great Demon; Mahdebo, the great spirit; Bamdebo, the frightful spirit; Mohilla, the destroyer; Khaal, time; Sumbu, Ish, Pushuputti, Shuli, Surboh, Ishan, Shawkacarrah, Sandraseikar, Butchessa, Candapursu, Girissa, Merrurah, Mittenja, Kirtibash, Pinnaki, Pirmatadippo, Ugur, Choppardi, Scieant, Sitticant, Copalbrit, Birrupacka, Trilochuna, Kersanwreta, Sirbugah, Durjutti, Neloloito, Harra, Sarrabarra, Trimbick, Tripurantacka, Gangadir, Undukorripu, Kirtudansi, Birsadija, Bumkesa, Babah, Bimeh, Stanu, Rudder, Umma-putti.

In the same manner as the power of God is figuratively said to have taken upon itself three masculine forms at the creation; so **PIRKITTI**, or the goodness of God, is said to have taken three feminine forms. The first of these was **Drugah**, or Virtue, who, say they, was married to Shibah, to intimate that good and evil are so blended together, that

they could not have existed separately: for had there been no such thing as evil, in consequence there could be no good. She is worshipped in this character under the names of Bowani, courage; Maiah, love; Homibutti, Ishura, Shibae, Rudderani, Sirbani, Surba-mungula, Appurna, Parbutti, Kattaini Gouri, and a variety of other names.

As the consort of Bishen, she is worshipped under the names of Litchmi, which signifies fortune; Puddamah, Leich, Commala, Siri Horripria.

As the consort of Brimha, she is generally known by the names of Sursitti, which means the bestower of wisdom; Giandah, the giver of reason; Gire, Baak, Bani, Sardah, Brimhapira.

Besides the above six capital divisions of the divine attributes, they raise temples to GRANESH, or policy, whom they worship at the commencement of any design, by the names of Biggenrage, Binnauck, Deimatar, Gunnadebo, Eckdant, Herrumboo, Lumbodre, Gunjanund. This divinity is feigned to be the first-born son of Shibah, and is represented with the head of an elephant, with one tooth only.

KARTICK, or Fame, is also worshipped under various names as follows; Farruck-gite, Mahasin, Surjunmah, Surranonno, Parbutti-nundun, Skunda, Sonnani, Agnibu, Guha, Bahulliba, Bishaka, Shuckibahin, Shanmattara, Shuckliddir, Cummar, Corimchidarna. He is said to be the second son of Sibah.

CAM-DEBO, the spirit of love, is also known by the names of Muddun, Mannumut, Maro, Purrudumun, Minckatin, Kundurp, Durpako, Anuungah, Pansusur, Shwaro, Sumberari, Munnusigah, Kusshumesha, Ommenidja, Passbadinna, Kulliputti, Nackera-dija, Ratimoboo; he is said to be the first born of Bishen.

COBERE, or wealth, is known by the following names: Trumbuca-suca, Juckrage, Gudja-kessera, Monnusa-dirma, Dunnedo, Raja Raja, Donnadippa, Kinarezzo, Borsserbunnu,

Pollusta, Narru-bahin, Joikaika, Ellabilla; Srida Punejani-sherah. Nill Cobere, the son of wealth, is also represented in the emblems of luxury, but is seldom worshipped.

SOORAGE, or the Sun, is worshipped under the names of Inder, or the King of the Stars; Mohruttan, Mugubah, Biraja, Packsasen, Birdirsisba, Sonnasir, Pürruhutta, Pur-rinder, Gistnow, Lickersubba, Sockor, Sukamunneh, Depas-putti, Suttraha; Gottrabit, Budgeri, Basub, Bitterha, Bastosputti, Suraputti, Ballaratti, Satchiputti, Jambubedi, Hor-riheia, Surat, Nomisinundun; Sonkriadana, Dussibina, Tur-rasat, Negabahina, Akindilla, Sorakah, Ribukah.

CHUNDER, or the Moon, is worshipped under the names of Hindoo, Himmanchu, Chundermah, Kumuda-bandibah; Biddu, Sudduns, Subransu, Ossadissa, Nishaputti, Objoja, Soom, Gullow, Merkanku, Kollandi, Dirjarage, Sesudirra, Nuhtitressa, Kepakina.

Besides all the above, they have divinities which they suppose to preside over the elements, rivers, mountains, &c. or rather worship all these as parts of the divinity, or on a supposition of his existence in all things.

AGUNNI, or the God of fire, hath thirty-five names; Bir-ren, or the God of water, ten names; Baiow, or the God of air, twenty-three names; all which are too tedious to mention.

The JUM are fourteen in number, and are supposed to be spirits who dispose of the souls of the dead.

The USSERA are beautiful women, who are feigned to reside in heaven, and to sing the praises of God.

The GUNDIRP are boys who have the same office.

The RAKISS are ghosts or spectres who walk about the earth.

The DEINTA, or OISSURS are evil spirits or demons, who were expelled from heaven, and are now said to live under ground.

The DEOS or DEBOS are spirits whose bodies are supposed

to be of the element of fire ; they are sometimes represented beautiful as angels, and at other times in horrible forms ; they are supposed to inhabit the air.

Such is the strange system of religion which priestcraft has imposed on the vulgar, ever ready in all climes and ages to take advantage of superstitious minds. There is one thing however to be said in favour of the Hindoo doctrine, that while it teaches the purest morals, it is systematically formed on philosophical opinions. Let us therefore no longer imagine half the world more ignorant than the stones which they seem to worship, but rest assured, that whatever the external ceremonies of religion may be, the self-same infinite Being is the object of universal adoration.

DISSERTATION
CONCERNING
THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF DESPOTISM
IN
HINDOSTAN.

GOVERNMENT derives its form from accident ; its spirit and genius from the inherent manners of the people. The languor occasioned by the hot climate of India inclines the native to indolence and ease ; and he thinks the evils of despotism less severe than the labour of being free. Tranquillity is the chief object of his desires. His happiness consists in a mere absence of misery ; and oppression must degenerate into a folly which defeats its own ends, before he calls it by the name of injustice. These phlegmatic sentiments the Indian carries into his future state. He thinks it a mode of being in which passion is lost, and every faculty of the soul suspended, except the consciousness of existence.

Other motives of passive obedience join issue with the love of ease. The sun, which enervates his body, produces for him, in a manner spontaneously, the various fruits of the earth. He finds subsistence without much toil ; he requires little covering but the shade. The chill blast of winter is unknown ; the seasons are only marked by an arbitrary number of nights and days. Property being in some mea-

sure unnecessary, becomes of little value; and men submit, without resistance, to violations of right, which may hurt but cannot destroy them. Their religious institutions incline them to peace and submission. The vulgar live with the austerity of philosophers, as well as with the abstinence of devotees. Averse themselves to the commission of crimes, they resent no injuries from others; and their low diet cools their temper to a degree which passion cannot inflame.

The fertility of the soil, which in other kingdoms constitutes the great prosperity of the natives, was a source of misfortune to the Indians. Notwithstanding their abstinence and indolence, they were in some degree industrious; and, in want of but few things themselves, their own arts, and the natural productions of their country, rendered them opulent. Wealth accumulated, in the progress of time, upon their hands; and they became objects of depredation to the fierce nations of the northern Asia. The facility of incursion, among a peaceable and harmless race of men, encouraged conquest. The victors, instead of carrying the spoil into their native country, sat down where it had been found; and added the ministration of the conquered to the other enjoyments of wealth.

Asia, the seat of the greatest empires, has been always the nurse of the most abject slaves. The mountains of Persia have not been able to stop the progress of the tide of despotism; neither has it been frozen in its course through the plains of the northern Tartary, by the chill air of the north. But though despotism governs Asia, it appears in different countries under various forms. The Arabs of the desert alone possess liberty, on account of the sterility of their soil. Independent of revolution and change, they see, with unconcern, empires falling and rising around. They remain unconquered by arms, by luxury, by corruption; they alter not their language, they adhere to their customs.

and manners, they retain their dress. Their whole property consists of flocks and herds, of their tents and arms. They annually made a small and voluntary present to the chief of their blood. They revolt against oppression; and they are free by necessity, which they mistake for choice. When men are obliged to wander for subsistence, despotism knows not where to find its slaves.

The Tartar, though a wanderer like the Arab, was never equally free. A violent aristocracy always prevailed in the country of the former, except in a few short periods, when the fortune of one established a transient despotism over the whole. There man is armed against man, chief against chief, and tribe against tribe. War is no longer a particular profession, but the constant occupation of all. Men are more afraid of men in the solitudes of Tartary than of beasts of prey. The traveller moves with great circumspection, and hears an enemy in every blast of wind. When he sees a tract in the sand, he crosses it, and begins to draw his sword. Though the barrenness of the country has prevented the growth or introduction of luxury, avarice prevails; and he that has the least to lose is the most independent, where life is invariably risked for a trifling spoil. Robbery acquires the more honourable name of conquest; and the assassin is dignified with the title of warrior.

In the mountains which separate Persia from India, the nature and face of the country have formed a different species of society. Every valley contains a community subject to a Prince, whose despotism is tempered by an idea established among his people, that he is the chief of their blood as well as their sovereign. They obey him without reluctance, as they derive credit to their family from his greatness. They attend him in his wars with the attachment which children have for a parent; and his government, though severe, partakes more of the rigid discipline of a general, than of the caprice of a despot. Rude as the face of their country, and fierce and

wild as the storms which cover their mountains, they love incursion and depredation, and delight in plunder and in battle. United firmly to their friends in war, to their enemies faithless and cruel, they place justice in force, and conceal treachery under the name of address. Such are the Afgans or Patans, who conquered India and held it for ages.

The despotism which the Patans established in their conquests, partook of the violence of their national character at home. Their government was oppressive through pride, and tyrannical from passion rather than from avarice. Reinforced by successive migrations from the mountains of Afghanistan, they retained their native spirit in the midst of the luxuries of India. When the monarch became voluptuous and degenerate, they supplied his place with some hardy chieftain from the north, who communicated his own vigour to the great machine of state. The empire was supported by a succession of abilities, rather than by an hereditary succession of Princes; and it was the countrymen, and not the posterity of the first conquerors, who continued the dominion of the Patans over India.

The conquest of India by the family of Timur proceeded from the abilities of one man, and not from the effort of a nation. Baber himself was a stranger in the country in which he reigned, before he penetrated beyond the Indus. His troops consisted of soldiers of fortune from various countries; his officers were men who owed their rank to merit, not to succession. The religion of Mahommed, which they in common professed, and their obedience to their leader, were the only ties which united the conquerors upon their arrival; and they were soon dissipated in the extensive dominions which their arms subdued. The character of the Prince went down on the current of government; and the mild disposition of his successors contributed to confirm the humane despotism which he had introduced into his conquests.

A continued influx of strangers from the northern Asia became necessary for the support of Princes who professed a different faith with their subjects, in the vast empire of India. The army was recruited with soldiers from different nations; the court was occupied by nobles from various kingdoms. The latter were followers of the Mahommedan religion. In the regulations and spirit of the Coran, they lost their primary and characteristic ideas upon government; and the whole system was formed and enlivened by the limited principles which Mahommed promulgated in the deserts of Arabia.

The faith of Mahommed is peculiarly calculated for despotism; and it is one of the greatest causes which must fix for ever the duration of that species of government in the East. The legislator furnishes a proof of this position in his own conduct. He derived his success from the sword more than from his eloquence and address. The tyranny which he established was of the most extensive kind. He enslaved the mind as well as the body. The abrupt argument of the sword brought conviction, when persuasion and delusion failed. He effected a revolution and change in the human mind, as well as in states and empires; and the ambitious will continue to support a system which lays its foundation on the passive obedience of those whom fortune has once placed beneath their power.

The unlimited power which Mahommedanism gives to every man in his own family, habituates mankind to slavery. Every child is taught, from his infancy, to look upon his father as the absolute disposer of life and death. The number of wives and concubines which the more wealthy and powerful entertain, is a cause of animosity and quarrel, which nothing but a severe and unaccountable power in the master of a family can repress. This private species of despotism is, in miniature, the counterpart of what prevails in the state; and it has the same effect in reducing all

the passions under the dominion of fear. Jealousy itself, that most violent of the feelings of the soul, is curbed within the walls of the haram. The women may pine in secret, but they must clothe their features with cheerfulness when their lord appears. Contumacy is productive of immediate punishment. They are degraded, divorced, chastised, and even sometimes put to death, according to the degree of their crime or obstinacy, or the wrath of the offended husband. No enquiry is made concerning their fate. Their friends may murmur, but the laws provide no redress; for no appeals to public justice issue forth from the haram.

Young men, with their minds moulded to subjection, become themselves masters of families in the course of time. Their power being confined within their own walls, they exercise in private that despotism which they in public dread. But though they are freed from domestic tyranny, they still continue slaves. Governors, magistrates, and inferior officers, invested with the power of the principal-despot, whose will is law to the empire, exercise their authority with rigour. The idea of passive obedience is carried through every vein of the state. The machine, connected in all its parts by arbitrary sway, is moved by the active spirit of the Prince; and the lenity or oppressiveness of government, in all its departments, depends upon the natural disposition of his mind.

The law of compensation for murder, authorised by the Coran, is attended with pernicious effects. It depresses the spirit of the poor; and encourages the rich in the unmanly passion of revenge. The price of blood in India is not the third part of the value of a horse. The innate principles of justice and humanity are weakened by these means; security is taken from society, as rage may frequently get the better of the love of money. A religion which indulges individuals in a crime at which the rest of mankind shudder, leaves ample room for the cruelty of a Prince. Accustomed

to sit in judgment on criminals, he becomes habituated to death. He mistakes passion for justice. His nod is condemnation; men are dragged to execution with an abruptness which prevents fear. The incident has no consequence but to impress terror on the guilty or suspected; and the spectators scarcely heed a circumstance which its frequency has made them to expect.

The frequent bathing inculcated by the Coran, has, by debilitating the body, a great effect on the mind. Habit makes the warm bath a luxury of a bewitching kind. The women spend whole days in water; and hasten by it the approach of age. The indolence of the men, which induces them to follow every mode of placid pleasure, recommends to them a practice which Mahommed has made a tenet of religion. The prohibition of wine is also favourable to despotism. It prevents that free communication of sentiment which awakens mankind from a torpid indifference to their natural rights. They become cold, timid, cautious, reserved, and interested; strangers to those warm passions, and that cheerful elevation of mind, which render men in some measure honest and sincere. In the East there are no public places of meeting, no communications of sentiments, no introduction to private friendship. A sullenness and a love of retirement prevail, which disunite mankind; and as all associations among men are prevented, the hands of government are strengthened by the very virtue of temperance.

The doctrine of a rigid fate, or absolute predestination, which forms one of the principal tenets of the Mahommedan religion, has a great influence on the character and manners of men. When this opinion is adopted as an article of faith, the necessity of precaution is inculcated in vain. The fatalist begins an action because human nature is incapable of absolute idleness; but when a love of repose invites him, when an obstacle arises before him to thwart his designs, he

has no motive for perseverance. He waits for another day, perhaps for another month; he at last trusts the whole to Providence, and makes God the agent in his very crimes. Miscarriage can be no disgrace where success depends not on abilities; and the general who loses a battle through his own pusillanimity, lays the blame upon Providence.

The extensive polygamy permitted by the law of Mahommed has a fatal effect on the minds of his followers; but it has its advantages as well as its defects. The peculiar nature of the climate subjects women to diseases, and hurries them forward in a few years to age. One man retains his vigour beyond the common succession of three women through their prime; and the law for a multiplicity of wives is necessary for the support of the human race. But the custom weakens paternal affection; for as a husband cannot equally divide his regard among many women, the children of the favourite will be preferred. Even these will not be much beloved. The loss of a child is no misfortune; and the care of preserving it is lessened by the opportunity which the number of his women furnishes to the father for begetting more. The child himself is no stranger to this indifference; and he fails in proportion to his duty. Besides, the jealousy between mothers in the haram grows into hatred among their sons. The affection between brothers is annihilated at home; and when they issue forth into the world, they carry their animosities into all the various transactions of life.

These religious tenets, which are so favourable to despotism, are accompanied with singular opinions and customs, which are absolute enemies to freedom and independence. The concealment of their women is sacred among the Mahommedans. Brothers cannot visit them in private; strangers must never see them. This excessive jealousy is derived from various causes. It proceeds from religion, which inculcates female modesty; it arises partly from the policy

of government; it is derived from the nature of the climate, where continence is a more arduous virtue than in the bleak regions of the north. Honour consists in that which men are most solicitous to secure. The chastity of his wives is a point without which the Asiatic must not live. The despot encourages the opinion; as the possession of the women of his most powerful subjects is a sufficient pledge for their faith, when absent in expedition and war.

When the governor of a province falls under the suspicion of disaffection for his Prince, the first step taken against him is an order issued for sending his women to court. Even one of his wives, and she too not the best beloved, will bind him to his allegiance. His obedience to this mandate is the true test of his designs. If he instantly obeys, all suspicions vanish; if he hesitates a moment, he is declared a rebel. His affection for the woman is not the pledge of his fidelity; but his honour is, in her person, in the custody of his sovereign. Women are so sacred in India, that even the common soldiery leave them unmolested in the midst of slaughter and devastation. The haram is a sanctuary against all the licentiousness of victory; and ruffians, covered with the blood of a husband, shrink back with confusion from the secret apartments of his wives.

