

their persons, they are not influenced by love, but a desire of gain. Nor was this custom so frequent, before the arrival of the Russian hunters, and is not practised by any whose thirst of gain has not stifled their natural sense of shame; there are, however, many who would not carry on so disgraceful a commerce, for any emolument whatever. I was told, that formerly this custom was not practised for money, but from a sort of compassion, and a cordial attachment to an individual, who, on his return after a long absence, was allowed to sleep one night with every female, married and unmarried, in the jurt. Hence it is, that the man, who can never with certainty claim the children as his own, that are born by his wives, has not an equally unlimited power over them with the mother; nay, that the uncle on the mother's side has more authority than he.

The children of one father by different mothers are not regarded as brothers and sisters, and are accordingly permitted to intermarry; but the case is reversed, with respect to those by one mother and different fathers. The distribution of the property on the death of the father is regulated by the relatives, who usually leave the greatest part for the widows and children, and take the rest for themselves.

I had no opportunity of witnessing a burial; but I learnt from the inhabitants, that a custom formerly prevailed at the decease of a Toja, or any other man of consequence, of burying one of his servants with him. But now this barbarous custom is done away; and the baidars, darts, and other utensils only of the deceased are put in his grave. The entrails are taken out of the corpse; which is stuffed with hay. Persons in mean circumstances are put without any ceremony into the ground, or the cavities of the rocks, but the rich are laid in tombs, made of wood, expressly for the purpose. Into these earth is first shaken, and then covered with grass mats and skins, upon which the body is laid, and bound with thongs, in the position in which one usually sits in the baidar, with the feet approaching towards the breast, and the hands folded round the latter. Another mat is then laid over it, and covered with another layer of earth, upon which broken pieces of the baidar are placed. If the wife has an affection for the deceased, she cuts the hair off the crown of her head, as a token of her grief, and mourns for him several days; sometimes carrying it so far as to keep the body for weeks together in the jurt, for which purpose a frame is erected of a suitable size, in the shape of a prism, and covered with skins. The corpse is fixed into this case, as in a sitting posture, and remains there in a detached corner of the jurt, until the unsupportable smell renders it necessary for it to be buried. But little chil-