RUSSIAN MISSIONS

INTO THE

INTERIOR OF ASIA;

I.

NAZAROFF'S EXPEDITION TO KOKAND.

II.

EVERSMANN AND JAKOVLEW'S ACCOUNT OF BUCHARIA.

III.

CAPT. MOURAVIEW'S EMBASSY TO TURKOMANIA AND CHIVA.

Translated from the German.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS AND CO.

BRIDE-COURT, BRIDGE-STREET.

1823.

G. Sidney, Printer,
Northumberland Street, Strand.

INTRODUCTION.

Russia appears, by its geographical position, to be, of all the states of the Continent, that which is the best calculated to serve as an entrepôt for Europe and Asia. On the one hand, rivers and canals unite the Baltic with the Caspian Sea; and make Nischnei-Novogorod and Astrachan great markets, where commerce would become of great importance, if its safety were insured on the roads which it is obliged to follow; on the other hand, the ports of the Black Sea are open to the mercantile fleets which trade to the Levant. Yet, notwithstanding the advantages of this position, it has hitherto been impossible to surmount all the obstacles to the progress of commerce, arising from the unsocial character of the Asiatic tribes, bordering upon Russia. The difference in manners, religion, and civilization, between the Europeans and the Orientals, or the consequences of a distrustful and suspicious policy, have caused the people of Asia to remain in a state of separation, which, while it gives them security, leaves commerce without a sufficient guarantee, to enable it to follow a regular course.

Caravans have long been accustomed to go from Bucharia to Orenburg and Astrachan, and this last town has a commercial intercourse with the Turcomans; but the routes which these caravans take, pass across *Steppes* infested by the invasions of the Kirghis; and the expeditions from Manghichlak to Astrachan are neither constant nor regular.

The Russian government has, of late years, taken various measures to give more solidity to its commercial relations with the countries in the interior of Asia, near its own frontiers; efforts have been made to conciliate the independent tribes; and various missions have been sent, an account of which will be found in the following pages.

The first is a short extract from an account of an expedition to Kokand, in the years 1813-14, by Mr. Philip Nazaroff, interpreter to the Siberian Corps employed in the expedition.

The second is the account of an embassy to Bucharia in 1820 1821, at the head of which was Mr. Negri, Counsellor of State: described under the title of a "Journey from Orenburg to Bucharia," by Dr. Eversmann, physician to the Embassy, in which we have inserted several interesting extracts from the letters of Mr. P. L. Jakovlew, secretary to the embassy.

The third is the narrative of a Journey to Turcomania and Chiva, by Captain Mouraview, who was sent on a mission to those countries in 1819-20.

RUSSIAN MISSIONS

INTO

THE INTERIOR OF ASIA.

No. I.

EXPEDITION TO THE COUNTRY OF KOKAND IN THE YEARS 1813 AND 1814. BY PHILIP NAZAROFF, INTERPRETER TO THE SIBERIAN CORPS EMPLOYED IN THE EXPEDITION.

THIS account, which as we are informed has never been translated from the original Russian, does not, it must be owned, give so much information as might have been expected, concerning this interesting part of Asia, the seat and centre of the barbarian grandeur of Timour, and of Gengis Khan, his predecessor; yet it affords some little insight into the strength and character of the Tartar hordes, who now roam over a small, but favourite portion of that once magnificent and boundless empire, and an analysis of it seems to be a very proper introduction to the accounts of the subsequent missions into the adjacent countries.

The Sultan of Kokand, at the time of this expedition, was a young man of twenty-four years of age, named Valliami, (more properly Uaelnahmi) of a warlike and enterprising character, who had subjected to his dominion, various Tartar tribes dispersed on those immense plains, called, by the Arabs, Mawn-el-nahar, which contain the once celebrated cities of Bokhara, Balk, and Samarcand, a tract of country remarkable for its fertility and beauty. This central part of Asia is bounded on the north by the Algydim Zano mountains, on the west by the Belur Tag, on the south by the Hindoo Koo and Pamar mountains, and on the west by the river Jihon, and the Lake (or Sea) of Aral.

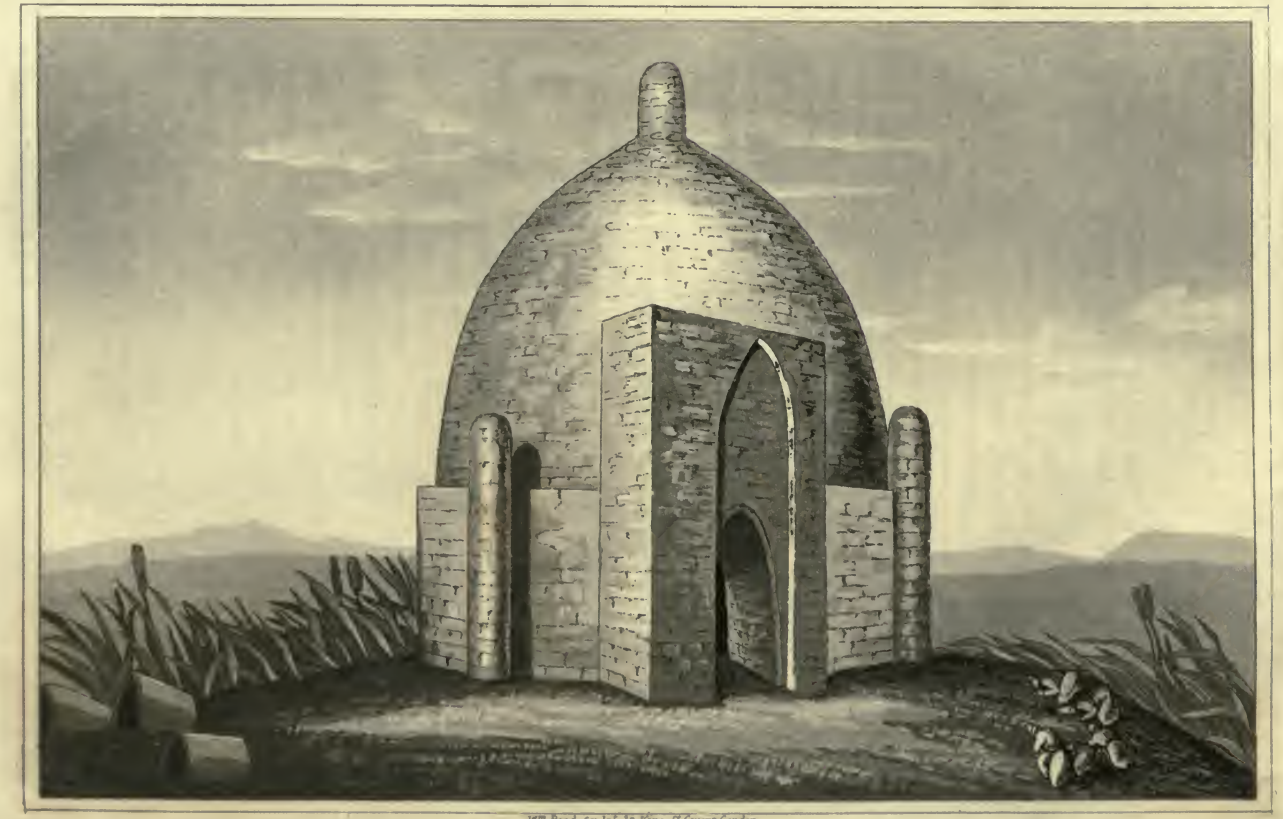
The occasion of the present mission was as follows: a deputation had been sent, in 1812, from the Sultan, or Khan, of Kokand to the court of Petersburgh; which, on its return, halted at the fortress of Petropaulousk, (marked St. Peter in

the charts), on the river Ishim: the principal person caught a fever and died; the next in rank was a most depraved character, and frequented the company of profligate women, in whose society he formed an acquaintance with an exiled Russian soldier. This man, with a view of getting possession of the Tartar's money, enticed him one day to the Ishim to bathe, and, availing himself of the opportunity, murdered him, and threw his body into the river. These untoward circumstances induced the Russian Commandant of the fortress to accompany the remaining part of the deputation with an escort, in order to obviate any unfavourable interpretation that might be put by the Khan on the unfortunate end of his two envoys.

Mr. Nazaroff, being well acquainted with the language of the Kokans, offered his services, and was dispatched by the commandant, in May, 1813, with credentials and presents in the name of the Emperor, under the protection of a party of Cossacks; and, at the same time, an opportunity was taken of sending a caravan, or a company of traders, to endeavour to open a commercial intercourse with the people. Having crossed the Steppe of Ishim they entered upon the possessions of the northern Kirghis; whom Mr. Nazaroff describes as consisting of three hordes, over each of which is a Khan; each horde is divided into other portions, over each of which is a Sultaun; and these are again subdivided into separate companies, placed each under the controul of a Bia, or Elder. Both the general government and that of the hordes are very cruel: their religion is that of Mahomet, and their laws are founded on the precepts of the Koran.

The Kirghis are excellent horsemen; even children of four or five years old are able to manage a horse with great dexterity, and the women are not less expert than the men. Their horses are of the Arabian breed, fifteen or sixteen hands high, and in their predatory excursions will hold out for several days at the rate of an hundred miles a day. The hordes are honest and faithful to their word among themselves, but make no scruple of plundering their neighbours. Nocturnal excursions to drive off cattle are very common; and the women, on such occasions, armed with clubs and lances, take as active a share in any combat that may ensue as the men.

Marriages are contracted by the parents while the parties are infants; and such contracts are held sacred. At the marriageable age, which is very early, the young people have free access to each other. They have a tent set apart from the rest of the horde, to which the bride is brought every night for a fortnight before the marriage, and left alone with the bridegroom; but such, says Mr. Nazaroff, "is the native



Wm Read, Sculpt 37, King St Covent Garden

SEPULCHRAL MONUMENT OF A KIRGESE CHIEF.

modesty implanted in the breasts of these people, that no indecent or improper liberty is ever taken by the young man." On the day appointed for the nuptials the relations meet, the mollah receives the declaration of the parties, unites their hands, and invokes a blessing and a numerous offspring; barrenness being, according to their estimation, little short of disgrace.

Mr. Nazaroff and his party stopped at a place called *Tur-Aigrah*, in Turkistan, near which was a lake about thirty miles in circumference, called *Kitchubai-Tchurkar*. On a sloping bank of this lake they observed an extensive burying ground, containing a multitude of square wooden tombs, some marked with spears, as a memorial of the good horsemanship of the deceased, and others with the figures of hawks, as a sign of their skill in fowling. To this burying-ground the rich Tartars bring their deceased relations from every part of the territory of the Kirgis. In the winter months, when the country is covered with snow, and no food is to be had for their cattle, they suspend the bodies, swaddled in thick felt, from the branches of trees, and in spring collect and carry them to the sanctified cemetery. "Crossing the deserts of Tartary," says Mr. Nazaroff, "in the winter months, one frequently meets with these dismal objects covered with hoar frost, and dangling, in all directions, to the chilling blast."

The borders of this lake are the resort of various wandering tribes, who barter their horses, camels, and sheep, with the caravans for clothing and other articles of necessity and luxury. While Mr. Nazaroff remained in this place, one of the horde was condemned to suffer death. A halter was immediately thrown round the neck of the offender, the end of which was fastened to the tail of a horse, which, being mounted by a Tartar, set off at full trot, and continued galloping round the encampment till the life of the unfortunate criminal was terminated. "Having inquired into the cause of so excruciating and dreadful a punishment, I was surprised (he says) to learn that the sufferer's offence was that of stealing two sheeep, whilst those who condemned him were at the very moment, under pretence of private quarrels with the neighbouring tribes, carrying off whole herds of cattle, and requiring ransom for their restitution.

The farther they advanced through Turkistan, now a part of Kokand, the more fixed the population appeared; the tents of the Tartars were exchanged for houses of stone, and fields cultivated with grain, among which towns and villages were interspersed, were seen on every side. Every thing now wore the appearance of improved civilization. They had now

reached the territory of Tash-Kand, which is watered by the Sir and its numerous branches. The Khan sent his officers to demand the usual duties from the caravan, at the same time inviting them, in the most friendly manner, into the town of that name. He advised Mr. Nazaroff to proceed with his Cossacks alone to Kokand; not succeeding in this, he detained the caravan with a part of the Cossacks, at Tash-Kand, but graciously permitted the mission to set forward with the remainder of the escort (about twenty), which they did without guides, confiding in the local knowledge of the Kokaners whom they had brought with them from Russia.

With the utmost difficulty they succeeded in crossing the river *Tchirtchik*, on account of the rapidity of the stream, and the large stones which it rolled down with it. This is one of the numerous torrents which fall from the high mountain called Kindertau, a prolongation of the Belur Tag, and which swell the Sir or Sihon. Mr. Nazaroff says, that the roaring of this turbulent stream may be heard at the distance of 15 wersts, and that it is so tremendous, that even the beasts of prey dare not approach it. The valleys of this range of mountains are inhabited, it appears, by little hordes of savage or uncivilized Persians of the East, who are called the Men of the Mountains.

Proceeding southerly, the mission passed the Khojund and the Sur-Daria, and arrived at the city of Khokand, the capital of Kokania, situated in the centre of those interminable plains, where Gengis-Khan was in the habit of assembling a general council of all the khans, governors, and military chiefs of his extensive empire; and where, we are told, were once assembled 500 ambassadors from the conquered countries only. It was here that the magnificent feast was given by Timour on the marriage of his six grandsons; where, according to Gibbon, following the statement of Sherefeddin, "the plain was spread with pyramids of meat, and vases of every kind of liquor, to which thousands of guests were courteously invited;" where "pearls and rubies were showered on the heads of the brides and bridegrooms, and contemptuously abandoned to their attendants;" where "a general indulgence was proclaimed, every law relaxed, every pleasure was allowed, the people was free, the sovereign was idle."

On arriving at the gates of Kokand, the Cossacks dressed themselves in full uniform, and the whole cavalcade entered the city, marched by the palace, and were lodged in a garden with one small pavilion in it. Two tents were immediately pitched for the cossacks, and one for Mr. Nazaroff and his companion Beziuzikoff; the Kokaners were taken away, and

a guard of fifteen men placed over the Russians, with orders not to suffer them to leave the garden.

During the night they had a visit from the vizier, who demanded what their object was in coming to Kokand? They replied to bring home the Kokaners; to explain the unfortunate circumstances of the death of the two envoys; and to open a commercial intercourse with the country. The vizier then told them that provisions for themselves and their cattle should daily be sent to them, and without explaining himself further, departed. The garden, while the Europeans were confined there, was crowded with spectators, who stood gazing from morning to night. This continued for eleven days, when the hour was announced for delivering the credentials and presents to the Khan. This short period of confinement showed the degree of respect deemed necessary for the Russians, the delay being in the ratio of the estimation in which the envoys are held.

The distance of the garden from the palace of the Khan, was about fifteen wersts, the whole of which was lined with cavalry. The two Russian envoys mounted their horses, but the cossacks, four of whom, attended by a corporal, carried the box which contained the imperial presents and credentials, marched on foot in two columns. Before they reached the outer wall of the palace, Mr. Nazaroff and his friend were ordered to dismount, and were detained about half an hour, when the gate was opened, and Mr. N. alone was conducted through a court-yard, at the extremity of which the Khan was pointed out to him at a window. In proceeding towards the royal presence he was told that he must pay the same marks of respect as were observed to his own sovereign, upon which he took off his hat, made a bow, and put it on again. The Khan was seated on a lofty throne, placed on an elevated platform covered with carpets, and the viziers and principal grandees of the court, were ranged on each side of him. Mr. Nazaroff was told to put the credentials on his head, and holding them with both hands, a common ceremony in the east, (dictated probably by precaution,) was brought to the foot of the throne. Here he was desired to fall upon one knee, upon which the Khan took the credentials from his head, and gave them to one of his viziers; he then stretched out his hand, which Mr. Nazaroff took in both of his, after which he was led by two of the ministers to the door, always keeping his face towards the throne. There were present on this solemn occasion ambassadors from China, Bucharia, and from the various surrounding petty states, for all of whom a dinner was prepared, consisting of coloured rice and horse-flesh, and

this being finished the Russians returned in procession to their garden.

Soon after this interview, it was announced by the secretary of the Khan that the detachment would be sent back to Russia in the course of three days; but that Mr. Nazaroff must remain there till the following spring, when the caravan and certain deputies would be sent by the Khan to enquire more particularly into the real cause of the death of his two ambassadors. Mr. Nazaroff now began to suspect that he was a prisoner, and he was in fact removed in a few days from the garden, and lodged with his corporal and four cossacks in the castle of the governor, with a guard over him. He remained here twelve days, at the end of which he was brought before the great men of the court, and asked what compensation he meant to offer for the murder of the Khan's ambassadors. If our envoy was startled by such an abrupt question he was not much relieved when he was told that three alternatives would be submitted to him,---to pay the money demanded by the relations of the deceased---embrace the religion of Mahomet---or be suspended from a gibbet, to which they pointed at the same time. "I replied thus," says Mr. Nazaroff,---"to pay an adequate sum is quite out of my power; to betray my faith and my sovereign, I am not prepared; and as to death I am not afraid to meet it; well knowing that my sovereign will fully avenge any insults that may be offered to my person." "Finding" he continues, "that I boldly replied to their questions, I was ordered back to my prison; and from this moment the governor of the castle treated me with the greatest kindness; but he shortly after told me that the Khan had determined to send me into exile.

Accordingly, an invitation was one day brought for Mr. Nazaroff to attend the Khan on a hunting party, to a place called Margliand, about 250 wersts from Kokand. Two carriages were prepared to transport him and his Cossacks, accompanied by an officer and two drivers. After having passed through a great number of villages they entered a very extensive desert. Thinking this a good place to come to some explanation with the officer, "I rushed upon him," says Mr. Nazaroff, "with my sabre drawn, and desired him, if he regarded his life, to tell me whither he was ordered to convey us." He answered trembling that he had secret orders to convey us to the fortress of *Jarmazan*, on the frontier of Persia; but that if I preferred it he would take us to Margliand, distant about 50 wersts." Mr. Nazaroff preferred the latter, and in two days they arrived at that place, where lodgings were ordered for them by the governor, who behaved with great kindness.

Here they were kept for three months, when, by the intercession of the Vice-Khan, they obtained permission to return by a very pleasant and populous route to Kokand, from which they were sent to Tash-Kund, where the deputies of the Khan to the Emperor of Russia joined them. It was in consequence of this Mission that the Emperor Alexander resolved to send an embassy to Bucharia, the account of which follows in the next chapter.

The people of Kokand speak the Turkish language with the greatest purity, and are far advanced in civilization. The strictest probity prevails among them. Whoever is convicted of imposition is immediately stripped of all his clothes, without respect to person, scourged with whips through all the streets, and compelled to proclaim himself aloud to be a cheat. Their law-suits are carried on without any records of the proceedings. The priests are their judges, who in large assemblies, at which the commander-in-chief presides, hear causes and pass sentence. Treachery and usury are punished with death. The property of a person executed falls to the public treasury; his wives and grown up daughters are given in marriage to common soldiers. For theft one or both hands are lopped off, according to the value of the thing stolen; immediately after the execution of the sentence, the stumps of the arms are dipped in boiling oil, and the thief is then suffered to depart, as incapable of further mischief. A murderer is given up to the relations of the person murdered, who are at liberty either to kill him or sell him. Adulteresses are buried in the earth up to the breast, and then stoned to death by the people.

No. II.

EMBASSY TO BUCHARIA BY DR. EVERSMANN, PHYSICIAN, AND MR. JAKOVLEW, SECRETARY TO THE EMBASSY.

After various fêtes we left Orenburg on the 10th of October, 1820. Our caravan consisted of 500 camels, about 230 Cossacks, as many infantry, and two cannons. As the Kirghis are very distrustful of Russia, it was difficult to persuade them to furnish camels, and it was only by the prudent conduct and wise measures of General Essen, Governor of Orenburg, that they were prevailed upon.

A good camel carries, on a long journey, sixteen poods, (one

pood thirty-six pounds English,) and can travel from forty to fifty wersts in a day. The pace is very slow in comparison with its size, even slower than that of an indifferent horse, or about seven or eight wersts in an hour.

When a caravan is to be assembled a negotiation is commenced with the rich Kirghis about the price; when this is settled they endeavour to collect, in the Steppe, as many camels as their credit and their fortune permit; they partly supply their own camels, and partly hire them of the poorer Kirghis. Every owner of camels in a caravan is obliged, not only to attend and take care of them, and collect them when the caravan sets out, but to load and unload, and guide them, so that the owner of the goods has no trouble; for this purpose the owner of the camels hires a certain number of drivers, according to the number of the animals; a good driver generally having the care of eight or twelve camels. When the camels are loaded, all those belonging to one driver are fastened together, one behind the other, by a rope, only the first is guided by the driver, who either goes on foot or rides upon a horse, ass, cow, or ox, sometimes on the camel itself, which he manages with a halter. Travelling with the caravan is, indeed, fatiguing, but a good constitution is soon accustomed to it; at first its novelty pleased me, but I afterwards found the endless Steppe extremely tiresome till I was gradually used to it; and the rambling life under tents even became agreeable to me. When a caravan stops, in the evening, the first thing is to set up the tents, taking care (as at court) to see from what quarter the wind blows; to open the roof of the tent on the opposite side, that the smoke may have free egress. Then tea, the chief beverage of the Asiatics, is quickly drunk out of large cups, a frugal supper is prepared, and the weary traveller reposes on skins, spread on the ground, without needing to invoke Morpheus to his aid.

The leader of our caravan was named Jamantschibai, an old Kirghis, who rode before; after him came the vanguard of Cossacks, then camels, soldiers, cannon, &c. till the rear guard closed the procession. Cossacks rode at some distance, on both sides, in order to have early knowledge of any hostile attack.

Early in the morning of the day of our departure the caravan preceded us; only the officers of the embassy remained behind to enjoy a few hours more on the cultivated soil of their native country, till at length the departing day obliged us to mount our horses. We rode rapidly through the gates, and over the wretched bridge across the Ural, and were now on Asiatic ground, and had before us the boundless

Steppe of the free Kirghis. Three wersts from the Ural, in the Steppe, is the bartering place, a large space surrounded with stone shops, where the Asiatics and Russians annually exchange their goods; we left it on the right and proceeding to the south-east, overtook our caravan, which was encamped twenty-one wersts and a half from the town, on the little river Berganka, which falls into the Ural about eight wersts further. The Berganka, or as the Kirghis call it, Darataldi, like almost all the little rivers of the desert, consists of deep holes, or pools, united by narrow and shallow currents, and in a dry season, or when the sources have but little water, they cease to flow, and only the pools with putrid water remain. The cause of the scarcity of water in the desert is, undoubtedly, to be looked for in the entire want of wood. On the Berganka are the old copper mines already mentioned by Pallas, which are now entirely abandoned, being too poor to pay the trouble and expense of working them.

On the 11th of October we halted, because the Kirghis wished to make several purchases at Orenburg; we left our camp the next day, crossed the Berganka three wersts further, and continued our journey to the south-east, through an undulating country overgrown with dry grass.

On the 26th we encamped near Bitlissu, i. e. lousy water, where there are some small pools, the corrupt water of which well deserves the name. Just after sunset, we saw a ball of fire fall from the sky, which, as it approached the earth, increased considerably and rapidly in size. The Kirghis told us the phenomenon is often seen in the desert, and, without troubling their heads further about the matter, they call it Tängri-Fermani, i. e. command of God. In general the Kirghis, like all other followers of the mechanical worship of the Koran, are little disposed to reflection: thus, if you ask them if it will be fine weather to-morrow, they always answer "God knows;" if you ask them how many days' journey it is to any place, they reply, "God knows," though they have passed the same way fifty or a hundred times: to obtain an answer to your question you must reverse it and ask, "the last time you made this journey how many days did it take you."

On the 13th of October, at sunrise, we left Bitlissu, and soon reached a small spring river, called Kundissu, i. e. Blood water, from the numerous leeches in it, which fasten on those who bathe in it. On our way we killed many foxes of the desert, which are so numerous that a great trade is carried on with their skins in the Russian frontier towns, as also in Bucharia, Taschkand, Turkestan, &c. In size and colour

they resemble the common fox, only that their ears and the lower part of their feet are black.

Continuing our road through the desert, which offered but little variety, we came to an eminence where there were many ancient graves; they consisted of longish heaps of stone, which were mostly lower in the middle. These graves are said to belong to the Kirghis, but, to judge by the appearance of the stones, overgrown with lichens, this can hardly be possible, as the Kirghis have not inhabited those parts above two hundred and sixty years.

On the 16th of October, at sunset, we continued our journey, at first parallel with the little river Usunburta, which lay on our right, and afterwards, went further and further from it. The country here, as well as near our camp the night before, was a little more mountainous, or rather the undulating hills were higher. After travelling about twenty-one wersts we reached an eminence visible at a considerable distance; there is here a hill, consisting of sand, sunk in the middle, and measuring about 150 paces in circumference, which is evidently a work of human hands; around it were several smaller hills of stones, like those I have mentioned before. When I asked the leader of our caravan, he told me that a Tartar prince was buried under the great hill; that each individual of his people had carried the corner of his garment full of earth, and thus they had formed the hill; and his sons lay round him. The eminence upon which these graves are must be pretty considerable, as the prospect from it is extensive; it was a general custom with the Tartars, as it is still with the Kirghis, to bury their dead in the highest places; all the graves which we saw in the sequel confirmed this.

After going thirty-five wersts and a half we encamped near a little wood, a great rarity in this barren desert; the trees, which are pretty high, are alders mixed with poplars and willows, that are not so high. The last day's journey rather fatigued us, we therefore broke up the following morning later than usual. We crossed two small rivers, consisting, at present, of single pools; they both join and fall into the Ilek, the course of which we could discern by the trees growing on its banks. It flowed, with many windings, on our right hand till we reached it, after travelling about twenty-eight wersts. Upon the banks of this river, in a spot overgrown with trees, and very agreeable for this desert, we met with the Auls of the Sultan Arungasi, who afterwards accompanied us from that place to the Jan-Darja. An Aul signifies, among the Kirghis, several tents, (Kibit) standing together; Aul in the Tartar language means a village.

Arungasi was just employed in passing sentence of life and death; at first, it was said, that he would do us the honour of having the criminal, who had stolen some horses, put to death in our presence; but afterwards his life was spared, because the Sultan hoped by this clemency to obtain the protection of Heaven to the Jan-Darja. But the culprit did not entirely escape punishment; I was witness of it, and will here describe it. The delinquent, with his hands tied upon his back, almost naked, and his face blackened with charcoal, was driven round the tents; if he did not run fast enough, those who rode after him struck him with their whips. He was then compelled to go a second time round the tents, a rope being put into his mouth, which was fastened to the tail of a horse, on which a man rode before him, while another horseman behind him urged him on, and so he was driven a second time round the camp. After this he was upbraided with his crime, and forced to confess that he had well deserved his punishment. This being done, his horse's throat was cut, instead of his own, and each of the Kirghis cut off a piece of the still palpitating flesh, to make himself a delicate supper; not a morsel of the horse remained. The whole execution passed, of course, amidst the loudest cries and noise. I will here add some of the Sultan's laws, which, as far as I know, compose his whole code.

1st. He who steals any cattle, a camel, horse, sheep, &c. is punished with death: in general his head is cut off with a knife.

2d. A murderer must pay a certain value in sheep; from 500 to 2000 sheep, according to his wealth; if he cannot pay this sum he suffers death.

3d. To hinder horses from running away, three of their legs are tied together with a thong, contrived for that purpose; if a person steals such a thong, both his ears are cut off.

4th. Other trifling faults, quarrels, affrays, &c. are punished by flogging.

The delinquent, who is to suffer death, is placed bound on the ground; then he must repeat aloud certain prayers prescribed by the Koran; if he does not know them, which is almost always the case, they are repeated to him by a Mollah, and he must say them after him; when this is done they cry, "it is done," and the executioner, who is any person that may be chosen, performs his office.

On the 18th of October we again halted for the day. Arungasi, who had before presented us with an ox and several sheep, waited on the ambassador early the following morning, but the ambassador, on account of his situation, could not

return his visit. The fine weather invited us to walk on the banks of the Ilek, a pretty river about 60 paces broad. A great number of shell-fish live in its sandy bed, but with all my pains I could find only five different species. We found the little ponds or lakes to abound in fish, but only of three kinds, namely, the pike, the carp, and the white fish. The water of these ponds was rather salt. The Sultan Arungasi having still some affairs to settle, set out some days later than we did, who continued our journey on the 19th. We went at first up the Ilek, which was on our right hand, for about four wersts; when we crossed it, and left it pretty far to the left, till we reached it again, at sun-set, having gone 31 wersts. On the left side of the river, there is a long row of pretty high hills, which are only ancient graves.

