

available silver coins, at the ratio of eight Tangas to five Miskals, unless one is prepared to handle the dirty rolls of Chinese coppers which the local trader keeps strung up like sausages. But the exchange rate between silver and copper is not stable, and the silver Miskal was just then considerably above the value of forty copper pieces which the ratio just mentioned would indicate. So after successfully converting Tangas into the legal coin, a varying discount has to be calculated before payment can be effected. It only adds to these monetary complications that prices of articles imported from Russia are reckoned in 'Soms' (Roubles), which in the form of gold pieces of five or ten Roubles widely circulate through the markets of Turkestan, while the heavier Chinese silver 'Yambus,' of horse-shoe shape and varying weight, have a discount of their own. During my stay in the country the value of the gold Rouble as against the local currency of Tangas represented by Chinese silver and copper pieces, steadily declined, and with it unluckily fell the Rupee too, the exchange value of which seems in Turkestan to depend mainly on the Rouble rate. For the well-trained arithmetical faculties of the Hindu trader these tangled relations offer no difficulty. But I confess I sadly reflected on the loss of time which they implied for me.

On the 24th of September the weather became cloudy and the temperature distinctly cold. A yellow haze hung all day low over the ground and intensified the effect of the atmospheric change. It felt autumnally chilly in the wide halls of my palace, and I realised how different life in them would be when the winter set in. The haze still continued when early on the morning of the 27th of September my caravan was again set in march. It was market-day, and the endless stream of villagers that passed along the roads with their manifold produce and belongings was a welcome distraction. Women of the cultivating class play a prominent part in all the marketing. I met them in large groups or