



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

## **The People of India, Volume Six**

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LANGHANS.

(335)

THE SAME.

(335-2)

"THE musicians in Sind," writes Captain Burton (*History*, p.302), "are of two kinds: first, the Kalwat, or respectable singers; second, the Langhans, or Mirasee, the bards of the country. The latter term is derived by the people from some 'mir,' or great man, who, acquiring the unenviable sobriquet of 'Asi,' the sinner, by condescending to eat with a Shikaree, or sweeper, became the father of the bards. The clan, as might be expected, gives itself a noble origin. Some connect themselves with the Samma tribe, which once reigned in Sind; others mount up as high as Kaab-el-Akbar, the renowned poetical contemporary of Mahomed. The Langhans are of Jat or Sindee extraction. They are considered a low race and certainly are one of the most vile and debauched classes to be found in the country. Every clan of any consequence, as, for instance, the Lagharee, has its own minstrels, who attend the weddings, circumcisions, and other festive occasions, and expect to be well paid by the chief. In former times they used to accompany the head of the house to battle, armed with sword and shield, with the Surindo, or rebec, in hand, praising the brave, and overwhelming cowards with satire and abuse. The people had, and still have, a great horror of their tongues. One of the Talpoor family, who had not distinguished himself at the battle of Meeanee, was so much tormented by their ironical praises, that he pays them liberally to keep out of his presence. Anciently the chief bards were in the service of the several Ameeris; now they are obliged to live by begging, singing in the bazars, and attending at houses where any ceremony is going on. At the same time they will spend every farthing they can gain in drinking and other debauchery.

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