The Ilek is bordered in its whole course with trees and shrubs, especially the silver poplar, the black poplar, the aspen, and several species of willow; it is the last river beyond the Russian frontiers, the banks of which are bordered with trees;---farther to the south, the face of Nature becomes more and more melancholy, till it attains the highest degree of sterility, in Bucharia itself, as we shall see in the sequel.---After proceeding 28 wersts we encamped on a small spring rivulet, which consisted at present only of separate pools: it falls into the Ilek, and is called Tambutak, from the sepulchre of a Tartar Prince, close by, which consists of a square of brick, about 15 feet in breadth, eight in length, and 10 feet in height; it is hollow within; the walls are about four feet and a half thick; the bricks on the outside are burnt, those on the inside only dried clay. A square hole is left on each side. Besides this sepulchre, we met with many graves like those we had already seen.

From Tambutak we came the following day across the Batbakli, i. e. moory; it falls into the Buschtamag, or five throats, because five streams there join, which contribute to form the Ilek. After travelling 30 wersts, we encamped on a pond called Suukssu, or cold water, where, as far as the eye could reach, nothing but the desolate Steppe was to be seen. So far we had always fine weather;---the night temperature was only a few degrees below zero, by day the sun afforded an agreeable warmth: but the sky now became gloomy, the cold disagreeable, and in the evening the thermometer being at 8 degrees of Reaumur, below zero, we had a fall of snow.

On the 23rd of October we left the Suukssu, where we had halted one day. The sky had cleared up during the night, and in the morning early it was very cold; even in the day it was from 10° to 12° of Reaumur. After going 16 wersts, we

passed a pretty considerable rivulet, Issanbai, i. e. rich in health; and some wersts farther, a second, called like that we passed on the 21st, Batbakli: both come from the south, and fall into the Ilek. After 35 wersts we encamped near a small river, Talaschbai, i. e. rich in quarrels: 16 wersts from this, we passed, on our left hand, a small river, called Karagandi, from a low shrub called Karagan, which abounds there. On its banks are numerous petrifactions, especially of shells. The rivulet was hard frozen, and we took ice with us to our resting place for the night, which we reached after travelling 32 wersts, and halted in a large plain, quite overgrown with Artemisia, which afforded excellent fodder for the horses and camels: the latter eat with great avidity the dry stalks of that plant.

From Orenburg to this place we had in general ascended, as the course of the rivers which we passed evidently shews. Our journey on this last day was constantly ascending, and at length pretty rapidly, till we reached the highest point, a few wersts from the place where we encamped for the night. Here there is an extensive level, which has the name of Bussaga, i. e. the threshold, because at the highest point, it determines the course of the rivers, and not as if you came into a different country, for it is as desolate on the one side as on the other. The country all around is a sterile clay, in which no grass grows, but only two kinds of Artemisia, and several lichens. The 25th of October we saw on our right many elevated graves or tumuli, overgrown with grass, and some wersts farther, on an eminence, several graves marked out by stones: on many stood an irregular red stone, with various characters on it, which probably signify no more than the words of the Koran, Lah-illah-illalah (i. e. besides the one God, there is no God,) and prove that those graves are not very old, but of Mahometan origin. The characters were of the same age as the erection of these stones, as might be seen by the lichens, which spread over the characters as well as on the rest of the stone. Between these tumuli there was another square brick building, as I have before described, but it was still more dilapidated; another similar one had stood near it, of which nothing remains but the foundation of the walls. The stones of the sepulchres, as well as the bricks, were all covered with lichens.

When we came to the little river Iaman-Tirmissu, which was frozen over, I crossed the ice, at a place where the right bank was about 60 feet high, to look for petrifactions, when suddenly something precipitated itself from above, and fell upon the ice, not far from me. In my first surprise I thought it was a man, but it was a Saiga (Antelope Saiga) which pro-

bably had been chased by dogs, and in the rapidity of its flight had not perceived the precipice; it was dashed to pieces by the fall; it was a female, brown above and white below, with a very short white tail. The Saiga lives in the Kirghis steppe, in herds, like all antelopes: in spring and autumn, when it is a dry season, and the burning sun has destroyed all the grass in the steppe, it often comes in herds over the river Ural, to the Russian territory, and commits great ravages, especially in the corn-fields. It is found in the whole Kirghis steppe, to the country about Bucharia, where, as well as another antelope, which lives in the mountains near Samarkand, it is often tamed by the Bucharians, and runs about in the court-yards of those who are rich.

Continuing our journey through the same description of country, we halted, on the 31st of October, at the little river Kurwandschur, about three wersts from an eminence, on which there is an ancient burying-ground, where, as the Kirghis believe, Kalmucks were buried; they relate that a hundred years or more ago, they did not know whether Mahometans or Infidels were buried there; it was therefore resolved to open some of the graves, where they found skeletons of men sitting on horseback, and many articles of silver, such as sabres, stirrups, &c.; women were also found, whose necklaces, consisting of pearls and precious stones, were put into their mouths. The sepulchres consisted of heaps of stones, lower in the middle, like some I have mentioned before. It may be believed that the Kirghis really opened the graves, not to look for treasures, but to discover whether Mahometans of former ages were buried there; for such places are sacred in their eyes, and the only spots where they now bury their dead; wherever there is a Tartar sepulchre, Kirghis graves are seen all round it.

On the 2d of November, we made a long day's journey, and did not reach, till half-past eight in the evening, our intended resting place, lake *Karakul*, that is black lake, or *Chodsakul*, from a rich Kirghis, of the name of Chodsa, who is buried there. The Kurwandschur, which lay a little to our left, on our day's journey, falls into this lake. On the 3d, we halted upon the Karakul, which was distinguished by some marshes and a great quantity of reeds; to judge by appearances, it must be very extensive in the spring. The Kirghis say that it takes a day to ride round it.

The next day, at some distance from the Kuraka, we came to several lakes, which we left on our right. These lakes are probably all connected in the spring, and form the great Karakul. After passing them we went some wersts over a flat

Steppe, and reached the sandy desert of *Uluburssuk*, i. e. the great Burssuk. Properly speaking, it cannot be called a desert, for the vegetation is more diversified than in the rest of the Steppe: we found there several shrubs and plants, an acacia, astragalus, and some other plants; there was particularly a great quantity of reeds, with the roots of which the sand, in many places, is interwoven in all directions, and which prove that the whole tract has but lately arisen from Lake Aral.

The country itself consists of sand hills; it is quicksand, and it is surprising that the plants can live in it; it would, indeed, be impossible, did not nature strive to overcome, by instinct, every obstacle which she lays in her own way; thus, for instance, the roots, which in other soils are but small, ran for five, ten, or more paces under the sand, partly to bring sufficient nourishment to these plants, in the dry and parched soil; partly not to be left wholly bare by the sand, which is easily carried away by the wind.

After going thirty wersts we had crossed the sandy desert, which extends to lake Aral, and encamped at the east end of it, near a little lake surrounded with fountains, the superfluous water of which flows into it. About three wersts before we came to the place, we saw, in the desert, a large bare spot, consisting of white bitter salt, of a considerable depth. Such places are very common in the Steppe; they are salt lakes dried up, most of which are filled with water in the spring. The journey through the deep sand had fatigued our horses so much that we were obliged to halt again the next day, which gave me an opportunity to examine the surrounding country. The lake was quite dried up, and its bright surface, which I had taken for ice the day before, was composed of that bitter salt. There was similar lakes in the neighbourhood, one of which, instead of the bitter salt, contains beautiful sea salt; this lake was also dried up, the surface of pure salt about two inches and a half thick: under this it was mixed with earth.

On the 8th of November, after travelling ten wersts, we reached an eminence, from which we could overlook the country before us to a great distance; it consisted of many large and small, even, sandy bare spots, which had a dazzling white appearance from the efflorescence of the bitter salt upon the surface, so that at a distance, where the whiteness is not so dazzling, they look like water; between these salt spots there were patches of sand, which were scantily covered with the usual plants of the Steppe; but upon the salt there was not a trace of vegetation.

On the 10th of November we rested for a day near several

springs with sweet water, called *Saribulak*, which enabled me to examine the surrounding country. Three wersts to the north a high bank (above 200 feet high) extends from west to east; before this bank, and connected with it, are many equally high and bare hills, to which the rain and the influence of the weather have given singular shapes; they consist of marle, which in many places is so soft that it forms a sandy clay. In this clay there is an innumerable quantity of univalve and bivalve shells in pretty good preservation, also bones of glires, vertebræ and teeth of fish, and bones and skulls of the common horse, (and not of the wild horse, as the Ural Cossacks, to whom I showed these skulls, and who were able to judge, unanimously affirmed.) Among the univalves two kinds of murex were particularly well preserved; of the bivalve Cardium two small species were in such an amazing quantity that they formed nearly the whole mass. There were also two kinds of turbinates, and many worm shells.

These hills, as I have said, have very picturesque forms, the whole together having the appearance of a ruined castle, with watch towers built before it. The leader of our caravan affirmed that, only sixty years ago, lake Aral extended to this place, though its nearest bank is now sixty wersts distant. It is therefore probable, that all the shells found here are still living in that lake. A well, which the Kirghis had dug early in the morning, contained good water, only it had again a strong smell and taste of hydrogen gas.

On the evening of the 14th we reached a sandy desert called Sapak-kum, in which we proceeded for six wersts with great difficulty; the high and loose sand hills were very troublesome to our caravan; in the evening we encamped on a bay of the Aral, the smaller creeks of which spread far around. None of these creeks were frozen, though the water in them was much shallower than in the bay which we left in the morning, which was covered with ice four inches thick. The sand of the Sapak-kum is mixed with innumerable shells of the same kind as those which lie on the banks of the Aral; it is not however to be understood that lake Aral overflows this tract; on the contrary, it is well known that a few years ago it was entirely under water, and the traveller evidently sees that it is of the very latest formation: that this Steppe is not overflowed in the spring by the water of the Aral, is evident from its being the resort of numberless kinds of mice, which would not frequent a country that was inundated a part of the year, when they must naturally perish. The subterraneous dwellings of these mice are often very troublesome to the traveller, the ground being frequently so undermined that the

horse is in danger of breaking his legs, from its giving way at every step. The next day (November 15th) we had six wersts further to go through the sand of the Sapak-kum, which was bounded, on its eastern edge, by dried up salt ponds; in one place there was fine sea-salt, and under it lay a firm compact bitter salt, which turned the edge of the hatchets with which the sea salt was hewn. Twenty one wersts further on we came to a great lake of fresh water, which is connected with the Sir Darja; it is called the bay of the Sir. It was hard frozen all over; in fact, we had for the last week an extraordinary degree of cold for that country, from fifteen degrees to eighteen degrees of Reaumur. An uncommonly large species of *mya* lay on its banks, and another bivalve shell in great abundance. Going on, till we had travelled twenty-five wersts and a half, we rode round this bay and encamped on the south side of it.

Our caravan halted here two days, to make an excursion to the mouth of the Sir. We set out early the next morning, accompanied by forty Cossacks, rode northwards, about the bay, the longest extent of which is, from N. E. to S. W. and proceeded along its bank for about 35 wersts, till we reached its junction with the Sir, and then 15 wersts on the right bank of that river, to the place where it falls into Lake Aral. Along the Sir are many small lakes, formed by its overflowings, and some of them are still connected with it. The banks of these lakes, and particularly those of the great bay, are almost every where covered with reeds to a considerable extent, which grow three times the height of a man, and even more; on the mouth of the Sir, they are so abundant, and the banks of the Aral are so thickly covered with them, that we could not properly see the lake itself; as far as the eye could reach, the western horizon was bounded with reeds, and we had no time to look out for an eminence. These reedy plots are inhabited by many very poor Kirghis, who subsist by agriculture and fishing. Having been plundered of every thing in the preceding spring by the people of Chiwa, they had at that time but very few cattle, which are fed on young reeds. Their huts, which are made of reeds, are chiefly in the midst of the plots, in order to be protected against wind and weather. The reed is every thing to these people; it serves them for fuel, affords materials for buildings, food for the cattle, and by burning the stubble, they obtain an excellent manure, which makes the grass grow with great luxuriance. The corn-fields, which are always near the water, consist of several small sunk spots, separated from each other by little dams.

The above bay of the Sir may be about 25 or 30 wersts long in a straight line; its breadth differs considerably. The bay as well as the Sir were hard frozen; the fishermen say that it is about forty feet deep, and has a pretty strong current, so that it requires in each boat three men to row against the stream: but if we consider their wretched boats, which are constructed in a very singular and curious manner, we must wonder that they can go against the stream at all; they are flat-bottomed, with perpendicular sides, are pretty large, and consist entirely of little pieces of wood, from two to three, at the utmost four feet in length, and from three to four inches thick, which are fastened together with wooden pegs, there is no iron in the whole boat, and as the pieces of wood of which it consists are irregular and crooked, it is no wonder that one man is always employed in baling out the water. Yet such a boat is a great treasure to a Kirghis of this part, because the wood is fetched many hundred wersts from Turkestan. It serves them not only in fishing, but in summer also, to convey the caravans over the river, from which they derive great profit; most of the boats are so large, that from four to six camels, not loaded, can be carried over at once, and for every camel, they charge 17 ells of a coarse Bucharian cotton stuff; they will not take money: the price is certainly high, but the labour is considerable.

In this desert country, there is no wood whatever; nor, except the reeds upon the banks, any grass or other forage, for the cattle. Here and there are a few stunted shrubs. We passed the night at the north of the Sir, and continued our journey back at sun-rise, and joined our caravan soon after sun-set, having ridden nine hours without stopping. I was very cold, and some snow fell. On our arrival we learnt that the caravan of Bucharians, coming from Orenburg, would soon overtake us.

On the 18th of November, we left the bay of *Kamuschli.* One road lay over undulating argillaceous sand; on the left there were many steep ledges, often rising like terraces one above the other, which were probably the former banks of lake Aral. Three wersts before we reached our night's quarters, we ascended an eminence called Aküräk (white duck). To the south-east of our camp we saw two hills, on which there were many decayed sepulchres of the Kirghis; that on the right hand is called *Kutbai,* and that on the left *Sutbai,* from two distinguished Kirghis buried there. The next day, soon after we set out, we passed between Kutbai and Sutbai, and left, on the S.W. another hill, upon which there was also a large sepulchre and many inconsiderable graves of the Kirghis. I will

give a short description of this one Kirghis monument, which will suit all the rest, which are very frequent in the S. W. desert, particularly beyond the Sir; it consists of a round building, with a vaulted cupola, with a small pillar on the top, in front a projecting entrance with a Gothic arch, and about it four pillars, united with the building, which are a little higher than the break where the cupola begins. They are built for the most part of bricks, sometimes also of rough stones. All these monuments are very new, and built by the Bucharians, whom the Kirghis pay for their trouble, either with sheep or corn; the Kirghis are used to perform their devotions at these places. The whole, however, is a miserable work, and I mention it only because people in Europe form notions of such things very different from the reality. The graves of the poorer Kirghis in the southern desert, where there are no stones, consist of a sloping roof of clay rather lower behind than in front.

On the 20th of November, we halted on the right bank of the Sir, uncertain how we should cross it; it was only partially frozen, yet horses and unloaded camels passed backwards and forwards. The weather became more mild, and there was no prospect that the ice would become firmer; we therefore hastened to get the open places next the bank, filled up with reeds, and on the following day, the artillery and loaded waggons were conveyed over the river without accident; the rest of the caravan followed on the 22d of November. Our passage was very fortunate; one camel, indeed, fell through the ice, but was saved as well as the burthen. In two hours our caravan was on the opposite side; we were followed by that of the Bucharians, which had overtaken us two days before, and had brought us news that the caravans of Chiwa, from Orenburg, had been entirely plundered by the Kirghis.

The breadth of the river in this place was nearly 800 feet; the banks were not every where steep, but in many places flat, and no where much above the level of the water; nay, in many places, at a distance from the river, the land was certainly below it. On both banks, for several wersts together, there is a boundless tract of reeds, which serves as a retreat for wild boars and tigers; the former are very numerous. There is no appearance of woods or shrubs, such as one is used to see upon the banks of rivers; the Sir creeps slowly and sluggishly through the reedy marshes, to the great pool, the Lake Aral. Ravens, crows, and magpies, collected in great numbers in our camp; they were so starved in this desolate country, that these birds, which are otherwise so shy, ventured within four or five steps of persons who were eating, and en-

deavoured, by a desperate leap, to carry off a piece of meat: they followed us on our route, alighted upon the camels, and tried to steal the meat out of the bags.

On the left side of the Sir we went three wersts up the stream, as far as Karatubä, a sandy eminence and a burying place of the Kirghis; then leaving it a little on the left, we encamped near a small lake, having gone only about nine wersts through high reeds. Many deep graves and the traditions of the Kirghis indicate that the place was formerly inhabited; the old town of Jankend stood about one day's journey farther up the stream; on the right side of the Sir, were many sherds of broken vessels, and bricks, glazed with different colours, point out the spot.

On the following day we travelled through the same uniform Steppe, and on the 24th reached the Kuwan-Darja, a small river only twenty-five or thirty paces broad, and in some parts pretty deep in comparison with its breadth; the water is fine and clear; and the banks by no means so thickly grown with reeds as those of the Sir. On the 27th and 28th we ascended the Kuwan, and encamped in a large plain covered with reeds, which was full of herds of swine: our Cossacks killed eleven of these animals. On the 29th, when we halted in the above plain, we nearly came to blows with our Kirghis guides, who already pronouncing their watchword *alatsch*, hastened from all sides with their arms, but order was soon restored by the infantry, which marched to the spot, and by the interference of the elder and more reasonable Kirghis.

On the 30th of November we entirely left the Kuwan, and took the shortest course to the Jan-Darja. The way was through reeds and then over sandy hills, till having gone thirty wersts we encamped in an agreeable spot, but without water. The trees, which we had before met with in the Steppe, but only as shrubs, are called by the Kirghis and Bucharians, Saxaul, and attain there the height of twelve or fourteen feet, the wood is very solid and heavier than water, but cannot be worked in any manner, being extremely brittle; it has the peculiarity of burning nearly without smoke, for which reason it is highly prized by the Kirghis; the coals are remarkably heavy, and burn for a long time under the ashes. This tree is of the class of those which have the male and female flowers perfectly separate, the former consists of a bunch of stamina, without calix or corolla; the latter, on the contrary, is pretty large and consists of five petals. There are considerable woods of this Saxaul, which are very pleasant, and in summer, when this tree is in flower, those spots must be very romantic, compared with the other parts of the Steppe.

On the 1st of December we had a pleasant journey through woods of Saxaul, which was very agreeable to us who had for a long time seen nothing but sand. To our left we saw the ruins of an ancient town or fortress, which were very much decayed. In one of the buildings, which was the largest, about four fathoms high, there were still two windows, in the Gothic style, the whole was of unburnt bricks, four or five inches thick, mixed here and there with some that were burnt. As far as we could see, it had consisted of three walled inclosures, one within the other; here and there, in the line of the walls, were the ruins of the buildings. For a great distance around there were numerous fragments of broken pots, not glazed. These ruins, which were probably a fortress, are called by the Kirghis, *Kutschuck*, who affirm that they are of Tartar origin: but no reliance can be placed on their assertions; they ascribe every thing in the desert, of which they do not know the origin, to the Tartars, who lived there immediately before them.

After travelling thirty-four wersts we suddenly came out of the Saxaul wood, and saw the former bed of the Jan-Darja before us. We halted here the next day to provide ourselves with water for five days' journey through the sandy desert, which is called the Kisilkund. For this purpose we filled all our leather bottles with water, and the sacks with ice.

Nothing remained of the Jan-Darja but its ancient bed, in which there were here and there small pools of corrupt water, which had a smell of sulphurous hydrogen gas. It is said not to be very long since this river ceased to flow, and that it was nearly equal to the Sir-Darja. "Ah," said our caravan leader, a pious Mahometan, with tears in his eyes, "when I was here seven years ago, what a fine river was this! God has reduced it every year, till it is now quite dried up."

On the 3d of December, well stocked with water and ice, we continued our journey; we traversed the bed of the Jan-Darja almost perpendicularly, and then proceeded through an extensive and almost bare plain, the soil of which is a barren clay, which even after we had gone thirty-three wersts to our encampment for the night, stretched out as far as the eye could see. In this plain were many ruins of ancient towns and sepulchres, which are filled with quicksand; if the Kirghis are questioned respecting the names and number of these ruins, they say, "who can name all the towns that formerly stood there." Probably this country was, formerly, as populous as Bucharia now is; and was watered by the Jan-Darja, as Bucharia is by the Kuan and Wafkan.

On the 4th, in order to make our day's journey longer, we

set out at four in the morning: travelling in the dark was new to us, and gave us much pleasure; the setting moon and the fire of our camp, which was visible at a great distance, had a striking effect. Having gone some wersts through the above plain, we came into the actual Kisilkum, that is, red sand. This desert has the same appearance as the former; an ocean of sand with little hills, which, in some places, formed small chains; the sand is not so deep; that is, it is firmer.

The Bucharians say, that many attempts have been made, and in different places, to dig wells, but always without success: others again say, that water might be found, but that it is not done in order to be more secure against the robberies of the Chivans, who cannot remain so long in places where there is no water, to watch for the caravans. We travelled that day forty-two wersts by four o'clock in the afternoon, and the next day forty-four wersts.

On the road we met several Kirghis coming from Bucharia; they brought us news that four thousand Chivans were waiting for us at Bukan, (the next well) with hostile intentions. We, therefore, immediately sent a Tartar to inquire into the truth of this report. He joined us the next day, at the end of the desert, informing us that he had not met with any signs of an enemy. The report of the Kirghis was, however, not quite false, for a week afterwards the second half of the Bucharian caravans, coming from Orenburg, was plundered and entirely destroyed; the caravans from Orsk and Troizk, which followed it, turned back.

On the 6th we set out at three in the morning, and after thirty-five wersts the way turned to the right, towards the well of Bukan, and at forty wersts we reached the end of the Kisilkum; we rode six wersts further and encamped there, about fifteen wersts to the east of the well Bukan, in an undulating sandy desert, where two kinds of artemisia afforded some fodder for our cattle. The plain through which we passed is a clayey sand; it is nearly surrounded by the Kisilkum mountains, at least, on the north, west, and south.

On the 8th we halted at Juskuduk, or the hundred wells, which is no exaggeration, there being in fact an amazing number of wells near that place; but most of them are decayed, and appear only as corrupt stinking pools; one alone is in perfectly good condition, and contains good water sufficient to supply a whole caravan; it is lined with brick work, is about seven feet in diameter, and, to the surface of the water, about nine feet deep; the water is said to be between three and four feet deep.

On the 12th of December we set out, at five in the morn-

ing; the sky was cloudy, but the moon afforded us light. Our road led us through the plain in which we had encamped, so that the low mountains were on our right and left, at first nearer, then more distant, and, at last, the plain extended so far that only higher mountains were visible, particularly on the right, at a great distance. At the end of thirty-seven wersts a new country suddenly appeared to us; we looked down from an eminence into an extensive plain, which was surrounded by low hills; in the middle of which we were astonished to see a little wood of mulberry tree; and there we took up our lodging for the night. In the middle of this wood is a small eminence, at the foot of which, under the shelter of the far-spreading roots of a mulberry trees, there is a little fine clear reservoir of water, on the sandy bottom of which a number of little springs bubble up, and make the water appear as if it boiled. The water is lukewarm, and seems, therefore, to be cold in summer and warm in winter; it smells like gunpowder, the taste indicates sulphurous hydrogen gas. The stone next the spring is compact feldspar, the rest of the place is compact limestone, and to this stone the spring probably owes its origin. The earth, close to the spring, is black and slimy, and has the same qualities as the water by which it has probably been deposited. In the neighbourhood are similar springs, with the same qualities, the waters of which join with the first, and so form the origin of a brook, which is said to flow into the Amu-Darja. The grove with the spring is considered as sacred by the Mahometans, and no one ventures to do the least injury to the trees; under the hill, they say, a saint of the name of Karaata, (black father) is buried, whence the place is called by that name. For this reason many ceremonies are performed there. All travellers who arrive there, wash and say their prayers: the sick make pilgrimages to this place, and offer sacrifice; a part of every thing that the patient eats, is laid down near the spring; old clothes and rags are then laid aside and offered; the various rags being tied to the trees (this is in general the way in which the Mahometans offer to their saints, and in Bucharia itself the trees, in the sacred places, are hung with rags; and at the rocks lie little heaps of fruit and corn.) If many of the patients recover, as they say, it is probably owing to the water; but the neighbouring burying-ground, where there are pretty many graves, seems to prove also that numbers die.

At Karaata we met with six Bucharian soldiers, who keep guard at this place, which is the most northern frontier of Bucharia, but they are chiefly placed there to accompany mer-

chants, who arrive there with their goods, to the city of Bucharia, that there may be no fraud in the payment of the customs.

On the 13th, we travelled 38½ wersts to our encampment, near which many springs issued from the grey limestone; they are called Agetma, and contain the same kind of water as the spring of Karaata. Not far from this place are many hundred small clay hills, with various low shrubs growing on them; they appear to be the remains of the country, which was formerly higher, but washed away by inundations; among them is one larger hill, which is an artificial mound, and still serves to overlook the country, for there is the second Bucharian frontier post, which likewise consists of six men. It is said that a fort formerly stood there: many bricks lying around seem to prove this.

On our arrival at Agetma, we met fourteen camels, laden with fruit and bread, and fodder for our horses, which had been sent to the embassy, by the Khan of Bucharia; as well as 30 Bucharian soldiers to receive the embassy.

On the 14th of December we halted at Agetma. The plain is there very extensive, like the plain near Karaata; it seems to have been a lake, for the hills which surround it have every appearance of having been formerly washed by the water: the next steep bank that I visited was about 400 feet high; it consists in general, as well as the surrounding country, of lime-stone. From this high bank I could see, at a distance to the east, a lofty mountain, called Nura-tau, which we had seen for two or three days before; its summit, which is said to be about 100 wersts distant, rose above the horizon; and we also saw many lower mountains. The little river Wafkand, which waters Bucharia, rises on the Nura-tau.

Leaving Agetma on the 15th, we crossed the plain and afterwards several hills, beyond which we came to one of the most dreary deserts that we had met with on our whole journey: there was hardly a trace of vegetation; however, the sand was not so deep and the road not so bad, as on former occasions: we found in some places a firm clay bottom under the sand; and about our encampment, where ruins of a fortress or entrenchment were still to be seen, there were evident marks of former cultivation, which agrees with the tradition, that this part was formerly inhabited, and that the quicksand annually encroaches on that side, upon the grounds of the Bucharians. The next day we set out at six o'clock, and soon came to a well, which is lined with wood and two fathoms deep. Near it is a row of five dwellings for travellers or guards, all built of clay.

Many persons, induced by curiosity, came from the neighbouring villages to meet us; and after going some wersts we at length saw the promised land, in the horizon beyond the desert. At a short distance before the country seats, which are called villages, 200 Bucharian horsemen came to meet us, drew up in two lines, and let the embassy go between them. We then passed through some estates destroyed by quicksand, and came to the camp of the Kusbegi (prime minister), who had come from Bucharia to receive the embassy. His camp consisted of many party-coloured tents, and his retinue of 500 men. From there we went about three wersts between estates which had suffered more or less.

The quicksand, as we have already said, annually encroaches on the cultivated land. We are told that five years before, a piece of ground, planted with vines and melons, was entirely covered with the sand, and when the wind carried away the sand two years afterwards, the fruits were said to be perfectly well preserved, and in the finest condition.

On the following day, the 17th of December, we travelled only eighteen wersts, partly because the crowds of people hindered us, and partly because the roads were too bad to allow us to go faster. We proceeded without interruption, between country seats, till, at the end of sixteen wersts, we reached Wafkand, a small town, which may be about three wersts in circumference; it is surrounded with a wall of clay, of which almost all the buildings consists, and may be known by a tower built of bricks, which is about sixteen or twenty fathoms high, broader at the top than at the base, and smallest in the middle. We left this town on our right hand, passing close under its walls: at the southern side of it we crossed a large canal, or arm of the Wafkand and encamped two wersts beyond it, among country seats.

A Bucharian country seat (called in the Tartar Aul, and in the Persian Sachra) consists of a square, surrounded by a high clay wall, in which the dwellings are situated; but as they are lower than the wall which encloses them, they cannot be seen on the outside. The lands lie round this square, and can be laid under water at pleasure by means of numerous canals.

On the 18th of December our road still lay between country seats, till close to the city of Bucharia. After riding about fourteen wersts we arrived at the river Wakan, which further below spreads into a lake, and is called Karakul, or the black lake. At the place where we crossed it, over a stone bridge, it is about thirty paces broad, and not deep.

After we had gone twenty-five wersts the embassy encamped three wersts from Bucharia, and I went through the city gate

as a merchant, and took up my lodging in the Tartar caravansary.

And so ended our tedious journey, which had taken two months and nine days.

GEOLOGICAL RETROSPECT.

