

and they give their opinion about it. Then some one who has a case to bring before the Mehtar for his decision will advance, kiss his feet, and state his case. The people at the upper end of the watercourse of his village have taken all the water, and left none for his lands in the lower part of the village. The Mehtar turns to the durbar and asks if any one knows about this. Some men from the village will then say what they know; a conversation about the matter will follow; then the Mehtar will give orders as he thinks fit, and the matter is there and then disposed of. No record of any case is kept, but, as every case is decided in full durbar, there is generally some one present who remembers former decisions; and, cases being usually simple and not very numerous, it is possible to administer justice satisfactorily on these primitive lines, both civil and criminal cases being disposed of in this manner.

While these conversational trials are being carried on, dinner is brought in on a number of trays and dishes, some special dishes being laid before the Mehtar, and the remainder being placed before the men in durbar. Just a few members of the Mehtar's family, whose rank is undeniable, are permitted to eat from the same dish with him; the rest eat out of the common dishes placed round the durbar. The meals consist of bread, rice, and stews of meat; in the summer fruit is served round, and the Mehtar and a few principal men have tea. No spirituous liquor of any kind is served, for the people are Mohammedans. The food is taken up with the fingers, water being handed round before and after the meal for washing the hands.

All the time the dinner is being eaten, the Mehtar is quietly disposing of affairs; conversation about the cases before him is kept up, and, perhaps with his mouth full, he will give his decision in the matter. Often, when Nizam-ul-Mulk held his durbars by the river, or on a shooting-expedition, a man would rush up to say there were some duck by the water, or markhor on the mountain-side, and the Mehtar and his men