In the silence which attends despotism, every thing is dark and solemn. Justice itself is executed with privacy; and sometimes a solitary gun, fired at midnight from the palace of the despot, proclaims the work of death. Men indulge themselves under the veil of secrecy; and rejoice in their good fortune, when their pleasures can escape the eye of their Prince. Voluptuousness is, therefore, preferred to luxury. The enjoyment of the company of women is the chief object of life among the great; and when they retire into the sanctuary of the haram, they forget, in a variety of charms, their precarious situation in the state. The necessary privacy enhances the indulgence; and the extreme sen-

sibility, perhaps peculiar to the natives of a hot climate, carries pleasure to an excess which unmans the mind. Men are possessed of something which they are afraid to lose; and despotism, which is founded on the principles of fear and indolence, derives stability and permanency from the defects and vices of its slaves.

The seeds of despotism, which the nature of the climate and fertility of the soil had sown in India, were, as has been observed, reared to perfect growth by the Mahomedan faith. When a people have been long subjected to arbitrary power, their return to liberty is arduous and almost impossible. Slavery, by the strength of custom, is blended with human nature; and that undefined something called public virtue exists no more. The subject never thinks of reformation; and the Prince, who only has it in his power, will introduce no innovations to abridge his own authority. Were even the despot possessed of the enthusiasm of public spirit, the people would revolt against the introduction of freedom, and revert to that form of government which takes the trouble of regulation from their hands.

The simplicity of despotism recommends it to an indolent and ignorant race of men. Its obvious impartiality, its prompt justice, its immediate severity against crimes, dazzle the eyes of the superficial, and raise in their minds a veneration little short of idolatry for their Prince. When he is active and determined in his measures, the great machine moves with a velocity which throws vigour into the very extremities of the empire. His violence, and even his caprices, are virtues, where the waters must be always agitated to preserve their freshness; and indolence and irresolution can be his only ruinous vices. The first indeed may injure the state; but by the latter it must be undone. A severe Prince, by his jealousy of his own authority, prevents the tyranny of others; and, though fierce and arbitrary in himself, the subject derives a benefit from his being the sole

despot. His rage falls heavy on the dignified slaves of his presence; but the people escape his fury in their distance from his hand.

The despotic form of government is not, however, so terrible in its nature as men born in free countries are apt to imagine. Though no civil regulation can bind the Prince, there is one great law, the ideas of mankind with regard to right and wrong, by which he is bound. When he becomes an assassin, he teaches others to use the dagger against himself; and wanton acts of injustice, often repeated, destroy by degrees that opinion which is the sole foundation of his power. In the indifference of his subjects for his person and government, he becomes liable to the conspiracies of courtiers, and the ambitious schemes of his relations. He may have many slaves, but he can have no friends. His person is exposed to injury. A certainty of impunity may arm even cowards against him; and thus, by his excessive ardour for power, he with his authority loses his life.

Despotism appears in its most engaging form under the Imperial house of Timur. The uncommon abilities of most of the Princes, with the mild and humane character of all, rendered Hindostan the most flourishing empire in the world during two complete centuries. The manly and generous temper of Baber permitted not oppression to attend the victories of his sword. He came with an intention to govern the nations whom he subdued; and selfish motives joined issue with humanity in not only sparing, but protecting the vanquished. His invasion was no abrupt incursion for plunder; and he thought the usual income of the crown a sufficient reward for his toil. His nobles were gratified with the emoluments of government; and, from disposition, an enemy to useless pomp and grandeur, he chose rather that his treasury should be gradually filled with the surplus of the revenue, than with the property of individuals whom the fortune of war had placed beneath his power. Awed by

his high character, the companions of his victories carried his mildness and strict equity through all the departments of government. The tyranny of the family of Lodi was forgotten; and the arts, which had been suppressed by a violent despotism, began to rear their heads under the temperate dominion of Baber.

Humaion, though not equal in abilities to his father, carried all his mild virtues into the throne. He was vigilant and active in the administration of justice, he secured property by his edicts; and, an enemy to rapacity himself, he punished the oppressive avarice of his deputies in the provinces. The troubles which disturbed his reign, were the effect of the ambition of others; and his expulsion from the throne was less a misfortune to him than to his subjects. When he returned with victory, he left the mean passion of revenge behind. He punished not his people for his own disasters; he seemed to forget the past in the prospect of doing future good. The nations of India felt, by the benefit received from his presence, how much they had lost by his absence. Though worn out, under a succession of tyrants during his exile, Hindostan began to revive when he remounted the throne. His sudden and unexpected death portended a storm, which was dissipated by the splendid abilities and virtues of his son.

Akbar was possessed of Baber's intrepidity in war, of Humaion's mildness in peace. Bold, manly, and enterprising, he was an enemy to oppression; and he hated cruelty, as he was a stranger to fear. In the more splendid business of the field, he forgot not the arts of peace. He established, by edict, the right of the subject to transfer his property without the consent of the crown, and by ordering a register of the fixed rents of the lands to be kept in the courts of justice in every district, he took from his officers the power of oppressing the people. Severe in his justice, he never forgave extortion. He promoted just complaints

against the servants of the crown by various proclamations. He encouraged trade, by an exemption from duties through the interior provinces; and by the invariable protection given to merchants of all nations. He regarded neither the religious opinions nor the countries of men: all who entered his dominions were his subjects, and they had a right to his justice. He issued an edict, which was afterwards revived by Aurungzêbe, that the repts should not be increased upon those who improved their lands, which wise regulation encouraged industry, and became a source of wealth to the state.

Jehangire, though unfit for the field, trod in his father's path in regulating the civil affairs of the state. Impressed with a high sense of the abilities of Akbar, he continued all his edicts in force; and he was the invariable protector of the people against the rapacity and tyranny of his own officers. In his administration of justice he was scrupulous, severe, and exact; and if he at any time gave a wrong decision, it proceeded from a weakness rather than from a vice of the mind.

His son, Shaw Jehân, was possessed of better parts, and was more attentive than Jehangire to the business of the subject. He was minutely acquainted with the state of the empire, and, being free from that caprice and whim which threw a kind of disgrace on the authority of his father, he rendered his people happy by the gravity, justice, and solemnity of his decisions. The empire flourished under his upright and able administration. Oppression was unknown from the officers of the crown, on account of the vigilance of the Emperor; and the strict impartiality which he established in the courts of justice, diminished injuries between man and man.

Aurungzêbe, to whom business was amusement, added the most extensive knowledge of the affairs of the empire to an unremitting application. He made himself minutely

acquainted with the revenue paid by every district, with the mode of proceeding in the inferior courts, and even with the character and disposition of the several judges. He ordered the register of the rents to be left open for the inspection of all, that the people might distinguish extortion from the just demands of the crown. He commanded, that men versed in the usages of the several courts, in the precepts of the Coran, and in the regulations established by edicts, should attend at the public expence, and give their opinion to the poor in matters of litigation. He established a mode of appeal beyond certain sums; and he disgraced judges for an error in judgment, and punished them severely for corruption and partiality. His activity kept the great machine of government in motion through all its members: his penetrating eye followed oppression to its most secret retreats, and his stern justice established tranquillity, and secured property, over all his extensive dominions.

When Baber, at the head of his army, took possession of the dominions of the Imperial family of Lodi, he continued to the crown the property of all the lands. These being annually rented out to the subject, furnished those immense revenues which supported the unequalled splendour of his successors in the throne. The property of individuals consisted, at first, of moveables and money only; and the officers of the crown could not even dispose of these by will, without the written consent of the Prince. Time, however, wrought a change in things. The posterity of Baber alienated, for particular services, estates from the crown in perpetuity; and these descended in succession by will, or if the proprietor died intestate, by an equal division to his children, according to the law of the Coran. This kind of property was also transferable by sale; and it has been judged, that one third part of the empire was given away by this species of grants from the crown.

These grants, however, were not always a sufficient se-

curity against the violence of the crown. Some of the Emperors found themselves obliged to resume many estates by an edict; and it must be confessed, that political necessity justified the measure. Princes who contended for the empire were lavish in their donations; and, had not an act of resumption sometimes taken place, the revenue of the crown would, in process of time, have been annihilated. There was, however, a kind of equivalent given to the proprietors; a pension was settled upon themselves, and their children were received into the service of the government. The wealth of the officers of the crown is, after their death, considered as Imperial property; but unless it is immense, it is never appropriated by the Prince; and even in that case a proper provision is made for the children, and they have, by an established custom, a right to be employed in some of the departments of the state. The women of the deceased receive annual pensions according to their rank; and they may either live in widowhood, or make new alliances by marriage.

The Mogul system of government admits of no hereditary honours. Every man must owe his preferment and rank to himself, and to the favour of his Prince. High birth, however, was respected; and, to a person of abilities, it was a great recommendation at the court of Princes proud of their own noble origin. The ranks and degrees of nobility were for the most part official, excepting those of the military kind. Judges, men of letters, and eminent merchants, have been frequently dignified with titles, and admitted into the circle of the principal nobles in the Imperial presence. The nobles consisted of three orders: the EMIRS, who were the first officers of state, and the viceroys of provinces; the CHANS, who held high posts in the army; and the BAHADURS, who may in some measure be compared to our knights. The number of which these three orders consisted was arbitrary, and each of them had peculiar privileges in

the empire, and a demand on the respect of the undignified part of the subjects.

The course of justice ran through the same gradations which the general reason of mankind seems to have established in all countries subject to regular governments. The provinces were divided into districts; in each of which a judge, appointed by the Emperor, decided in criminal as well as civil affairs. He pronounced judgment on capital offences, but his sentence was never put in execution without the consent and warrant of the governor of the province. In disputes concerning property, there lay an appeal to the supreme court, in which the viceroy presided in person. Every province was, in miniature, a copy of the empire. Three principal judges, with high titles of dignity, sat, with many assessors, in the capital. They not only decided upon appeals, but suits might originate before them. The Emperor himself, in the presence of his nobles, presided almost every day in this court, which generally sat for two hours in the hall of public justice.

When the matter appeared clear, the Prince, without much hesitation, pronounced judgment; when it was doubtful, witnesses were examined, and the opinion of the judges asked on the point of law. Should the suit appear intricate, it was referred to the judgment of the court in their own common hall; but the subject might appeal from their decision to the Emperor and his assessors in the chamber of audience. These courts, both when the monarch was present and when he was absent, were left open to the people. No judgment was ever pronounced secretly, except when the power of the delinquent rendered a public trial dangerous to the state.

The great officers of state, by a kind of prescription, formed a council which answers to our cabinet. The Emperor asked their advice upon affairs of moment; he heard their sentiments, but nothing came ever to a vote. They

were his advisers, but they had no control on his power. He frequently called to this council men in inferior departments; and when the deliberation concerned any particular province, the nobles best acquainted with that part of the empire were admitted into the cabinet. The offences of the first rank of nobility came under the cognizance of this council, as well as other matters of state. They were a kind of jury, who found the matters of fact, and the sovereign pronounced the sentence. He might, by his despotic power, issue out a warrant of death without their advice; but the known opinions of mankind on that subject bound him like a law.

To these great lines of the government of the Moguls, some reflections may be joined. Conquests made by incursion rather than by war, must be retained by violence. The sword, which obtained the empire, supported it under the house of Timar. Their subjects obeyed them from necessity more than from choice; and the lenity of their administration arose more from the mildness of their disposition, than from the spirit of their regulations. The despotic principles of the Tartars, ingrafted upon the Mahomedan tenets of religion, led to force; and seemed to recognize no obedience but that which proceeded from fear. This circumstance obliged the despot to invest his deputies in the provinces with a great part of his power; and when they left his capital, they only did not absolutely rise from subjects into Princes.

This communication of power, though in some measure necessary to command the people, became dangerous to the Prince. The Imperial deputies began to lose their allegiance in proportion to their distance from the throne. The governors became, in some measure, independent, though they professed obedience to the Imperial edicts. A certain portion of the revenue was remitted to court; and the deputy, in a venal court, found frequently means to retain

the favour of his Prince, when he disobeyed his commands. Every idea of loyalty was, towards the decline of the empire, destroyed among the people of the distant provinces. They heard of an Emperor, as the superstitious hear of a guardian angel, whom they never behold. An indifference for his fate succeeded to his want of power. A peasant, at the end of many months, was informed of a revolution at Delhi. He stopt not his oxen, nor converted the ploughshare into a sword. He whistled unconcerned along his field; and inquired not, perhaps, concerning the name of the new Prince.

Notwithstanding this indifference in the inferior sort, the Emperor every day extended symptoms of his superior power to the very extremities of his empire. His edicts were transmitted to every district; they were publicly read, and registered in the courts of justice. They became a security to the people against the impositions of the governor. An appeal lay from his decisions, by a petition to the Emperor in the hall of audience. This doctrine was inculcated by the edicts; and some of the oppressed took advantage of the promise of justice which they contained. Their petitions, whenever they found access to the throne, were heard with the attention which a jealous Prince pays to his own power; and there are many instances in which the governors of provinces have been severely punished for an act of injustice to a poor peasant. Never to forgive oppressions against the helpless and low, was an established maxim among all the Princes of the house of Timur.

The power of disposing of the succession naturally belongs to a despot. During his life, his pleasure is the law. When he dies, his authority ceases; but the strength of custom has made his will in favour of any of his sons, a superior title to primogeniture. The power is, in some measure, necessary. A Prince having an independent right of succession to the throne, might be very troublesome to his father in an em-

pire established on the principles which we have described. The weight which he might derive from his hopes would clog the wheels of government, which, under a system of despotism, can admit of no delays, no obstructions, no divided or limited power. Personal abilities, under such a system, are more necessary than under established laws. A weak Prince brings more calamities than a civil war. A minority is dreadful; and it can scarce exist where the voice of the Prince is the living law, which moves the whole machine of the state.

Necessity frequently excuses, in the eyes of mankind, the worst of crimes. A Prince of abilities, who mounts a throne in the East by the exclusion of an elder brother, escapes the detestation of his subjects from the good which they hope to derive from his superior parts. Even fratricide loses its name in self-preservation, combined with the public good. The greatness of the crime is eclipsed by the greatness of the object. Success is a divine decision; and the state gives up the lives of the unhappy sufferers, as a sacrifice to its own repose. To be born a Prince, is therefore a misfortune of the worst and most embarrassing kind. He must die by clemency, or wade through the blood of his family to safety and empire.

The Hindoos, or the followers of the Brahmin faith, are in number far superior to the Mahommedans in Hindostan. The system of religion which they profess, is only perfectly known in the effect which it has upon the manners of the people, Mild, humane, obedient, and industrious, they are of all nations on earth the most easily conquered and governed. Their government, like that of all the inhabitants of Asia, is despotic; it is, in such a manner, tempered by the virtuous principles inculcated by their religion, that it seems milder than the most limited monarchy in Europe. Some of the reigning Princes trace their families, with clearness, above four thousand years; many of them, in a dubious manner, from the dark period which we place

beyond the flood. Revolution and change are things unknown; and assassinations and conspiracies never exist.

Penal laws are scarce known among the Hindoos; for their motives to bad actions are few. Temperate in their living, and delicate in their constitutions, their passions are calm, and they have no object but that of living with comfort and ease. Timid and submissive from the coldness of a vegetable diet, they have a natural abhorrence to blood. Industrious and frugal, they possess wealth which they never use. Those countries, governed by native Princes, which lay beyond the devastations of the Mahommedans, are rich, and cultivated to the highest degree. Their governors encourage industry and commerce; and it is to the ingenuity of the Hindoos, we owe all the fine manufactures in the East. During the empire of the Moguls, the trade of India was carried on by the followers of Brahma. The bankers, scribes, and managers of finance, were native Hindoos; and the wisest Princes of the family of Timur protected and encouraged such peaceable and useful subjects.

The nation of the Mahrattors, though chiefly composed of Rajaputs, or that tribe of Indians, whose chief business is war, retain the mildness of their countrymen in their domestic government. When their armies carry destruction and death into the territories of Mahommedans, all is quiet, happy, and regular at home. No robbery is to be dreaded, no imposition or obstruction from the officers of government, no protection necessary but the shade. To be a stranger is a sufficient security. Provisions are furnished by hospitality; and when a peasant is asked for water, he runs with great alacrity and fetches milk. This is no ideal picture of happiness. The Author of the Dissertation, who travelled lately into the country of the Mahrattors, avers, from experience, the truth of his observations: But the Mahrattors, who have been represented as barbarians, are a great and rising people, subject to a regular government, the principles of which are founded on virtue.

AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
STATE OF BENGAL:
WITH
A PLAN FOR RESTORING THAT PROVINCE TO ITS FORMER
PROSPERITY AND SPLENDOUR.

STATE OF BENGAL UNDER THE MOGULS.

Preliminary Observations.

THE affairs of India, though long of great importance to this kingdom, have only very lately become objects of public attention. Facts coming from afar made little impression: their novelty could not rouse, nor their variety amuse, the mind. With a self-denial uncommon in a spirited nation, we heard, without emotion, of the great actions of some of our countrymen; and, if we listened to any detail of oppressions committed by others, it was with a phlegmatic indifference, unworthy of our boasted humanity. A general distaste for the subject prevailed; an age, marked with revolution and change, seemed ready to pass away, without being sensible of events which will render it important in the eyes of posterity.

The current of public opinion has, at length, taken an-

other direction. Men are roused into attention, with regard to a subject which concerns the welfare of the state. They begin to decide, in their own minds, upon affairs which stand in need of the interposition of the nation; and they shew an inclination to be informed, as well as a willingness to correct mistakes and to redress grievances. This consideration has induced the author of the following observations, to submit them, with all due deference, to the public. He has been, for years, a silent spectator of the transactions of the British nation in the East; and it is from the means of information which he has possessed, that he hopes to give something new to the world. With hands guiltless of rapine and depredation, he assumes the pen without prejudice, and he will use it with all decent freedom without fear.