When I look back upon the extensive and desolate tract which we have traversed, I must consider the greatest part of the desert to be a production of modern times; the barren soil, without any mould, the naked sterile banks of the rivers, the many salt ponds in the Steppe, the former banks of lake Aral, which are still very distinguishable, and which I have observed above an hundred wersts distant from the present borders of the lake, indicate this; the ruins of the city of Jankend, which, according to old maps, stood close to the junction of the Sir with lake Aral, are now four days' journey distant from it. To judge by the rapidity with which lake Aral is said still to diminish from year to year, it certainly cannot be much above a thousand years since this lake was united with the Caspian Sea, for they are separated by a flat desert Steppe, like that which we have passed through; and it is well known that the Caspian Sea diminishes as well as lake Aral: tracts of country at the junction of the Ural with the Caspian Sea, which formerly could not be passed at all, or only for a short time in the year, are now dried up, &c.: I am even inclined to go farther, and to affirm, that at a time not further back than the commencement of our era, the Caspian Sea was connected with the gulf of Finland, with the Baltic. It is evident that the Caspian Sea, at the time of Pliny, extended very far to the north, because that naturalist considered that connexion still to exist. The geologist who has seen the whole, will not find this conjecture so improbable as it may at first appear; for instance, what kind of rocks are between Orenburg Astrachan, and Moscow, far and near, to the right and left?—chiefly lime-stone of the latest formation, with petrifactions of all kinds, and sand-stone, both with horizontal strata;—beyond Moscow, to the north, is the same, as far as the Walda mountain, which extends from the west, and formerly, perhaps was a cape, and however, is nothing but a very insignificant and low Flotz lime-stone mountain. What is between the Walda mountain and Petersburgh? nothing but a sandy clay marsh land, which is impassable, except by means of logs of wood, laid down to form a road, and the rocks of which consist of foliated lime-stone, of late formation, likewise with horizontal strata, extending below St.

Petersburg, westwards to Esthonia and Livonia; and northwards, joining immediately to the granite of Finland; these countries, Esthonia and Livonia, likewise consist only of marshes, where the traveller, unacquainted with the road, is even now in danger of sinking into the bogs. Lastly, what is Prussia? a sandy desert, which human industry has cultivated. We have already seen that lake Aral, and the Caspian Sea, retire into narrower limits; but that the Baltic, namely, the Gulf of Finland, has retired, is proved, partly by the nature of the country round St. Petersburgh, and especially by the circumstance, that workmen digging in the ground, near the little town of Preussuisch-Holland, found a stone wharf, in which the iron rings, used for mooring vessels, were still fixed. This fact is known to the inhabitants of the town, and mentioned in its chronicles; it is true, I did not read it myself, for want of time, though it was offered me to read, when I passed through the town.*

All the mountains and ridges of the Kirghis Steppe, through which we travelled, are only low, inconsiderable, naked eminences, which I have not always ventured to call mountains, but hills; they resemble each other, and their external and internal appearance, is every where the same. The Mugosarki mountains, are, undoubtedly, the Trap formation of the northern Ural mountains, which become flatter at Werg-Uralsk; they stretch almost direct from north to south, and reach their visible end, at the shores of Lake Aral.

The Ildertau---Kapkata---Pütpüldück---Susses Kara chains, are all connected together, and probably belong to the lofty Nuratau, which is to the north-east; the formation of which, I however cannot state. These are the five chains of mountains which form the skeleton of the Steppe through which we passed; they are all low, rocky, naked, and bare, and all belong to the transition and Flotz-trap formation. The flat, or undulating Steppe, lying between them, is partly of the Flotz formation, and partly alluvious land.

It is an important circumstance, that the Sir-Darja has changed its course; about thirteen days' journey from lake Aral, it divides into two branches; the northern, which is now the main stream, is justly considered as the continuation of the river; the lower is the Kurvan-Darja, which, at present, has but little water, but is said, never to have been considerable, as is evident from its narrow bed: from this branch, about

* Mr. Counsellor Von Pansner, assures us, that a precisely similar circumstance happened in a place in Livonia; and it is a well-known fact, that the gulf has become much shallower about Cronstadt, since the first survey made by Peter the Great.

a day's journey below the first division, issues the third arm of the Sir, the Jan-Darja, which is said formerly to have been the main stream, as its bed, which still remains, plainly proves; but it has been dried up for some years. This circumstance perfectly corresponds with the fact, that the Amu-Darja (Oxus,) which undoubtedly once flowed into the Caspian, and the ancient bed of which is said to be very discernible, has changed its course, and now flows into lake Aral. The fertility of the Kirghis desert decreases, the further you go from the Russian frontier, to Bucharia itself, and, in general, is at the lowest, between lake Aral and Bucharia; there a single Carex, is almost the only fodder for horses, and in some places an Artemisia; and for camels, the *Ferula persica.*

Extracts of Letters from Mr. Jakovlew, Secretary to the Embassy.

December 16th.

After having gone 17 wersts, we arrived at the village of Djigabachi. We received notice yesterday that our interview with the Bucharian vizier would take place to-day. At the distance of five wersts from the village, two hundred horsemen came to meet us; they were mounted on the finest horses that can be conceived. The inhabitants of the neighbouring village had come in great numbers to see the Russians. Some were on horseback, some on camels, some on foot, and some on donkeys. The crowd was so great that they obstructed our passage, and we were obliged to halt at every step. But the jessaouls, or police-officers, armed with large sticks, without mercy began to strike men, camels, horses, and asses; their blows fell like hail on the Bucharians, who were very eager to see us; on all sides, turbans flew in the air, shewing the shaved heads of all these musselmen. It was in the midst of this throng, accompanied by drums beating, and with the aid of the constant exertions of the jessaouls, that we reached the place where the vizier expected us.

Some persons appeared to conduct us; the ambassador, captains Tsiolkovski and Meyendorf, lieutenants Volkhovski and Timofeiev, doctor Pander, the two interpreters, and myself, escorted by fifty Cossacks, advanced towards the place where the vizier was to receive us. We perceived tents striped with different colours; the largest was the audience chamber. Necessity obliged us to alight, for it was not possible to advance a step on horseback. Bucharian foot-soldiers, under arms, were drawn up on each side, they made a singular appearance, being men of different ages, old and young, dressed

in robes of different colours; some had caps, others turbans, or only drawers; some had boots, others none at all, all held their matchlocks in both hands. They have but two words of command, "rise" and "sit down;" they never pronounce the word fire, because the matchlocks cannot fire, and because the Bucharians have in fact no infantry. Before our arrival, the Khan had caused all the matchlocks to be collected; they got together 200: and the Khan desired all persons to announce themselves, who desired to hold a matchlock, when the Russian embassy should come to visit him. Thus was formed this terrible Bucharian infantry, through which our procession passed to wait upon the vizier.

He received us sitting, and had on his right hand four counsellors in the same posture. The ambassador placed himself opposite to him; we were desired to do the same, and though with our dress nothing could be more disagreeable than to sit on the ground, we were obliged to comply; we took our places opposite the four counsellors. Then began the ceremonies, congratulations, and compliments: the servants of the vizier now appeared, and set before each of us a dish, in which there were pistachios, dried raisins, manna, and a sugar-loaf.

The vizier is a man of about forty-five years of age, he speaks with ease, and a degree of emphasis: he has a particular manner of turning his eyes, and shrugging his shoulders. In about half an hour the four counsellors retired; we did the same; the ambassador remained alone with the vizier.

I had never seen such a throng, and so mixed a crowd: Bucharians, Chivans, Afghans, Kirghis, Hindoos, our Cossacks, the soldiers, Baschkirs, altogether formed a very striking sight. The weather was very fine, as clear and warm as in the month of July.

In about an hour the ambassador came out of the tent: we re-mounted our horses, and proceeded on our journey: it was four wersts from the tent of the vizier to the place where our Kibitki (tents) were already set up: we were told we were near the village, "there is the village," said a Bucharian, "but it is a fort."---"That is the same, it is a village." In fact it was one. When I entered it in the afternoon, I perceived that it consisted of four crenated walls built of brick, dried in the sun, with only two openings, a gate and a postern, and not a single window in the walls. Such is the outside of a Bucharian village. There is not the least appearance to indicate that there are any living beings behind those rude walls. If you enter by the postern, you perceive in the opposite wall, the gate, to which you go through a street, so narrow that a

loaded camel can hardly pass through it. On the two sides of this street you see only walls, as high as those on the outside, crenated in the same manner, and doors to the right and left: there are entrances to the houses, and you see in them the horses, camels, and asses, of the Bucharians. In every court there is a cistern and a well. The rooms have no windows, so that the doors are always obliged to be open. They have no notion of ovens, but they have in each room a hole, in which they put hot coals; over this hole they place a table covered with a thick carpet. The Bucharian sits down by the table, puts his feet under the carpet, and says he is warm. This carpet is the only ornament in the rooms.

Wapkand, 17th December.

The next day we proceeded on our journey. The crowd of people was the same, and the merciless jessaouls were equally active with their long canes. After we had passed through the town of Wapkand, we encamped at a short distance from its walls.

The Bucharians continued to-day, as they had done before, to crowd round us till late in the night; nothing could keep them at a distance, even the jessaouls at length gave it up. It was quite an amusement for us to see an innumerable multitude, which accompanied us from place to place, and when we stopped to encamp, ranged themselves round us, and remained sitting till night, without uttering a word. Our visit will be an era in the history of Bucharia. It is affirmed that the inhabitants of Wapkand hired a horse for two or three ducats, to see the Russians; and they got beat by the jessaouls into the bargain. In the afternoon a Bucharian, who was a pupil of some Indian jugglers, appeared. He had a monkey whose tricks filled the whole multitude with admiration. We too went out of our tents. The monkey was really extraordinary. None of us, not even Mr. Pander, the naturalist, had ever seen one like it. The Bucharian suddenly threw four knives into the air, the monkey caught one in each of his paws, held them fast, and walked, putting the points on the ground. He danced, saluted the company, and played as many tricks as a Russian bear.

On the following day, the 18th, we went five wersts beyond Wapkand, to the banks of the Sir-Icherchan, which we passed over a bridge of boats, bearing the name of Mikhter-Kassim, who built it: we went twenty-five wersts to Basartche: the jessaoul bachi, chief of the Khan's guard, came at the head of twenty horsemen to receive us, five miles before we reached the village.

Basartche, which is two wersts distant from Bucharia, be-

longs to the vizier; this village likewise resembles a fort; the interior is divided into courts and gardens. Our baggage remained there during our stay at Bucharia.

For four days together our soldiers, our cossacks, and ourselves, were in full uniform. In this interval the drums beat the general march, which gave infinite pleasure to the Bucharians, and especially to the jessaouls. They were continually begging the officers to order the drums to beat: we were almost tempted to think that it was to have an opportunity to exercise their canes, for at the first stroke of the drum the people rushed in a body towards the soldiers; the jessaouls, in their turn, fell upon the people, and their canes were in constant motion.

The road from Kagatan to Basartche, being continually intersected by canals, it cost much trouble to get the artillery over the wretched bridges which serve to cross them.

ENTRY OF THE RUSSIAN EMBASSY INTO BUCHARIA.

20th December.

The negotiations relative to the entry of the embassy into the capital are finished. To day the Khan has sent a letter to the ambassador, in which he accepts the proposals made by the latter.

As soon as the dispatch was received, the Russian embassy left Basartche, in the following order; thirty Ural Cossacks, with an officer; the Mollah Bourkhanbei Pansad-Bachi, Asad-Khan Da-Bachi, and twelve jessaouls; fourteen persons carrying presents; the Ambassador, at his right hand the Secretary to the Legation, holding in his hand the Emperor's letter; the Officers of the Staff of the Guard; Doctor Pander, and the Counsellor Chapochnikow; the Interpreters; the Gentlemen of the Suite; a hundred and fifty foot soldiers, commanded by M. Tsilkovski, captain of the guard; lastly, a hundred and fifty Cossacks of the Ural and of Orenburg, with their jessaouls.

I need not say that the crowd was prodigious; in the town it was still worse; the throng of spectators, of all ranks and ages, and both sexes, filled the streets in such a manner that we were obliged to stand still at every step. At last we reached the palace. The procession ranged itself outside of the square; we alighted near the great gate, and entered the palace. After we had crossed three courts full of Bucharians

seated, and holding in their hands matchlocks and falconets, the persons bearing the presents, and thirty infantry, without muskets, remained in the last court; we entered into the audience chamber, the ambassador having first given to the Bourkhan-Bei a list of the presents, then taking the emperor's letter from the hands of the secretary, he advanced.

The apartment was very large, a handsome Persian carpet covered the floor, the Khan was seated on a raised platform; he was dressed in a stuff resembling a shawl, had a rich dagger at his girdle, and a black aigrette in his turban, the vizier was standing at his right, his two sons at his left hand; on each side the officers of the Khan, dressed in silk, were ranged along the walls. The ambassador saluted him: "welcome," said the Khan, "approach." The ambassador remained standing at a considerable distance from the prince, and delivered the following speech in the Persian language.

"The Emperor of Russia, my most gracious master, expresses to your highness his sentiments of affection and esteem, and desiring to consolidate commerce, the source of the riches of the subjects of the two states, he has sent me as his ambassador to your highness. The contents of the Emperor's letter, will make your highness acquainted with the intentions of my sovereign towards a monarch, celebrated for his many and brilliant qualities, and the founder of the prosperity of his people. I shall esteem myself perfectly happy, if while I fulfil the orders of my sovereign, I can obtain the favour of your highness.

"His Majesty likewise sends to your highness, as a testimony of his friendship, some presents, which are the produce of the countries subject to his dominion."

The ambassador after he had finished speaking, kissed the letter of the Emperor, raised it above his head, delivered it to the vizier, and sat down again.

The Khan took the letter, and opened it; and after having read it aloud, said that he was happy to see that the wishes of the Emperor of Russia agreed with his own, and that for the advantage of the two states, it was proper that caravans should go frequently from Bucharia to Russia, and from Russia to Bucharia.

Then the ambassador presented us to the Khan. The prince put several questions to us respecting our journey, and the country of the ambassador, and enquired of him whether he had long inhabited Russia, &c.

At last he desired to see the thirty soldiers, who were in the court-yard; and they were introduced to him.

The ambassador bowed a second time and retired.

When we reached the house prepared for the embassy, the escort, and the baggage returned to Basartche.

THE CITY OF BUCHARIA,

Is rather longer than it is broad, and its longest diameter may be from three to four wersts; it is surrounded by a clay wall, from three to four fathoms high, with a breast-work, and embrasures.

The streets are very narrow; for a European particularly so: in the narrowest two people can hardly pass, and in the broader ones, a loaded camel touches the houses on both sides.

The dwelling houses are neatly built of clay, some rich persons have them partly of brick, of one or two stories, but not higher; the entrance to the street is through a very small door, so that when you walk through the street you see only clay walls on each side. The houses, without exception, have flat roofs; they have no windows whatever, and the rooms are lighted only by doors, which look into the court-yard.

The palace of the Khan, (called Aerk) lies on a clay hill 60 feet high, which is an artificial work; it takes almost half an hour to walk round it; the lower half is, at least externally, of bricks, the upper half clay: it is steep, only on one side there is a path leading obliquely to the residence of the Khan, which is built of bricks of different colours, glazed, with inscriptions. The other part of this mound is built up with clay huts standing close together, in which live the Khan's servants, women, &c. At the entrance of the palace are two high towers, built in the usual style of this country, at the top almost as broad, and even broader than below, and smallest at about two-thirds of their height. There are many such towers in the city; they are in general a distinction of a city, and considered as ornaments; they are used to proclaim from the summit the hour of prayer: the highest of them is particularly used to throw down from the top of it persons who are detected in illicit connexions of every kind, or who are found intoxicated; whereas other criminals, sentenced to death, after having had their throats cut, are hung up in the square before the Khan's palace, which is called Registan, where they remain three days. This Registan is the only open place in the whole city of Bucharia; even this is very small, and filled up with shops and butcher's shambles; in the midst of these shops stands the gallows, which is seldom vacant, for not only Bucharian

criminals are hung on it, but the heads of their enemies are exposed there in the oriental fashion.

The town is intersected by many canals, which are called Rud; whereas those out of the city, which water the fields, are called Arik. These canals supply with water many ponds lined with hewn stones; this water, which serves the inhabitants for drinking and other uses, is drained off, twice every month, and fresh water let in.

It is said that Bucharia contains 360 mosques, and 285 schools, in which there are three hundred teachers. The mosques and schools very much resemble each other; they are large and lofty brick buildings, having within, after the manner of convents, a large court (all the houses have such a court,) in front is a large and handsome gateway leading from the street. These mosques and schools have their estates; each of them has a steward, appointed by the Khan, and the teachers are paid out of the revenue. The estate consists chiefly of lands, or of caravansaries, of which there are many in the city; a caravansary consists of many stone booths, built close to each other, so as to form a square, which serves both to load and unload the camels, and to let them remain there, if necessary, for some days. Almost a third part of the city is composed of these caravansaries, market places, and booths; a market is not, as with us, a large open place, but a narrow street, with shops on both sides; there is a continual crowd, bustle, and disputing; in every shop you hear crying, "ah if you are a Musselman you must let me have the article for this price," the seller exclaims, "if you are a Musselman how can you ask such a thing?" Many Bucharians live all their lives in such a shop, without having any other dwelling.

Most of these shops remain open the whole week, others, on the contrary, only twice a week, namely, the jewel market and the slave market. In the jewel market they sell rough, polished, and also set stones. They chiefly consist of turquoise, rubies, violet fluorspar, polished cornelian, and calcedony; the lapis lazuli is seldom polished here, but almost always used as a colour for painting rooms, &c. The turquoise is brought rough from Persia and polished here. The polished cornelian and calcedony are said to be brought from Arabia, through Persia; they are polished in the form of seals and as beads; they are of excellent quality, and very cheap; the mode of selling them is by weighing them in a scale against pure silver; if any person should think this dear, as it at first seems to be, he will be convinced of his error if he makes a trial, by putting both into a scale. The lapis lazuli and the violet fluorspar come from Badakschan, by way of Kokand;

the latter is enormously dear: in its rough state, as it comes from Badakschan, it is called Isilan, and when it is polished here it is called finussa; the pood (thirty-six pounds) of lapis-lazuli costs, in its rough state, from twenty to forty Dutch ducats, according as more or less of the mass of the rock is attached to it; but the pure washed powder, as it is used for painting rooms, costs from two hundred to three hundred ducats and upwards. The ruby is called, in Persian, Sailan, and in the Tartar language, Jachet. There is, likewise, here a very dear precious stone, called lahl, which I take to be spinel;* it is rose colour, and fully agrees in its internal properties, hardness, and lustre, with the sapphire, which is also sometimes sold here. The prices of these stones are low, it is true, when compared with those of Europe, but the stones of a larger size are seldom perfect.

Besides these, many other polished stones, partly of the above-mentioned kind, are brought here for sale, which are found not far distant, in a place called Kamuschkand: whenever a high wind has blown, and disturbed the sand, these stones are found, and many other things, as amulets, in various shapes, gold, silver, and copper coins, &c. which belong to very different periods; partly to the Mahometan period after Mahomet, with Arabic and Persian inscriptions; partly to the time of the Greeks, with Greek inscriptions, and partly to a more ancient period, with inscriptions in a language with which I am unacquainted. The stones which are without an inscription, are either round or oval, convex above or angular; but they are all cut concave below, as if they had served to receive hair and the like; or they are adorned with inscriptions in characters unknown to me, with idols, dragons, quadrupeds, birds, &c. and have probably served as amulets; all these figures however are not raised, but engraved.

The slave market is also twice a week; persons of all nations and both sexes are sold there, except genuine Mahometans; but especially the Persians, who as followers of Ali, are considered as the greatest heretics; and by far the majority of the slaves here, that is, many many thousands, are Persians, who are most of them carried off and brought here for sale by the Truchmenians, who, make inscursions into the Persian provinces. The labour of agriculture, in Bucharia, is performed exclusively by Persian slaves.

When a merchant arrives, he puts up at some caravansary,

---

* This conjecture of the author is certainly well founded, as appears evident from the description of the Laal, or Lahl, given in the Persian treatise on precious stones, by Mahommed Ben Mansour.

where he hires one or two shops, according as he can afford it; here he has his goods, carries on his business, sleeps, dresses his wretched meals, and sometimes lives twenty or thirty years, in such a miserable hole, according to circumstances; that is, he either takes a journey every year and fetches a fresh stock of goods, or he remains stationary several years, and his countrymen or partners make the journey for him. Thus in the Indian caravansary, there are many Indians who have lived there above thirty years. The individuals of these several nations generally keep as much as possible together. Several caravansarys have a second story, each booth or shop having a small room over it, which serves as a kitchen or sitting room. Such a one I myself occupy, the close damp shops being intolerable to those who are not accustomed to them.

The caravans come from all parts of Asia.

1. From various frontier places of Russia, as Troizk, Orsk, Orenburg, and from Astrachan, by way of Chiva; they bring English and Russian goods, such as cloth, calicos, silk and cotton handkerchiefs, &c. brass, copper, iron, hardware, &c. The traders are, in general, Bucharians, Russian Tartars, and Armenians, from Astrachan, who take back Bucharian productions, especially silk and cotton, both raw and wrought, Cachmere and Persian shawls, indigo, Chinese wares, &c.

2. From Persia, Medsched, and Herat, there come annually only a few, (about 500) camels to Bucharia, bringing chiefly Persian silk and cotton manufactures, shawls, stuffs, &c. They take in return, partly Russian goods, especially silks and cottons, and a great quantity of raw cotton. The traders are Bucharians and Persians.

3. From Kokand, Kashkar, and Tashkend. The principal articles imported from Kashkar, are Chinese wares and tea. The caravans on their return take almost all kinds of articles of trade; especially all kinds of furs, gold thread and lace, real coral beads, cloth, printed calicos, &c. From Kokan and Taschkand the chief articles of importation are white calicos, which are printed here, besides these, silks, raw silk and cotton. The caravans on their return to Kokand and Taschkand, take the calicos which are printed here, and a few silks, besides taking for Kaschkan the things mentioned above. The merchants here are Kokaners and Bucharians, (Russian) Tartars, and Armenians. The caravan goes from here to Kokand, through Orutuba (the last Bucharian city) and Chosand, (first Kokandian town) in from fifteen to eighteen days, and from thence in twenty to twenty-two days to Kaschkar.

4. From Cashmere and Caboul, Cachmere shawls, printed Indian calicos, which are much better than those of this

place, Indian silks, embroidered with gold, of a particular quality, and indigo, (here called nil) are brought. From Cachmere 40,000 shawls are said to be annually exported, but of these only 3000 come to Bucharia. The returning merchants, who mostly consist of Afghans and Indians, (few Bucharians) take from here particularly, Dutch Ducats, which come from Russia.

The Afghans are all Mahometans, but do not shave their heads; they are fiery, hot, quarrelsome, and have a constant and unbiassed love for their country. The Indians consider the cow with religious veneration, and worship it; they cannot think or conceive any crime more dreadful than to kill a cow; and often when they see a piece of cow's flesh they begin to weep; they use the urine for all manner of purposes, mixing it in all their food; and as they are about three hundred, and have only one sacred cow, they are obliged to be very sparing, so that frequently only a few drops of urine are mixed with a pailful of water. They paint their countenances, chiefly the forehead over the nose, and the ears, in various figures and colours; this is probably intended as a charm, the colours being mixed up with the urine of the sacred cow. These Indians, notwithstanding their silly religion, are however a virtuous, good-natured, polite people, and by no means inferior in honesty to us orthodox christians, and to the Mahometans, who far exceed us in religious zeal, and are ready to sacrifice their lives for the truth. The Afghans, it is true, think themselves far superior to them on account of their true religion, but they esteem them on account of their probity and good-nature. The Indians, besides praying before the cow, likewise pay their adoration to the rising sun.

THE SOVEREIGNS OF BUCHARIA.

To come to the reigning Khan I will begin some generations back; but I cannot exactly state the era or length of the reigns; I here give the genealogy, as I had it from a mollah, in Bucharia.

Schaibani Chan left a son and heir, Abaidula Chan, who was succeeded by his son, Isskander Chan, who left two sons, Abdula Chan and Dschani Muhamed Chan; the first succeeded him in the government, and is said to have erected the first regular caravansary, about a hundred years ago; he left five sons, Din Muhamed, Baki Muhamed, Uali Muhamed, Imamkuli, and Nadir Machmed Chan: Din Muhamed inherited the

throne; he was succeeded by his son Abdul Asis Chan, who also left two sons, Subhankuli and Abaidula Chan; Subhankuli Chan inherited the throne, and was followed by his son Abulfais Chan. This Abulfais was murdered by the Usbeck Rachim Bi; and his son Abdul Mumin Chan, an infant between eight and twelve years of age, was placed on the throne; he enjoyed his dignity however only two or three months; for having once cut a water melon in two with a sabre, in the presence of his mother, and she asking him the reason, he said, I do not cut a melon, I cut off the head of Rachim Bi. The latter hearing this, did not feel himself at his ease, and therefore murdered him also. He had now liberty to do as he pleased, he married the sister of the murdered Abdul Mumin Chan, and so intruded himself into the royal family. He and the Usbeck Daniel Atalik, governed the kingdom, but, for appearance sake, placed on the throne an individual of the royal family of weak intellects, named Abdul Gasi Chan, and then did as they pleased. Rachim Bi died two years and a half after he had murdered Abdul Mumin: Daniel Atalik died some time after him, leaving a brave son, Schamerad Uälnahmi, who married the widow of Rachim Bi, (sister of Abdul Mumin Chan,) and thus likewise introduced himself into the royal family. The weak Abdul at length dying, Schamerad Uälnahmi ascended the throne; by the widow of Rachim Bi he had a son, the present sovereign, Emir Haider Khan, who ascended the throne, twenty-two years ago, on his father's death; he is a man of above forty years of age, indulging to excess in wine and sexual pleasures of all kinds. He is besides a devotee and bigoted Musselman, in the highest degree, and quite unfit for the business of government; his sole occupation is with religious exercises; he has daily a thousand scholars whom he instructs in the Koran. He has four sons, the eldest is Saidmir Abulhassan Chan; the second Bahadir Chan; and the third Umer Chan; the fourth is not known to me. The eldest, who is called also Tourou Khan, i. e. Crown Prince, has a wife of the family of Dschudat; the founder of this family lived 130 years ago, under the reign of Abdulah Khan. He was reputed a great saint, for which reason the Khan once sent to him, and asked him what was the best thing in this world, to which he replied, eating, drinking, and, in general, all sensual enjoyments, on which the Khan left him with indignation and contempt. Some time after this the Khan was affected with indigestion, and to such a degree that all the physians failed in curing it, whereupon Dschudat, the saint, came to him and asked him whether he was now of his opinion: the Khan answered in the affirmative and begged him to

relieve him; Dschudat immediately began to pass both his hands over the Khan's body, repeating certain prayers; the patient feeling himself relieved, made the saint a present of an estate, and begged him to proceed in his operation; continuing to give more estates, in proportion as he felt the benefit of it; by which Dschudat became so rich, that a great part of the city which bears his name, now belongs to his family. It is reported that the wife of the Crown Prince brought to her husband sixteen poods of ducats as a portion: an enormous sum for this country; perhaps, however, it is an Oriental hyperbole.

The royal family, the reigning Khan and his sons excepted, live together in country-seats near Wafkand, and in case the Khan should die without leaving a son, one of the family is chosen, and placed upon the throne, as was the case with Abulgasi-Khan.

The royal treasury is supplied partly by taxes, (consisting of corn) which the cities of Bucharia are obliged to deliver every year; partly from the toll which the caravans pay on their arrival, and especially from the many estates belonging to the Khan. The inhabitants of Bucharia, as being the capital, pay no taxes, except the Jews.

THE INHABITANTS OF BUCHARIA,

Consist of Tadschiks, Usbecks, and Jews. The Tadschiks, are the original inhabitants; the Usbecks afterwards made themselves masters of the country, and constitute in some measure the class of the nobility; they fill all employments, civil and military, the Tadschiks being only merchants. The word *Usbeck* literally translated means *own master*, from *Us* own or self, and *Beck*, master, lord, or nobleman. They are said to have received the name from the prophet Mahomet, because the Usbecks while they yet inhabited the south-west part of Russia, once sent troops to his assistance, when he was hard pressed by his enemies;---it is said that they came too late, but for their good will the prophet made them all Usbecks. Be this as it may, the statement that a hundred Usbecks first adopted the Mahometan religion, and that this is the origin of the name, meaning a hundred lords, is false, for a hundred is *Jus*, and therefore, it ought to be Jusbeck.

In the city, the Usbecks are said to be to the Tadschiks as one to three, in the surrounding village, estates, &c. the proportion is said to be exactly contrary.

The language of the Usbecks is a corruption of the Tartar,

which is called Türki, so that the Tartars can understand it, but it is much mixed with Persian words. The Tadschiks speak Persian, and this is the most common language, for when an Usbeck speaks with a Tadschik, they speak Persian.

