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PERSIAN SMOKING.

Pub^d by R. Ackermann London 1822.

THE WORLD
IN MINIATURE ;
EDITED BY
FREDERIC SHOBERL.

Persia,

CONTAINING
A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY ;
AND
AN ACCOUNT
OF
ITS GOVERNMENT, LAWS, AND RELIGION,
AND OF THE
CHARACTER, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, ARTS,
AMUSEMENTS, &c. OF ITS INHABITANTS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

ILLUSTRATED WITH
Thirty Coloured Engravings.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED FOR R. ACKERMANN, REPOSITORY
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LONDON :
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PERSIA
In Miniature.

PART II.
LEGISLATION.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PERSIAN
LEGISLATION.

IN treating of a Mahometan State, it is necessary to examine at one and the same time its religion and the laws to which it is subject, because the former serves as a foundation to the latter. The Koran is both a religious and civil

code ; just in the same manner as the sacred books of many nations of antiquity, and of the Israelites in particular, furnished rules for the various circumstances of life. The legislator, in thus stamping his works with the seal of the deity, undoubtedly had recourse to this expedient, as the only one calculated to ensure to them the veneration and obedience of men.

The Persians have but a single term, *cheriet*, to express the canon law and the civil law. That they have a legislation cannot be questioned ; but there is every reason to believe that its application is frequently perverted or evaded, and that though there exist laws, there is no justice.

The Musulman legislation takes the *lex talionis* for its basis. It is the development of the principle : do not to others what you would not have them do to you ; or receive an equivalent for whatever you do for them. Murder is accordingly punished by murder, and one wound by another, provided the latter be not more dangerous than the former. Such is the rule, but its application is subject to various modifications.

In this legislation no judgment or decision, that of the king excepted, is without appeal : the same cause may be carried successively before all the tribunals in the kingdom.

Judicial decisions should be founded on—1. passages of the Koran : 2. prophetic traditions, *hadees*, that is judgment pronounced by Mahomet. There is another authority which is followed in the adjudication of punishments to be inflicted on criminals : this is the *ourf*, which might be aptly called the common law.

A celebrated Persian poet relates a story of a judge who committed a capital crime, and obtained pardon through the skill and eloquence of his defence. He might have cited also the example of a wealthy but stupid man, who extricated himself from a very serious affair by the sacrifice of large sums of

money. These two facts would perfectly characterise the spirit and manner in which the law is administered.

One of the peculiar features of Persian jurisprudence is its exemption from judicial forms. The most important suit is terminated in a few days; so that the parties are not reduced to beggary by the law's delay. A Persian cannot form any idea of our system of procedure and the delays attendant on it: he prefers arbitrary but speedy justice to the tediousness of a regular investigation. Still less has he any conception of the equality of all men in the sight of the law, though it is inculcated in the Koran, and though despotism and venality alone have de-

stroyed it. The protection which the law affords to the poor against the oppression of the rich appears to him as but a dream : because in Persia the humbler classes are always sacrificed to the opulent and the powerful ; and the man of quality there enjoys a number of privileges, which are denied to people of low condition. A servant must not complain of the dishonesty or cruel treatment of a grandee ; nor must a tradesman demand of him the payment of a debt. This is a species of injustice which custom has erected into a principle ; but there is an infinity of other circumstances in which the laws are violated. Hence arises the aversion of the Persians to law-suits :

they are too well acquainted with the iniquity of judges to wish to expose themselves to its effects.

In Persia there is no profession corresponding with that of attorney or notary. When a contract is made, the only way to ensure its validity, is to obtain the signature of several witnesses : for it is right to observe, that in this case the system of evidence in civil and criminal matters is generally pursued agreeably to the Koran : but the sacred book also recommends to the faithful to be sincere in their testimony, were it even against themselves or their parents that they had to give evidence. The Persians are at no

loss for reasons for evading this precept ; and giving evidence is with them a profession, which, like any other, they will exercise for money.

CHAP. II.

OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

Since religion serves as a foundation to the laws, the administration of justice is committed to magistrates whom we may, without impropriety, term ecclesiastical.

The chief of these magistrates is the Shiek-ul-Islam, an appellation which signifies the elder, teacher, or high-priest of the Mahometan religion. This title was created in 1423, by the Turkish emperor, Mahomet II. to be conferred on the celebrated Djelalzadeh, whom he raised to the dignity

of mufti and cadi of Constantinople. Shah Ismail, founder of the dynasty of the Sofis, having instituted a new religious dignity in Persia, gave to the person who filled it, the title of Sheik-ul-Islam : and this prelate is now regarded as the head of religion in that country.

The Sheik-ul-Islam, whose peculiar costume is represented in the opposite plate, is the judge of all civil causes, the decision of which is governed by the text of the divine law, or the Koran. He also determines all religious causes.

The great cities of the empire, such as Ispahan, Shiraz, Tabreez, &c. have each a Sheik-ul-Islam: we believe, how-



HIGH PRIEST.

Pub.^d by R. Ackermann London 1822.

ever, that they are not all of equal rank, but that the magistrate of the first of these cities is superior to the others.

The Cadi, whose authority was formerly very great, is subordinate to the Sheik-ul-Islam: his functions are of the same nature. Scrupulous Musulmans apply in preference to the Cadi, in consideration of the antiquity of that dignity, which has existed ever since the time of the first caliphs, whereas, that of Sheik is of modern creation.

The Mufti seems to be rather a lawyer than a magistrate, as is implied by his name, which is an Arabic participle, signifying "one who gives decisions founded on the Koran." He seems, in

fact, to combine the characters of doctor of divinity and doctor of law ; for he is consulted on litigated matters, on points relative to religious doctrines and ceremonies, or to morality, and in civil and criminal causes. In Persia the Mufti enjoys respect rather than authority: the Sheik-ul-Islam, the Cadi, the ministers, and the king himself defer to his decisions. The annexed plate exhibits a faithful representation of the Persian Mufti, or doctor of divinity.

These are the only magistrates whose judgments are founded on the text of the Koran. Each of them has his separate tribunal, for there is no place set apart for the administration of justice.



DOCTOR IN DIVINITY.

Pub.^d by R. Ackermann London. 1822.

This tribunal is in general a large room open towards a court or garden, and raised two or three feet above the ground. A kind of alcove of lattice-work is constructed in it for the accommodation of females. The judge sits at the extremity of the apartment in the eastern fashion : his head is covered with a large turban ; the lower part of his face is concealed by a very black bushy beard ; while his body is wrapped in an ample robe. He studies to assume an air of dignity, speaks little, gravely smokes his pipe, and by a happy silence, avoids those mistakes into which loquacious ignorance frequently falls. Long experience has given him a correct eye ; and before he

has even heard the parties, he can discover from their dress which of them is right and which wrong. Not a motion, not a gesture escapes him; he readily comprehends their signification, and in his decision he is guided much less by conscience than the expectation of a present. It is, indeed, the custom to make him one; the wealthy give stuffs, confectionary, or coffee; the artisan or the husbandman, a lamb, a sheep, or fruit; and it is necessary to conciliate the favour of his servant also by some gift or other.

In the preceding volume we have adverted to the *ourf*, or common law. While the Sheik-ul-Islam and the Cadis decide according to the text of the

Koran alone, the civil magistrates, such as the *kelaunter*, and the *darogha*, pronounce judgment in causes of minor importance, agreeably to the common law. They even give their decisions in civil matters, where the text of the *cheriet* would not always be conformable with justice. It is often the case that the two authorities, that of the ecclesiastical magistrates and that of the civil magistrates clash with one another; but the latter, having the effective force at their beck, carry their point without much difficulty.

CHAP. III.

OF THE LAW OF MARRIAGE.

“There is no celibacy in Islamism : your wives are to you and you are to your wives what the garment is to the body.” Such are the terms in which the Koran speaks of marriage. Every male, on attaining the proper age, is therefore expected to take a female companion ; whether it be a slave that he purchases, a woman whom he hires, or a legitimate wife whom he marries. His religion allows him the choice of these three modes ; but at the same time, forbids him to hold intercourse

with loose women, and to covet the wife of another.

A female slave, when purchased by a man, becomes his sole and entire property: he can dispose of her life and even of her honour as he pleases; and he may raise her from servitude to the condition of a free woman, and even of a legitimate wife, without incurring any censure: such is the custom.

The Persians have a connexion of a singular nature called *moutah*, which signifies the use of any thing for a certain time. It is in fact, a temporary marriage, the duration of which is fixed by the taker. A man whose circumstances do not permit him to form a jointure for a legitimate wife,

takes one on lease, and when he feels himself susceptible of constancy, or pride forbids him to give up to another what he has once enjoyed, the lease is sometimes for 99 years. The contract is executed before the Cadi or the Sheik-ul-Islam.

Legitimate marriage is called *naccah*, and is contracted before the same magistrates. The female brings nothing but moveables, such as clothes, jewels, &c. for her portion, and the husband is obliged to settle a jointure on her. The Koran authorises a man to marry four lawful wives, provided he can maintain them. The same book proscribes marriages between relatives within a certain degree. A man may not

marry his mother, his aunt, his daughter, his sister, his niece, his nurse, his foster-sister, his wife's mother or daughter, his son's wife, two sisters, or the wife of another. The husband is master of his wife's property, and has the control over her person; it is his duty to maintain her, to provide for her wants, and to treat her with kindness. When any misunderstanding arises between husband and wife, they each choose an umpire out of their respective families, and refer the matter to his decision: but if their dispositions or tastes cannot be reconciled, a divorce is solicited and granted by the judge. The wife then receives back her portion and sometimes keeps half her jointure.

A man may marry again after such separation, and be a second time divorced ; but the third marriage, though allowed, must not be contracted till the woman has married another man.

A wife who has been put away, cannot marry for three months after her repudiation ; neither can a widow till four months and ten nights after the decease of her husband.

If a wife commits adultery, and the fact is attested by four witnesses, the husband has a right to keep her a prisoner for life. It is lawful for the husband to chastise and even beat his wife in case of misbehaviour.

The Koran treats also of the duties of parents to their children and those

of children to their parents. The mother may commit her infant to the care of a hired nurse ; but she acquires an additional merit in the sight of God by suckling it for two years with her own milk. The father is obliged to maintain his children, to educate them in the true religion, and to make them good Musulmans : on the other hand it is the duty of a son to assist those to whom he owes his existence.

In Persia, and in the east, there is no such thing as illegitimacy : all the children are equal and legitimate in the eye of the law. The first-born is heir of right, even though he received life from a slave.

When a wife dies, half of her pro-

perty belongs to her surviving husband, if she has no children : in the contrary case he has but one-fourth. When the wife survives, she can claim one-fourth of her husband's property, but one-eighth only in case there are children.

According to Chardin, on the death of the father, the eldest son takes two-thirds of the property left by him, and the other third is divided among his brothers and sisters, in such proportion, that a girl receives only half as much as a boy.

CHAP. IV.

OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

It has been already observed that the Persians have no idea of our law proceedings; they have therefore neither counsel, nor attorneys, nor that swarm of blood-suckers, who, under different denominations, intermeddle in Europe in every thing, and while they keep the oyster for themselves, leave the shell only for their clients. In Persia every man pleads his own cause.

The first step towards what we should call bringing an action against

a person is to present a petition to the judge, who writes on the margin of it an order for bringing before him the party against whom complaint is made. One of his officers immediately puts this order in execution. It is customary for the defendant to pay this officer for his trouble by the way : for he has no other salary than what arises from fees of this kind, and even these he has to divide with his employer. The parties commonly appear together with their witnesses : both insist on being in the right ; they warmly maintain their point ; the altercation becomes violent, and they abuse one another in the grossest terms. When they are people of fortune or distinction, the

judge stops his ears, and lets them bawl away: but if they belong to the lower classes, a few thumps on the head or back from his attendants allay the warmth of the dispute. The uproar is twice as great when the parties are of the female sex: for it is to be observed that women personally defend themselves. They appear before the court covered with a veil and remain in the small separate apartment already mentioned. The judge cannot impose silence on them but *viva voce*; he must not have recourse to corporal punishment; and what power would the voice of ten judges have over that of an enraged woman?

For want of witnesses the Koran is

brought. The judge, after respectfully kissing and raising it to his forehead, presents it to the defendant, to do the same, and receives the oath of the latter on the open book. If the defendant swears, he gains his cause, as it is not to be supposed that the allurements of worldly and perishable lucre would induce a man to incur the punishment reserved for perjury in a future life.

When the defendant is summoned on account of debt, and he is unable to pay it, the Koran enjoins that a delay be allowed him : but if he has several times availed himself of this indulgence without fulfilling his engagements, or if he has betrayed in his conduct a

want of integrity, he is delivered to his creditor, who has a right to do with him what he pleases, except maiming or putting him to death. He may then sell him as well as his wife, detain him prisoner, maltreat him, and beat him publicly in the streets of the town. The bankrupt, nevertheless, is favoured: as long as it can be proved that he is living, his creditors cannot obtain of the ecclesiastical magistrates authority to sell his effects and property; so that they are obliged to apply for the interference of the civil judge, who grants them the exercise of their rights.

Quarrels and assaults in the streets are usually punished with a fine and the bastinado. Whenever any distur-

bance takes place, an officer of the police rushes among the combatants, striking indiscriminately the aggressors, the persons assaulted and the lookers-on, who take to their heels. Such of them as he can secure he carries before the judge, driving them along and belabouring them with his staff. On reaching the tribunal, after the unfortunate creatures have suffered this ill-treatment, the judge very coolly enquires their names and professions. The sentence is usually followed by the infliction of the bastinado as well on the complainant as on the aggressor ; and they are moreover obliged to pay a fine. As the money goes into the coffer of the judge, the fine is never

remitted; but it is possible to avoid the beating and final bastinado. To this end the person in custody need only say to the officer before they reach the court: "My good friend and brother, why should you thus seek to be the death of an innocent man? I have such a sum of money in my purse; take half of it for yourself, and give the other to the judge's porter, that I may not receive punishment." This address, accompanied with the gratuity, usually produces the innocence and the acquittal of the accused.

The slightest faults are severely punished in Persia. The venality which prevails among the judges ensures, if not the administration of justice, at

least the exercise of their functions. The repression of irregularities of every kind is a source of revenue. The drunkard caught in a tavern, and the debauchee found in the house of ill fame, purchase impunity for their transgressions: murder and robbery alone are never pardoned, and no sum can save persons guilty of these crimes from punishment. When a man has been killed, his relatives run with loud cries to the residence of the judge, and demand the blood of the murderer, for whose apprehension the magistrate issues orders. If the murderer be opulent, a negotiation is opened. The judge proposes the requisite indemnification to the complainants, setting down a handsome

sum for his own trouble as mediator : but if the relatives persist in demanding the murderer, the judge delivers him into their hands with these words : “ I deliver up to you, agreeably to the law, the murderer of your kinsman ; pay yourselves for the blood which he has spilled ; but remember that God is generous and merciful.” The officers then conduct the culprit to the spot directed, and inflict on him such torments as they are directed by the relatives, unless the latter prefer glutting their rage on him themselves ; but if the murderer, after enduring all their tortures and being left for dead by his executioners, should nevertheless reco-

ver, he is free both in regard to his liberty and his life, and the family of the person whom he killed has no right to persecute him any more. The rich and powerful man who has imbrued his hand in the blood of an indigent fellow-creature commonly expiates his guilt by a sum of money. The compromising mulct paid to the family of a murdered person is usually rated at from fifty to one hundred *toomauns* ; but if a Christian happen by any evil chance to kill a Musulman, the sum commonly exacted is two hundred *toomauns*.

