

found such as are mentioned by the writers who visited the courts of the Amírs and saw their splendour.

In the character of their ornament, rather than in their shape, the Sindian arms approach more closely the Persian than the Afghan type. The coloured enamels, the embroidered leather accoutrements, and the chased silver mountings which characterise their swords are of a more decorated style than is usually met with in India.

Postans¹ describes the Sindian arms as being of very superior quality, "particularly the matchlock barrels, which are twisted in the Damascus style. The nobles and chiefs procure many from Persia and Constantinople, but nearly as good can be made in the country. They are overlaid with gold, and very highly finished. The European lock is attached to the Eastern barrel, and our guns and barrels are only prized for this portion of their work. The best of 'Joe Manton' and 'Purdy' guns, of which sufficient to stock a shop have at various times been presented to the Sindian chiefs by the British Government, share this mutilating fate. The Sind matchlock is a heavy, unwieldy arm, the stock much too light for the great weight of the barrel.

"The sword blades are large, curved, very sharp, and well-tempered. The sheath also contains a receptacle for a small knife used for food and other purposes.

"The belts are of leather or cloth, richly embroidered, for which Guzerat has long been famous.² Great taste is also displayed in the manufacture of the pouches, &c. attached to the waist.

"Shields are made from rhinoceros hides, richly embossed with brass or silver. They are carried over the shoulder, or worn strapped between them.

"A great part of the treasure of the Amírs consists in the rubies, diamonds, pearls and emeralds with which their daggers, swords, and matchlocks are adorned. One or two Persian goldsmiths are engaged at court in enamelling and damascening, in which arts they have attained great perfection.

"The Amírs have agents in Persia, Turkey, and Palestine for the purchase of swords and gun barrels,³ and they possess a more valuable collection than is probably to be met with elsewhere. 'I have had in my hand,' says Burnes,⁴ 'a plain unornamented blade which had cost them half a lac of rupees. They estimate swords by their age and watering or temper. One presented to me bears the date 1708, and was valued in Scinde at 2,000 rupees. "Another bore the following inscription:—'Of ancient steel and water, I am the produce of Persia. I am light in appearance, but I am heavy against my enemies. When a brave man wields me with his strength a hundred thousand Hindoos will perish by my edge.'" The verse was written by the Amír's Vizier. The armoury also contains swords worn by Shah Abbas the Great, Nadir Shah, and Ahmed Shah Durrání.

The swords are balanced differently from ours. "I have seen one of the young princes," continues Burnes, "with a single stroke cut a large sheep into two pieces.

"The favourites of the Amírs may be distinguished by gold-mounted swords, which are the highest honorary distinctions conferred by the Hyderabad Durbar. It is contrary to the usage of the court to wear side-arms ornamented with any of the precious metals which are not presented by their Highnesses. For very high services the Amírs sometimes, though rarely, give one of their valuable blades adorned with diamonds."

"The Amírs of Sind show their love of sport by taking the field with hawks, dogs, &c., but they never expose themselves to the sun, but remain under shelter till the deer or hog is forced to come before them to a small tank or well to drink, when they shoot him deliberately, and receive the acclamations of their followers."

There is a peculiar Sindian custom alluded to by Sir H. Elliot, and mentioned in the

¹ Personal Observations in Sind.

² Marco Polo describes the mats in red and blue leather, exquisitely inlaid with figures of birds and beasts, and skilfully embroidered with gold and silver wire.—Book iii. ch. 26.

³ Those not rifled come chiefly from Constantinople. They are of very small bore, and long in the barrel.

⁴ Burnes' Visit to the Court of Scinde.