These Mahometans are perhaps one of the most common, and basest nations on the face of the earth; commerce and religion have extinguished in them every spark of honour and honesty; when they have said their prayers five times a day, as prescribed by the Koran, every thing is lawful. For a few pence, a Bucharian is capable of betraying his father and his brother; nothing is sacred in his eyes but gold. In the midst of the most violent quarrels, if the hour of prayer comes, they suddenly leave off, say their prayers, and after this they begin with the same heat as when they left off.

The Jews, the third nation residing in Bucharia, are allowed to live in but one quarter of the city, because they are much despised by the Mahometans; they all speak Persian, and but few among them understand Türki. The Tadschiks and Usbecks pay no tribute to the Khan, but the Jews, as soon as they have attained the sixteenth year, must pay for permission to reside, from one to four Tanga a month, according to their riches. The number of these Jews registered as paying the tax, is 1200. They have the perfect jewish countenance, although they are in other respects handsome and well made. They have no historical books, and only know by tradition, that about 1000 years ago, they came hither from Persia; they obtain their religious books from Constantinople, and when opportunity offers, from Russia. Their chief means of subsistence is dyeing silk and cotton, which is almost exclusively in their hands: the richer Jews likewise carry on wholesale trade. Farther to the east, for example, in Kokand, Tashkand, Badakschand, Kaschkar, there are no Jews; only in Samarkand some few families, who have removed from Bucharia. They are much oppressed here, and have difficulty in maintaining their religion. That a Mahometan may not salute them from mistaking them for people of his own religion, they are compelled to wear, by way of distinction, particular black caps, and to bind their garments with a cord, instead of a long and narrow silk sash as is usual; nay they are not even permitted to ride on horseback; they shave their heads like the Mahometans, but leave a long lock on each side. All these three nations have very fair complexions; they are almost as fair as those of the northern Europeans, especially in their youth; the countenances of older persons are in general, but not always, more or less sun-burnt.

Here too the Mahomedan Religion, permitting Polygamy,

and considering woman as a slave, that is, bought and sold, has produced a great corruption of morals; I could relate incredible facts, were I not withheld by shame. Certainly there is no country, not even Constantinople, where unhallowed propensities are so common as here; nor is any secret made of it: the Khan himself, besides his Harem, has in his palace forty or fifty other degraded beings, though he severely punishes such crimes in others. If the Persians have beautiful amatory poetry, the Bucharian has no notion of refined sentiments, and though all the works of the Persian poets are known here, the Bucharian thinks only of sensual pleasures. Not content with these excesses, all the horrors and abominations of Sodom and Gomorrah are here practised, and even the frequency and severity of the punishment inflicted, are unavailing to deter them from the commission of these enormities.

THE COUNTRY AROUND BUCHARIA,

Like the whole of the Kirghis Steppe, is in itself very unfruitful and salt. The soil of the cultivated part is a firm clay, where the bitter white salt, which I have before mentioned, effloresces and covers the earth with a white crust, which very strongly reflects the rays of the sun. This cultivated clayey soil is entirely surrounded by deserts of pure quicksand, which is annually driven further from the north, covering more and more the fine cultivated lands; and no human power is able to check it. At a considerable distance from the cultivated parts, the ruins of ancient plantations are seen in the desert; in many places the sand has been blown away again, and we there see the same clayey soil as in the cultivated parts, which shews that this soil extends horizontally under the desert. Though this saline clay, upon which hardly any wild plants can thrive, is in the highest degree unfruitful, yet Bucharia is a large and beautiful garden, where all the fruits of France and Spain come to perfection. This fertility is entirely owing to the astonishing heat, and the excellent mode of irrigation; the fields and gardens are almost the whole year under water, which is effected by means of many large and small canals. The water is conducted by means of principal canals from the higher country, far to the north, near the mountain Nuratua, from the rivers Wafkand and Kuan, which rise there, so that the canals lie higher than the land. The fields are all separated from each other by low dams, like those which I have described on the Sir Darja, only on a much larger scale, so that each

single field may at pleasure be laid under water, which can be again drained off into canals that lie lower; which serves both to give the necessary moisture, and also to dissolve the salt which continually rises to the surface. Such fields and gardens, with the dwellings belonging to them, are called villages (Aul, Sachra;) and all the country round Bucharia is cultivated in this manner, particularly on the road by which we came; and then southwards to the town of Karakul and the lake of the same name, which is an extension of the river Wapkand, and was formerly united to the Amu Darja, (Oxus) and particularly from here to Samarcand, and from thence to Oratuba, the most easterly town in Bucharia, which is a distance of eleven days' journey; where you travel, almost without interruption, through such villages and some towns. One part of these villages is principally inhabited by Arabs, who were sent here in A.D. 699, by the Caliph Valid, with his General Kotahiba, to induce this nation to adopt the Mahometan religion; they still speak Arabic among themselves.

If the rivers Wafkan and Kuan bring down sufficient water the whole year, Bucharia has a productive season; but as they are very inconsiderable rivers, there is often a scarcity of water in summer, which causes a failure of the crops. Whether the water will be abundant or scarce, depends on the quantity of snow which has fallen on the Nuratua mountains; hence there is an ancient custom, that he who brings to Bucharia the first news that snow is fallen on the Nuratua, receives from the Khan a present of a silk chalat. A chalat is a kind of loose robe, which, with a pair of drawers, constitutes the whole dress of the Bucharians.

The fruits, &c. cultivated in Bucharia, consist, as far as I have learnt, of a particular kind of millet, a large species of peas, a short, thick turnip, apples, quinces, pears, plums, cherries, apricots, peaches, almonds, figs, dates, pomegranates, pistachio nuts, walnuts, and many kinds of grapes, among which there is one species which has no seed in it, and many sorts of melon. Many kinds of seeds for seasoning and for medicine, also many ornamental plants, are cultivated here; but I cannot specify them, having been here only a short time, and in winter. The above juicy fruits may, for the most part, be had fresh and at moderate prices, till February and March; the markets are supplied with melons the whole year.

The principal, or rather the only domestic animals of the Bucharians are the camel, the horse, the ass, the mule, the cow; the Kirghis and Arabian sheep are not so common. There are three kinds of camel: first, the Bactrian camel, with two bunches and long hair; second, the dromedary, with

one bunch, and the same long hair with the preceding; thirdly, another camel with one bunch, here called Luk, which is larger than the two others, and has short, curly, dark brown wool. The dromedaries are more esteemed than the camels, being in general stronger. The Bucharian horse is well known to be one of the finest races in the world; it is tall, slender, and extremely spirited; it rears, and springs, and dances continually in the most graceful manner, if I may so express myself; it has a very peculiar pace, something between an amble and a gallop; its hair is very short, smooth, and glossy.

Bucharia seems to be the native country of the ass, for the number of these animals is inconceivably great. They are of almost all colours, black, white, brown, grey, &c. which seems to prove that they have been much longer domesticated here than in other countries. Mules are also common and much dearer than asses.

Very few sheep are kept in Bucharia, because fodder is very dear; but the Kirghis drive in flocks from the Steppe as many as are wanted. There are also but few cows, because the inhabitants are not fond of milk diet, and drink their tea without milk.

Storks build here in the towers of the city; they go away in autumn, and come again at the end of February. Here too they are held sacred, so far at least that nobody will injure them. There are two kinds of swallows, one is the *Hirundo rustica*, and the other a species unknown to me. The first arrives in the beginning of March. The Afghans assure me that the storks and swallows come here by way of Kabul, and take from eight to twelve days in their flight hither; they likewise told me that they winter in Hindostan.

The Tarantula is seldom or never found close to the city of Bucharia; but is frequent further to the east, about Samarcand, and Oratübä, particularly on small hills. Their venom is mortal: the only remedy known here, is to read aloud without interruption, certain verses or sacred books before the patient, making him breathe violently; if he becomes fainting and exhausted by this exertion, they leave off a few minutes, and then begin again. They affirm that in this manner the patient breathes out the poison. If this does not avail, death is said to be inevitable.

Scorpions are frequent about Bucharia, and the Kirghis Steppe, south of the Jan and Sir-Darja; their sting is seldom or never mortal; a person who had been stung coming to me, I made him rub the place with oil, and the next day the pain was nearly gone. They have particular exorcisms, which they pronounce on going to bed, if they are afraid of scorpions;

the effect of which is said to be, that the scorpions in the chinks, or holes of the chamber, are unable to move.

In general there are very few insects in Bucharia; the reason is evident, partly because the cultivated country is under water, the greater part of the year, and partly because the uncultivated country is almost without vegetation.

PHYSICIANS, MEDICINES, AND DISEASES.

PHYSICIANS are very numerous; almost every learned man is more or less a physician, because he has read medical books. Their practice is evidently the pure Brunonian system: they divide all diseases into hot and cold, as also the medicines and food. If a sick person comes to them, they first determine whether the disease is hot or cold; if it is hot they prescribe cold medicines, if cold, hot; in the same manner they order the diet, on which they lay great stress. In their books all kinds of medicines and food are divided into hot and cold, and in this they go so far that, for instance, the pulp of grapes is cold, the seed warm; bread alone is neutral. Of course they distinguish various degrees of heat and cold, i. e. very hot, very cold, almost neutral, &c. The physician, however, does not prescribe the medicine, but when a patient consults him, and he has determined for instance, that the disease is hot, he writes down on a slip of paper, a list of cold medicines; the patient pays for this paper a Tanga, goes with it to the druggists, and buys any one of the medicines on the list; if this does him no good, he tries another, and so on. Their surgical knowledge is almost confined to bleeding. They have a great opinion of feeling the pulse, and though not one of them has any notion of it, they affirm that a good physician can discover, by the pulse, every disease, either local or general; many persons came daily to me, and would have me discover by their pulse if they had a wound, for example, in the foot or elsewhere. The same opinion prevails among the Kirghis, and probably among all nations out of Europe.

Beggars are so numerous and so insolent, that one has to quarrel with them all the day; their various cries, consisting of wishes, prayers of the Koran, and benedictions, are at first amusing, but one soon gets tired of it. One of them often stands in a cross-way, and howls out his prayers in every direction, so that I at first thought murder had been committed; but the Mahometan is affected by it, and purchases a blessing, for a Pul (the smallest brass coin): the beggar takes

him by the hand, and shakes him with such violence, that the dislocation of the shoulder might be apprehended; he then takes him by the breast, and shakes him with the same violence, and then repeating some prayers, tells him all that heaven shall bestow upon him. I saw a Bucharian moved even to tears: all this is done in the public streets, when hundreds crowd round, for a Pul from him who receives the blessing; unless other spectators, moved by the beggar's speech, give him something more.

In your room, in the caravansary, you have not a moment's peace for these beggars; and many, if they receive a refusal before they enter, force their way in, and demand alms, asking "if you have no god?" To this question I sometimes answered "no;" and as this had never happened to them before, they left me with disgust. In the streets they often hold one fast, saying, "give me money!"

The Khan is a zealous Mahometan, favours them, and gives them abundant alms, instead of giving them work, as they do in other countries; thrice a year there is a grand distribution of alms, all the beggars meet, and the Khan having the bags of money by his side, gives each of them three or four Tanga. This of course increases their number. It is said that there are beggars who are very rich, and yet beg in the streets for a Pul.

There is an establishment called Fatahabad, for poor blind people, where they are maintained at the expense of the Khan; it is said to be very full; notwithstanding which, there are innumerable blind beggars in the streets.

Another kind of beggary, which is rather more genteel, is the following: a poor author copies prayers in verse, or moral sentences out of some books, and learns them by heart, or he compiles them himself out of different books; he then comes in the evening, with many copies, to a caravansary, or into the street, and bawls them out, where he finds amateurs, who, for a few Puls, buy some copies of these fine verses. Such beggars as are unable to walk, sit down in the streets and beg alms; they try every art to obtain money; they often pretend to have convulsions and fits, and sometimes as if they were in the agonies of death; indeed, they very often die of hunger and misery.

Wine and Brandy are consumed in great quantities in Bucharia, the manufacturers of these are the Jews, and one Armenian, who has the chief sale. These people are permitted to make as much as they please for themselves, and also to get intoxicated in their own houses; but they dare not leave their houses intoxicated, nor sell any wine, otherwise the

Khan does with them as he pleases. Thus, for instance, five years ago the principal physician here, a Jew, who became rather intoxicated on the marriage of his son, fell a victim to this law; for the Khan had him hanged. Yet, notwithstanding this law, the Khan does as he pleases: not long ago, he had the houses of all the Jews searched to see whether they had a stock of wine; and if any was found, the owners were beaten in the most dreadful manner in their houses; but the richest of them was confined in a tower on bread and water, and daily beaten, and was told that he should recover his freedom, if he would give the Khan his stone house, which was valued at 800 Bucharian ducats. But as the Jews in Bucharia, as well as in other countries, consider riches as the greatest good, he had not yet consented when we were there. Yet the Khan drinks to excess, and after him the superior Usbecks, whose houses the police officers do not venture to search, and to whom the Khan does not think it expedient to shew his authority in this respect. These noblemen all receive their wine from the above-mentioned Armenian, who is, indeed, protected by them, but yet is in a critical situation. When the Khan had the houses of the Jews searched, he ordered the Armenian to quit the kingdom in three days. The order was indeed afterwards revoked, but the Armenian was still afraid that as soon as the embassy departed, his life would be in danger, and therefore resolved to leave Bucharia at the same time, till the Kusbegi himself at length assured him that he had nothing to fear, and begged him to remain. I may observe, that the Armenians, though they are Greek Christians, are more esteemed, or rather less despised, by the Mahometans, than all the other nations, and this was the reason why the Armenian was asked to stop; the Khan thinking it beneath him to buy his wine of the Jews.

Other poor devils, who may happen on any occasion to indulge in wine, must often pay dear for it, for the police officers, who are always on the watch, almost daily detect some in the streets, coming from the Armenian or the Jews, with a bottle concealed under their clothes. They are dragged to the police office, severely beaten, and sometimes even punished with death, if they have been before detected.

The wine which is made here is far more intoxicating than any European wine; it is made of the ripest grapes; in general the grapes here have a degree of sweetness, such as I never tasted in any other country.

Brandy is also made of grapes, but only of the ripest, or of raisins, and then rectified. It is made of the strength of rum, is colourless, and in my opinion has a disagreeable smell

and taste. It gives me the head-ache, and a determination of blood to the head.

The particulars which I have communicated in the preceding pages, were written down clandestinely at Bucharia, during the night, with the intention (as I thought, to travel farther,) of sending my notes to the University of Berlin by the returning embassy. Partly for this reason, and partly because in those countries it is always dangerous to ask a question, or to take a walk, except on commercial business, I must request the indulgence of my readers. After three months' stay at Bucharia, I was ready to set out with another caravan to Kaschkar, when I learned, by a singular chance, that a Bucharian, with whom I had become acquainted at Orenburg, had denounced me as a Russian spy, and that the Khan had hired persons to attack and murder me on my road, as soon as I should leave Bucharia. As this news was certain, I was obliged, in order to save my life, to return with the embassy.

SOME ACCOUNT OF BUCHARIA, FROM MR. JAKOVLEW'S LETTERS.

The kingdom of Bucharia is bounded on the North by a part of the Kirghis Steppe, Kokand, and Aderkand: on the East by Naimatchin and Badakhchan; on the South by Anderab, Balk, and Ankoa; on the West by a part of the Kirghis Steppe and Chiva. The length of this country, from the town of Ouratup to Sareksa, is estimated at thirty days' journey with camels, in a straight line; its breadth from Bucharia to Old Balk, twenty days' journey.

The population of Bucharia is estimated at three millions of souls: but as no census is taken, it cannot be stated exactly. The capital is Samarcand, but the Sovereign resides at Bucharia. Chakh-roud is a suburb of this city. The kingdom is divided into seven Tumans, or Governments, each of which has a civil governor.

Samarcand, the capital, is situated on the river Kouanderia, which has its source in lake Pandjikand or Taran. This river traverses Bucharia, and falls into lake Karakul; innumerable canals are filled from it, which water the towns and villages; it is navigable, but navigation is not in use in this country: they content themselves with floating down the Kouan-deria, the wood which is cut on the banks of the Pandjikand. Samarcand is a pretty well-built city; it has several stone-houses, but the greater number are of earth. It has 250

mosques, and forty schools, the professors in which are priests, and read lectures on the Mahometan law, and the Arabic language. This city contains 150,000 inhabitants. There are three caravansaries for the merchants who arrive from the interior, and from the other towns of Bucharia. Samarcand is governed by the Delvet-by, who is at the head of the administration, both civil and military. The garrison consists of 3000 horse.

The religion of Bucharia is Islamism. There are mosques in all the towns, and even in the ports and villages. The Mollahs celebrate divine service, and instruct the children in the Koran. The rich people send their children to the schools at Samarcand or Bucharia, where they finish their education. Bucharia is at present governed by the Khan Mir Haïdar. In 1821, he was about forty-five years of age: his authority is unlimited and hereditary. His eldest son, Tourou Khan, the heir to the crown, is twenty-three years old. He was Commander-in-chief of the Army, but has ceased to be so, and lives with his father. The principal public functionaries about the Khan's person are six in number, the Kissoubeghi, or Grand Vizier, makes known and executes the will of the Khan; he enjoys all his confidence: Nias Bekbei, is the chief of the army, for whom the Khan has great esteem. Raasbek-da-Akha is likewise a general, he is related to the Khan: Mouknistan-Divaa Sarkhar fills an office like that of Grand Marshal of the household, and is the most important person about the palace. Moursa Saadik is the first secretary of state: Moursa-Dja'far-Mouchraf is the grand treasurer, he pays the salaries of the civil and military officers. The assembly of these officers, at which twenty other honorary officers are invited to attend, forms the council of the Khan, of which the Kissoubeghi is president, and which directs the most important affairs, such as declarations of war, treaties of peace, and other similar subjects.

The Kazy-Kalam is at the head of the ecclesiastical order, and besides this is judge in civil affairs; his decisions are executed like those of the Khan: he can pass sentence of death, but whoever is not satisfied with his sentence, can appeal to the Khan through the Kissoubeghi. After having examined the case, he reverses the decree of the Kazy-Kalam, if he finds it unjust, and according to the importance of the affair, either deposes him, or contents himself with only reprimanding him. The former very rarely occurs. Every day after sun-set, the Kazy-Kalam informs the Khan of all the causes he has decided during the day. The Grand Mufti is the second person in the order of the priests; he is at the

same time the adjunct of the Kazy-Kalam to hear complaints and petitions. He quotes the decisions of the Koran, and shews who is right or wrong, but the Kazy-Kalam decides. The Kazy Ourdas form the third class of the priesthood; there are two in Bucharia and Samarcand, and one in each of the other great towns. They have under them the inferior muftis, and they are in the same relation to them as the Kazy-Kalam to the mufti. To guard the person of the Khan and the Palace, there is a kind of troops under the command of the second Oudaïtchi-Bachi, he is always about the Khan, and accompanies him in all his journeys through his kingdom.

The envoys who come from adjacent countries, are maintained at the expense of the Bucharian government; they enjoy full liberty in the city. The military force of the kingdom is estimated at 300,000 men, consisting of a well-organized cavalry, besides artillery and some infantry. The Kissoubeghi is the generalissimo of the armies; but, except at Bucharia, he does not personally concern himself about them. He has under him several generals, who, in time of war, have full powers to act, but on the other hand, they are responsible. In case of ill success, they not unfrequently lose their head. The Khan sometimes commands his army in person. When he is absent from Bucharia, the Kissoubeghi directs the administration, but sends him daily a report of what occurs.

After the ecclesiastics rank the merchants. Every Bucharian carries on commerce, more or less, according to his abilities. Civil and military officers, and even the persons about the Khan's person, are merchants; they have clerks and agents, and by their means export goods beyond the frontiers. The villagers are labourers and gardeners, gather the harvest, dig canals, &c. The inhabitants of towns are more inclined to follow mechanical arts and professions. They weave and dye calicos, and spin cotton and silk; this is particularly the occupation of the women. The latter, agreeably to the Mussulman law, do not appear in public, being slaves to their husbands; they are entirely devoted to domestic labour, and the education of their children. Their husbands, though pretty active out of doors, indulge in idleness at home. Having, in their wives and concubines, faithful and obedient servants to their will, they remain sitting without doing any thing, and singing hymns from the Koran: these consider themselves as pious men: others pass their time in amusing themselves. Their games are chess, cockal, &c. they frequently play for large sums. Many of them are very fond of spirituous liquors, which the Jews sell to them in great quantities. However,

as the Koran forbids the use of fermented liquors and games of chance, and as government severely punishes these infractions of the law, they do not indulge in such excesses except privately. The Turcomans, Usbecks, and Jews pay a personal tax. The tenants of the crown lands give a third of the produce to government, and keep two-thirds for themselves. The lands are taken from the idle, and from those who are unable to cultivate their fields. The Turcomans live between Serakhs, Marv, and Djardja, on the Amou Deria; the number of tents of these nomades, is estimated at 90,000, which gives a population of 900,000. They furnish 50,000 warriors to Bucharia. It is now about twenty years since that people began to accustom themselves to a settled abode. Several of them already have houses, and apply themselves to agriculture and the tending of cattle. At present they are not much acquainted with the mechanical arts. Their flocks are very considerable, they have excellent horses, and they pay as a tax, one sheep out of forty.

The Jews are not numerous, except at Bucharia and Samarcand, in these two cities they occupy 8000 houses; the population is supposed to amount to 40,000. They live separate from the Bucharians, though in the full enjoyment of their liberties. Every man pays a tax of one tanga a month. The produce belongs personally to the Khan; he employs it for the maintenance of his court. The Jews perform their worship in their synagogues, without any restrictions; they carry on commerce, follow different trades, manufacture silk stuffs, and are distinguished as goldsmiths, tinkers, and smiths; they are however despised. Some of them are very rich, but do not enjoy more rights or more respect than the others; it is only on extraordinary occasions that they are admitted to the Khan. They are not permitted to ride on horseback in the city, nor are they allowed to wear either shawls or silk garments. The Jews alone have the permission to make wine and brandy; they drink these liquors themselves, and sell them in secret to the Bucharians, by which they make large profits.

The climate of Bucharia, generally cold, is temperate in the northern parts. Spring commences very early, in the beginning of March every thing is in flower. The heat of summer is the more violent as it seldom rains, which obliges the inhabitants to water their fields by canals from the Kouan Deria and the other rivers. In autumn the rains are pretty frequent. The winter is not very severe, it lasts only three months; but little snow falls, and the thermometer is seldom more than ten degrees below zero.

The soil is generally clayey and sandy; there are many gardens; nature amply repays the labour of the cultivator. Every thing that can satisfy his appetite, and even his fancy, grows without difficulty. The Sorgho constitutes the principal food of the inhabitants, from the Khan to the poorest of his subjects. This grain produces such abundant crops that large quantities are exported. Grapes and other fruits are equally common. They are dried partly for home consumption, and partly to be sent to Russia. They cultivate much cotton, which forms the principal article of the commerce of this country. They spin or weave it, or send it raw to Russia. The greater part of the goods sent to Russia are calicos. The country does not produce much silk, for this reason, they procure it from Persia. There are no considerable manufactories in Bucharia. Individuals manufacture at home, according to their means. A proprietor sometimes employs twenty labourers, but never more. They manufacture all kinds of cotton, the most of which are dyed of mixed colours, an operation which is partly performed by other artizans. They also manufacture silk and cotton stuffs, for all kinds of clothing.

They breed great numbers of cattle in this country. The Arab, or broad-tailed sheep, are very common. The lambs of this race being in great request in China and Turkey, great numbers are sent to those countries; many also go to Russia. The best lambs are those which are called premature. Horned cattle are not numerous, but only sufficient for the people. The race of horses, called Bucharian horses, is also pretty common: the Truchmenian horses are the most esteemed, they are called *argamaks*, and are often sent as presents to the court of Russia. Between Bucharia and Samarcand there is a species of horse called Karabair, but greatly inferior to the Argamaks.

Wood is very scarce; there are no forests except on the Pandjikand. No mines of iron, copper, gold, or silver, have been discovered; all these metals come from Russia, either raw or wrought. Bucharia has coins of gold, silver, and copper. The gold coin is the achraf, a fourth part heavier than the Dutch ducat; it is coined at Bucharia, and is called by the name of the sovereign. The tanga, the silver coin, is the twentieth part of a ducat. The pouli-siah is the copper coin; fifty make a tanga. The Bucharians trade with all the adjacent countries; government demands of the Russians the fifth part of the value of their merchandize, according to valuation; but if they are brought by a Mahometan subject of Russia, only one ducat on forty; as but very few of our christian merchants go to Bucharia, the produce of this tax is not con-

siderable. They receive from China a pretty large quantity of tea, silver in bars, silk stuffs, rhubarb, and porcelaine. They send to that country beaver and other skins, coral, velvet, furs, great numbers of Arabian lambs, cloth, plates of gold and silver. The commerce with the Chinese is carried on in the towns of Kachgar, Akssa, Jarkand, Ili, and Khotan, which are adjacent to Bucharia, the entrance to the Chinese empire being prohibited to foreigners on this side also. The inhabitants of these places profess Mahometanism, and frequent all the cities of Bucharia. The duties of custom are, on each side, one ducat on forty of the value, paid either in kind or in money. The Bucharians receive from Hindostan, Afghanistan and Cashmere, indigo, many shawls, muslins of different sorts, chintzes, veils, Indian stuff for clothing, and sugar in powder; they give in exchange cochineal, gold or silver plates, coral, gold thread, cotton, long robes, cloth, velvet, Argamak horses, and Dutch ducats and crowns. They send their goods to all these countries, and visit every part of them without hindrance; however, they pay a duty in each, which increases the price of their goods. The Indians and Afghans, on their side, are allowed to come to Bucharia without any obstacle. They pay one ducat in forty.

They procure from Persia, silks, shawls of Kerman wool, which serve as girdles for the soldiers, beautiful Persian carpets, silks embroidered in gold, and plain silks; girdles wrought in gold, are brought from Ispahan, for the great and rich people, also turquoises, sugar in powder and loaves, pepper, ginger, and all kinds of spices. They send in return cotton, cloth, cochineal, gold thread, copper, and velvets. The inhabitants of these two states go backwards and forwards without any obstacle. The former pay one ducat in twenty, the latter only one in forty.

The produce and manufactures of Kokan are the same as those of Persia. The Kokaners require no import duty from the Bucharians; the latter, on the contrary, levy a tax of one ducat in forty, on the goods of their neighbours. The commerce with Chiva is not considerable, the produce of the two countries being nearly similar. The Bucharians receive from Chiva, silks, dried fruits, melons and apples, for which they send in return spun cotton, colours, &c. The import duties are reciprocally one ducat in forty.

The Kirghis-Kaïssak lead their numerous flocks into Bucharia, and on the frontiers of Russia; they sell and exchange great numbers of sheep and cows, as well as articles of their own manufactures, such as coarse and light felt, camlet, camels' hair, raw hides, and furs of wild animals:—they take from

Bucharia long robes, woollen cloths, sargho, &c. The Kirghis pay the same duties as other Mahometans. The duties are levied in the frontier towns as well as in Bucharia and Samarcand, by officers who are under the Kissoubeghi. The receipt amounts to 47,000 Bucharian ducats, and, according to the accounts of the inhabitants, the Khan spends it entirely in the relief of the poor.

The Khan rises every day before the sun; after having finished his ablutions, he prays for an hour in the mosque of the court, in the presence of the principal officers of state and the ecclesiastical dignitaries; upon which he sends the public functionaries to fulfil the duties of their office, and then with his courtiers and mollahs goes to the Khanaka, which is a great hall, where he takes his seat and sends for persons of different classes, particularly literati and young men of the first distinction. After this conference he reads in the Koran for two hours, and then goes to the audience chamber, where the Kissoubeghi, the Kazi, Ourda, the Oudaïtche bachi, the moukchajan, the chigaoul, and other officers are waiting for him. First they pay their respects to the Khan; when this ceremony is over, all those who have a right squat down, those who do not enjoy this privilege retire when they have saluted the Khan. Each public officer then makes a report on the affairs of his department and obtains decisions. Those which cannot be decided in this council are referred by the Khan to the Kissoubeghi. Individuals who have requests to present are also admitted and receive a speedy answer. This business lasts two or three hours. The Khan then returns to the mosque; when he leaves it he retires to his private apartments, to which the Kissoubeghi attends him; after some time he goes to the dining room, where five or six of his relations sit down to table with him. After the repast he reads the Koran for half an hour and says his prayers; then he retires to his cabinet, where it is said he attends only to his private affairs. At five o'clock in the afternoon he repeats a short prayer, which is succeeded by the time for recreation; he converses with his favourites, drinks tea, and eats dainties; and, after sun-set, the Kazy Kalam reports to him the cases decided during the day. When the Khan has heard them he sups, sometimes in the audience chamber with his favourites, and sometimes in the interior apartments with his women. After supper he retires to the chamber of her with whom he intends to pass the night, or he returns to his apartment and takes one of his concubines. During the night he rises to make his ablutions, after which he says his prayers, and retires again.

