Robert Percival Pott to H.R.H. –

38808 – 9

Lucknow May the 30th. 1793.

Sir

My Brother some time ago, communicated to me, that your Royal Highness was collecting the Military Weapons of different Countries.

My prospects in life some Years ago, held out to me the pleasing hope of one day re-visiting my Native Country: and I had made some progress in collecting the Antient, and Modern Armour of this part of the Globe. The local situation I held, when I began this collection gave me an influence which enabled me to obtain many Articles, it otherwise would not have been in my power to procure.

Engaged in a Service, where no Individual has claimable right, or privilege – Where Abilities, probity, and long service establish no legal claim – A Service in which there is a contract to serve, without a Counterpart to continue

employment: and where every Subordinate Office is considered to appertain to the patronage of the Governor General, the vicissitude of Fortune must necessarily attend on every Man, who like me shall be so unfortunate as to possess no family influence or private claims on the patronage of each new Governor.

The paragraph in my Brother's letter that mentioned your Highness was forming an Armoury, afforded me the greatest pleasure as it pointed out an appropriation of the collection I had then made; and held out to me an object for continuing the pursuit which tho' I have done with the greatest assiduity, since the receipt of my Brother's letter, still I am perfectly aware how unworthy Your Royal Highness's acceptance are those specimens I have hitherto been able to collect.

The art of making the Foullard, or Persian Steel, has for many years been totally lost: so has the art of tempering it. Perfect weapons of the genuine Manufacture of Ancient Persia are now few in Number: and held in a degree of Estimation

Robert Percival Pott to H.R.H. –

38809

absolutely ridiculous. They are purchased with the greatest avidity by the Natives, when offered for Sale; which never occurs but on the greatest emergency and distress. War is the ruling passion of every Persian, and Hindostanee: and however abstracted from Military circumstance an Asiatic may be, to doubt his science in the temper of Sword or Dagger blades, would by him be deemed a downright insult. No Hindostanee or Persian, follows any other Profession than Arms by choice: tho' the business of a Merchant, and of a Soldier is by them deemed not incompatible. Ashamed of the real cause an avidity for wealth, they constantly assign what to them appears more plausible, that all the Shaiks, or immediate descendants of Mahommed to their military character join that of Merchant.

In such estimation is the Foullard held, from the art of making it being so totally lost, that fragments of Scymeters, and Dagger blades are eagerly purchased, and re-made: but bear a very inferior value from the art of tempering them

being lost.

Particular Scymeters have been transmitted from Father to Son, and their origin and merits handed down, thro' a series of many hundred Years, to the present day - have been made to cut a conspicuous figure in Legends, and in Tales: and to this hour retain their high value. These circumstances render it difficult to procure Arms of that Species.

When the use of fire Arms, became general, the Body Armour was laid aside. Such of it as was made of Metal, ornamented with gold, and Silver, or precious Stones, has been broken to pieces for the sake of those valuable Materials. Perfect Specimens of Metal Armour are now extremely scarce.

The Armour of the highest repute in the earliest periods was made of multiplied folds of Cloth. The Chiefs made them of forty or fifty thicknesses of exquisitely fine Muslin, ornamenting the outer Surface with embroidery. They also made Use of the Scales of a large kind of Carp. Of the Scales

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Of the scales of the Scaly Lizard - From parings of Horses hoofs - and of the soft Skins of Several small animals. Their Shields and Targets were made of fine Muslin steeped in a mucilage of linseed, and finely varnished. Such materials were of course not of long duration, and I deem myself fortunate in having at last been able to obtain a Shield of considerable Antiquity of the above description, which together with some Weapons I was not able to procure last Season, I a few days ago sent to my Agents in Calcutta to be forwarded by them to Your Royal Highness - I have also sent some disks of Persian Steel, of as good a Quality as can now be made.

Understanding from my Brother, that your wish extended to other matters of Oriental curiosity beside Armour, I have taken the liberty of sending some trifles, I procured a few months ago at Delhy, of which I have the honour to enclose a List. It is very much my wish to add some curious Animals, and a Persian Horse of the Genuine breed: but I have hitherto been unable

to

to procure Shipping for them, the Captains of the Indiamen considering my Situation, as precluding me from being able to con-fer on them, what they deem equivalent obligation. I expected to have been able to have sent the Horse, and some other Animals by Captain Wakefield, but the unexpected destination of his Ship to Madras with Stores prevented me. I shall renew my endeavours to procure a passage for them, by one of the Ships of the present Season, and do myself the honour to inform your Royal Highness of the result of my Application.