The empire of the Hindoos over all India, came down from the darkest and most remote antiquity, to the 170th year before the Christian æra, when it was dissolved by civil discord and war. Bengal, like many other provinces, started up into an independent kingdom, and was governed by successive dynasties of Rajas, who chiefly resided at the now deserted capital of Ghor. Under these princes, it continued a powerful and opulent kingdom to the beginning of the thirteenth century, when it was first invaded by the Mahomedans, under a Prince of the race of Chillagi, who possessed the countries near the source of the Oxus. The name of this Tartar invader was Eas-ul-dien; but he was soon after reduced to subjection by Altumsh, the Patan Emperor of Delhi, who formed Bengal into a province, governed by a lieutenant, who derived his authority from the conqueror.

Bengal, during the dominion of the Patans in India, was frequently subject to revolution and change. When a Prince of abilities sat on the throne of Delhi, it held of the empire; when the Emperor was weak, it became an in-

dependent sovereignty under its governor. When the valour and conduct of Baber put an end to the government of the Patans at Delhi, some of that race remained untouched in Bengal. The misfortunes of Humaïoon, in the beginning of his reign, not only prevented him from extending the conquests of his father, but deprived him even of the throne which Baber had acquired; and death followed too soon, upon his return, to permit him to reduce the wealthy kingdom of Bengal by his arms. The glory of this conquest was reserved for his son, the illustrious Akbar, who, by the expulsion of Daoud, the last King of Bengal of the Patan race, annexed it in the year 1574 to his empire. Viceroy's from Delhi governed the kingdom, from that period, till the debility of Mahommed Shaw gave scope to the usurpation of Aliverdi; and now, by a wonderful revolution of fortune, the sovereigns of that distant province are created by the deputies of the East India company.

To give an enlarged idea of the subject, it may not be improper to inquire into the mode of government, which the Moguls established in the important province of Bengal. To impose nothing merely speculative upon the public, the Writer of the Dissertation has endeavoured to derive his information from undoubted authority. He has, therefore, translated and annexed to his work, the commissions granted by the court of Delhi to its principal officers in the provinces: from which it will appear, that the despotism of the house of Timur was circumscribed by established forms and regulations, which greatly tempered the rigid severity of that form of government.

Various Tenures under the Moguls.

THE Mogul Tartars, when they conquered India, carried a system of necessary policy through the countries which their arms had subdued. Instead of seizing the lands of

the vanquished, they confirmed them in their possessions. The number of the conquerors bearing no proportion to the conquered, self-preservation obliged the first to adhere together, and to hold the sword in their hands. Had they attempted to settle in different provinces, they would have soon ceased to be a people; and their power would have been broken by separation. They retained, therefore, their military character; and, when they reduced a province, they made the taxes paid to former Princes the invariable rule of their imposts. The people changed their lords, but if their government suffered any change, it was in the substitution of a milder despotism, in the place of the fierce tyranny of the Patans.

Many of the Rajas, or indigenious Indian Princes, had, from the first establishment of the Mahomedans in India, been permitted to retain a great part of their ancient possessions, which they continued to govern by their own laws, without any appeal from their jurisdiction to the courts of justice established by Imperial commissions. The only mark of homage paid by the Rajas was a certain annual tribute. The house of Timur, no less remarkable for their prudence than for their clemency and justice, never encroached upon the privileges of the tributary Princes. They found, that though the Rajas paid not to the crown above half the sum raised upon the subject, their policy, industry, and good government, were so much superior to those of the Moguls, that the countries which they possessed yielded as much, in proportion to their extent, as those which they had farmed out to Zemindars of their own nation and faith. In the two provinces which the British nation now possess, and which, for the future, we will distinguish by the general name of Bengal, many districts of greater extent than any county in Britain, are still possessed by the aboriginal Rajas. But we are more rigid than the Moguls: we have encroached on their privileges, and an-

nihilated their power. During the domination of the house of Timur, one fourth of Bengal was subject to these hereditary lords.

The division of the province which was more immediately under the Mahomedan government, was parcelled out into extensive districts, called Chucklas, resembling, in some measure, our counties; and into lesser divisions, like our ancient tithings. These were let to Zemindars, or farmers of the Imperial rents, who sometimes possessed a whole district, or Chuckla; as the Zemindar of Purnea, who assumed the style and state of a Nabob, though only a farmer of the revenue, under the unfortunate Surage-ul-Dowla. The court of Delhi, under the best Princes, was venal. A sum of money, secretly and properly applied, often secured the possession of his office to the Zemindar during life; and he even was sometimes enabled to transmit it to his heirs, till, by length of time, they were, in some measure, considered as lords of their respective districts.

The farmers, however, had no lease from the crown of the lands over which they presided. Their authority for collecting the rents from the inferior tenants, was derived from a written agreement, for a certain annual sum to be paid to the treasury, exclusive of the Imperial taxes. To prevent imposition on the poorer sort, in every district there was established a register, in which the rents and imposts upon every village and farm were entered, and open to the inspection of all. The registered rents and imposts were collected by the Cronic of the district, who was established in his office by an Imperial commission. He was accountable for the whole, even to the last Dām, as the commission expresses it, to the Fotadār or treasurer of the district, who paid them into the hands of the Dewan, or receiver-general of the Imperial revenues in the province.

The rights or dues of the Dewanny, or the revenue paid to the crown, did not amount to above half the sum raised

upon the subject by the great farmers. These were, from time to time, permitted to raise the rents upon the inferior tenants, in proportion to the general improvement of the lands. The surplus, which was known to government from the public registers of the districts, was, in part, allowed to the general farmers, for the purpose of building houses for the husbandmen, for furnishing them with implements of agriculture, for embanking to prevent inundations, for making reservoirs of water for the dry season; and, in general, for all expences attending the improvement and cultivation of the lands; which otherwise would have rendered the accounts of government intricate and perplexed.

The great farmers, however, were not permitted to oppress the tenants with exorbitant rents; neither was it their interest to extort from the husbandmen sums which would render them incapable of cultivating their lands, and of living comfortably upon the fruits of their toil. In the Imperial officers of the revenue, the poor had friends, and the Zemindar spies upon his conduct. They were such checks upon him, that he could conceal nothing from their observation. They transmitted monthly accounts of his transactions to court. If the tenants were able, without oppression, to pay the additional rent, the demands of the crown rose at the expiration of the year upon the farmer, in proportion to the new impost; if they were found incapable of bearing the burden, the Zemindar was turned out of his office for his avarice and imprudence.

A double revenue, it appears from what has been already observed, rose to the crown from the lands; the ancient rent, established at the conquest of India by the Moguls, and the sums which proceeded from the annual contracts with the great farmers. The viceroy of the province was vested with the power of letting the lands; and he was obliged to transmit to the receiver-general a record of the sums payable by each Zemindar. The cause of this mode

of raising the revenue is obvious. The detail of accounts, the making of contracts with the inferior tenants, would have rendered the business of government too minute and too expensive; and to have permitted the general farmers to manage their districts without either check or control, would have given birth to scenes of oppression, which fate had reserved for an unfortunate people to our times. The Mogul empire is now no more; and the servants of the freest nation upon earth have left the body of the people to the mercy of the Zemindars.

The general farmers of districts were not the only persons known by the name of Zemindars. Men who possessed estates for life, and sometimes in perpetuity, free from all taxation, by virtue of Imperial grants, were distinguished by the same title. These grants were generally given to learned and religious men, to favourite servants at court, to soldiers who had deserved well of their Prince; and they were respected by succeeding Emperors, and seldom revoked. One sixth part of the lands in Bengal had been conferred, in perpetuity, by different Princes, on their favourites and adherents. Many of these estates have fallen into the East India Company, from a failure of heirs; and others daily fall, as the property is not transferable by sale. A minute inquiry might greatly increase our revenue. Many grants said to be derived from the Emperor, are only from the governors of the province; many are in the possession of men who cannot trace their blood to the original proprietors. A succession of revolutions has rolled one part of Bengal upon the other; and it is not hitherto settled from confusion.

Lands were held by a tenure less permanent, of the Emperors of Hindostan. A firmân or Imperial mandate, called by the name of Jagieer, was issued frequently to particular men. This species of grant was for no term of years. It was given through favour, and revocable at pleasure. When

any person was raised to the rank of an Omrah, it was an established rule to confer upon him an estate, for the support of his dignity. This, however, was nothing more than an assignment on the revenues of the crown, arising from a specified tract of land in a district named in the body of the grant. The grantee had no business with the tenants, as he never resided on the estate allotted for his subsistence. He sent his agent every season to the public officers of the district; and his receipt to them, for his allowance, was received by the Dewan, as a part of the Imperial revenue. No conditions of service, none for the maintenance of troops, were annexed to the grant. These are the fables of men who carried the feudal ideas of Europe into their relation of the state of India. The armies of the empire were paid out of the public treasury. Every province had its particular establishment of troops, which the governors were empowered to augment in times of rebellion and commotion.

During the domination of the house of Timur, there was no transferable landed property in Hindostan; excepting gardens, orchards, houses, and some small portions of ground, in the environs of great cities, for which merchants and wealthy tradesmen had obtained particular grants, distinguished by the name of Pottas. This species of property was repeatedly secured by general edicts, for the encouragement of building, for the accommodation of citizens, and the improvement of towns. Grants of this kind did not always proceed from the crown. The governors of provinces were empowered to issue Pottas, under certain limitations and restrictions; the principal one of which was, that the usual rent of the ground should be paid regularly by the proprietor to the collectors of the Imperial revenue.

Tenures of other various kinds were common in Bengal, as well as in the other provinces of the empire. An assignment was frequently granted, upon a specified tract of land,

for the discharge of a certain sum; and when the sum was paid, the assignment expired. Particular farms were burdened with pensions, called *Altumga*, to holy men and their descendants, without their having any concern in the management of the lands. The despot reserved the people entire to himself, and established his power by preventing oppression. Certain imposts were also appropriated for the maintenance of *Mullas* or priests, for the support of places of worship, public schools, inns, highways, and bridges. These imposts were laid by the receiver-general of the revenue, upon the different husbandmen, in proportion to the rent which they paid; and the tax was distinguished by the name of the impositions of the *Dewan*.

Civil Officers and Courts of Justice.

IN states subject to despotism, the legislative, the judicial, and executive power, are vested in the Prince. He is the active principle which exists in the centre of the machine, and gives life and motion to all its parts. His authority and consequence however depend, in a great measure, on the degree in which he communicates his power to his officers. If he gives them all his authority, the reverence for his person is lost in the splendour of his deputies. If he bestows only a small part of his power on his servants, that terror, which is the foundation of his government, is removed from the minds of his subjects; and a door is opened for commotion, licentiousness, and crimes. The Emperors of India, of the house of Timur, had, for two centuries, the good fortune to clothe their officers with that happy medium of authority which was sufficient to govern without the power of oppressing the body of the people.

The despotism of Hindostan, it ought to be observed, was never a government of mere caprice and whim. The

Mahomedans carried into their conquests a code of laws which circumscribed the will of the Prince. The principles and precepts of the Coran, with the commentaries upon that book, form an ample body of laws, which the house of Timur always observed; and the practice of ages had rendered some ancient usages and edicts so sacred in the eyes of the people, that no prudent monarch would choose to violate either by a wanton act of power. It was, besides, the policy of the Prince to protect the people from the oppressiveness of his servants. Rebellion sprung always from the great; and it was necessary for him to secure a party against their ambition among the low.

The Imperial governor of a province, known by the corrupted name of Nabob, in the East as well as in Europe, was an officer of high dignity and authority; but his power, though great, was far from being unlimited and beyond control. He conferred titles below the rank of an Omrah; he was permitted to grant estates till they should be confirmed by the crown. He appointed and dismissed at pleasure all officers both civil and military, excepting a few, whom we shall have occasion to mention, who acted by commission under the seal of the empire; and some of these, upon misbehaviour, he could suspend till the Emperor's pleasure was known. He let the lands to the general farmers, in conjunction with the Dewan; but he bore no part in the collection of the revenue, but by aiding the Imperial officers with the military power. The Omrahs, who served under him in the army, having generally, on account of the convenience, their allowance from the Emperor on the rents of the province, he had the power, for disobedience or notorious crimes, to suspend them from their Jagieers, until he should receive an answer from court, where the dispute was examined in the cabinet. In matters of justice, there rested an appeal to his tribunal, from the Cazi or chief-justice, though he seldom chose to reverse

the decrees of that judge. Disputes where property was not concerned, and where the established laws had made no provision, were settled by his authority; but he was instructed at his peril not to turn the subjects of the empire out of the lands, tenements, or houses, which they themselves either possessed or built, or which descended to them from their ancestors.

The Dewan was the officer next in dignity to the viceroy, in the province. He derived his commission from the Emperor, as receiver-general of the revenue. His office was altogether confined to the administration and collection of the Imperial rents and taxes. He corresponded with the minister; he audited the accounts of the governor; and as he had entire to himself the charge and disposal of the public money, he might, for good reasons, refuse to discharge any extraordinary and unprecedented expences, or to issue out pay to new troops, raised without apparent necessity. He presided in the office called *Dafter Ali*, or over all the *Mutasiddies*, or clerks of the cheque; the *Canongoes* or public registers; *Croffes*, or collectors of the larger districts; *Fusildars*, or collectors of the lesser districts; *Fotadars*, or treasurers; *Chowdries*, or chiefs of districts; *Muckuddums*, or head-men of villages; and in general over all the officers of the Imperial revenue.

The *Crorie* of every *Pergunnâ* or larger district, derived his commission from the Emperor. His office, though in miniature, was the exact counterpart of the Dewan; being the receiver-general of the county, if the name may be used, as the former was of the whole province. He was immediately accountable to the Dewan, in whose office he passed his accounts. He produced the receipts of the *Fotadar*, or treasurer of the *Pergunna* or district, for the sums which he had paid into that officer's hands, from the collections made by the *Fusildars*; who, in the subdivisions

of the Pergunna, held offices each of which was a counter-part of his own.

The Carcûn of the larger districts was an officer commissioned by the Emperor, to settle all matters and disputes between the tenants and the officers of the revenue, and to preserve the ancient usages of the Pergunna. He was also a kind of spy upon all their private as well as public transactions; he audited their accounts publicly, transmitting copies of them monthly to court, attested by the Sheickdars, Chowdries, and Canongoes of the district. These accounts being entered with great regularity in the vizier's office at Delhi, the Emperor had an immediate view of the collections in the province, before the general accounts of the Dewanny were adjusted; and this was also a great check upon the office of the Dewan.

The view already presented of the mode of collecting the Imperial revenue, renders it unnecessary to descend through all the inferior offices in the department of the receiver-general. The revenues, it must be observed, were never transmitted entire to the Imperial treasury in the capital of the province, much less into that of the empire. The expences incurred in every district were deducted from the receipts of the Fotadar, or treasurer of the district; and the disbursements of the province in general from those of the Dewan. The surplus alone, which was more or less according to accident, found its way to the Imperial exchequer. The estimates of the Imperial revenues are, therefore, not the sums received in the exchêquer at Delhi, but the gross collections in every province.

The courts of justice in Bengal, distinguished by the general name of Cutcherries, were of various kinds. They generally received their designation from the officer who presided in each, or within whose jurisdiction they were comprehended. The Author of the Inquiry is not fully

informed concerning the powers of the different judges, or the mode of proceeding in their courts. There arose a chain of appeal from the lowest to the highest. An action might be removed from any of the courts below before the Cazi of the province, commonly called Daroga Adalit, or chief justice; and from him there lay an appeal to the tribunal of the viceroy.

Inferior judges were appointed by an Imperial commission, in every large district, and in every considerable city, with whom appeals rested from the courts in the country, and from the decisions of Cutwals, or mayors of towns. These Cazis, or judges, were vested with power to summon before them all persons, to examine records, public registers, grants, and witnesses. They were, at their peril, to pass judgment impartially, according to the laws of the Coran, and the canons and regulations of the empire. They were empowered to make and dissolve marriages, to execute contracts of every kind between individuals, to inflict punishments, which did not extend to either life or limb. They took cognizance of all riots, disorders, and tumults; and they were denominated the general guardians of the morals of the people. They were provided with an establishment of clerks, registers, and officers of the court. They passed judgment in a summary manner, and their legal fees were one-fourth of the matter in dispute, equally levied upon the plaintiff and defendant. This regulation was intended to prevent vexatious law-suits, as well as to bring them to a speedy issue. During the vigour of the Mogul empire, capital punishments were hardly known in India. When a crime which merited death was committed, the Cazi, after a full proof of the fact, by witnesses, pronounced sentence against the guilty person; but, without the confirmation of the viceroy, it could not be put in execution. Though the empire, sometimes abounded with treason, it was never punished but in the field.

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In each subdivision of the Pergunna or district, subject to the jurisdiction of the Cazi or judge, there was an inferior officer called a Chowdri, similar to our justice of the peace. Every village had its chief-man, who was the constable of his own department. A Fogedar was, properly speaking, the commander of the troops, in every military station. He sometimes farmed the lands in the neighbourhood; and being the immediate representative of the viceroy, he was considered as the principal officer in his district. But he did not sit in judgment, the civil being always kept distinct from the military department, under the government of the Moguls, as long as it retained its vigour. The Zemindars, or general farmers, were sometimes intrusted with the command of the troops in their own districts; but in their courts they decided only upon trivial disputes between the inferior husbandmen.—Such was the government of Bengal, under the empire of the house of Timur.

Revenue and Commerce.

