

The greater part of the individuals composing the *tāffah*, or set of female dancers, are either attached by family connections, such as marriage with the *oostaulds* and *surmaunjahs*, who are the instructors and musicians; or they are slaves obtained by purchase during times of scarcity; some, indeed, are kidnapped when very young, on account of their promising features; these rarely are able to give any account of their parentage, and do not always know the districts in which they were born.

Whatever may be their origin, or their connection, the dancers, who are likewise vocal performers, are entirely subservient to some person, whether male or female, who is considered the proprietor of the *set*, and on whose application to any court of law, or to any *soubah*, or person in power, any run-away is immediately pursued, and restored to the *tāffah*; whether the obligation be peremptory, such as in the case of a *baundy*, or actual slave; or merely implied, as in the case of a *paulah*, or person preserved from famine, &c., and reared in the capacity of a menial.

The Mahomedan law barely recognizes actual slavery, but makes a great distinction in favor of those who purchase, or thus adopt, children that would otherwise, in all probability, perish from want. The latter are considered to be the property of the patron, until arrived at their full