CHAPTER IX. 

THIBET.

Sect. I.—General Outline and Aspect.

Thibet, or, as M. Klaproth has recently called it, Tubet, forms a mountain region of a very peculiar character. We have already traced the mighty mountain ridge of Himalayah, forming the whole northern boundary of Hindostan. Parallel to this, at a varying distance, extends another, nearly, if not altogether, as lofty, which the Chinese called the Kuenlin, and at its western extremity, Kauung-ling, or the Blue Mountains. Towards the east, it penetrates with its snowy peaks the Chinese province of Shensi, being there, too, connected with a mighty circuit of mountains that surround the lake of Koko nor, and, as Humboldt conceives, give rise to the Yellow River. At this eastern portion of the range, the interval which separates it from the Himalayah is of considerable breadth, and includes some fruitful and highly cultivated plains. As the two chains proceed westward, the space between them is gradually narrowed, till, at their extremity, they meet and form one mass with the Hindoo Koh, or Indian Caucasus, which extends thence westward through Independent Persia. M. Humboldt even views the two boundary chains of Thibet somewhat as debris saillants, shattered branches from the Caucasus. The Hindoos, who see them in their closest approach to each other, consider both as the Himalayah, and Thibet as only a great and long valley enclosed within this astonishing chain. High detached branches from both of the great boundaries penetrate and encroach upon the territory; yet, wherever the breadth is at all considerable, the greater part of it is occupied by a vast table-plain, the most elevated, perhaps, on the globe, which yields only scanty crops of grain, but is pastured with numerous flocks of animals peculiar to this elevated region. Thibet presents a region every way distinct in aspect and character from Hindostan, whence it is separated only by a mountain ridge. Instead of saltly plains, luxuriant harvests, and magnificent cities, appear only rude plains, covered with scanty herbage, and diversified by rocky heights, under whose shelter a few rough-built villages find protection from the chilling winds of the snow-clad mountains.

Besides its grand mountain features, Thibet is distinguished as containing the source of many of the greatest rivers of Asia. The Indus and the Sansoo, rising near to each other, from that loftiest part of the chain which gives rise, on the other side, to the Ganges and the Jumna, traverse this high plain in contrary directions. The Indus, after draining the waters which descend into it from the western part of both ridges, bursts its mountain barrier, takes a new direction, and flows southward into the ocean. The course of the Sansoo has not been traced beyond the vicinity of Lassa; and the theory which identified it with the Brahmapoutra has become, at least, extremely doubtful. There seems, however, every reason to conclude, that most of the great rivers which water the empire of China and the kingdoms between it and India, derive their sources from the mountains of Thibet. The Sutlej, the largest tributary of the Indus, also takes its rise upon their border.

Thibet contains the lakes of Manasa-ur-wara and Rawan-ur, picturesque and striking objects, encircled by some of the loftiest snow-covered peaks of the Himalayah, and which are held by the Hindoos in religious veneration; yet they are by no means of great extent. The lake Tchenaror, farther to the west, is similarly described by M. Gerard. The Chinese maps delineate in the north-eastern part the lake of Terkiri, seventy miles long, and several others, respecting which no further particulars are yet known.

Sect. II.—Natural Geography.

Subject 1.—Geology.

Gold is found in grains in many of the rivers, and also disseminated and in masses in quartz rock and other rocks. Silver ores are not mentioned by travellers, but some varieties

References to the Map of Thibet and Tartary.
of galena contain that metal. Mines of lead occur, but they are not worked to any extent; ores of iron and copper occur in different quarters, and the Thibetians are said to work rich mines of mercury, the ore being cinnabar. Rock salt is reported to be common; but the most interesting saline mineral met with in Thibet is that named tinalia, or borax. According to Mr. Saunders, the lake from which borax and common salt are obtained is fifteen days’ journey north from Tesheo Lomboo. Surrounded on all sides by rocky mountains, it receives no rivulets, but is fed by brackish springs rising from the bottom of the lake itself. The borax is found crystallised in the lake, and is taken up in large masses, which are then broken, for the convenience of carriage, and exposed to dry. This mineral, though collected for a considerable length of time, has no appearance of diminishing, and most probably is continually formed anew. The lake is said to be at least twenty miles in circumference. For a part of the year it is frozen over. In Thibet, as in Europe, borax is employed for soldering, and as a flux for promoting the fusion of gold and silver.

**SUBJECT 2. — Botany.**

The reader is referred to the remarks under this head at page 337.

**SUBJECT 3. — Zoology.**

The Zoology of Thibet and of Tartary cannot well be separated in a work of this nature, and with the scanty knowledge we yet possess of their productions. We shall therefore enumerate the most remarkable quadrupeds that have yet been found on the elevated deserts of Central Asia.

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<tr>
<th>Genus</th>
<th>Species</th>
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<tr>
<td>Geocercus Lagurus</td>
<td>Little short-tailed Jerboa</td>
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<td>Vulpes Concolor</td>
<td>Gervis Fox</td>
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<td>Vulpes Karshu</td>
<td>Tartarian Fox</td>
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<td>Pteropus algericus</td>
<td>Alpiscote Fruit-eater</td>
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<td>Dipus Jerboa</td>
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<td>Dipus brachyrurus</td>
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<td>Dipus minutus</td>
<td>Mongolian Jerboa</td>
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<td>Gerbillus Tamara</td>
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<td>Gerbillus macrourus</td>
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<td>Lepus Todai</td>
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<td>Lagomys Longicaudus</td>
<td>Grey Fizz</td>
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<td>Equus Hemionus</td>
<td>Mongolian Horse</td>
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<td>Nocha pecora</td>
<td>Thibetian Musk</td>
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<td>Pteropus Amissus</td>
<td>Tartarian Roc</td>
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Several of the above quadrupeds claim a more particular notice; as the Mongolian Horse, the Pica Hare, the Musk Deer, and the Tartarian Roc.

The Mongolian Horse (Equus Hemionus Pallas) inhabits, in troops, the great central deserts of Asia. It is about the size of an ordinary horse, but is distinguished by having hairs only at the end of the tail: along the back is a black line: the ears in size are rather larger than intermediate between those of the horse and mule: the tail is black, near two feet long, and much like that of a cow. This was probably the wild mule of the ancients. All the proportions of this singular animal exhibit much lightness and elegance. It runs almost literally with the rapidity of lightning, carrying its head erect, and snuffing up the wind: its air is wild and fiery, and the fleetest courser that ever scourced the desert would in vain attempt to overtake it. When unmolested, its character is peaceable and social. Their troops are from 20 to 100 in number, each headed by a chief, who acts as guide and sentinel. It is said to leap three times in a circle round the object which inspires fear. If the chief is slain, which, from his temerity in approaching very near the hunters, will sometimes happen, the troop disperses. The Mongols, the Tunguses, and other Tartar nations bordering the Great Desert, hunt these animals for their flesh, which they highly esteem; but it appears they have never succeeded in taming it.

The Gray Pica Hare is not more than six inches long. It is common in the Tartarian deserts, and beyond Lake Baikal. These little animals dig very deep burrows with two or three entrances, furnished at the bottom with a thick and soft bed of leaves: they wander about during night, for they are exceedingly timid, and have many enemies. In spring they begin to cut and lay in their winter provision of tender herbage, &c., which they pile in numerous small heaps, like haystacks, about the entrance of their dwelling, previously filling that as full as it will hold. To the external store of provisions they probably gain access during the deep snows of winter, by undermining it from their subterraneous retreat.

The Musk Deer of Thibet (fig. 660a) yields the valuable drug so called. The animal itself is nearly the size of the roebuck. The flesh is esteemed, although strongly impregnated with this scent. When the animal is killed, the bag is cut away, and made into a kind of preserve. So powerfully does every part retain this perfume, that even the blood and liver are frequently mixed up with the genuine musk by the crafty Asiatics.

The Tartarian Roc is larger than our roebuck. It is marked with a large disk of white on the buttocks, and is remarkable for having no tail: it inhabits the loftiest regions, only descending to the plains in winter: the horns are much branched, and of great expense.

Among the very few Birds yet brought from these unexplored regions, we may notice two large Pheasants, whose singularity and splendour are almost unrivalled.
The Horned Pheasant \((P. \text{ cornutus})\), \((\text{fig. 669})\) in size and general appearance is between the fowl and the turkey; the top of the head is red, and over each eye is a fleshy blue substance, like a horn, and bent backwards; the throat has a bright blue naked flap, marked with orange spots; the breast and back are red; the rest of the plumage deep chestnut brown, marked all over with white spots surrounded with black.

The magnificent Impeyan Pheasant \((Lophophorus rubiginosus T.)\) is larger than a fowl. It is called by the Indians the Bird of Gold: its whole plumage is metallic, reflecting every colour and lustre that can be conceived; the crown of the male is ornamented with several feathers shaped like a lance or arrow, and those of the neck are all pointed. It has been found in the mountains in the north of India, but is very rare.

The domestic animals, among tribes having no fixed habitation, are naturally few. The Tartar Horses appear to be small and ill made, yet docile, and more fitted than any others to undergo long and violent journeys without food. The most vigorous are alone preserved; the others are killed and eaten, to prevent them from consuming provender wanted for the rest. The fat-rumped Sheep \((\text{fig. 670})\) is a breed reared in southern Tartary: the horns are small, or wanting; the ears long and pendulous, and the tail very short and thin. There is another breed, having very broad tails, with four, five, and sometimes six horns; the wool of the first is good, but that of the latter very coarse. The Thibet Goats are well known to furnish materials for those delicate shadows which bear this name: the hair is very fine and long, particularly on the back, and the ears small and pendant.

Sect. III.—Historical and Political Geography.

One section may comprehend the very little that can be said on these subjects. Although Thibet be placed amidst nations of ancient origin, its history is almost a complete blank. By the Arabian geographers it is barely named; but, under the name of Tetheth, Marco Polo gives a series of relations which, with a certain tincture of fable, suggest a country not materially differing from that which is now to be described. The ecclesiastical character of its government, and its subjection to a sovereign priest, appear to have favoured a report, that there existed in the heart of Asia a Christian monarch, to whom the early discoverers gave the appellation of Prester John. His sacred character, joined to the strength of the mountain barrier of his kingdom, served in a great measure to the Thibetians as a safeguard against the barbarous tribes by whom they were surrounded. Tradition, however, represents their shrines to have been at different times plundered by the Tartars. The most serious invasion was made in the end of the last century by the aggressive and encroaching power of Nepal. Tempted by reports of the wealth of its temples, and particularly of Pootala, the king of that country marched an army into Thibet, and, after an obstinate war, compelled the Lama to purchase peace by the payment of an ample tribute. The emperor of China, professing to revere that sovereign priest as his spiritual head, determined to interpose on his behalf. In 1791, a Chinese army of 70,000 men arrived at Thibet, and, notwithstanding a very vigorous resistance, drove the Nepalese troops beyond the mountains, from the summit of which the Chinese might even desory the British possessions on the plains below. The Thibetians now experienced the too frequent lot of a weak state which seeks the aid of a stronger. The religious attachment of the emperor to the Lama did not prevent him, when he found the country in his hands, from assuming civil sway over it, and limiting his ally to a spiritual jurisdiction. The whole country is now, therefore, a province of China, which has thus become almost conterminous with the British Indian empire. The sway, however, according to the usual Chinese maxims, is mild, and does not interfere with the original plan of internal administration. The Chinese have only established, along all the Thibetian frontier, that jealous exclusion of foreigners which renders it so difficult to gain information respecting any country included within their territories.

The government of Thibet, so far as it is unaffected by foreign interference, is altogether priestly. The lama, or high priest, is the sovereign, while the successive ranks of monks and gylongs compose the nobility. The laity are the vulgar. It is under the head of religion, therefore, that we must comprehend the political arrangements of this singular country.
DESCRUCTIVE GEOGRAPHY.

Part III.

Sect. IV.—Productive Industry.

Thibet, in respect to agriculture, labours under great disadvantages. The general character of its soil is bleak, barren, and poor; wheat and barley can be grown only in a few favoured situations, and often fail of coming to maturity. Even the herbage, the most valuable product, though it reaches a tolerable height during the rainy season, from March to September, suffers severely by arid and cold winds, which blow during the remaining part of the year, when it often dries up and crumbles into dust. Yet these mountain pastures possess qualities peculiarly nutritious and grateful, and support numerous flocks and herds. Many species of those especially belonging to Thibet are remarkable for their beauty and value. Indeed, this side of the mountains is alike noted for the profusion of animals as the other is for that of vegetable life. Birds, game, and wild animals of various descriptions, are equally abundant with those trained for the use of man.

Among the numerous animals that enrich Thibet, the most prominent seems to be the yak, an animal of the buffalo tribe, but in some particulars resembling the horse. Though not employed in agriculture, the yak is of great value for the conveyance of burdens, and yields also a rich and nutritious milk. Its tail, composed of a mass of long, flowing glossy hair, forms, under the name of chowrie, a considerable article of trade. It is in general demand among the great men of India, both as an ornament and as a flap for dispersing insects. Another animal, equally characteristic and useful, is the goat, which yields the fine wool used in manufacturing the shawls of Cashmere. Smaller than the smallest English sheep, it is the most beautiful of the goat species. The wool grows like down, close to the body, and is covered with a profusion of thick and strong hair. This fine covering is evidently given by nature as a fence against the cold, and soon degenerates in any milder climate. Sheep, though certainly not peculiar to Thibet, are here of peculiar value; the mutton being the finest, perhaps, in the world, and the fleece extremely soft and silky. The lamb fleeces, when tanned with the hair, afford linings considered particularly luxurious in China, Tartary, and all the cold districts of Asia. Goats and sheep are used in this country as beasts of burden, in which capacity they follow each other in long trains, and make their way with surprising safety across the most difficult and perilous mountain passes. The musk deer, a product of the chase, is found also in the neighbouring parts of China and Tartary, and is particularly abundant and valuable in the high districts of Eastern Thibet.

This country seems to have been almost as bountifully stocked by nature with mineral as with animal productions. The imperfect skill of the inhabitants, however, the scarcity of timber, and the difficulty of transport, render thearser and more useful kinds of little value, unless for immediate consumption. In this view, the most estimable product is gold, which is found nearly pure, in the form of dust, and sometimes in pretty large pieces. Copper is drawn from the mines in considerable quantities as a material for the manufacture of idols, grongs, and sacred instruments. Near Teshoo Lamboo is a mine of lead, obtained by the simple process of fusion. There are also mines of cinnaabar rich in mercury, which the natives have not the skill to extract. A most valuable fossil substance is the tincal, said to be deposited at the bottom of a lake, surrounded by lofty mountains in the north-east, and fed by mineral springs bursting forth in its own bed. The tincal is detached in large masses, and, besides those employed for fusion and other purposes, quantities of it are taken, by way of Bengal, to England, where it is refined into borax. Rock salt is likewise plentiful.

The manufactures of Thibet are rude, and only adapted for immediate consumption; but commerce exists on a considerable scale, and under some striking aspects. It is, of course, entirely inland, and carried on through perils and difficulties, only equalled by those, of an opposite nature, to be encountered in crossing the burning sands of Africa. The merchants are conveyed over the tremendous steep and snows of the Himalayas, by tracts rudely formed along the edge of precipices, obstructed by falling rocks and showers of stones, and where the least false step may hurl the travellers into instant destruction. Thibet thus maintains, however, a commerce of some extent, by the export of gold, tincal, musk, shawl-wool, and sheepskins; while from Bengal it imports cloth, particularly woollen, tobacco, spices, and toys; from China, tea, porcelain, and silk. The trade is much impeded by the injurious system of the chiefs, who monopolise the most valuable articles, particularly musk and wool, and by the disposition generally prevailing among them, rather to carry on traffic themselves, than to protect their subjects in doing so.

Sect. V.—Civil and Social State.