A BRIEF, but it is hoped a comprehensive, idea being given in the preceding section, of the government of Bengal under the Imperial house of Timur, the Author of the Inquiry will proceed to explain the Revenues and Commerce of that once flourishing and opulent kingdom. In the reign of the Emperor Jehangire, the revenues of the provinces of Bengal and Behâr, both which, for the sake of brevity, we comprehend under the name of the former, amounted to £. 2,796,719 13 2

Under his grandson Aurungzêbe they
 increased to 2,911,866 7 6

Mahommed Shuffia, who wrote an abridgment of the History of the Empire from the death of the illustrious Akbâr to the fatal invasion of Nadir Shaw, where he mentions the provinces which revolted during the indolent reign of Ma-

hommed Shaw, estimates the revenues of Bengal at sixty crores of Dâms, or one crore and fifty lacks of roupees, which sum is equal to	£.1,875,000
The revenues of Behâr, according to the same writer, amounted to forty-five crores of Dâms, or	1,406,250
	<hr/>
	£.3,281,250

It appears, from the above calculation, that the revenues of Bengal had been gradually increasing, in the progress of the empire, through time: They continued still to increase under the revolted Nabobs, some of whom brought into their treasury four millions of our money, but not without distressing the subject, and plundering him of a part of his wealth. It may be necessary to repeat an observation already made, that not above half the sum raised upon the people came into the coffers of government. The exact sum transmitted annually to Delhi before the dissolution of the empire, is not easy to ascertain; but we can form some judgment of the amount, from the ruinous policy of the Imperial court, when its ancient vigour began to decline. The provinces of Bengal and Behâr, during some years of indolence and debility, were farmed out to the viceroys, who paid into the treasury, one million two hundred and forty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence of our money.

This sum, it is supposed, was a medium struck upon an average of years, of the money remitted to the treasury at Delhi, when the empire retained its force. But this stipulated revenue, as might have been foreseen, was never regularly paid. The viceroys acquired an independent power, by a regulation which threw the whole management of the province into their hands, without control; and the vigour of the Imperial government, in proportion, declined. The country profited, however, by the refractoriness of its

governor; if his avarice prompted him to raise more on the subject, the latter was more able than before to pay the additional impost, from the revenue being kept and expended in the province. Bengal began to flourish under an additional load of oppression. It yielded more to a severe Nabob than to the milder government of the empire; and being relieved from an annual drain of specie to Delhi, it became opulent under a degree of rapine.

Though despotism is not the most favourable government for commerce, it flourished greatly in Bengal under the strict justice of the house of Timur. Sensible of the advantages which they themselves would derive from a free commercial intercourse between their subjects, they were invariably the protectors of merchants. The military ideas which they brought from Tartary, prevented the principal servants of the crown from engaging in trade; and therefore monopolies of every kind were discouraged, and almost unknown. No government in Europe was ever more severe against forestalling and regrating, than was that of the Moguls in India, with regard to all the branches of commerce. A small duty was raised by the crown; but this was amply repaid by the never-violated security given to the merchant.

Bengal, from the mildness of its climate, the fertility of its soil, and the natural industry of the Hindoos, was always remarkable for its commerce. The easy communication by water from place to place, facilitated a mercantile intercourse among the inhabitants. Every village has its canal, every Pergunna its river, and the whole kingdom the Ganges, which falling, by various mouths, into the bay of Bengal, lays open the ocean for the export of commodities and manufactures. A people from an inviolable prejudice of religion abstemious, were averse to luxury themselves; and the wants of nature were supplied almost spontaneously by the soil and climate. The balance of trade, therefore,

was against all nations in favour of Bengal; and it was the sink where gold and silver disappeared without the least prospect of return.

All the European nations chiefly carried on their commerce with Bengal in bullion. The Dutch, at a medium of ten years, threw annually into the bosom of that kingdom, in bullion £.475,000

The English 192,500

The French, Danes, and Portuguese 250,000

The exports of Bengal to the gulfs of Persia and Arabia, were very great. She supplied Arabia, Persia, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, and the lesser Asia, with her manufactures, and brought home annually, into her coffers, of gold 375,000

Her trade in opium and piece-goods to the eastern kingdoms of Asia, to the Malayan and Philippine islands, brought yearly a balance in her favour of 150,000

The inland trade of Bengal with the upper Hindostan and Assam 250,000

The coasting-trade with the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar 160,000

£.1,852,500

The above estimate is made designedly low; for were we to argue from general principles, a greater sum must have been imported annually into Bengal. The twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds remitted annually to Delhi, never returned into the province, and, as there were no mines wrought in the country, the surplus of the revenue must have proceeded from the balance of trade. Coin, it is well known, loses greatly by friction, where little alloy is mixed with the silver, and where the want of paper-currency makes the circulation extremely rapid. It loses also by recoinage, which happened annually under the empire in Bengal.

The practice of concealing and burying treasure, which the terrors of despotism introduced, has occasioned a considerable loss, besides the quantity of silver and gold used in rich manufactures. These various losses could be repaired only by a favourable balance of trade; and the sum which we have stated above, would barely supply the waste.

State of Bengal under the revolted Nabobs.

THOUGH the causes which broke the empire were obvious, the decline of the power of the house of Timur was gradual and imperceptible. The seeds of decay were long sown before they were brought to an enormous growth, by the indolence of Mahommed Shaw. Had even the Persian invasion never happened, the fabric which Baber raised in India was destined to fall to ruin. The abilities of Aurungzêbe, by establishing half a century of domestic tranquillity in his dominions, broke the spirit of his subjects, whilst that of the Imperial family declined. The distant provinces obeyed the mandates of the court through habit, more than through fear of its resentment and power; and governors, though destitute of ambition, found, in their own indolence, an excuse for their inattention to commands which could not be enforced with rigour.

The intrigues of the two Seids at the court of Delhi, who raised and removed monarchs at pleasure, weakened that respect for the house of Timur which bound the allegiance of the subject, even after their mildness had degenerated into indolence. Every month brought intelligence into the distant provinces of the murder of one Prince, whilst another was placed on a throne still warm with his predecessor's blood. The veil which hid despotism from the eyes of the people, was rent in twain; monarchs became puppets, which the minister moved at pleasure, and even men who loved slavery on its own account, knew not to what quarter to turn

their political devotion. The viceroys, under a pretence of an unsettled succession, retained the revenues of the provinces; and, with specious professions of loyalty for the Imperial family, they became polite rebels against its authority.

Through this debility in the Imperial line, a new species of government rose in various provinces of India. The viceroys, though they assumed the state of Princes, were still the *humble slaves* of some desolate monarch, who sat without either power or dignity in the midst of the ruins of Delhi. They governed the people in his name, but they listened not to his commands. He even became an instrument of oppression in their hands; and they sanctified the most unpopular of their measures by inducing the Prince to pass, in their own cabinet, regulations which originated under the seals of the empire. Instead of a revenue, they remitted to him bribes; and the necessity of his situation reduced him into a tool, to the very rebels who had ruined his power.

This mock form of an empire continued for many years; and some provinces are still governed through the medium of a monarch that only subsists in his name. But though the Nabobs affirmed that they had still an Emperor, the people found, in their oppressions, that there was none. The check which the terror of complaints to Delhi had laid formerly on the conduct of the viceroys, was now removed; and the officers of the crown who had been placed between the subject and the governor, were discontinued or deprived of their power. The inferior tenants, instead of being supported by the Imperial collectors of the revenue against the avarice of the general farmers, were submitted, without redress, to the management of the latter, and were considered by him as a kind of property.

The usurpation of Aliverdi introduced, more than thirty years ago, the above-described form of government into

Bengal. The same policy was continued by his successors. They owned the Emperor of Delhi for their sovereign, but they governed the country, and collected its revenues for themselves. The interposition of the crown being removed, the independent Nabobs, who succeeded one another either by force or intrigue, adopted a more simple, but a more impolitic mode of collecting the rents and imposts than that which had been practised by the house of Timur. The lands were let from year to year to Zemindars, who were accountable for the rents to the treasury, and the former officers of the revenue, though not annihilated, possessed neither emolument nor power.

An intimate knowledge of the country, however, enabled the Nabobs to prevent their government from degenerating into absolute oppression. They had sense enough to see, that their own power depended upon the prosperity of their subjects; and their residence in the province gave them an opportunity of doing justice with more expedition and precision than it was done in the times of the empire. The complaints of the injured, from a possession of the means of information, were better understood. The Nabobs were less restricted than formerly, in inflicting necessary punishments; and, as they were accountable to no superior for the revenue, they had it in their power to remit unjust debts and taxes, which could not be borne. The miseries of Bengal, in short, were reserved for other times. Commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, were encouraged; for it was not then the maxim to take the honey, by destroying the swarm.

The folly of the Prince had no destructive effect on the prosperity of the people. The Nabobs, carrying down, through their own independent government, the idea of the mild despotism of the house of Timur, seemed to mark out to the people certain lines, which they themselves did not choose either to overleap or destroy. Many now in Britain were

eye-witnesses of the truth of this assertion. We appeal to the testimony of those who marched through Bengal after the death of Surage-ul-Dowla, that, at that time, it was one of the richest, most populous, and best-cultivated kingdoms in the world. The great men and merchants were wallowing in wealth and luxury; the inferior tenants and the manufacturers were blessed with plenty, content, and ease. But the cloud which has since obscured this sunshine was near.

When the troubles, which ended by putting Bengal into the hands of the Company, first arose, Surage-ul-Dowla, a very young and inconsiderate Prince, was Nabob of the three provinces. The good fortune which had at first forsaken us, returned to our arms; and, by the assistance, or rather opportune treachery of Jaffier, one of his generals, he was deposed and murdered. We raised the traitor, as a reward for his convenient treason, to a throne still warm with the blood of his lord; and the measure seemed to be justified, by our apparent inability of retaining the conquered province in our own hands.

The fortune of Jaffier, however, did not long withhold her frowns. Though he had treachery enough to ruin his master, he was destitute of abilities to reign in his place. His weakness became an excuse for a revolution, which had been meditated on other grounds; and Cassim Ali, Jaffier's son-in-law, an intriguing politician, was invested with the dignity and power of his father. If Jaffier was weak, Cassim had too good parts to be permitted to govern Bengal. He was deposed, and his predecessor reinstated in his place. This farce in politics was adopted as a precedent. A governor, without a revolution in the state of Bengal, could not answer to himself for idling away his time.

The civil wars, to which a violent desire of creating Nabobs gave rise, were attended with tragical events. The country was depopulated by every species of public

distress. In the space of six years, half the great cities of an opulent kingdom were rendered desolate; the most fertile fields in the world lay waste; and five millions of harmless and industrious people were either expelled or destroyed. Want of foresight became more fatal than innate barbarism; and men found themselves wading through blood and ruin, when their object was only spoil. But this is not the time to rend the veil which covers our political transactions in Asia.

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Observations on the Treaty for the Dewanny.

AN ample field lay open before us; but we have appropriated revolution and war to history. The present disquisition is of an inferior kind; an inquiry, which means not to irritate but to reform. Let it suffice to say, that Bengal suffered from disturbances and violent measures; and that fortune, though unfavourable, was less fatal, than the rapacity of avaricious men. Peculiarly unhappy, an unwarlike but industrious people, were subdued by a society whose business was commerce. A barbarous enemy may slay a prostrate foe; but a civilized conqueror can only ruin nations without the sword. Monopolies and an exclusive trade joined issue with additional taxations; the unfortunate were deprived of the means, whilst the demands upon them were, with peculiar absurdity, increased.

But to wander no farther into declamation: though the misfortunes of Bengal began with the revolutions and changes which succeeded the death of Surage-ul-Dowla, the system, which advances still with hasty strides, to the complete ruin of that once opulent province, was established several years after that event. A noble governor sent to command in Bengal, by the East India Company, arrived in that king-

dom in the May of 1765. The expulsion of the Nabob Cassim Ali, and the reduction of Suja-ul-Dowla, by our arms, had enabled the servants of the Company to establish peace upon their own terms. The treaty which they concluded was absurd ; and had it been less exceptionable, it would not probably have pleased a man who went not to India to be idle.

The various revolutions of fortune, which had subjected several of the richest provinces of India to the Company's servants, threw the undoubted heir of the Mogul empire into their hands. The governor availed himself of this circumstance. Other Nabobs had converted the unfortunate prince into a tool ; and it was now the turn of our governor to do the same, for the benefit of his constituents. Conscious of his power over the Emperor, and having the absolute direction of a Nabob, who owed his elevation to the governor, himself, and to his own crimes, he threw aside the former treaty. A perpetual commission for the office of Dewan, or receiver-general of the revenues of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, was obtained, from SHAW ALLUM, for the Company. The office of perpetual Nabob might have been as easily obtained ; but the former balanced a thousand disadvantages, by rendering the nature of the tenure perplexed.

In consideration of the Imperial mandate, which, with the revenues, conferred the government of Bengal for ever on the Company, Shaw Allum was to receive an annual pension of three hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds. The annuity was moderate to the lineal successor of Timur. He was, at the same time, guaranteed in the possession of the province of Allahabad ; and thus a kind of provision was made for a Prince, who retained nothing of what belonged to his illustrious ancestors, except the empty title of Emperor of Hindostan. This treaty, however, though it dazzled with its splendour, was neither solid nor advantageous.

in itself. The Emperor, instead of being placed at Allahabâd, ought to possess the province, out of which his pretended vizier, Suja-ul-Dowla, had been recently driven; or should that measure be supposed to invest him with dangerous power, the territories of Bulwant Singh, equal in revenue to Allahabâd, might have been conferred upon him. The Company, being then in possession of all these provinces, might, by its servants, have adopted either of these systems.

To the first measure there are no well-founded objections, and many advantages might be derived from it. The sum of three hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds might have been annually saved, which sum is now sent to a distant province, from whence it never returns. This latter circumstance is of more real prejudice to Bengal and the affairs of the Company, than if half the revenues of the province had been given to the Emperor, upon condition of his keeping his court in that country. Had Shaw Allum been put in possession of the dominions of Suja-ul-Dowla, the natural inactivity of his disposition, and the extraordinary expence and magnificence which he is, in some measure, obliged to support, would have prevented him from being so dangerous a neighbour as even Suja-ul-Dowla. The whole empire was in a state of rebellion; and we were only from convenience his friends.

Arguments crowd in to support this position; but there are still stronger reasons for placing the Emperor in the territories of Bulwant Singh. His residence, in such a case, might have been fixed at Patna or Mongeer; and our army, instead of being cantoned at Allahabâd and Cora, two hundred miles from the frontier of our provinces, might have remained in Patna, in the centre of our dominions. Bengal, had this measure been adopted, instead of losing the pension paid to the Emperor, and the enormous expence of a brigade in a foreign country, would have been enriched by the

greater part of the revenues of the territories of Bulwant Singh; for which he had paid twenty-two lacks of roupees to Suja-ul-Dowla, though in reality he collected double that sum upon the subject.

The latter position will appear more obvious from the following state. Bengal, had the measure been adopted, would annually have saved,

The pension paid to the Emperor	£. 325,000
The expence of a brigade	187,500
Twenty lacks from the territories of Bulwant	
Singa spent at Patna	250,000
	762,500

This measure alone, we may venture to affirm, would have preserved Bengal in a flourishing condition, in spite of avarice and mismanagement. It would, at the same time, have been attended with many salutary effects in our political system in India. The Emperor would have been more immediately under our eye; for though he at present labours under an eclipse, he may, some time or other, shine forth like a comet, in the hands of an ambitious and able man. We are now obliged to protect and support him, under manifest disadvantages. His territories border on the Mahrattors, Jates, and Rohillas; and he is under a perpetual apprehension from these nations. Had the measure, the advantages of which we have described, been taken, Suja-ul-Dowla would have come in between him and these powers; but, at present, our army at Allahabad becomes a security to that prince; whose apprehensions would otherwise have induced him, to adhere more firmly than he now shews an inclination, to his treaty with the Company.

State of Commerce in Bengal, under the Company.

THE prosperity and opulence which Bengal enjoyed during the government of the house of Timur, and even under the

revolted viceroys, proceeded from her lucrative commerce, as much as from the fertility of her soil. Rich in the industry of her inhabitants, she became independent of the partial rapine of impolitic governors, who plundered only to squander away. The money, which entered by injustice at one door of the treasury, was carried out at another by luxury. The court of the Nabob was the heart, which only received the various currents of wealth, to throw it with vigour through every vein of the kingdom.

We may date the commencement of decline, from the day on which Bengal fell under the dominion of foreigners; who were more anxious to improve the present moment to their own emolument, than, by providing against waste, to secure a permanent advantage to the British nation. With a peculiar want of foresight, they began to drain the reservoir, without turning into it any stream to prevent it from being exhausted. From observation, we descend to facts.

The annual investments of the Company, for which no specie is received, amounts, at an average of ten years, to	£.927,500
Those of the Dutch, for which the servants of the Company take bills on Europe, for remitting fortunes acquired in Bengal . . .	200,000
Those of the French, paid for to the natives, in the same way	350,000
Those of the Portuguese and Danes	100,000
	<hr/>
	£.1,577,500

Bengal, it shall hereafter appear, to replace all this waste, scarce annually receives in bullion 100,000

She loses therefore, yearly, to Europe . . . £.1,477,500

The above estimate of the exports of Bengal, for which she receives no specie, is formed on the prime cost of her

manufactures. The balance against her comprehends the savings of the Company on the revenue, the value of British exports, the private fortunes of individuals, which centre in this kingdom. This ruinous commerce with Europe is not balanced, by a lucrative intercourse with the various states of Asia. The increase of the demand for the manufactures of Bengal for our markets here, and the revolutions which shook and greatly depopulated that kingdom, have raised the price of goods. The demand would, upon this head, sink in proportion in the East; but besides, the internal state of the various countries, which formerly exchanged bullion for the goods of Bengal, has been long unfavourable to foreign commerce.

