

TRAVELS
IN
THE HEDJAZ OF ARABIA.

DJIDDA.

MY arrival in the Hedjaz was attended with some unfavourable circumstances. On entering the town of Djidda, in the morning of the 15th of July, 1814, I went to the house of a person on whom I had a letter of credit, delivered to me, at my departure from Cairo, in January, 1813, when I had not yet fully resolved to extend my travels into Arabia. From this person I met with a very cold reception; the letter was thought to be of too old a date to deserve notice: indeed, my ragged appearance might have rendered any one cautious how he committed himself

with his correspondents, in paying me a large sum of money on their account; bills and letters of credit are, besides, often trifled with in the mutual dealings of Eastern merchants; and I thus experienced a flat refusal, accompanied, however, with an offer of lodgings in the man's house. This I accepted for the first two days, thinking that, by a more intimate acquaintance, I might convince him that I was neither an adventurer nor impostor; but finding him inflexible, I removed to one of the numerous public Khans in the town, my whole stock of money being two dollars and a few sequins, sewed up in an amulet which I wore on my arm. I had little time to make melancholy reflections upon my situation; for on the fourth day after my arrival, I was attacked by a violent fever, occasioned, probably, by indulging too freely in the fine fruits which were then in the Djidda market; an imprudence, which my abstemious diet for the last twelve months rendered, perhaps, less inexcusable, but certainly of worse consequence. I was for several days delirious; and nature would probably

have been exhausted, had it not been for the aid of a Greek captain, my fellow passenger from Souakin. He attended me in one of my lucid intervals, and, at my request, procured a barber, or country physician, who bled me copiously, though with much reluctance, as he insisted that a potion, made up of ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon, was the only remedy adapted to my case. In a fortnight after, I had sufficiently recovered to be able to walk about ; but the weakness and languor which the fever had occasioned, would not yield to the damp heat of the atmosphere of the town ; and I owed my complete recovery to the temperate climate of Tayf, situated in the mountains behind Mekka, where I afterwards proceeded.

The Djidda market little resembled those Negro markets, where a single dollar would purchase two or three weeks' provision of dhourra and butter. The price of every thing had risen here to an unusual height, the imports from the interior of Arabia having entirely ceased, while the whole popula-

tion of the Hedjaz, now increased by a Turkish army and its numerous followers, and a host of pilgrims who were daily coming in, wholly depended for its supply upon the imports from Egypt. My little stock of money was therefore spent during my illness, and before I was sufficiently recovered to walk out. The Greek captain, though he had shown himself ready to afford me the common services of humanity, was not disposed to trust to the honour or respectability of a man whom he knew to be entirely destitute of money. I was in immediate want of a sum sufficient to defray my daily expenses, and, no other means being left to procure it, I was compelled to sell my slave: I regretted much the necessity for parting with him, as I knew he had some affection for me, and he was very desirous to remain with me. During my preceding journey he had proved himself a faithful and useful companion; and although I have since had several other slaves in my possession, I never found one equal to him. The Greek

captain sold him for me, in the slave-market of Djidda, for fortyeight dollars.*

The present state of the Hedjaz rendered travelling through it, in the disguise of a beggar, or at least for a person of my outward appearance, impracticable; and the slow progress of my recovery made me desirous of obtaining comforts: I therefore equipped myself anew, in the dress of a reduced Egyptian gentleman, and immediately wrote to Cairo for a supply of money; but this I could hardly receive in less than three or four months. Being determined, however, to remain in the Hedjaz until the time of the pilgrimage in the following November, it became necessary for me to find the means of procuring subsistence until my funds should arrive. Had I been disappointed in all my hopes, I should then have followed the example of numbers of the poor Hadjis,

* This slave cost me sixteen dollars at Shendy; thus, the profits of sale on *one* slave defrayed almost the whole expense of the four months' journey through Nubia, which I had performed in the spring.

even those of respectable families, who earn a daily subsistence, during their stay in the Hedjaz, by manual labour; but before I resorted to this last expedient, I thought I might try another. I had indeed brought with me a letter of introduction from Seyd Mohammed el Mahrouky,* the first merchant in Cairo, to Araby Djeylany, the richest merchant of Djidda; but this I knew could be of no use, as it was not a letter of credit; and I did not present it. † I determined therefore, at last, to address the Pasha, Mohammed Aly, in person. He had arrived in the Hedjaz at the close of the spring of 1813, and was now resident at Tayf, where he had established the head-quarters of the army, with which he intended to attack the strongholds of the Wahabis. I had seen the

* The original characters of these and other names, both of persons and places, are given in the Index of Arabic words at the end of this volume.