Religion forms the essential basis of the constitution, both civil and social, in this mountain region of Asia. The system which here holds sway is that known in Asia under the title of Boodhi, its founder, and of the Lama, its sovereign head; while in China the same worship is denominated that of Fo, and in Tartary is called Shamanism. It had its origin in Hindostan, though now nearly expelled thence by the rival system of Brahma; from which it is generally supposed to have separated as a schism, though others conceive it to
have been the parent superstition. It is so far less enlightened, that its objects of worship are mortals exalted into deities, instead of a spiritual and eternal Author of the universe. The doctrine of transmigration is alike held under both religions; but in that of Buddhism, it is converted from a speculative belief into a powerful engine of practical influence. As soon as the Lama dies, the priests, by supposed celestial indications, discover an infant into whom his soul is supposed to have transmigrated. This person is immediately exalted into the character of Lama, and in his name all the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the state are administered. In Tibet and the bordering regions of Tartary, every great district has its Lama; but the chief of these spiritual sovereigns is the Grand Lama, who resides at Lassa; next to him is the Teshoo Lama, resident at Teshoo Lombo. The latter, at the period of the English embassy, was only a year and a half old, having but just, it was supposed, had transferred to him the spirit of his deceased predecessor; yet the ambassadors were admitted to an audience, in which he acted his part with surprising propriety. As the sovereignty centres in the Lama, so the nobility is formed by the monks called jelums or gyolongs. The monastic principle exists under the Buddhist system in its utmost rigour, accompanied by the same usages of seclusion and celibacy which distinguish it in the Catholic church. These habits being adopted by the most celebrated characters both in church and state, the idea of dignity is exclusively centred in them, and those of degradation and vulgarity are attached to marriage. The priests reside in large mansions, much the handsomest in the country, and uniting the character of convents and palaces. The monks in the villages bordering on India are represented as a dirty, greasy, good-humoured, happy class of persons, who do not think it inconsistent with their vocation to carry on a good deal of worldly traffic. In the great central establishment, more dignity of character is preserved, and the obligations imposed by their situation appear to be strictly regarded. On the whole, their deportment is represented as humane and obliging; on the part of superiors massuming, and respectful on that of inferiors. Somehow or other, however, all the wealth appears to centre in them, and a general poverty pervades the rest of the community. The ceremonies of the Buddhist religion bear a striking resemblance to those of the Catholic, insomuch that many of the missionaries found it scarcely possible to discover any distinction. This has even been ascribed by some to a mixture with the votaries of the Nestorian heresy, which was spread through the East. A favourite part of the service consists of music, less remarkable for its harmony than for the employment of every means of raising as great a noise as possible. Not only are all the voices of the congregation put forth, and trained by practice to an almost stentorian pitch, but drums, trumpets, cymbals, harps, and other instruments of the most sonorous description, of three or four times the usual size, swell the chorus. One of the favourite exercises of devotion consists in producing by the hand the revolution of a painted wheel with gilded letters, on which the gale of the worsheriper is fixed. Notwithstanding the difference between the religions of this country and Hindostan, many of the temples of Tibet are crowded with Hindoo idols; and the seats of Indian pilgrimage, particularly Benares, Juggermut, and Sagar, are devotly visited by votaries from the dominions of the Grand Lama. On their part, the Hindoos pay a deep religious veneration to the lofty snowy peaks and the lonely mountain lakes of this elevated neighbourhood. Among the former, Chopularee, on the Boutan frontier, and among the latter Manasarowara, hold the pre-emminence.

Of the learning of Tibet scarcely the least notice has reached us; and yet there appears to be a good deal. The Thibetians possess the art of printing, derived, apparently, from the Chinese; since it is executed, like theirs, on fixed wooden blocks instead of movable types. The language has a large infusion of Sanscrit, and is admitted by the Chinese to be superior to theirs in sound, though its characters have not equal beauty. It is written, conformably with the practice in Europe, but contrary to that of the East, from left to right. Turner found the mausoleum of the Lama (Fig. 671) filled with high piles of sacred books. M. de Koros, a Hungarian physician, who has resided in the country, and acquired its language, discovered an encyclopaedia, in forty-four volumes; and a system of Buddhism, comprising also a general view of the arts and sciences, in 104 volumes. In those discovered among the Calkmeks, the Russians complain of impenetrable mystery; but, perhaps, such specimens might not be the most favourable. The Thibetians must have had some skill in astronomical observation, since they were acquainted with the satellites of Jupiter, and even with the ring of Saturn.
several husbands. All the brothers of a family have only one spouse among them, the privilege of selecting whom rests with the eldest. It seems to be said that a surprising degree of harmony prevails in this extraordinary kind of household: the females, who are active and laborious, enjoy higher consideration than those of India or other Oriental countries.

The ordinary buildings in Thibet are very rude, consisting of rough stones heaped together without cement, and with flat terraced roofs. The only thing like ornament consists in a small banner, composed of pieces of rag or white paper, employed as a charm. On the contrary, the religious edifices, which unite the triple character of temples, monasteries, and palaces, display in many instances an extraordinary splendour. That of Teshoo Lomboo, with its white walls, coloured wooden roofs, numerous gilded canopies and turrets, makes an appearance almost magical; and the apartments are furnished with a regard both to elegance and comfort. That of Pootala, at Lassa, is said, by M. Klaproth, to be 367 feet high, to contain 10,000 apartments filled with images in gold and silver, and to have its roof richly gilded. There, as at Teshoo Lomboo, the state apartments are at the top of the edifice, seven stories high. The villages and monasteries are generally situated about half way up the insulated rocks which diversify the table-plain of Thibet. The rock above shelters them from the cold blasts; that below affords channels by which the melted snow may run off, while in the heart of it granaries and magazines are usually excavated.

The national dress of Thibet, contrary to that of India, is composed of thick woolen cloth, and prepared sheepskins with the fleece turned inwards, forming a comfortable protection from the severity of the climate. The religious orders wear a vest of woolen cloth with red sleeves, a large mantle resembling a plaid, with a kilt, and a pair of huge boots. Silks from China, and furs from Tartary, are employed by the higher classes. A fine white silk scarf is an invariable present on occasions of ceremony, and is enclosed in complimentary letters.

The religion of Thibet does not impose the same austere abstinence in respect to food, to which the leading castes are subjected under the Hindoo system. A general renunciation of animal food, indeed, would very reluctantly be observed in a country which scarcely affords any other aliment. The heads of the church and state, however, seem to value themselves on great simplicity of diet, and abstinence from strong liquors. Tea is the universal drink, not taken, as with us, in a porous liquid form, but thickened with flour, salt, and butter, the leaves being retained, so as to form a mess by no means agreeable to an European palate.

The entire religious character of the people of Thibet is scarcely compatible with any very varied amusements; though their religious exercises, from their splendour, and their imposing effect on the senses, may almost be accounted as such. The game of chess is well understood, and frequently played.

SECT. VI.—Local Geography.

Our topographical knowledge of Thibet is extremely imperfect, and, unless at a few detached points, can scarcely be considered as having any existence. The missionaries, indeed, found in the Chinese archives a map constructed upon the information of two lamas, who had been sent by that government to make a survey of the country. It contains, at best, mere outlines and names, and is evidently far from being strictly accurate. This defect, partly owing to a civil war which broke out in the course of their mission, particularly appears in the delineation of the course of the great rivers, since the Indus and the Ganges are evidently confounded; the latter being represented as flowing along the table-land of Thibet, and penetrating the Himalayah. Our definite knowledge, therefore, is confined to the very few points which have been visited by European travellers, and to some recent extracts, made by M. Klaproth from works published in China.

Lassa, or Hassa, the capital spiritual and temporal, "the Rome of central Asia," is situated in the finest part of Thibet, an extended valley bordered by stupendous mountain ranges. The winters are severe; but from April to October, notwithstanding occasional cold blasts, the climate is warm; rice, the vine, and other fine fruits come to maturity. The city, independent of its chief ornament, which is the temple of Pootala already described, is represented as handsome and opulent. In the surrounding plain are twenty-two other temples, all richly adorned, and of which those of Sera and Birueboung are described almost to rival Pootala. The entire number of priests and monks maintained at the expense of government is stated at 84,000. Lassa is the seat of the grand or sovereign Lama, from whom all the priests and sovereigns of that denomination, throughout Thibet and Tartary, receive their investiture. He ranked, also, till lately, as the civil ruler of an extent of country about 300 miles in length, and composed of the best territory in this region; but the Chinese, as already observed, after expelling the Nepalese invaders, have established at Lassa a military commander and a civil governor, and virtually annexed it to their empire. They rule it, however, with a mild sway, leaving all the ecclesiastical institutions undisturbed, and in full possession of their ample endowments; and the tribute, conveyed by an annual embassy to
Peking, is extremely moderate. Within the district of Lasma, and to the south, is the remarkable lake of Palte, described as forming merely a belt of about four miles broad, round the large interior island which it encloses.

Toshoo Lombo is the seat of a lama, second in rank to that of Pootala, but is rendered interesting to us by its close vicinity to the Bengal frontier, from which it is only separated by the mountain district of Boutan. Two successive embassies, under Boyle and Turner, have been sent thither, and have made us tolerably acquainted with the place and neighbourhood. About 400 mansions combine to form a large monastery (fig. 672.), the walls of which are built of stone, the roofs of coloured wood, and crowned with numerous gilded canopies and turrets. According to the usual system, it is built under the shade of a high rock with a southern exposure, and looks down upon the great river Sanpo, whose course is here diversified by numerous islands, through which it flows in deep and narrow channels. The number of monks and gylongs, the sole inhabitants of this monastic capital, amounted in 1783 to 3700. Between it and the Boutan frontier is the district of Jiansu Jeung, surrounded a monastery of the same name, and containing a considerable manufactury of that thick soft woolen cloth which is generally worn in Thibet.

Mr. Moorcroft penetrated at a more westerly point into the region beyond the mountains, called there the Undes, or plains. He went with the double object of opening a trade in shawl wool, and of viewing the celebrated lake of Manasarowara, and the rivers, if any, which flowed out of it. The only entrance from India is by a narrow and most perilous path, along the precipitous sides of these loftiest mountains of the Himalayah, which give rise to the Ganges. Niti, a village of about sixteen poor houses, forms the frontier point; beyond which, on the Thibet side, the road passes over a tract whose extreme elevation is indicated by its effects on the human body,—oppressed respiration, and a giddiness threatening apoplexy; the blood, at the same time, bursting from the lips, and all the parts exposed to the air becoming red and sore. Here all the tops of the mountains are covered during the night with snow, which melts in the heat of the day, and thus fills the beds of numberless torrents. The first village reached in the Undes is Daba, perched on a number of irregular eminences, and sheltered by a hill of great height. The administration seemed in this region divided between the Lama and the Deba, or civil governor; but the Chinese commands were of paramount authority.

About eighty miles to the north of Daba lies Gertope or Gortope, the chief market for the shawl wool. This place is rather a camp than a town, consisting merely of clusters of black tents made of blankets fastened to stakes by ropes of hair, and adorned at the tops with flags formed with shreds of coloured silk and cloth. It is situated in the midst of a vast plain, covered with large flocks of sheep, goats, and yaks; not fewer, it is supposed, than 40,000.

About 100 miles to the south-east of Gortope are the lakes of Rawan Hrad and Manasarowara. The latter, though of smaller dimensions, bears a much greater name, and is an object of reverential pilgrimage from all parts of Hindostan. The few, who can overcome the tremendous obstacles encountered in the way, consider all their sins as forgiven, and an entrance into paradise as secured. The lake Manasarowara is of an oval form, about fifteen miles long and eleven broad, surrounded by cliffs of prodigious height, haunted by vast numbers of aquatic eagles and a species of grey wild geese. It is studded with numerous convenuts, above which the loftiest mountains of the Himalayah rear their snowy pinnacles. It has been generally reported that some great river, supposed once to be the Ganges, and afterwards the Indus, had its source in this lake; and even that the Sanpo issued from it in an opposite direction; but Mr. Moorcroft could not discern the least trace of any outlet. He was, however, prevented by illness from making the complete circuit in person. The Rawan Hrad was described to be four times as large as the Manasarowara, and is supposed to give rise to the Sutledge; though this, too, seems not fully ascertained. Between these lakes and Daba, the country is filled with hot springs, largely impregnated with calcareous matter. Those at Tirtapuri throw up the water, which is intensely hot, to the height of a few inches.

It appears that, though not from the lake Manasarowara, yet from some of the mountains in its vicinity, the main branch of the Indus takes its rise, and, after passing Gortope, rolls to the north-west, for more than 300 miles, till it passes Ieh or Ladauk. This province, the most westerly of those which have been included in Thibet, appears to be rude and
decidedly Tartar. The Laduaks have held themselves independent of China, and were accustomed to lay waste the Undes by frequent inroads, till the Chinese government adopted the expedient of assigning that territory in jaghire to the Grand Lama, who is held in such reverence by the Tartar tribes, that they have been induced to desist from their ravages. They have stipulated, however, that the shawl wool sent from the Undes to its market in Cashmere shall be conveyed exclusively by the route of Laduak. The town of that name is the seat of a considerable trade, being the place of transit for the caravans which come along both sides of the valley of the Indus, from Thibet, Hindostan, and Cabul. It is stated by Humboldt to bear the name of Tubet, and, perhaps, has communicated that appellation to the whole region. To the north ascend the snowy steeps of the Muztagh, or Moutztagh, whence descends a rapid stream called the Shuyook, which joins the Indus at Laduak. About 100 miles to the west, at Draus, that river is joined by another tributary from the south-east, which has been sometimes considered as the main stream.

CHAPTER X.
TARTARY.

TARTARY is the name given in Europe to that immense region extending almost entirely across Asia from the Caspian to the Eastern Ocean. It is the second of the three great belts into which that continent is portioned out. Although the name of Tartary be only partially recognised within these limits, and though, in so vast a region, much diversity of every kind must necessarily exist, the general similarity is striking.* Many parts of it are bordered, and even pervaded, by chains of mountains; and large cities, cultivated spots, and fixed societies, here and there occur. It contains also sandy deserts of considerable extent. Still the predominant characteristic is that of plains almost boundless, covered with herbage more or less abundant, and occupied by wandering and pastoral tribes, whose camps, like moving cities, pass continually to and fro over its surface.

SECT. I.—General Outline and Aspect.

The surface of Tartary consists of bold and strikingly contrasted features on an immense scale: in the west, long and lofty chains of mountains supporting very elevated table-lands; in the east, a plain of astonishing extent. The researches of Humboldt and his learned com­patriots have thrown great light on the configuration of this vast region, which was before involved in much obscurity.