Persia, about thirty years ago a great and a flourishing empire, has been torn to pieces, and almost depopulated by the cruelties of Nadir Shaw; and, since his assassination, by unremitting civil wars. The few inhabitants who escaped the rage of the sword, sit down in the midst of poverty. Georgia and Armenia, who shared in the troubles of Persia, share also her untoward fate. Indigence has shut up the doors of commerce; vanity has disappeared with wealth, and men content themselves with the coarse manufactures of their native countries. The Turkish empire has long declined on its southern and eastern frontiers. Egypt rebelled: Babylonia, under its Basha, revolted. The distracted state of the former has almost shut up the trade, by caravans, from Suez to Cairo; from the latter of which, the manufactures of Bengal were conveyed by sea to all the ports of the Ottoman dominions.

The rapacity of the Basha of Bagdat, which is increased by the necessity of keeping a great standing force to support his usurpation, has environed with terror the walls of Bus-sora, which circumstance has almost annihilated its commerce with Syria. Scarce a caravan passes from the gulf of Persia to Aleppo once in two years; and when it does, it is

but poor and small. Formerly, in every season, several rich and numerous caravans crossed the desert to Syria; but the few that venture at present, being too weak to protect themselves against the wandering Arabs, are stopt by every tribe, and are obliged to purchase safety with exorbitant duties. Trade is in a manner unknown; the merchants of Bussora are ruined; and there were, last year, in the warehouses of that city, of the manufactures of Bengal, to the value of two hundred thousand pounds, which could not be sold for half the prime cost.

The number of independent kingdoms which have started up from the ruins of the Mogul empire, has almost destroyed the inland commerce of Bengal with the upper parts of Hindostan. Every Prince levies heavy duties upon all goods that pass through his dominions. The merchants, who formerly came down toward the mouths of the Ganges to purchase commodities, have discontinued a trade, not only ruined by imposts, but even unsafe from banditti. The province of Oud and Assam are the only inland countries with which Bengal drives, at present, any trade. The former has greatly the balance in its favour against us of late years, from the money expended by seven thousand of our own troops, which till of late have been stationed in the neighbourhood of the dominions of Suja-ul-Dowla, in consequence of an impolitic treaty, and to answer private views. The commerce of salt, beetle-nut, and tobacco, with Assam, is almost balanced by the quantity of silk, Mugadutties, and lack, which we receive from that kingdom in return.

The trade of Bengal, with the kingdoms and islands of the eastern Asia, still continues in some degree; but it has been long on the decline. The coasting trade with the maritime provinces of Hindostan has, upon various accounts, decayed. We may venture to affirm, upon the whole, that the balance in favour of Bengal, from all its Asiatic commerce, exceeds not annually one hundred thousand pounds.

The council of Calcutta have calculated it at less than half that sum. They estimated, in the year 1768, the importation of bullion into Bengal, for the space of four years, at fifteen lacks of roupees; which amounts annually to forty-six thousand pounds of our money. But the cause of this decay lies more in negligence than in the present state of the maritime regions and islands beyond the eastern mouth of the Ganges.

To draw a conclusion from the observations made: though Bengal, by her industry, yields to Europe, of manufactures, to the annual amount of one million five hundred and seventy-seven thousand pounds, for which she receives nothing; yet, if the balance of her trade with Asia amounts to one hundred thousand pounds, she may still continue to flourish under a proper system of internal regulation. The paradox is hitherto supportable by argument and proof; but there still remain heavy articles to be brought into the account against Bengal. Some of the articles, from their complicated nature, must be stated from opinion: others rest on incontrovertible facts. The estimate of the first shall be made as low as possible: the latter are established beyond the power of cavil itself.

The specie carried from Bengal, by the expelled Nabob, Cassim Ali, is supposed to amount to	£.1,250,000
Specie carried away by men of property, who have deserted the kingdom since the power of the Company prevailed	2,500,000
The expences of the war, for one whole year, in the dominions of Suja-ul-Dowla, at five lacks per month; which, after deducting fifty lacks, paid by treaty by that prince, amounts to	125,000
Carry over	<u>3,875,000</u>

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	Brought over	£.3,875,000
Specie sent from Bengal to pay a brigade, consisting of seven thousand men, stationed for five years, after the peace, at Allahabâd, at the annual expence of fifteen lacks . . .		937,500
Specie sent from that kingdom to China and Madras, including the expences of troops on the coast, detached from the establishment of Bengal		1,500,000
Specie brought to England		100,000
		6,412,500
Exported of specie		6,412,500
Deduct the imports of bullion for twelve years, at the annual sum of one hundred thousand pounds		1,200,000
		5,212,500
Decrease in the specie of Bengal since the accession of the Company to the dominion of that kingdom		5,212,500

This ruinous state of the commerce of Bengal is by no means exaggerated. To deprive every adversary of argument, the calculations are, by the Author of the Inquiry, purposely rendered extremely low. A comparative view of the former situation of that once opulent kingdom with its present condition, will throw additional light on the subject. In the days of the empire, the balance of trade for which Bengal received bullion, has been estimated at £.1,687,500

Deduct the annual revenue sent in specie to Delhi	1,250,000
Yearly acquisition in money	437,500

The kingdom of Bengal, it appears, has not, in the midst of her misfortunes, fallen off greatly from her former exports of manufactures. She still sends to Europe, within one hundred and ten pounds a year of the quantity, for which she received the above balance of bullion, in the days of her

prosperity. This, had not her specie been exported, would not have impoverished her. But let us suppose that her whole currency amounted to fifteen millions; the entire loss of a third part of that sum must have inevitably distressed her; and an annual decrease of near half a million must, if not prevented, in a few years, totally ruin the little commerce that still remains. The prospect is gloomy. The taxes must be lessened, and the ruin, which we have brought on an unfortunate country, will recoil upon ourselves.

To illustrate the argument by comparison. Were the paper-currency of Great Britain totally suppressed, and her gold and silver currency, which is estimated at seven millions, left for the purposes of trade and taxation, it is evident that ruinous consequences must ensue; but none will pretend to affirm, that the nation, by such a measure, would become one farthing poorer than before. Trade, however, from the want of a sufficient quantity of the signs of wealth and property, would be cramped in all its veins. The interest of money, in spite of laws, would rise to an enormous pitch. The same want of currency would, at the same time, become such a check upon luxury, that the price of labour, and especially of provisions, would fall, unless the latter were kept up by rigorously enforcing the present taxes without abatement. The price of provisions, in that case, would rise every day, and the poor would daily become less able to purchase. The people would, in a very few years, be stript of all their property, and national beggary would be followed by national ruin.

Bengal, from the decrease of her specie, feels, in fact, the miseries which we have in speculation just described. Were not her taxes enforced by oppression, provisions would fall in proportion to the decrease of wealth; supposing the number of inhabitants and state of cultivation to continue the same. But the reverse happens, from our endeavouring to keep up the revenues to their former pitch. The farmer

cannot sell his grain without a price, which bears a proportion to the rents which he is obliged to pay, whilst his cultivation decreases for want of a sufficient stock. The consumer, at the same time, must have food. If he is a manufacturer or labourer, he must raise his goods or his wages to answer the price of bread. The evils of a forced state of society increase. Famine, with all its horrors, ensues; and, by sweeping away some millions of wretched people, gives, to the unhappy survivors, the respite of a few years.

Observations on Monopolies.

THE monopolies established by the servants of the Company in Bengal, furnish an ample field for animadversion. But other writers have already occupied that province. The brevity which the Author of the Inquiry has prescribed to his work, induces him to pass lightly over ground that has been trodden before. It is superfluous to insist upon the prejudice which monopoly has done to the natural rights of the natives, and to the privileges which they possessed, by prescription, from despotism itself. This part of the subject has been handled with ability by others: we shall slightly touch upon what has escaped their observation.

Salt, in almost every country, is one of the necessaries of life. In Bengal, which still contains near fifteen millions of people, the consumption of this article must be very great; for, besides what they themselves consume, they mix great quantities with the food of their cattle. Salt is produced by filtrating the earth near the mouths of the Ganges, and by then boiling the water which is impregnated with saline particles. The process is simple and cheap, where wood for fuel costs nothing. The low price at which salt could be conveyed through all the branches of the Ganges, rendered it an advantageous article of trade with the inland ports of Hindostan. Great quantities were sent to Benâris and Mir-

rapour, from the markets of which, the provinces of Oud and Allahabád, the territories of the Raja of Bundela, and of all the petty princes of the kingdom of Malava, were supplied. This trade, by a society of monopolists in Calcutta, was seized in the year 1765. Avarice got the better of prudence, and a rage for present gain cut off all future prospects. The article of salt was raised two hundred *per cent.*; and the foreign purchasers, finding that they could be supplied at a much cheaper rate with rock-salt from the dominions of the Rohillas near Delhi, this valuable commerce at once was lost.

Beetle-nut and tobacco have, by the strength of habit, become almost necessities of life in Hindostan. The first is produced in many parts of the Decan; and the latter is cultivated over all the empire. There was, however, a considerable exportation from Bengal in these articles; and it, unfortunately for that country, attracted the notice of the monopolists. But, as if monopolies were not sufficient to destroy the inland commerce of Bengal with the rest of Hindostan, an edict was issued, in the year 1768, prohibiting all the servants of the Company, the free merchants, Armenians, Portuguese, and all foreigners whatsoever, from carrying goods beyond the limits of our province, under the pain of confiscation, and the severest punishments inflicted on their agents.

The court of directors, it is but justice to declare, have invariably opposed the above-recited destructive monopolies. But the commands of fugitive and transient masters are weak in opposition to interest. The fluctuations in Leadenhall-street, deprived the mandates which issued from it of all their authority; and the presidency abroad frequently received orders from their constituents at home, with the same inattention that the Nizám of Golconda would pay to the Firán of the unfortunate Shaw Allum. The directors, in short, are only to blame in an acquiescence to a disobedience to the orders

of their predecessors in office. Carrying frequently the animosity of prior contention into their measures, they forgot the attention due to their own power, in the pleasure of seeing a slur thrown on that of their opponents. They are also blameable for the suspicious veil of secrecy with which they affect to cover their affairs. The door of information is, in some measure, shut up; the inferior servants are precluded, by an ill-founded fear, from laying open to them the state of government abroad, and it was perhaps the interest of their superior servants to conceal a part of the truth. Substantial darkness has by these means settled on objects which it is even the interest of the Company, as well as of the nation, should be known to the world.

Mode of collecting the Revenues.

THE Princes, whom we raised in Bengal, vanished imperceptibly from their thrones. Light and unsubstantial as the shew of power with which, as in derision, we invested them, they disappeared, like Romulus, but without a storm. The benefits derived from former revolutions, created a love of change; and the angel of death, if not our friend, was opportune in his frequent visits to the Musnud. In the course of five years, three Nabobs expired; and the unfledged sovereign, who acceded to the nominal government of Bengal on the March of 1770, has enjoyed already, considering the times, a long reign. Nabobs, to own the truth, are useless; and they are dismissed to their fathers, without either ceremony or noise.

In the year 1765, upon the demise of Jaffier, whom we had, for the first time, raised in 1757 to the government for his convenient treachery to his master, Nijim-ul-Dowla, his son by a common prostitute, was, in the eighteenth year of his age, placed upon the throne, in the capital of Murshe-dabad. Soon after the accession of this prince, a noble

governor, on the part of the Company, arrived at Calcutta, and executed the treaty which has furnished materials for a preceding section. Mahommed Riza, a man of less integrity than abilities, was made prime minister; activity being a virtue more necessary to the intention of his creation than honesty. The wretched Nijim-ul-Dowla was a mere name; a figure of state more despicable, if possible, than the meanness of his family and parts. The whole executive government turned upon Mahommed Riza. A resident was sent from Calcutta to check the accounts of the nominal government; as if one man, who knew very little of the language, manners, and opinions of the people, could prevent the frauds of an artful minister, and ten thousand of his dependants, versed in the management of finance. The consequence might be foreseen with little penetration. Unable and perhaps unwilling to oppose the current, the resident fell down with the stream, and became so far a check upon Mahommed, that he appropriated to himself a part of what the minister might otherwise have thrown into his own treasure.

Mahommed Riza, as a small salary of office, received annually one hundred and twelve thousand five hundred pounds, with three hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds a-year to be distributed in pensions among his friends. The minister, with his other good qualities, had no local attachment to friends. They were of various complexions and religions; fair-faced Europeans, as well as swarthy Indians; and, though professing Mahomedanism himself, he was so far from being an enemy to the uncircumcised, that it is said the most of his pensions and gratuities were bestowed on good Christians born in Great Britain and Ireland. Mahommed, however, did not take up his whole time with acts of benevolence to our nation. He applied himself to business; and he was more rigid in executing the government which the revolted Nabobs had esta-

lished in Bengal, than fond of introducing innovations more favourable to the prosperity of the country.

The Nabobs of Bengal, it has been already observed, began the ruinous policy of farming out the lands annually; leaving the wretched tenants to the oppression and tyranny of temporary Zemindars. At the commencement of every year, there is a general congress of all the great farmers, at the capital of Bengal; which meeting is, in the language of the country, called *Punea*. The object of the congress is to settle the accounts of the former year, and to give the lands for another, to the highest bidder. The competition between the farmers is favourable to the private interest of Mahommed Riza and his friend the resident; but it is destructive to the poor, and consequently to the Company's affairs.

The charge of travelling from the more distant divisions of the province, and the expence of living in the capital, are but a very inconsiderable part of the loss of the farmers in this visit to court. Pretences are never wanting to intimidate them, on account of their past conduct; and where no competitors offer of themselves, some are created by the minister, to raise anxiety and terror. Presents are an infallible remedy for quashing all inquiries into former oppressions; and a bribe secures to them the power of exercising, for another year, their tyrannies over the unhappy tenants. It would be endless to trace the intrigues of the farmers upon this occasion: it would be difficult to expose all the artful villainy of the minister. The Zemindars, however wealthy they may be, feign such poverty, as not to be able to make up the balances of the preceding year. They have even been known to carry the farce so far, as to suffer a severe whipping before they would produce their money.

The avarice of Mahommed Riza is the cause of this unmanly behaviour in the wretched farmers. When they seem rich, the impost is raised; and the bribe must in proportion be greater. Their love of money is often more powerful

than the fear of bodily pain. When they have long groaned under the lash, some banker or money-broker appears, who, for the exorbitant interest of ten per cent. per month, discharges the debt. The farmer, by such means as these, often deceives the vigilance of the minister and resident, and obtains his lands for another year, because no one else will offer a sum which the possessor finds so much difficulty to pay. A friend, in the secret, gives security for the rents; and a present, thrown into the hands of the minister, suspends, for a time, the discipline of the whip.

In the year 1767, the Author of the Inquiry, who resided, at the time, in Bengal, had the curiosity to calculate the expence of the Bundubust, or yearly settlement. He formed his estimate from the accounts of various Zemindars, and he avers, without exaggeration, that the expences amounted to twenty-seven and one-half per cent. of the rents of their lands; which may amount to a million sterling. These trivial perquisites were shared between Mahommed Riza, his friends, and the bankers of Murshedabad. The place of the Company's resident at the Durbâr, or the court of the Nabob, was HONESTLY worth one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year.

These embezzlements and fraudulent practices were not, however, so detrimental to the Company's affairs, from the actual decrease in the revenues, as from the general depravity of manners, and the oppressions which they introduced. When the sources of government are corrupted, they poison the whole stream. Every petty officer in the state, every clerk of the revenues, assumed the tyrant in his own department. Justice was totally suspended; and the fear of being plundered by a superior, was the only check that remained against the commission of the most atrocious crimes. Every instance of abstaining from the most cruel oppressions, proceeded from indolence: every act of tyranny from the love of money. The distemper of avarice, in the

extreme, seemed to infect all whom the wrath of God against a devoted people had placed in power.

The consequences of this mode of letting the lands of Bengal, were such as might, with little foresight, have been expected; had not stronger impressions than those of reason been necessary to convince men of a profitable error. Nothing in the conquered provinces was premeditated but rapine. Every thing, but plunder, was left to chance and necessity, who impose their own laws. The farmers, having no certainty of holding the lands beyond the year, made no improvements. Their profit must be immediate, to satisfy the hand of avarice, which was suspended over their heads. Impressed with the uncertainty of their situation, they raised the rents, to the last farthing, on the wretched tenants; who, unwilling to forsake their ancient habitations and household gods, submitted to impositions which they could not pay. They looked up to Heaven in their distress; but no redress remained for the wretched.

Year after year brought new tyrants, or confirmed the old in the practice of their former oppressions. The tenants being at length ruined, the farmers were unable to make good their contracts with government. Their cruelty to their inferiors recoiled, at length, on themselves. Many of them were bound to stakes and whipped; but their poverty ceased to be feigned. Their complaints were heard in every square of Murshedabad; and not a few of them expired in agonies under the lash. Many of the inferior tenants, reduced to despair, fled the country, hoping to derive from other despotisms, that lenity which our indolence, to speak the best of ourselves, denied. Those that remained were deprived of the small stock necessary for cultivation; and a great part of the lands lay waste. Every governor thought it incumbent upon him to keep up the revenues to their former pitch; but, in spite of the permitted cruelty of Mahommed Riza, they continued every

year to decrease. It could not have happened otherwise ; unless Heaven had wrought miracles as a reward for our VIRTUES.

