

they are said to commit the greatest cruelties on those that fall into their hands, making them drink warm milk, and then hanging them up by the feet, and shaking them in order to make them bring up any small coin they have swallowed, in order to conceal it from them; they even rake in their excrements, in hopes of finding something to recompense their trouble; it being usual for the merchants and pilgrims who travel through this desert, to take that method to save what small gold they carry about them; and whether any be found so concealed or not, they constantly strip them of all they have, even to the last rag of their cloaths.

SECTION XXXI.

Of the Government and Power of Tripoli: the Taxes laid on the Inhabitants, and their Commerce.

AS the government, laws, religion, and customs of Tripoli are nearly the same with those of Algiers and Tunis, we shall not tire our readers with a needless repetition of them. It is sufficient to observe, that the beys of Tripoli are not mere titular vassals to the Porte, like the governments we have been describing, but are really under a kind of subjection, and pay an annual tribute to the Grand Seigneur. This, joined to the other exigencies of the regency, the avarice of the Turkish bashas sent thither from Constantinople, and the general decay of commerce, obliges them to load the subjects with such heavy taxes and extortions, as hath reduced the greatest part of the people to the lowest degree of indigence.

The public revenues, like those of which we have already treated, arise chiefly from their corsairs, who are very few; and besides these they have only common small galleys, poorly manned and equipped. Another branch of the revenue arises from the duties on imports and exports, and from the taxes laid on the Jews, which are extremely high. These people are very numerous, and carry on the greatest share of the Italian commerce. The natives also, though ever so poor, must pay a part of the produce of their ground or other manufactures. The Moors and Arabs, in the country are also heavily taxed, and among them the bey sends his flying camp of janizaries, and sometimes goes himself at the head of them, to levy the impositions laid upon them: for both the Arabs and Moors are equally restive and impatient under the Turkish yoke, and are kept so poor, that nothing but force, and sometimes exemplary severity, can extort it from them.

The bey, by receiving the protection of the Porte, still keeps up a kind of despotic power; for as he is generalissimo of all the forces, by appointing the officers who act in all capacities under him, he has obtained such an absolute power over the divan, that it is now continued only as a matter of form, the members having nothing to do but to approve and ratify whatever he is pleased to lay before them; nor does the Porte, or its basha, give themselves the least concern about the government; for, provided he does but punctually pay his tribute to the one, and satisfy the avarice of the other, they leave him to govern the rest in as arbitrary and tyrannical a manner as he chooses.

As to the commerce of Tripoli, it chiefly consists either of such slaves as are taken by their corsairs, or such as they traffic for with their neighbours; the greatest part of both they send into Turkey, where they can dispose of them to the best advantage. The next branch is that of slaves, which they buy from the Arabians, and sell to the Europeans to make glass and soap. The rest of their traffic is so inconsiderable as to be unworthy of notice.

It is observable, that the regency are here more scrupulous observers of their treaties with other nations, and punish the breach of them with greater severity than any of their neighbours: this punctuality, whether it proceeds from real policy, or a consciousness of their own weakness, is, nevertheless, of no small advantage to the navigation of the commercial nations.

SECTION XXXII.

Of the Manner of travelling in Barbary.

THE account of the manner of travelling through Barbary, as given us by the learned Mr. Shaw, will serve as a summary of the manners of the people, the climate, and state of the country.

In the several maritime towns of Barbary and the Levant, where British factories are established, our author was entertained with extraordinary marks of generosity and friendship, having the use not only of their houses, but of their horses, their janizaries, and servants. In the inland towns and villages there is generally a house set apart for the reception of strangers, with a proper officer to attend it, where persons are lodged and entertained for one night in the best manner the place will afford, at the expence of the community: but, except at these, and the places before-mentioned, there are no houses of entertainment throughout this extensive country; yet, were travellers to furnish themselves with tents, it would not only be attended with expence and trouble, but might raise the suspicion of the Arabs of their being persons of rank and fortune, and consequently too rich and tempting a booty to be suffered to escape. If, therefore, in the course of their travels they do not fall in with the hoveis of the Kabyles, or the encampments of the Arabs, they can have nothing to protect them from the scorching heat of the sun by day, or the cold of the night, unless he has the happiness to find a grove of trees, the shell of a rock, or a cave.

When they are so fortunate to find an encampment of the Arabs, they are entertained one night on free cost, and furnished with a sufficient quantity of provisions for themselves and their horses. Upon their arrival they are generally presented with a bowl of milk, and a basket of figs, dates, raisins, or other dried fruit; the master of the tent where they lodge then fetches them, according to the number of their company, either a kid, a goat, a sheep, or lamb, half of which is instantly boiled by his wife, and served up with cuscufu; and the rest is usually roasted, and served for their breakfast or dinner the next day.

But though the tents of the wandering Arabs may shelter them from the weather, they have their inconveniences; for, besides the fleas and lice, which are here in all their quarters, the apprehensions of being bit or stung by the viper, the scorpion, or the venomous spider, seldom fails, in some parts of these countries, to interrupt the repose so grateful to a weary traveller. They are no less disturbed by the calves, kids, and other young cattle, that are every night tied up in the tents, to prevent their sucking their dams; for the cords being generally made of loose spun yarn, they frequently break loose, and trample over them.

When they are entertained in a courteous manner, which is not always the case, they may highly please the master of the tent by giving him either a knife, a couple of flints, or a little English gunpowder; which being much stronger than theirs, they highly esteem, and keep it to serve as priming for their fire-arms; and the wife will return a thousand thanks for a pair of scissars, a skean of thread, or a large needle, which are extraordinary rarities.

Our author says, that during the excessive heats of summer, and particularly when they were afraid of meeting with a party of the Arab free-booters, they travelled in the night, which, according to an Arabian proverb, having no eyes, few of them dare venture abroad, from their not knowing into what dangers and ambushes they may fall. Our travellers had then frequent reason to call to mind the words of the Psalmist: "Thou makest darkness that it may be night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move; the lions roaring after their prey"; for leopards, hyenas, and a variety of ravenous beasts then call to, and answer each other; the different sexes by this means, perhaps, finding out and corresponding with their mates; and these sounds awfully