Three great chains of mountains, running from east to west, traverse the wide expanse of Eastern Tartary. Two of these are liminary; one, the Koenioun, or Kuenlun, already described, which separates it from Thibet; the other the Altai, dividing it from the bleak regions of Siberia. This last remarkable chain extending eastward under the titles of the Sayanski and Yablony mountains, is prolonged almost from the sources of the Irtysch and the Obi to the Eastern Ocean. The intermediate chain, which is wholly Tartar, and divides the country into two great table- plains, is called by the Chinese the Thianchan, or the Celestial mountains. This range, hitherto imperfectly distinguished from the Altai, appears to reach its highest pinnacle to the north of Turkistan and the lake of Lop, where three peaks covered with perpetual snow are celebrated under the title of the Holy mountain (Bokhdaoela), or of "the mountain of the queen." Hence Pallas, who erroneously views this chain as part of the Altai, has given to the whole the name of Bogdo. The Turks have attached the appellation of Moutzagh, or Snowy mountain, to its western portion, where it stretches beyond the general range, and shoots a branch towards Khojend, separating the sources of the Oxus from those of the Jaxartes. Here the lofty peak termed the Throne of Soliman, and several others, appear covered with perpetual snow. Considerable mountains also occur north of the Jaxartes; but all these gradually sink into the vast low level of western Tartary. Eastward, near the frontier of China, this elevated range declines, partly into the great desert of Cobi, partly into a lower range separating that empire from the country of the Mandeshur Tartars. The boundary in that direction is formed by the transverse chain of the Khinghkanoula, beyond the meridian of Peking, which runs from south to north, and probably connects it with the branches from the Altai. At the western extremity, the plain enclosed between the Thianchan and Siberia, is believed to be entirely

* [Much confusion exists in geographical works on account of the improper extension of the term Tartar, (more correctly, Tartar,) to several entirely distinct families of nations, and even the accurate Burans confounds the Turkish Usheks with the Tartar tribes. According to Klaproth, whose knowledge of the oriental languages renders him an authority on this point, the term Tartar is applicable only to the Mongols, Calmucks, Kalkas, Elustom, and Burans, who have as little in common with the eastern Mandeshures as with the Turkish nations of the west. The Kirgisses, Kazunks or Cossacks, the Usheks who are the ruling people of Kesk, Bokhara, Khiva, and Koondooz, the Turkoums, who roam over the regions south-west of the Oxus, and the various people within the Russian limits, generally called Tartars, are of Turkish origin.—A. R.]
open, and connected with that of Independent Tartary. It is otherwise with the plateau south of the Thianchan, and separated from Thibet by the Kuenlun. The extremities of these two boundary chains are connected by a transverse one called the Beloor or Bolor, of a peculiarly lofty and rugged character, and affording only two narrow and difficult passes, by which caravans can penetrate into Eastern Tartary. This remote corner of Asia is distinguished by valuable mines of ruby, lapis lazuli, and other precious stones.

These three mighty chains enclose two great table-lands, of which the Thianchan forms the central and common boundary, whence the southern extends to the Kuenlun, and the northern to the Altai. The former, commonly called Little Bucharis, is very imperfectly explored, not having been traversed for several ages by any European; but it is known to contain several states that have risen to a considerable height of culture and civilisation. An impression has prevailed, as if this were the most elevated plain on the globe; but Humboldt observes, that a country in the fortifith degree of latitude, where cotton, the vine, and the silkworm come to maturity, can scarcely exceed in elevation the plateaux of the Mysore, Spain, and Bavaria. The northern table-land, called commonly Mongolia, is, probably, nearly similar in elevation; but, being in a more northerly situation, its climate is much more bleak and ungenial: it yields, in its best tracts, only pasturage, and includes large expanses of sandy and saline desert. The country still farther to the eastward, occupied by the Mandshur and other tribes of Tartars, is still more imperfectly known, but appears to consist, likewise, of an alternation of mountain and table-land, hearing still more decidedly a rude and pastoral character.

Western or Independent Tartary presents an aspect entirely different; and, as the one is supposed to rise higher, this is believed to sink lower than any tract on the surface of the globe. A few branches, indeed, from the lofty mountains, which give rise to the Oxus and the Jaxartes, penetrate its border; but in extending westward to the Aral and the Caspian, the surface declines lower and lower, till a great extent of it is believed to be 200 or 300 feet beneath the level of the sea. It consists generally of a vast and monotonous level, which by the scarcity of water is rendered in many places almost a desert; and the fine countries fertilised by irrigation from the great rivers, are little better than large oases amid a greater surrounding waste.

A considerable number of rivers descending from these high mountain ranges traverse the great upland plain of Tartary; but, unable, across so many barriers, to reach any of the surrounding oceans, they expand into large interior salt lakes, whose magnitude entitles them to the appellation of seas. The Caspian, indeed, the largest inland sea on the globe, is fed, not from Tartary, but by the Volga and the torrents of the Caucasus. The Aral is the receptacle of the two great characterising rivers of Tartary, the Oxus or Amoor, and the Jaxartes or Sirk, which rise in different parts of the transverse chain of the Beloor Taghi, and flowing westward through the long tracts of Independent Tartary, fall into the Aral. The Oxus seems to hold a course of about 1000 miles, and the Jaxartes of more than half that length. Along and between these streams are situated the most fertile and populous tracts, and the most powerful states, of Western Tartary. In Little Bucharis, another series of rivers, flowing eastward from Aksou, Cashgar, and Yarkand, unite in the Turim, which proceeds in the same direction towards the great lake of Lop. To the north of the Thianchan, the Ilai, a considerable stream, flows westward into the lake Balkash or Palkati. Several other rivers traverse this part of Asia, and expand into lakes. The Irysheg, Angara, and Selina, though they rise in this region, soon break the northern barrier, and roll through Siberia. Eastern Tartary is watered through nearly its whole length by the Amoor or Siglaelen, which, after a somewhat winding course, falls into the long narrow strait that separates the continent from the island of Siglaelen. It may vie in magnitude with the greatest Asiatic streams; but, from its unfavourable position, it conduces little to the interests of commerce and communication.

SECT. II.—Natural Geography.

SUBSECT. 1.—Geology.

The central and interior portion of Asia, which forms neither an immense cluster of mountains nor a continued table-land, is crossed from east to west by four grand systems of mountains; these are, the Altai, the Thian-chan, the Kuenlun, and the Himalayah. The Altai chain exhibits magnificent displays of primitive and transition rocks, which are more or less deeply covered with secondary and tertiary deposits. The metallic wealth of this range is great; for, independent of other metals, it affords annually 70,000 marks (a mark is equal to 4008 grains) of silver, and 1900 marks of gold. The geology of the system of the Thian-chan is not known; and we are equally ignorant of the geognostical structure and composition of the Kuenlun. The little that is known of the Himalayah range is noticed in our account of Hindostan. It is worthy of remark, that ancient volca-
noes, and some in a state of activity, have been met with in Central Asia. The most remarkable volcanic mountains are Pechan, Houtchou, Ouroumpetsi, Kobok, and Aral-louve. These mountains, along with other similar tracts, form a volcanic territory, the surface of which is upwards of 2500 square leagues, and which is distant 300 or 400 leagues from the sea. Vast quantities of sal ammoniac are collected in this volcanic region.

Great western Asiatic depression. The Caspian Sea and the Lake Aral occupy the lowest part of this great depression, whose surface is probably 18,000 square leagues in extent, and which lies between the Kouma, the Don, the Volga, the Yak, the Obshysyrt, Lake Akasakal, the Lower Sihon, and the Khanat of Khiva, upon the shores of the Amoor, and whose surface is situated below the level of the sea.* This very low country abounds in tertiary formations, whence proceeds melaphyre, and in debris of scoriaceous rocks, and offers to the geognostic enquirer, from the constitution of its formations, a phenomenon hitherto almost without parallel on our globe. To the south of Baku, and in the Gulf of Balkun, this aspect is materially modified by volcanic forces. On both sides of the isthmus between the Caspian and Black seas, naphtha springs and mud volcanoes are numerous. The mud volcano of Tuman is a dependency of Baku, and of the whole peninsula of Absheron. Eruptions take place where the volcanic forces encounter the least opposition. On the 27th November, 1827, crackings and tremblings of the earth, of a violent character, were succeeded, at the village of Gokmali, in the province of Baku, eight leagues from the western shore of the Caspian Sea, by an eruption of flames and stones. A space of ground, 290 toises long and 150 wide, burned for twenty-four hours without intermission, and rose above the level of the neighbouring soil. After the flame became extinct, columns of water were ejected, which still continue to flow.

SUBSECT. 2.—Botany.

The reader is referred to the remarks under this head, at page 337.

SUBSECT. 3.—Zoology.

The Zoology of this country is described with that of Thibet.

SECT. III.—Historical Geography.

The Scythians of the ancient world, the Tartars of modern times, have maintained in all ages an unchanged character. In war, their name has always been memorable. Their rapid inroad, their sudden and desultory attack, their flight which defied pursuit, enabled them to lave all attempts to effect their subjection, though made by the greatest conquerors of antiquity. In those ages, however, their power was chiefly displayed in maintaining their rude independence, and occasionally committing extensive ravages on the more favoured regions subject to the great empires. They could not, except in one instance recorded by faint tradition, reduce their conquest to any permanent subjection. The clouds of arrows which they shot flying, though they might harass, could not vanquish in regular battle, the well-armed and better disciplined troops of the great military nations. The tide of Arabian invasion, which reduced to subjection the countries beyond the Oxus, appears to have first caused a reaction. The Turks from the countries beyond the Jazartes poured down in vast bodies, and not only drove the Arabian invaders out of central Asia, but overran the greater part of Persia, which the Turkish princes of the race of Seljuk governed for the greater part of two centuries. Even after being expelled by subsequent revolutions, they found a home in Asia Minor, where, being recruited by voluntary levies, they at length succeeded in subverting the Greek empire of the East. Tartary began now to wield entire the destinies of Asia. In the thirteenth century, Zingis Khan rallied round his standard the tribes of Mongolia, of the same race with those who had formerly, under the name of Huns, and under the command of Attila, ravaged the remotest countries of the West.† After having assembled under him all the native bands, he began the conquest of China; which was completed by his successors, who afterwards added Western Tartary, and Persia with all its appendages; so that, with the exception of India, they reigned almost the supreme and sole rulers of Asia. To this immense dominion they afterwards added Russia and part of Poland, while Hoolagoo subverted the throne of the caliphs. The empire of Zingis, however, was divided among his sons, the Tartaric part forming what was called the empire of Kapschak, while distinct branches ruled over Persia and China. This order of things continued till the rise, in the fourteenth century, of the empire of Timur. This prince, taking advantage of the dissensions which reigned among the posterity of Zingis, successively overcame them,

[*] It is by no means certain that there is here any such depression of the surface. Parrot, who advanced this opinion in 1811, declares that his barometrical observations made in 1828 (Reise zum Ararat) do not indicate such a phenomenon, and is disposed to refer the results of his previous operations to some defect in his barometer. The barometrical observations of Humboldt, Rose, and Ehrenberg do not show any depression.—Am. Ed.]

[†] Klaproth seems to have proved that the Huns, Avars, and Hungarians, who committed such terrible ravages in Europe, were not Mongol, but Finnish tribes.—Am. Ed.]
and on their ruin erected a new empire, as splendid as that which he had subverted. He conquered Persia, overcame and made prisoner the proud Bajazet, and crushed for a time the rising power of the Turkish Roumelian kingdom. But India was the most splendid and permanent acquisition of the house of Timur, and, under the title of Mogul emperors, they reigned over it, long after the vicissitudes of fortune had obliged them to quit hold of their original seats.

In the last two great revolutions the conquerors had belonged to the race of Mogul or Mongol,* but the Turks, or Toorks, who had begun the career of conquest, again appeared on the field. Pouring in vast bodies from the least known part of interior Asia, they overran all the fine country on the Oxus and Jaxartes, and carried their arms as far as the grand range, the Hindoo Kohs, which separates Tartary from Cabul. They have not as yet made any attempt to pass that barrier, or to grasp any of the southern sceptres of Asia. These tribes, indeed, have never been united under one head, but have been divided into several distinct monarchies, of which the most powerful and flourishing are those of Khiva and Bokhara on the Oxus, and of Kokan on the Jaxartes.

Eastern Tartary, meantime, had effected an important revolution. China, the most valuable possession belonging to the posterity of Zingis, had remained to them after every other had been wrested out of their hands; but at length they were so far weakened by ease and prosperity, that even that timid nation succeeded in driving them out, and re-establishing a native dynasty. This was a situation, however, in which China was not destined long to remain. In the seventeenth century, the Mandzhurs succeeded in reducing it under their yoke. To the empire thus formed were speedily annexed, not only the original conquering state, but the whole of Mongolia as far as the frontier of Asiatic Russia, and all the interior countries of Tartary to Beloo Tagh and the boundary of the Uzbekis. Over all these countries China has established a very mild sway, leaving the internal administration almost wholly in the hands of the natives, and not scrupling to procure the submission and peaceable behaviour of the wandering tribes by paying rather than receiving an annual tribute.

Sect. IV.—Political Geography.

The government of all the Tartar races presents a singular phenomenon. This bold and rude people, who seemed to set the whole world at defiance, are yet subject to a despotism as complete as that established in Turkey or Hindostan. As this cannot be placed to the account of any thing timid or effeminate in their nature, it must arise from some other principle in the human mind. The Tartars do not, like the shepherds of a civilised country, lead their flocks through remote and sequestered valleys, and spend their days in peaceful seclusion. They move from place to place, usually in large bodies, united for some purpose either of war or plunder. It has been always found necessary that the leader of a military enterprise should be invested with discretionary powers. The habitual exercise of these powers, with the attachment and admiration generated in the minds of the followers whom he had guided with success in a series of such expeditions, give him, by degrees, a permanent claim to supreme authority. The same tendency is greatly aided by the superstition prevalent in a barbarous people, whose creeds, all derived from the south, are accommodated to the system of absolute power there prevalent. Under the character of mollahs and of hussars, many of the princes of Asia preach and rule. Although, however, every thing in these states owns the supreme law of the sovereign, minute inspection discovers in the inferior branches indications of aristocratic and even of popular influence. Each nation is formed by an aggregation of clans or ooroochs, the members of which are united to each other by strong hereditary ties. Over each oorooch is a chief, who, according to Mr. Frazier's account, is, in Tartary as well as in Cabul, elected in many instances by the body of the clan. This chief administers all its internal affairs, and arranges the quotas of tribute and military service exacted by the general government. The general heads of clans, however, do not unite in any assembly, or claim the right of exercising any regular control over the measures of the sovereign.

The vast tracts under Chinese dominion, comprising about two-thirds of all Tartary, are subject in a manner to despotism over despotism. The people are despotically ruled by their native prince, while he is held in complete thraldom through the military occupation of his territory by a foreign power. Yet the sway of this great empire is said to be singularly mild, and even suspicious to the rude realms over which it extends. It prevents their bloody internal contests, their roving propensities, their predatory habits; it promotes the influence of order and industry. In the flourishing districts of Cashgar and Yarkand, it is even said to have generated such an attachment among its subject tribes, that, far from feeling any inclination to shake off the yoke, they would even fight with zeal in its cause.

The military force of all the Tartar states consists of cavalry, which for the strength of

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* Timur was not a Mongol, but a Turk. The princes of Delhi, his successors, commonly called the Grand Mogul, were, therefore, of Turkish and not of Mongolian descent. The invaders, who drove out the descendants of Timur from Turkestan, were, as is stated in the text, Turkish tribes.—As. Ed.
the horses, the hardihood of the troops, their endurance of fatigue, and even their valour in a tumultuary shock of battle, are scarcely equalled, perhaps, in the world. If Bokhara, Kokan, and the other kingdoms of Independent Tartary, were united under one head, they would muster about 300,000 such horsemen, well mounted and well conditioned, and might renew the ages of Tartar conquest. Yet a mere tumultuary host of this nature, without infantry and without artillery, would probably, if brought into contact with a force either European, or trained after the manner of Europe, be wholly unequal to the contest.

As Tartary is divided into a number of separate states, connected only by the general similarity of institutions and habits, the details of the power, revenue, and administration of each, so far as they can be ascertained, must be given under the local section.

Sect. V.—Productive Industry.

Tartary, with some local exceptions, is a poor country, scarcely affording to a thin population the mere necessaries of life. Articles of luxury it does not produce; and it affords few others for which they could be received in exchange. Whatever of splendour has shone in the courts of Karakorum or Samarcand, has been wrested, by the sword, from their effeminate possessors in southern Asia. Conquest, indeed, no longer enriches Tartary; but the plunder of caravans, or the booty swept together in long chepaas, or forays, forms still the chief source of wealth to its petty khans and chieftains.