† I afterwards became acquainted with Djeylany, at Mekka; and what I saw of him, convinced me that I was not mistaken in the estimation I had formed of his readiness to assist a stranger.

Pasha several times at Cairo, before my departure for Upper Egypt, and had informed him in general terms of my travelling madness (as he afterwards jocularly termed it himself at Tayf). I should here observe that, as the merchants of Upper Egypt are in general poor, and none of them strictly honour a bill or obligation by immediate payment, I had found it necessary, during my stay there, in order to obtain a supply of money, to request my correspondent at Cairo to pay the sum which I wanted into the Pasha's treasury, and to take an order from him upon his son, Ibrahim Pasha, then governor of Upper Egypt, to repay me the amount. Having therefore already had some money dealings with the Pasha, I thought that, without being guilty of too much effrontery, I might now endeavour to renew them in the Hedjaz, and the more so, as I knew that he had formerly expressed rather a favourable opinion of my person and pursuits. As soon, therefore, as the violence of my fever had subsided, I wrote to his physician, an Armenian of the name of Bosari,

whom I had also known at Cairo, where I had heard much in his favour, and who was then with his master at Tayf. I begged him to represent my unfortunate situation to the Pasha, to inform him that my letter of credit upon Djidda had not been honoured, and to ask him whether he would accept a bill upon my correspondent at Cairo, and order his treasurer at Djidda to pay the amount of it.

Although Tayf is only five days distant from Djidda, yet the state of the country was such, that private travellers seldom ventured to cross the mountains between Mekka and Tayf; and caravans, which carried the letters of the people of the country, departed only at intervals of from eight to ten days; I could not, therefore, expect an answer to my letter in less than twenty days. During this period I passed my leisure hours at Djidda, in transcribing the journal of my travels in Nubia; but I felt the heat at this season so oppressive, especially in my weak state, that, except during a few hours early in the morning, I found no ease but in the

cool shade of the great gateway of the Khan in which I lodged; where I passed the greater part of the day, stretched upon a stone bench. Bosari's correspondent at Djidda, through whom I had sent my letter to Tayf, had meanwhile mentioned my name to Yahya Effendi, the physician of Tousoun Pasha, son of Mohammed Aly, now governor of Djidda, who had been in Upper Egypt while I was there, but I had not seen him. This physician, when at Cairo, had heard my name mentioned as that of a traveller; and understanding now, that I came from the Black countries, he was curious to see me, and desired Bosari's friend to introduce me to him. He received me politely, invited me repeatedly to his house, and, in the course of further explanation, became acquainted with my wants, and the steps I had taken to relieve them. He happened at this time to be preparing for a journey to Medina with Tousoun Pasha, and was sending back all his unnecessary baggage to Cairo; with this he was also desirous to transmit to his family his last year's savings,

amounting to three thousand piastres (about 100*l.*), and he was so kind as to offer me the money for a bill upon Cairo, payable at sight ; an advantage which, he well knew, the merchants of Djidda never insure to those who take their bills. Such an offer would not be considered as conferring any obligation in the commercial towns of Europe ; but in the East, and under the circumstances in which I was placed, it was extraordinary. Yahya Effendi added, that some of his friends had given me a flattering character while at Cairo, and that he could not, therefore, entertain the slightest doubt of my solvency and respectability, in which opinion he had been confirmed on reading the letter of credit I had brought with me. As the issue of my application to the Pasha at Tayf was uncertain, I readily and gratefully accepted Yahya's proposal ; the money was immediately paid to me, the bills drawn, and a few days after, my obliging friend departed with Tousoun Pasha for Medina, where I had the pleasure of seeing him again early in the following year.