The Khan seldom goes out of his palace; when he shews

himself to the people in the city, it is always in great state, accompanied by two oudaitchi-bachi, and his guard, and preceded by mikharam-jessaouls, or officers on horseback, who in a loud voice announce the approach of the sovereign. This prince is dressed in the same manner as the Bucharians who come to Russia, except that his attire is more costly. He wears a robe made of shawl or silk, enriched with gold and precious stones; he proceeds at a slow pace, on a beautiful Turcoman horse, magnificently caparisoned. Whoever is on the road, either on foot or on horseback, must, as soon as he hears the voice of the mikharam-jessaouls, stop, dismount, and wait with his arms folded, till the Khan passes, when he is to exclaim: "Assalâm alikom!" (God bless you!) A Salam Agassi who immediately precedes the sovereign, replies with a loud voice. "Ou alikom salâm!" (God be with you.) In summer, the Khan goes sometimes to his gardens near the capital, where he passes his time with his women and his favourites.

He has four wives, and a great number of concubines. The wife to whom he is most attached, is Khanakma, the daughter of Seït Bii, Governor of Issar; the one who holds the second rank in his affections, is the daughter of Moumin Khan, who was sent as Ambassador to Saint Petersburgh, in 1820.

Mir Haïder Khan is of the race of Genghis Khan, for the sovereign cannot be taken out of any other family. He was twenty-five years old when he ascended the throne, and by his equity, his rigorous observance of the laws, and his goodness, has made himself universally beloved by his subjects; he lives in a regular manner, strictly adheres to the principles he has adopted, and maintains peace with his neighbours. If any one disturbs the public tranquillity he has him punished with the cruelty which characterizes the Asiatics. His subjects love him, and his neighbours esteem and fear him. Though the Khan of Chiva is also a sovereign prince, and has troops, still he is subject to the influence of the sovereign of Bucharia, who has more than once humbled his pride, and obliged him to fulfil his obligations. A striking instance occurred on occasion of the plundering of the caravans. The Bucharian merchants suffered no less than the Russians, by the conduct of the Kirghis, who encouraged by the people of Chiva pillaged them; but they always obtained full and prompt satisfaction, through the interference of their respective governments. The Kirghis, themselves, a ferocious and untameable people, and who recognize no law of nations, fear the Bucharians; I mean, however, to speak only of those who live a wandering life on

the frontiers of Bucharia. On the south-west of this country are the cities of Marv and Serakhs, belonging to Persia. The continual disputes of the Bucharians with this kingdom, led to a war, in which the former made themselves masters of those two cities; this conquest was facilitated by the assistance of the Turcomans, who lead a roving life on the banks of the Amou Deria; it took place under the reign of Mir Manzoum, the father of the present sovereign. The Khan has a garrison there; a great number of the inhabitants have been removed to towns in the interior of Bucharia.

Mir Manzoum Khan had three brothers; Oumour Kchou Bii who was commander-in-chief, and two others who lived in retirement. Mir Manzoum had also three sons: Mir Haïdar, the present Khan, who, during the lifetime of his father, was governor of Kartch; the two others were governors of Marv and Samarcand. Outkar, the father of the present Vizier, a sensible and active man, devoted to his prince, was Kissoubeghi, before the death of Mir Manzoum. This prince being dangerously ill, and all hopes of his recovery being lost, Outkar, who desired that the throne should fall to Mir Haïdar, the eldest son, as the lawful heir, sent an express to Kartch, desiring him to come with an army to Bucharia, as soon as possible. Meantime the Khan died. To avoid an insurrection, Outkar concealed the death of the monarch, even from his nearest relations. According to law, the public functionaries must come every morning, to pay their respects to the Khan. Outkar dismissed them three days in the name of the prince. People began to conceive suspicions, for this had never happened before: on the evening of the third day, Outkar summoned the most considerable persons in the state, to assemble the next morning in the audience chamber. When they were assembled, and each had taken his place, Outkar coming from the interior apartments of the palace, entered the hall, and placing himself before the throne, declared aloud that the Khan's will was, that before they learnt the subject of their convocation, they should lay aside their sabres and daggers. When this order had been executed, Outkar told them that the Khan ordered them to go home, and return again the next day to hear an extraordinary communication. They were then convinced that the Khan was no more; but being disarmed and surrounded by soldiers, they dared not to undertake any thing, and separated. A report was immediately spread in the town, that the Khan was dead, and that the Vizier intended to usurp the throne, and that he ought to be prevented; but nobody ventured to undertake any thing. The Khan's brother, Oumour, considering himself as the

lawful heir, resolved to act; being generalissimo, he assembled all the commanders of the armies, communicated to them his suspicions of the Vizier, declared his right to the throne, proposed marching to the palace with his troops, and demand of Outkar to be admitted into the presence of the Khan; and, in case of refusal, to enter by force. Several generals approved of his proposals, others on the contrary, opposed it: saying, that such conduct, would be a manifest violation of the law, and an act of unpardonable rashness. These arguments did not dissuade Oumour; he went to the palace with his partizans, entered it, desired to see Outkar, and called upon him to conduct him into the Khan's presence. The Vizier kept him back, represented to him that he violated the obedience he owed to the monarch, in attempting, with a handful of rebels, to disturb the peace of the Khan and of the people; and declared to him, that if he did not disperse his band and go home, he would repel him by force. Oumour, in spite of his remonstrances, persisted. Then Outkar, turning to the soldiers, cried with a threatening voice, "I order you, in the name of the Khan and in mine, as your supreme chief, to retire immediately, otherwise, I declare you rebels, and will have you fired at." Some confusion appeared among the followers of Oumour; all his people abandoned him, and he fled to the province of Kata-Kourgan, the inhabitants of which took him under their protection. Meantime, the people, by Outkar's order, pillaged his house and all that he possessed. The same day, at midnight, Mir Haïdar arrived from Kartch with his army, and was received by Outkar, as his Sovereign. The following morning, the most important persons in the state were convoked in the audience chamber, where they were informed of the death of Mir Manzoum; and that, according to the laws, Mir Haïdar, his eldest son, was to ascend the throne. The new Khan, in the presence of the whole assembly, took the solemn oath, to govern with equity, to make the laws respected, and to love his subjects. All the persons present took the oath of allegiance.

The following day the deceased Khan was buried with all the honours due to his rank. After Mir Haïdar had ascended the throne, he sent to Katakourgan for his uncle; the inhabitants refused to deliver him up. A general was sent with five thousand men to seize him by force. After a resistance of two days, the inhabitants were obliged to open their gates, and deliver up Oumour to the general, who immediately caused his head to be cut off, and sent it to the new Khan. This barbarous act is called by the Bucharians justice.

Mir Haïdar's brothers, who, as we have said above, com-

manded in Marv and Samarcand, incurred the disgrace of their brother, and were obliged to fly beyond the frontier.

No. III.

JOURNEY TO TURCOMANIA AND CHIVA, BY CAPTAIN MOURAVIEW.

General Jermolow, governor of Georgia, having conceived the plan of sending an expedition to the east coast of the Caspian sea, in order to establish a friendly intercourse between the Turcomans and the Russians, wished to form upon the coast, an establishment where the Russian merchant vessels might anchor and land their goods without danger.

In the year 1813, Mr. Rtichtchew, general of infantry, and commander-in-chief of Georgia, sent to Turcomania John Mouratow, an Armenian merchant of Derbend, who carrying on trade at Astrabad, had correspondents in those countries. Mouratow communicated the proposals of General Rtichtchew to Sultan-Khan, who commanded a party of Turcomans, and who hoping that he might one day become the legitimate chief of the Turcomans, who at that time did not acknowledge any master, received with joy the promise of protection given him by general Rtichtchew; he sent him a deputation composed of persons the most respected for their age and character. They were commissioned first to ask that Russia would cast an eye of pity on the Turcomans, whom the Persians had severely chastised for the robberies they had committed.

These envoys, among whom was Kiat-aga, whom I shall have frequent occasion to mention in the course of my narrative, did not reach General Rtichtchew at the camp of Gulistan, till he had just concluded a peace with Hussein-Khan, plenipotentiary of the court of Persia. The latter knowing how dangerous the Turcomans, supported by the Russians, might be to his country, required that our government should have no connexion with that people. General Rtichtchew consented to this, and dismissed the deputies loaded with presents. The Turcomans much vexed at this disappointment, and feeling themselves unable to resist Persia, submitted to that power, and gave hostages. Those who would not submit, went to settle upon the bay of Balkan, where they were secure from the power of the Persians, others went to Chiva, where they were welcomed by Khan Mohamed-Rahim, the declared enemy of the dynasty of Kadjar, which fills the throne of Persia. Sultan-Khan also went to Chiva, where he fixed his residence.

General Jermolow wishing to renew the attempt to form a connexion with the Turcomans, gave the commission to Major Ponomarew, commanding the district of Elizabethpol, I received orders, as an officer of the staff, to visit with him, the eastern courts of the Caspian sea, and to go to Chiva to negotiate with the Khan, and to describe that country. Such were the reasons for my journey to the coasts of the Caspian sea, and to Chiva.

General Jermolow having delivered to us the papers relative to our mission, set out on the 17th of June, 1819, for the Caucasus, where military operations rendered his presence necessary. The Armenian Mourotow, was to attend us, to act as interpreter.

On the 18th I left Tiflis, with captain Rennenkampf, and joined Major Ponomarew, at Soganloughi. On the evening of the 20th, we arrived at Elizabethpol, a pretty town on the Ganginka. We remained here till the 1st of July.

On the 2nd we passed the Kur at Minghit-chaour, upon a raft. We had hitherto passed only naked Steppes, crossed here and there by saline marshes; but the country now assumed a different appearance. The banks of the Kur are adorned on both sides by woods and gardens, on the left bank are lofty mountains, while on the right you have a view over an immense cultivated plain, in which are the ruins of an ancient city called Arevcha.

On the 3d we were at New Chamakhi. On the 4th, we began to ascend the steep mountains which separate it from the old town. From the summit of the mountain I beheld the vast and rich plain that extended behind us. Armenian villages were grouped on the summit, and in the ravines of the chain: the labours of the harvest, in which the inhabitants were engaged, gave animation to the scene.

We entered Bakou on the 6th. From an eminence in front of the town we saw the fortress, the city, the sea, and the vessels. The town is surrounded by a double wall, flanked with towers, with battlements and cannon. The environs are mountainous and naked, both water and wood are scarce; it is not well situated. The streets are narrow, with high buildings, but pretty clean. The population is numerous, the bazaar well supplied, and the caravansaries in good order. Bakou carries on a considerable commerce with Astrachan.

The vessels being ready for us, we embarked thirty soldiers of the garrison, with an officer; Major Ponomarew took Mr. Polétaew for his secretary.

Our two vessels were the *Kasan*, of 18 guns, commanded by G. G. Bassarghin; and the *Saint Policarpe*, a merchant

ship, with part of our escort, and our cargo; commanded by lieutenant A. F. Ostolopow.

On the evening of the 8th we embarked and set sail. We soon passed by the ruins of a great caravansary, which is partly under water, and half a werst from the shore; its towers still rise above the waves. It is not known how and when this edifice was swallowed up by the sea; it was probably occasioned by an earthquake. The environs merit particular attention, as well on account of the inflammable earth which is impregnated with naphta, as of the great number of ruins which are extremely interesting in an historical point of view.

On the morning of the 20th we landed on the isle of Sara, which is in the form of a crescent, and eight wersts long; the soil consists of a layer of shells.

The *Saint Policarpe* had arrived at Sara three days before us; having taken in water she sailed to Lenkoran, a fort which is situated fifteen wersts from Sara, to take in wood.

On the 24th we weighed anchor. We had intended to land at Cape Sérébrénoï, none of our sailors knew it, or any other part of the coast.

On the 28th we perceived the coast of Turcomania and a cape, which we took for the Beloï, or Akh-tépé. We cast anchor seven wersts from the coast, and by the help of a telescope, perceived on shore some Turcoman tents; we resolved to land the next day to examine the country, and to employ our interpreter to communicate with the inhabitants.

On the 29th I embarked with the interpreter and four other persons in a boat, rowed by twelve men armed with a twelve pounder carronade, and two falconets, having on board six marines; we took biscuits, and water for one day only. As soon as we landed I discovered, by my telescope, that the supposed cape, or Beloï-Bougor, was a mountain, which is probably connected with some chain; it appeared to me to be ten wersts distant; that we were separated from it by an arm of the sea; and that we were in an island.

I had at first intended to proceed to the north to look for a creek, where the Turcomans hide their flat-bottomed boats, but the information given me by Mr. Dobytchew, a subaltern officer of the marines, and a sailor, induced me to look for a creek towards the south, on the side of Astrabad; I expected besides to meet with a river; I, therefore, went along the coast with four sailors and Petrovitch, our interpreter, while Lieutenant Joureff took the same direction with the boat. We had attempted to dig a well, but the water was brackish. After having gone fifteen wersts along the coast, and following the track of camels, horsemen, &c. we perceived on the other

side of the bushes a long pole with a flag fastened to the end of it. This signal leading me to suppose that there was a Turcoman boat in the neighbourhood, I was going to pass through the bushes, when I discovered that great quantities of branches had been piled upon a heap of sand, and a long pole with a flag set up. Being thus disappointed, after having walked all the day over a burning sand, I resolved, at three in the afternoon, to return on board the corvette, leaving Petrovitch on shore to look for a Turcoman camp. On a sudden a violent gust of wind obliged us to land again and pass the night on shore. This stormy weather made me uneasy, as I feared it might last several days; we had neither provisions nor water, and might besides be suddenly attacked by the Turcomans. To be able to defend ourselves we brought the two falconets on shore, and encamped upon two hills. The sand incommoded us much, filling our eyes and ears. We lighted a large fire that the corvette might know where we were. Two wells were dug, but the water was too salt to drink. Petrovitch joined us in the evening, he had not met with any body. Notwithstanding our fatigue and thirst, the lieutenant and myself were obliged to watch by turns through the night. Our situation became every moment more disagreeable, the bad weather continued, our provisons were consumed, the torment of thirst began to be so insupportable that several of our people dipped the remainder of their biscuits in the sea water. To put an end to our deplorable situation, I resolved to proceed in the Steppe towards a hill which was visible at a distance, and hoped to find there a camp, or at least sweet water; I was going to set out, when we observed that our boat was near sinking. We immediately rushed through the waves, threw the carronade overboard, and with much difficulty succeeded in drawing the boat on shore. I then advanced into the Steppe, with a subaltern officer, Petrovitch, four marines, and two men with pickaxes; after a fatiguing march of four wersts, in deep sand, we suddenly sunk up to our knees in black mud, in the midst of a dried up salt lake. We were obliged to turn back; two other attempts to find sweet water by digging wells having failed, I resolved to make use of a method which I had heard spoken of in Persia, which consisted in firing a musket into the well, to hasten the appearance of water; in fact it did appear more rapidly than usual, but it was nevertheless salt. Returning to the coast, without the hope of finding water, I resigned myself and sat down on the sea-shore, waiting till it should grow calm. Its waves at length subsided, and in the evening we resolved to lighten the boat and send it to the corvette.

It set out when the moon rose; I had written to Mr. Ponomarew, to send us some provisions; I told him also that, in case of any accident, we would proceed to Astrabad by land. The boat, which returned to us on the 31st in the morning, brought us provisions for only one single meal; Mr. Ponomarew begged me to return on board. The sea permitted us to return in two or three hours.

On Sunday, the 31st of August, during divine service, we were told that three Turcoman boats had been seen near the coast; in fact, we perceived ten going under full sail, towards the north. We hailed them, and fired the carronade loaded with powder only; but not understanding this signal, the vessels spread all their sails; we then fired two shots, which did not reach them. It was necessary, therefore, to launch a boat, which had on board several armed men and Petrovitch. The boat had much trouble to overtake them; the last of the Turcoman vessels, seeing itself on the point of being taken, ran on shore: there were on board five men and three women, who fled into the bushes. Our people landed, and Petrovitch laid hold of a Turcoman, and told him that our intentions were peaceable; the others, at length, determined to come forward and ask us for mercy. We again told them they had nothing to fear, and let them go, except Devlet-Ali, the master of the boat, a man of about sixty years of age. Notwithstanding all our testimonies of friendship, he was sorrowful, and seeing himself our prisoner, expressed fear.

The camp of these Turcomans, placed between the two hills which I have mentioned above, is called *Hassan Kouli;* it was the residence of Kiat Aga, who in 1803 had been deputed to general Kitchtchew. The flocks of these Turcomans feed on the pastures in the neighbourhood of Serebrenoï-Bougor: notwithstanding the distance of that pasture, they have chosen this place for their camp, on account of the facility of having their boats, which are the source of all their welfare: they obtain fresh water at the river Gurghen-Tchaï, the mouth of which is near Serebrenoï-Bougor; it flows about half a day's march from the camp, and a day's journey from Astrabad: in the interval is another little river, the Kodja Nefes.

Devlet-Ali spoke to me of the ruins of towns, which are found in Turcomania; among others, near Serebrenoï-Bougor, the foundation of which is attributed to Alexander the Great.

Sultan Khan, surnamed Djadoukiar, of whom Petrovitch had often spoken to us, had taken refuge in Chiva, after the peace concluded between Russia and Persia, in 1813. According to the account which I received from Devlet-Ali, the Turco-

mans do not recognize one single chief; they are divided into tribes, each governed by an elder. He named only five, though he told me that they were more numerous. He assured me that the Chivans lived in great friendship, and had frequent intercourse with his tribe; he pretended, that in fifteen days, one might go from their camp to Chiva. We could not obtain any other information from this man, who appeared to be very uneasy among strangers, and begged us to set him on shore, promising to send Kiat-Aga to us.

We, therefore, cast anchor opposite the place at which he said his camp was, but the shoals obliged us to stop before we were within sight of land. In the evening, Mr. Ponomarew resolved to land Devlet-Ali, and to wait opposite to Serebrenoï-Bougor for his return with Kiat. We hoped to lay in a stock of water at this cape, and by keeping nearer to the shore, to be better able to communicate with the Turcomans, and to choose a favourable situation for our intended establishment.

During the night, we twice saw the sky reddened by fire. Devlet-Ali informed us, that it was occasioned by the reflection from the burning of the dry grass in the Steppe.

Having weighed anchor on the 3d of August, we reached Serebrenoï at seven in the morning. The *Saint Policarp* had arrived there three days before. Lieutenant Ostolopow, who commanded her, came in the corvette with Nazar Mughen, the elder of the camp, situated near this point. He was a man of agreeable appearance: but his character did not correspond with it. We learned that the village of which he was chief, contained as many as two hundred tents of the Turcomans, having fixed abodes. They cultivate the ground, and seem to enjoy a certain degree of welfare. We received Nazar Mughen well; he promised to conduct Petrovitch to Kiat-Aga, who was gone to a fair in the Persian territory. Kiat is an important person among the Turcomans, many chiefs or elders obey him, that is to say, when they please to obey, for they say that *God alone is their chief, and that they are sworn enemies to the Persians.*

We were soon visited by ten Turcomans, whom we received, as well as possible, and treated with pillaw. When we spoke of sending Petrovitch to Kiat-Aga, Nazar Merghen, who had at first promised to take him there for three ducats, demanded five, and then ten. Mr. Ponomarew, at length losing patience, sent them all away, except Nazar Merghen, who did not become more complying. Devlet-Ali consented to what we desired, for a present of small value, which, however, excited the envy of Nazar, who received two gun flints and a

pound of powder; in the evening, Petrovitch set out with his guide. From the apparent simplicity of the Turcomans, one would not be led to suppose that they were so fond of money.

Cape Serebrenoï is not very high. The Turcomans say, that upon its summit are the ruins of an ancient city, to which they give the name Guchim Tépé. According to my observation, the cape is situated in 37° 5′ 22″ North latitude.

On the 4th of August I went on board of the Saint Policarp, and then got into a boat with Mr. Ostolopow, to ascend and examine the Gurghen Tchai, the mouth of which is three wersts to the south of Cape Sérébrenoi. The boat of the Saint Policarp followed me with ten soldiers, two swivels, and one cannon. Our boat was obliged to stop on account of the shallows: the sailors hauled it along the coast; we then took one of the country boats, a kind of proa, made of a trunk of a tree hollowed out, which our people hauled in the same manner to the mouth of the river. The banks are low, marshy, and inundated to a considerable distance; its current is slow and choaked with reeds, a yard and a half high: though low in summer it was now quite dry. When we had gone about two wersts up it, we were near to a Turcoman camp. At some distance from this place there is a ford, which the inhabitants pass to go to Astrabad. Cape Serebrenoi was plainly to be discerned from this point. Three wersts from the ford I met with some Turcomans, with whom I conversed for about two hours; they invited me to their aul, or village; but I deferred my visit to another day. They expressed to me the unanimous wish of their countrymen to see the Russians rebuild the fort, near Cape Serebrenoï, which had been destroyed. "We will take vengeance of the Persians for their robberies," said they, "the heads of our Turcomans want brains, we would have rebuilt the fort but we do not understand it; when we make a general call to arms, we assemble above 10,000 men, and we beat the Persians; five years ago we cut to pieces three Sardars, (military chiefs) near this place, and we took from them great numbers of cattle." "Should you like to have cannon from us?" said I. They seemed delighted at this offer. They said they had frequent intercourse with Chiva, and that a company of half a dozen men might go thither without danger. They made a pompous description of Chiva, and said that the Khan who governed that state possessed great treasures.

These Turcomans cultivate the ground and possess numerous flocks. They understand how to make gunpowder, and are in want only of manufactured goods. Fifteen wersts from the little river, on the side of Astrabad, there is a forest, from

which the Turcomans affirm, that timber for ship-building might be obtained. They had seen Petrovitch the day before going to Kiat-aga, in a boat with Devlet Ali, and two men of their village. After two hours' conversation with them I re-embarked in the evening to return to the corvette.

On the 6th of August, very early in the morning, the Saint Policarpe sent a boat on shore to fetch Nazar Merghen and the principal persons of his village; it returned about dinner time with only one elder, named Devlet-Ali-Khan, whom Nazar Merghen had requested us not to send for, doubtless in hopes of receiving the presents intended for him. The Khan told us that he had not come sooner, not to trangress the custom which forbids a Khan to make a visit without having been invited; this was only a pretext; the truth was, that having been raised to the rank of Khan by the Persians, he was afraid of offending them by communicating with us. Devlet-Ali-Khan has more understanding than most of his countrymen; he had served under Aga-Mahomet-Khan, and then in plunder of Tiflis in 1792. He has since left Feth-Ali-Shah, and has been raised to the dignity of elder in his own country. He did not give us any more information than the rest, and seemed better inclined towards the Persians than to the Russians. He named the principal chiefs or elders, including himself; they were Kiat-aga of the village of Hassan-Kouli; Tagan Koulidj-Khan and Tepé Mirza-Khan, of the village Gheréi; Kodjum-Kolibai and Tagan-Kazi of the nomades of the river Atrek.

The Atrek flows two miles to the north of the Gurghen. The villages are situated on the sides of the two rivers. On the banks of the latter are the ruins of towns and fortifications. Mr. Ponomarew wrote letters to call together all the persons I have just named, and after having presented to the Khan a piece of damask, he gave them to him to forward to their destination: Nazar-Merghen, who remained as a hostage on board the corvette, told us that, according to Devlet-Ali-Khan, the Turcomans were in great alarm because they expected that many Russian vessels, loaded with troops and cannon, would come to their coasts the following autumn. The same day Petrovitch returned with Kiat aga. This chief shewed at first some mistrust; when Mr. Ponomarew made him acquainted with the designs of our government, he entered into a long discussion, and concluded by saying, "If your intentions are sincere I am again ready to serve you; but you will more easily succeed if you go to the Tcheleks, where I have relations; the coast there would afford you a more convenient situation for your intended establishment, and you will not

be above fifteen days' journey from Chiva; there too you will find the people of Sultan Khan, with whom I will send your envoy to Chiva. I am also ready to conduct you to the Tcheleks."

I soon landed near Serebrenoï Bougor, and visited Devlet-Ali-Khan in his village; I then saw that what we had taken for a little hill was the wall of a large building, and that the sand of the Steppe accumulating against the eastern side gave it the appearance of a sand hill, upon which the inhabitants had cultivated a little field. Between this wall and the sea there are many other ruins. It is more than half a werst from this place to the village; I left outside of the village an escort of a dozen men, whom I had brought with me, and repaired to the Khan, who gave me a very good reception. A great crowd had assembled round his tent; I also saw his wife. They offered me curdled camels' milk and bread, and begged me to let my escort enter the village. Mirza Khan, one of the chiefs to whom Mr. Ponomarew had sent letters of invitation, had already arrived there; he came to see me at the tent, and wished to accompany me when I returned on board; he afterwards changed his intentions, saying he would wait for the arrival of the three other chiefs who had been summoned. The Khan begged me to shew him the manner in which our soldiers fire their muskets. "We have heard from our old men, said he, that the Russians are so well exercised that when a man stamps his foot, three hundred do it at the same time, and we should be very glad to see it." I made our people exercise and fire, which seemed to please and surprise them greatly.

The tents of the Turcomans are made like those of the nomade Turks in Georgia; the Turcoman women do not veil their faces; they have pleasing features; their dress consists of coloured pantaloons and a large red chemise; their head-dress is composed of a kind of cap which, for its height, might be compared to those worn by the women of Canchois in Normandy. These caps are ornamented with gold or silver, according to the fortune of the husband. The hair is divided over the forehead, and fastened in a long braid behind.

On the morning of the 7th, I returned to Sérébrénoï-Bougor with workmen, provided with pickaxes and shovels, in the hope, that by digging, I might find some medal which would acquaint me with the antiquity of these ruins. To divert the attention of the Turcomans, I landed some soldiers, who, preceded by a drummer, went to exercise in the village, while I undertook my researches. I cannot yet say any thing positive on the ruins of Sérébrénoï-Bougor; it is the outer

wall of a great building or fort, on the east side of which, a sand hill has accumulated; but I found tombs in this wall, in which I discovered human bones; bodies had been buried there in the Turcoman fashion, that is to say, placed on the side, with the head turned towards the east. I suppose that these skeletons are of a later date than the ruins. The wall may be about a hundred toises in length, and at the utmost, two in height; it is built of burnt bricks of a good quality. Seventy toises from this wall, on the side of the sea, we saw a promontory which did not appear to us formed by nature; in some places, I found walls of houses, round towers, and little places paved very regularly with large bricks, half an arsheen square. This place is entirely covered with the fragments of bricks, even into the sea, to the distance of thirty or forty toises. To my great surprise, these remains did not look like ruins; the walls are all on a level with the horizon, which made me believe that they belonged to buildings which had been swallowed up by an earthquake, like the caravansary in the road of Bakou, and that I had been walking on the terraces or roofs of houses. The inhabitants have often found gold and silver coins; they affirm that this fort was built by the Russians, who formerly commanded on this coast. I made the workmen dig in the inside of one of the towers, where I found only fragments of earthen-ware and glass, a square bottle of which we found the neck and the upper part, which was quite different from the bottles of the same kind in Russia. I would have continued to dig to the foundation of the tower, had not the workmen been overpowered by the heat.

Reading the voyage made in 1782 by the Russian squadron of Count Voinovitch to Astrabad, and on the east coast of the Caspian sea, I found that the description of Sérébrénoï-Bougor, did not agree with what I had seen, it being there called an island. In fact, Kiat and the other Turcomans, told me that it really had been an island, and had not been joined to the continent above four or five years.

Very early in the morning of the 11th, I landed with Kiat to survey Cape Sérébrénoï; Kiat told me that our people who were going to look for water, ought to be on their guard, and not disperse, because the Persians had gained some inhabitants of other villages, who were disposed to hide themselves in the reeds, to fire at us.---The heat was oppressive; my survey being finished at one o'clock, I returned to the village to repose. Devlet-Ali-Khan and Nazar Merghen, received us hospitably.

On the 17th, Kiat, Devlet-Ali-Khan, and Kodjam-Kouly

Bey, assembled on board the corvette; but Mirza Khan, and Tagam-Kolidj Khan, did not come; they had sent their people to beg us to wait for them, because they wished to choose a more favourable opportunity to escape the suspicions of the Persians, who were watching them. Mr. Ponomarew, however, began the negotiation without them; he proposed to the three chiefs, to send Kiat as Ambassador to General Jermolow, giving him full powers in writing. They joyfully agreed to our proposal, and promised to procure the consent of all the other chiefs, even of the kazy or priest, the most eminent in dignity, and whom they consider as the prince of the tribe of Jomoud. Kiat hoped to succeed in obtaining their assent in about four days. We, therefore, resolved to send him ashore, and to go by sea to Hassan Kouli, to await his return, and then to the bay of Krasnovodsk, which is in the Balkan, to induce the elders there to consent also to our proposal, and then prepare for my departure for Chiva.