In regard to agriculture, although in some favoured districts there are fixed tribes who cultivate the ground, the general aspect of modern as of ancient Scythia, is that of a pastoral region. The horse is the wealth and strength of Tartary. Those, however, for which this region is so famous, display neither the elegance, the airy lightness, nor the almost preternatural swiftness of the Arabian steed. They are inferior in these respects even to those of Persia and the Deccan. They are of great weight, with long bodies and large limbs. Their merit consists in what is called bottom; in the power of making immense journeys, without pause or fatigue; and by this quality they wear out, at the long run, their swifter adversaries. According to Mr. Fraser, their powers of endurance on these long expeditions are by no means promoted by setting out in good condition. On the contrary, they are studiously reduced, till they become almost skeletons, and their flesh feels like marble; after which they will perform continued journeys of seventy or eighty miles a day without injury. They form a regular article of trade, and are in great demand for the cavalry of Persia and India. They are used, however, not merely as instruments of war and plunder, but also for economical purposes, and particularly for food. Horse-flesh, from one end of Tartary to the other, is the standing dish; and mare's milk, fermented into a liquor called koumis, is almost the only liquor used for convivial purposes. The other animals of Tartary are more local, and chiefly borrowed from the adjoining districts. Eastern Tartary has in the south, the yak, the goat, and the musk-rat of Tibet; in the north, the fur-bearing animals of Siberia; but neither in such perfection as in their own proper districts.

The vegetable productions which are the objects of culture in Tartary do not materially differ from those of Europe: in the southern and milder tracts are raised wheat, barley, and millet; while the ruder northern districts, particularly of Mandshur Tartary, scarcely yield any grain except oats. On the declivities, however, of the great chain which separates Tartary from Siberia, are found some valuable and peculiar products; the rhubarb, so useful as a medicine, and which has been transplanted into Europe, without attaining the same excellence; and the ginseng, which, though it has never been valued among us, is in China and Tartary held of sovereign virtue.

Manufactures cannot be said to have any national existence in Tartary, though here, as everywhere else, the women produce some coarse fabrics for internal consumption. Among these, the principal are felt, coarse woolens, and skins, particularly of sheep, variously prepared.

Commerce, over this vast region, is on a scale not quite so limited; resting, indeed, on other resources than its own exports and imports, which are of very small amount. These wide open plains have in all ages formed the route of communication between Eastern and Western, and of late between Northern and Southern, Asia. Notwithstanding the multiplied obstacles of mountains, deserts, snows, and the more deadly impediment of barbarous nations devoted to plunder, caravans proceeding by this route have always exchanged the products of Persia and Hindostan for those of China. To avert the perils that await them, they proceed in large bodies, well armed, and purchase the protection of the princes through whose territories they pass, and who, indeed, if at all enlightened, seek rather to encourage this system of transit. Even in the second century, we find Ptolemy describing an immense caravan route across Asia from Byzantium to the frontier of China, and which probably existed long before, though it escaped the notice of earlier writers. This route varies with the disturbed or peaceful state of the countries which it traverses; but its favourite points of rendezvous seem to be Herat (ancient Aria), Balkh (Bactria), and, above all, Yarkand situated on the line which separates Eastern from Western Tartary. The tract beyond may be considered almost as unknown land, since it has been but loosely described by one or two
travellers, whose narratives are several centuries old. They mention Khoten, Koutché, Turfan, and Hani, as important points to be passed; but this route is rendered arduous by the necessity of crossing the great desert of Shamo or Cobi, which extends here for a vast distance from north-east to south-west. Of late, the Russians have opened a great trade across Independent Tartary. They have annual caravans from Orenburg to Bokhara, a commercial route, which Britain vainly attempted to open, for several centuries; and these caravans, it is said, consist frequently of 30,000 men. They frequent also the fairs of Yarkand, and some of them have even been seen in those of Thibet. From all that part of Tartary, however, which is subject to China, they are rigidly excluded. The only communication between the empires is on the frontier of Siberia, at the two towns of Mainatchin on the Chinese, and Kinkhta on the Russian side. Here the commodities of the respective empires are exchanged, under those strict regulations by which China limits all her intercourse with foreigners.

The chief trade peculiar to Tartary consists in its horses, the superior qualities of which have already been noticed. There is a small, stout, hard-working breed, selling from 5£ to 10£ a piece, exported to Cabul, and some parts of India, for purposes of husbandry. The large war-horse of Turkestan has been always in request for the cavalry, of which the armies in Hindostan and all the south of Asia chiefly consist. The demand, however, has been much diminished in India by the prevalence of the English, whose troops consist chiefly of infantry, and whose officers prefer Arabian horses.

SECT. VI.—Civil and Social State.

The population of the tribes roving over the boundless plains of Tartary cannot be estimated from any precise data, nor can a loose conjecture on the subject be hazarded with much chance of coming near the truth. The population of Bokhara has been stated at 3,000,000, that of Kokan at the same, that of Bakh at 1,000,000. Badakshan, Khiva, the Kirghiz territory, and other minor divisions, may raise the whole of Independent Tartary, perhaps, to somewhat above 10,000,000. In regard to what is called Chinese Tartary, we are destitute of all positive data; but if we suppose the same ratio to prevail between the extent and population, we must allow to this portion double the number. Against this allowance, it may be argued, that Eastern Tartary contains immense tracts of desert, and thinly inhabited country. It is not certain, however, that these are more extensive than in its western regions; and our accounts of it, which must be confessed to be imperfect, represent various districts as fertile and highly cultivated. Under these views, we might guess the entire population of Tartary at about 30,000,000.

The Mongols and the Turks, or Toorks, the two leading races among the various tribes who inhabit this immense region, are distinguished by numerous peculiarities from each other. The Mongols, as celebrated in the annals of conquest and ravage, both under their own name and the ancient name of Huns, occupy chiefly the pastoral districts bordering on the north upon the great desert of Shamo. Their visage is strange, and almost deformed; broad, square, and flat, with high cheek-bones, the nose peculiarly depressed, small and keen black eyes, bending obliquely towards the nose, thick lips, and a scanty provision of black hair upon the head, eyebrows, and beard. Their persons are somewhat diminutive, spare, muscular, and active, and the horses on which they continually ride are more distinguished for swiftness than for size and beauty. The Calmucks, the Kalkas, the Elutha, the Burats, may be considered as branches of the great Mongol family. The Turks, celebrated for their early conquest of Persia, and for their possession of Constantinople, are a much handsomer race. They have short and stout persons; broad foreheads, high cheek-bones, small but not twisted eyes, and black hair. Their features cannot thus be considered as perfect, according to European ideas; but as they have none of the Mongol deformities, and, instead of the dark-yellow tint of the latter, have clear and ruddy complexions, their beauty is celebrated by the poets of Asia. They are divided chiefly into the Uzbeks, the Turkomans, the Kuzzaaks. The Mandarin are represented by some as exhibiting the Mongol features, with a fairer complexion; but, according to Pallas, they belong to the same class as the Tunguses. Although there be this variety in the external appearance of these races, yet the same wandering, pastoral, equestrian habits; the division into tribes; and the absolute sway of their khans, unites in fixing a similar character on all the nations who bear the name of Tatar.

Of the national character of the Tartars very various reports have been given, according to the relation under which they have presented themselves. Their delight is in war, and there is no nation that wages it on a more dreadful and barbarous system. The "scourge of God," the "terror of mankind," are the appellations by which they are known to the neighbouring empires. General extermination, without regard to age or sex, is what they consider themselves entitled to inflict on all who attempt resistance; and this is mitigated only when a profit can be made by carrying off captives, and selling them as slaves. It was said of the armies of Zingis and Timour, that they saw before them a fruitful kingdom, and left behind them a solitary desert. It was their boast, with regard to some of the proudest capitals, that they had reduced them to such a state, that a horse might pass over their site
without stumbling. A picture greatly the reverse of this has been drawn by those who have observed the Tartars, even when they were spreading elsewhere the widest desolation, displaying, in their domestic life and their intercourse with each other, the simplicity and amiable virtues of the pastoral age. They are cordial, kind, and hospitable; quarrels are rare, seldom produce fighting, and scarcely ever bloodshed. Compared with the Hindoos and Chinese, they are frank, sincere, and honest; and though they make even peaceable strangers feel the influence of a national pride, nourished by the recollection of so many victories, yet they protect them, and treat them with courtesy.

Two religions divide Tartary, and are professed with zeal through different portions. All its eastern regions acknowledge the Shaman doctrines, and the supremacy of the Grand Lama; while, even since the commencement of the eighth century, when the countries beyond the Oxus were conquered by the arms and instructed by the preaching of the caliphs, they have remained devoted to the Mussulman creed. Under the former system, the little tribes of Eastern Asia have minor lamas, exercising a mingled spiritual and temporal jurisdiction, though not holding a supreme sway in either capacity. The original Buddhist system, also, here seems combined with ruder features; particularly magic, sorcery, and similar modes of deluding the ignorant wanderers of the desert. In the west, again, Mahometanism seems to be professed in greater purity, and with stronger bigotry, than in almost any other of the numerous regions where it reigns.

The learning of Tartary is little known, and is at best only a reflected light from the southern regions of Persia, Hindostan, and China. Yet the country is by no means involved in that thick darkness which the name Tartar suggests to an European ear. In all the Mahometan states, some of the first elements of knowledge are very widely diffused; and the few great cities contain colleges for instruction in the sciences, on as extensive a scale as those of Europe. Unfortunately, the sciences there taught form a contracted and monastic circle, nearly similar to what was professed in Europe during the middle ages. Commentaries upon the Koran take the lead of every other class of literature; and as that rude composition is the standard of Mussulman law as well as theology, the science of jurisprudence can never assume any liberal aspect. Astronomy appears merely under the character of astrology; medicine has lost all the lustre it possessed in the days of Avicenna; and, perhaps, the only solid parts of knowledge retained of those which were taught in the schools of Bagdad, are arithmetic, and the branches of practical mathematics.

Architecture, in a country of which the greater part of the population is movable, can never be expected to make much progress. The great capitals are decorated with handsome edifices, on the model of those of Persia; but none of these have attained any great celebrity. The regular abode of all native Tartars is the tent, carried from place to place with the tribe or encampment. The Tartar tent is much more commodious than that formed of black cloth, which is used in Cabul or Thibet. It is framed of close lath or wickerwork, covered with felt, and terminating upwards in the shape of a dome. These, which are often large and lofty, are placed on wagons, and conveyed from place to place, suggesting the idea of a moving city. A camp or migratory village is called onool, and consists usually of from twenty to fifty tents.

The dress of the Tartars differs materially from that of Southern Asia, and is chiefly adjusted for the production of that comfortable warmth which the climate renders desirable. The Turks wear a cotton shirt and trousers, a silk-napped tunic, tied with a girdle, and over it a gown of broad cloth or felt. The national head-dress is a large white turban, drawn, in general, over a calpak, or pointed cap. Boots are worn at all times by all classes, poor and rich, men and women, but the rich have them of a sort of light leather, without soles or heels, forming rather a species of leather stocking, over which shoes must be worn when they go out. Every man has a knife hanging from his girdle. The women wear nearly the same garments as the men, but longer, and throw a robe of silk or cotton over all. They delight in gold and silver ornaments, and plait their hair into a long queue, like the Chinese. In Mongolia, sheepekins, dressed in a peculiar manner, with the hair inwards, are considered the most comfortable protection against the cold; and some furs, though not of the finest kind, from either Tartary or Siberia, are added.

The favourite food of the Tartars is horse-flesh, so repugnant to the taste of all other nations. The varied delicacies which cover the tables of the great in Persia and Hindostan are considered by them as very insipid when compared with a stew of this coarse aliment. Horses there, as oxen with us, are regularly fattened for the tables of the rich; but their limited number, and the higher services to which a large proportion must be put, place this delicacy, in a great measure, beyond the reach of the poor. They can enjoy it only occasionally in winter, when the scarcity of pasture obliges the camp to kill such as they are unable to subsist. Among the wandering tribes, however, an animal diet must preponderate, both from its abundance and the want of any other; but, in the absence of the above most valued kind, recourse is had chiefly to mutton. To the horse, the Tartars are also indebted for their most national and characteristic liquor. The milk of the mare is fermented into an intoxicating drink, called koumiss, which is their favourite beverage, and which physicians
have described as really very palatable and wholesome. The stern precept of the Koran is, by a Tartar interpretation, not considered as applying to this exhilarating fluid, in which the Turks, notwithstanding general habits of sobriety, indulge nearly to the utmost extent in which it can be procured. They use also bouza, a thin acidulous liquor, made from grain, and which is likewise much drunk in Arabia and Northern Africa. They breakfast on tea, which, after the mode of Thibet, they make into a thick liquid, with milk, flour, and butter.

Sect. VII.—Local Geography.

Subsect. 1.—Mandshuria.

The most eastern division of Tartary, or the country of the Mandshurs, forming the interval between China and Siberia, and bordered by the Eastern Pacific, is still less known than most of its other regions. We scarcely know it at all, unless by Chinese descriptions, which are in general meagre and pompous. It presents generally a different aspect from those immense and naked plains which characterise the centre of Asia. It appears to be diversified by rugged and broken mountain ranges, covered with thick forests, and separated by valleys, many of which, notwithstanding the coldness of the climate, possess considerable fertility. Their recesses are filled with wild beasts of a formidable character, and in such crowds as to render travelling dangerous. Wheat is raised only in the most favoured spots; the prevalent culture is that of oats, elsewhere scarcely an Asiatic grain. The product most valued abroad is the ginseng, the universal medicine in the eye of the Chinese, who boast that it would render man immortal were it possible for him to become so. It grows upon the sides of the mountains. The shores of the Eastern Ocean appeared to the Pousse covered with magnificent forests, but abandoned to nature; a singular circumstance in a region so closely bordering on the over-cultivated and crowded empire of China. The few inhabitants do not even hold any intercourse with its civilised districts; but subsist on fishing, and live entirely independent, but display a mild and excellent disposition. The great river Amoor, after rising in Mongolia, traverses the whole of this province, receiving from the south the large tributaries of the Usuri and the Songari. It abounds with fish of the finest kinds, of which the sturgeon, in particular, is found in matchless abundance and perfection. The lands upon this shore ought also, it should seem, to possess ample capacities of culture. Yet they are occupied merely by tribes of poor and wandering fishermen, and for a great extent, near the mouth, are almost a complete desert. The very few towns that exist are inhabited chiefly by Chinese, defended by Tartar garrisons. North of the Amoor, the country is Siberian, and is filled with a race of hunters, who find many valuable fur-bearing animals, among which the sable is conspicuous.

The Mandshurs are by no means wholly destitute of civilisation. They possess even a language and writing, essentially different from that of the Chinese, or of any other nation of central Asia. The language is distinguished by an excess of smoothness, which forbids two consonants ever to come in contact with each other; by a copiousness almost unrivalled; by the very varied inflections, particularly of the verb. Philologists have traced in it analogies with the languages of Southern Asia, and even with the cognate dialects of Europe. This refinement, however, seems to belong rather to some other era, or to have been imported from some other region; for the impression which Sir George Staunton received of these Tartars, immediately after he had crossed the Great Wall, was that of a very rude people. Their persons were tall and robust; but their countenances were less expressive than those of the Chinese; their manners were comparatively rude and unpolished; the same strict order and police were not maintained; and beggars, who are never tolerated in the Chinese empire, swarmed on all the roads. They were so rational as not to have adopted the ridiculous and injurious system of cramping the female feet. On the whole, though the Tartar lords hold a high and even ruling place at the court of China, the nation in general is depressed under the ascendency of the conquered state, all whose institutions have been adopted entire by the government.

The province of Mandshur Tartary, immediately adjacent to China, is called Kirin-Oula, with a capital of the same name. The most remarkable place, however, is Zheholl or Geliol, the summer residence and hunting-seat of the Chinese emperors. The gardens here are most superb and extensive, occupying a large expanse of ground tastefully ornamented. The province, however, which is reported to contain the greatest extent of productive land is that of Shin Yang, or Lenotong, bordering on Corea. There are cities bearing each of these names, and of considerable extent. This district is even reported to carry on the manufacture of a species of ornamental paper, in request at Peking. The northern region, watered by the Amoor, bears the title of Tzitzikar, or Mandshur Proper, being the original seat of that conquering race. Its towns, Tzitzikar, Ningouta, and Saghlicen Oula, are poor, and of middling extent. On the Upper Amoor is the district of Solon, inhabited by a rude race of Tartars, who take their name from it; and farther to the east is Daouria, peopled by a mingled race of Mandshurs and Mongols.