Criminal justice is administered by the civil magistrates, according to the *ourf*, or common law. There is neither

public prison nor executioner : the only places of confinement are dark and filthy apartments in the houses of magistrates, whose servants perform the office of executioners. There is no criminal court. The want of regular proceedings in so important a matter seems to be an advantage to the Persians. Among them house-breaking, assassination and poisoning, were not long since crimes which might be said to be unknown. Murder was commonly committed either in a gust of passion or to revenge an injury ; but there were none of those murderers by profession of whom Europe exhibits but too many examples. The rarity of the evil has induced a

neglect of the remedy: it has fared with these crimes as with those severe diseases for which medicine has no fixed rules—the operator in both is obliged to act according to circumstances.

CHAP. V.**OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PUNISH-
MENTS.**

It is not without feelings of pain and disgust that we enter upon this subject, which we would gladly have entirely omitted, were it not necessary to complete the portrait of a nation. Death, the idea of destruction, presents itself to man under an aspect so alarming, that there is no occasion to present it with all the circumstances which render it still more cruel. We should imagine, it is true, on considering the number of crimes committed in countries where

executions are very frequent, that it could not be accompanied with too many horrors to deter man from guilt, since reason alone is incapable of recalling him to his duty: but the most consummate villain, enduring the horrid torments of a lingering death ceases to be viewed as such; we forget his crimes and behold in him only a fellow-creature suffering excruciating agonies. The emotions of the heart are not to be controlled either by reason or circumstances.

The kinds of punishment are numerous in the east, and vary according to the nature of the crime, and the quality of the culprit. The bastinado is the most common. The legs of the sufferer

are tied together and raised by means of a cord fastened to a tree or stake : the soles of the feet are then beaten with a stick. The rule is to give at least thirty strokes but never more than three hundred. When a person is convicted of perjury, his throat is crammed with tow or rags, and melted lead poured into his mouth. Swindlers are branded on the forehead with a red-hot iron ; house-breakers and coiners of counterfeit money have a hand cut off. Tradesmen using false weights are put into a kind of walking pillory. A thick plank, with a hole in the middle to admit the head, rests upon the shoulders of the culprit ; to this plank is fastened a bell : a straw cap is placed on his head, and thus ac-

coutred he is paraded through the streets of the town.

The most common capital punishment, called *shekeh herden*, consists in cutting the body in two lengthwise with a sword, beginning between the legs and terminating on the side of the neck above the shoulder. For this purpose the criminal is fastened by the heels to a pack-saddle on the back of a camel, with his head hanging nearly to the ground. After the horrid sentence has been executed, the camel with the bisected body is led through the whole town, preceded by an officer who proclaims the nature of the crime. The remains of the culprit are then hung to a pole or a tree, either in the country

or in the suburbs, or even in the *meidan*, or open place before the palace.

Mr. Morier relates, that during the residence of the embassy which he accompanied at Shiraz, the report of a gun was one day heard, and on inquiry it was found to be the execution of a thief, who had been blown from the mouth of a mortar. Three men had been condemned to death by the prince-governor for robbery : one was beheaded ; the second blown up ; and the third was cut in half, and the two parts of his body hung over two of the most frequented gates of the city, as a warning to other thieves. This horrid spectacle was displayed for three days.

Another cruel punishment reserved

for robbers who, since the accession of Feth Ali Shah, have been treated with peculiar severity, is the following:— The tops of two young trees are pulled down by means of a rope ; one of the legs of the criminal is fastened to each of them and the ropes are suddenly loosed : the force with which the trees return to their original erect position, tears the body of the unfortunate wretch in two. Impaling, cutting off the hands and legs, and immuring between four walls, were punishments usual in Persia in Chardin's time.

The death inflicted on grandees who have incurred the anger of the king varies according to his pleasure. The most common is beheading : but if the

fault be attended with aggravating circumstances, ingenious cruelty easily finds out refinements of suffering. A French gentleman relates, that during his residence in the camp of Feth Ali Shah, he witnessed the punishment inflicted on one of the king's officers, who had been convicted of peculation. His majesty caused the culprit's hands to be nailed together in his presence, over his breast, and two hundred strokes with a stick to be administered on his back. This punishment, nevertheless was not considered as ignominious ; and it was generally asserted, that this officer would appear again at court as soon as he should be well enough.

When the reigning Shah aspired to the throne, the nation was divided into several parties, whose leaders were actuated by the same ambition of reigning. Saduk Khan Chegaughee, the richest and most powerful of them, was alone able to make any long resistance. Having been at length discomfited in a battle near Casvin, he was persuaded to surrender to the king, provided his blood should not be spilt. The king gave his solemn promise to this effect and kept it: for he caused him to be bricked up alive in one of the small rooms of a house at Teheran, in which he miserably perished of hunger, after having nearly eaten his own hands.

The house in which this horrid scene occurred, was one of those assigned to the British embassy under Sir Gore Ouseley.

During the residence of this embassy in Persia, Mohamed Zemaun Khan, governor of Asterabad, having allied himself with the Turcomans, threw off his allegiance to the king; but was seized and delivered up to the monarch by his own people, who dreaded the resentment of the latter. The king, on his arrival, ordered the chief of his camel-artillery to put a mock crown on the rebel's head, *bazubends*, or armlets on his arms, a sword by his side; to mount him upon an ass with his face towards the tail, and the tail

in his hand; then to parade him throughout the camp, and to exclaim: "This is he who wanted to be king!" After this was over and the people had mocked and insulted him, he was led before the king, who called for the *looties*, or buffoons, and ordered them to turn him into ridicule, by forcing him to dance and make antics against his will. He then ordered that whoever chose might spit in his face. He then received the bastinado on the soles of his feet, and some time afterwards had his eyes put out.

As to females, they frequently owe the preservation of their lives to the notion entertained by the Persians that their blood produces ill-luck. This

notion has probably given rise to the punishment reserved for them, which consists in muffling them up closely in their veils, and precipitating them from the top of a tower.

PART III.**RELIGION.**

CHAP. I.**RELIGION OF THE PERSIANS—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR CREED AND THAT OF THE TURKS.**

THE followers of Mahomet, when they subdued Persia during the califat of Omar, introduced into that country the religion of their prophet, which has predominated there ever since.

The whole of the Mahometan religion may be reduced to seven points, two of which relate to faith, the other to ceremonies : 1. To profess that

there is but one only God ; 2. that Mahomet is his apostle ; 3. to observe corporeal purifications ; 4. to recite the stated prayers ; 5. to give alms ; 6. to fast during the month of Ramazan ; 7. to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca. To these fundamental points of Islamism the Persians add another, which they place next to the second, and which consists in confessing that Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, is the lieutenant of God. This article of faith, which is rejected with horror by the Turks, occasioned the grand schism which divides the Musulmans ; the partisans of Ali being called by the *Sunnites*, or orthodox believers, *Shias*, or *Shiites*, that is, heretics. Having already traced

the origin and early history of this dissension in treating of Turkey, we refer the reader, in order to avoid repetition, to the first volume of that division of our work.

The hatred of the Sunnites and Shiites increased in the sequel. Under the califs of the dynasty of the Abbassides, it frequently degenerated into fury; and it was considered a meritorious action in a man to kill another of a contrary opinion to his own. The Shiites found warm protectors among the Abbassides, whose zeal, however, only paved the way to fresh scenes of carnage. How often have the streets of Bagdad, *the city of peace*, the Rome of the Mahometan world, been drench-

ed with the blood and strewed with the carcasses of its inhabitants !

The sect of the Shiites made great progress in Persia. The provinces bordering on the Caspian Sea, and the mountains which separate them from the centre of the kingdom, afforded an asylum to the descendants of Ali. The Bouides were Shiites, and Adhad-ad-daulah, the greatest prince of that house, even caused splendid tombs to be erected in honour of Ali and his son Hossein. The destruction of the califat of Bagdad by Holagou, put an end to the religious dissensions, or at least to the fanaticism which kept them up : a million of inhabitants perished by the hand of that Tartar. Among his suc-

cessors, however, there were some who adopted the doctrine of the Shiites : such were Gazan Khan, and his brother, Mohammed-Koda-bendeh, though the latter, indeed, afterwards recanted. At length Ismail Ardebili, founder of the house of the Sofis embraced it ; he spread it with his victories, and in his zeal, laid sacrilegious hands on the tombs of the Sunnites, destroyed their mosques, and cruelly persecuted such of his subjects as rejected his doctrine. Selim I. who then occupied the throne of Turkey, availed himself of the pretext of religion, to declare war against Ismail : and in the letter which he addressed to the Persian monarch, previously to this declaration, he gives a

curious exposition of the motives of piety and zeal by which he professed to be influenced. Ismail was vanquished in the battle of Tchaldiran, but nevertheless, continued his efforts for the propagation of the tenets of the Shiites, which the majority of the Persians have ever since his reign espoused. This difference of creed has laid the foundation of that antipathy which prevails between them and the Turks. Their wars are religious wars, of which politics are never the apparent motive.

When Nadir Shah had contrived that the crown should be offered to him, he accepted it only on condition that the Shiites should in future abstain from anathematizing the first three

califs, and holding festivals in honour of Ali and Hossein. It must have been a singular spectacle, though not unparalleled in history, to see that ferocious conqueror assembling the doctors, entering into theological discussions, and arguing like a casuist. Toleration appeared to be his virtue: he exhorted the Persians to return to more moderate opinions, to adopt merely the explanation of the Koran by the Imam Djafar-el-Sadik, one of Ali's descendants, and to assume the name of Djafari. These indications of extraordinary moderation were at first persuasive; but the persecution by which they were followed, displayed Nadir's character in its true light: it was not, as may easily

be conceived, either philanthropy or pity that had actuated this barbarian. His object was to conciliate by this conduct, the Arabs, the Courds and the Turcomans, who composed the greater part of his army, and who were Sunnites. It was probably his intention also, to pave the way to the more easy conquest of Turkey, by removing the cause of religious animosity. These designs he thwarted by the impolicy of his own conduct : he imagined that a new point of faith may be established by force of arms, and that it is not more difficult to rule consciences than to govern men. He increased the hatred of his subjects, shook his power, and perished without obtaining the

least success. Had he been better informed, the history of past ages would have taught him that a religion never shines with brighter lustre than when it is furiously attacked, and that periods of persecution furnish occasions for its proudest triumphs.

CHAP. II.

DOCTRINES.

SECTION I.

OF GOD, THE RESURRECTION AND A
FUTURE STATE.

The Persians are the most decided deists in the world. They not only profess the unity of God, but they insist also on a singleness of person in his essence, and charge the Christians with blasphemy in adoring a deity composed of three persons. All their divines agree upon this point, as well as on the omniscience and omnipotence of the divinity: they differ only

in this particular, that some consider these qualities as attributes, while others hold them to be part of the essence of God.

They believe in the resurrection, the last judgment and a future state. As soon as the body is deposited in the tomb the two angels of death, Monkyr and Nekyr, appear and question the deceased respecting his religion, faith, and works. His answers are inscribed in a great book, which will be delivered in at the day of judgment. After this examination, the souls of the good proceed to Barzak, and those of the wicked to the valley of Bairouth: there they abide till the general resurrection, neither enjoying nor suffering,

but by anticipation of their eternal happiness or misery. An intermediate place between paradise and hell receives for eternity the spirits of those who have not done either good or evil.

On the day of resurrection the souls will appear together with the bodies which formerly belonged to them : they will assemble in a vast plain near Mecca. The judgment will take place by means of a pair of scales, each of which will be as large as the superficies of the heavens. In one, called the *basin of light*, will be placed the book of good actions ; in the other, or the *basin of darkness*, the book of bad actions. After this examination, the

spirits will cross the famous bridge, *Pouli-sirath*, laid over hell, on which the separation will take place. The good will traverse it with the rapidity of lightning which flashes and disappears, but the wicked will be tumbled from it into the infernal regions.

The Persians admit seven degrees of felicity and torment, but differ respecting their nature. Some doctors assert that the soul of the good will revel in purely spiritual joys, such as the sense of its qualities, the knowledge of all the sciences, &c. : while others represent paradise as the theatre of the most refined pleasures of sense, peopling it with *houris*, or celestial females, to whose beauty the imagination which

creates them can alone do justice. According to the former, the pains of hell will consist of mental torments, and, according to the latter, of bodily sufferings. In this future state, the women will live apart from men, but in the arms of youthful Ganymedes they will enjoy delights of which this nether world affords no image.

In adopting the Koran the Persians have acknowledged the divine mission and the prophetic character of its author. According to them, there have been 280,000 prophets since the creation of the world. Adam was the first of them, and Mahomet the last. All the epithets attached by the Musulmans to the name of that impostor would

fill a volume. One of the most extraordinary is that of ignorant : they repeat it with enthusiasm, proclaim it with emphasis, and find in this ignorance a manifest proof of the divine nature of his mission ; upon the ground that the less learning a prophet possesses, the more manifest it is that the doctrine he preaches must be from heaven.

SECTION II.

OF ALI—OF THE TITLE OF IMAM—
OF MEHDI.

We have seen that it is an article of the Persian confession of faith, that Ali was the lieutenant of God : in an axiom which is very common with

them, they demonstrate the respect which they pay him. Mahomet, say they, is a city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate to it. Setting no bounds to their veneration or their fanaticism, they exalt him above human nature, attribute miracles to him, and almost deify him : nay, there is a sect, whose members inhabit the countries contiguous to the sources of the Djihoun and the Sind, to the north of Kandahar, who regard him as God, though they admit the divine character of the Koran, and follow its precepts. It is chiefly among the lowest class of the people that these exaggerated notions are current : this calif's name always figures in their oaths, and instead of

commending themselves to the divine protection, they invoke that of Ali. The superior orders, however, make a great difference between Mahomet, the apostle of God, and Ali, the son-in-law of that apostle; and though they regard Ali as his legitimate successor, they are far from making him his equal.

Not only do the Persians maintain the justice of Ali's rights to the crown to the exclusion of the first three califs, rights which he derived from Mahomet himself, but they admit no legitimate princes excepting his descendants. These princes are twelve in number. Ali is the first, and Mehdi the last. They bear the title of *Imam*,

that is spiritual and temporal guide or chief. From the nobleness of their origin may be inferred the qualities with which they are endowed. Supernatural knowledge, perfect sanctity, and the power to perform miracles, are some of the most remarkable of their attributes.

The twelfth Imam was but five years old when he succeeded to the Imamatus ; and he disappeared at the age of twelve years. Opinions are divided respecting him. The Sunnites consider him as destined to appear again towards the end of time, to call all the nations of the earth to the knowledge of Islamism ; adding that three hundred and sixty celestial spirits will assist him in this

mission, and that he will be the vicar of Jesus Christ, in the august office of the Imamat. The Shiites, on the other hand, believe, that he still dwells in this world, living unknown by men in a sequestered cave: his return is the object of their wishes and expectations, for he is to re-assert the rights of his house, to establish a universal califat over the whole surface of the earth, and to bring all mankind to the true faith, as is denoted by the surname of Mehdi, or director, which he bears. His proper name is Mohammed. This opinion has favoured the ambition of a multitude of impostors, who have given themselves out for this Imam, and who, by the assumption of so

sacred a character, have collected numerous partisans. What blood has it again cost humanity to establish and overthrow their power !