In proportion as an unfortunate people became less able to bear the established taxation, the modes of collecting it became more oppressive. Seven entire battalions were added to our military establishment to enforce the collections. They carried terror and ruin through the country ; but poverty was more prevalent than obstinacy every where. This new force became an enormous expence to the Company ; and the unnatural pressure on the people raised the price of provisions. The manufacturers, to be able to purchase bread, shewed an inclination to raise the price of their goods. It was soon perceived that, should this be permitted, the manufactures of Bengal would not answer in Europe, so as even to indemnify the Company for prime cost, for duties, and other expences, exclusive of the profit which a commercial body had a right to expect. The prices must be kept down ; but this could not be done without violence. Provisions became daily dearer ; and the demand for goods increased.

The officers chiefly employed in the management of the revenues, being needy adventurers from Persia and the upper India, carried avarice, as well as the arbitrary ideas of their own distracted governments, into their departments. Solicitous to obtain an immediate advantage to themselves, they forgot the interest of their employers ; and practised every species of rapine and violence on the timid inhabitants of Bengal. The wealth which, in the space of a few years, they accumulated, enabled them to return into their native countries ; and thus they furnished another cause of the decline of specie in the kingdom. These foreign collectors maintained a numerous train of needy dependants, who, under the protection of their tyrannical masters, assumed the privilege of rapine and peculation. Venality ceased to

be a crime; and dexterity in the art of imposition, was deemed a recommendation to the first offices of trust.

Mahommed Riza made it his invariable policy to keep the servants of the Company in ignorance of the true state of affairs; and when any deception was practised, another was formed to conceal it from view. He entered into a collusion with many of the farmers. Occasional accounts were framed; and the usual accounts were studiously involved in inextricable confusion. Men averse to trouble throw them aside, and neglect their duty in their indolence. The servants of Mahommed Riza not only escape censure, but retain their places; and thus iniquity furnishes to itself a new field for a repetition of its execrable talents.

To investigate the various demands and extortions of the Aumins, or the protectors of the people, who, instead of defending, pillage their charge, would be endless. These, by a collusion with the Zemindars, prey with them on the unfortunate tenants. The Gomâstas, or agents, Dellols, Pikes, Pikars, Burkândaz, and other vermin, employed in the collection and investment, establish a thousand modes of oppression and extortion. An ignorant and unhappy people see these officers of government through the medium of fear; and comply, in melancholy silence, with their exorbitant demands. No collector, not even his principal servant, travels over any part of his district, without imposing upon the village in which he chooses to rest, a tax of rice, fowl, kid, fruits, and every other luxury of the table, for himself and his dependants. He also levies fines, at pleasure, for frivolous offences, and under various and often false pretexts. The crime consists in the ability of the person to pay the fine; and nothing but excess of misery and poverty is safe from the griping hand of avarice.

The Zemindars, or principal farmers, copy the officers of government in tyranny. The Riôts, or wretched tenants, are forced to give their labour gratuitously to this transitory

lord of a year, whenever he chooses to employ their toil in his fields, when their own farms lie waste for want of cultivation. There is not one article of consumption with which the poor tenants are not obliged to supply the general farmer. The quantity brought is frequently more than his consumption demands; and, in these cases, they are forced, under the inspection of his servants, to carry their own property to market, and to dispose of it for the use of their lord. They even frequently raise or fall the exchange upon the roupées, against the wretched husbandmen: and, without even the strength of custom, they exact from the lower sort, fees upon births, marriages, and contracts. There is scarce an occurrence upon which they have not invented arbitrary imposts.

The Company, having never examined into the real tenures by which many possess their lands, left an ample field for sequestration, fraud, and encroachment. The Talookdars, or the favourites and dependants of former Nabobs, hold, by grants from their patrons, extensive tracts of land. Some of these grants convey a kind of freehold; others, estates at a very low rent, possessing, besides, particular exemptions and extraordinary immunities. These alienations were never valid, in the days of the empire, without being renewed by every viceroy; and no good reason remains why they should now exist, as the illegal means of oppression, in the hands of petty tyrants. They have even added encroachment upon the adjacent lands to the injustice by which they possess their own; and they have presumed to lay tolls on ferries, and imposts upon markets, even beyond the limits of their imperfect grants. This encroachment on the rights of the Company is, however, a kind of benefit to the people. The possessor of the grant considers the lands which it describes, as his own property; and he is, from a natural selfishness, more a friend to his inferiors than the fugitive Zemindar of a year.

To render clear affairs hitherto little understood, we must descend into more particulars. The frauds and oppressions committed in Bengal in the collection of the revenue, are as various as they are without number. The interior policy subsisting in that kingdom, will throw new light on the subject. Some of the lands in Bengal go under the designation of Comâr, having no native tenants, being cultivated by vagrant husbandmen, who wander from place to place in quest of labour. A farmer takes frequently large tracts of these lands upon contract. He obliges himself to be answerable to government for the produce; but he keeps the accounts himself. The vagrant husbandmen whom he employs, having neither implements of agriculture nor stock, are, from time to time, supplied with small sums by the farmer, and when the harvest is gathered in, he appropriates to himself two-thirds of the crop; after paying himself from the remainder, for the interest of the sums advanced to the vagrants. The accounts delivered in to government contain every thing but the truth; and this mode, from our indolence, becoming most profitable to the Zemindar, he wishes to depopulate the country, in some measure, for his own gain.

The lands which are under the immediate management of government, are, in the language of the country, called Coss. They differ from the Comâr in various particulars. Stewards are appointed to superintend them, without the power of making new contracts with the tenants, or of raising upon them the rents, being accountable only for the rents of the lands as they stand upon the rolls of the district. These rolls, however, are in general false and defective. Some lands, to serve particular friends, are greatly under-rated; and others are entirely concealed by the address of the stewards. To grant certain immunities to the stewards themselves, was formerly much in practice. They were permitted to possess for their subsistence, gardens, pastures, ponds for fish, and

fields for rice. These privileges have been greatly enlarged since Bengal fell under the Company; and the stewards have fixed no decent bounds to their encroachments.

The lands distinguished by the name of Riotty, are possessed and cultivated by the native inhabitants under Zemindars, or farmers, who contract for them with government for an annual sum. The rents are partly levied on a measurement, and partly on the various productions which are sent to market, and converted into money by the farmer. The ruinous effects of this mode of collecting the revenue have been already explained. There are, besides, great quantities of waste lands, which are of two kinds; lands struck off the public books at a former period, which are now cultivated but not brought to account; and such as are really waste, which comprehend at least one fourth part of Bengal. Of the former there are many large fertile tracts, well cultivated, which have been appropriated by Zemindars and their dependants; and they find means, in their accounts with an indolent government, to avoid all scrutiny into their usurpations.

To add to the mismanagement, lands are set apart for almost every officer under the government; a mode of salary which makes no appearance upon the annual accounts, but which, notwithstanding, amounts to more than all the apparent charges of collection. Great hurt arises to the revenues from this practice, and the abuse subsists without reformation. The lands of all the officers ought instantly to be resumed, and their salaries to be paid out of the exchequer. Many of the collectors have also imposed partial duties upon the subject; and thus have added oppression and injustice to the people, to their usurpations upon government.

Justice is suffered to be greatly perverted by the officers above specified; and others, who, from their inherent art or abilities, substitute their own decisions where government have established no legal judges. The custom of imposing

mulcts and fines in all cases, is an intolerable grievance to a wretched people. The rich suffer, by having money to give; the poor, by being deprived of restitution, because they have none. Every Mahomedan who can mutter over the Coran, raises himself to a judge, without either licence or appointment; and every Brahmin, at the head of a tribe, distributes justice according to his own fancy without control. The latter threatens the ignorant with the dreadful punishment of excommunication; and thus his own moderation becomes the measure of the sums which he receives from an unfortunate race of men.

Such, in the year 1767, was the true state of Bengal: but, it is to be hoped, that the regulations of 1770 have reformed many abuses. A plan was in that year digested, and begun to be carried into execution, by men who could not be strangers to any one of the above particulars; though, from their strict adherence to the regulations of a noble governor, to which they were tied down by express orders from the Court of Directors, the abuses were permitted to exist till the country was beggared and depopulated. The effect which the plan may have, cannot yet be estimated with precision. Were we, however, to judge from the improvements in Burdwan, which has been under the management of a very able servant for some years past, and has greatly increased in revenue and population, the new regulations will be attended with very considerable advantages to the Company. But even Burdwan owed part of its prosperity to the misery and distress of the surrounding districts. The plan adopted will be far from effectuating the reformation and increase of the revenue which are now required; for the balance of the revenue could, in the year 1770, hardly discharge the four hundred thousand pounds paid annually to government. If our information is just, what mighty advantages have the Company derived from their great acquisitions in Bengal?

Idea of the present Government of Bengal.

THE total suspension of all justice, among the natives of Bengal, was another cause of national decay. Men who retained some property in spite of the violence of the times, instead of being protected by British laws, found that they had not even the justice of a despot to depend upon when they were wronged. The officers of the Nabob, AS THEY WERE CALLED, committed every species of violence, under the pretence of the orders of the Company. When any person complained to the governor and council, he was referred back to those very men of whom he had complained. The heavy crime of having appealed to British justice was thrown in his face, by oppressors who were at once judges and party; and ruin and corporal punishment were added to his other wrongs. The spirit which asserts the natural rights of mankind, was called insolence, till it was totally broken by oppression; and men were even cautious in venturing their complaints in secret, fearing that the very walls of their most private apartments had ears.

These grievances, however, proceeded not from the inhumanity of the British governors in Bengal. The Author of the Inquiry can aver, from personal knowledge, that the successors of a certain noble lord were men of probity and honour, enemies to oppression and cruelty of every kind. But the whole weight of such a monstrous and heterogeneous chaos of government, consisting of military, political, commercial, and judicial affairs, falling upon the shoulders of men unexperienced in the regulation and management of the great machine of state, it was impossible for them to give the necessary attention to all departments. The multiplicity of affairs overwhelmed them with its weight; and the kingdom suffered more from a total want of system, than from any premeditated design.

The courts of justice, which the wisdom of the house of Timur had established in the cities and various divisions of the provinces, were either annihilated, or they lost their power under the summary despotism of the revolted Nabobs. Mahommed Riza, as the acting minister, had the whole executive power in his hands; and those who retained the name of judges, were only the executioners of his partial and violent decisions. The Company's governor could not, in the nature of things, enter into the cause of every individual in a very populous kingdom. When he consulted his own ease, he yielded to a kind of necessity; and he had to his own conscience the plausible excuse of having remanded the complaints to the judgment of a man who was perfectly acquainted with the manners, customs, and prejudices of the natives.

But even friendship itself will not permit the Writer of the Inquiry to justify the political conduct of any of those men who possessed the supreme power in Bengal. Many regulations, obvious in themselves, might have been formed; many pernicious practices been abolished, which have been continued either through negligence, or motives of another kind. Among the latter, ought to be numbered the custom of striking roupees every year, and issuing them out at five per centum above the real weight and standard. To explain the subject, a dry dissertation must be introduced. The new-coined roupees are issued from the mint at sixteen per centum more than the current roupee; a coin merely imaginary, for the convenience of reducing all money to a certain denomination. The Sicca roupee, as the coin is called, continues to circulate, at the above value, till towards the latter end of the first year. The dealers in money, as the roupee loses three per centum of its value at the beginning of the second year, refuse to receive it in payment, without a deduction of one or two per centum as it advances to that period.

In the beginning of the second year, the roupee, by this most preposterous of all regulations, has lost three per centum of its imaginary value. In this manner it continues gradually to fall, till the third year after coinage; and, from that time forward, it remains at eleven per centum, the intrinsic value of the silver. The possessor of the roupee may then, upon the payment of the three per centum to the mint, have the same re-coined into a new Sicca of the imaginary value of sixteen per centum. This gain of two per centum is intended as an inducement to bring in the silver, that the government may have an opportunity, every year, of robbing the public of three per centum upon the greater part of their current specie. To support this most iniquitous system, the revenues are directed to be paid in the new Sicca roupees, otherwise the money-changer will make such deductions as must occasion a very considerable loss to the unfortunate people. This evil is attended by another. The course of exchange in the markets varies toward the worst, from this cruel regulation by government, from combinations among the bankers, and the demand for particular roupees to discharge the revenue.

This mode of levying an annual tax on the silver currency, is not of the invention of the British governors of Bengal. The regulation derived its first existence from the well-known bankers, the Jaggat Seats of Murshedabad, in the short reign of the inconsiderate Surage-ul-Dowla. The error lies in its being adopted. But we drop this part of the subject, and return to the present state of government. To do justice to the Court of Directors, their repeated orders have checked the violence and rapine of the nominal government of the Nabob. Some of the Company's servants superintend, in various divisions of the country, the collection of the revenue. The pension and emoluments of Mahomed Riza have been lessened with his power. The kingdom, in point of civil regulation, if civil regulation can exist

without regular courts of justice, is on a better footing than before. But much remains to be done! The distresses of an unfortunate people continue to increase, through causes which must be explained.

General Observations.

THE idea of the present state and government of Bengal conveyed in the preceding sections, justifies the following conclusion, That the Company, in the management of that great kingdom, have hitherto mistaken their own interest. To increase the revenues was the point to which their servants invariably directed their attention; but the means employed defeated their views, and became ruinous to a people whom their arms had subdued. Though they exported the specie, though they checked commerce by monopoly, they heaped oppression upon additional taxes, as if rigour were necessary to power.

Much penetration was not necessary to discover, that it was not by the revenues of Bengal alone that either the British nation or the Company were to be enriched. A country destitute of mines, deprived of foreign commerce, must, however opulent from better times, in the end be exhausted. The transitory acquisition, upon the opinion that all the specie of Bengal had centred in Great Britain, would have no desirable effect. The fugitive wealth would glide through our hands; and we would have only our folly to regret, when the sources would happen to become dry. Bengal, without rain to itself, could spare none of its specie; and the objects to which our aim should have been directed, are as obvious as they are salutary. We ought to have encouraged agriculture, the trade with the rest of Asia, and internal manufacture.

Agriculture constitutes the wealth of every state not

merely commercial. Bengal, a kingdom six hundred miles in length, and three hundred in breadth, is composed of one vast plain of the most fertile soil in the world. Watered by many navigable rivers, inhabited by fifteen millions of industrious people, capable of producing provisions for double the number, as appears from the deserts which oppression has made; it seems marked out, by the hand of nature, as the most advantageous region of the earth for agriculture. Where taxes are moderate, where security of property is joined to a rich soil, cultivation will increase, the necessaries of life will become cheap, as well as the gross materials which manufacturers require. Manufactures, by these means, would not only fall in their price, but they would be produced in a greater quantity; larger investments might be made by the Company, the consumption would increase, and the profits rise. Bengal can, in short, be useful only in the prosperity and industry of its inhabitants. Deprive it of the last remains of its wealth, and you ruin an unfortunate people, without enriching yourselves.

In the place of those placid regulations which render mankind useful to their lords, we substituted, with preposterous policy, force, the abrupt expedient of barbarous conquerors. The pressure of taxation has, in the space of a few years, trebled the price of provisions of all kinds. The Company have, in the mean time, been endeavouring, by every possible measure, to increase their investments, without raising the price. Various oppressions have, for this purpose, been adopted. This wretched expedient is of short duration. The manufacturer may, for one year, perhaps for two, redouble his industry; but whilst the work of his hands is forced from him at a stated and arbitrary price, he sinks under an uncommon effort, subject to despair. The principal servants of the Company, to conceal the evil, have found themselves obliged, either to remit in the quality of the goods, or to raise the price to the manufacturer. Both ex-

pedients have been in part adopted; but it is a temporary remedy, without the hopes of effectuating a cure.

The reasons already mentioned have contributed to destroy the trade of Bengal with the rest of Asia. Merchants can procure only the gleanings of the Company. The quality is inferior, and the prices high. Nations formerly supplied from Bengal, found themselves under the necessity of establishing manufactures of the same kind at home, or to adapt their clothing to their poverty. Argument on this head is superfluous. The plan must be totally and radically changed. The question is, not to oblige the people to become silk-winders, spinners, and weavers, and to take the fruits of their labour, as it is practised at present, at an arbitrary price. Industry cannot be forced upon a people; let them derive advantage from toil, and indolence shall lose its hold. Ingenuity expires under the foolish despotism which defeats its own ends; and human nature, in its most wretched state, revolts against labour which produces nothing but an increase of toil.

P L A N

FOR RESTORING BENGAL TO ITS FORMER PROSPERITY.

Preliminary Observations.

GOVERNMENT, among the natives of a country, rises imperceptibly from that impenetrable obscurity with which time and barbarism have covered the origin of mankind. When states are subdued by foreign enemies who are advanced in the arts of civil life, a new constitution generally starts up from their pressure upon the old. Some laws of the conquerors must necessarily supersede some of the regulations of the conquered; but the ancient form of government remains in all the lesser departments of the state. When the Patans conquered India, when the Moguls extended their empire over that country, many of the indigenous laws of the northern nations of Asia were introduced; but the great system, in most of its parts, descended from the regulations which Brahma transmitted, with his followers, from remote antiquity.

The British nation have become the conquerors of Bengal, and they ought to extend some part of their own fundamental jurisprudence to secure their conquests. To call the possessions of the Company by any other name, is to leave them undefined. The sword is our tenure, and not the Firmân of an unfortunate prince, who could not give what was not his own. The thin veil of the commission for the Dewanny is removed; and we see a great kingdom at last in our power, whose revolutions we directed before. It is an absolute conquest, and it is so considered by the world. This it was necessary to premise. The Author of the la-

quiry will now proceed to his plan for restoring our conquests to their former prosperity. But he proceeds with diffidence: he sees the magnitude of the subject, he feels his own want of abilities. He hopes not to escape without censure, as he confesses himself liable to error; but he shall answer his own purpose, if he can throw some rays of light upon a subject, which, though interesting to the nation, continues still involved in obscurity.