The eastern coast of Tartary does not, at any point, face the open expanse of the Pacific.
It has, parallel to it, a chain of great islands, or rather a continuous extent of continent, penetrated at different points by narrow straits, and extending for about twenty degrees from north to south. The three greatest of these islands compose the empire of Japan, the importance of which claims a separate description, and which is divided from Asia by a broad expanse of sea. Japan has only a narrow strait between it and the island of Joyce or Matsuai, which, with the neighbouring one of Saghalien, suggested to the early navigators the idea of an immense extent of continent stretching indefinitely to the east and north. The observations of Perouse and Broughton have established it to be an island, extending about 150 miles in length, and 80 in breadth. All the level coasts adjacent to their own territory have been occupied and cultivated by the Japanese; but the rugged tracts in the centre and north are still held by the natives. A strait, as narrow as that which parts Joyce from Japan, interposes on the northern side, between it and the long and narrow island of Saghalien, which, for a space of about 700 miles, faces the eastern coast of Tartary. It has now, indeed, become almost more than doubtful whether it be an island or not. European navigators have traced on the south what is called the Channel of Tartary, and on the north the bay of De Castrics; but they have left in the middle a space unexplored, where the natives report that Saghalien is joined to the continent by a sandy isthmus, so small that fishermen drag their boats across it. This isthmus, if it exist, is perhaps of recent formation, and is an alluvial deposit formed by the Amoor, which here terminates its course. Although the maps of the Chinese and Japanese represent Saghalien as entirely insular, yet the want of current, and the freshness of the water on the south side of the suspected isthmus, seem to give a greater weight to the contrary hypothesis.

The inhabitants of Saghalien, and the natives of Joyce, consist of a peculiar race, called the Ainos, who possess a physical character entirely distinct from the inhabitants of the opposite coast of Tartary. Travellers, content with remarking this, have given very few particulars of their actual outward appearance, except that their persons are covered with a more ample growth of hair than those of any other race; a fact which, though Krusenstern has doubted it, seems to have a great predominance of testimony in its favour. Their occupations rank them among the rudest classes of human society. They are unacquainted either with agriculture or pasturage, and derive their sole subsistence from fishery or the chase. Yet Perouse remarked among them a degree of reflection and information superior to that which distinguishes the bulk of the people in a civilized country. He did not consider, that these precocious and adventurous employments, requiring invention and ingenuity to be always on the stretch, give much more scope to the intellectual faculties than the routine task of an European labourer. Their moral attributes he praises in still more unqualified terms; representing them as mild, peaceable, generous, and warmly attached to each other. The venire is more brilliant than on the opposite coast of Tartary, and the sea abounds in an extraordinary degree with fish, among which whales in considerable numbers reach the coast of Joyce. They did not appear, however, to possess any materials for trade with nations at a distance so immense as those of Europe. Their only intercourse is with Japan, and with the country to a considerable height up the Amoor.

SUBSECT. 2.—Mongolia.

On the western limit of Mandshur Tartary commence the almost boundless plains roamed over by the tribes of Mongolia, who extend for nearly fifty degrees of longitude as far as the Lake of Balkash or Pacleiti. In the central portion of Tartary, a principal feature is the Desert of Shamo, or Cobi, which extends almost entirely across it. According to the best of these imperfect accounts which we yet possess, it reaches about 2000 miles from southwest to north-east, separating like a great inland sea the countries upon which it borders. According to the report of Marco Polo, it is crossed, like the African deserts, by caravans with camels; and the real terrors of the journey are heightened by superstitious alarms, natural to those who find themselves bewildered in the depth of such an awful solitude. The traveller who chanced to straggle from the main body imagined that he heard a sound, sometimes like that of the march of a caravan, sometimes like that of music and warlike instruments echoing through the air; when, following these delusive indications, he was led astray into some perilous, and, perhaps, fatal situation. The only precise account of it is given by the Russian embassies to China, particularly that of Lange, narrated by Bell. Though a month was spent in crossing it, the breadth does not appear to have exceeded 400 miles. The ground was covered with short and thin grass, which, owing, perhaps, to the saline quality of the soil, maintained a greater number of cattle than could have been supposed. There is, indeed, a considerable number of springs and lakes, but the water is so brackish as to be scarcely potable; so that a single pure spring which occurred, tasted as delicious as burgundy or champagne. A space of twenty miles in extent immediately beyond the Chinese wall was composed of shifting and sinking sand, formed into waves twenty feet high, and the crossing of which was an operation of the greatest labour. The ground along this tract is covered with pebbles of considerable beauty, and even value.

All the habitable parts of this desert, with the tracts to the north of the Thianchan, cover-
ed with rank and luxuriant pastures, are traversed by the tribes or standards of the Mongols. This terrible race are no longer in a condition to pour over Asia the tide of conquest and desolation. They are split into a number of petty tribes separate from each other, generally hostile, and incapable of combining for any common object. They have been made to own the sovereignty of China; but that state, unable either to maintain garrisons or exact tribute, leaves them much to themselves, and requires little more than that they shall leave it unmolested. Even this is not accomplished without the payment of a small salary or tribute to their chiefs. There is not even any effective prohibition against the practice of waging private war with each other; though, when this threatens to reach any serious or perilous height, a force is levied and sent out, by whose influence terms of accommodation are dictated. The physical features of the Mongols have been already described. In their character they are rough, roaming, warlike; but in domestic intercourse, frank, cheerful, and hospitable. Their main pride consists in the management of their horses, in which they appear indeed to show a wonderful degree of dexterity. They do not attempt to rival the weight and size of the Turkish horses, but prefer those which are swift, hardy, and serviceable. They have trained them to stop in their most rapid career, and to face, without fear, the fiercest animals.

As the luxuries of horse-flesh and koumiss can be commanded only to a limited extent, they supply their place with cows, and with that species of sheep having huge tails composed entirely of fat, which prevails in many parts of Asia and Africa. For amusement, they hunt deer and a few hares; but find little opportunity for fishing. Amidst all the privations to which they are exposed, they manifest a gay and cheerful disposition, and take delight in various kinds of sports and exercises. Complete converts to the religion of Buddhism, they have lamas, feigned or fancied to be immortal, and each of whose places is immediately supplied after death by another, believed to be a new body animated by the same soul. They have also gheinins (gylonks), or monks, by whom the religious ceremonies are conducted; and these ceremonies are observed, as in Thibet, to bear a close resemblance to those celebrated under the superstitions forms of Christianity. This ecclesiastical nobility, however, though revered and handsomely supported, is far from enjoying the same exclusive dignity as in Thibet. The warlike chiefs hold that pre-eminence which is usual among such rude tribes.

The Calkums are by much the most numerous among the branches of the Mongols, and they occupy all the western portion of the region now described as Mongolian. In form, manners, and religion, they present scarcely any distinction. They appear, however, to have a more independent and regular form of government than any other Tartar nation. The khans of the different congers, or tribes, meet in a general council, to elect the great khan of the Calkums. They boast of their country as that whence issued the Huns, who acted so celebrated a part in the overthrow of the Roman empire; and they even claim the great Zingis as their countryman. In the end of the seventeenth century, they had made themselves completely the ruling people, and masters of all central Tartary, including the southern countries of Cashgar and Khotten. Being attacked, however, by the Mongols, their rivals, confederated with the whole force of the Chinese empire, they were unable to sustain the unequal contest, which ended in the subjection to China of all Tartary east of the Belor. The Mongols, though sharing the common subjection, became pre-eminent over their rivals, many of whom, unable to brook this double servitude, sought refuge in Asiatic Russia; but the mildness of the Chinese sway has since induced a large proportion to return. The whole number occupying their original seats is now supposed to amount to about 1,000,000.

Other branches of the same widely extended race are the Kalkas, called sometimes the Black Mongols, whom Gerbillon describes as, next to the Hottentots, the dirtiest and ugliest race he ever saw; their neighbours on the south, the Eluths, dwelling round the great lake of Kokonor; and the Sifans, divided into Black and White, who occupy the head of the great rivers of China, on whose sands are found some grains of gold.

**Subsect. 3.—Little Bucharis, or Chinese Turkestan.**

The region to the south of Thianchan, and of the Great Desert, although of vast extent, and including some of the finest tracts of central Asia, has remained to the moderns almost utterly unknown. The narratives of Marco Polo and Geoz, the only Europeans who are recorded to have passed through it, and the Tartur histories, afford only a few scattered notices, which can be combined into nothing like a regular survey. The appellation of Tangut appears to have been extensively, though in a somewhat vague way, applied to this region, which has also been called Little Bucharis and Eastern Turkestan. According to the report, however, of our late Persian travellers, the Chinese, having driven out the native princes, have incorporated the greater part of it into the kingdom of Cashgar. This kingdom, in its original limits, forms a wide plain to the east of the great chain of the Belor. It is described as superior in beauty and fertility to any other part of Tartary, and as rivaling the finest tracts in southern Europe. It is watered by numerous streams, descending from the high border chain; the fields, carefully cultivated, are covered with large crops of grain, and the fruits are peculiarly excellent. It is a tract redeemed, as it were, from the
general desolation of Tartary. At present, Cashgar appears to be flourishing under the Chinese sway. There, and in Yarkand, both Mahometan countries, the magistrates of that profession administer justice, and carry on all the internal affairs, while the Chinese military officers called amdans collect the revenue, and defend the country against foreign invasion. The exclusion of strangers does not seem so very rigid at this frontier as at all the others. The boundary line is guarded by a chain of military posts, at which every package brought by the caravans is carefully examined; and permission is then given to proceed to Cashgar and Yarkand, where duties of no very oppressive amount are exacted.

Cashgar is described as a handsome and ancient city, the seat of government, and, though not the chief emporium of this part of Asia, yet a seat of considerable trade. A fine river from the west passes by it, and a lead mine in the neighbourhood affords employment to a considerable number of the inhabitants. Yarkand is universally allowed to be a larger and still handsomer city. Though destroyed by Abubeker, the grandson of Timur, it speedily regained its former prosperity, and now contains 50,000 inhabitants. Its situation, indeed, seems to ensure its continuance as the centre of the inland trade of Asia, the grand medium of communication between the east and the west, the north and the south, of that great continent. Yarkand, accordingly, is a place of immense resort, and filled with numerous caravanserais for the reception of strangers. A handsome street runs the whole length of the city, entirely filled with shops and warehouses, which are kept by the Chinese, who sit on benches in front. There is also a considerable number of madrasses, or colleges. The country around is described as almost unrivalled, particularly for its finely watered gardens and the excellence of its fruits.

Some other countries and cities are enumerated by Mr. Fraser and other writers as situated in Little Bucharia: Khotoen, Aksou, Koutche, Eelah, Turfian, Kamehar, Elchi, Karia, Gunna, Kargalie, Yengu, and Hissar. Khotoen is celebrated in the early histories and travels as an independent kingdom of considerable extent and importance. Its territory, besides the ordinary products, is said to contain a species of marble and jasper, beautifully variegated with flowers, leaves, and other objects, which afford a material of profitable exchange with China. Its temperate climate and fruitful soil are marked by the production of the vine and the silkworm. At a period anterior to the Christian era, the doctrines and learning of Buddhism are said to have been introduced into Khotoen, and to have flourished there till they were driven out by Mahometan conquest. At present, under Chinese sway, both religions are equally tolerated. Aksou is also described by Fraser as the capital of an extensive district subject to Cashgar. Humboldt describes it as the seat of an active commerce, and gives general caravan routes, which pass through it in different directions. Eelah was the Cambuck capital, when that people were the rulers of central Tartary; it is perhaps the Culs of Goze, described by him as a small but well fortified city, considerably to the east of Cashgar, but still in dependence upon it. Burns assigns it 75,000 inhabitants. Turfian is also mentioned by him as a large and strong city, the capital of a considerable country, governed by a branch of the royal family of Cashgar. No recent mention is made of Peym, or Peym, which, according to Marco Polo, ought to be within the above limits. Further to the east, that traveller has described the country of Lop, in which was a great lake where the river of Cashgar found its termination. The city of Lop formed then a rendezvous of the caravans, that here found the most favourable opportunity of crossing the Great Desert on their way to China. Beyond it, and close on the Chinese frontier, is Khamil, called Hami in the Chinese maps, represented as a peculiarly fine country, inhabited by a learned and polished people, immersed, however, in dissolute and voluptuous habits. The Mahometan religion, which has been established through Cashgar and all its dependencies, gives place here to the ecclesiastical sway of the Lama. Peculiar superstitions, the remains, probably, of an earlier system, are said to prevail in this part of Tartary. The dead are often embalmed in spices, and kept for several years till the astrologer has determined the planet under which they ought to be interred. There are lodged along with them in the tomb painted representations of men, women, cattle, money, and other objects, which it is imagined may be useful to them in the other world; a remnant, probably, of the custom prevalent among many savage tribes who bury these objects themselves along with their chiefs.

SUBSEC. 4.—Turkestan or Independent Tartary.

Independent Tartary, commencing at the great boundary chain of the Beloor, reaches westward to the Caspian, and is bounded on the south by Persia, and on the north by Asiatic Russia. Its chief divisions are the kingdom of Bokhara and that of Koken, both fertile and populous when compared with the wastes by which they are surrounded; both famed and ancient seats of empire. They are situated upon, and derive their fertility from, the two great central rivers; one from the Oxus, Gilon, or Amoor, the other from the Jaxartes, Nihon, or Sirr. These states, with the khanat of Khiva, also an important power, occupying the lower Gilon, are ruled by Uzbek chiefs.

Bokhara forms a fertile oasis, extending about 200 miles along the northern bank of the
Oxus, at about the middle of that north-westerly course by which it flows to join the Aral. The principal cities and cultivated lands, however, are on the river Zurufshan, or Kohuk.

The population, by the last Russian embassy, is reckoned at 2,500,000, of which a great proportion consists of fixed inhabitants, cultivating the ground, or inhabiting towns.* The bulk of these, over all Independent Tartary, as well as Cashgar and Cabul, consist of a race called Taujiks, apparently descended from an original native people reduced to subjection by the conquering tribes who at present bear sway; and the name is now generally applied to all who have adopted the same pacific and industrious habits. The military force of the kingdom consists of 20,000 horse and 4,000 infantry, besides about 50,000 militia. The present sovereign, a warlike prince, has wrested Balkh from the chief of Koondow; but the only expeditions in which his troops engage at present are for the purpose of plunder, chiefly over the vast plains of Khorsan. On these occasions, the party often ride for several hundred miles without intermission, till they have reached the city which is to be the object of attack. They study to arrive in the night, and watch the moment in the morning when the gates are opened and the inhabitants come out. The invaders then rush in, set fire to the place, kill all that resist, and carry the rest into slavery. Such proceedings, indeed, arise rather from the predatory habits of the Tartars, than from any peculiar impulse from the sovereign, in whose eyes, however, they are sanctioned by the consideration, that the Persians are heretical Shiitas, and therefore, by the holy and orthodox Sunites, are justly devoted to bondage. The country is well governed, peaceful, and flourishing. Cultivation is only limited by the want of water, and by the naked character of the vast plains which enclose Bokhara. A considerable inland trade is carried on with India, Persia, and, above all, with Russia. From Astrachan, two annual caravans come by way of Orenburg, each accompanied by 4000 or 5000 camels. In winter, the Oxus being frozen, they are enabled to pass it over the ice; but much hardship is experienced in consequence of the desolate character of the route, where often neither provisions nor water are to be found for several successive days. The imports from Russia are metals, arms, cutlery, cloths, and other European manufactures; the returns are in silk, cotton, hides, rubies, and turquoises.