CHAP. III.

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

SECTION I.

PURIFICATIONS.

Purifications form one of the most essential practices of the Mahometan religion. "The body appears before God as well as the soul; it must therefore be cleansed from all stain previously to the performance of any religious act." Such is the principle on which purifications are enjoined. But bigotry has so increased the number of objects which make a person unclean, and carried its scruples relative to

legal purity to such a length, that the half of life might be occupied with purifications.

“ Religion,” says Mahomet, “ is founded on cleanliness of the body.” No pretext, not even want of water, can excuse the Musulman from the duty of purifying himself before he says his prayers. For want of running water he will use such as is stagnant and muddy, earth, or even camel’s dung. Hence it may easily be supposed that a Persian is frequently more dirty after than before his purifications. Thus all institutions, how useful soever originally, in process of time become corrupted. Moses, in making purifications a religious duty, designed

to prevent those diseases which are engendered by neglect of cleanliness, especially in a hot climate where perspiration is profuse. Mahomet adopted this principle and for the same purpose. Such was the cause of this institution, but what is its effect? If personal cleanliness be the emblem of internal purity, it must be confessed that the Persians have very filthy souls indeed.

There are three kinds of purifications: the *gasl*, the *ab-dest* or *vouzou*, and the *gousl*. The first is washing for all the material impurities that may happen to be on the body of a Musulman, on his garments, or in his oratory. It is to preserve himself from

such impurities that the Musulman, though he takes the greatest care of animals, and uses them well, will constantly drive them from his person or apartment. He will abstain for the same reason from wearing robes that reach the ground, lest they should touch any thing impure ; he will wear double coverings for the feet, the outermost of which he leaves at the door of apartments ; and he will never go abroad or undertake a journey without his *sedjadeh*, or carpet, on which he says his prayers.

The *ab-dest*, or ablution, is required whenever the believer has defiled himself by drinking wine and on other occasions ; it must precede the five cano-

nical prayers. This ablution consists in washing the face, hands, and arms as high as the elbows, and the feet up to the ancle. The frequent recurrence of this practice has occasioned the necessity for the great number of fountains that are met with in the east, by the road-side, in the caravanserais and in private houses. All the mosques have basins deeper than the height of a man, destined for purifications, and which may be compared to the brazen laver in Solomon's temple at Jerusalem.

The *gousl*, or general lotion, extends to the whole body. It is repeated twice or thrice a week in private or public baths, and it is strictly practised among all Mahometan nations.

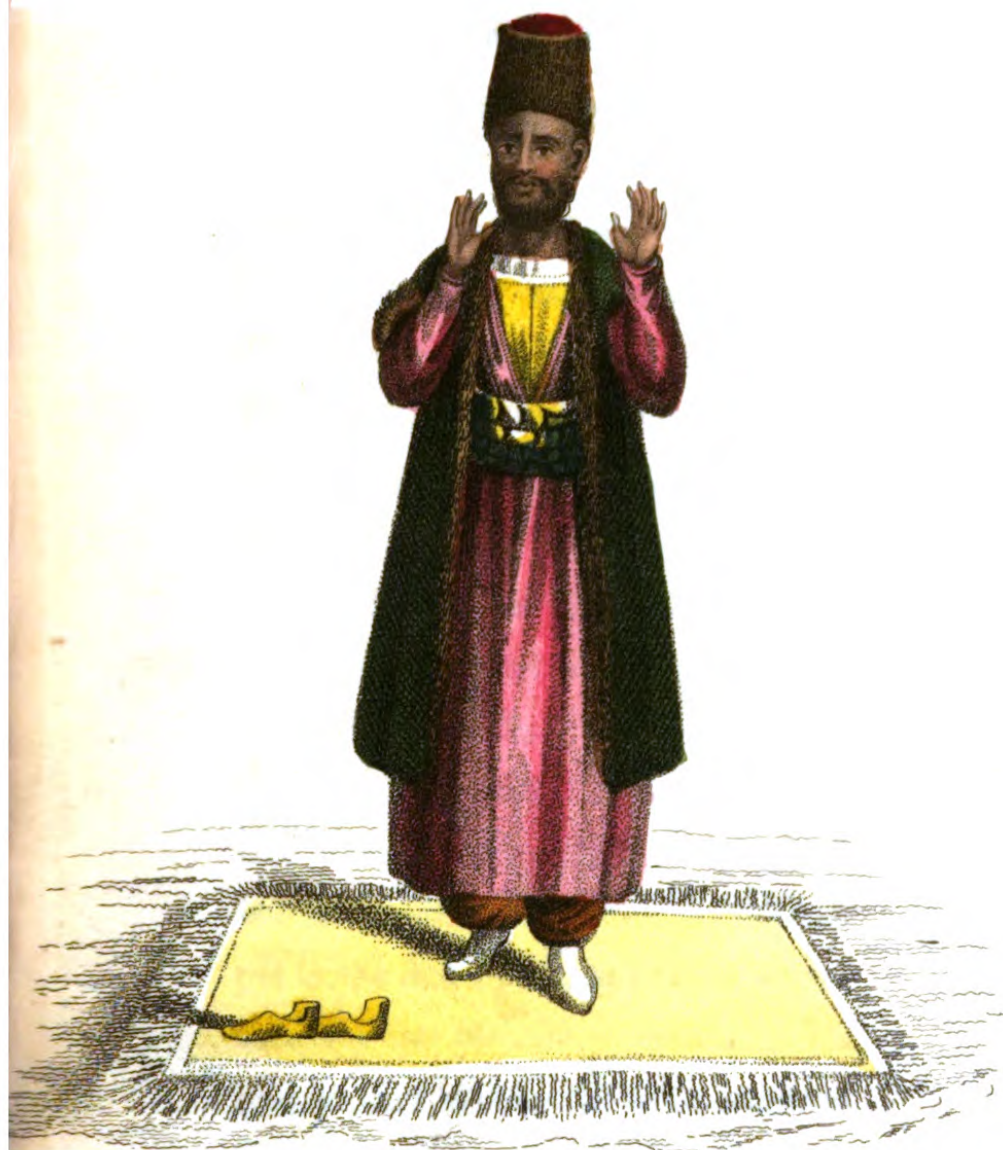
SECTION II.

PRAYERS

Mahomet having received from God the principles of his new religion, promised in behalf of himself and his followers to say prayers fifty times in the course of each day: the lukewarmness of men, however, soon obliged him to reduce the number to thirty. But the occupations of civil and military life were incessantly interrupted by these devotions; and the enemy availed themselves of the fervour of the piety of the Musulmans to destroy their works. Mahomet, therefore, entered into a second negociation with God, and the

number of prayers was reduced to five.

The first of these five prayers is said at noon, at which hour the civil day of the Musulmans commences; the second, when half the sun's disk is below the horizon; the third when it is so dark that a white thread cannot be distinguished from a black one; the fourth at bed-time; the fifth between the moment when the stars disappear and noon. As, however, the precept was somewhat obscure, these prayers have been reduced to three, those for noon and evening, and those for bed-time and night, being said together; and great latitude is taken in regard to the time for prayer, by advancing it four



PERSIAN AT PRAYERS .

Pub.^d by R. Ackermann London. 1822.

hours or deferring it for the same space.

Nothing can prevent the Persian from performing these devotions: he allows no human respect to stand in his way; on the contrary the demonstrations of his piety assume a character of greater or less fervour, according to the notice taken of them by strangers. A Persian belonging to the suite of Asker-Khan, ambassador from Feth Ali Shah to the court of France, who affected an appearance of piety, was frequently seen spreading his carpet in the midst of an apartment where company was assembled, muttering his prayers, and making the same religious gestures as if he was alone. The an-

nixed engraving represents a Persian performing these devotions.

These devotions furnish the Persians with a polite excuse, of which they rarely fail to avail themselves to get rid of any person whose society or conversation is disagreeable to them. They will spring up all at once and abruptly quit the room. "It is high time for me to say my prayers," is the only apology they make for their rudeness.

We have seen that bodily purity is one of the external qualities required for the due performance of religious devotions: there is another, namely, gesture. The Musulman is obliged to turn towards Mecca, to make certain motions with his arms and hands, and

to prostrate himself according to specific rules. After stripping to his shirt, the sleeves of which he tucks up above the elbows, he puts on his head a turban of linen cloth without gold, silver, or embroidery and performs his ablutions. This done, he puts on his stockings, turns down his sleeves, throws on his robe, spreads his carpet and squats on a corner of it in the eastern fashion, and after combing his beard, takes up his rosary and begins his prayers. He generally places on the floor, at a little distance before him, a plate of metal, on which are engraved the name of God, those of the prophet and the Imams, the profession of faith and texts of the Koran : the use of it

is to receive the forehead in the prostrations which accompany the prayers.

A Persian is rarely without a string of beads in his hand: this he carries not so much out of a spirit of religion as for a guide in the ordinary concerns of life. When, for example, he thinks of going to some place, making a bargain or performing any action whatever, he lays hold of a handful of beads at random, and from their number he decides whether he shall do what he intended or not.

As there are no clocks in Persia, the time for each prayer is announced by the *muezzins*, or cryers, stationed for the purpose in the minarets of the mosques. To augment the power of



PERSIAN LADY AT PRAYERS.

Pub^d by R. Ackermann. London 1822.

their voices, they pull their mouths with their little fingers, placing their thumbs in their ears, and sing out with all their might, so that they may sometimes be heard at the distance of twelve or fifteen hundred paces. On hearing the well-known sound, every one says his prayers either at the mosque, or at his own house ; for the Persians rarely visit their temples, as their religion allows them to perform at their own homes the duties which it imposes. In the opposite plate is represented a Persian lady thus employed.

We shall conclude this section with a trait which evinces the subtlety of the Persian divines. Their religion forbids them to pray in a room con-

taining any painting of the human countenance. To evade this injunction, the face is represented with one eye only: thus mutilated, it is no longer an image, say these doctors, but a grotesque figure which is not forbidden by their law.

SECTION III.

ALMS AND FASTS.

The Koran in several places commands the giving of alms. Every Musulman who has acquired wealth generally devotes part of it to the foundation of establishments of public utility, and that independently of the tithe required by religion to be given in charity, if he would ensure himself

a quick passage over the Pouli-sirath, on the day of judgment. Ostentation, indeed, is more frequently his motive than piety ; but be the cause what it may, the effect is beneficial.

Charity may be said to be the pre-eminent virtue of Mahometan nations : there is not a moralist, not a poet, but recommends the practice of it and sounds its praises. "Be ye like the trees laden with fruit and planted by the road-side," says Djami : "they give shade and fruit to all, even to those who pelt them with stones."

Most of the caravanserais of Persia, as well as the bridges, cisterns, mosques, colleges and baths, are pious foundations.

Fasting is no less an obligation than purifications and prayer: it is termed by the doctors, the gate of religion. The fast of Ramazan alone is of divine command; the others are of human institution. It consists in abstaining from every kind of food from day-break till night, from all sin, and from temporal concerns, and the cares of life, during the thirty days contained in that month: hence a perfect dervise is described to be a man living in this world in a perpetual Ramazan.

This month is the ninth in the year of the Persians, which is lunar: thus it runs through the different seasons and falls in winter as well as in summer. When the moon of Ramazan

appears, the *muezzins* announce it with a loud voice from the tops of the mosques, strike up hymns and publish the commencement of the fast as the most welcome intelligence. The people reply to this intimation with shouts of joy, and in an instant all the shops are illuminated. At the same time, the trumpets sound at the doors of all the baths, to give notice that they are open ; for this fast, like all other religious ceremonies, must begin with purification. Its conclusion is celebrated with greater solemnity than the commencement. The acclamations of the people, the sound of instruments, and all sorts of festivities, declare that a season of joy has succeeded a period

of privation. These diversions are sometimes continued five or six days.

The fast of Ramazan must be extremely distressing in summer, when the days are long. Let the Catholic who murmurs against lent, which merely enjoins abstinence from certain articles of food, consider the Persian summoned betimes to his daily avocations, overpowered with heat, fatigue and hunger, taking as it were by stealth a few drops of water to quench his thirst, abstaining even from smoking, and waiting till the tardy departure of the sun shall allow him to break a fast of nearly seventeen hours !

In Persia, however, as in all other countries, there are persons ingenious

enough to evade these disagreeable precepts, or to soften their rigour. Some will sleep all day, during the Ramazan, and pass the night in excesses of every kind; and such people, nevertheless, think that they are duly observing the fast.

SECTION IV.

PILGRIMAGE.

The only pilgrimage enjoined by the Mahometan religion, is to the *kaabah*, or temple of Mecca, the object of the veneration of all true Musulmans.* The Persians, however, are far from

* For an account of the ceremonies practised there, see *Turkey in Miniature*, vol. v. p. 175.

strict in their observance of this precept. They think, and justly too, that this act of piety cannot well be performed but by those who are in good health, and whose circumstances will allow them to take such a journey without injury to their families. Many, however, acquit themselves of this duty by substitute. You meet in Persia with numbers of Arabs, who sell the title of pilgrim which they have acquired, or who travel to Mecca instead of another for a certain sum of money. To prevent fraud, their employers require them to bring back the certificate which the sherif of Mecca delivers to pilgrims.

The Musulman who has visited the

sacred city bears for the rest of his life the honourable title of *hadjee*, or pilgrim. On his return from Mecca he usually passes through Jerusalem and Hebron, which he also considers as sacred places, on account of his veneration for Abraham ; and in his way back to Persia he traverses the Arabian Irak, where he pays his devotions at the tomb of Ali and his son, Hossein.

CHAP. IV.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS.

The Persians have a great number of religious festivals in celebration of the birth and death of their prophets and saints, the principal mysteries of their faith, and the most memorable events of their religion. None of them is obligatory ; their observance is purely optional, and some of them are not even distinguished by any ceremony. It would be too long to enumerate all these festivals ; we shall therefore confine our notice to a few of them.

We have seen that the conclusion of

the Ramazan furnishes occasion for a religious festival kept with the greater enthusiasm and piety because it terminates the strictest fast. The *Aid-el-corban*, or festival of the sacrifice, is also attended with great rejoicings; it has been instituted in commemoration of Abraham, who, out of obedience to the Almighty, would have sacrificed his son Ishmael, whom the Arabs regard as their progenitor, and whom they substitute in this instance to Isaac. Some days before the *corban* every family buys a sheep without spot or defect, an emblem of the corporeal and spiritual purity of Ishmael. On the day of the festival, this victim is decorated with ribbons, pearls and or-

naments of every kind ; its forehead, feet, and other parts of the body are stained with *henna*, a powder made of the leaves of the *cyperus* ; after being thus adorned and paraded about, it is slaughtered, and pieces of the flesh are sent by the family to its friends and the poor.

In large cities, instead of a sheep, the governor slaughters a camel ; and the ceremony is performed out of the town on a spot appropriated to the purpose. The governor inflicts the first blow ; on which the bystanders instantly fall upon the victim and cut it in pieces : and happy are they who can secure one of them for their share, because it is a pledge of good luck.

On the return of the people from the sacrifice, scaffolds are erected before the governor's palace, in the public places, and in the streets, and rope-dancers, wrestlers, musicians, singers, and dancers, amuse the multitude there during the rest of the day.

