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S K E T C H

OF THE

Topography & Statistics

OF

D A C C A.

By JAMES TAYLOR,

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gunnahs to the residence of the Zemindar or to the Sudder station. The petty Talookdars generally employ one Mundul, and collect the revenues themselves without the assistance of a Putwaree : or three or four join and have a Putwaree among them. In some estates the Munduls and Putwarees receive their wages in money, in others in land and money. In many instances they follow other occupations, and are paid at a rate varying from two and half to three rupees a year for the Mundul, and from three to ten rupees a year for the Putwaree. In parts of the district subject to inundation, they are allowed boat hire from June to November.

The petty Talookdars collect the revenues themselves.

The Munduls and Putwarees paid in money and sometimes in land or kind.

CHAPTER VI.

Arts of Weaving, Embroidery, Bleaching, Gold and Silver Work, Manufacture of Shell Bracelets—List of Professions, Trades and Occupations in the City—Commerce—Decline of Commerce.

Of the several arts practised in the city and district, the principal are weaving, embroidery, bleaching, gold and silver work, and the manufacture of shell bracelets.

Weaving.—Dacca has long been celebrated for its muslins. These fabrics were known

Weaving.

Muslins
known in
Europe at
a very early
period.

in Europe in the first century of the Christian era, and according to some writers they constituted the "serice vestes" which were so highly prized by the ladies of Imperial Rome, in the days of its luxury and refinement.* Pliny in enumerating the imports from Egypt and Arabia mentions the Bengal muslins, and the author of the "Circumnavigation of the Erythrean Sea"† bears testimony to their extreme fineness and transparency.‡ In this work, which is supposed to have been written by Arrian, an Egyptian Greek, mention is made of several kinds of Indian muslins, which are distinguished by commercial names§ derived from the country. The word "Carpassus" which is employed to designate the fine Bengal muslins is obviously derived from the Sanscrit "Kurpass" or Hindee "Kapass" cotton; and hence the term "Carpassium" or Carpassian, which came into use in the time of Pliny, to denote all the very fine kinds of cloth that were then manufactured, whether of cotton, flax or asbestos.|| The word, however, as used by Arrian and the Egyptian traders generally

* Salmasius "Exercitationes Plinianicæ," and Dr. Ure on "Cotton Manufacture of Great Britain," 1836.

† *Periplus Maris Erythriæ.*

‡ *Σινδωνες αἱ διαφωρωταται αἱ Γαγγυτικαι λεγωμεναι* The vestes bombycinæ tenues pellucidæ sericæ were so thin "ut transluceret" that the body shone through them.—*Pliny.*

§ *Molochina*, or coarse muslins. *Monachi*, wide muslins of a fine description. *Zudaion*, coarse cloth.—*Dr. Vincent's Translation of Pausanias.*

|| *Linum Carpassium* of Pliny was the fine flax of Spain.

took its origin, in all probability, from "Cassia," the country from whence these muslins were exported; and which, as has already been mentioned, was the principal seat of this manufacture in early times.* In the "accounts of India and China by two Mohammedan travellers in the 9th century," mention is also made of the fine cotton cloths of India, and from the notice of certain circumstances connected with the country in which they were manufactured, it is very evident that the Dacca muslins are the fabrics that are alluded to. After mentioning the rich possessions and great number of elephants belonging to the King of the country, the travellers state, "In this same country they make cotton garments in so extraordinary a manner that no where else are the like to be seen. These garments are for the most part round, and wove to that degree of fineness that they may be drawn through a ring of middling size. Shells⁽¹⁾ are current in this country and serve for small money, notwithstanding they have gold and silver and aloes⁽²⁾ and sable skins⁽³⁾ of which they make furniture of saddles and housings. In this same country is the famous karkadur or unicorn."⁽⁴⁾† The Empress Noor Jehan greatly

Mentioned
by early Mo-
hammedan
travellers.

* This part of the district which is now in a great measure overrun with jungle, abounds with the dry beds of tanks, &c. which shew that it was at one period the seat of a dense and busy population.

† "Accounts of India and China by two Mahommedan travellers," translated by Abbe Froissart.

(1) Cowries—(2) Aggur Wood—(3) otter skins—(4) Rhinoceros, at appears from a subsequent paragraph.

cent. When the investment is large, the cloths when brought to the merchant are assorted by a Jackindar or prizer, who divides them according to their quality into four classes, each of which has a certain value attached to it, and whatever is too coarse to be admitted into the 4th class is rejected or thrown on the hands of the Pykar.

Commerci-
al intercourse
between Dac-
ca and Eu-
rope.