According to Mr. Elphinstone, and the late Russian mission, the city of Bokhara contains 70,000 or 80,000 inhabitants. Burnes estimates the population at 150,000. As usual in Asiatic cities, the habitations of the ordinary citizens are poor; but there is a number of mosques, and madrassehs, or colleges, handomely built of stone. Bokhara is a great seat of Mahometan learning, such as it is, and government is a liberal encourager of it. The city contains eighty madrasses, each attended by from 40 to 300 students. To every madrasse there is a lecturer; and these, with the students, are supported by funds consisting chiefly in the rent of lands or houses, appropriated to that purpose by Mahometan zeal and charity.

Further up the Kohuk, and about 200 miles to the east of Bokhara, is Samarcand. Its walls still enclose a circuit of forty-eight miles: the beauty of its environs, and the delicacy of its fruits, are still extolled in the same lofty terms which were used by the writers of the middle ages. This renowned capital of Asia is now little better than a mass of ruins. Murnd Bey, however, one of the princes, having fixed his residence there, has of late done something for its revival. Here is still found the celebrated observatory of Ulugh Beg, and the mausoleum of Timur, paved with green stone adorned with jewels. It is watched by a few attendants, who were liberally supported by the court of Delhi; but, since the fall of the Mogul empire, they are left in a state of extreme poverty.

The region of Bokhara, situated on the north side of the mountains, forms part of the vast plain which extends to the Altai, and, being ruled by Uzbek chefs, it must properly be considered as belonging to Independent Tartary. Under the name of Bactria, this country has, from the remotest antiquity, been celebrated in the annals of the East. It has been, in a manner, the link connecting together the civilized and uncivilized worlds of Asia; the main point of union between them. Under the auspices of Alexander, a Greek kingdom of Bactria was formed, which continued for several centuries, and even after its fall retained some marked traces of civilization. Under the Roman empire, when a commercial route had been opened across Asia as far as China, Bactria was the grand rendezvous, before entering the bleak regions of Tartary. When Asia yielded to the dreadful sway of the Mongol warriors, whose southward track to conquest lay across the Bactrian territory, that unfortunate district became exposed to accumulated disasters. It is subject at present to the king of Bokhara. Bakh, the ancient Bactria, possesses in Asia the fame of almost unrivalled antiquity, which seems to ascend even to the age of Semiramis. It is commonly called, in the East, the mother of cities. It retains, however, a mere shadow of its ancient grandeur. Only one corner of the wide circuit which its walls enclose is now inhabited, and, according to Burnes, it does not contain more than 2000 souls. The surrounding district is flat, fertile, and well cultivated, containing about 300 villages. This fertility is produced, in a great measure, by a grand reservoir formed of the numerous waters which

*Burnes estimates the population of Bokhara, in which he includes Balkh, at 1,000,000 souls.—Am. Ed."

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descend from the southern side of the Paropamisian mountains; a single canal derived from which is said to yield a revenue of 9000L sterling. As this source of fertility dries up, the country to the north declines into those sterile and naked plains which compose the greater part of Tartary.

The tracts between the Oxus and the Jaxartes partake of the rudest character of Tartary, and are occupied only by bands of wandering Turkmans. The waters of the latter river, however, fertilise the kingdom of Kokan and Ferganah, similar in cultivation and improvement to Bokhara. Omer Khan, a Mahometan prince, cultivates peace, and is mild and beneficent in his internal administration. Kokan, or Kokan, of modern origin, and recently made the capital, has risen from a small village to a city of 50,000 houses, with 300 mosques. It lies in a fruitful plain, watered by two small rivers. Kojan, the ancient capital, though decayed, is still more than half the size of Kokan. Its situation on the Jaxartes is described as truly delightful, and its inhabitants as the most learned and polite of any in this part of Tartary. Tashkend is an ancient city, still very flourishing, and estimated, in Humboldt's itinerary, to contain 100,000 inhabitants, with 320 mosques. Murgilan is a large and fine city, described even in some routes as the capital of Ferganah. On the frontier towards the Kirghises is Ush, a populous town, the inhabitants of which have succeeded in reclaiming from roving habits a great proportion of that barbarous race, who are now peaceably settled round them.

Khiva forms still another kingdom of Independent Tartary, once a seat of empire, and still considerable. It is situated on the lower Oxus, separated by a wide interval of desert from that of Bokhara. This country was the first in Tartary that was converted by the sword to the faith of Mahomet; which, about 710, the conquering Catfish preached in the mosque of Khuram. This last name became afterwards that of the kingdom, of which Urgunge was the capital, as well as of an empire extending over a considerable portion of Asia, but which was subverted by the arms of Zingis Khan. After being destroyed by Nadir Shah, it was rebuilt and made the capital of the present kingdom, the cultivated part of which extends less than 200 miles in length, and 50 in its utmost breadth, along the banks of the Oxus. The canals derived from that river are the chief means by which cultivation is produced. To Khiva, also, is loosely attached the roving population of those immense deserts which, on every side, insulate it from the civilised world; from Persia, from Candojar, and from Bokhara. Travellers across those wastes find only at wide intervals a few spots affording water and pasturage. That there exists, however, in their recesses a greater number of these oases than the routes across them would indicate, is proved beyond a doubt by the multitudes whom they pour forth for the purposes of war and plunder. The population of the whole territory has been reckoned at 300,000 families, of whom about a third are fixed, the rest wandering, pastoral, and predatory. These last roam usually through their deserts in a state of wild independence, under hereditary chiefs, yet are ever ready to join any standard, either of their own sovereign, or of Persian revolted chiefs, under which they may promise themselves adventure and booty. At present, as nothing on a great scale presents itself, they are principally employed in desolating Persia, and particularly Khorasan, by plundering expeditions, in which they not only carry off every thing valuable, but the inhabitants themselves to perpetual captivity in the heart of their immense deserts.

The settled inhabitants of Khiva are described as gross and uncivilised, when compared either with the Persians or with the Tartars. They indulge in glutinous excesses, foreign in general to Oriental habits, and the persons of the chiefs are in consequence corpulent and overgrown. Their situation enables them to carry on some trade similar to that of Bokhara, though on a smaller scale. One branch they have extended much farther, that of slaves, if trade it can be called which consists merely in selling the unfortunate victims whom they have obtained by violence. Mr. Fraser heard it estimated that there were in slavery, throughout Khiva and Bokhara, from 150,000 to 200,000 Persians, and 15,000 Russians.

The city of Khiva is situated about fifteen miles to the south of the Oxus, and contains about 5000 families. It is poorly built, and is, indeed, rather a fixed encampment than a regular town. Even the palace of the Khan is only a large wooden tent plastered with clay. Urgunge, the ancient capital, is almost in ruins, though its situation on the Oxus still preserves to it a little trade. Hazarasp, a place distinguished in the revolutions of Asia, has experienced an equal decay.

[Between Cabul and Bokhara, to the south of the Oxus, is the little state of Koondooz, ruled by an Uzbek chief or Meer, who has established his power over all the neighbouring districts; he holds Khooloom, Heibuk, Ghoree, Inderab, Taligian, and Tliuzrut-Imam, and is master of the valley of the upper Oxus, and its tributaries. He has reduced Badakshan, and several of the hill districts north of the Oxus, and has even sacked the city of Balik. At Moorad Beg, the Meer of Koondooz, has a force of 20,000 horse, and renders himself formidable to his neighbours by his activity and his vigorous policy. The town of Koondooz is situated in a marshy valley, proverbial for its unhealthy climate, and is visited by the]
Meer only in winter; it was once a large town, but the population does not now exceed 1500 souls. Khooloom, or Tash Koorghnan, is agreeably situated in a fine district, and contains about 10,000 inhabitants.—Am. Ed."

The long mountain valley of Badakshan, situated between the Belooch Tagh, and a high branch thrown out from it, called the Ridge of Pamere, remains to be described. At the loftiest meeting point of these two chains, in a glacier called Pooshthoe Khurr, the Oxus rises, and, flowing along the whole of Badakshan, collects from its mountains a mass of waters, with which it proceeds to force its way through the deserts of Tartary. Badakshan is celebrated over the East for its mineral products; iron, salt, sulphur, lapis lazuli; but, above all, rubies considered equal to any in the world. The mines are situated in the lower part of the Belooch, near the Oxus. According to Mr. Elphinstone, they are no longer worked; but this, according to Burnes, is a mistake. Badakshan is dependent on the Meer of Koomdooz. The capital is Fyzabad, on the Coacha, a mountainous tributary to the Oxus.

Contiguous to Badakshan, on the opposite side of the Oxus, is the district of Derwauz, the king of which claims a descent from Alexander, which his neighbours are said to admit; probably on very slender testimony. West of this is Shoghan, which anciently conveyed to the whole of this mountain tract the name of Sogdiana.

In order to take the picture of Tartary, we must take a view of that northern region, bordering on Asiatic Russia, which is covered with the flocks and tents of the Kirghises. This remarkable race does not figure in the early revolutions of Asia. They appear then to have chiefly occupied the pastoral regions of Siberia, on the Upper Yenisei. When the Russians invaded these regions with a force which undisciplined warriors could not resist, the Kirghises, after a desperate struggle, yielded without submitting. They retired over the mountains into the wide uncultivated plains or steppes which extend to the north of the Jaxartes and the east of the Aral. They are divided into three branches or hordes, called the Great, the Middle, and the Little Horde. The Great Horde ranges to the east and south on the frontiers of Cashgar and Kankan, and many of its tribes have adopted the habits of those more improved districts, and acquired a fixed and peaceable character. Only some of the high separating ranges contain about 50,000, who are called wild or mountain Kirghises, and entirely merit the name. The Middle and Lesser Horde occupy the shores of the Aral, and the tract extending from the Aral to the Caspian, and in these the original nomadic and pastoral character is preserved most entire. They own, in a certain sense, the sovereignty of Russia, which, however, must have recourse to measures both of conciliation and defence, to prevent them from making extreme depredations in its territory. In the former view, it grants pensions to the principal chiefs, of whom the khan receives annually 600 rubles and 20 camels; the rest in proportion; and it maintains a chain of strong posts along the whole line from the Ural to the Irlishec. This does not preserve the frontier from occasional inroads; still less does it secure from plunder the great caravans which carry on by this route an intercourse with the central countries of Asia, and which can ensure their safety only by the humiliating expeditious of a tribute, usually of ten or twelve rubles for each camel.

In their social and political capacity, the Kirghises enjoy a greater share of independence than most of the other tribes of Middle Asia. The Little Horde, indeed, allows Russia to appoint a nominal khan; but he enjoys scarcely any power, unless what he can secure by wealth or personal qualities. The main authority rests with the little khans who are at the head of each clan, and the union of whom with the old men constitutes a sort of democratic assembly, by whom the great affairs of the nation are determined. Yet the slowness and indecision incident to such a body renders it less formidable in war than those which are commanded by warlike and absolute chiefs. The private life of the Kirghises is directed by the maxims of Mahometan law, of which they are strict but not learned observers. Under its sanction the chiefs observe polygamy to an extent as purchase or robbery can enable them, and a separate tent is allotted to each wife. The wealth of the Kirghises consists in horses, goats, the large-tailed sheep (which afford very delicate food), and a few camels. In these respects their possessions are said to be often very considerable. Their tents of felt are both larger and nearer than those of the Calmucks, and one of them will often accommodate twenty persons. It has been chiefly, as yet, by plunder or contribution that they have obtained foreign luxuries; but some, adopting more peaceable habits have begun to obtain them by the exchange of furs, hides, and felt.

CHAPTER XI.

RUSSIA ON THE CASPIAN.

The Urals form the western boundary of that main body of Asiatic Russia which is denominatated Siberia. Between them, however, and the confines of Europe on the west, Persia and Turkey on the south, intervenes a region of considerable extent and remarkable character, over which sway is claimed, and in some rude manner exercised, by Russia. It
consists of two portions, which, though considerably differing in aspect, circumstances oblige us here to combine.

SEC. 1.—General Outline and Aspect.

In this territory the most prominent and connecting object is the Caspian. It is the largest inland sea in the world. Its greatest dimension reaches almost due north and south, and in this direction its extent appears to be upwards of 600 miles. It has an extreme breadth of 300; but this occurs only in the great bay or projection at its north-east extremity; everywhere else the breadth varies from 90 to 120 miles. This mighty inland expanse is supplied on the north by the Volga, which, after traversing, in a course of 2000 miles, the whole of European and part of Asiatic Russia, pours in the united waters of those vast regions. On the west it receives ample streams from the mighty peaks of Caucasus and Ararat; the Kouzn, the Terek, the Aras, the Kizil Ozen, and some others, reach a certain magnitude; but in general these rivers are too near their source to attain any great expansion, and they arrive chiefly in the form of mountain torrents, descending from the long range of snowy heights. On the south, the streams descending from the Elburz, are of moderate length, but copious and rapid. On the east the Attruck enters the Caspian; but by far the greater portion of this border consists of arid and dreary deserts, from which the Caspian Sea does not derive any accession to its magnitude. Considering the large sources which supply this great interior sea, many inquirers are at a loss to determine how they can be disposed of. Hence has arisen the theory of a subterraneous passage, by which its superfluous waters are conveyed either to the Black Sea or the Persian Gulf. As, however, the facts on which this theory rests seem derived from the most superficial observation, so the difficulty which gave rise to it appears more imaginary than real. Evaporation from the surface so immense may satisfactorily account for the waters received from all these rivers, of which only one is of the first magnitude. Its surface is supposed to have become lower within the last 200 years, and it certainly appears to be about 300 feet beneath that of the Black Sea.*

The waters of the Caspian, unless at the immediate influx of the great rivers, are as salt as those of the sea, with the admixture of a bitter taste, arising from a portion of Glauber salt, supposed to be produced by the decomposition of the naphttha which is found on its shores in considerable quantity. The navigation is very dangerous, particularly in the northern part, on account of the heavy and sudden gales which descend from the high cliffs of the western shore, and of the rocks and shallows with which this quarter abounds. There are no good harbours from Astrachan to Derbend. A cluster of considerable islands occurs in the Gulf of Balkan, on the eastern coast; and a number of small ones extend along the north shore, but none of much importance, considering the magnitude of the sea. An immense quantity of fish, particularly sturgeon, is taken in the northern part.

Of the shores of this great sea, the southern belongs to Persia, the eastern to Independent Tartary and to the country of the Turcomans. The western and northern only are proper to the region we are now to delineate. Between the former and the Black Sea extends a wide region entirely covered with those lofty chains to which the ancients applied the name of Caucasus. In height, in ruggedness, and in the variety of their aspects, though not unrivalled, they are surpassed by few in Asia, or in the whole world. This great range of high land may be stated, generally, at about 400 miles in extent from north to south, and 300 from east to west. Its greatest breadth and elevation appear to take place in the northern border of Georgia, where the Elburz rears its gigantic summit. M. Kupfer, lately sent by the Russian government, on the suggestion of General Diebitsch, to measure its altitude, determined it to be about 16,500 English feet, which is considerably higher than Mont Blanc. He was only able to approach within 2000 feet of the summit. The boundary of perpetual snow is about 11,000 feet, which is considered higher than in any other chain, except the Himalayas. "This central chain of Caucasus," says M. Kupfer, "is entirely formed of porphyry. Imagine a plateau, 8000 or 10,000 feet high, extending from east to west, rent in every direction by deep and narrow valleys, and traversed lengthwise by a ridge of rugged and picturesque rocks, whose summits are covered with eternal snow; figure about the middle of this ridge an excavation very broad, but not deep, the centre of which is occupied by a cone which might be believed to be entirely formed of snow, did not the naked rock, which it covers, occasionally appear: this is Elburz, whose height surpasses, by 3000 or 4000 feet, that of all the surrounding mountains." The Caucasian territory formed, for a century, the debateable ground between the empires of Russia and Persia; and the greater part of it, after having been an undisputed, though somewhat turbulent, appendage to the latter, has, unless in some rugged mountainous districts, yielded to the powerful arms of the European invader.