Proposal for establishing Landed Property.

POLICY precedes regulation in every society; and a nation has public before it has private concerns. The great line of general arrangement is prior to the inferior detail of government, the latter being necessarily a superstructure raised on the foundation of the former. In Bengal we are to suppose, that a new treaty is to settle its great affairs; otherwise we build on the sand, and the rain comes, and washes all away. We shall only mention a subject on which we may hereafter enlarge. Give the province of Allahabâd to Suja-ul-Dowla, the territories of Bulwant Singh to the emperor, recal your troops into your own dominions, make Patna or Mongeer the residence of the representative of Timur, degrade the wretched Mubârîck from his nominal Nabobship, and let Mahommed Riza RESIGN. These arrangements require no address; the persons mentioned were the creatures, and they still continue the slaves, of your power. Besides, the measures will not displease the parties. The province of Allahabâd will satisfy Suja-ul-Dowla for the territories of Bulwant Singh; Shaw Allum will prefer Patna to his residence at Allahabâd; a small pension is more eligible for Mubârîck, than the dangerous name of power which he does not hold; and Mahommed Riza has derived from his SERVICES the means of securing an affluent retreat for his age.

If it shall appear necessary to retain Bengal by an Imperial Firmán, let it be changed into that of perpetual Nabob.

This fundamental regulation being settled, another of equal boldness, but no less practicable, ought to succeed. An established idea of property is the source of all industry among individuals, and, of course, the foundation of public prosperity. When mankind are restrained from possessing any thing which they can call their own, they are but passengers in their native country, and make only those slight accommodations which suit fugitive wayfarers through the land. A carelessness for industry is the natural consequence of the transitoriness of the fruits of toil; and men sit sluggishly down, with their hands in their bosoms, when they are not for a moment certain of possessing property, much less of transmitting it to their posterity or friends.

The decline of agriculture, of commerce, and of trade, in the kingdom of Bengal, have been already represented, and the ruinous consequences of farming out the lands from year to year, have been amply explained. Though long leases might greatly contribute to remove these evils; there is no possibility of doubt, but the establishment of real property would more immediately and effectually promote a certainty of prosperity to the kingdom. Let, therefore, the Company be empowered, by act of Parliament, to dispose of all the lands in Bengal and Behár, in perpetuity, at an annual sum, not less than the present rents. This single operation would have a chain of beneficial effects. The first sale of the lands would raise a sum which cannot be estimated with any degree of precision; but we may venture to affirm, that, should the scheme be properly advertised before it was to take place, and a fourth part of the lands only to be disposed of every year, until the whole should be sold, no less than ten millions, besides a certain and perpetual revenue, might be drawn from the hidden treasures of Bengal, and especially from the other opulent kingdoms of Hindostan.

Mankind, it is easy to perceive, would, in an empire where no real property exists, crowd to a country in which they could enjoy the fruits of their labour, and transmit them to their posterity. Cultivation would be the consequence of security. The farmer would improve, to the height, lands that were his own. The revenue would be regularly paid without the heavy expence of a band of oppressors, under the name of Collectors, who suck the very vitals of the country; and nothing would be required but a few comptoirs for the purpose of receiving the rents. The whole face of the country would be changed in a few years: in the place of straggling towns, composed of miserable huts, half of which are washed away every season by the rain, great and opulent cities would arise. Inhabitants would crowd into Bengal from every corner of India, with their wealth; the deficiency in the currency would be restored, commerce would diffuse itself through every vein, and manufactures would flourish to a degree before unknown.

Men of speculation may suppose, that the security of property to the natives might infuse a spirit of freedom, dangerous to our power, into our Indian subjects. Nature herself seems to have denied liberty to the inhabitants of the torrid zone. To make the natives of the fertile soil of Bengal free, is beyond the power of political arrangement. The indolence which attends the climate, prevents men from that constant activity and exertion, which is necessary to keep the nice balance of freedom. Their religion, their institutions, their manners, the very dispositions of their minds, form them for passive obedience. To give them property would only bind them with stronger ties to our interest, and make them more our subjects; or, if the British nation prefers the name—more our slaves.

Men who have nothing to lose, are only enslaved by disunion, and the terror of the impending sword. Drive them to the last verge of poverty, and despair will stand in the

place of spirit, and make them free. Men possessed of property are enslaved by their interest, by their convenience, their luxury, and their inherent fears. We owe our freedom to the poverty of our ancestors, as much as to the rude independence of their ferocious barbarism. But it is even difficult, in the cool air of our climate, to retain, in the midst of luxury and wealth, the vigour of mind necessary to keep us free. To confer property on the inhabitants of Bengal, will never raise in their minds a spirit of independence. Their sole hopes of retaining that property, will be derived from our policy and valour. When we fall, their lands will deviate to other heirs.

The revenues of Bengal, when properly paid, amount to four millions. Should this sum appear too small for perpetuity, many ways and means of increasing the taxes, without raising the rents, will present themselves. The British nation, famous for their political freedom, are still more famous for their judgment and wisdom in imposing taxation. Let them transfer to the banks of the Ganges, a part of that science of finance, which has so much distinguished their councils at home. The wealth of the people of Bengal is a treasury which will never fail, if drawn upon with judgment. Taxes may rise, in a just proportion to the wealth which this regulation will inevitably throw into our dominions in the East.

Very extensive possessions in the hands of an individual, are productive of pernicious consequences in all countries; they ought, therefore, to be prevented in the present regulation. Let the purchasers be confined to a certain quantity of land, not exceeding, upon any account, fifty thousand roupees a year. To prevent the accumulation of landed property, let the spirit of the laws of a commonwealth be adopted, and the lands be divided equally among all the male issue of the proprietor. Let the moveable property be divided, among the Mahomedan part of our subjects,

according to the laws of the Coran. Let the Hindoos, in the same manner, retain their own laws of inheritance; which are clear, simple, and defined.

Paper Currency.

THE absolute establishment of landed property, would create a perfect confidence in our faith, among our subjects in the East; and this circumstance leads to another regulation, which, if adopted, would have a great and immediate effect on the prosperity of Bengal. The want of a sufficient quantity of specie for the purposes of trade and the common intercourses among mankind, is one of the greatest evils under which Bengal at present labours. Let, therefore, a paper currency be introduced; a measure at once salutary, easy, and practicable. Let a bank be immediately established at Calcutta, for the convenience of Europeans. This would, by becoming familiar to the natives, prepare them for a more general paper currency. The mode of carrying this into execution, is left in the hands of those better acquainted with the nature of banking, than the Author of the Inquiry.

To destroy, at once, the fraudulent science of exchange, which proves so detrimental to trade in Bengal, a current coin ought to be established, to pass without variation, for its fixed and intrinsic value. This was, in some degree, attempted by a noble governor, but he failed in his first principles, by imposing an arbitrary value upon his coin, not less than twenty per cent. above its intrinsic worth. No other reason is necessary for the bad success of this coinage. Though a decimal division of money is the most rational and commodious; yet entirely to change the forms of a country, in that respect, might be attended with great inconvenience. Let the roupee, therefore, consist, as at present, of sixteen of the imaginary Anas, which are now used in accounts in

Bengal. The Pice, which is the twelfth part of an Ana, may be continued as the imaginary coin; but a copper coin of one half of an Ana, would answer the subdivisions of money, and be greatly beneficial to the poor.

The immediate fall of the exorbitant interest of money which prevails in Bengal, would be one of the first effects of this regulation. Ten per centum is the present interest; not so much owing to insecurity, as to the want of currency. Men of undoubted and established credit are ready to give this great premium to the lender, as they can turn the money to a great and immediate advantage. Were every man enabled, by a paper currency, to bring his whole property to the market, monopoly, in spite of oppression, would be at an end, and trade extend itself through a thousand channels not known now in speculation. The consequence would be highly beneficial; Bengal would draw great quantities of money from all the regions of Asia; and, by enriching herself, be rendered capable of bearing such taxes upon different articles, as this nation, for the augmentation of the revenues, might think proper to impose.

Napal, Thibet, Ava, Arracan, Pegu, Siam, Cochinchina, China, and almost all the islands in the Eastern ocean, produce gold: in the west, that metal seems to be found only in the Turkish Diarbekir. Japan and China only have silver mines. Asia contains native wealth, which has enriched it in all ages, exclusive of the balance of its commerce against Europe. The Author of the Inquiry means not that specie should be drawn from the East. But it might centre in Bengal, and make it one of the richest kingdoms in the world; whilst we might import, in its manufactures, the surplus of its revenues, without damaging either its foreign commerce or internal prosperity.

These two plans, and it is to be feared only these, would restore, under a government established on impartial justice, Bengal to its former prosperity and splendour. Let the

lands be disposed of in property: let a paper currency be established. Every individual would, in such a case, become industrious in improving his own estate; provisions would fall to a third part of the present price; the country would assume a new face, and the people wear the aspect of joy. Immense tracts of rich land, which now, with their woods, conceal the ruins of great cities, would again be cultivated; and new provinces arise out of those marshy islands, near the mouth of the Ganges, which are, at present, the wild haunts of the rhinoceros and tiger.

Monopolies.

THERE is no maxim in commerce better established, than the destructive tendency of monopolies. In Bengal, its recent evils are well-known and abhorred. A law must provide against it; otherwise every other regulation will be made in vain. The inhabitants must be permitted to enjoy a free trade; subject, however, to such imposts upon various articles, excepting those of either the growth or manufacture of Great Britain, as may be thought reasonable from time to time. Gross articles, necessary for carrying on the finer manufactures, ought, however, to be exempted from duty; and every encouragement possible given to the export trade.

Free merchants ought to be encouraged; neither must they be excluded from the inland trade; as that circumstance would place the subjects of Great Britain on a worse footing than foreigners, whom we cannot, without violence, prevent from trading wherever they please. Let, however, the residence of the free merchants be confined to Calcutta; as the influence which all the natives of Britain have acquired over the inhabitants of Bengal, is so great, that the selfish can convert it into the means of oppression. The Indian agents of British traders will not carry, among a wretched people, the same terror which clothes their masters; whom it is

a kind of sacrilege not to obey, in their most unjust commands.

The servants of the Company will have many objections to this proposal. But the management of the revenues, and of the general trade, which must remain in their hands, will still give them superior advantages, sufficient to gratify all their reasonable desires. The influence of a member of the council will, without doubt, enable any man, in that high station, to engross a share of the trade, almost equal to a partial monopoly. Should even a man of that rank be so self-denied, as not to take advantage of the influence annexed to his place, his attention to commerce would encroach on the time allotted for public affairs. Let him, therefore, when he rises to the board, be debarred from trading, either directly or indirectly, by severe penalties of law; and let there an ample allowance be made for his services, from the funds of the Company.

Religion.

MEN who submit to bodily servitude, have been known to revolt against the slavery imposed on their minds. We may use the Indians for our benefit in this world, but let them serve themselves as they can in the next. All religions must be tolerated in Bengal, except in the practice of some inhuman customs, which the Mahomedans have already, in a great measure, destroyed. We must not permit young widows, in their virtuous enthusiasm, to throw themselves on the funeral pile with their dead husbands; nor the sick and aged to be drowned, when their friends despair of their lives.

The Hindoo religion, in other respects, inspires the purest morals. Productive, from its principles, of the greatest degree of subordination to authority, it prepares mankind for the government of foreign lords. It supplies, by its well-followed precepts, the place of penal laws; and it renders

crimes almost unknown in the land. The peaceable sentiments which it breathes, will check the more warlike doctrines promulgated by the Coran. The prudent successors of Timur saw that the Hindoo religion was favourable to their power; and they sheathed the sword, which the other princes of the Mahomedan persuasion employed in establishing their own faith, in all their conquests. Freedom of conscience was always enjoyed in India in the absence of political freedom.

Attention must be paid to the usages and very prejudices of the people, as well as a regard for their religion. Though many things of that kind may appear absurd and trivial among Europeans, they are of the utmost importance among the Indians. The least breach of them may be productive of an expulsion from the society; a more dreadful punishment Draco himself could not devise. But the caution about religion is superfluous: these are no converting days. Among the list of crimes committed in Bengal, persecution for religion is not to be found; and he that will consent to part with his property, may carry his opinions away with freedom.

The Executive Power.

THE great path of general regulation is with less difficulty traced, than the minute lines which carry the current of government from the centre to the extremities of the state. Practice resists theory more on this subject than in any other; and the wisest legislators can neither foresee nor prevent obstacles, which may rise in the progress of time. In a country where the body of the people meet annually, in their representatives, to new inconveniences new remedies may be instantly applied; and even the mandate of the despot loses half its tyranny, in the expedition with which it opposes evil.

The distance of Bengal from the eye of the British legislature, renders it extremely difficult for them to frame laws against every emergency that may arise; and it is equally difficult, with propriety, to create a legislative authority in a kingdom, which cannot, in the nature of things, have a representative of its own. The executive power being vested in the governor and council, it is dangerous to trust them with the legislative; and it is impossible to permit the court of justice, which we mean to propose, to make those laws upon which they are to decide. The least of two evils is preferred by the prudent. Let the governor and council suggest annually, in their general letter, the necessary regulations; and these, after being duly weighed by the Company, in their collective body at home, be laid before parliament, to be by them, if found just, necessary, and equitable, framed into a law. The general laws for the government of Bengal being, by the British legislature once established, the inconveniences which may arise in India, will neither be so great nor detrimental as to occasion much mischief for one, or even two years; in which time, the proposed regulations, sent home by the governor and council, will return to them with the force of laws.

The executive power, in its full extent, as at present, must be vested in a president and council, of which the chief justice and commander in chief of the troops ought to be, *ex officio*, members. The number should be increased to sixteen, of which any five, with the president, may form a board; and ten always to reside at Calcutta, exclusive of the chief justice and the commander in chief, should even the peaceableness of the times permit him to be absent from the army. The four remaining counsellors should be directed to reside in the capitals of the larger districts, into which, for the benefit of justice, we shall hereafter divide the provinces of Bengal and Behâr. The business for forming regulations to make a foundation of a law, being of the last

importance, ought never to come before less than ten members in council, of whom the chief justice ought invariably to be one.

Let a general board of revenue be established at Calcutta, at which a member of the council is to preside. Let this board, in its inferior departments, be conducted by the Company's servants; and let it receive the correspondence and check the accounts of four other boards of the same kind, but of inferior jurisdiction, to be fixed at Dacca, Murshedabâd, Mongeer, and Patna. Let the provinces of Bengal and Behâr be divided into five equal divisions, each subject, in the first instance, to one of the four boards, which are all under the control of the superior board of revenue established at Calcutta. In the lesser districts, let a Company's servant superintend the collection of the revenue; and be accountable for his transactions to the board under whose jurisdiction he acts.

The wild chaos of government, in the absence of all rule deserves the name, which subsists in Bengal, must be utterly removed. There some faint traces of the British constitution is mixed with the positive orders of a Court of Directors, the convenient and temporary expedients of a trading governor and council, the secret orders of the select committee, the influence of the president with the Nabob, and the boisterous despotism of Mahommed Riza. To separate, or even to restrain, them within proper bounds, is beyond human capacity; some branches must be lopt off to give more vigour and room to others to flourish. Mubârîck must retire from the Musnud; Mahommed Riza and the secret committee vanish away; and even the council itself must be restrained from *BREVI MANU* despotism; such as, the sending home, by force, British subjects, and dismissing officers without the sentence of a court martial.

Judicial Power.

To preserve the health of the political body, the pure stream of impartial justice must rush with vigour through every vein. When it meets with obstructions, a disease is produced; and when the whole mass becomes corrupted, a langour succeeds, which frequently terminates in death. To drop the metaphor, the distributors of justice ought to be independent of every thing but the law. The executive part of government must not interfere with the decisions of the judge, otherwise that officer, who was created for the defence of the subject from injury, becomes a tool of oppression in the hands of despotism.

The first principle of wise legislation is to open an easy passage to the temple of justice. Where the seat of redress is either distant or difficult of access, an injury is forgot to avoid the trouble of complaint; and thus injustice is encouraged by the almost certain prospect of impunity. To avoid this evil, the Author of the Inquiry thinks it necessary, that the act of the legislature, which shall constitute the mode of distributing justice, should also divide Bengal and Behár into five great provinces, the capitals of which ought to be Calcutta, Murshedábd, and Dacca, in Bengal; and Patna and Mongeer in Behár. Let each of these five great divisions be subdivided into ten Chacklas, or extensive districts, almost the number of which the kingdom consists at present; and let each of these be still subdivided into an indefinite number of Pergunnas.

To bring justice, to use a certain author's words, home to the door of every man, let there, in each village, be established, as in the days of the empire, a Mucknuddum, to act as a constable for the preservation of the peace. A Sheich-dár, with a commission similar to that of a justice of the peace, should be fixed in the most central part of the Per-

gunna or lesser district, to whom disputes, which cannot be quashed by the authority of the Muckuddum, or constable, may be referred. Let the court of this officer, however, communicate with another of a more extensive and ample jurisdiction, established in the capital of the division or district, of which the Pergunna is a part.

Similar to the office of a Sheikdâr or justice of the peace, ought to be that of the Cutwâl or mayor of great towns and considerable cities. The wisdom of the house of Timur established this officer, to animadvert upon thieves, gamblers, and other miscreants; to remove nuisances, to suppress pimps and jugglers, to prevent forestalling of grain and other provisions; to be the regulator of the market, and to decide in all trivial and vexatious disputes, that tended toward a breach of the peace. His ministerial office coincided almost with that of the mayors of our lesser towns; and his court was the counterpart of the now obsolete *CURIA FUDERIZATI*, mentioned by our lawyers.