If your Royal Highness will condescend to let me know your wishes in regard to the productions of Hindostan and Persia I will use my utmost endeavours to accomplish them. As a guide to your Highness, I beg leave to mention what I conceive objects of curiosity. I have the honour to be

Your Royal Highness's, Most devoted, and obedient Servant

Robert Percival Pott

38811

Flower and Fruit Seeds.

Cattle, of exquisitely small, and wonderfully large size

Deer of all sorts.

Hawks, and Falcons.

Persian Horses.

Shawl Goats – Carminian and Persian Sheep –

Martin Skins.

Otta of different sorts.

Shawls.

Patridges of various sorts

Fighting Rams.

Bth Rev
Surgeon

R. P. Pott

May 30. 1793.

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Extracts of a letter from Mr. R. Pott Dated Lucknow 30th May 93

"I have sent off for the Prince a Pair of Curious Persian Fowls during Easter Week the Mussulmen gamble by fighting Eggs — They Strike one Egg against the other — The Proprietor or holder of the Broken One loses his Bet. — and the hardness of the Eggs of these Persian Fowls is so great, as to make them very valuable & much Covetted.

I have too few of the Breed, to have Eaten any yet, so can say nothing in their Praise on that Head, — but they are fine Birds — And Invariably through Thousands of Generations, — The Hens are of Similar Colour — A Colour I cannot describe, — and the Cocks white — They are not Game — Now I think on it, The Hens are the Color of your Cuckoo! —

I have sent Down to my Attornies a Set of the Musical Instruments of Asia, for your Prince, in Return for his Buttons, Pray tell him so, — And desire him to do me the honor, to wear a Persian Scymetre, which is Indostan Mounted, and which I assure him, on my

my honor, cost me 3000 Rupees 300 and is as fine a Blade as ever graced Thigh of true Believer"

Extract of a Letter sent by Mr. R. Colt to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales

"My Brother some Time ago Communicated to me, that your Royal Highness was Collecting the Military Weapons of Different Countries"

My Prospects in Life some Years ago held out to me the pleasing hope, of one day Revisiting my Native Country, and I had made some Progress in Collecting the Ancient & modern Armour of this Part of the Globe — The Local Situation, I held, when I began this Collection, gave me an Influence, which Enabled me to obtain many Articles, it otherwise would not have been in my Power to Procure — Engaged in a Service, where no Individual has Claimable Right or Privilege — where Abilities, Probity & long Service establish no legal Claim, a Service in which there is a Contract to Serve, without a Counterpart to Continue Employment — and where every Subordinate office, is Considered to appertain to the Patronage of the Governor General, the Vicissitude of Fortune, must Necessarily attend on every Man, who, like me, shall be so Unfortunate, as to Possess no Family Influence

or Private Claims, on the Patronage of each New Governor—
The Paragraph in my Brothers Letter, that mentioned your
Highness was forming an Armoury, afforded me the greatest
Pleasure, as it Pointed out an Appropriation of the Collection
I had then made, and held out to me an Object, for Continuing
the Pursuit, which tho' I have done with the greatest
Assiduity since the Receipt of my Brothers Letter, still I am
perfectly aware, how unworthy, Your Royal Highness Accept-
-ance are those Specimens I have hitherto been able to Collect—
The Art of making the Foullard or Persian Steel, has
for many Years been totally lost— So has the Art of Tempering
it— Perfect Weapons of the Genuine Manufacture of Ancient
Persia, are now, few in Number, and held in a Degree of Estim-
-ation Absolutely Ridiculous— They are Purchased with
the greatest Avidity, by the Natives when offered for Sale,
which never occurs but on the greatest Emergency— & Distress—
War is the Ruling Passion of every Persian & Hindostan —
and however Abstracted from Military Circumstance, an Asiatic
may be, to doubt his Science, in the Temper of Sword or Dagger
Blades, would by him be deemed a downright Insult—
No Hindostan, or Persian follows any other Profession than