On the 21st of Ramazan, a solemn festival is held in honour of Ali. For this purpose, a covered gallery is constructed somewhere out of the town, where the chief men of the place take their station. In front of this gallery is a kind of pulpit, eight feet high, covered with cloth. Here the preacher appointed to pronounce the panegyric of the sacred personage, reads for an hour or two in a book intituled *Moctel-*

nameh, book of the murder, containing a history of the death of Ali, chanting without intermission, in a loud, clear and doleful voice. There are certain passages of which he pronounces only the first word, leaving some of the congregation to finish. At the end of each passage they repeat this imprecation ; “ *May the curse of God be upon the murderer of Ali !* ” and all the people respond : *Rather more than less*. It is rarely that the assembly is not melted into tears, when the preacher draws the affecting picture of Ali, apprizing his children that he shall soon fall by the hand of one of his servants, and receiving the fatal blow in the mosque while engaged in prayer. After the

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in mourning, affect all the external appearances of sorrow, abstain from shaving their heads, from bathing, and even from changing their clothes. On the eve of the first of Moharrem, the mosques are hung with black. The next day the pulpits are dressed in the same manner, the *akhond* and *pish-namaz*, inferior ministers of religion, ascend them and narrate the particulars of the murder of Hossein with all the inflexions of voice that are calculated to render them more pathetic. The congregation from time to time beat their breasts, ejaculating: *Ya Hossein ! Ez Hossein heif !* "O Hossein! Alas, Hossein!" Parts of the history of this Imam are in verse, and are chanted

forms one of the amusing incidents of this funeral festival. A young man acts the part of the bride, who is attired in a rich wedding dress, and accompanied by her relatives, who sing a mournful elegy on the death of the bridegroom ; for it should be observed that the Imam Cassem was slain before the consummation of the marriage. At parting from his bride to go to the fight, Cassem takes the most affecting farewell of her ; and with a presentiment of his fate, he gives her, in token of his love, a mourning robe which she puts on. At this moment the people, transported with rage, rush upon the effigy of the calif Yezid, the mur-

derer of the Ali family, and tear it in pieces.

It is impossible to give an adequate description of the fanatic phrenzy of the Persians during the days of mourning ; nay, it could scarcely be credited, did not history teach us that the human mind knows no bounds in its aberrations. Death then appears a blessing of heaven ; and those who perish in the combats which take place are accounted martyrs. On the last day of the festival their bodies are deposited in sepulchres, which are profusely decorated and carried with great pomp to the cemetery. Many Persians even inflict voluntary wounds on themselves in commemoration of the sufferings of

the Imams and in expiation of their own sins.

On the 28th of Jefer, the death of the Imam Hassan, brother of Hossein, is celebrated, but with less pomp, though with the same ceremonies.

Mr. Scott Waring mentions a festival celebrated by the Persians for the death of the Caliph Omar. They erect a large platform, on which they fix an image, disfigured and deformed as much as possible. Addressing themselves to the image they begin to revile it for having supplanted Ali the lawful successor of the Prophet : at length, having exhausted all their expressions of abuse, they suddenly attack the image with stones and sticks, till they have shatter-

ed it into pieces. The inside is hollow and full of sweetmeats, which are greedily devoured by the mob who attend the ceremony.

We shall say nothing of the festivals instituted in commemoration of some of Mahomet's miracles, such as the cleaving of the moon, the parturition of the stone, the speaking camel, &c. The reader who is not intimately acquainted with the history of that impostor may not be aware that one of the chief miracles attributed to him is that of cleaving the moon in two. The parturition of the stone is not less surprising. A poor man, having lost a camel, which was all that he possessed, was

overwhelmed with grief. Mahomet, moved with compassion, struck a stone; a camel instantly sprung from it and he gave the animal to the poor fellow. The story of the camel seems to be an allegory in which the Arab is exhorted to have compassion on that useful animal when it is grown old. A wealthy merchant of Medina kept several camels for his commercial pursuits, and when age and hard work had reduced their strength, he turned them out to shift for themselves. A camel which had experienced this treatment, went to Mahomet and complained to him of the injustice and cruelty of his master. Mahomet sent for the merchant, repri-

manded him for his conduct, and commanded him in future to keep every camel worn-out in his service till its death.

CHAP. V.

OF THE SOFIS.

Having treated in our account of Turkey (vol. v.) of the mosques of the Mahometans, their public worship and the ministers who officiate at it, and also of the Dervises, numbers of whom are to be found in Persia, we proceed to the Sofis, a religious order peculiar to that country.

The Sofis, the origin of whose very name is veiled in obscurity,* are a species of philosophers not less fanatical

* See *Turkey in Miniature*, vol. v. p. 61, note.

than the Dervises with whom they are frequently confounded. Their doctrine and practices are covered with profound mystery. A Sofi, according to the idea to be formed of him from the works of the Persian poets, is a pious man living in seclusion from the world, whose morality is pure; whose doctrine is mild and tolerant; whose soul is plunged into the depths of mysticism; who spiritualizes all the ceremonies of religion, and constantly keeps a vigilant eye over himself. Universal indifference, the extinction of every worldly wish and desire, the presumptuous hope of an imaginary perfection, constitute the essence of his contemplative life. It was in this acceptation of the term that Saadi,

Senaï, Hafiz, Djelal-eddin and Djami aspired to the rank of Sofis : but mysticism approaches too near to the illusions of fanaticism for the mind to pause at any middle point, and when the imagination has once passed that point, it sets no bounds to its extravagance. Thus there arose in Persia a particular sect of Sofis, which were called impious, and who derived no other fruit from their crude meditations than the belief that there is no God. They gleaned from the Mahometan religion, the relics of the Grecian philosophy, and the reveries of the Indian Gymnosophists, materials for an insensate doctrine, which rather encouraged than checked the passions. These Sofis have a book cal-

led *Gulshen-raz*, the mysterious garden, containing their opinions on theology, philosophy and morals. As secrecy is the first precept of their order, it is difficult to ascertain its principles. It is said, however, that their doctrine is founded on that of Pythagoras; that they acknowledge one only essence and believe in the transmigration of souls. They repeat among themselves this distich, which they style the mystery of the Sofis :

“ There is one only essence, but there are a thousand forms or figures ;

“ And how numerous soever these forms may be, they are not worthy of engaging our attention.”

There is a striking resemblance be-

tween this distich and the following passage of the Baghavat of India:—

“He who considers all the different species of beings as forming but a single essence diversified to infinity, that man knows Brahma.” It would not be difficult to prove that these sects of Persian Sofis derived most of their doctrines and practices from India.

The devout Mahometans charge the Sofis with atheism; while the latter not only deny the accusation, but pretend to hold intercourse with God: they assemble at night and perform the exercises of turning round, jumping and shouting, till they drop down from weakness and exhaustion. Owing to

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those preachers: as nothing can be more hostile to the interests of the true religion; as the subject has been deemed worthy of the attention of our wisest counsellors, and you have yourself addressed to us your observations upon it; we have deemed it advisable to take this matter into consideration, and to write to our governors and officers to punish these Sofis, unless they amend their conduct, to take from them what they have craftily obtained from the credulous and people of weak minds; and in case the owners of these things cannot be discovered, to distribute them among the poor. We have lastly ordered this sect to be extirpated and destroyed, that the true faith may

flourish. Aga Mehdy and Mirza Mehdy have misled the people in the neighbourhood of Hamadan, where they were regarded as holy doctors ; they have been sent prisoners into our presence. We now deliver them into your hands, considering you as the most learned, the wisest and the most virtuous of the doctors of this kingdom. Put them to death, imprison them, or punish them in any manner most agreeable to the laws of our holy religion." The two Sofis were executed.

CHAP. VI.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

The Persians, unlike the other professors of the Mahometan faith, manifest a spirit of toleration towards those whom they regard as infidels, worthy of the imitation of many a christian community. To show how this spirit is encouraged by the present government, either from a principle of justice or from political motives, we shall adduce a circumstance that happened some years since in the province of Adherbijan; under the administration

of Abbas Mirza, heir-apparent to the throne.

One day, in the month of January 1807, a Persian belonging to the household of the prince-royal thought fit to insult publicly an Armenian merchant of the city of Tabreez, and to abuse him in the grossest manner, for no other reason than the difference of their religions, the Armenian being a christian. The latter hoped at first to silence his aggressor by addressing to him some pretty sharp reproofs : but a zealous Musulman, acknowledging no other legitimate right than that of his own strength, despises the eternal principles of justice. With defiance on his brow, and blasphemy upon his lips,

it is his delight to insult the weak and to calumniate the christian religion, when he can do it with impunity. Not content, therefore, with personally affronting the christian merchant in an outrageous manner, this Persian servant launched out into the most atrocious language against Christ, his gospel, the sign of the cross and other emblems of our religion. These blasphemies roused the indignation of the Armenian to such a degree, that, to punish the aggressor and to avenge his religion before the public, he laid hands on him, and after giving him a sound beating, left him extended on the ground, and quickly returned to his own house.

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then summoned before him the Armenian merchant, and determined to examine him in full divan, and hear what he had to say in his defence. At the same time he ordered the persons who had witnessed the fray to attend. After hearing their declarations and evidence, the divan was convinced that the servant had without provocation attacked the Armenian, and uttered blasphemies against the christian religion, and that for these causes only the merchant had beaten the Persian. After this unanimous decision of the divan, the prince commanded the christian and the Musulman to be confined in separate prisons.

With a view to prevent similar of-

fences in future, to give satisfaction, as it were, to the christians resident in the country, and to administer justice with the sanction of those who are the guardians of the laws of Mahometan states, Abbas convened a divan composed of the Sheik-ul-Islam, and the principal ulemas of the city of Tabreez, and proposed the following questions, which he required them to answer in succession, according to their custom :—

Question. Was the Lord Jesus (Hazreti-Iysa) a real prophet sent by God?

—*Answer.* Yes.

Question. Are the laws contained in his noble gospel (Indjili-sheryf) just or not?—*Answer.* Yes, they are just.

Question. Is it permitted by our laws to blaspheme the Lord Jesus and his noble gospel?—*Answer.* No, it is unjust.

Upon these unanimous decisions of the ulemas, called in such cases, *fetva*, (sentence) the prince-royal ordered the merchant to be set at liberty, and his servant to be punished with one hundred strokes of the bastinado; and he dismissed him from his service as a warning to all who should be disposed to insult the professors of a different religion from their own.

Similar sentiments were displayed by the monarch himself on a more recent occasion:—In April 1815, the vicinity of the capital was visited with

an extraordinary drought. The Sheik-ul-Islam of that city, who was held in high consideration by the king and the court, but who was not acquainted with the good intentions of the sovereign towards all his subjects without distinction, imagined that he was performing an action well pleasing to God and his majesty, in collecting in his house two hundred of the populace, and persuading them that the drought and the consequent dearth of the productions of the soil, were a punishment inflicted by the Almighty, because people frequented the taverns kept by the Armenians ; adding, that to appease the divine wrath, they ought to destroy those haunts of impiety. By such language,

the Sheik-ul-Islam inflamed the minds of his hearers, who tumultuously proceeded to the quarter inhabited by the Armenians, and in the presence of the Sheik, demolished one of their churches, and pulled down the houses of several dealers in wine.

It was not long before the king was informed of this outrage. He ordered the Sheik-ul-Islam and the persons whom he had instigated to its commission to be immediately apprehended and brought before him. Being apprized of his majesty's indignation, they had concealed themselves in different parts of the city, and the Sheik-ul-Islam, who had most to fear from the king's displeasure, sought refuge in

the mosque of Shah Abdul Azym, a few miles from Teheran, which is an inviolable sanctuary for criminals, and even for murderers. The mosques in which the Imams or their children are interred, enjoy the same privilege.

The royal guards, however, discovered and secured twelve of these people, who were carried before the king. He was surrounded by all his ministers. "Audacious wretches!" said he, "who commanded you to act thus? What law authorises such proceedings? Is the Sheik-ul-Islam your sovereign, or the ruler of this country? Ye have violated the laws of my dominions; by them I condemn you: depart from my presence." The legal penalties were

immediately enforced, and the culprits were obliged to pay the Armenians an indemnification of one thousand *toomauns*. His majesty then sent for the principal persons of the Armenian nation. "It is my wish," said he to them, "that all my subjects of what religion soever they be, should enjoy a just liberty and live unmolested under the protection of my royal authority." He then promised to inflict condign punishment on the Sheik-ul-Islam and exhorted them to pray to God for the preservation of his life. At the same time Feth Ali Shah ordered his treasurer to pay to these notables the sum of three thousand *toomauns* out of his privy purse, as a compensation to the

christians for the injury they had sustained. He moreover commanded that the Armenian church should be repaired at the expense of government, and that restitution should be made for such furniture and effects as had been damaged or destroyed.

If the preceding facts exhibit a laudable relaxation of Mahometan rigour towards those whom they regard as infidels, the following whimsical anecdote proves the Persians to be the least fanatic of all Musulmans, in permitting doubts to be publicly raised among themselves against points of faith inculcated by their own religion.

A *mollah* preaching one day in a mosque strongly insisted on the ex-

amination which the deceased have to undergo from the angels of death, Nekyr and Monkyr, as soon as they are deposited in the tomb. "Don't believe a word of it!" cried one of the congregation, for one of my slaves died a few days since; I filled his mouth with rice, and on digging him up again to-day the rice was just as I left it. Now it is morally impossible for a man to give answers even to angels, with his mouth full." Such an argument, brought forward in any other place than a mosque, in Turkey, would not have passed without answer.

PART IV.**MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.****CHAP. I.****CHARACTER OF THE PERSIANS.**

Nature, just in her gifts, has diffused them equally over the face of the globe. She has allotted to each climate its peculiar productions, good and bad, and has rarely refused to any region one species of tree or plant without bestowing some other in its stead. The same observation applies to the character of each nation, which is composed of a sum of good and bad quali-

ties which counterbalance one another, and which are found in such proportions in that nation exclusively. It is a mark set upon it by the deity, and this mark it will retain in spite of human revolutions and the lapse of ages. We find ancient nations now degenerated and debased; yet there is none of them but has retained some of the primitive features of its character.

It would, therefore, be not less absurd to seek than impossible to find a nation without defects or without virtues: of course we must balance the one against the other, and according as the mass of good or bad qualities preponderates, we must form our judg-

ment of the character of the nation which we are studying.

In delineating the character of the Persians, we can scarcely have a better guide than Chardin, whose long residence in the country, and whose intercourse with the great, enabled him to make himself intimately acquainted with the character of the nation, rather than with that of the lower classes, the number of whose vices is increased by the want of education.

The Persians are pre-eminent for intellectual qualities; their moral character exhibits a compound of the most odious defects. They have a sound understanding, a quick imagination, a ready memory, and a happy capacity

for the sciences and the liberal and mechanical arts. Under the appearance of a proud indifference, they derive information from the society of foreigners and profit by their knowledge: they receive them kindly, patronize them, tolerate their religion, and regard them with pity rather than contempt. In illness and affliction they even solicit the prayers of infidels; but this may proceed from superstition rather than from toleration.

In conversation, the Persians affect elegant language, and are fond of introducing quotations from the works of their best poets, such as Saadi, Hafiz, and Djami. This love of quotations is common alike to persons of

distinction, and to the dregs of the people; because those who have received no education, and cannot even read and write, take advantage of the readiness and retentiveness of their memory to learn by heart a great number of striking passages, which they omit no opportunity of bringing forward. They are also very clever at irony and punning.