The dignity of Khan is not hereditary among the Turcomans; they are nominated by Persia; sometimes the people obey them for their personal qualities, and sometimes for their conduct. They employ slaves whom they purchase, or prisoners of war, to cultivate their fields.---The dignity of Akh-Sakhal, (white beard,) or elder, is conferred by the people; it seems to be superior to that of Khan, and to be retained in the family, when, after the death of the person invested with it, his relations are entitled by their conduct to the general esteem.

On the 24th we went on shore, and after having bid adieu to Devlet-Ali-Khan, who for the fourth time offered us a horse which we refused, because we could not carry it away. I returned to the corvette with Kolidj-Bek, and a relation of Kiat, to whom we made some presents. He told us that the Turcomans established in the neighbourhood of Persia, obey that power, but that those who reside on the borders of the Atrek, and farther north, do not acknowledge its dominion. Having landed Kiat's relation, we ordered him to proceed directly to Hassan Kouli, and inform Kiat of our speedy arrival.

The Turcomans have not that austerity and uprightness of character which distinguish the tribes of the Caucasus; in the midst of poverty, these people are strangers to the laws of hospitality; they are so greedy after money, that there is nothing, however mean, to which they will not submit, for the smallest recompense. They speak a Turkish dialect, resembling that in use in Kazan. It is only their Mollahs that have some education; they are of the sect of Omar, and scrupulously fulfil

every thing relating to the external practice of their religion and prayers; they have no distinct idea of the dogmas. They are tall, broad shouldered, have short beards, their physiognomy resembles that of the Kalmucks; and they dress like the Persians.

When we arrived opposite the coast of Hassan Kouli, the water was so shallow that we were obliged to stop at so great a distance from the land, that we could not see it with the naked eye; with the aid of the telescope, we descried several boats. According to my observations, the latitude of this place is 37° 27′ 51″ north. On the 27th, Mr. Ponomarew went on shore with me. Kiat had come to meet us, accompanied by all the inhabitants of the village; they had prepared for our reception a tent with carpets. There are a hundred and fifty tents at Hassan-Kouli. This village received its name from the ancestors of the Turcomans, who have been long settled on this coast. It was formerly an island, but is now joined on the north side to the continent, and forms a peninsula, separated from it on the east, by a bay six wersts broad, and twelve long. Kiat endeavoured to divert us by the sight of Turcoman games. They shot at a mark, both with a musket and the bow, wrestled, and run races: the prizes were awarded by Mr. Ponomarew, and the inhabitants seemed very eager for them. Their arms are clumsy and ill kept; their powder is of the worst quality, and they did not display much address. Many of these people are pretty well clothed, and lead rather an idle life, from which it may be inferred, that they derive great profit from the only kind of trade which they follow, which consists in taking naptha and salt to Persia. They also manufacture carpets of good quality; they are indifferently skilled in various arts, their goldsmiths strike coins, which serve as ornaments for the women; they have two-stringed instruments resembling a Russian guitar. The peninsula supplies them with nothing but water-melons. The produce of their fishery has for sometime past decreased one-half; in winter they chace the swan, from which they procure a considerable quantity of down. Numbers of wood-cocks are always to be seen on their coast; the animals which frequent the Steppes and the borders of the Atrek, are the wolf, the fox, antelopes, wild boars, jackals, &c. The winds which blow almost constantly from the sea, render communication with the coast difficult.

The chiefs of the village of Hassan-Kouli, are divided into two parties, of which that of Kiat is the strongest. Though the writing we had drawn up was subscribed by most of the chiefs, Mr. Ponomarew insisted on having the general

consent of all the Turcomans, to the sending of Kiat as ambassador to our government; he therefore called together all the elders in the presence of Kazi and Kiat, and in this assembly, which was held on the 29th of August, his nomination was unanimously confirmed. On the 30th, the wind having abated, we went on board the corvette in the evening, accompanied by Kiat, who would not have any person share his labours, or rather participate in the presents and the confidence which he expected from us. We weighed anchor on the 31st, but the wind being unfavourable, we made little progress. I obtained, however, from Kiat, various information respecting the several tribes and their chiefs, which may be of use in future intercourse with this country. On the 2d of September, we came in sight of the isle of Naptha, which is pretty accurately described in the account of the expedition of Count Voinovitch, and its position well marked on the map. The isle of Dervich, which was at that time on the south-west of the isle of Naptha, was united to it 15 years ago by an earthquake. In the afternoon we landed with Mr. Ponomarew, near the village, on the south-coast of the isle of Naptha. It contained only 15 tents. The inhabitants have a trade in Naptha and in salt, (which last they procure from a lake,) with the Turcomans from Hassan-Kouli or Sérébrenoi-Bongor. The springs of Naptha are on the other side of the mountains, where some families live; there are 100 families in the island; there are only four wells, the water of which is fit to drink, though salt. There are also some pastures in the interior of the island, but their only cattle are camels and sheep; they have no wood for fuel but brush-wood; the winters are said to be very severe. Some of the inhabitants still recollect Count Voinovitch; one of them had even preserved a writing given by him, which he promised to bring and show to us at Krasnovodsk, to which place we were going. Our voyage was however very tedious, on account of contrary winds and calms, so that though we sailed early in the morning of the 3d, it was not till the 10th, in the forenoon, that we anchored in the bay of Krasnovodsk, in three fathoms water, one werst and a half from the shore, and from mount Oog. Nomade camps are on several parts of the coast, where there are wells with fresh water, as well as at cape Krasnovodsk. This bay is not dangerous for vessels, and of all the places we had visited, this would certainly be the most suitable for an establishment. As soon as we arrived, Kiat was put on shore to find a person who should accompany me in my journey to Chiva. On the 11th, we landed in a place, where a well, hewn in the rock, furnishes excellent water. The mountains near the coast are steep, and strewn

with rocks of a friable stone. On the 14th, we assembled all the principal chiefs of the bay of Balkan, on board the corvette, where they passed the whole day. I went on shore; an entertainment had been prepared for the elders, to whom Kiat made proposals to dispose them in our favour. The guide whom they had recommended, refused to accompany me. Kiat sent for another, who arrived on the 15th. Kiat again assembled all the elders on board the corvette; by way of signing, they dipped their fingers into the ink, and applied them to the paper. Moulla Kaïb ratified their consent. The presents were then distributed. During this time, I agreed with Seïd the guide, who wished to set out for Chiva on the 21st, or according to their manner of reckoning, on the 12th of the month Zylkhidje. He engaged to take me to Chiva and back again for forty ducats, the half to be paid in advance. The Saint Polycarpe, which was to bring us provisions, had not yet arrived; it was thought that she had sprung a leak, and was obliged to return to Sara, and as we could not remain without provisions, we resolved to send the corvette to Bakou; on my return from Chiva, I intended to winter on the coast.

I went on shore on the 17th, to purchase a horse, they brought me one which was little, old, and miserable, and not worth above thirty francs, and which, far from carrying me as far as Chiva, would not have borne two days' journey; they asked me more than ten times its value. I declined the bargain, and resolved to use a camel.

JOURNEY TO CHIVA AND RESIDENCE THERE.

I PASSED the 17th of September in making preparations for my journey to Chiva; I had two letters for the Khan, one from general Jermolow, and another from major Ponomarew; which expressed the desire of the Russian government, to establish regular caravans between Chiva and the Caspian sea.

The 18th in the evening, every thing was ready for my departure; we received good news from the Saint Policarpe, which induced us to give up our first plan; we immediately sent back the boat, and desired lieutenant Ostolopow, to go as soon as possible to Krasnovodsk. In the evening I landed with our chaplain, lieutenant Linitskoï, and midshipman Jourieff, and passed the night in two Kibitkas, belonging to an old Turcoman.

I undertook this journey without much hopes of returning; however, I made myself easy by reflecting that I had already advanced one step towards the accomplishment of the dangerous duty which I had undertaken.

I left the coast on the 19th. My guide Seïd, lived in a camp near the well of Soudji-Kubil; he had sent me four camels by one of his relations; I procured two horses, and in this manner, we entered the Steppe. I had with me only Petrovitch, the interpreter, and one soldier who waited on me. I was, however, armed with a good pistol, a gun, a large sword, and a dagger, which I never laid aside during the journey. Petrovitch was a very obliging man, much attached to me, and besides, of a lively disposition: he often amused me by his pleasantries when I was inclined to despond.

Kiat and Tagan-Nias, accompanied me only as far as Sendovoï-Ob. Having ascended the lofty rocks, which form the bank of the bay of Balkan, I had a view over the immense Steppe, which I was about to cross. It is in some places sandy, in others sprinkled with bushes. Though there is no grass in these dry and naked plains, yet there are herds of camels and sheep, which browze on the bushes which are scattered here and there. The Turcomans are idle and careless, and subsist on camels' milk and corn, which they buy at Astrabad or Chiva. Their only profession is robbery, they carry off Persians at Astrabad, and sell them for a very high price at Chiva.

I was very well received in the camp of Seïd, which was twenty-eight wersts from our anchoring place, Krasnovodsk. I left on one side some inconsiderable eminences, which are a branch of the Balkan mountains, and towards evening, arrived at Ob Seïd, the habitation of the Turcomans of the family of Kelte.

These tribes are spread through the whole Steppe, almost from the Caspian Sea to the frontiers of Chiva. They are subdivided into an infinite number of branches, each of which elects an elder, who is obeyed, or to speak more properly, esteemed, for his old age, his intrepidity in robbery, or his riches.

I have since learned that the elder of the tribe of Kelte, a friend of Hekim-Ali-Bey, elder of the tribe of Kirindjik, whose brother had offered to conduct me for a hundred ducats, an exorbitant price, which I refused to give, had persuaded Seïd not to accompany me. Seïd, who had given me his word, resisted every persuasion and resolved to remain with me. This conduct, so different from the general avidity and cunning of the Turcomans, was an effect of the influence of Kiat, who had persuaded him to set out with me, by making him hope that if my journey succeeded he would easily obtain what he wished from the Russian government. Seïd was perhaps the best of the Turcomans that I was acquainted with; though

unpolished and of confined understanding, he was faithful, resolute, and brave, and famous for his robberies in Persia.

I found the Turcomans of this village more mild in their manners than those on the coast.

I set out from Soudji-kabil on the 21st of September; mounted on an enormous camel, I had great difficulty in keeping my seat when it rose. My caravan was composed of seventeen of these animals, and belonged to four Turcomans, who had engaged to serve me as guides; they were going to buy corn at Chiva. Seïd was the oldest of the four.

After travelling twenty wersts we stopped about noon for an hour, after which we joined a caravan commanded by Hekim-Ali-Bey, As we proceeded our company was increased by persons from the camps, near which we passed, so that on the third day after entering the Steppe, we had with us two hundred camels and forty men; all going to buy corn at Chiva.

The quarrel between Hekim-Ali-Bey and Seïd affected me; each of the caravans travelled apart, and, in the evening, each formed a separate camp. My people were well armed; which probably prevented Hekim from attacking and plundering us. He never condescended to salute me; sitting before the fire with his companions he abused us; I succeeded however in disposing several of the people of his caravan in my favour, by offering them tea, of which the Turcomans are very fond. Perhaps Hekim shunned me because he was afraid that if he conversed with me the Khan of Chiva might receive him ill; whatever was the motive of his conduct, I was constantly on my guard, and, during the sixteen days that our journey continued, never laid down my arms.

I passed this time very uncomfortably; the rough pace of the camel did not fatigue me so much as an invincible ennui. I was absolutely without society, having nobody to talk with. The heat was very oppressive. The view of the Steppe was no way calculated to amuse me; it was the image of death, or rather of desolation, after a convulsion of nature; neither quadruped nor bird was to be seen; no verdure, no plant refreshed the sight, only at long intervals we met with spots where some miserable bushes grow with difficulty. In the midst of this frightful desert my thoughts dwelt upon my native country, from which I was so distant, and from which I feared that an eternal slavery might separate me for ever.

I wore the Turcoman dress, and had taken the Turkish name of Moura-Bek; this precaution was very useful to me, for though I was known to all the people belonging to the caravan, yet when we met with strangers I avoided their idle

questions by passing for a Turcoman of the tribe of Djafar-Bey.

We had proceeded in an easterly direction. In the night there was an eclipse of the moon, which lasted for above an hour, and greatly disturbed the Turcomans; they asked me the reason of this phenomenon, assuring me that the moon was never eclipsed except on the death of a sovereign or of an elder; they added that this eclipse probably announced that I should have a bad reception at Chiva. As it was of consequence to me to remove this notion; I endeavoured to explain to them the motions of the celestial bodies, which eclipsed each other at certain periods. They did not understand me, and appeared to consider deeply; at length they said, "you are indeed an ambassador, an extraordinary man, since you know not only what is done upon the earth, but also what passes in the heavens." I completed their astonishment by telling them which part of the moon would first become visible.

We continued our journey on the 22d, at one o'clock in the morning; it was very cold, and the dew fell in abundance. After a march of twenty-four wersts we arrived, at day break, at the wells of Suili, where there were about twenty Turcoman tents. These wells are fifteen toises deep, the water is not good.

Nea rthis place is a great burying ground; the tomb-stones, which are pretty large, appear to me to be limestone; there is sculpture on some of them, which is not the work of the Turcomans. The inhabitants say that this burying ground is very ancient.

On the 23d we set out at midnight, and an hour before sunrise, having gone eighteen wersts, we reached the wells of Demour-djem, which are in a cavity, the bottom of which is level, and is supposed to be the bed of an ancient lake.

After having passed near forty-eight hours without closing my eyes, I alighted from my camel. Overwhelmed with fatigue, I fell into a profound sleep while they were watering our animals, which took about an hour. The afflicting thoughts which possessed me during the day, represented themselves to my imagination. I dreamt that I was bidding an eternal adieu to my eldest brother, and that I was going to certain destruction and frightful captivity.---When I awoke, I was surrounded by women and children, who crowded about me and examined me with great attention. The transition was so rapid that I could hardly recollect myself, but the voice of Seïd, calling to me to rise quicker, put me in mind, that I was in the hands of the Turcomans; and, perhaps, on the eve of that captivity, which had just troubled me in my dream.

The bottom of the ancient lake has not a single bush; we halted six wersts from Demour-djem. During the whole journey, we had not met with a blade of grass; the camels endured hunger as well as thirst; they fed on little branches, and whatever they found in the Steppe. As we had some days' journey to go, without any hope of finding water, our guides had filled their skins at the wells of Demour-djem.

During the whole way which we had just passed, was through the dried-up bottom of a lake. It is remarkable, that the water found here should be of such different qualities; a well of sweet water is often close to another of salt. There are some wells 250 feet deep; they are lined with timber; the inhabitants cannot tell by whom they were dug.

Five wersts to the left of the road is a great lake, which the Turcomans call Kouli-Deria, or Adji-Kouyoussi. It extends to the north and south, to the length of ten miles, and joins the bay of Karabogaz. This lake does not appear to be known to geographers, and the bay of Karabogaz, (in which the inhabitants pretend is an unfathomable abyss,) has not been visited by our navigators. Though the Turcomans coast without danger a part of the shore, when they go to fish for seals, they have never dared to venture to the farther part of the Kouli-Deria, of which they speak with a kind of mysterious apprehension.

"What necessity," said they, "is there to venture upon this lake; all living creatures avoid it, the animals of the Steppe are afraid to drink its water, which is excessively bitter, and causes death; even the fish keep at a distance from it." They pretend that the waters of the Caspian sea are swallowed up in this lake, because they rush with extraordinary rapidity into the bay of Karabogaz. It is very easy to perceive the diminution of the Kouli-Deria, the ancient bank of which is distinguished at a little distance in the Steppe; the northern banks are steep. According to a popular tradition, the birds which fly over this lake fall down, blinded by the pestilential vapours which rise from it.

We set out on the 24th at sun-rise; and after travelling thirty wersts, stopped near the summit of the chain of the mountain Sare-Baba, which extends to the north and south. We had began to ascend the Sare-Baba, which had been long in sight; when we were half way, the ascent was pretty gentle but very long. On halting in the evening, we were tormented by a high wind, which enveloped us in clouds of sand, and by a cold air, which we felt the more, as it was with great difficulty that we collected some branches to make a fire.

At midnight we set out again, and soon descended the

mountains, which are pretty steep on this side. On the summit of this chain rises the Kyr, a hill where there is always a high wind, and on which is a monument in honour of Er-Sare-Baba, founder of the Turcoman tribe. The Turcomans relate, that Er-Sare-Baba, lived in a very remote period, and was revered for his virtues, and his numerous children; that he desired to be buried on the top of these mountains, near the road, that the passengers might pray for him; this chain is called by his name. The monument which is raised for him, consists of a pole, on which are hung rags of various colours, and round it they have heaped stones, stag's horns, &c. These offerings are deposited here by all the Turcomans, of whatever tribe they may be, who pass near this place, and none of them dare touch the tomb, for fear of profaning it; near it are traces of an ancient burying-ground.

As we descended the heights, the climate changed; we left the region of wind and cold; and entered into a mild and calm atmosphere. We walked over a moveable sand, in which some bushes grew.

At three in the morning, on the 25th, after going twenty-five wersts, we arrived at Touer, where there are six wells of good water; the soil is so barren, that we did not see the least verdure, nor even a bush.

Near these wells is a stone monument, pretty well built; and raised in honour of Djafar-Bey, one of the ancestors of the Jomouds: he has given his name to the most courageous and the most numerous branch; it counts 2000 tents, and has assumed a certain superiority over the others. Seïd, who belonged to this tribe, affected airs with the Turcomans of other tribes. From Touer are two roads to Chiva. The shortest is liable to two objections; the first is the want of fresh water, the other, the proximity of the camps of the tribe of Téké, which is always at variance with its neighbours, and the most addicted to pillage.

The second road turns to the left in a north-east direction; it is two days' journey longer than the first, and is equally destitute of water, but is less dangerous; nevertheless, Seïd loaded his gun, and advised me to do the same. We halted after travelling forty wersts,---Hekim-Ali-Bey continued to behave to me with much rudeness; disregarding the dangers to which we were exposed, he would never wait for us, that we might travel together; it is true, I had not asked him, and to judge by his manners, I could not have depended upon him in case of an attack. I encamped at some distance, and every night took the necessary precautions, making a kind of rampart with my baggage, and never quitting my arms. Some

people of his caravan, once advised me to join them, for the sake of safety. I replied, that they might join my caravan if they were afraid; they left me without adding a word. One of Hekim's companions, who was very fond of tea, came and joined me with sixteen camels, and one clerk: he followed me during the whole journey, in hopes of receiving rich presents; which I did not think proper to bestow.

The country which we traversed on the 25th was a little hilly; after proceeding twenty-three wersts we reached, on the 26th, before day break, the well of Dirin, which is in a deep valley and lined with stone; though the water was putrid and salt we were obliged to fill our bottles with it, because we were going to enter a steppe which was entirely arid. The valley of Dirin has very steep sides, and presents the traces of a river, which formerly flowed from north to south; it is the ancient bed of the Amou-Deria, which is now dry.

Hekim-Ali-Bey having met my caravan here, gave me for the first time a good reception. "My sincerity," said he, "is not on my lips, like that of the people who surround you, but it is in my heart." I turned away without answering. Several persons expressed their desire to go before me to Chiva, to announce my arrival to the Chan; but, knowing their perfidy, I declined their offers.

On the 26th we travelled the whole day, and on the 27th before sun-rise halted, after having gone fifty-one wersts. We met a small caravan coming from Chiva, and I gave to the Turcoman Mahomet Nias, who was with it, a letter for Mr. Ponomarew; in which I informed him of my safety, and begged him to seize the son of Hekim-Ali-Bey if any accident should happen to me.

On the 27th we travelled thirty-one wersts, and on the 28th and 29th one hundred and twenty-eight wersts, and halted at the wells of Bech-Dichik, the water of which is excellent. I was much rejoiced that they had chosen this place to pass the night. During the ten days that we had been travelling I had hardly enjoyed any repose; being unable, like the Turcomans, to sleep on my camel; if I happened to drop into a slumber it was at the risk of falling off. At this place I was able to sleep comfortably, and had time to change my clothes, which were full of sand and dust, I had excellent water to refresh myself, make tea, and dress some food; I besides pleased myself with the reflection that I had passed two-thirds of this troublesome journey.

The whole way which we passed was covered with moving sand; before us the prospect extended to a distance, over a steep bank almost perpendicular to the horizon, and intersected

with large fissures; my companions assured me that it was the shore of an ancient sea, of which I shall have occasion to speak. Ten wersts from the wells, we had met with the bed of a great river, now dry, above an hundred toises broad, and about fifteen deep. The banks are very steep, and, as well as the bottom, covered with brambles; its direction is from north east to south-west; the steepness and looseness of the banks hindering us from crossing it, we were forced to turn to the left, and follow the course of this ancient river, among little hills of sands heaped up by the wind; their height was about two toises. Having gone seven wersts along the bank, we found a place where we could descend into it, and stopped at the wells of Bech-Dichik, near a great caravan. From thence I saw the coasts of this ancient sea; it was at two wersts distance, and extended in a direction parallel to the bed of the ancient river.

As in becoming dry in the midst of this steppe it has retained its form, I frequently met with the sinuosities, which perfectly resemble those of a river, and I concluded it was the bed of the ancient Amou-Deria, which the Emperor Peter the Great caused to be looked for with so much care.

On my return from Chiva, Kiat told me, that though the mouth of the river was obstructed with sand, it was still to be distinguished, and that on the coast of the sea a small house had been built of beams placed horizontally, in the Russian fashion. The oldest inhabitants have no account of the erection of this building; it inspires them with a kind of veneration and superstitious fear, which contributes to its present preservation. It is not surprising that such a cabin should have stood so long in such a dry climate. If it was built by the Russians, it must have been since the time when Peter the Great sent an expedition to look for the gold sand; the present inhabitants of the sides of the Balkan have no tradition on the subject, probably because other Turcoman tribes lived there at the time that the cabin was built.

In the places which have not been covered with the sand, the bed of the Amou-Deria offers a soil entirely different from any other in the Steppe; in some parts there is grass and even trees, and very good water is found in it; at the wells of Sare-Kamych it rises over the brim aud forms a brook, which flows at the bottom of the dried up river; close to it is another well, the water of which is salt. At the place which we had chosen for our encampment, there were six excellent wells. On the road from this place to the real frontiers of the state of Chiva, there is a considerable quantity of brush-wood.

On our arrival I was much surprise to see Hekim-Ali-Bey

and his brother come to meet me, unyoke my camels, and take off the bales. Hekim coming up to me, excused himself for his conduct on the journey, and protested his desire to repair it, and to do me all the service in his power. While I received his assurances with indulgence, and offered him tea, I did not place the more confidence in him, and during the night was more on my guard than ever. The sudden change might be explained by supposing that, if he had really formed any hostile projects, now that he saw that he was unable to execute them, and that I was on the point of arriving at Chiva, he thought it would be most advantageous to pretend an attachment to me, because it appeared probable that the Khan would receive me well, and that then I should be able to do him some service. This supposition was confirmed by the fact, that he had learned from the caravans we had met, that the report of the speedy arrival of a Russian embassy had been spread at Chiva, and that it was said there that Mahomet Rahim expected me with great impatience to receive four bales of ducats, which it was supposed the Akh-Padishach, or white Czar, had sent him. The news of my approaching arrival had been brought to that town by Turcomans from the Gurghen and the Atrek, who, when we were in their neighbourhood, had learned that I had made inquiries respecting the road to Chiva, and suspected my intentions, which in fact I had not endeavoured to conceal.

On the 30th, at day break, we set out and did not stop till sunset, after going 25 wersts. This day's march was very agreeable. Having passed to the other side of the ancient bed of the Amou-Deria, we followed its direction at a short distance, for the space of three wersts, leaving to our left the great steep bank, which the Turcomans regard as that of a sea. We lost sight of it in the distance. Its appearance was every where very uniform, its height might be about 20 toises. The part of the Steppe situated above was as even as that below, on which we travelled. We were much amused by an echo which repeated several syllables many times over. The road turned to the right, and we perceived on the bank five openings, regularly hewn, which appeared to be the entrance of a dwelling. So strange an object amongst so ignorant a people, necessarily gave rise to some fables. In fact, my guides informed me that it was known to their whole tribe, that these five openings led to a vast palace which, from the most remote antiquity, had been the residence of a Czar, with a numerous family, great treasures, and daughters of extraordinary beauty. Some curious persons having been so bold as to enter these subter-

raneous recesses, had been stopped by an invisible power and died.

Though their accounts differed from each other, I would not pass this enchanted spot without visiting the old Czar, to judge of the beauty of his daughters, or without entering a caravan which might have been the retreat of banditti. I therefore went with one of my Turcomans towards these ancient habitations; they are at little more than half the height of the bank; immediately below these openings is a projection which forms a kind of esplanade, about a hundred fathoms long: the ground was of a very light earth, which crumbled under our feet; I however climbed up, to pass by a narrow crevice between the bank and a rock, which had become loose. Above my head a stone of enormous size was suspended, which seemed to need but a slight shock to crush me under its weight; I was obliged to get through a narrow interval which this stone left, in order to reach the projection, whence it seemed easy to get to the caverns. My Turcoman walked before; he penetrated without difficulty into the narrow passage, but when he got further, he found it impossible to proceed, because the projection was interrupted for the length of two toises; if we could have crossed this break we might easily have entered the caverns, which are only a few steps further. We might have surmounted this difficulty, by the means of ropes, but the caravan was already at a very great distance, and I was obliged, though very unwillingly, to hasten to overtake it. It may be presumed, that the real entrance of the cave had been at the place where I was, and that it had been purposely closed by rolling a piece of rock before it, which almost entirely covered it.

I do not know what to think of this steep bank, which the Turcomans say was once a sea-coast; the appearance of the country renders this assertion probable; at least if it is not the coast of a sea now dried up, it may be reasonably supposed to have been the shore of an immense lake, the extent of which cannot be overlooked from one point.*

Before sun-rise on the 2d of October, we met with a numerous caravan of Turcomans of the tribe of Igdyr. It consisted of 200 men and 1000 camels. As they went along, they were very noisy,

---

* According to the system of Buffon, Pallas, and others, these may have been the ancient banks of the Caspian sea, when it was united with lake Aral; the saline nature of the Steppe and of its waters, support this hypothesis. This system agrees with that of Strabo and Eratosthenes, who relate that in remote ages, the Black sea, the Caspian, lake Aral, and the Palus Neotis, formed one sea.—*Note of the Translator.*

laughing and singing, and rejoiced at having left Chiva, and having made advantageous purchases of corn. Meeting this caravan where the passage was confined between bushes, we were obliged to stop till it had passed; they perceived by Petrovitch's cap that he was not a Turcoman.

They looked at us with curiosity, and asked our Turcomans what people we were, "They are Russian prisoners," replied they; "this year one of their vessels stranded on our coast, and we took three of them, whom we are going to sell at Chiva."

"That is right, (replied the Igdyr, with a ferocious smile,) take and sell those cursed infidels; we have just sold three of them for a good price, at Chiva."

On the 3d we met several caravans with corn, from Chiva, from which we learnt that the Khan had just imposed upon the Turcomans a tax of eight francs for every camel which should arrive. The Turcomans refusing to submit to this tribute, and demanding that it should be revoked, the Khan had ordered the caravans which had arrived to be detained, promising to go to the fortress of Akh-Saraï to receive their elders, listen to their demands, and accept their presents: they added, that in spite of this, several caravans had already fled, and that probably we should meet at Akh-Saraï with the Khan, whom they supposed to have already left Chiva. This news gave me pleasure, because it seemed to indicate the speedy conclusion of my mission. I even prepared the speech which I should make at my first interview with the Khan; I gave it to Petrovitch, and ordered him to learn it by heart: I greatly deceived myself!

Since we left our halting place the day before, we found roads crossing in all directions, which led to villages or camps in Chiva. The whole caravan of Hekim-Ali-Bey had dispersed, to buy corn; we remained alone upon the road. This place is exposed to frequent robberies; nobody, however, approached us. I was glad to see the marks of wheels, and felt great consolation at being again in an inhabited country, being far from thinking of the bad treatment which I received.

On the 3d we discovered, in the distance, a thick mist, which covered all the horizon. I looked in vain for the appearance of the sun; and perceived at length that what I had taken for mist was a cloud of sand, which continued, without interruption, the whole day. I was obliged to cross it; we halted ten wersts beyond the canal. My ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and hair were full of sand, and my face was excoriated by the violence of this whirlwind.

Our camels turned away from the wind; the sand was so

thick that we could not distinguish objects at a small distance. Two hours before sun-set, Seïd made the caravan stop, and alighted to look for shelter in some tents which he perceived. He returned in an hour, and had much trouble to find us again; he conducted us to these tents, which belonged to Turcomans of the race of Kyryk; Atan-Niaz-Morghen, their elder, was there.