The tract of Asiatic Russia to the north of the Caspian, enclosed between the Volga and the Ural mountains, is of a different character. The immediate shores, composed of the deltas of the rivers Volga and Ural, and forming the province of Astrachan, are flat and

* See note on page 436.
marshy. Further north, the provinces of Oun and Orenburg rise insensibly into a mountainous elevation, till they terminate in the declivity of that great plain which separates Europe from Asia. Here these regions participate in the rich metalliferous character which distinguishes Catharinemb and the other districts on the Asiatic side.

Sect. II.—Natural Geography.

SUBJECTS. 1. and 2.—Geology and Botany.

The Geology and Botany of this region have no features distinguishing it from those parts of Tartary and Siberia which lie under the same latitude.

SUBJECT. 3.—Zoology.

The Zoological tribes, which appear to have had their origin from the towering elevations of Caucasus, have been so frequently mentioned in the preceding pages, that little more need be said on their general nature. There is reason to believe, that around this lofty chain of Alps are concentrated most of those quadrupeds whose geographic range has been assigned to Europe; and representations of others, whom nature has given to western and southern Asia, and the confines of Africa. But the Fauna of these interesting regions is so deplorably defective, that much remains to be investigated before this theory can be received with confidence.

The Quadrupeds mentioned by travellers as inhabiting the Caucasian regions are the Caracal Lynx, the Chamois and Ibex Goats, Bears, several Antelopes, and a species of small Tiger of an unknown race. The true Bison, so long extinct in Europe, is still sheltered in these wild recesses; and the Ovis Awnon, or wild Asiatic Sheep, extends from Central Asia to Caucasus. The Ibex of these mountains is distinct, however, from that of Europe, to which it appears superior both in strength and agility; there is also another species (C. Aegopus Pullus) differing from both the former in its horns; and more closely resembling our domestic goat.

On the warm shores of the Caspian is found that rare British bird, the Charadrus himinopus, or the long-legged Plower (Fig. 674.), together with most of the aquatic species known in Europe; nor can we point out a more interesting subject for philosophic inquiry, than the affinities which these countries appear to exhibit between the animals of Europe and of Asia.

Sect. III.—Historical Geography.

The tribes inhabiting this tract have always been regarded as dwelling on the outer border of the civilised world. They attracted, indeed, the notice of nations with whom they were in somewhat close vicinity; but their annals have never assumed a regular or connected form. The Greeks viewed them only in dim and romantic distance, and considered the cliffs of the Caucasus, and the shores of the Meotis, as the wild and extreme boundaries of nature. The poets painted Prometheus chained by the wrath of Jove to these awful rocks. The expedition undertaken to this quarter in search of the golden fleece was considered as exalting almost to the rank of demigods the daring mortals by whom it was achieved. Afterwards the southern borders of Iberia and Colchis became better known, and were even noted in the revolutions of Asia. Their rugged and inaccessible tracts served occasionally as the refuge of the vanquished, while they deterred even the boldest conquerors from an attempt to subdue them. It is believed that these recesses still enclose races whose habits and language bear the stamp of very high antiquity. Etymologists have even conceived themselves able to trace many of the radicals of that original language which, under varied forms, has spread from the East through Europe. It is much more probable, however, that the rugged seats of the Caucasus afforded shelter to these ancient races, than that they were the source whence population and language originated.

In modern times, Georgia, the most powerful of the Caucasian kingdoms, has been distinguished by its contests for independence with the Persian empire, and subsequently as the main theatre of contest between that empire and the rising power of the czar. Russia, after a pretty long struggle, has secured the whole western shore of the Caspian, and all the level tracts between it and the Black Sea. Even the rude mountain tribes are obliged to own a certain homage; but this, as well as the accompanying tribute, is scanty, and fully compensated for by the frequent plundering excursions, against which the Russians with difficulty guard by cordons of troops drawn along their border. Georgia, and still more Circassia, has been distinguished for the athletic strength of its men, and the fine forms of its females; in consequence of which qualities, they have been in great request as domestic slaves over all the Turkish empire. In Egypt, particularly, the offspring of those slaves,
kept up by continual accessions, long maintained, under the appellation of Mameluks, a sway superior or paramount to that of its Turkish masters.

Turkey possessed, till lately, some ports and districts on the shores of the Black Sea, which enabled her to carry on a considerable traffic, especially in slaves, and also to foment insurrection among the rude mountain tribes. As, however, she has been obliged by the late treaty to cede to Russia the ports of Anapa and Poti, with the districts of Guricel and Akalzike, she may be considered as having entirely lost her hold of the Caucasian territory.

Sect. IV.—Political Geography.

It has already been observed, that nearly the whole of this territory owes the sovereignty of Russia. That power, to the extent of its means, seeks to establish around the Caspian the same despotic system by which its other territories are governed. Many circumstances, however, render this, in its full extent, impossible. Over a dominion extending amid inaccessible cliffs, buried in snows, or on boundless plains traversed by wandering shepherds, the most absolute ruler is obliged to slacken the rein. Provided the Circassian tribes yield a certain form of submission, or even remain peaceable, they suffer little disturbance in their domestic economy, which proceeds upon principles very different from those which prevail among the servile nobles of Russia. The same proud aristocratic ideas, and the same value for the distinctions of birth, reign here which prevailed in Europe during the feudal ages. The lower ranks, who till the ground and perform all the menial offices, are nearly in the condition of serfs, or slaves, who, in many cases, may be, and are, sold for the profit of their masters. The fighting part of the population, again, consists chiefly of voluntary and attached vassals, the companions in peace, and the followers in war, of the head of their tribe. In the southern districts, especially where the Russians must court the natives as their allies against Persia, they are obliged to allow them the unrestrained exercise of their national propensities. To the north, again, the vast plains on every side of Astrachan are continually traversed by Celmucks, Noguis, Kubans, and other Tartar tribes, who, though they may be brought to yield an enforced homage, could never brook a daily interference in their interior concerns. These are administered by their khans, who collect and transmit such scanty tribute as can be drawn from the flocks and herds of their humble vassals. Thus, in all the wide regions around the Caspian, Russia holds full military occupation of the leading positions; but she is obliged to allow to all the natives, not indeed any solid or rational liberty, but that rude and proud independence which, in their eyes, is more precious. It is only in the northern provinces of Ouza and Orenburg, where cities with a civilised population and extensive mining establishments have been formed, that she has been able to mould the people to that uniform subjection which prevails in other parts both of her European and Asiatic territory.

Sect. V.—Productive Industry.

The wealth and industry of this region will not afford scope for very copious details. The Caucasian region presents to the scientific enquirer a varied and interesting vegetation, but a scanty portion of those products which are subservient to the uses of life. Even the lower valleys of Georgia and Mingrelia, though endowed by nature with extreme fertility, are little improved. The inhabitants, ill disposed to themselves to industrious culture, are moreover liable to the almost continual ravage of war and predatory incursion. Their supply of arms and of foreign luxuries is chiefly derived either from plunder, or from the sale of their people as slaves. Wine in considerable abundance, though of middling quality; a little silk from the low southern districts; some skins and furs from the higher, and fine honey from the declivities of the hills, nearly complete the list of their commodities which are fit for the purposes of trade. Ever since Russia became at all civilised, Astrahan, at the head of the Caspian, has been of some importance as a seat of commerce. Two spirited attempts, indeed, were made by the English, one in the sixteenth century, and the other in the eighteenth, to establish a factory there, and open thence a communication with the interior of Asia. The leading object was a share in the commerce of India, which, in consequence of the occupation of all its ancient channels by the enemies of Christianity, had found out this circuitous and difficult line by the north of Persia, and across the Caspian to the Crimea. It was found, however, that Indian commodities could now be more cheaply conveyed by the new maritime channel of the Cape, and even by the Euphrates, to Aleppo. The secondary object, of exchanging the raw silk and precious stones of Persia for English cloth, was baffled by the cruel civil war which distracted and impoverished that kingdom. Even the great extent of land and river carriage across Russia, with the jealous caprice of a despotic government, would have presented insurmountable obstacles to the regular maintenance of such an intercourse. Astrachan, therefore, was in both cases abandoned, and has been left to carry on the little trade which can belong to the vast and desolate regions that stretch round it on every side. The Volga, indeed, after traversing all European Russia, and receiving many great tributaries,
must bring down articles of some magnitude,—timber, flax, iron, copper; but these find not in the round of the Caspian either any adequate demand, or any means of obtaining copious returns. One of the chief sources of wealth consists in the immense quantity of fish which both the sea and its tributary rivers supply. The sturgeon is particularly excellent, and from it is manufactured the caviare, which is considered a delicacy over all Europe. To the north, the provinces of Oufi and Orenburg, as already observed, contain mines of considerable value, the management of which is intrusted to the general board at Catharinenberg, on the opposite side of the Ural.

Sect. VI.—Civil and Social State.

As the countries of the Caucasus have ever been little accessible to the rest of the world, the social existence of their inhabitants, modified neither by conquest nor foreign communication, presents many picturesque and varied aspects. Indeed, there is, perhaps, no part of the earth, in which rude and barbarous life appears under a greater variety of forms. As these are, however, in many respects dissimilar, and as society is split into a multitude of small tribes, the subject ramifies into a variety of details, which will be better given under the local division. In general, all these tribes profess the dogmas of the Mahometan faith, though in a somewhat loose manner, free from the tame and mechanical routine which that religion prescribes. Scarcely any of them possess among themselves, or have imbibed from the Russians, the smallest tincture of literature. They are almost universally addicted to habits of plunder,—that national plunder, on a great scale, which is considered rather a boast than a disgrace, and which is generally familiar to rude tribes who live in the vicinity of more opulent nations.

Sect. VII.—Local Geography.

In treating the details of this part of Asia, we shall begin with the regions of Caucasus, which present the grandest natural features, as well as the most peculiar and striking forms of society. The Kuban and the Terek are considered its northern boundary. Within this river-line the country presents a continuation of those vast pastoral steppes which compose southern Russia. In approaching them, however, the traveller descends the mighty precipices of Caucasus rising before him. Its highest ranges are clad in perpetual snow; beneath is the black region of rocks and precipices; while the lower declivities contain a number of well-watered valleys, forming fine pastoral districts; and, though not capable of high culture, yielding plentifully the inferior products, maize and millet. In these mountain valleys dwell the Circassians. This race have been peculiarly celebrated for their physical qualities. The men, though sparse, are tall, handsome, and athletic. But it is the fine form and delicate complexion of the female Circassians, which form so wide a theme of Eastern panegyric. In these high valleys, with a northern exposure, they do not suffer that intense heat of the sun, which produces, generally, the dark tint of Asia. The daughters of all above the rank of slaves are exempted from oppressive or degrading labour, and merely occupy themselves in sewing, embroidery, and the plaiting of straw. Their beauty seems also to be the result of a careful study of all the circumstances which tend to produce or preserve female charms. The face is carefully shaded from the sun; they are fed moderately on milk and pastry; their feet are protected from injury by a species of wooden shoe; and their hands by the use of gloves. Some even make use of paint, but this is considered disgraceful. The value set upon their virtue is marked by the barbarous precaution of a broad leathern girdle, fastened at an early age with silver clasps, and which the husband cuts through at marriage.

The distinctions of rank and birth are observed in Circassia with all the strictness of highland pride. Under the prince, or sovereign, are the udzena, or nobles, who attend him in war or forny, but exercise a sway almost absolute over their own immediate vassals. They are of two kinds,—bodzians, who cultivate the glebe, and armed retainers, who attend him to the field; which last have often been raised, on this condition, from the inferior rank. The arrangements for marriage and education are of a most peculiar character, founded on a sort of Spartan apathy, which tramples upon every tender and domestic tie. Until after the birth of the first child, the husband and wife live entirely separate, and never see each other, unless by stealth; the husband considers it an insult if the wife be even named in his presence. The child, when born, is never reared in the house, or under the eye of his parents. At the age of three or four, some friendly nobleman receives him, and undertakes the sole task of educating and rearing him. Under him the sons are trained in all manly exercises, and the females in those which belong to their sex, until the former is ready to take the field, and the latter to receive a husband, which this foster father is bound to provide. Then, and not till then, they are allowed to see their parents, to whom they have before remained strangers. This violent and fantastic mode of escaping the dangers of effeminate indulgence does not seem to be here inconsistent with that nurture, for which full confidence is elsewhere reposed only on the parental care.

The noble Circassians lead that sort of life which is usual with independent chiefs on their
own estates, and surrounded by their vassals; a round of war and feasting, of hunting and jollity. Especial pride and care are manifested respecting their horses, whose parentage they consider almost equally important with their own. At the birth of the foal, a black mark, indicating its pedigree, is burnt upon the thigh, which cannot be effaced or altered under pain of death. As these noble animals are wanted both for ornament and use, they must unite the qualities of beauty, strength, and fleetness. On the armour, also, no cost is spared. The modern musket and pistol are combined with those of a former age; and a coat of mail, often proof against pistol-shot; a helmet of polished steel; a bow and quiver. As these, besides being of the finest materials, are, in the case of uzdens, ornamented with pearls and precious stones, their value amounts often to 2000 roubles. Besides the ordinary occupations of war and predatory excursion, these arms are employed in enforcing the right of private revenge, which, as in all barbarous societies, where no other mode of redress exists, is confided to the sword of the injured person, or that of his friends. With these habits of violence is combined, as usual, an almost romantic hospitality. When a stranger has been once admitted to draw a mouthful of milk from the breast of the mother of the family, he is under the protection of the house, and considered as one of its members.

The only estimate of the population of Circassia, which we have met with, is that of Pallas, who reckons the number of uzdens at 1500, and their fighting vassals at 10,000. This number would seem to be under the truth, unless it were restricted to the great Kabirli, who form the principal tribe, and that which approaches nearest to civilisation. The serfs, or labouring part of the community, must, of course, exceed in number both the two classes mentioned above.

The Russian territories everywhere border upon, and enclose, Circassia; yet the value of its inhabitants, and the rapid movements of the light cavalry of which its bands are composed, have set at defiance every effort to reduce it to a state of regular subjection. The Russians, on the contrary, are only able, and that somewhat imperfectly, to protect their own territories from inroads by a chain of strong fortresses. These are chiefly erected along the Terek and Kuban, two considerable streams, which, rising among the loftiest heights of Caucasus, flow for about 400 miles, first north, then the former east, till it falls by numerous mouths into the Caspian, the latter west into the Black Sea. Mosolok, on the Terek, is the centre of this line of defence; a town of 3000 people, with a strong garrison. Georgievsk, on the Kuban, is a fortress of smaller magnitude. Near the sources of the Terek is Vladikaukaz, "the ruler of Caucasus," situated amid the loftiest of its snowy pinnacles, and the fiercest tribes by whom they are tenanted. Though defended only by palisades and a wall of earth, it is sufficient to repel their unskilful assaults. It serves at once to bridle these fierce mountaineers, and to secure the route to Tiflis, which, however, cannot be safely undertaken without an escort of upwards of a hundred Cossacks. Formerly a great part of this road lay along streams so rugged that there was not even room for a traveller to pass on foot between the river and the cliffs, and he was obliged to make his way by projections along their perpendicular sides, crossing, too, many imperfect bridges, that were often swept away by the rapidity of the stream. But the Russian government lately caused to be constructed, from the fort of Dariel to that of Vladikaukaz, a secure road, 51 versets long, with only two bridges; and, though rocks were to be blown up, hills levelled, ravines filled, and large dikes constructed, this great work was completed in five years.