Endowed with a supple and intriguing disposition, they have agreeable manners and extreme politeness: but this politeness is little better than a jargon of high-flown compliments, and hyperbolic expressions, equally destitute of sense and feeling: hence it

is, no doubt, that they have been denominated the French of Asia.

Mr. Morier gives several examples of this propensity of the Persians to flattery, hyperbole and exaggeration. When the British embassy reached Shiraz, the vizir of the prince-governor, attended by most of the principal men of the city came out to meet the ambassador. When the usual routine of first compliments had been gone through and repeated over and over again, the minister placed himself on one side of the ambassador, while the *mehmandar*, an officer appointed to attend distinguished strangers, and who acts as commissary, guard, and guide, was on

the other. The *mehmandar* said to the minister : " How well the *elshee* (ambassador) talks Persian !"—" Well !" cried the minister : " he talks it admirably. He is superior to any *mollah*. We have never yet seen such an *elshee*, none so accomplished, none so clever, none so learned." To all this there was a chorus around of *belli, belli, belli*. The minister then turned to a person on the other side of him, and said loud enough and expressly for the ambassador to hear : " Did you ever see any one so charming as the *elshee*, so much better than all other *elshees* ?" The ambassador in praising the climate of Shiraz, observed : " It is so fine, that I should have thought mankind never

died here, had I not seen those tombstones,"—pointing to some which he was just passing. "Wonderful! wonderful!" exclaimed the *mehmandar*. "Did you hear that?" he roared out to the minister. "What a wit is the *elshee*!" He then repeated the joke to the minister, who likewise cried out: "Wonderful! wonderful!" as did all the others.

However impertinent this sort of barefaced flattery may appear to Europeans, in the eyes of the Persians the omission of it would be a neglect of the common forms of politeness. Mr. Morier was once present when the prime-minister gave instructions to a man who was sent to greet a Russian officer

on his arrival, and his principal injunction was, "Be sure you give him plenty of flattery." They know, however, the real value of it as well as we ; for at the same time he turned round to our countryman and said : " You know it is necessary *reesh-khundish bekuneem*—to laugh at his beard, or in other words to *humbug* him. Among themselves they practise the same sort of deceit ; and though they are in general aware of the value of the praise they receive, yet it does not fail to stimulate their vanity, which, as far back as the time of Herodotus, appears to have been a national vice ; for he says, " they esteem themselves the most excellent of mankind."

In the embassy of Sir Harford Jones,— we quote the words of the same traveller—I once witnessed the introduction of one Persian to another, the principal *mirza* of the embassy to the chief jeweller. “What!” said the latter, is this the renowned Aga Meer, that learned, that ingenious man, that famous penman?” and then went through such a rapid enumeration of virtues, qualities, personal charms, and family distinctions, that the *mirza* at first appeared quite overwhelmed : but by little and little he recovered, and returned so brisk a fire of compliments, as almost to annihilate the jeweller.

I have repeatedly heard them compliment a person, observes Mr. Scott

Waring, either in his hearing, or in the présence of some one who would convey this adulation to his ears ; and the instant that he has departed, their praises have turned into abuse, and they have, with malicious pleasure, exposed the character which not a moment before they praised with fervent servility.

I recollect, says the same writer, the Sheik at Bushire remonstrating against the rapacity of Chiragh Ali Khan, the governor of Shiraz, when he was informed of the arrival of his principal secretary. He began by inquiring after the governor's health, and when he was told that he had quitted the city, he readily observed, that, " now

Shiraz was worthless, and that it had lost the only ornament it possessed."

This spirit of exaggeration and insincerity is not confined to their personal intercourse with one another: it insinuates itself into public affairs as well as into the humbler relations between man and man.

Not long after the arrival of the English embassy, under Sir Gore Ouseley, at Teheran, the confidential secretary of the grand-vizir, accompanied by Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, who had been ambassador from Persia to the British court, came one morning in great agitation to announce a great victory gained by the prince-royal over the Russians. Their account was that the

Persians had killed 2000, and taken 5000 prisoners and 12 guns. We soon afterwards heard the real truth, says Mr. Morier, which reduced their account to 300 killed, two guns taken, and 500 made prisoners. On questioning them why they exaggerated so much, when they knew how soon the falsehood must be discovered, they very ingenuously replied :—" If we did not know that your stubborn veracity would have come in our way, we should have said ten times as much. This is the first time our troops have made any stand at all against the Russians ; and you would not surely restrict so glorious an event in our history to a few dry facts."

The Persian army, adds the traveller, amounted, on this occasion by their own account, to 9000, or according to English officers employed in it, to 14,000 men, among whom was a corps of flying artillery with 12 guns, to which chiefly its success was owing. The Russians, 800 in number, not expecting any attack from the latter kind of force, had neglected to send for succours. After losing 300 men the rest capitulated. One of the articles of capitulation was that their heads were not to be cut off: a practice which is quite common in Persian and Turkish warfare. During the fight, ten *toomauns* were given for every head of the enemy brought to the prince; and it has been known to

...om was a corps of 12 guns, to which chiefly owing. The Russians, not expecting any attack of that kind of force, had sent for succours. After the rest capitulated, the articles of capitulation was that the garrison were not to be cut off: which is quite common in Turkish warfare. During

palace gate, might make a considerable show. The Persians, a circumstance which the king's ministers exceeded on no preceding occasion had been known to approach the enemy to get killed.

Passionately fond of luxury and voluptuous Persians are unbounded. Hence they acquire mere

day is every thing, and the morrow belongs to God.

A Persian will never blaspheme the name of God, but he will invoke him without occasion. He will one moment pronounce that sacred name with the same lips which the next are pouring forth the grossest obscenities : he will punctually recite his prayers ; he will purify himself several times a day ; he will avoid all corporeal contamination, the contact of a person of a different religion, or the admission of such a person into his house in rainy weather, since the wet from his clothes would render impure whatever it touched, whether persons or furniture : but he

will bear false witness for the sake of filthy lucre; he will borrow without returning, or even deny his debt; he will seize every opportunity of cheating; he will be destitute of sincerity in the service of his friend, of fidelity in his engagements, and of honesty in trade: in short, while he outwardly exhibits the bark of all the virtues, the sap of vice will circulate through all his actions.

A French traveller, M. Olivier, has drawn a very just comparison between the Turks and Persians, from which we shall quote a few passages.

In Turkey every thing bears the stamp of barbarism and cruelty: in Persia every thing bespeaks a mild and

civilized nation. The Turks are vain, supercilious, inhospitable : the Persians polite, complimentary and obliging.

Though at the present day equally superstitious with the Turks, the Persians are not so fanatical : in some particulars they carry their scruples to a greater length than the former ; in general they will not eat with a person of a different religion ; they will not drink out of a cup or a glass which has been used by a Christian, a Jew, or an Indian, and yet they admit any one into their mosques. They listen with patience to all the objections you have to urge against their religion, and to whatever you may say against their prophet and their Imams ; whereas the

Turk would murder you, if in his hearing you were to speak irreverently of Mahomet and his laws. The Persian looks at you with pity; and prays to heaven that the truth may be revealed to you in all its lustre. He avoids the subject of religion, but continues to treat you with the same kindness and friendship as ever.

Equally brave with the Turk, more active but less patient, he is, like the other, cruel in battle and implacable towards his armed foe; but more tractable after the combat, and more sociable after peace.

Insurrections for overthrowing the sovereign or his ministers, for plundering caravans, or for laying a city or a

province under contribution, are less frequent in Persia than in Turkey. The Persian, however, ranks beneath the Turk in point of morals and perhaps also of character. If the first is better informed, more polite, more gentle than the second ; if he less frequently disturbs the tranquillity of the state ; if he does not so often threaten the lives and property of his fellow-citizens ; if he pays more respect to weakness in either sex ; he possesses neither that pride nor that magnanimity, neither that self-esteem, that confidence in friendship, nor that devoted attachment to his benefactor, which occasionally produce great things in the Turk.

The Persians seem to be a degenerate

people, whose vices have increased during the troubles of the country ; whose virtues are perhaps at present but the shadow of what they once were when the laws were in full vigour, when talents were encouraged, when integrity was honoured, and when each, secure in the possession of his property, could augment it by honest exertions.

The Turks, on the other hand, are a new nation, having all the coarseness, rudeness and ignorance of one which civilization has not polished, and which instruction has not meliorated. Under an able government the Persians would rebuild their cities, re-establish their commerce, and repair the injuries which their agriculture has sustained. With

a vigorous, active and intelligent government the Turk would perhaps once more strike terror into Europe.

From these different traits we are authorized to conclude that the society of the Persians is agreeable, if the connexion between the parties is disinterested : but we must not expect from them either sincere friendship, strict integrity, or refined delicacy.

To judge from the Guebres, the relics of the ancient Persians, they were originally a coarse-looking race of people ; but their blood has since been refined by the intermixture with that of Georgia and Circassia. There are few Persians of quality, who are not sprung from women of those nations : and as

this intermixture has been practised for several centuries, both sexes have been greatly improved by it. The men are tall and well-proportioned, vigorous, active and comely. The women, without being qualified to vie with those of Georgia in beauty, are in general handsome in face and figure.

CHAP. II.

NOMINATION AND CIRCUMCISION OF
INFANTS.

It is an established custom among all nations to accompany the birth and nomination of children with ceremonies and diversions ; which differ with the manners of the respective countries.

In Persia, on the birth of a son, some confidential person about the *harem* is usually the first to get the information, when he runs in great haste to his master, and says: *Mujdeh!* or "good news!" by which he secures

to himself a gift which generally follows the *mujdeh*. Among the common people, the man who brings the *mujdeh*, frequently seizes the cap or shawl, or any article belonging to the father, as a security for the present to which he holds himself entitled.

On the birth of a child, the Persians wash, clothe, and swathe it in a long bandage, called the *kandak*, that entirely encircles the infant from the neck downwards, keeping its arms pinioned to its sides, so that it cannot stir either hand or foot. They then place it under the same bed-clothes with the mother. The midwife pronounces in the ear of the child the profession of the Musulman faith, in

virtue of which the child is received into the number of the true believers. It is remarkable, that immediately afterwards they perform a ceremony, which may be supposed to have an indistinct reference to christianity ; for in the room where the child is born, the midwife takes a sword, and with the point draws a line on the four walls. One of the women in attendance asks: "What are you about?"—the other answers: "I am tracing a tower for Mariam and her child." Mr. Morier says, that he could never learn the origin or intention of this ceremony. A similar practice according to Buxtorf, is common among the modern Jews.

On the day of the woman's confinement, a certain food is prepared for her, of which all those present at the birth partake, and portions of it are likewise sent to all her other friends. On the third day after the delivery, she is taken to the bath, where she performs the ablutions and purifications prescribed by the Mahometan law. The eastern women suffer little from parturition, the better sort being frequently on foot the day after their delivery, and out of all confinement on the third day.

The Persians and the Asiatics in general suckle their children much longer than the Europeans : to a boy they give the breast two years and two

months, and to a girl only two years complete. On the day that the child is to be weaned, they carry it to the mosque, and after performing certain acts of devotion, return home and collecting their friends and relations, give a feast of which they make the child also partake.

The evil eye is as much feared in Persia as in other parts of Asia. They hang about the child's neck, or sew to its cap, a bangle of the colour of a turquoise, which they look upon as most fortunate, and which serves to annul the glance of an evil eye. They also insert paragraphs of the Koran into little bags, which they sew on the child's cap, or on its sleeve, esteeming

them great preservatives against sickness. If a visitor should praise the looks of a child, and the latter should afterwards fall sick, the visitor immediately gets the reputation of having an evil eye; and the remedy is to take part of his clothes, which, with the seed of a species of cress, they burn in a chaffing-dish, walking round and round the child. Him who has the reputation of having an evil eye they keep at a distance.

The Persians observe the same ceremonies at the circumcision and naming of children as the Turks;* but they have another custom on the

* See *Turkey in Miniature*, vol. v. p. 127
—131.

occasion, called *akikeh*. The father of the child kills a sheep, of the flesh of which he makes broth, but cautiously preserves all the bones. He invites his friends, relations, and the poor in the highways, to partake of this food, from which he and his wife are excluded, and having selected a clean place near some running water, he there buries them.

They adopt also certain ceremonies about shaving the child's head. It frequently happens after the birth of a son, that if the parent be in distress or the child sick, or there be any other cause of grief, the mother makes a vow that no razor shall come upon the child's head for a certain portion of

time and sometimes for all his life. If the child recovers, and the cause of her grief be removed, and if the vow be but for a time, then she shaves his head at the end of that time, makes a small entertainment, collects money and other things from her relations and friends, which are sent as *nezers* (offerings) to the mosque at Kerbelah, and there consecrated.

The circumcision of the children of people of distinction is always attended with extraordinary festivities, in which parents display all the profusion that their circumstances admit of. Mr. Franklin happened to be at Shiraz when the son of Djafar Khan, prince of that city was circumcised. All the

bazars were illuminated, and adorned with lustres and coloured lamps; the walls were hung with beautiful tapestry, and decorated with mirrors, flowers, and pictures; and the shops were embellished with the greatest care. Companies of musicians and female dancers were to be seen night and day, in the streets and public places, exhibiting pantomimes and other entertainments. These festivities lasted a whole week.

The Persians have no family name. Every male at his birth receives one taken from the Old Testament, the Koran, or the Mahometan history, or compounded of two words, the first signifying servant, and that which follows being one of the epithets of God.

They have also pre-names and surnames, to which they affix the names of their father and ancestors, if they are desirous of indicating their descent. In the prename it is common to add to the word *abou*, father, that of a man's son: the surname is almost always an epithet or title of honour. This practice is common among the Arabs as well as the Persians. The great Saladin, for instance, was called Aboul-Modhaffer Yousef-ben-Ayoub Selaheddin. His pre-name was Abou'l-Modhaffer, father of the victorious; his proper name Yousef, that of his father, Ayoub, *ben* signifying son; and his surname Selah-eddin, the support

of religion. To these denominations is sometimes appended an adjective denoting a person's birth-place, or the tribe to which he belongs.

CHAP. III.

EDUCATION OF THE PERSIANS.


Education is far from being neglected by any class of the people. Persons of high rank have their children instructed by *mollahs* and other preceptors, who attend their pupils at the houses of their parents. The lower orders and often considerable Persians who are under the condition of nobles send their sons to the public schools established in every town. They are commonly held in the mosques and sometimes in the houses of the teachers who are mostly *mollahs*. The expense of each

child's education annually amounts to scarcely a *toomaun*, not much more than half a guinea—a price greatly in favour of the advancement of learning. The scholars sit round their master on the matted floor, all conning their lessons aloud as they learn them, and not stopping their noise even when the teacher is officially hearing one of the other pupils read. This little seminary presents a curious sight to a European ; for, besides the rapid motion of their lips, they keep their bodies in one continued seesaw, without which movement a Persian conceives it would be impossible to learn anything. When idleness or any other misdemeanour requires chastisement, the young culprit undergoes the

same punishment as that which royalty at times inflicts on any offending nobleman—namely the bastinado on the soles of the feet. The children are taught reading and writing, and as soon as they can commit to memory, they learn passages from the favourite poets of the country, many of which are fraught with the noblest sentiments and the most amiable feelings of human nature. At the same time they are taught prayers from the Koran in Arabic, a language which they do not in general understand; but the meaning of the prayer is explained to them, and they are directed on what occasions to repeat it. Youth of the higher classes often add a knowledge of the Arabic and also the

Turkish language to their deeper studies. The usual list are—arithmetic, geometry, moral philosophy, astronomy, and not unfrequently astrology, all of which are cultivated with considerable assiduity and success by most of the Persian gentlemen, who never fail to add the manly exercises to these liberal acquirements. This being the case, it is difficult to comprehend the ruin and neglect into which the colleges of nearly all the great cities have fallen: the once noble establishments of Ardebil, Casvin, Ispahan, Shiraz, &c. being mere shadows of what they once were.