Of all the Turcomans I ever knew, this was the one I most esteemed. After having settled in the country of Chiva, he had entered into the service of the Khan, as a partisan; he went every week to pay his respects to the prince, and had but very lately returned when I arrived at his tent. He received me with a kindness which shewed him to be an honest and disinterested man, and took all imaginable pains to procure me rest. He killed his best sheep for me, gave me water to wash, had my food dressed, and sent away all the curious people who assembled to see me.

He told me that the news of my arrival had already reached the Khan, and he advised me not to send a messenger to Chiva, but to go directly to that town, to repair, according to their custom, to the palace of the Khan, announcing myself as his guest, and as an ambassador; he added, that by conducting myself in this manner, I should certainly be well received. I could not persuade myself that so abrupt an arrival could please the Khan, and thanking my host for his well-meant advice, resolved to act differently. He presented to me his four sons, who were very handsome men; they showed their horses and long guns, which they had received from the Khan. Atan-Niaz-Merghen was going shortly to send his second son to Astrabad, at the head of thirty men, who had united to go on a plundering expedition.

My worthy host accompanied me on the 4th to the distance of 12 wersts from his residence. There was nothing to mark the road in the steppe we had to pass, except to go between two canals, Dach-goous, and Akh-Sarïa; this tract is covered with little hills: the whirlwinds not having ceased, the sand incommoded us more than the day before, and our host himself missed the way. As the wind abated I saw on both sides the ruins of forts and edifices; the whole tract which I had passed was strewed with pieces of brick and other fragments. At length, after having gone 24 wersts towards the south-east, we perceived, in the evening, the canal Akh-Saraï, near which were many tents, well-cultivated fields, and even trees. We had wished to reach a village where Seïd's relations lived, but were forced to give it up, and to stop at a poor Turcoman hamlet. The inhabitants were a tribe from the confines of

Bucharia. They surrounded and tired me with questions: I thought I had found an excellent means to get rid of them, by frightening them with the name Mohamed-Rahim-Khan, whose guest I said I was. Disregarding this, they refused me admittance, and said they did not know Mohamed-Rahim-Khan: then I raised my voice, on which they immediately retired, and forming a circle at some distance, began conversing together. When I had made my preparations to bivouac in the midst of their tents, one of them came up to me, and offered his habitation, saying he had already cleaned it. I accepted the invitation, and having entered a miserable hut, I began to act as master, and instantly drove out a number of curious people who tired me with their questions. My old host, who had a Chinese countenance, did not know what sort of people he had to do with, and seemed very much surprised when I offered him some tea, instead of turning him and his daughters out of the room. The great number of curious people who came to see me, induced me to order my Turcomans to keep a good watch during the night.

On the 5th, after going 10 wersts by the side of a canal, we arrived at two villages where Seïd's relations lived.

The farther we advanced along the canal, the more cultivated lands we discovered. The fields covered with rich harvests, struck me by their contrast with those I had passed the day before. I had never seen, even in the heart of Germany, fields cultivated with so much care as those of Chiva. All the houses were surrounded with canals crossed by little bridges. I walked in beautiful meadows, in the midst of fruit trees. Numerous birds animated with their song these fine orchards. The tents and the houses of clay, scattered in this enchanting spot, presented the most agreeable prospect, and I rejoiced at having arrived in such a delicious country. I asked my guides why they did not also apply to agriculture, and come and fix their abode in the territory of Chiva, since their own country was not fertile.

"Ambassador," replied they; "we are the masters; these are our workmen; they fear their chief, and we fear none but God."

I was very well received by Seïd's relations, who gave me a small room, which was rather dirty and dark: while I was dressing, several elders assembled to congratulate me; I admitted the principal ones, and having conversed with them, went out to see the others: all received me in the most friendly manner. I sent one of the Turcomans to Chiva, to carry the news of my arrival to the Khan, who had not yet quitted the town; and sent the other for the same purpose to one

of the officers of the Khan, who commands the neighbouring fortress of Akh-Seraï.

I was very much displeased with the language of the Turcomans, respecting me, "The Russian ambassador," said they "must be a man out of the common way, since he knows how to read, and at all the wells where we stopped, he marked their depth; he has also noted the distance from one halting place to another." All this came to the Khan's ears, as we shall soon see, and gave occasion to the sentence of death, which was passed upon me, for they took me to be a spy.

Berdi-Khan, a Turcoman elder, who came from Chiva, called to see me. In 1812, being in the Persian service, he was wounded, and taken prisoner by the Russians. Having served two years under General Lissanevitch, he returned to his own country, and took refuge at Chiva.

After having received from him some information about the Khan, I wanted to go that evening to Chiva, which was only forty wersts distant, but Seïd absolutely refused to yield to my desire. I was angry, and scolded; he consented to send for horses, but he most likely ordered his messenger, at the same time, not to procure any. I fancy he wanted to detain me, in order to force me, in some measure, to make presents to his relations, or to do a service to the elders, who had brought caravans, and hoped, by joining my suite, that they should get their camels into Chiva without paying duty. They endeavoured to make me understand them, but I seemed not to comprehend their meaning.

The want of horses, obliged me to stop the whole day in this place. I took a walk, followed by a crowd of people. A Turcoman, very well dressed, who served in the Khan's troops, while he was talking with me, began to examine the buttons of my riding coat, to see if they were really silver; wishing to get rid of him, I asked him if the silver of Chiva, was the same colour as ours? All who heard me, began to laugh. The Turcoman stepped back, and putting his hand to the hilt of his sword, answered, "Mr. Ambassador, we Turcomans are a rude and unpolished nation, we are pardoned for things of this kind, but we are esteemed for our courage, and for our swords, which are always at the service of the Khan." "They will also be at the service of our white Czar;" replied I, "as soon as I have succeeded in the establishment of peace between the two countries." These words appeased him.

I retired to rest rather late, and was already asleep, when I was abruptly informed of the arrival of an officer from Mohamed-Rahim-Khan. Abdoulla, a young man of good ap-

pearance, accompanied by a person advanced in years, entered. They sat down by my bed side; the young man inquired in the name of the Khan, the cause of my coming, and the intentions of my government; I answered, that I would tell the Khan himself, or any other person whom he should name; that besides, I was the bearer of papers, the contents of which were unknown to me. I shewed Abdoulla a sealed letter, and requested him to convey my answer to the Khan. "It is surprising," continued he, "that Ambassadors from the white Czar should have arrived from different sides; we have at Chiva four of these envoys, and it seems that you are likewise from that Czar." I endeavoured to persuade him that they could not be ambassadors, and that they must be deserters, who had assumed the title; that they ought to be arrested, and that if they were impostors, I would have them bound, and sent back to Russia. I afterwards learnt that they were four Nogaïs, who brought a letter to the Khan. "Are you used to take tea," asked Abdoulla, "if you are, you may make some for me."---"We take it in the day time," replied I, "and as I am unwell and fatigued by my journey, you will oblige me by leaving me to take some rest, adieu." He left me, and I afterwards learnt that he was son of an officer of the highest rank, who had been in the Khan's service, that Mohamed had not given him any commission to me, and that he was brought merely by his curiosity.

The same day, I learned that two Russians, having heard of the arrival of a corvette on the coast of Turcomania, had fled the day before my arrival at Akh-Sarai, to try to reach the sea side, that they had left wives and children, and had been retaken soon after. The Chivans have many Russian prisoners, who are sold to them by the Kirghis, who take them on the line of Orenburg: they have also Persian and Curd slaves, whom the Turcomans bring there in great numbers. They treat these unhappy people with great rigour. On the least suspicion of their intending to escape, they are cruelly punished, and if they find them transgressing in this respect for the second time, they nail them by the ear to their door, and leave them in that dreadful situation for three days; those who do not sink under this punishment, continue to vegetate in the most frightful slavery.

On the 6th, in the morning, some hired horses were brought me; but having been invited a moment before they arrived, to breakfast with one of the elders, I lost two hours, which gave quite a different turn to my affairs; for I should have arrived at Chiva the same day, and the Khan, surprised at my sudden arrival, would probably have received me well and speedily

dismissed me. I had scarcely gone eight wersts when I met a horseman in full gallop, who came to request me, in the Khan's name, to stop, and wait the arrival of two officers, who had been dispatched to me the night before from Chiva. They soon arrived, attended by four men on horseback: the eldest, who might be about sixty, was a man of low stature, with a long grey beard, and the countenance of a monkey; he stammered a little, and every word shewed the maliciousness of his character, and his eagerness for money. His name was At-Tchapar-Alla-Verdi. His companion was a robust and a very large man, with a little beard; he had a noble and frank countenance, which his language did not belie, and with which all his conduct corresponded. His name was Ech-Nezer, and he might be about 30 years of age; his rank was that of Jous-Bachi, or centurion, which does not mean the commander of a hundred men, but officers to whom the Khan in time of war gives the command of corps of troops, different in number. I learned afterwards, that At-Tchapar was of Astrabad, and of Persian origin; he had been carried into slavery in his youth, had embraced the law of Suily, and had married. His son, Khodjach-Mehhrem, had rendered the Khan great services in a battle, had become his favourite, and soon was placed at the head of the board of customs; he afterwards gained the entire confidence of the Khan, and endeavoured to make the fortunes of his father and brothers. The Khan gave many estates and canals to Khodjach Mehhrem, who having increased his property by large acquisitions, was become one of the three richest and most distinguished persons in the country of Chiva. As he had commercial dealings with Astrachan, he had asked the Khan to let him lodge me in his house till my fate was decided. It was probably to receive the presents, in case my affairs turned out well, or to do the Khan the pleasure of strangling me in case this service had been agreeable to his master.

It was probably for this reason that At-Tchapar signified to me the Khan's order to follow him to his estate, Il Gheldi, where every thing was prepared for my reception. We travelled 18 wersts, through a beautiful and populous country, with the exception of a sandy tract between two canals. The weather, which was very serene, permitted me to see at a great distance, a small fort with a little garden; this was the fort of Il Gheldi, forming a square, flanked by four towers, the walls built of clay and stones, about three toises and a half high, and twenty-five long. It belonged to Khodjach Mehhrem. At Chiva most rich persons have similar forts, but without embrasures. In the interior they have a small reser-

voir, some houses, chambers, magazines, and mills, and reserve a place for their cattle. The custom of fortifying houses originates in the troubles which occur on the death of their prince, and generally end in civil war. Even in times of peace the Turcomans frequently pillage the Chivans. These forts contain provisions; each family is at all times able to resist the attacks of a little troop of Turcomans. There were at Il Gheldi about sixty inhabitants, part of them occupied the chambers and others were in tents, placed in the court-yard; they had their wives with them. In the wall opposite the gate there was a tower with a small door leading to the garden, which contained a small muddy reservoir, and a few trees and vines of a good quality. This garden was surrounded by a wall, about ten feet high, against the outside of which the house of a mollah and a mosque were built.

When I arrived at Il Gheldi, I saw Khodjach Mehhrem's brother; he was a young man of prepossessing appearance, and a mild and amiable character. During the first days, my hosts treated me with remarkable attention, Seïd Nezer, bringing me the compliments of the Khan and his elder brother, brought me a tea-kettle, and some sugar and tea; they dressed pillau for me, presented me with several kinds of fruits, and lodged me in a separate room. As the weather was hot, this chamber, though dark, appeared to me supportable, because it was so cool and neat. I walked from time to time in the court-yard, and now and then in the garden. There were sentinels at all the outlets: I at first took them for a guard of honour, but I soon discovered that I was a prisoner. The four Turcomans who accompanied me, received permission to go and see their friends. I had been assured that the Khan would send for me the day after my arrival; but it was already the 7th of October, and nobody appeared. Jakoub, the third son of At-Tchapar, who came that day from Chiva, told me that the Khan would certainly send for me the day following.

On the 8th of October, I received a visit from a certain Jakoub Bey, who spoke a little Russian. He had formerly been a merchant at Astracan; after having dissipated his fortune, he returned to Chiva, and obtained an employment in the custom-house. He came from the Khan to ask who I was, the purpose of my coming, my instructions, and also to demand my papers, that he might give them to the Khan. I refused them positively, saying that I was sent to the Khan alone, and if he would not see me, he had only to send me back; however, added I, you may tell the Khan that I have to deliver presents and two letters, one from the Governor of the country between the Caspian and Black Sea, and the other

from Major Ponomarew, who governs one of the provinces under our Sardar. Jakoub Bey rose angrily and left me.

One of my Turcomans had heard that the Khan had left Chiva, and that he would give me audience in a fort near Il Gheldi. I communicated this information to my guards, At-Tchapar, and Jous Bachi, who assured me it was false. I learnt, however, the same evening, that when Jakoub Bey came to see me, the Khan had already left Chiva to go on a hunting party to a Steppe twelve days' journey off. Meantime I was every day treated with more rudeness, and my food diminished; they ceased to give me tea, or wood to dress my meals; they even forbid me to buy provisions, but they afterwards relaxed in this point, because At-Tchapar, who took this upon himself, kept part of the money for himself. I was watched with more strictness, and prohibited from leaving my room, even for a moment, without two guards; they placed sentinels at my door with orders to admit nobody: a man slept across the threshold of the door, so that it was not possible to pass without waking him. My Turcomans learnt from people who frequented the bazar, that after my arrival the Khan had called a council, composed of the first persons in the state, that the debates had been very long, but that the result was not known. A few days after, I learnt from some Turcoman friends of my guides, one of whom was in the service of the Khan, that Mahomet Rahim, having been informed that I had taken notes on the road, considered me as a spy, and said to the council; "The Turcomans who brought him should not have let him enter my dominions; but they ought to have killed him and delivered his presents to me. Since he is come we can do nothing; I desire to know the opinion of the Kazi. 'He is a miscreant,' replied the latter, 'and ought to be carried into the fields and buried alive.' I thought you had more understanding than myself, said the Khan, but I perceive you have none at all. If I kill him, his master, the white Czar, will come next year and carry off the women of my harem; it is better I should receive him, and then send him back; meantime let him remain in prison till I learn from him what brings him here. As for you, withdraw."

In this council some imagined I had come to treat for the ransom of the Russian prisoners; others, that I wished to obtain satisfaction because ten years before two of our vessels had been burnt in the Bay of Balkan, by Turcomans of the tribe of Ata, who after having been expelled from the coasts by the Jomouds, submitted to Mahomet Rahim. Some even thought that the object of my mission was to demand satisfaction for the death of Prince Bekevitch, who was murdered in the year 1717.

They also said that our fleet had approached the coasts of the Turcomans; that the foundations of a great fort had been laid and it was already half built, and that knowing the route, I should return to Chiva in the following year, at the head of an army. Some of the members of the council fancied that our commander-in-chief, being at war with the Persians, wished to engage the Khan of Chiva to afford him assistance. They even pretended that the Russians had already taken the fort of Akh Kala, near Astrabad. But if their opinions on the motive of my journey were different, they almost all concurred that I ought to be sent to punishment, or be put to death secretly, or be kept in slavery. The Khan himself was much alarmed at my arrival; but his fears of our government hindered him from putting me to death publicly, however much he was disposed to do it. For this reason he determined to keep me in prison till he had made further inquiries, and had thought of a better means to accomplish his design. They sent persons to sound me respecting the intentions of my government; but I took care to let nothing transpire. What I heard of the deliberations of the council and the secret designs of the Khan, of course alarmed me; at first I did not credit it, but the truth of it was fully confirmed by subsequent circumstances.

In this situation I hesitated whether I should submit patiently or attempt to make my escape. However, I determined to resign myself, and as they had left me my arms, I resolved to have them ready, being resolved to sell my life dearly if I should be suddenly attacked. Fortunately I had for my consolation Pope's translation of the Iliad. Every morning I went into the garden to read it, and sometimes forgot my misfortunes.

Thus the time passed on. I perceived indications of the approach of winter. The mornings were cooler, the leaves began to wither and fall from the trees, and reminded me that even if my affairs should end happily, I should in all probability be obliged to give up the idea of returning to my own country, there being every reason to believe that the frost would oblige the corvette to depart and leave me to my fate, in the midst of a ferocious people. My captivity lasted forty-eight days.

I was visited at Il Gheldi by a child, ten years of age, the son of Kodjach Mehhrem, a favourite of the Khan, who liked to play at chess with him; his father sent me word that he should soon come and see me. I had been so often deceived that I would not believe this messenger. I had always thought that among those who surrounded me, I might induce some to bring me from time to time certain news from Chiva. Having

assembled them all and offered what I had to give, I tried to discover which of them I might induce to serve me; not one ventured to speak, for fear of being denounced by one of the witnesses of our conversation. I then thought of a poor Bucharian, named Bey Mahomet, who had left his country seventeen years before to go to Mecca; he remained in this fort, where he gained his livelihood by making girdles. I gave him a pair of scissars, he came secretly to me and gave me all the information he could obtain; though not important, he did me great service, by acquainting me with a dispute which had arisen between Jous Bachi and At-Tchapar on my account. I found that Jous Bachi, a worthy man, was my real keeper, and had been ordered to watch me most strictly. Having invited him one day to come to me, he had been seized with fear and endeavoured to avoid an interview alone. At-Tchapar never let him enter my room without following him immediately, lest I should make him some presents. When I perceived this jealousy I asked At-Tchapar to visit me, and though I had already given him some cloth, I now presented him with some linen, desiring him not to mention it to any body, but particularly not to Jous Bachi. The old rogue concealed the linen under his robe, and fled like a robber, hid his booty and sat down close to Jous Bachi as if nothing had happened. I took the first opportunity of telling this story to Jous Bachi, who laughed heartily at it; in truth, he despised At-Tchapar and all his family. Having succeeded in gaining the confidence of Jous Bachi, I took him alone into the garden, where I had the consolation to hear from him, that though the day was not fixed, he expected every hour that I should be sent for; that when the Khan returned he would probably not go to the chace again, because the people said that he was afraid of the Russian ambassador, not knowing what answer to make him, and fled into the Steppe.

My Turcomans seeing the bad state of my affairs, became less respectful; they sought to avoid me for fear of sharing my fate. When they went to the bazar the people surrounded them, and asked what day was fixed for my execution; they were even asked one day whether the ambassador had not been strangled the night before. The elders advised them to fly, both on account of the danger they might incur in remaining with me, and partly because the Khan was very angry at their not having yet paid the tribute he had imposed on the caravans. Seïd too grew insolent; and upon one occasion, when I reprimanded him, he rose, and said "Adieu, Mourad Bey: I have served you till this day, but if you choose to treat me in such a manner, I shall leave you." He again said

"Adieu!" and went out. I called him back: he looked as if he expected some apology from me, but I said,—"Seïd, depart: you see my unfortunate situation; it is possible you may share my fate. Return to your family, and tell Kiat-Aga, who ordered you to accompany me, that you have abandoned me: but learn, also, that as long as I have these arms, I fear neither you nor any man: Adieu! do not return." This reply confounded him; he sat down, reflected, shed tears, asked my pardon, and vowed that he never would forsake me, but share my fate; I was reconciled to him.

At-Tchapar had seven Russian prisoners, one of whom, named David, lived at Il Gheldi. He had been made prisoner at the age of 14, and had been sixteen years in slavery. He had served several masters, and though he had adopted the manners and customs of the Chivans, he refused to change his religion. Having one day met Petrovich, he desired him to ask me to try to take him home with me. I endeavoured to see him, but had very few opportunities. I asked him to enquire of the Russians who came from Chiva, what passed there, and what was said of me. His accounts, as well as those of sixteen Persian slaves at Il Gheldi, confirmed the truth of the reports of the deliberations of the Council. Having been some time without seeing David, I found means to let him know that I wished to see him in the night; though it was forbidden, under pain of death, to hold communication with me, he came at midnight, and told me what I had already heard from the Turcomans; he also gave me much information respecting the situation of the Russian prisoners, and I dismissed him with the present of a ducat.

The prisoners are chiefly taken by the Kirghis on the line of Orenburg; they sell them at Chiva, and it is said there are as many in Bucharia as in Chiva. The number of Russian slaves at Chiva is estimated at 3000, and that of the Persians at 30,000. The Chivans force the Persians to renounce their Faith, but they do not compel the Russians. David assured me that they had a separate room, where they placed the images of their Saints, and that they go there at night to say their prayers. Their masters allowing them to walk about during the two great festivals, they take the opportunity to meet, and get intoxicated with the brandy which they distil from the fruit of the country; these festivals generally end in some murder.

Though the masters have a right to kill their slaves, they seldom exercise it, not to lose a labourer; to punish them they put out an eye, or cut off one of their ears. One day At-Tchapar was going, in my presence, to cut off one of Da-

vid's ears, because, on his way to Chiva, he had stabbed, with a knife, a Persian slave, with whom he had a quarrel. He began by striking him across the face with his whip, and afterwards seizing his knife, he desired Sergum to throw David down, that he might the more easily execute his intention. His clerk, Ouzbek Mahomet Aga, prevented him. I took care not to interfere, and retired for fear I should injure poor David. The following night he came to me and said,—" Sir, you have seen how I was beaten; that dog was going to cut off my ear; yesterday evening his son gave me 500 blows with his whip; but towards these dogs it is necessary to behave in this manner, that is to say, boldly; though they have beaten me, they are afraid of me; you should see how they all run away from me when I am drunk!"

On the 20th of October, we were visited by Seïd Nazar, of Ourghendi, who came to see me several times. I do not know whether he suspected me of intending to escape; but when I asked him if the Khan would soon return, he replied vehemently, " do you think of escaping? venture to make the trial, and you will see what will be done with you." These words vexed me much, but that he might not discover the intention I really entertained of flying, I answered, that he was mistaken, and that an Ambassador never took flight, because his Sovereign was answerable for his inviolability. This circumstance made me suspect that they had some idea of my project; I went into the garden to examine the walls, and found that a ladder had been removed, upon which I had placed much reliance. I complained to Jous Bachi, of the rude language of Seïd Nazar, adding, that to begin with At-Tchapar, an old man, whose grey beard ought to inspire respect, the whole family appeared to me contemptible. " Certainly, replied Jous Bachi, his beard proves nothing, for goats too have long beards."

On the 21st of October, I received a visit from Hekim-Ali-Bey, who assured me of his attachment, and told me that he was preparing to fly from Chiva with his caravan. " The eyes of the Khan are full of blood said he; formerly every one had access to him; at present, he wont listen to any body, demands of us enormous duties for the caravans which arrive, and in this manner, he shuts us entirely from Chiva, has us hung, impaled, &c."

In fact, the Khan frequently punishes Turcomans who inhabit his dominions, for thefts or other crimes; it is the only means by which he has succeeded in establishing tranquillity in his kingdom. Five Turcomans were hanged while I was there.

Hekim-Ali-Bey asked me for a letter to major Ponomarew; being afraid of trusting him with one, I gave him a medal of Julius Cæsar, which he was to deliver to father Timothy, chaplain of the corvette, begging him to place, in my name, a taper before an image. "This is customary with us," said I, "however, do not suppose that I mean to make a secret of it, on the contrary, you may tell it to whom you please." Every body on board the corvette knew that I possessed this medal, and I sent it that they might know that I was still alive. "Forget what has passed," said Hekim-Ali-Bey, rising; "and at your return, do not say, that I have treated you with Turcoman unpoliteness." However rigorously the Turcomans were forbidden to come to me, they always found means to speak to me; I wished to see some of them, but the greater part only disturbed me.

At length, the Khan returned from his hunting party on the 23d, and every body then gave me hopes, that he would soon send for me. Five days, however, passed, and I was still watched with the same strictness; when seeing that I had no means to escape from this cruel slavery, I had recourse to threats; I therefore repeatedly addressed my keepers, desiring them to tell the Khan in my name, that winter was at hand, that the corvette was in danger of being frozen in, and of perishing in the bay of Balkan, because it could not set sail without me. I added, that if it met with any accident, the Khan would be answerable to the emperor of Russia. None of my keepers would charge himself with this message to the Khan. Three of my Turcomans, perceiving that my affairs went on badly, began to refuse to obey me, one of them even demanded his discharge. I gave it him, and left him to repent as well as Seïd.

On the 31st, I sent for At-Tchapar and Jous-Bachi, that they might inform me of the Khan's intentions; I again begged them to acquaint him with the situation of the corvette, and of the responsibility which he would incur; they persuaded me to have patience for one day, to wait the arrival of Khodjach-Mehhrem, whom they expected every hour. Their irresolution made me think of sending Petrovitch or Seïd to Chiva, but they would not permit it.

On the 4th of November, I learnt from a Turcoman, that Jomoud-Nias-Batyr, had come from Krasnovodsk, and had arrived at Chiva, and had brought two letters from major Ponomarew, one for the Khan, and the other for me. On the 6th, at day break, I secretly sent Koultchi to look for Nias-Batyr, and to demand my letter; he came himself the next day, bringing me the compliments of the Khan,

and delivered me by his order, the letter from major Ponomarew. Nias-Batyr told me that the Khan had expressed much pleasure at seeing him. "Mahomet-Rahim," continued Nias, "has been deceived by some Turcomans, who assured him that the Russians were building a fort on the coast; I have undeceived him, and as a mark of his favourable disposition towards you, he has ordered me to deliver this letter personally, and to request you to have patience, because he has resolved to send for you shortly. All on board the corvette are well, they amuse themselves, and are waiting for you. I am come to be your deliverer, for without me you might have passed all your life in this fortress." He added much more, and though I had not much confidence in him, I treated him as well as I could, and on that day, my old friend At-Tchapar took more pains, and spent more money for me, than he had done in a whole week.

The letter from major Ponomarew contained nothing important; he hoped I should be back by the 8th of November. I made a considerable present to Nias-Batyr, telling him that as I did not wish to conceal any thing from the Khan, I requested him to deliver my letter to him, that he might read it. Nias-Batyr vowed that the Khan would certainly send for me in two days. He passed the night with me.

Though I had no reason to give full credit to Nias, yet, from the weakness which induces the unfortunate to catch at the slightest hope, all this news filled me with joy, and the following day I invited all the relations of my Turcomans. I bought two sheep and millet, and had large dishes of pillau prepared, to regale my hosts as well as I could. I did not forget the inhabitants of the fortress, and joy entered, for the first time, into this gloomy abode. The famished slaves and Turcomans greedily devoured the portions given them. The entertainment being over, I let Nias-Batyr go, putting him in mind that he had promised to give me constant information.

Koutchi, who had been sent to Chiva to look for Nias-Batyr, returned in the evening. He had seen some Turcomans hung, and was in great terror. On the evening of the 9th, Nias came back; he had met the Khan at Maï-Djenghil, where he was gone on a hunting party, which was to last two days. He again protested his attachment, and set out on the 10th for Chiva.

However, I did not receive any messages from the Khan. David informed me that the Prince was making preparations for my reception, and that he had even ordered garments which were intended for presents; he added, that there would be in

my room a door, secured by a lock, behind which a Russian would be stationed to listen; and lastly, that I should be sent away with honor. Being unable to believe all this news, I entreated Jous-Bachi to tell me whether I was to pass the winter at Chiva, or whether I should be sent home, that I might take my measures accordingly. "Not to deceive you," said he, I will frankly own that I know nothing about it; yet I think you may expect very shortly to receive the invitation you desire." I repeated to him my constant request, that he would go himself to the Khan, and represent to him the dangerous situation of the corvette. "If nobody comes from Chiva between this and to-morrow, I will certainly go," said he. Three days passed, yet he did not set out. I represented to him that he had nothing to fear, since, according to the report of Nias-Batyr, the Khan was perfectly well-disposed towards me, and that, besides, the blame of such a step could fall only upon me. "You have chosen to deceive yourself," said he, "and I have not thought proper to undeceive you by blackening a man whom you have thought worthy of your confidence; I will now tell you, that Nias-Batyr is a rogue without any conscience." These accusations seemed probable, because Nias not only did not send me any intelligence, as he had promised, but even tried to cheat me in purchases which he had undertaken to make for me.

At length on the 14th, Jous-Bachi, who for some reason unknown to me, violently quarrelled with At-Tchapar, came and told me that he was immediately going to Chiva, in order to inform the Khan of the shameful manner in which I was treated, and of the situation of the corvette. He added, that without regarding the danger which he might incur himself, he was resolved to declare to the Khan, in my name, that if the vessel suffered any injury, he would be responsible to the Emperor of Russia; and that if he was resolved to keep me he had better send away the corvette. The Khan was to set out again in three days for the Steppes, where he intended to hunt for three months; he had already sent his hunting apparatus and his tents. "If I succeed you will see me again to-morrow afternoon," said he. He did not, however, return at the time appointed, I was therefore persuaded that he had been punished for the boldness of his declaration, or that my affairs had taken a bad turn, and I again returned to my old plan of escaping. I had never made any overtures on the subject except to Petrovitch, fearing to trust Seïd. However, as it was absolutely necessary for him to be in the secret, I sent for him, and after some conversation contrived to bring him

to make me the proposal of escape: I at first pretended to disapprove this design, and then to yield to his arguments; so that we had only to provide means for the execution.