Decline of Commerce. The commercial intercourse between this part of the country and Europe in early times was carried on via Masalia, (Masulipatam) Taprobane, (Ceylon) to Byragara, (Broach) on the western coast of India. From this latter place it extended to Aduli on the Red Sea, and to Alexandria in Egypt, and from thence to the different ancient ports of Europe, bordering on the Mediterranean. Spikenard, pearls and cloths appear to have been the exports. From the accounts of India and China by two Mahomedan travellers, we find that the Chinese purchased cloths, Rhinoceros horns, ~~and~~ in this part of the country in the 9th century; and in the time of Vertomannus in the year 1503, the manufactures of this part of Bengal were exported to Turkey, Syria, Arabia, Ethiopia and Persia. He states that in the city of Bengala were "many merchant strangers" who purchased precious stones, and that 50 ships laden with cloth of Bombasin* and silk were dispatched annually to the countries above mentioned. Fitch also in his notice of

Its antiquity.

With the
Chinese.

* Derived from the Italian word for cotton.

zurs received by the Provincial Council, at the Pooneah or day of annual settlement with the Zemindars were at this time made over to defray the expense of repairing the roads in the vicinity of the town.

1771 a collision between the King's and Company's Courts.

The principal event in 1777 was a collision between the King's and Company's Courts, which appears to have attracted the attention of the higher authorities, both here and in England. Mr. Peat who resided at Dacca in the three-fold capacity of Attorney, Sheriff Depute, and Master in Chancery, in attempting to serve a writ on a person of the name of Juggernaut, the Peshkar of the Foujdaree Court, at the house of Seyed Ali Khan, the Provincial Foujdar, was resisted; and in the scuffle that ensued between the two parties, Meer Houssein, a relation of the Foujdar's, was unfortunately shot. The issuing of the writ originated in a case, in which a man of the name of Kyeroo was confined for some misdemeanour by Juggernaut, and who, effecting his escape, proceeded to Calcutta, where he instituted a suit against Juggernaut for trespass and false imprisonment.

In 1778 the French Factory surrendered to the English.

In July 1778 the French Factory surrendered to Lieutenant Cowe; and a party of the Militia under the orders of Mr. Lodge, the Secretary of the Provincial Council, took possession of Jugdea, (a branch of the Dacca Factory) in the district of Tipperah. Their

property in Dacca consisted of 26 houses, and a gunge yielding rupees 300 per year. They had also houses at Tezgong and Backergunge.

In 1779 Mr. Shakespear succeeded Mr. Rous as Chief, and Messrs. Holland, Hatch, Lodge and Day were appointed Members of the Provincial Council. 1779.

In 1781 the Council was abolished. Mr. Day was appointed Collector and Magistrate, and a Court of Judicature was established, of which Mr. Duncanson was the first Judge. The Foujdars and Thannadars were recalled and the Judge acted as a Magistrate in the apprehension of decoits. In this year the Dutch Factory was taken possession of, and in 1783 the Militia was disbanded, and a Sebundy or Provincial Corps raised in its place. The Dutch property consisted of 31 houses in the town and a house at Tezgong. 1781 the Council abolished. The Dutch Factory taken possession of.

From the year 1781 to 1839 fifty-nine Civil servants have held the office of Magistrate, but of this number thirty have only been in temporary charge. The average duration, therefore, of each Magistrate's appointment has been two years: the longest period four years and twenty-seven days. The number of Collectors for the same time was thirty-seven. Twenty of this number have been acting Collectors: the longest period for which a permanent Collector has held office, is six years and forty-five days. 1781 to 1839.

The jurisdiction of the Magistrate.

The jurisdiction of the Magistrate is divided into 20 Thannahs or Police districts, of which number 10 are in the city, and the remaining 10 in the Mofussil. The number of choukedars employed in the district is 2,619, 189 of whom are stationed in the city, besides 90 burkendazes and 10 jemadars.

Extent of the jurisdiction.

The Civil Judicial establishment of Dacca and Fureedpore comprises a jurisdiction of 4,800 miles in extent. The principal officers attached to it, are 1 Civil and Session Judge, 2 Principal Sudder Ameens, 1 additional ditto and 9 Moonsiffs. The total annual expense

Number of civil functionaries attached to it.

Expenditure.

Rs. 77,741-11-9. The registering of deeds yielded Rs. 1,770 in the year 1796-7 : at present it gives about Rs. 450 per year.

Collector's Office Establishment.

The Collector's Office comprises the seven Minor Departments of Treasury, Dewanny Sherista, Moonshee Khana, Nazerut, Record Office, Abkaree and Stamp Office. The number of persons employed in it, exclusive of the Collector and 3 Deputies, is 93. The total monthly expense is Rs. 4,099-10-5.