A youth quits his preceptor at the age of eighteen. He then learns to bend the bow, to wield the sabre and



to manage a horse. Marriage releases him from all restraint, but not from the respect which he owes to his father. The sacred rights of paternity are never violated in the east: there a son, whatever may be his age or condition, never sits in the presence of his father; but his movements and whole demeanour are marked with filial submission.

More pains are bestowed on the education of the children of the lower classes than in Europe. They are never seen running about the streets, getting corrupted by bad examples and bad language, contracting a fondness for play, quarrelling and fighting. They usually begin to go to

school at the age of six years, and attend it twice a day. On their return, their parents keep them at home to accustom them early to the business for which they design them.

CHAP. IV.

MARRIAGE.

The mode of matrimonial courtships in Persia does not allow the eyes of the parties to direct their choice till they are mutually pledged to each other. An elderly female is employed by the relations of the youth to visit the object selected by his parents or friends, or guessed at by himself; and her office is to ascertain the damsel's personal endowments, and all other subjects suitable to their views in the connexion. If the report be favourable, the friends of the proposed bridegroom dispatch

certain sponsors to explain his merits and pretensions to the relations of the lady, and to make the offer of marriage in due form. If accepted, the heads of the two families meet, when the necessary contracts are drawn up ; the presents, ornaments, and other advantages proposed by the bridegroom's parents discussed and arranged ; and when all is finally settled, the papers are sealed and witnessed before the *cadi*.

On the morning of the day fixed for the wedding, the lover sends a train of mules laden with the promised gifts for his bride, to the house of her parents ; the whole being attended by numerous servants, and preceded by

music and drums. Besides the presents for the lady, the procession carries all sorts of costly viands on large silver trays, ready prepared to be immediately spread before the inmates of the house. The whole of the day is spent in feasting and jollity: towards evening, the damsel makes her appearance enveloped in a long veil of scarlet or crimson silk, and being placed on a horse or mule splendidly caparisoned, is conducted to the habitation of her affianced husband by all her relations, marching in regular order to the sound of the same clamorous band which had escorted the presents. When alighted at the bridegroom's door, the lady is led to her future

apartments within the house, accompanied by her female relations and waiting-maids. Her friends of the other sex meanwhile repair to those of the bridegroom, where all the male relations on both sides being assembled, the feasting and rejoicing recommences; with the drums and other musical instruments still playing the most conspicuous part. When the supper-feast is over, the blushing bride is conducted to the nuptial chamber, and there the impatient lover first beholds his love, and the marriage is consummated without farther ceremony. The bridegroom, not long after, returns to his party, and an ancient matron in waiting leads the lady back to her female friends.

A prescribed time is allowed for both sets of relations to congratulate the young people on their union, after which they repair to the bridal chamber for the night, leaving their separate companies to keep up the revelry, which generally lasts for three days.

The marriage-contract stipulates the settlement on the bride of such jointure as may be agreed upon. It consists of a sum of money, proportionate to the fortune of the bridegroom, and other presents. If he is in middling circumstances he presents her with two complete dresses, a ring, and a mirror. This jointure, called *mihir* or *kavin*, is destined for the support of the wife in case of divorce. The husband also

supplies the requisite furniture, carpets, mats, culinary utensils, and other necessities.

It would be deemed the greatest possible disgrace to take back the bride after she has left her own home to go to the house of the bridegroom. When, therefore, the latter has promised a jointure beyond his means, a curious scene sometimes ensues. He shuts his door against the cavalcade, and declares that he will not have the girl unless the jointure be reduced to a certain sum. A negotiation takes place between the parties, and the matter is finally adjusted according to the wishes of the bridegroom.

CHAP. V.

FUNERALS AND TOMBS.

The Persians inter their dead with the same ceremonies which are practised by other Mahometan nations, and which, having been already detailed in our account of Turkey, need not be repeated here.

Though religion forbids graves to be covered with any structure whatever, yet the ostentation of the great has violated this precept, and left the observance of it to the very lowest class, who have only a piece of stone set up vertically at the end of the grave,

with a moral inscription, or a passage from the Koran. The tombs of the poorer sort of people are built with bricks, with a small piece of marble at the head for the epitaph. Stone lions and rams rudely sculptured are very frequently seen in Persian burial-grounds, and are placed over the tombs of soldiers or those famed for their courage. The rich have over their tombs small cupolas resting on four pilasters. The largest and most considerable are called *takieh*, and are built over the remains of holy and learned men. Around these and such-like monuments, are in general to be seen collections of minor tombs, for it is a received opinion, that those who are

buried in the vicinity of a holy personage will meet with his support at the day of resurrection. The Persians, however, do not take the same care of their dead as the Turks. Their tombs are trampled on ; paths frequently lead right over them ; and epitaph, tombstone and all, are often carried away to be used as materials for building. The terrace which supports the gardens and buildings of the Bagh Jehan Nemah, at Shiraz, is almost entirely composed of tomb-stones, and at Ispahan sepulchral inscriptions are often seen on the surface of a wall.

Mourning lasts forty days at the utmost. Black is not the livery of sorrow : that colour is abhorred by the

Persians. They express grief, and mark the state of mourning by sighs and means, by abstaining from food for eight days, and by wearing garments of a brown or pale colour adapted to the state of the mind. For ten days their friends pay them frequent visits, and afford them all the consolations in their power. On the ninth they take them to the bath, have their heads shaved and supply them with new clothes. Here ends the full mourning; but their lamentations continue till the fortieth day: and they renew them twice or thrice a week always at the hour when the deceased expired.

The grief of the women is more strongly expressed and of longer con-

tinuance. Endowed by nature with keener sensibility than the other sex, and left by the death of a husband in a state of forlorn widowhood, to which they are generally doomed for the rest of their lives, they mourn for many months, paying daily visits to the grave, watering it with their tears, rending their garments, imposing on themselves bodily mortifications, and in short, setting no bounds to the expression of their sorrow.

CHAP. VI.

COSTUME OF THE PERSIANS.

“ If the prudence of a nation were manifested in a stedfast adherence to its costume, the Persians could not be too highly praised for that quality ; for their dress never alters ; they never make any change either in the colour or fashion of the stuff. I have seen dresses belonging to Tamerlane which are preserved in the royal treasury at Is-pahan, and which are cut in the very fashion of the present day, without the slightest difference.” Such was the remark of Chardin, nearly two centu-

ries ago: but could the same traveller now revisit Persia, he would fancy himself in another country, such are the changes effected by the late revolutions in the state of the kingdom and the costume of its inhabitants.

In Chardin's time all colours, black excepted, were worn indiscriminately. Under the dynasty of the Zends light colours were preferred; but since the family of the Cadjars has filled the throne, the darker hues have been the fashion.

The form of garments also has undergone great change: and the dandy, if such a character exists in Persia, cannot appear but in clothes of the true

Cadjar cut, the only style of dress that is considered as fashionable.

The garments composing the dress of a Persian are the following :—

1. The *zeer djameh*, a species of very wide trowsers, made of cotton cloth or silk, which reach down to the ancles, and are tied at the waist in front.

2. The *peerahun*, or shirt, of silk, comes over the trowsers and falls a little below the hips. It is shaped at top like a woman's chemise, having no collar, and is fastened by means of two buttons over the left shoulder.

3. The *erkalig*, a very tight vest, which falls to the bend of the knee ; the

sleeves descend to the wrist but are open from the elbow. It is made of Mahometan chintz, or fine shawls.

4. The *caba*, a long robe reaching to the ancles, fits close down to the hips, and buttons on the sides. The sleeves of the *caba* cover those of the *erkalig*, and are held together from the elbow downward by a row of buttons, so that they may be opened for the performance of the prescribed ablutions previously to prayers. The *caba* is made of various kinds of cloths, some of which are very magnificent and expensive.

The *bagalee* is another kind of robe, which folds over the breast and buttons on the side, down to the hip. This

garment is generally made of cloth, shawl, or cotton stuff folded ; and is worn in winter only.

5. The outer robe is always of cloth ; it is worn or not, according to the weather. The robe has as many names as there are forms of which it is susceptible. It is called *tikmeh*, when the sleeves are open as high as the elbow, and when it is round, buttons before, and falls like a petticoat over the shawl that serves for a girdle ; *omeh*, when it is open on both sides from the hips ; and *biroonee*, when it is loose, with wide sleeves hanging carelessly from the shoulders.

6. The *shalee-kemr*, or shawl girdle, fastened round the waist over the *caba*.

This girdle is, according to the circumstances of the wearer, either a real Cashmere, a Kerman shawl, or a piece of flowered muslin. In this girdle is stuck the *candjar*, a kind of dagger, the handle of which is sometimes enriched with precious stones and at others merely of ivory or wood.

The Persians have, also, pelisses of very rich stuff, trimmed with furs, such as the *catabee*, which covers the whole body, and is trimmed with fur down the back, at the shoulders, at the elbows and in the inside. This is the richest and most showy garment of the whole Persian costume.

The *coordee*, a sort of jacket, which fits close to the body and the skirts of

which fall over the thighs. The *catabee* and *coordee* were worn in Chardin's time.

The *kolah*, or cap, worn by the Persians, while more convenient, keeps the head not less warm than the turban. It is made of lamb-skin, with short, curly black wool, lined with a greyish skin of not so fine a quality, terminating in a skull-cap of red or azure blue cloth, or merely of white sheep-skin. The only distinction there is in this species of head-dress, consists in a shawl wound about the *kolah* and this distinction is reserved for the king, the princes of his family and a few of the nobles, the great officers of state and the magistrates.

The inhabitants of the town, wear in winter socks of worsted or cotton. The country people wear no stockings in summer; and in winter they wrap pieces of cloth about their legs.

The Persians have three sorts of shoes or slippers, and two of boots. People of the higher classes wear green slippers with heels an inch thick. A low slipper of red or yellow leather, having an iron in shape of a horse-shoe at the heel, was formerly worn. The lower classes use strong shoes of leather or quilted cotton, with flat soles, and turned up at the toes.

One of the sorts of boots has high heels, turns up at the toe and covers

the whole leg. The others are smaller, tighter, and only reach up to the calf.

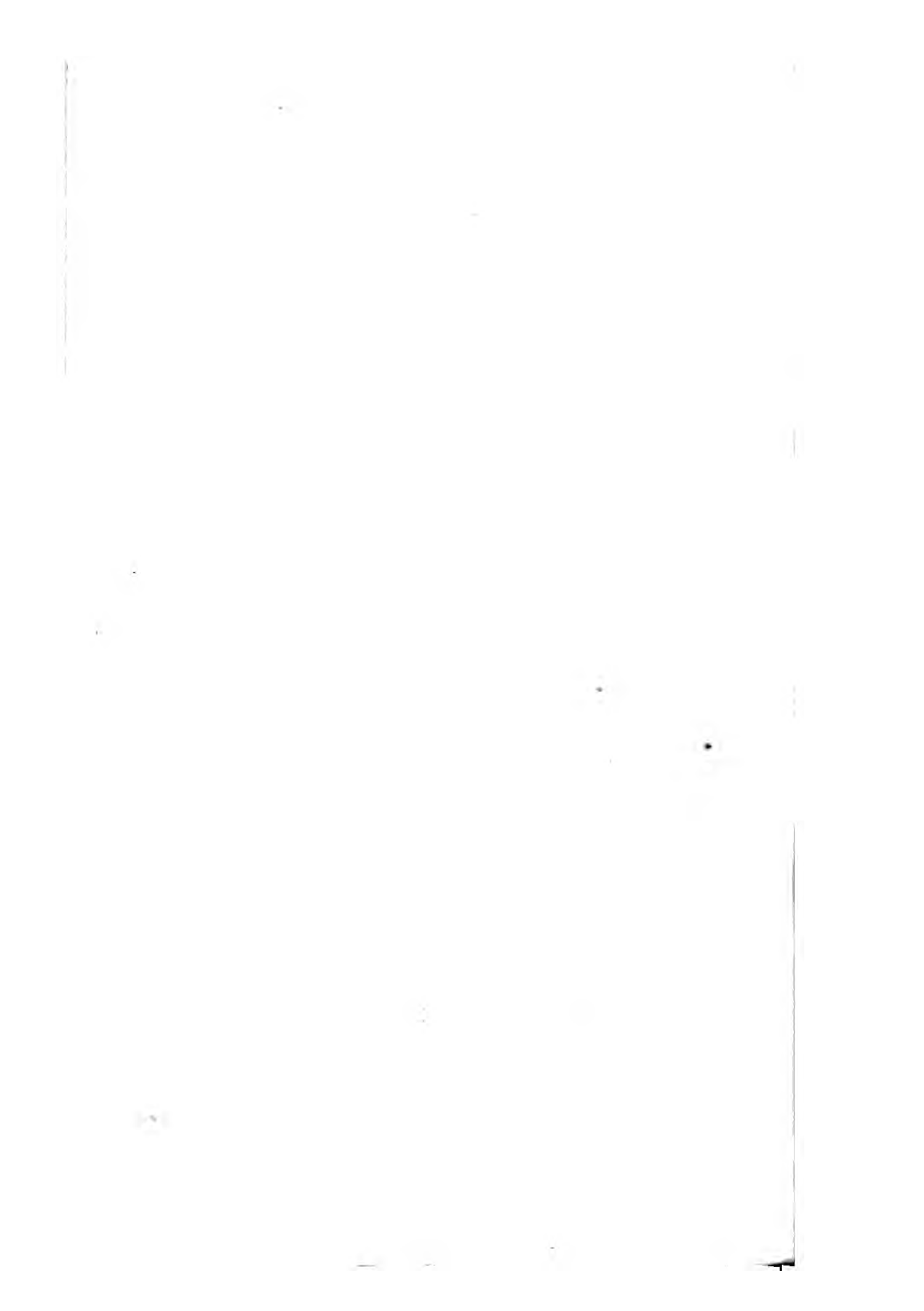
When a Persian is going to ride, he puts on a pair of wide cloth trowsers, called *shalwar*, into which he introduces the skirts of the *erkalig* and the *zeer-djameh*. A Persian of distinction, thus equipped and mounted, is represented in the engraving opposite to this page.

The dress of the Persians of the superior classes is very expensive, frequently amounting to sixty or one hundred guineas. It is admirably calculated for either a hot or cold climate: it imposes no restraint on the limbs, and may be put on or thrown off



· PERSIAN OF HIGH RANK.

Pub^d by R. Ackermann. London. 1822.



in five minutes. The poor people wear no cap and but little clothes in summer; but when the cold weather comes they make dresses of sheep-skins.

The merchants never wear scarlet or crimson cloths, or use silver or gold buttons to their robes: this may not possibly amount to a prohibition, but the effect is the same. Shah Abbas, who wished to make this class of his subjects very frugal, issued an order that they were always to wear shawl turbans and robes of broad cloth. This would be, in his opinion, the cheapest dress they could wear, as the shawl would serve them for their lives, and descend to their children, and the cloths would last several years.