Arms, by Choice, tho' the Business of a Merchant and of a Soldier is by them deemed not Incompatible —

Ashamed of the Real Cause, an Avidity for Wealth, they Constantly assign, what to them appears more Plausible; that all the Shaiks or immediate Descendants of Mahommed, to their Military Character, join that of Merchant —

In such Estimation is the Foullard held, from the Art of making it, being so totally lost — that Fragments of Scymeters & Daggers Blades &c &c are Eagerly Purchased and Re-made but bear a very Inferior Value, from the Art of Tempering them being lost —

Particular Scymeters have been Transmitted from Father to Son, and their origin & Merits, handed down, thro' a Series of many Hundred Years, to the present Day; have been made to Cut a Conspicuous figure in Legends and Tales, and to this hour Retain their high value — These Circumstances render it difficult to obtain Arms of that Species —

When the Use of Fire Arms became general, the Body Armor was laid aside, such of it, as was made of Metal, ornamented with Gold and Silver or Precious Stones, has been broken to Pieces, for the sake of those valuable Materials — — Perfect

Specimens of Metal Armour are now Extremely scarce — The Armour of the highest Repute in the Earliest Period was made of Multiplied folds of Cloth, — The Chiefs made them of Forty or Fifty Thicknesses of Exquisitely fine Muslin ornamenting the outer Surface with Embroidery, — They also made them of the Scales of a large kind of Carp — Of the Scales of the Scaly Lizard — From Parings of Horses hoofs — And of the soft Skins of several small Animals — Their Shields and Targets were made of fine Muslin, steeped in a Mucilage of Linseed & finely Varnished — Such Materials of course were not of long Duration, and I deem myself fortunate in having at last been able to obtain, a Shield of Considerable Antiquity of the Above Description, which together with some Weapons, that I was not able to procure last Season, I a few Days ago sent to my Agents in Calcutta, to be forwarded by them, to your Royal Highness — I have also sent some Disks of Persian Steel, of as good a Quality as can now be made —

Understanding from my Brother, that your Wish Extended to other Matters of Oriental Curiosity beside Armour, I have taken the Liberty of sending some Trifles, I procured a few Months ago at Delhy, of which I have the honor to Enclose

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If your Royal Highness will Condescend, to let me know your Wishes in Regard to the Productions of Hindostan & Persia I will use my Utmost Endeavors to accomplish them -

As a Guide to your Highness I beg leave to mention what I conceive objects of Curiosity &c - "

Signed R Ker Porter

Dec 1819

Enclosure to the Prince 38815

Seeds - Flower & Fruit

Cattle - of Exquisitely small & Wonderfully large Size

Deer, Hawks & Falcons

Persian Horses, Shawl Goats

Carminian & Persian Sheep.

Martin Skins, Otta Shawls

Various sorts of Patridges -

Fighting Rams -

Things sent to Calcutta for the Prince

Two Shust, or Arrow Rings, one made of Cornelian, one of Sea Lions Tooth -

A Pair of Bootan Scissars for Cutting Betle Leaf

4 Agat Persian Salt Cellars

1 Agat Persian Spoon

1 Agat Persian Coffee Cup.

A Jewell Case, cut out of the solid Christal, with an Embroidered Lip of Agat -

A Silver Halleeycune, Persian

A Gure Guree of Silver Enamel made at Delhy -

List of Things sent to Calcutta Cont.

Two Castle Painted Javelins

A Knife used in Tehaar

A Persian Tubber, or Battle Axe

A Bustore Tore, or Armour Breaker

An Hindostan Knife with Chystal handle -

Five Tere Dustiet or hard arrows

One Persian Javelin

A Steel Chased inlaid Hindostan Gripe for a Scymeter -

Some Models of Lanthorns that are used in Illuminations

A Taliaga

An Hindostan Battle Axe

A Bootan Sword

A Persian Brace

A Priming Horn made of Mountain Antelope horn

A Pair of Armour Trowsers

An Exercising Bow.

An Hindostan Chiefs Saddle with Bridle &c of Gilt Silver, with the Drum & Cowtails -

A Mahratta Chiefs Saddle

A Baula or Persian Lance

A Shield -

A Tube to Blow Poisoned arrows through -