for the whole population of a village to migrate to another station, as choice or necessity prompts them. Westward, the country gradually improves, and on approaching the region of the inundation, it presents an appearance of ex­tensive cultivation, and the richness of the soil is every­where remarkable, It is intersected by numerous canals from the branches of the Indus, dug for the purposes of navigation, and over which small brick bridges have been thrown, on which water wheels are placed, by which a supply of moisture is distributed over the fields. The country in the vicinity of Hydrabad assumes a hilly ap­pearance ; and westward of the Indus it is bounded by a pile of barren mountains, that are quite as inhospitable, both as to soil and climate, as the sandy desert which is seen at a distance from the Indus and its waters. Near the sea at Kurachee, in latitude 24. 52. north, longitude 67. 17. east, west of the river, the country is, for eight or ten miles, a dead flat ; and as, when it was visited by Pot- tinger, there had been a want of rain for several seasons, the earth was quite burned, without the slightest trace of vegetation, except some small stunted bushes scattered over the plain. But the inhabitants assured him that in forty- eight hours after a plentiful fall of rain, the ground would be a perfect grass plat, moisture being here, as in other hot regions, the great agent of fertility.

The climate is hot; the thermometer varying, in the months of June and July, from 90 to 100 ; and the country is within the range of the monsoons, and the periodical rains. It is mentioned, however, by Dr. Burnes, that in January 1828, the rain fell in torrents at Hydrabad, which was attended with more piercing cold than he had ever ex­perienced in Europe. In the northern parts of Sinde the air is pure, and refreshed by the cooling breezes from the westward, so that the heat is far from being intolerable. On the western bank of the river, from the latitude of Schwan in 26. 6., there is a variety of feature in the face of the country, some districts being mountainous, some flat, some intersected by ranges of low mountains down to the sea.@@1

The banks of the Indus near Hydrabad, and generally throughout its lower course, are well cultivated, except where the Ameers, the rulers of the country, have convert­ed the most fruitful fields and districts into gloomy and im­pervious forests for the preservation of game; those princes being unfortunately passionately fond of hunting, and like all despotic princes, gratifying their inclinations at whatever expense of misery to their subjects. It is mentioned that one of the princes, Meer Futteh Ali, depopulated one of the most fertile spots in the neighbourhood of Hydrabad, which yielded two to three lacs of rupees annually, because frequented by a peculiar species of antelope, which he found great pleasure in hunting. And the youngest brother, Mourad Ali, banished the inhabitants of an ancient village and razed it to the ground, because the crowing of cocks, and the grazing of cattle, disturbed the game in the neigh­bouring lands, which were contiguous. The game laws of Europe are sufficiently tyrannical; but they are fortunately corrected by the milder influence of manners. During the swelling of the river, grain and other seeds are reared; the re­mainder of the year is employed in the production of indigo, sugar-cane, and all kinds of grain. They have also extensive pastures ; and the country would rapidly advance in wealth, but for the oppressive rapacity of the government. It is the heavy taxes which ruin industry in this, as in most other eastern countries. Every beegah of land watered by a canal or wheel, pays a revenue of from l1/2 to 31/2 rupees to the government. A duty of one rupee is also charged on each kun war, or 120 pounds of gιain reaped by the farmers. Garden land producing fruit trees, pays 21/2 rupees per bee­

gah ; and the spring crop of tobacco is rated at 41/2 rupees per beegah. The tax on sugar is collected in kind, and is 41/2 rupees per beegah. But these are not the only exactions with which agriculture is burdened. Its produce has to pay other dues in the market before it is allowed to be sold. Boats that arrive at Tatta are all taxed in proportion to their value ; and these exactions generally exceed the original cost of the articles on which they are imposed. The rev­enues that are derived from Kurachee, situated west of the Indus, at the south-western extremity of Sinde, of which it has become of late years the principal sea-port, are farmed, agreeable to the wretched policy that obtains throughout this country ; and in 1809, according to the in­formation of the able and enterprising traveller, Lieutenant Pottinger, there was paid on this account, into the public treasury, 99,000 rupees, or L. 12,375 ; and the vender was supposed to clear 12,000 rupees. The revenues have since increased to one lack 23,000 rupees, equal to L.l5,375. This increase of revenue is ascribed solely to the local ad­vantages of the port, being a central point between India and the dominions of Cabul, as also Khorassan, Balk, Bok­hara, &c. The disorderly state of the country, from the decreasing authority of the Khan of Kelat, diverted the trade into this route through Sinde, the merchants finding the heavy exactions imposed on them more tolerable than the risk of violence to which they were exposed in other parts.

It has been remarked that despotic power, wielded by wis­dom and goodness, would constitute the best government. But unfortunately, in Sinde it is wielded neither by wisdom nor goodness, but is a fearful instrument of rapacity and oppression, in the hands of the tyrants who rule the country, who, having no conception that it is for their own interest that the people should thrive, despoil them of their wealth, thus crushing the seeds of future accumulation, and for ever preventing any improvement of the national revenues. Under this short-sighted policy, the imposts and taxation in Sinde, according to Dr. Burnes, whose work affords valuable information on this subject, are enormous, and paralyze the whole trade and industry of the country. With the char­acteristic recklessness of an arbitrary government, the re­venues are farmed to the highest bidders, who, as they are responsible to their task-masters for the produce, and can never expect indulgence on any pretence, are obliged to satisfy their rapacity, and to extort a revenue by whatever means from the impoverished people. Were it not for the great natural advantages with which the country is blessed, in the never-failing supply of moisture from the inundation of the Indus, which renders the cultivator independent of the tropical rains, her industry must have sunk under the manifold evils of ignorance and misrule. This is *a* source of fertility, of which no tyranny can despoil this highly favour­ed land ; and thus the bounty of Providence is here more effectual to renovate, than the wickedness of man to destroy. The cultivator looks with certainty to an abundant harvest, and is enabled to export of his abundance to other countries. “ Hence,” says the judicious traveller already referred to, “ there is an appearance of plenty and contentment through­out this misgoverned land, which would surprise any tra­veller who did not take every circumstance into considera­tion.” Certain checks, however imperfect, no doubt exist to the excesses of despotic power. The farmers of the revenues are generally Hindus, who have no influence with the Ameers, by whom they are despised for their re­ligion, and envied on account of their wealth; and on this account, they are the more ready to listen to any complaints against their oppressions from the Ryots, and to grant them redress. This, however, is but a feeble safeguard against oppression ; and it too often happens that the interests of

@@@1 Pottinger'a Narrative of a Journey through Belochistan, chap. 9. p. 361.