It should be observed that the wearing of silk is interdicted by the Musulman law, on account of its being an excrement. The Persians, however, evade this prohibition by mixing with the silk a very small portion of cotton. A large quantity of this kind of cloth is imported into Persia from Guzerat.

Although the Persians bathe so often, they are a very dirty people. They very rarely change their garments, and seldom before it is dangerous to come near them : indeed they think nothing of wearing a shirt a month and a pair of trowsers half a year.

The Persians have a high esteem for the beard, which is an object of their incessant care and attention. In Egypt

it indicates a state of liberty ; in Persia it is worn alike by the slave and the master : there the condition of the eunuch is too much despised for any one to wish to resemble him in any particular.

Black bushy beards are held in the greatest estimation : accordingly all are of this colour, for men of a fair complexion dye their beards as well to please the women as to give themselves a look of youth and vigour. It is more difficult to make them bushy : ointments, pomatums, drugs of all sorts are early employed to impart to them this species of beauty ; but nature is seldom to be overcome by such applications.

Nothing can exceed the attention paid by a Persian to his beard. In the morning, as soon as he rises, at night before he retires to rest, after his meals, and several times in the course of the day, he carefully washes it, dries it with a cloth, combs and trims it. A mirror and a comb, which he always carries about him, enable him to adjust it at any moment of the day, when it has been deranged by the wind or by the accidental brushing of something against it.

The beard is fresh dyed every fortnight. The operation is as follows. A paste is first made with *henna*, and copiously rubbed over the beard. It is removed in an hour, by which time

it has communicated a deep orange colour to the hair. Another paste made of indigo leaves, reduced to powder is then applied, and left on two hours. During this time the person lies at full length on his back. When this indigo paste is removed, the beard appears of a dark-green colour, which turns to black after twenty-four hours' exposure to the air.

The Persians shave the head twice or three times a week. Some have a lock of hair growing on the crown, after the fashion of the Turks; others retain only a border above the ears.

It is also customary, as a piece of finery, to dye the nails of the hands and feet with the *henna* just men-

tioned, which is nothing but the pulverized leaves of the *cyperus*. Sometimes the whole of the hands up to the wrist, the soles of the feet and the toes are stained with the same orange-coloured tincture.

To convey a more complete idea of the general appearance of a Persian of distinction, we annex a portrait of Myr Daoud Zadour, a native of Persian Armenia, who a few years since, filled the post of envoy from the king of Persia to the court of France. His conduct in this situation was highly creditable to himself and to the master whom he served; and to his pen we are indebted for a small tract with the title of *Particulars respecting the pre-*



AMBASSADOR.

Pub.^d by R. Ackermann. London, 1822.

sent State of Persia, published at Paris, in 1818, in the Persian, Armenian, and French languages, of which we have not failed to ourselves in the compilation of these volumes.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE WOMEN OF PERSIA.

SECTION I.

OF THEIR EDUCATION.

The women of Persia, like those of all Mahometan countries, receive no moral education whatever. When they have learned reading, writing, and embroidery, their education is finished; and those things they are taught either by females hired for the purpose, or at the schools which they frequent till they have attained such an age as not to be permitted to go abroad without veil. Neither dancing, music, and

other accomplishments, nor reading and study, ever develop or heighten their natural graces, or enrich their minds. Living shut up in a *harem*, visiting and being visited by none but females, society never forms their manners; the power of human respect opposes no barrier to their passions, to the vices of their hearts and to the extravagances of their disposition: the intercourse with women perverts rather than purifies their morals. The mother exclusively superintends the education of her daughter, and faithfully transmits to her defects which were not corrected when she was herself young: virtue and modesty are terms which she never utters in her hearing,

for they are terms as unmeaning to the one as to the other. She familiarizes her with but one idea—that she is one day to belong to an absolute master, whose love she must strive to acquire, not by practising the virtues of her sex and condition, but by the arts of refined coquetry, which, though they may excite passion, are an antidote to true conjugal tenderness, which is founded on mutual esteem and regard. She does not teach her how to become a good wife and mother, or inculcate that modesty, and that chaste reserve in all her motions, language, and actions, which adorn beauty and embellish plainness ; but she enjoins her not to go abroad without muffling up her

face and her whole person; not to look at a man, nor to engage in any intrigues; if however, she does not instruct her in the art which she has herself learned by experience, of bringing them to a fortunate conclusion.

Thus the females of Persia receive no other than a physical education, the care of their morals being left to nature, till the moment when example corrupts them. Hence we need not be surprized at the unfavourable character given of them by travellers.

The Persian women, like the Indian, says Mr. Scott Waring, are totally devoid of delicacy: their language is often gross and disgusting, nor do they feel less hesitation in expressing them-

selves before men, than they would before their female associates. Their terms of abuse or reproach are indelicate to the highest degree: it may safely be averred that it is not possible for the imagination to conceive, or language to express, more indecent or grosser images.

SECTION II.

OF THE CONDITION OF THE FEMALE SEX IN PERSIA.

We never think of the women of Asia, without deploring the severity of their lot. We figure them to ourselves thwarted in all their inclinations, restrained in all their actions, watched with degrading vigilance, exposed to

the caprices, the insults and torments of jealousy : compelled to regulate their habits and actions by the wishes of an imperious master ; torn from their parents, the protectors of their childhood, and the companions of their early years ; disappointed in the hopes which their youthful imaginations had fondly indulged ; floating incessantly, according to the whim of their lord, between the condition of mistress and that of slave ; lastly, doomed to live imprisoned in a *harem*, and to receive the caresses of an object for whom they can feel no other sentiment than hatred—what pleasures could ever make amends for the horrors of such a life !

Mirza-Abu-Taleb, a Persian, who re-

sided some time in England, and committed to writing his observations on our manners, which were afterwards given to the public in an English dress, has endeavoured to prove in his work, that these women who are the objects of our pity, enjoy a condition far preferable to that of European females. It is curious to see how he establishes so extraordinary a position.

Six reasons, according to this writer, cause us to think that the women of Asia have less liberty than those of Europe:—1. The little intercourse which they have with the other sex, and the seclusion in which they live. 2. The power granted to men by law, of marrying four wives. 3. The right of di-

force possessed by the husband. 4. The small degree of credit attached to the testimony of women. 5. The custom which forbids women to be present at public diversions, or to use personal ornaments after the decease of their husbands. 6. The custom which denies females the liberty of rejecting a husband.

Abu Taleb does not strive to overthrow the first of these reasons ; but he asserts that the liberty enjoyed by our European women is a calculation of interest. If we live in the same apartments with them, and admit them to our repasts, it is because we cannot afford to keep up two establishments : if they share our beds it is owing to

want of room and the coldness of the climate ; if they go abroad without restraint and intermeddle with our affairs, it is on account of the duties which they have to fulfil, and the experience in business which it is necessary for them to acquire.

As to the perpetual seclusion to which the Asiatic women are condemned, this Persian denies its severity and extols its advantages. These females, he says, have not the least desire to go abroad ; what with us is a pleasure would be to them a derogation from their honour : they would think themselves contaminated by mingling with the vulgar and by the contact of rude and brutal passengers in the streets. Besides as

well from habit as inclination, they are fond of repose, which they prefer to the activity of a European life: and it is easy to appreciate the advantages of seclusion from the time which it affords for useful employments. It is wrong to suppose that they are debarred from any liberty and from the society of men. They may enjoy the company of the relatives of their father and mother and that of their aged domestics ; they may go in palanquins to the houses of their relations, and to visit women of their own rank, without giving their husbands previous notice of their intentions ; and they may walk in the gardens, after they have been cleared of persons of the other sex.

The privilege given to men of marrying several wives seems, says Abu Taleb, to arise out of the nature and physical constitution of women, which require temporary separations. The laws of Asia, in permitting polygamy, do justice to the one sex without wronging the other. The honour of the legitimate wife sustains no injury from it ; for a female who surrenders her person to a married man is never of superior condition, neither is she admitted into the society of *ladies*, but treated in the same manner as a kept mistress is in Europe.

The notion that all Asiatics have four lawful wives is very erroneous ; for in general they have but one.

The husband rarely avails himself of the right of divorce : on the contrary, divorces are almost always granted against his will and at the solicitation of the wife ; for he prefers the infliction of some punishment to separation from her.

The inexperience of women and the levity of their character furnished occasion for that article of the law which requires the testimony of four of them, in cases where the declaration of two men would be deemed sufficient.

Attachment to a husband and respect for his memory naturally suggest the custom practised by the Asiatic women of abstaining after his death from diversions, sumptuous apparel and jewels.

How can they bestow attention on dress and on the pleasures of the world when their souls must be overwhelmed with grief? Feeling and decorum alike prescribe this line of conduct.

In Europe the liberty allowed to females of choosing a husband is merely ideal, for after all it is the will of the father only that authorises and sanctions their choice: in regard to this point therefore our customs perfectly correspond with those of the East.

Having thus combated the reasons which give us false notions of the condition of Asiatic women, Abu Taleb enumerates under eight heads the advantages conferred on them by custom and the laws—advantages not enjoyed

by the women of Europe. They are in substance as follows :—

In the East custom grants to the wife large claims on the property of the husband ; this is one of the results of despotic power. As the fortune of the latter depends on the good pleasure of the sovereign, he makes it over to his wife, such property being always secure. It is frequently the case that in his old age he is reduced to indigence, and that, however extensive his possessions, he is obliged to be satisfied with the alimony which she allows him, because, in the eye of the law, he possesses nothing.

It is custom also which gives the mother absolute power over the education

of the children. Their settlement in life depends on her will : her opposition alone prevents a match projected for them by the father, whereas the opposition of the latter would be no obstacle to the conclusion of one if decided upon by the mother.

The wife possesses all the authority over her own and her husband's servants. She may punish or discharge them at pleasure, without fear of being thwarted or crossed : she is not put to the trouble of doing the honours of a company or a table, or obliged to go through any of those tedious ceremonies, which, in my opinion, says Abu Taleb, could not fail to render the lives of European women most irksome,

were they not made subservient to coquetry and vanity.

This same female, whose servitude we deplore, acquires, on entering the *harem*, the imprescriptible right of tormenting her lord . nay it is an essential and integral quality of beauty.

Her own interest would compel her, were she not led by inclination, to resort to the arts of coquetry ; her caprices enhance the value of her charms ; the waywardness of her humour, the fickleness of her disposition and her imperious temper, are qualities which, in the estimation of fondness, far surpass the timid submission of an affectionate and virtuous wife. If she were mild and gentle she would be overlooked : forward,

capricious and dissipated, she is adored. Thus on all occasions she causes the pleasure of her presence to be purchased by the delay which precedes the grant of it; and if she goes abroad to pay a visit, she does not return to the *harem* till her husband has sent several times after her.

It is amusing enough to find Abu Taleb reckoning liberty and the confidence of the men in the virtue of the sex among the advantages of the condition of Asiatic women. In Europe, he observes, a women may indeed go about where she pleases, and converse with strangers, but yet she never stirs a step without being accompanied: whereas in the East she might absent herself

several days, and pass them with her relatives, or her friends, even without the permission of her husband.

In case of divorce, the laws of most European countries deprive a mother of the children whose education has occupied the best part of her life. In Asia she retains the girls; the law allowing the father to take the male children only.

Lastly, the woman who is ill treated by her husband can quit his house to seek an asylum with her father or some other relation : and she absents herself till due reparation is made for the affront offered to her feelings.

Such, according to Abu Taleb, are the advantages enjoyed by females in

the East. Without pretending to examine whether they are real or chimerical, we shall confine ourselves to a few remarks on one point, that is, *liberty*.

For Asiatic women there is really and truly no such thing as liberty. The very circumstance of their being allowed to leave their homes for several days seems to be a fresh proof of the jealousy of man rather than of his confidence in their virtue. A Mahometan, who tolerates the absence of his wives, well knows, that in quitting his *harem* they have merely changed their prison, and that in their temporary abode they will be not less carefully watched and secluded from the society of men than in his own house: his security therefore

springs from his confidence in the jealousy of another.

It may admit of a question whether the privation of this liberty be so great a hardship as we suppose. Most probably it is not. We judge in general of things by comparing them with our own customs, manners and opinions, and hence the erroneous notions and ideas that we form. Pleasure and pain depend much on habit; what pleases in one country, disgusts in another. We are unable to conceive a more wretched condition than that of a woman whose life is passed in a *harem*; but this woman, who from disposition and habit is fond of repose, who has never known the pleasure of attracting

the attention of the other sex and eclipsing her own in personal charms, and in splendour and elegance of dress, cannot imagine that in other countries a female would compromise her honour, her dignity, and her modesty, by exposing her face unveiled to the public eye, and mingling among crowds of pedestrians. Of course she does not complain of being deprived of a liberty adverse to her manners ; for she cannot regret the want of that which she knows nothing of.

It is to be presumed, however, that the degrees of happiness enjoyed by a Persian female vary according to her condition. She, whom fortune has placed in the middling class of life, and

whose husband's circumstances and rank are too low to admit of his keeping several wives, must naturally be happier than the female destined to grace the *harem* of a grandee, where she will groan under the yoke of a eunuch.

SECTION III.

OCCUPATIONS AND WAY OF LIFE OF THE WOMEN OF PERSIA.

The occupations of the Persian women are more diversified than might be supposed. They spin, embroider, work with the needle, and make their own apparel. They superintend also whatever relates to the interior of the house; they keep an account of the

daily expenditure, deliver out the provisions to the servants, pay their wages, adjust their disputes, and even see to it that proper attention is paid to the horses. In every house of any consequence, there is a eunuch called *nazir*, steward, with whom the mistress of the house daily consults and decides on every thing relating to the servants and domestic concerns.

Sir Robert Porter gives the following lively picture of the employments of women belonging to what may be called the middling class. The originals after whom it was delineated, were the four wives of a man in whose house he was entertained.

From the hour of rising, says this

traveller, to that of going to rest, the house sounded with one continual clatter of female voices mingling with the cries of children and the bustling clamour of varied occupation. These women do all the laborious part of the household establishment, each having her own especial department, such as baking the bread, cooking the meat, drawing the water, &c. and though the latest espoused is usually spared in these labours and the best dressed, still the whole party seem to remain in good humour, no appearance of jealousy disturbing the amicable routine of their proceedings. When their lord shows himself among them, it is like a master coming into a herd

of favourite animals ; they all rush forward, frisking about him, pleased with a caress ; or frisking still if they meet with a pat instead.—The four wives of my worthy host retire at sun-set from their domestic toils, and each, taking her infant and cradle to the roof of her division of the house, not forgetting the skin of water she has brought from the spring or well, deposits her babe in safety, and suspends the water-case near her bed on a tripod of sticks, in order that the evaporation may cool it for the night or next day's use. To preserve the amity between these ladies, which had so excited my admiration, our communicative host told me that himself, in common with all hus-

bands who preferred peace to passion, adhered to a certain rule of each wife, claiming in regular rotation the conjugal attentions of her spouse.—Wherever this monopoly of many women exists there we find the softer sex regarded by man with a contempt which gives the loveliest bride, or the most respectable mother of his children scarcely a higher rank in his esteem than the best mare in his stud, or the dog that is his favourite to-day and totally neglected to-morrow. In proof of this Mahometan disparagement of women in general, it would be deemed the height of impropriety, while addressing a person of noble quality here, to hint at the female part of his family ; and

were even the most beloved wife of his bosom at the extremity of some dangerous illness, if a male friend were to make the slightest inquiry after her health, it would be deemed the grossest insult.