In every Chuckla, or greater division, let there be established a court similar in its nature, but different in its mode, to the courts of Cutcherri, instituted in the days of the empire. Let this court be composed of the Company's servant, residing for the collection of the revenue in the Chuckla, and of two Mahommed Cazis, and two Brahmins. The servant of the Company ought to be the nominal president of the court, but only to sit when the voices are equal, to throw his casting-vote on the side of equity. In such a case the process to begin anew. The fees of the court must be regulated, and a table of the expence of every article to be hung up to public view in the common hall. The punishment for corruption, upon conviction in the supreme court of Bengal, ought to rise to a degree of severity suitable to the danger of the crime.

This court, besides the power of hearing appeals from the decisions of the Sheichdâr in the lesser districts, ought to

retain its ancient authority, subject, however, to an appeal from decisions beyond a sum to be specified, to the provincial courts, which shall be hereafter described. Its jurisdiction ought to extend to the contracting and dissolving of marriages, to the settlement of dowries for women, and the succession to money and moveables among children, according to the respective institutes of the Mahomedan and Hindoo systems of religion. It ought also to be a court of record; and to be obliged to keep an exact register of all public and private contracts, births, marriages, and deaths; and, to execute that department of the business, a Canongoe and a Mutaseddy, as clerks, ought to be annexed to each court. These, with other matters to be described in the succeeding section, ought to comprehend the whole power of the court of Cutcherry.

In each of the capitals of the five provinces, a member of the council of state at Calcutta ought to reside. He, together with possessing the management of the Company's commercial affairs in his province, ought to be empowered, by a special commission, with three assessors of the elder resident servants, to form and preside in a court of justice, which we shall, for distinction, call The provincial court of appeal. To direct their judgment upon points of law, an officer, under the name of Attorney-general for the province, ought to be appointed to give his advice, together with a Mahomedan Cazi and an Indian Brahmin, to explain the principles of their respective institutions and usages, and to tender oaths to the parties. Suits may originate in this court; and it ought to have the power of removing before itself the proceedings of the court of Cutcherry.

To establish thoroughly the independence of the judicial on the executive power, a supreme court, from which an appeal ought to lie only to Great Britain, should be erected at Calcutta, by the authority of the legislature. Let it consist of a chief justice and three *puisné* justices, who derive

their commissions from the king; and let them be in Bengal the counterpart of the court of king's bench in England. The jurisdiction of this court, which, from its transcendent power, may be called the supreme court of Bengal, ought to extend, without limitation, over the whole kingdom; and to keep the inferior courts, within the bounds of their authority; as well as to decide ultimately upon all appeals. It ought to protect the just rights of the subject, by its sudden and even summary interposition; and to take cognizance of criminal as well as of civil causes.

To carry justice, in criminal matters, with all the expedition possible, through our conquests, it is proposed, that two of the *puisné* justices shall, twice a year, go on circuits, to the respective capitals of the five provinces, one into the three provinces in Bengal, and one into the two, into which Behâr is to be divided. The *puisné* justice shall sit, upon these occasions, with the members of the provincial court; but the member of the council who is the president of the court, shall still be considered as the principal judge. In criminal matters, the culprit shall be tried by a jury of British subjects only; there being always a sufficient number of good and lawful men to form a jury, in the capital of the province. In the supreme court at Calcutta, disputes between the natives may be decided in civil cases, according to equity, without a jury, by the judges; but, in suits between British subjects, the matter ought to be tried by a jury, upon the principles of the law of England.

The sole management of the revenue of Bengal, being in the Company, many capital alterations are necessary to be made in that important branch. The great channel of public justice has been, by the above regulations, separated from the executive power; but some part of the judicial authority must still remain in the Company's hands. To manage the receipts of the revenue, it has been already mentioned, that five boards must be formed, the superior one of

which to remain in Calcutta. The boards ought to consist of two divisions, or rather of two sides; the receipt of the Exchequer, and the judicial part, which must enable them to enforce the payment of the revenues.

The mode of proceeding in this branch ought to rise in the same gradations with the course of appeals in the civil line of disputes between man and man. Let the Cutcheries enforce the payment of the revenues of the Chucklas, under an appeal to the provincial board, whose decisions, beyond certain sums, ought to be subject to the revision of the general board at Calcutta. But, as the state must not suffer through delay, let the sum in dispute, upon a decision against the subject, by any of the courts of revenue before whom the suit shall originate, be forthwith paid into the exchequer; and let the person aggrieved seek for redress, by petition, to the court which is placed immediately above that court of whose decision he complains.

The board of revenue, in each of the capital cities of the five provinces, except in Calcutta, where no court of law except the supreme court exists, is to be made up of the same persons whom we have already placed as judges in the provincial court of appeal. The court of exchequer, in England, examines, by a fiction, into all sorts of civil causes. It is necessary to preclude the boards of revenue from such powers as a court of exchequer. As provincial courts of common law, their decisions are liable to an appeal to the supreme court at Calcutta, and therefore any prejudices which they may be supposed to imbibe, as members of the executive part of government, cannot be of great detriment to the people, subject as their proceedings are to a court not amenable to the jurisdiction of the Company.

Observations on the Judicial Power.

THE despotism which naturally sprung from the double government which arose on the foundation of the success of our arms in Bengal, repressed one evil, whilst it gave birth to a thousand. Those frequent disputes which grow between individuals, where the access to justice is easy, were quashed by a terror which prevented an unfortunate people from appearing before rulers who wanted but an excuse to oppress. The hand of power fell heavy upon both the plaintiff and defendant; and, therefore, men put up with injuries from one another, in hopes of concealing themselves from the rigid eyes of government. This alludes to the boisterous tyranny of the minister of a nominal Nabob; indolence was more our crime, than cruelty.

The doors opened to justice in the preceding section, will, without doubt, introduce an ample harvest for men of the law; but it is better that they should live by litigiousness, than that the people should perish by tyranny. The objection rising from this circumstance must therefore vanish in the utility of the thing; and another objection, just as obvious, may be as easily removed. It may be thought impolitic by some, that any part of the judicial authority should remain in the hands of the natives. But this is objected in vain. The officers of justice, as well as being subject to a revision of their decrees to the British, derive from them their own power; and the people, by being left in possession of some of their laws and usages, will be flattered into an inviolable submission to our government.

Though the inhabitants of Bengal are, from their natural disposition, prepared to submit to any system of government, founded upon justice, there are some laws of their own, which absolute power itself must not violate. The regulations with regard to their women and religion, must never

be touched ; and, upon mature consideration, the Author of the Inquiry is of opinion, that many other ancient institutions might be left entire. There are, however, particular usages established by time into a law, which our humanity must destroy. No pecuniary compensation must be permitted for murder ; no theft be punished by cutting off the hand. Let the Mahomedan laws still in force against the Hindoos be abrogated ; let no women burn themselves with their husbands, no dying person be exposed by his friends.

To leave the natives entirely to their own laws, would be to consign them to anarchy and confusion. The inhabitants of Bengal are divided into two religious sects, the Mahomedan and Hindoo, almost equal in point of numbers. Averse, beyond measure, to one another, both on account of religion and the memory of mutual injuries, the one party will not now submit to the laws of the other ; and the dissension which subsists between individuals, would, without a pressure from another power, spread in a flame over the whole kingdom. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for the peace and prosperity of the country, that the laws of England, in so far as they do not oppose prejudices and usages which cannot be relinquished by the natives, should prevail. The measure, besides its equity, is calculated to preserve that influence which conquerors must possess to retain their power.

The expence of the judicial establishment is but trivial, if compared to the advantages which the kingdom of Bengal must derive from such a necessary institution. The judges in every country should be placed in affluence ; in Bengal they ought to derive a fortune from the labour of some years. The natives of a northern climate settle not for life in the torrid zone ; they always place the prospect of returning with wealth to their friends, among their great inducements for venturing to cross the ocean. The following table presents an estimate of the annual expence of justice in Bengal.

The Supreme Court of Bengal.

One chief justice	£. 10,000
Three <i>puisné</i> justices	15,000
One attorney general	3,000
One register	2,000
Two Cazis and two Brahmins, to attend the court	0,400
Contingencies	1,000

£. 31,400

The four provincial courts of appeal, consisting of the Company's servants :

Four counsellors, as presidents	£. 2,000
Twelve assessors	2,400
One provincial attorney in each	2,000
One register in each	0,800
One Cazi and one Brahmin in each	0,800
Contingencies in all	1,600

£. 9,600

Fifty courts of Cutcherry :

Fifty presidents, being servants of the Company	£. 5,000
Two hundred assessors	10,000
Fifty registers	1,500
Fifty Clerks	1,000

£. 17,500

£. 58,500

The above calculation, it is hoped, will not be thought extravagant, for dispensing justice to fifteen millions of

people. The salaries of the members of the boards of revenue, and of these, as forming courts of exchequer, are not mentioned, as the Company is supposed to pay its own servants, with certain sums and lucrative privileges for the whole of their trouble. The Sheichdars, the Catwals, and the Muckuddums, have no salaries; the influence and distinction which they shall derive from their employments, being a sufficient reward for their toil.

General Reflections on the Plan.

PROPERTY being once established, and the forms of justice to protect it delineated, public prosperity is placed on a solid foundation. But the love of money, which generally prevails, renders the most of mankind more anxious to possess present profit, than to look forward to future advantage. The plan which we have laid down in the preceding sections, will begin to yield an apparent benefit from its commencement; at the same time that the tide will become the more rapid the longer it flows.

The immediate pecuniary advantages which will rise to Bengal, are to be derived from various sources. The removal of the Emperor, either to Patna or Mongeer, will save to the kingdom his pension of three hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds; the revenues of the territory of Balwant Singh, three hundred and twelve thousand five hundred pounds to be spent in Bengal; and fifty thousand pounds, which is now sent abroad without hopes of return, to pay three battalions of our troops, stationed at Allahabád. This sum of six hundred and eighty-seven thousand pounds, thrown at once into the circulation, would animate the languid pulse of commerce; and at once prepare the kingdom for the commercial improvements, which the plan, in its other regulations, seems absolutely to ensure.

The future advantages arise also from various springs. The influx of specie and inhabitants, which the sale of the waste as well as of the cultivated lands, would draw from all the other provinces of Hindostan, would be productive of immediate national wealth. The advancement of agriculture would promote the advancement of manufactures. The peace of the country would be secured from abroad; and justice, by prevailing at home, would attach the natives to a government, on the stability of which the possession of their landed property depended. The establishment of a paper currency, on national faith and the Company's security, would enable mankind to bring all their property into action, lower the exorbitant interest of money, and render Bengal, in the space of a few years, the most commercial, the most flourishing, and the most wealthy kingdom, of its extent, in Asia.

The Company, in the midst of the prosperity of the subject, would amazingly thrive in their affairs. A sum not less than ten millions, independent of their revenue, would, in the space of four years, flow from the first sales of the land into their coffers. The improvement of their present revenue would join issue with its future certainty and permanency. A large annual sum would arise from a thorough examination of tenures; and from imposts already laid upon fairs, markets, entrance into great towns, shops, magazines of grain, fees upon marriages, tolls collected at ferries, licences for exercising trades, ground-rent of houses, which though at present paid by the public, have never been brought to account by Mahommed Riza and the general farmers. These articles, at the lowest average, might amount to the annual sum of four hundred thousand pounds. Five hundred thousand pounds would yearly be saved in pensions, and on the charge of collection; besides, the immense increase in the revenues, which would most certainly be derived from the growing prosperity of the kingdom.

The absolute establishment of property, without which written law seems superfluous to society, is, as has been observed, the foundation upon which national prosperity is laid. Regulations which stop short of this primary object, are only temporary expedients, which may, for a time, alleviate the pain of the distemper, but can never cure it. A tacit acquiescence in the right of possession of the natives, the prevention of some part of the present national waste, a mild despotism, which we may dignify with the name of justice, will have an immediate good effect; but the advantage is limited, partial, and transient; and the Author of the Inquiry will venture to affirm, that, unless something similar to what has been, in the preceding sections, proposed, is adopted, Bengal will, in the course of a few years, decline into a shadow, and vanish from our hands.

Miracles are not to be expected in this age; and, without them, in the absence of a bold and determined exertion, the boasted fruits of our victories in the East will wither with our laurels. A kingdom, lying under all the disadvantages of a foreign conquest, which, without return, deprives it of one million and a half of its annual industry, must sink under the weight, unless it is placed on a better footing than the surrounding countries which pay no tribute. Let our justice to our own subjects, let the advantages of our regulations, entice foreigners with their wealth to settle among us; let us, without the sword, appropriate the wealth of India by our policy; otherwise the stream which flows into Great Britain will soon become dry. The lake, which feeds it, has already disappeared from the banks. Temporary regulations may dazzle with their immediate effect; but a permanent plan, which in its wide circle comprehends futurity, will preserve the vigour and health of Bengal, to the verge of that political death, to which all empires seem to be subjected by fate.

Concluding Reflections.

ARGUMENTS deduced from general principles, however obvious they may appear, strike not the bulk of mankind so forcibly as facts. The revenues of Bengal, without including the Jagieers, amounted, in the year 1766, to near three millions and six hundred thousand pounds of our money. The charges of collection, the Nabob's government, pensions, civil, military, and marine expences, being deducted, there remained a balance of one million three hundred thousand pounds, for the Company. The expences have since been increasing yearly, and the revenues decreasing. Both were hastening to that middle point, which would balance the accounts of the British nation, with the fortune of their arms in the East.

To conceal this decrease as much as possible, men fell on a very shallow and poor expedient. The servants of the Company protracted the time of closing the accounts to make up the usual sum; and, by these means, an encroachment of five months was, by degrees, made upon the succeeding year. To understand this circumstance, it is necessary to observe, that the collections are not fixed to a particular term. They are continued without intermission, and the produce of the five months, which may amount to one million five hundred thousand pounds, must be deducted from the accounts made up, since the Dewanny was submitted to our management.

Notwithstanding this deception, it was not the only deficiency in the state of money affairs. The revenues of the year 1769 had, besides, fallen short five hundred thousand pounds; and what further reduction the famine which ensued may have made, time can only demonstrate. By the best accounts from Bengal, there was not a balance of five hundred thousand pounds remaining, after all expences were

paid ; and this was not above half the sum necessary to purchase the annual investments of the Company. No fair conclusion, however, can be drawn from the produce of one year ; and the vigilance of the Court of Directors has since established some beneficial regulations. To flatter the sanguine, we will suppose, that the net balance will amount, on the present footing, to one million. The sum is just sufficient for the investments of the Company ; without leaving a single farthing in the treasury to answer any extraordinary emergency.

The advantages of the proposed plan are obvious ; and, therefore, easily explained. Let it be supposed, that the rent-roll of the year 1766 shall be taken as the rule of the quit-rent to be paid, after the sale of the lands. Let none think this sum too much. Under the management of the proprietors, the lands would in a few years produce, thrice the sum of three millions six hundred thousand pounds ; but the subject must receive a bribe for his industry. The Company, at present, complain, that the Talookdárs, or those who possess lands in property, run away with all the tenants. Their estates are flourishing, whilst our limited policy of letting the lands by the year, has created solitudes around. After a thorough examination of fictitious tenures, private encroachments, and public embezzlements, we may, with great propriety, venture to add, at least one million to the above sum. But to speak with a moderation which precludes reply, we shall only take it for granted, that four hundred thousand pounds are, by these means, only gained. Even this sum will fix the annual revenue at four millions ; and there let it rest till the prosperity of the country shall authorise an increase, by slight imposts on trade and the articles of consumption.

The abolition of the tyrannical and impolitic government of the Nabob, will be a saving of five hundred thousand pounds on the annual expences. The fact is notorious, that

the real expence of this secondary and intermediate government, in pensions and in the mode of collection, exceeds six hundred thousand pounds; but the judicial and fiscal systems established in the preceding plan will not exceed one hundred thousand pounds, with all the advantages of a salutary and equitable administration of justice and law. To this sum we may add the five hundred thousand pounds which have fallen off from the revenue, as the first-fruits of the plan; all which, supposing the expences of the civil, military, and marine departments to remain as at present, would make an annual difference of one million four hundred thousand pounds, in favour of the Company. The investments of the Company might in that case be increased, yet leave a sum for the treasury in Calcutta for emergencies.

The treasury, however, ought not to be too rich, lest circulation should deaden in the kingdom. Two millions in specie would be sufficient. To employ the surplus to advantage, together with the ten millions, which are supposed to arise from the sale of the lands, a bank ought to be established for the purpose of lending out sums of money, not exceeding three years' purchase on landed security to the proprietors, at the interest of seven per centum. The land-holders would be, by these means, enabled to raise the necessary sums, at less than half the interest which they now pay; and the Company would have good security for their advances. Let us suppose, that, in the course of a few years, ten millions were lent upon these terms, that sum would produce an annual interest of seven hundred thousand pounds; which, upon the whole plan, makes a yearly balance, in favour of the Company, of TWO MILLIONS ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS MORE THAN THEY AT PRESENT RECEIVE, exclusive of a PRODIGIOUS and GROWING TREASURE; and the moderate imposts which may be hereafter laid on articles of luxury.

The Plan, to speak the least in its favour, is practicable in

its great and general line. It would produce, even partially followed, immense, sudden, and permanent advantages; but no human foresight can absolutely estimate the precise sums. Though the Author of the Inquiry has not the vanity to suppose that his scheme is, in all its branches, infallible, he will venture to pledge himself to his country, that, should the more material parts of his system be adopted, the advantages to be derived from it would not fall short of his calculations. His knowledge of the kingdom of Bengal, and its various resources, gives him a confidence on this subject, to which he is not entitled by his abilities.