THE
SEIR MUTAQHERIN;
OR
REVIEW OF MODERN TIMES
BEING AN
HISTORY OF INDIA,
From the Year 1118 to the Year 1295 of the Hegira,
CONTAINING, IN GENERAL,
THE REIGNS of the SEVEN LAST EMPERORS of
HINDOSTAN,
AND, IN PARTICULAR,
AN ACCOUNT of the ENGLISH WARS IN BENGAL,
WITH a CIRCUMSTANTIAL DETAIL of the RISE and FALL of
THE FAMILIES of
SERADJ-ED-DOWLAM and SHUDJAH-ED-DOWLAM,
THE LAST SOVEREIGNS of BENGAL and OOWA.
To which the Author has added
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION of the ENGLISH GOVERN-
MENT AND POLICY in THOSE COUNTRIES,
as far down as the Year 1785.
The whole written in Persian
by
SEID-GHOLAM-HOSSEIN-KHAN,
An Indian Nobleman of high rank, who wrote both
as Actor and Spectator.

VOLUME III

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THE SEIR

"and a very exact examination, destructive of any foundation; but that nothing had appeared from that excellent man, but proofs of fidelity, self-restraint, and zeal. That it followed therefore that the hard treatment he had experienced, had been unjustified, and far from what his valuable services had deserved." To this they added a dress of honour suitable to his rank and merits, with an elephant and a number of jewels; and he was dismissed to his former station of associate in the Council of Arim-abad. But the man had already broke his heart, accustomed these many years to the kindnesses and catteries of the English Judges, he could not brook the ill return he had received for the many valuable services he had rendered the State. He fell into a despondent state of mind, and took a dislike against all the world, as well as against his own life. The truth is, that his predestination being likewise at hand, a slight looseness, which chance to come upon him on his arrival at Arim-abad, turned into a violent flux, and made him cover victuals and things he was not accustomed to. The steadiness of his mind, and his usual temper foretold him, and henceforward made no distinction between what was hurtful and what was beneficial to him. It is true that the learned Fakir, (whom may this salutation of mine reach at some lucky hour!) a famous physician, who in these days has not his equal at Arim-abad, had attended him some time, and there appeared evident signs of his good management having been beneficial; but there were about the sick man's person some scoundrels, and illiberal men, who made it a point to represent me (who was one of Mr. Vanstatter's friends), as inimical to his welfare, and at last found means to remove from his person the physician above, who then lived with me, after having represented his worst recommenders, and his undignified zeal, together with his attachment to me, as so many proofs of hatred and envy; insomuch that when the sick man was forced by necessity to recall him again, and he heard me strongly recommend his abstaining from the many compound medicines which ignorant persons of all sorts used to prepare to secret for him, this ill-intentioned man, already prisoner to death, abstained altogether from all physic, and left the whole to the course of nature. Nevertheless, in consequence of the solicitations of the Gentlemen of the Council,

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who so far from being incomical to him, were sincerely deformed of his recovery, he applied to a doctor, which in English signifies a physician; but this doctor having conjectured that, it was proper to evacuate and remove out of his body the impure mixture which had taken possession in it, he gave him a purging dose, by which the sick man's stomach, already reduced to extreme debility, became weaker and weaker, and at last lost all power of digestion.

Radja Shytab-Rah, originally a Cuhri,[23] by tribe, was a Kajab-saha-nun by race, and born at Shah-dhian-abad. He was bred in the family of Sians-em-ed-dowlah, son to another Sians-em-ed-dowlah, better known under the name of Chandroon, Lord of Lords, in Multan-abad; and he commenced by getting into the service of one Aga-ed-dowlah, a Persian who was slave and steward to Sians-em-dowlah, as well as every thing in his house. He had at first but a small salary; but by his abilities in business, and by his mendicant services, he soon became the centre of all business in Aga-ed-dowlah's house, and of course the absolute ruler of Sians-em-dowlah's affairs. On that nobleman's repairing to the mansions of God's mercy, and on that capital's becoming a continual scene of revolutions, he concluded that there was no safety for him in those parts; and he obtained the Imperial Divanish of Arim-abad, with the management of the Dijahors of his master's son, being the districts of Polia and Malda in Bengal. Thus provided, he came into those eastern countries, and, as it has been already mentioned, soon raised himself to the summit of power. He was a man of great sense, a Mislater knowing in business, and a cerebrator of a quick dispatch, keen, and full of penetration in every thing he took in hand; and he had so many other worth qualities besides, that I always thought him the most deserving, and the ablest man amongst the most eminent men of Hindostan. Although originally a clerk and a penman, he proved that he did not want either courage or prowess upon an emergency; and although he had been himself courted by Veirs and by Emperor, nevertheless he had no little pride about him, that he belonged to men