Having concerted our measures, Seïd left me on the morning of the 16th, to make some necessary purchases, after which he was to return, and then go in the evening to his village to provide horses, with which he was to wait for me under the walls of the fort. Meantime, I and Petrovitch examined the fort and garden, to find the best method of escaping from it. Noon passed, and I had seen neither Jous-Bachi nor Seïd; plunged in melancholy reflections, I sat down in a corner, waiting the decision of my fate, when Seïd arrived, and sat down by me; and being questioned as to the cause of his delay, said, "that he had considered that man was governed by destiny, and that if we took flight, destiny would punish us for having disobeyed it." I was angry, and asked him whether he had purchased what was necessary? "I have bought nothing, (said he,) there is your money." I had given him ten ducats, which he had exchanged for silver, and had brought me back the value of eight ducats, saying that the rest had served to pay the agio.

Perceiving myself entirely at the mercy of Seïd, I remained lost in thought, not knowing what to determine. My affliction moved Seïd, who begged my pardon, weeping like a child, assuring me that he would prepare every thing necessary for our flight the next day. All at once Koultchi came running in with the news that Jous-Bachi was arrived. The latter entered, and joyfully congratulated me, saying, "The Khan desires to see you; we shall go to him to-morrow morning: he was angry that I had quitted my post, but when I detailed all the particulars, when I spoke to him of the situation of the corvette, and of the inevitable responsibility to which he exposed himself in thus detaining an ambassador, he has resolved to send for you, and to receive you in a becoming manner." I thanked Jous-Bachi, and made him a present by way of acknowledgement; and the evening after receiving this good news was the gayest of the forty-eight I spent at Il Gheldi. My Turcomans were again respectful; the rude, insupportable At-Tchapar became extremely civil, and had even the meanness to ask me not to tell any body of my bad fare during the time I lived at his house.

During the night I sent to a neighbouring village to hire some horses; the report of the good intentions of the Khan towards me, spread so rapidly, that on the following morning, a crowd assembled to congratulate me, attracted by the hope of receiving some present, or of joining my suite, and

feasting upon pillau and tea, all the time I should be at Chiva. Before I left Il Gheldi, I ordered Petrovitch to distribute some money among the inhabitants, and particularly to give a piece to each of the servants or slaves, who had endeavoured to do me service.

The distance to Chiva was thirty-five wersts, in a north-easterly direction, across two sandy steppes, intersected by canals, on the sides of which were large villages and gardens. The water is conducted to them with so much skill that at one place I saw a canal over which a bridge passed, supporting another canal, and this again had a bridge across it, over which we passed. At five wersts from Chiva, the eye ranges over an infinite number of gardens with narrow lanes between them, sprinkled with forts, which are the residence of the wealthy inhabitants. The view of the town is very agreeable; above the high wall which surrounds it, the vast domes of the mosques rise, surmounted by golden balls, and painted of an azure colour, which forms an agreeable contrast with the verdure of the gardens. When we came to a place where the road was crossed by a narrow canal with a very handsome bridge over it, I found numerous groups of people attracted by curiosity; they accompanied me as far as the habitation prepared for me; and when I entered the narrow streets of Chiva, the crowd became so considerable, that it was impossible to pass through it; the people stifled themselves, and fell under the feet of our horses. Jous Bachi was obliged to use force in order to make a passage for us; it was with deep affliction that among the spectators, who were attracted by mere curiosity, I recognzied some unhappy Russians, who took off their caps, and begged me in a low voice to save them.

After going about half a werst through the narrow streets, we at length stopped before a house, the outside of which had a pretty good appearance. Jous-Bachi introduced me into a court-yard very clean and paved; this led to the apartments, one of the largest of which was assigned to me, and a smaller one to the Turcomans. My chamber was very well furnished, in the Oriental style, with magnificent carpets; a vain advantage which was no indemnity for the insupportable cold. As the crowd had followed me as far as my residence, Jous-Bachi drove them away, and went to announce my arrival to the Khan. During his absence the people again collected, so that quarrels arose at the door, and the passage across the court-yard was completely obstructed. The Khan's servants, who had been placed to maintain order, could not drive away this immense crowd. Jous Bachi, as soon as he returned, rid me of them by employing force. The gates and all the avenues

were secured by good locks; nobody was left with me except my guards, who did not dare to enter my room without being desired.

Jous-Bachi congratulated me in the name of the Khan on my arrival, and informed me that I was the guest of Mekhter Aga Joussouf, first vizier to the Khan. Soon afterwards, they gave me a cook, and besides what was prepared for my table at home, the vizier sent me enormous dishes of all kinds of food, besides sugar, tea, and fruits. The politeness with which they treated me was not natural to this people; but in the midst of this parade, which lasted five days, they did not cease for a moment to keep a strict watch over me.

On the evening of my arrival, Khodjach-Mehhrem came to see me for the first time. He was a crafty man, but very agreeable in his manners: we had an hour's conversation, which passed in reciprocal compliments; among other things he asked me to permit him to apply to the Khan for the favour of being entrusted with all the affairs of the embassy. I replied that I had not the right to prescribe their duty to the officers of the Khan. He succeeded in settling every thing the same evening, and came to let me know that the Khan had honoured him with this employment; he then asked me in his name for the letters and presents I had brought for him; but I would not consent till Jous-Bachi had assured me of the truth of it. However, I gave him only the letters; in the course of the night he came to ask for the presents. I did not think this unseasonable, when I found that the Khan slept during the day-time, and attended to his affairs during the night. Jous-Bachi advised me to seal up what I sent, lest Khodjach and his brethren at the custom-house might appropriate the most valuable articles to themselves. I placed upon a plateau, cloth, damask, and other things, and having wrapped them up in a piece of linen, gave them to Khodjach, who was followed by his people, and carried them away in a mysterious manner. I ordered Petrovitch to accompany him. Two hours already passed, and the latter not returning, I began to fear that he had met with some accident, when he suddenly entered with a great noise, dressed from head to foot like an Usbeck. Throwing off the great cap which formed part of his costume, and the kaftan in which he was muffled up, he swore that he would never again execute such a commission; he told me that he had been left to wait in a passage, and that at last Khodjach had come and taken off the dress he wore, and in the name of the Khan gave him another, and dismissed him. The next day, At-Tchapar, Khodjach's father, desired him to return the dress. Mekhta Aga, the president of the

council, asked for the plateaus which had been borrowed to put the presents on: I told Jous-Bachi to return them. He answered me that the owner would never see them again, for that the Khan was a powerful man, and never returned any thing that once fell into his hands.

Among the presents there was a plateau, with ten pounds of lead, an equal quantity of powder, and ten gun flints. The Khan spent the whole night in examining what had been sent. He was astonished at the weight of this plateau; when he lifted it up, he asked Jous-Bachi, if it did not contain the ducats which he expected; he immediately unsealed the linen envelope, and was greatly disconcerted at not finding what he expected. It seems that the meaning of the presents upon the plateau, was explained by them in the following manner; two sugar loaves placed with the lead and powder, signified according to them, propositions of pure and kind friendship, and in case the Khan did not consent to it, the powder and lead were equivalent to a declaration of war.

The Khan would not yet receive me; on the 18th, I intended to send some presents to his elder brother, Koutli-Mourad-Inakh. I was told that I could not do it without the express permission of the Khan; Jous-Bachi obtained it for me, and in the night, I charged Petrovitch to carry him some cloth, damask, sugar, and other trifles. Petrovitch was not admitted into the presence of this personage, but he sent him five tilla in gold. Among the presents I had sent him, there was a small dressing case, which contained a tin box, with a piece of black soap in it. Inakh, in examining all the articles one after the other, saw this piece of soap, which excited his suspicions, because he could not conceive what it might be. He asked his physician, who knew no more about it than himself; they sent to me to ask what it was; having forgotten what the case contained, I begged them to send it me for a moment, that I might explain it to them: this they refused to do, and when I desired that they would only shew me the single article which embarrassed them, they would still not consent. "Do not expect to see any thing again, said Jous-Bachi, our Inakh is as tenacious as the Khan; what he once has he never returns; but I fancy it is a piece of soap, and I will make him easy."

The same evening, I recollected that there were ten glasses which I had forgotten to send to the Khan; I therefore begged Jous-Bachi to carry them to him, and to make an apology in my name for having omitted them. "That is of no consequence," said he, "our Khan takes every thing, the only difficulty is to get something from him. Glass is very rare among

us; I am sure they will please him, but you must not send ten, because that number among us, is considered unlucky; it will be sufficient to send nine." He immediately left me with the glasses; he returned after midnight, and told me that the Khan had been very much satisfied, that he examined them all one after another exclaiming, "What a pity that they were not sent me when I drank brandy." He had formerly drank it habitually, but had since given it up as well as smoking, which he also prohibited to his subjects, under penalty of having the mouth slit open as far as the ears. This prohibition is not always strictly observed: the Khan knows that several persons about him smoke, and he pretends not to perceive it.---Most of the Chivans, instead of tobacco, smoke hemp; it is very unwholesome, and causes those who are not accustomed to it, to faint.

Among the presents sent to the Khan, there was one of the glass vases through which the Persians make the smoke of their pipe pass. The Khan very much astonished, asked Jous-Bachi, what it was; the latter, who did not dare to tell him, told him that it was a vase to keep vinegar in, of which the Khan is very fond. A burning glass which I had much surprised the Chivans. Several came to me merely to see it; they pretended that glass could not possess so marvellous a quality, and that it must be rock crystal.

As I was closely guarded, and nobody ventured to come and see me without permission, I recollected that while at Il Gheldi, David had told me that, when I should come to Chiva, a Russian would be placed at one of the doors in my room, to listen to my conversation. On examining my apartment, I really found this door; it was locked; it was easy to perceive that somebody was stationed on the other side. I sat down purposely near the door, and conversed in a loud voice, with my interpreter, in Russian, on the military qualities of Mahomet-Rahim-Khan, his strength, the superiority of the people of Chiva, over the Persians, &c.---I was listened to for three days, and my discourses were faithfully reported to the prince. During this time, notwithstanding the attentions paid me, the time hung heavily on my hands, because I was not at liberty; and I feared that the Khan would set out for the hunting party which was to last three months, and for which I knew every preparation had been made.

The first minister and my keepers carried their attention so far that, seeing my ennui, they brought to me one Molla Seide, a man about forty years of age, witty, and as amiable as an European; I never met any person who played chess so well. Molla Seide lived upon the presents of the first officers of

Chiva, with whom he spent the evening playing chess, reading, reciting verses extempore, and telling stories. He was versed in the Arabian, Persian, and Turkish languages; expressed himself in a very clear and agreeable manner; was acquainted with the ancient history of the east, recited with animation passages from it, which he mingled with extracts from the best poets. He told me jokingly, that he had a country-house which he had not entered for fourteen years, and that during this time he had always passed the night at the house of some one of the most distinguished inhabitants of Chiva; complaining of the present times, he thought the Khan excessively severe, because he had prohibited the use of brandy and hemp for smoking. He remained with me till two o'clock in the morning.

On the evening of the 20th of November, Khodjach sent Seïd Nézer to inform me that I was expected by the Khan. I dressed myself in full uniform, retaining the Chivan cap; but lest some of the Russians about the Khan should recognise the branch of the service to which I belonged, I took off my embroidered collar and put on one of plain scarlet. Jous-Bachi told me that according to their customs I could not retain my sabre in the presence of the Khan; however, as I was resolved to keep it, I begged him to let the Khan know. "You will spoil every thing by that," said he; "the Khan is at present in a good humour, I will rather tell him that you do not wear a sabre, but a large knife," (instead of a sabre I had a large Tcherkessan dagger.) He left me and soon returned, saying, that the Khan had told him to request me to come without arms, merely not to break through their customs. I consented to take this request into consideration, in order to terminate my mission as soon as possible.

Jous-Bachi and the officers of my guard opened the procession; some jessaouls, with long canes, kept back the people who crowded about us, the roofs were covered with spectators; I again heard the complaints of some of my countrymen, who were mingled in the crowd. In this manner I walked about a quarter of a werst through narrow streets to the gate of the Khan's palace, where I was left till he was informed of my arrival; soon afterwards I was invited to enter. The gateway is built with bricks and in good taste; I was first introduced into a small sanded court, surrounded by dirty clay walls, round which sixty-three Kirghis envoys were sitting, who had come to pay their respects to the Khan: they were to go away after having taken part in an entertainment, and each received a piece of coarse cloth to make a kaftan.

The second court, a little smaller than the first, contained

the Khan's arsenal; there are seven cannons upon their carriages, resembling ours; they were placed one upon the other in very bad order, the wheels were broken; I was particularly desired to notice them. I entered the third court where the council assembles, and then into a passage, at the entrance of which were some of the Khan's servants; it was covered with reeds, the walls were of clay, the ground dirty and uneven; I went down a few steps into the fourth court, which is much larger than the other three, but dirtier; plants climbed up the walls; in the middle of it was the Khân's tent.

While I was going down some steps I saw a man come towards me in a dirty garment, whom, by his slit nostrils, I recognized to be a criminal escaped from Siberia; he got hold of my scarf behind, and wanted to lead me. It immediately occurred to me that I had been deceived and brought to this place, not to be presented to the Khan, but to be put to death, and that this was the reason they had disarmed me, under pretence of their customs. I turned round angrily and asked him, why he had laid hold of my scarf; he instantly drew back with a threatening posture; Jous-Bachi approached me, saying, that according to their customs an ambassador ought to be led into the presence of the Khan. The Russian again advanced, but not venturing to take hold of the scarf, he walked behind me holding up his hand.

I stopped before the tent where the Khan was seated, dressed in a robe made of the red cloth with which I had presented him, fastened over the breast with a silver clasp. He wore a turban with a white band, and sat without moving, upon a Korassan carpet. At the entrance of the tent Khodjach Mehrem was on the one side, and on the other Jossouf Mekhter Aga, an old man, whom I saw for the first time. The Khan, though rather corpulent, has an agreeable appearance. They say that he is six feet and a half high, and that his horse cannot carry him for more than two hours together; his beard is thin and of a light colour; he has a pleasing voice, and speaks with purity, ease, and a certain degree of dignity. Standing before him I saluted him without taking off my cap, and not to infringe their customs, I waited till he had spoken. In a few minutes one of the persons nearest him made the following prayer: "God preserve this state for the advantage and glory of its sovereign." The Khan then passed his hand over his beard, as well as the two persons who were present at the audience. Jous-Bachi kept at some distance; the prince then addressed me, saying, welcome. He then added, "Ambassador, why are you come, and what have you to ask me?" I replied; "The very happy Russian Commander-in-Chief of

the country situated between the Black and Caspian Sea, having under his government Tiflis, Ganja, Georgia, Karabag, Chouchia, Moukhia, Cheki, Chirwan, Bakou, Kouba, Lezghistan, Derbend, Astracan, Caucasus, Lenkoran, Salian, and all the forts and states taken by the imperial arms from the Kadjares, (Persians) has sent me to your highness to testify his respect, and present to you a letter written in a favourable moment.

The Khan. I have read his letter.

The Ambassador. He has also intrusted to me some presents for your Highness, which I have already had the happiness of delivering. I am also ordered to converse with you upon some other subjects, and wait for your decision to speak of them; when do you consent to hear me? now, or at another time?

The Khan. Speak now.

The Ambassador. Our Commander-in-Chief desiring to form an intimate friendship with your Highness, would be happy to have frequent correspondence with you. For this purpose it will be necessary to consolidate the commerce between our people and your's, and to make it advantageous to both. Your caravans going to Manghichlak, have to travel thirty days through a steppe destitute of water; and the obstacles which occur on this road are the cause that our commercial intercourse has hitherto been inconsiderable. The Commander-in-chief would wish that these caravans should come to the port of Krasnovodsk, situate in the bay of Balkan; this new route is no more than seventeen days' journey, and your merchants will always find at Krasnovodsk ships from Astracan, with the merchandize and other things sought for by your people.

The Khan. Though the road by Manghichlak is in truth much longer than that by Krasnovodsk, the people of Manghichlak are submissive to me; the Jomouds of the coast living at Astrabad chiefly obey the Kadjares, and consequently my caravans would run the risk of being plundered by those hordes; I cannot, therefore, consent to this change.

The Ambassador. When you are our ally, your enemies will be ours. I afterwards added, "The glory of your Highness's arms is well known to me; but what do you order me to reply to our Commander-in-chief, who desires your friendship? he begs you through me to send him a confidential person who may assure you of his friendly intentions. Immediately on my return to my country, I shall be sent to His Majesty the Emperor, to give an account of the reception you have given me, and deliver your Highness's answer.

The Khan. I shall send with you some good men, such as are desired, and give them a letter for the Commander-in-Chief; I am myself desirous to see a true and indissoluble friendship established between us. Farewell!

I accordingly bowed and retired. I was conducted back to the third court, followed by Khodjach and Mekhter-Aga, and several dishes with sugar and fruit were brought to me; during the half hour that I remained here, Mekhter Aga asked me for information respecting the relations between Russia and Persia, and of the state of our forces in Georgia. I replied that we had there an army of about 60,000 regular troops, and that besides we could raise among the inhabitants as many corps of cavalry as we pleased, composed of the best partizans. Jous-Bachi rejoined us, followed by a man carrying a robe of cloth of gold which the Khan gave me; when I had put it on they girded me with a rich scarf of cloth of gold of India, in which they placed a dagger with a silver sheath; they then muffled me up in a kind of surplice, with short sleeves of cloth of gold of Russia. They exchanged my cap for a worse, of which the Khan made me a present, and then again conducted me to his tent. The same ceremony was observed; the Khan ordered every thing I had said before to be repeated, and he made the same answers. "Khan," continued I, "tell me how I have merited the kindness which you have shewn me? I should esteem myself happy if I could return to you next year to assure you of the friendship of our Commander-in-Chief." "You will return if you are sent," answered he; "you will place my ambassadors entirely at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief; if he pleases he may even send them to the Emperor."

I crossed the courts to return to the outer gate, where they had ready for me a beautiful grey horse of the Turcoman breed. They set me upon it, and my Turcomans ranged themselves on both sides to lead it by the bridle; two placed themselves at the stirrups. There was so great a crowd, that Petrovitch, who was on foot, could not follow me. While I was speaking to the Khan, I had affected to elevate my voice, and to shew great assurance; it seemed strange to those who surrounded him, who were accustomed to slavery and meanness; and they looked at me with an air of displeasure during the whole audience. The crowd accompanied me as far as my residence. Khodjach arrived with some robes of cloth for my people. Seïd was very much displeased at their giving him a red dress of coarse cloth like that of his companions; he had a great mind to refuse it, but he had not the courage. Khodjach communicated the different commissions which the

Khan had given him for me. He told me that Mahomet had a cannon-founder, who had come from Constantinople, and that within these few days he had ordered him to cast a seventy-pounder.

There too they informed me that I was free, and that I might return; they took all my domestics from me; when left alone I was surrounded by such a crowd of curious people that, but for the assistance of Jous-Bachi, I should have had much trouble in getting rid of them. It would even have been difficult for me to leave Chiva without his aid, as I had neither horses, nor anything that I wanted. This want of horses obliged me to pass another night at Chiva, very well pleased at the happy termination of my mission. After my return from the Khan, I sent to ask his permission to make presents to the three most distinguished persons in the country; namely, Mekhter-Aga, and Kouch Bey, who was absent from the capital, and Khodjach Mehhrem. I sent each of them a piece of cloth, some silks, and a watch. Notwithstanding all my endeavours, I could not see Sultan-Khan, who in 1813 had reconciled three Turcoman tribes, to make them act against Persia.

As for the rest of the presents, I requested Jous-Bachi to distribute them according to the importance of the persons who received them. In the distribution which he made, he forgot a glass smoking vessel, for which he had an extreme desire; he told me to pull my cap over my eyes, and to think of the person who was most deserving of this present; of course it could be no other than himself. At-Tchapar also tormented me to obtain something; I gave him a small remnant of cloth. He seemed greatly dissatisfied, and went away in anger, and did not shew himself again. I learnt that Khodjach Mehhrem had presented to the Khan enormous bills for my board at Il Gheldi; they amounted to thirty-two francs daily; his father, At-Tchapar, also demanded sixteen francs daily.

RETURN.

I had intended to leave Chiva on the 21st of November, very early in the morning, for Il Gheldi, where I was to wait for the arrival of the ambassadors appointed by the Khan; they were Jous-Bachi, Ech Nezer, and Jakoub Bey, whom I have already mentioned. This man could read and write, was very crafty, and somewhat malicious. But I was detained at

Chiva till dinner-time, by the ambassadors, who had received orders from the Khan to entertain me, and they regaled me with some bad cold pillau. During this time Jous-Bachi went to the bazaar to make different purchases for me; at length, all being ready, and the horses saddled, I recollected that the lock of my two-barrelled gun was out of repair, and begged them to bring me a gun-smith; a young man with a fair complexion, and handsome countenance, and dressed in a turban, came to me. His physiognomy immediately betrayed his origin. I asked him in Russian if he spoke that language? No, replied he in Turkish, and taking the lock continued the conversation, sometimes in Persian, and sometimes in Turkish; he had very easy manners, and after having examined what was the matter with the lock, he ran home with the gun. I learnt from others that his father, who was a Russian, had been taken prisoner, and sold at Chiva. Having embraced the Mahometan faith, he married a Persian slave, and they had this son, who had studied with so much success, that he had been raised to the dignity of Mollah; he was able to support his parents by his labour, and had even redeemed them from captivity. I was just setting out, when the young man returned out of breath with my gun, but very indifferently mended, and some dozens of eggs and white loaves; I gave him a ducat, and spoke to him no more in Russian for fear of embarrassing him; I gave the gun to Jous-Bachi, begging him to examine it, and if he found it in a bad condition, to have it repaired and brought to me at Il Gheldi.

A Russian bringing me a horse, uttered in a low voice abuse of the Chivans on account of the difficulties they made to procure me horses. Going through Chiva, I saw in several places, some of my unhappy countrymen in separate groups, they saluted me, calling me their deliverer. One of them for a long time walked close to my horse, and on my turning to him, he said "Accept, Sir, the assurance of my profoundest respect, and when you return to your country, do not forget your unhappy countrymen." This man seemed to be above the lower class. As I was leaving the city, the people collecting in a crowd; I ordered my interpreter to throw among them two handsful of small coin; this produced disputes, of which we availed ourselves to proceed.

To my great regret, Petrovitch perceived at ten wersts from Il Gheldi that he had lost a little purse containing 300 ducats, with which I had intrusted him; he wept bitterly, and appeared overwhelmed with despair; I had much trouble in learning the cause of his affliction. Very fortunately Seïd found this purse; Petrovitch seizing it with transport, shed

tears of joy; I was no less pleased than he, for it would have been impossible for us to reach the corvette, if we had not sufficient money to pay the expense of the journey.---Seïd begged Jous-Bachi to obtain from the Khan an order, not to pay the duty for seventeen camels; I attempted in vain to dissuade him from making this request, and I was obliged to tell Jous-Bachi not to meddle in an affair of this kind: nevertheless, the Khan exempted Seïd and his companions from the duty on camels; I afterwards gave him money to buy grain.

I arrived at Il Gheldi at 11 o'clock at night, in a severe frost. David came a good way to meet me; and the Bucharian Moulla-Bey-Mohamed, and in general, all the inhabitants of the fort, rejoiced at the happy issue of my affairs, and congratulated me on my return. The good reception given me by the Khan, had raised me in the general estimation; the persons whom curiosity brought to see me, retired without hesitation as soon as I chose to dismiss them. My Turcomans had become very docile, and had acquired a degree of politeness, with which my visitors had reason to be contented. I was particularly satisfied with Aboul Hussein, and Koultchi, whom I had promised to take to the commander-in-chief, as ambassadors from the Turcomans. As it froze hard, I provided myself with sheep-skin cloaks, coverings for the legs, and large Chivan boots; and a Kirghis cap to wear at night. I bought mutton and millet, and some small Russian horses, which are common at Chiva. I put my arms in order, except my double-barreled gun, which the Russian at Chiva had spoiled: it, however, did me a great service. It was brought to me at Il Gheldi, three or four days after my return from Chiva. As I was setting out, I was going to load it; one of the barrels would not let the air pass when I blew into it; I ordered it to be cleaned, and a paper rolled up, was taken out; I opened it when I was alone, and read as follows:

"Most noble Sir, we take the liberty to inform you, that there are in this country 3000 Russian prisoners, who have to endure hunger, cold, and the insupportable labour imposed on them, as well as all kinds of insults: take pity on our unhappy situation, and lay it before His Majesty the emperor. Give a poor prisoner cause, eternally to pray to God for you."

It would be difficult to describe what I felt in reading this note; it made me the more sensible of the gratitude which I owed to Providence, for having delivered me from the danger; but, at the same time, my head was oppressed at the idea of leaving my unhappy countrymen in a rigorous captivity, without my being able to afford them any assistance. I re-

solved that as soon as I returned, I would do every thing to deliver them. This duty I have performed; our government has been made acquainted with the existence of these unhappy men, and will, doubtless, take all the necessary means to afford them deliverance. David brought to me another of my unfortunate countrymen, an old man, named Joseph Melnikow, who had been thirty years a captive. He was the son of a soldier, and was made prisoner by the Kirghis a week after his marriage; they sold him at Chiva. By working during the night and saving a part of his allowance, he had been able to make up the sum which his master required for his ransom; but the latter took his money, and instead of restoring him to liberty, sold him. "My parents too," continued the old man, shedding tears, "had saved some money, and sent it by a caravan, but the money was sent back, and my liberty refused; I am tortured, beaten, compelled to labour incessantly, and I know not when I shall be delivered from these ferocious beasts. I pray every night to our Saviour Christ; we are all Russians: we consider you as our deliverer, and pray to God for you. For two years more we will bear our sufferings, and pray for you in our hearts in expectation of your return: if you do not come back, several of us will unite, and venture into the Steppes of the Kirghis; if God pleases that we should die, be it so; but we will not fall alive into the hands of our persecutors."

Melnikow spoke the Russian very badly, mixing with it many Turkish words. The voice and miserable appearance of this old man, made such an impression on me, that I could not think of him without a sensation of melancholy.

On the 26th of November, Jous-Bachi arrived at Il Gheldi, but Jakoub-Bey had remained at Ourghendy, for some private business.---I left Il Gheldi on the 27th; all the inhabitants of the fortress, young and old, bade me farewell in the most affecting manner.---We were to stop the first night, twelve wersts from the fort, at a Turcoman camp, and lodge in the tents of one Aman, a friend of Seïd's, who having some connexions at the court of the Khan, had been able privately to inform me of what passed there; but he was a great rogue, and had so cheated me in the purchases he had made for me, that I had been obliged to turn him away. However, before my departure, Seïd had brought him to me to ask pardon. The hope of receiving some presents, made them wish me to pass the night with them. I was so happy to be on my way back, that I could not sleep the whole night, but passed it in conversation with a Turcoman, above eighty years of age, who had been famous in his youth for his robberies, and was respected in his old age for the prudent counsel which he gave.

His conversation, in fact, shewed him to be a judicious, experienced, and sensible man.

Our caravan had left Aman on the 28th of November, at noon, and, after proceeding twenty wersts, arrived in the evening at the canals of Bouz-Ghemen, which are the last in the country. In our passage through the desert country that followed, we saw, on the 29th and 30th of November and 1st of December, a great quantity of ruins; and on the 2d arrived at the ruined fort of Chakh-Senem, after which we saw no more ruins. With great difficulty we found the little reservoir formed by the frozen snow of which I have spoken; it was not above two feet deep, twelve broad, and thirty long. We immediately set to work, while some looked for wood, others dug out lumps of the frozen snow with their daggers, and melted them to make tea. The cold was very severe during our journey; on the 4th, about noon, we reached Akh-Nabal; the whole road as far as Touer was strewed with the carcasses of horses and camels, which had sunk under fatigue and been abandoned by the caravans that had preceded us.

On the 11th I was delighted at meeting the son of Kiat Aga, who had been sent to meet me; and on the 12th we reached the camp of Seid; on the 13th I descried the corvette, and hoisting my hat on a pole as a signal, two boats soon came on shore. I immediately went on board, where Mr. Ponomarew was delighted to see me, and all on board expressed their joy. We learned on the 16th from Petrovich, the arrival of the caravan at the camp of Seid. The Chivan ambassadors came the next day: on the 18th we set sail, and arrived on the 24th in the road of Bakou. On the 6th of January, 1820, we received orders from General Jermolow to go and meet him at Derbend; we arrived there on the 15th; on the 17th we presented to him the ambassadors of Chiva, and those of the Turcomans on the 21st.

The General ordered us to take the ambassadors to Tiflis and wait there for his further directions. We arrived there the 24th of February, and General Jermolow came there unexpectedly on the 23d of March. On the 4th of April the ambassadors were presented to him, and on the 22d I delivered them letters for Mohamed Rahim Khan, in which I expressed my gratitude for the attention that he had shewn to me, and informed him that I was going immediately, by order of the commander-in-chief, to give an account to his majesty the Emperor of the amicable relations that had been established between the two countries.

FINIS.

G. Sidney, Printer, Northumberland Street, Strand.