To this remark we find a striking illustration in a subsequent part of the work of the same entertaining traveller. In his journey from Persia through Asiatic Turkey, he fell in with a party belonging to Abdul Hassan Khan, then Persian ambassador in London. These people were returning from England to Teheran; and under their charge, mounted on a sorry post-horse, was *the Fair Circassian*, whose appearance both in Paris and in Lon-

don excited at the time so strong a sensation. She was noticed by our European ladies with much kindness, but the style in which our countryman now beheld her must have formed a sad contrast to what she had then experienced. When the poor creature, says Sir Robert, discerned, on approaching, my Frangy (European) appearance, she was riding forward to address me ; but in a moment the rough fellow who was her conductor laid his whip over her shoulders, with so terrible an admonition into the bargain, that closing both her lips and her veil, she travelled on, doubtless with heavy recollections. To interfere in behalf of a woman so situated

would cast a sort of contamination on her and only redouble her stripes.

SECTION IV.

CHARACTERS OF BEAUTY AMONG THE PERSIANS.

The Persians differ as much from us in their notions of beauty as they do in those of taste. A large, soft and languishing black eye constitutes with them the perfection of beauty, and diffuses an amorous softness over the whole countenance, infinitely superior to the piercing and ardent glance of majestic beauty. It is chiefly on this account that the women use the powder of antimony, which, although it adds to

the vivacity of the eye, throws over it a kind of voluptuous languor which makes it appear dissolving, as it were in bliss. Thus the chief characters of beauty with them are eyes like the antelope's, a full-moon face, and the stature of the cypress ; but there are secondary ones which the poets are fond of celebrating. Ferdousee, in the Shah Nameh, thus describes the females of Touran :—" Their stature is tall, like that of the cypress, and the locks of their hair black as musk. Their cheeks are covered with roses, and their eyes full of languor ; their lips are sweet as sugar and fragrant as the rose."

" Hark, O moon!" exclaims Hafiz

in his Odes ; “ fresh spouse of heaven ;
shew not thyself above the horizon, for
we this day behold the full moon of
the face of my beloved !”

“ Ah ! how admirable is thy form !
how delightful thy converse ! thy charms
and thy gentleness enchant my soul.
Thy heart is as tender as the bud of
the rose is fresh ; thy beauty is equal
to that of the cypress of the eternal
garden !”

Djami describes the charms of Leilah
in these terms :—“ Her figure was tall
and elegant, and in her graceful gait
she resembled the partridge of the
mountains. Beautiful without the as-
sistance of art, nature had given the
most delicate rosy tinge to her cheeks,

radiant with freshness ; her eyebrow was like a delicate bow, formed of precious amber, and her eyelashes, like so many little darts of musk, pierced all hearts ; her lips had the lustre of rubies without their hardness. Her enchanting smile displayed teeth as white as the purest pearls ; you would imagine you beheld the bud of the rose gemmed with the tears of morning."

Many of the women of Persia are as fair as those of Europe, but confinement robs them of that lovely bloom so becoming and so essential to female beauty. The Persian women have a curious custom of making their eyebrows meet ; and if this charm be de-

nied them, they paint their forehead with a kind of preparation made for the purpose.

The Persian ladies not only dye their hair and eyebrows, but also stain their bodies with a variety of fantastic devices, not unfrequently with the figures of trees, birds, and beasts, sun, moon, and stars, as we read was the practice of our ancient British ancestors.

This sort of pencil-work spreads over the bosom, and continues down as low as the navel, round which some radiated figure is generally painted. All this is displayed by the style of their dress, every garment of which, even to the light gauze chemise, is open from the neck to that point, as may be seen in

the figure of a Persian lady of the royal seraglio, in the first volume, (p. 100) in which, however, the savage appearance of the tattoo is omitted

SECTION V.

COSTUME OF THE PERSIAN WOMEN.

The dress of the Persian females is simple, being composed of a much smaller number of garments than that of the European women. A Persian lady, when at home, does not load herself with clothes; and in her finery she seems to attach very little value to beauty of form. Very ample trousers of thick velvet cover the whole of the lower part of the body down to the

heels. Over these trowsers is worn a *peerahun* or chemise of muslin, silk or gauze, which is open in front nearly down to the waist, and buttons down the bosom by means of a number of loops and small buttons of silk, gold or silver. Over the *peerahun* is generally fastened a girdle of skin, covered with cloth or silk, embroidered, and decorated with a plate of gold or silver and precious stones. Such is the summer costume. The winter dress is the same with the addition of a short upper garment resembling a jacket, and shawls in which the women wrap themselves as a protection from the cold. The covering for the feet is a



PERSIAN FEMALE .

Pub^d by R. Ackermann London. 1822.

kind of slipper, with a sole of ivory, metal, or some hard sort of wood. See the annexed engraving.

When they leave the house they put on a cloak which descends from the head to the feet, and their faces are concealed with oriental scrupulosity. The veil which they wear, is sometimes worked like a net, or else two holes are made in the cloak for their eyes. It is curious to see a number of tall and elegantly formed figures walking in the streets, and presenting nothing to your view but a pair of sparkling black eyes, which seem to enjoy the curiosity they excite. The veil seems to be essential to their virtue; for as long as they can conceal the face,

they care not how much they expose the rest of their person. The women in Persia are the only people who wear jewels and use perfumes; and this is a privilege in which they take much delight.

The hair is almost always arranged in tresses which fall down behind. That in front is cut short and turned up from the forehead. On the sides it descends in ringlets over the ears and cheeks. The ends of the tresses are adorned with pearls, clusters of precious stones, or ornaments of gold or silver. The bandeaux, diadems and caps vary in form according to the caprice of the inventor, or the taste of the wearer: they are more or less



PERSIAN FEMALE.

Pub^d by R. Ackermann, London, 1822.

costly according to the circumstances of the individual. Shawls alike cover and adorn the head in a thousand different ways : they fall down the back over the shoulders, twist round the neck, or are fastened on the crown of the head, without any other rule than taste to determine their position, as may be seen on comparing the figure of the female on the opposite plate with the preceding.

The dress of women of the lower class has a rather dismal effect : it is commonly of a very dark brown colour. The trowsers, chemise, and veil are of one and the same cloth. In this attire the wearers always look as if they belonged to a funeral procession.

CHAP. VIII.

OF CERTAIN HABITS OF THE PERSIANS.

Of all the habits of a Persian, the most common is that of smoking. Whether he is with his women, or in the *divan-kaneh*, in the company of his friends ; whether he is going abroad or to court, he is never without his pipe, which fills the intervals of silence, relieves him from the fatigue of talking, and frequently causes him to be deemed more intelligent than he really is.

The Persian pipe called *kallioun* or

narquilly, is totally different from ours, as may be seen in the frontispiece to this volume. It is shaped like a bottle terminated by the neck at the top of which is a bowl for receiving the tobacco. The tube is attached to the bottom of this bowl and frequently makes several windings in the bottle. The latter, which is of blown glass, has a curious appearance to a stranger: it is ornamented in the inside with representations of trees, flowers, and sometimes with small medallions. When the glass is just blown these ornaments are fixed in the bottle with small pincers, and so neatly are the pieces joined together, as entirely to escape obser-

vation. A handsome *hallioun* costs, we are told, nearly fifty guineas.

To use this pipe the bottle is filled with water, and the tobacco lighted. The smoke, after thus passing through the bottle, arrives at the mouth cool and disengaged from the coarser vapours.

The Peshkedmats are a class of servants who take charge of the smoking apparatus, and an excellent figure the man, his horse, and all the appendages of his office make in one of their motley cavalcades. A couple of cylindrical leather cases are fastened on each side of his saddle, at the places usually destined for the holsters ; one contains

the *kallioun* with its tubes, &c. and the other the tobacco. On the left flank of the beast and suspended by a chain long enough to clear the belly, hangs an iron pot with live charcoal, and as an opposite pendant we see a large leather bottle, holding water—fire and water being essentials to the enjoyment of the *kallioun*. The attendant must be ready to serve the *kallioun* instantly at the call of the master. Some use the common wooden tube, but others, more luxurious, have one that is pliable, winding like a snake several feet in length. It is attached to the conducting tube which being held by the servant, enables him to attend in his duty and yet keep a respectable

distance in his master's rear. The opposite plate represents a grandee smoking on horseback, and attended by a servant on foot.

It cannot be denied that the incessant use of tobacco renders the people of the East thin and emaciated: this they themselves admit: but the power of habit is stronger than regard for their health. Abbas the Great was desirous of correcting this pernicious custom. One gala-day, he provided pipes ready filled, and ordered them to be handed to the courtiers. From time to time the king inquired how they liked this new sort of tobacco, which, he said, had been sent to him by one of his ministers. They all de-



GRANDEE, SMOKING ON HORSEBACK.

Pub^d by R. Ackermann London. 1822.

clared that it was excellent. At length he put the same question to the chief officer of his guards, a man bred in camps, and who was unaccustomed to the polite but frequently false language of courts. "Sire," replied the officer, "I swear by your head that it smells like dung."—"Cursed be the drug," cried Abbas, turning to his courtiers, "which cannot be distinguished from horse-dung!" It was in fact that substance dried and broken small with which he had caused the pipes to be filled.

The use of wine, it is well known, is forbidden by the Mahometan religion. In spite of the prohibition many of the Persian monarchs of the Sofy

dynasty, as Abbas II. and Sefy III. did not scruple to drink wine in public, even to intoxication, in which state they committed the most atrocious excesses. Chardin speaks of a vizir to the former of these sovereigns, who, every night on returning home from the palace, looked at himself in the glass with surprize, and felt his head with his hands to make sure that it was still on his shoulders. One evening his forebodings were realized, for it was no longer in its place. The reigning family of the Cadjars, however, are strict observers of this point of the law of Mahomet, which they enforce both by precept and example. Kotzebue relates an adventure of a khan at Tehe-

ran, who was so lax in his observance of it, that his conduct reached the ears of the king. His majesty at first reproved him in strong terms for his immorality, but as this had no effect, he commanded the khan to continue drinking. This order the latter so faithfully obeyed, that he remained in a state of intoxication forty days, by which time he became so disgusted with the practice, that he begged the king to revoke his command.

Notwithstanding the example set by the court, drinking to intoxication seems to be no uncommon vice among the Persians. Mr. Morier informs us, that when they wish to have a debauch, instead of sitting down to it in the

evening; as is customary in Europe, they rise early and esteem the morning the best time for beginning to drink wine, by which means they have the whole day before them, and carry on their excess until night. He once saw a party seated not far from the road in the open air, and apparently much intoxicated by seven o'clock in the morning.

It is worthy of remark, that the nations, not excepting the most savage, to which the use of wine is unknown, have liquors or preparations which serve as substitutes for that beverage.

Thus the pious Musulmans, though they abstain from wine, intoxicate themselves with the poppy. From this

plant they make various preparations, the most common of which, called *hashem-begui*, is the juice of the poppy made up into pills. They begin with taking a pill of the size of a hemp-seed, and gradually increase it till it is as large as a pea. At this quantity they are obliged to stop, or the dose would be fatal. To this preparation the Persians attribute virtues which make them extremely fond of it. According to them, it places agreeable visions before the mind, and produces a sort of enchantment. It is remarked that those make use of it manifest, after a certain time, an uncommon flow of spirits ; on the cessa-

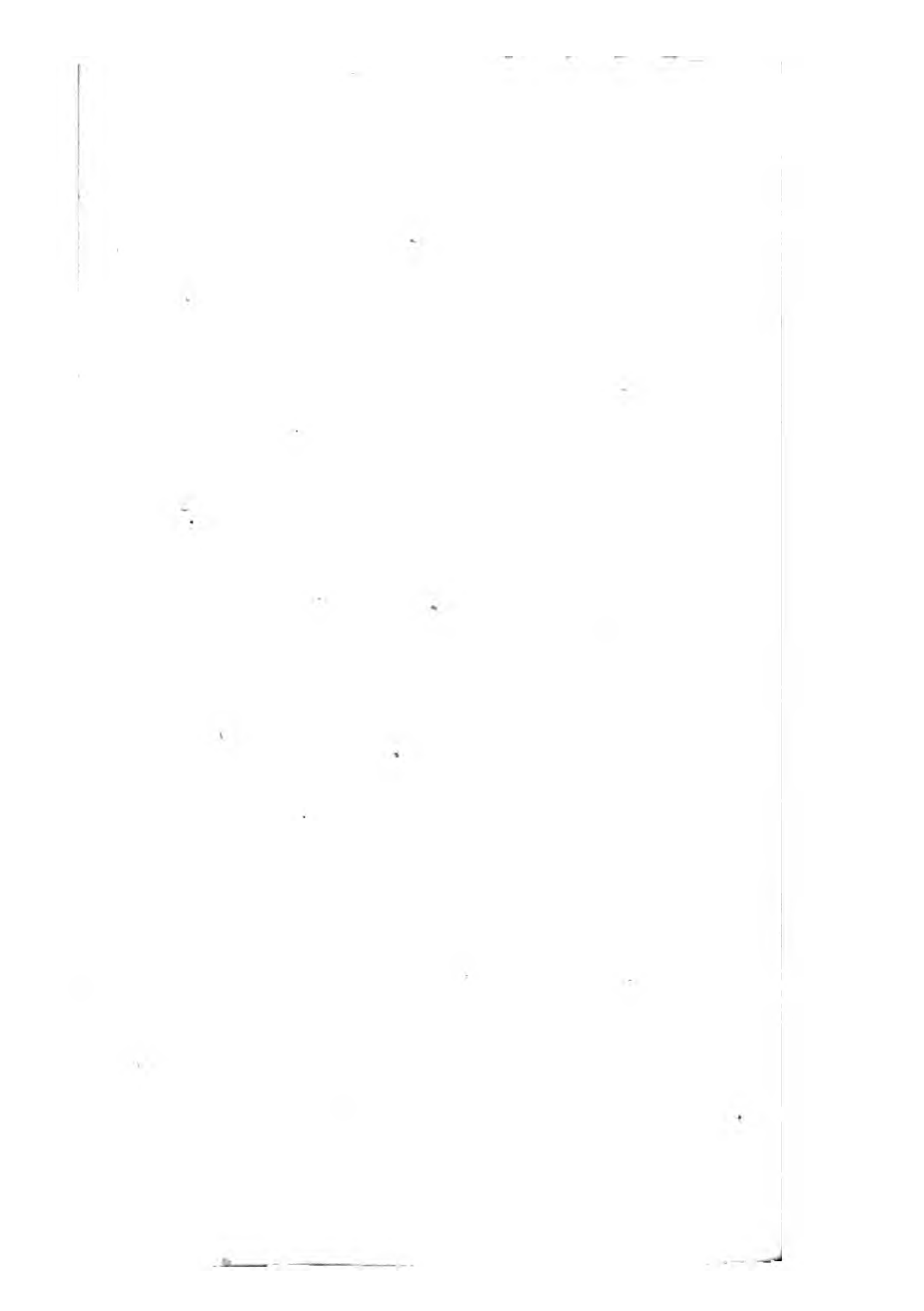
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tion of which the body becomes cold,
and the mind sullen and stupid ; sleep
commonly ensues and puts an end to
this species of intoxication.

END OF VOL. II.

GREEN, LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.









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