[23] The Cuhri are one of the four great tribes of Persia, into which the Hindostans are divided; it is the second. The four-ers are a subtribe, and there is an infinity of subtribes.
of virtue or of distinction with a modesty and an humility that disarmed envy itself. He comprehended at once, and at the very first instance, the intent of every one's supplication; and he used to gratify it with a deal of condescension, if he had leisure to do so, and the subject deserved it; or else, he would offer a humble excuse, in a condescending manner; so that no petitioner ever went away from his presence, dissatisfied or discontented. Perpetually in the hurry of business, and in conference with a variety of people, from day-break till noon-day, and from the evening to three or four in the morning; he seemed neither fatigued with the number, nor impatient with the singularity and extravagance of the demands constantly crowding upon him; but would attend to every one with a regard always proportioned to the petitioner's rank, never chiding or reproaching any one, or making use of a harsh or dishonest expression; nor did ever a word of abuse or rudeness come out of his mouth. Keen and knowing in every thing, and well apprised of the price of all kinds of wares, he never disputed with merchants, but would give them a handsome price at once; nor would he admit stinginess or economy, whenever he wanted to make a present. Fond of living high and with elegance, he used to procure from distant, cheap places, such provisions as he wanted for his own use, and the entertainment of his friends. Magnificent and generous in his household, he strove as much as his finances could afford to live up to the grandeur, and hospitality of a middling house of Hindostan. For on the very arrival of some person of distinction in town, he would send him, according to his rank and station, a number of tables covered with a variety of sweetmeats, delicacies, and dressed victuals, on which he had always quantities made with the utmost nicety and attention. In the entertainments and feasts which he used often to give, he always imitated the splendour and the customs of the Moghuls[56]; and when at table, he used to invite his

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[56] Although the Moghul, that is the Hindostanee, way of living is so very inferior to an European table, both for the variety and richness of the victuals, and for the expences of wines and other articles, yet such as it is, it is incomparably superior to the Hindostanee or Gentoo way of living; the very Rajahs and Kings of that persuasion living with such an abstemiousness as would disgrace most of their kinsmen, all the brawls of Europe.
we see today; and although those times were not free from partialities and private views neither, yet upon the whole, matters moved on. Men, he said, in what manner soever it seemed best to their rulers. Nor did the miseries of endless delay and endless expectation melt mankind away; nor did the people of God become the victims of endless alteration amongst their rulers. For I remember that on the dissolution of the Shykh, when Mr. George Vanittan was appointed Chief, and became the centre of all business, I took the liberty to represent to him, "That Shykh, "Shykh, you used to spend his time from one-half of each day "down to one-third of each night in hearing petitions, and in "giving decisions, by which dissidencies were dispelled and busi-"ness was conducted and gave a great deal of ease to very one. I added, that "the people of God, deprived of such a man, would naturally "express their anxiety, about what might be his pleasure now "on that head." He answered that, being accustomed, like "Shykh, to sit in public amongst hundreds of people, and to "listen to complaints and to determine causes, he could not "believe that he would be able to comprehend one-half of them, "but that those, that had any business with Government might "apply to himself privately, as he considered, that in the secret "and silence of a closet he would be more recalculated and better "able to give a decision. Upon this, I requested that orders "should be given to the seer, to admit all causes, and directions "to the seer or chowdary, to introduce every one, "immediately to give the necessary orders, and they proved strict "orders; and as he was a man of quick apprehension, and very "active in body and mind, and could not hear to have his "lesson taught him by a Moonshy or Secretary, or his task "dictated to by a Divan, or indeed by any man, he proved to be "as good as his word, and he constantly dispatched a great deal "of business. This state of things did not last such the affairs "and petitions grew numerous, people began to suffer more "delays; when after some time Mr. Law arrived, and wiped "clear the eyes of the people of God with the sword of goodness "and infallibility. After this, God knows, what is likely to happen. For it appears that to find out one single man's way, and to be "upon good terms with him, is an easy matter; or if he be dis-

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The 5th cause results from the extreme difference between the English way of giving public audience, and that in which it has been at all times customary to hold a Durbar in this country.