The baths of Caucasus are situated about thirty miles to the south of Georgievsk, at the foot of one of the lower mountain ranges. They are very numerous, extending over a space of about twenty miles. They are of various qualities, sulphurous, chalybeate, and acridulous; and the principal one is described by M. Godet as so copious as to discharge about a million of pints in the twenty-four hours. They were scarcely known till the first journey of Pallas, but are now much frequented during the months of May and June, and commodious buildings have been erected, both by government and private individuals. In this vicinity is the Scoto colony of Karass, which is in a flourishing state; though the missionary station established there has not answered expectation.

The lower course of the Terek, through a fertile country, presents some interesting objects. Its commerce is chiefly carried on by Kislar or Kisjahr, a town described by M. Godet, in 1824, as containing 2000 houses, and about 10,000 inhabitants, of whom 8000 are Armenians. This race, sober and industrious, founded the city in 1736, and carry on all its trade, by which they place themselves in easy and even opulent circumstances. The country round produces 40,000 hogsheads of wine, of 500 pints each; but it is of indifferent quality, and three-fourths of it is made into brandy. Silk is also produced in large quantity. To the south, stretching along the western coast of the Caspian, lies the mountainous province of Daghestan. Its fertile soil is but imperfectly cultivated, and its long coast presents but few harbours. Turi is favourably situated on the sea, but the principal place is Derbend, an old town, long the bulwark of the Persian empire, and still exhibiting imposing military works. It is now much sunk, having, according to Klapproth, a population of about 4000 families.—Am. En.]
ful kingdom of Georgia. The world, perhaps, does not contain a region more profusely gifted both with richness and beauty. Numberless streams, flowing from the central and lottiest parts of the chain, irrigate and fertilise all its borders. On the sides of the mountains hang magnificent forests of beech, ash, chestnut, oak, and pine; and the ground is covered with vines growing wild in vast profusion. On its successive stages are raised all the varieties of fruit and grain, both of the temperate and tropical climates. The woods abound with game; and the mountains contain in their bosom mines of considerable value.

The human race flourishes in an equal degree: the men are distinguished for vigour; and the females, with the single exception of a darker complexion, are as famed for beauty as those of Circassia. All these bounties of nature, however, have been rendered unavailing by the oppressions of a feudal government, and by the continual wars which have desolated Georgia for more than a century. The nobles, who had reduced the prerogative of the king within very narrow limits, possess over their vassals the power of life and death, and extract from them the whole produce of their lands beyond what may afford the most scanty subsistence. The unfortunate husbandman is moreover exposed to the continual inroad of the Lzogians and other tribes from the upper heights of Caucasus, and is often obliged to plough with arms in his hands. Georgia, which had been protected by its situation from the tide of Turkish and Tartar invasion, was attacked two centuries ago by the whole strength of the Persian empire; and, after a very gallant struggle, was obliged to yield. The Sophis endeavoured to conciliate their new subjects, and Georgian youth were even employed as the royal guards of Persia. Yet the spirit of independence was not subdued; and when the power of their conquerors was shaken by the growing fortune of Russia, they eagerly sought to regain their freedom by an alliance with this new power. So far as related to the downfall of Persian influence, all their hopes were fulfilled; but the potentate through whom this triumph had been achieved, soon proved no less ambitious. The sons of the brave Heraclius were deprived of their inheritance, and Georgia was at last reduced to the regular form of a Russian province. This might have proved an ultimate good; and the Russians have in fact made some efforts to introduce tranquillity and industry; but the constant wars in which they have been engaged with Persia, and of which Georgia has been the theatre, have rendered these hitherto of very little avail. Through the pressure of these various evils, the population of this fine region is supposed to be reduced to a number not exceeding 320,000 souls. The greater number are not Mahometans, but Greek Christians, with a large proportion of Armenians, who have in their hands all the traffic of the country. The Russians draw from it a revenue of 800,000 roubles, not nearly sufficient to defray its expenses. The waters of Georgia are chiefly collected by the Kur or Cyrus, which flows first northward, along the foot of a chain of lofty mountains; but afterwards turns to the east and south, passes by Tiflis, and falls into the Caspian on the borders of Ghiilan. It has previously received the Araxes, from Amurat; the greater part of whose course, however, has been through Armenia and Azerbijan.

The only city of Georgia of any importance, or worthy of the name, is Tiflis, (fig. 675.), the capital. It is boldly situated on the precipitous banks of the Kur, which flows here through a deep and gloomy defile covered with immense forests. Several points in its vicinity command a grand view of the bordering chain of mountains, rising in successive stages above each other, and culminating in the snow-covered pinnacles of Elburz. The city, founded in the eleventh century, does not possess any architectural beauty. It is a collection of low flat-roofed dwellings, built of dun brick, with small doors and paper windows. Nor are these splendid mosques, and gilded minarets, which elsewhere redeem the general poverty of Oriental cities, to be found at Tiflis. There are, however, several handsome churches, though chiefly distinguished for their picturesque situation; and the old citadel, placed on a high promontory, presents a grand and imposing mass of ruins. The only really good buildings are a few which have been erected by the Russians; the arsenal, the hospital, and particularly the great market-place, the shops of which are screened from the weather by a long range of columnar arcades; and which, as the natives begin reluctantly to acknowledge, is much more commodious than the old one. Tiflis is famous for its baths, formed of warm streams descending from the neighbouring hills, and collected into two large apartments, one for the male and the other for the female inhabitants. Their medicinal virtue is said to be considerable; but to an European eye, they are dark, dirty, and inconvenient. The Russians make Tiflis their head-quarters, and keep there a large military force, which is quartered upon the inhabitants. This is considered a serious grievance, being wholly inconsistent with the habits of Oriental seclusion.
particularly in regard to the female sex, whose virtue, made hitherto to depend chiefly on the jealous guard kept over it, is said to have suffered materially from this intrusion. The population of Tiflis, in consequence of the evils under which it has suffered, has declined in the course of the last twenty years from 22,000 to 15,000.

Proceeding westward from Georgia to the shores of the Black Sea, we find Mingrelia and Imiretta; regions celebrated in antiquity under the name of Colchis. The interior tracts are mountainous and rugged; but Caucasus here slopes downward, and allows to intervene between it and the sea a large plain, moist, fertile, but unwholesome. Floods innumerable, descending from the heights, and uniting into thirty considerable rivers, inundate this watery region. Among these, the only one of great importance is the ancient Phasis, now called the Rioni, which, after a long course through the deep Circassian glens, enters the plain of Mingrelia. The ground, impregnated with such copious moisture, becomes too soft for the plough, and unfit for the production of wheat or barley, but yields plentifully millet and other small grain, which forms the ordinary food of the inhabitants. Fruits of every kind grow spontaneously, though containing sometimes more juice than flavour; but this fault is not found in the figs, chestnuts, and grapes, which yield a strong agreeable wine. Raw silk abounds, and some rude manufactures are made of that material. There is a person holding the title of Prince of Mingrelia, and the country has vibrated between an attempt to maintain its independence, and a submission to Turkey or Russia; which last power has, by the course of events, become paramount. Mingrelia, however, has always been more exposed than even the rest of Caucasus, to oppression, tumult, and misrule of every description. The nobles are passionately devoted to hunting; they account a good horse, a good dog, and a good falcon, the first elements of human felicity. At the same time, they carry on the most regular system of oppression towards their dependants, and of indiscriminate plunder towards all others. Yet Mingrelia has not wholly lost that commerce which anciently rendered Colchis celebrated. Communicating by the Black Sea with Asia Minor and Constantinople, it supplies them with the commodities of the Caspian territory; silk, honey, and, unfortunately, above all, slaves; the obtaining of which, by purchase, seizure, and every sort of nefarious process, forms the principal occupation of the chiefs of Mingrelia. It is calculated that Turkey receives annually from thence about 12,000 of these unfortunate beings. As the port of Poti, however, at the mouth of the Rioni or Phasis, has by the last treaty been ceded to Russia, that power will henceforth command the trade of Mingrelia. Poti contains about 1000 inhabitants; from the obstructions at the mouth of the river, large vessels must anchor at the distance of half a mile. The late entrance of an English ship into this port forms a memorable event in the annals of commerce. Mingrelia extends about 140 miles along the sea-shore, and about forty or fifty inland. Reineger estimates the population at 4,000,000; but, from every picture which has been drawn of it, we should imagine one-fourth of that number exaggerated.

Imiretta, composing the lofty interior of Mingrelia and the banks of the Upper Phasis, is a bold pastoral region, inhabited by a simple people, who have remained more exempt than the rest of Caucasus from the evils by which that region has been desolated. Their czar, an hereditary chief, continues to rule them, under a mere acknowledgement of vassalage to Russia. Retired in woody hills, or agreeable valleys, the inhabitants of Imiretta keep aloof from the scenes of contention by which they are surrounded. When, however, their native fastnesses are invaded, they defend them with all the hardihood of mountaineers. They have among themselves deep understood tongues, which, echoed among the mountains, will often call up several hundreds from spots which did not seem tenanted by a human being. The people are accused of inofience; yet it is admitted, that silk, honey, and other Caucasian staples are reared by them with greater diligence than in other quarters. Kotais, called its capital, is an old city on the left bank of the Phasis, now reduced to about 2000 inhabitants.

Borders on Imiretta, south of the Phasis, is Gurieh, a country naturally as rich as Mingrelia, but still more desolated by Turkish inroads, and now reduced almost to a desert, being estimated to contain not more than 6000 families. By the last treaty, however, it has been ceded to Russia, whence a material improvement in condition is anticipated. Batoum, a port with the only good roadstead on this coast, is the seat of some trade.

Proceeding northward along the Black Sea, after an almost impassable range inhabited by a wild race called the Sainees, appears an extended and wooded region, the country of the Abasses, a rough variety of the Circassians. They resemble, without equaling, that people in their handsome persons and dignified manners. Secured from foreign invasion by the poverty of their country, and by its immense and entangled forests, they are wasted by intestine contests; and to the various forms of plunder, their situation has tempted them to annex that of piracy. It has also, however, enabled their country to become the theatre of some commerce in the usual Caspian commodities, that of slaves not excepted. Of this trade, Phanagoria, at the mouth of the Kuban, forms a sort of entrepôt. Anapa, farther to the south, a considerable port, with a good harbour, was in possession of the Turks till the last treaty, when it was transferred to Russia.

All the nations now enumerated occupy the declivities or borders of Caucasus where
alone any extent of culture, wealth, or civilisation can exist. Yet its extreme and most
awful heights, the regions of rocks and eternal snows, are not wholly without their tenants.
Among these, the most known and formidable are the Ossetes and the Lesghihs. The former
occupy the mighty northern heights behind Circassia, and either hold or border upon all the
routos leading thence to Georgia and the southern Caucasus. Of this position they avail
themselves, either to plunder the passing traveller, or to levy a composition upon him. They
block up the defiles, or roll down huge stones as he proceeds along the narrow paths cut in
the perpendicular face of the cliffs. They have not a village that contains a hundred in
habitants, and their abodes are like little castles; yet, on an emergency, they can muster
10,000 horse. The Russians have beaten them, without being able to reduce them, but
they have been forced to render up a number of their chiefs, who are kept as hostages at
Muzdok, and by that pledge alone are prevented from indulging against Russia their favourite
propensities.

The Lesghihs, who, from the southern summits of Caucasus, overlook the plains of Georgia,
are a still more notes and terrible race. Viewing from this awful height the magnificent
harvests which wave in the distance beneath, they are impelled to a perpetual career of ro
bery, and have become the terror and scourge of all the surrounding territories. Their
habitations, perched on the summits of the loftiest cliffs, and on the edge of the steepest
precipices, have a most fearful appearance. Respected as the bravest of all the tribes of
Caucasus, and entrenched in its most rugged recesses, they have from time immemorial set
all attempts to invade them at defiance. Like the Swiss, they have been tempted by poverty
to engage in mercenary warfare, and hire themselves for a campaign of three months at the
rate of twelve roubles. In their interior economy, they display no small degree of industry
and energy. They have thrown strong bridges of stone or wood across unfathomable gullies,
have carried roads along precipices, and raised good water to their habitations by pipes or
canals cut in the rock. They have availed themselves to the utmost of their scanty portion of
ground, by forming it into terraces. They are chiefly Mahometans, with some remnants of
Christianity; but a considerable number are still devoted to Pagan superstition, and worship
the sun, moon, and stars.

Between the grand divisions now enumerated, there are various little tribes, and spots of
greater ones, scattered through all the corners of this mountainous region. Enough, how-
ever, has been already said; for the few scanty annals of the Kistse, the Jugouches, the
Tusches, and the Karabulaks, would, we conceive, afford little edification to the reader.

We have still to notice, at the head of the Caspian, Astrachan and its district, constituting
a government of which the city of Astrachan forms the capital. This place, seated amid
such a vast range of mountains and deserts, has little opportunity of becoming great or
opulent. Yet its water communications are very extensive, by the Volga on one side and
the Caspian on the other; though these are inferior to those of Europe, and of the rich coun-
tries of the East. A river, however, which traverses all European Russia must bring down
some commodities; and Astrachan obtains raw silk from Persia; turquoise from Khorsun;
rubies and other gems from the head of the Oxus. After all, its chief wealth is derived
from its own industry, particularly the vast fishery which it carries on. The quantity of fish
obtained, is not only sufficient for domestic consumption, but is largely exported; and the
roes of sturgeon, prepared in that peculiar form called caviare, form an article of trade for
which it is famed. A good deal of salt is obtained from marshy lakes in the neighbourhood;
and some fabrics of leather and silk are carried on. The Russian monarchs, since the time of
Peter, have made every effort to improve Astrachan and its trade. The Kremlin, however,
and other monuments of its grandeur, when it was the capital of a separate kingdom, are
now in ruins; and the city, though three miles in circumference, and surrounded by a wall,
is for the most part poorly built of wood. Some handsome edifices of stone, however, have
 lately been erected, particularly two commercial halls. The population, amounting to 70,000,
forms a various mixture of the people of Europe and Asia: Russians, Greeks, English, French,
Persians; even the Hindoos have a small quarter appropriated to them. Most of the Persian
trade is carried on by the Armenians.

The environs of Astrachan, unless in its immediate vicinity, consist of a boundless extent
of flat steppe, in many places almost desert, but in others capable of supporting a considera-
bable pastoral population. The occupants are decidedly Tartar. A large body of fugitive
Calmucks have filled the eastern part with their flocks and herds. The western tribes are
chiefly Nogais, mixed to some extent with the Cossacks of the Don. The Tartar habits and
character universally prevail, though the people are reduced by subjection to a somewhat
more orderly and industrious way of life than they would spontaneously adopt.

To the north of Astrachan is the large government of Orenburg, which forms, as it were,
the link between European and Asiatic Russia. Tartars still form the basis of the popula-
tion; but many of them have been trained to regular and industrious habits. The country
is capable of every kind of culture, but is chiefly covered with rich pastures. Its eastern
frontier is formed by the Ural mountains, possessing that rich mineral character which has
been so often noticed. From these mountains flows to the Caspian a river called also the
Ural, and which in its southern course separates Russia from the vast wilds traversed by the Kirghises and Cutmucks. A line of military posts here secures the empire from the inroad of these rude tribes. On this river is situated Orenburg, whose site has been several times changed, and which is now rather a well-built town of 2000 houses. To this market the Tartars bring annually 10,000 horses, and from 40,000 to 60,000 sheep, the latter purchased chiefly for the sake of the tallow. Hence also numerous annual caravans depart for Khiva, Bokhara, Kukan, and other cities in the interior depths of Asia. Though Orenburg, however, be the most important city of the district, yet, in consideration of its exposed situation as a frontier place, the seat of government has lately been transferred to Oufa, situated at the junction of the river of the same name with Belaya, which afterwards falls into the Kania. It is surrounded by a fertile territory, but lies itself in a species of hollow, intersected by numerous torrents and ravines. It is reported to have been once a great Tartar capital, and contains, in fact, many remains covered with Arabic and Cufic inscriptions.