

JOURNEY
OF THE
RUSSIAN MISSION
FROM
ORENBOURG TO BOKHARA,

Meyendorff
BY: COUNT MEYENDORFF.

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TRANSLATED BY
COLONEL MONTEITH, MADRAS ENGINEERS.

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P R E F A C E.

THE first part of this Journal has already appeared in the *Madras Journal of Literature*, but, from the great interest excited at the present time, I have been induced at the solicitation of some friends to add the Chapter regarding Bokhara, and enlarge the Map to double the original scale, so as to connect the route performed by **Sir Alexander Burnes** from India to Bokhara, with that from the latter state to Orenburgh; the Head Quarters of the Russian Army of Tartary.

The division of Orenburgh is widely spread along the frontier of Independent Tartary till it meets the Chinese frontier. This division formerly consisted of 12 Battalions of Infantry, 10 Regiments of Cossacks, 20 pieces of Cossack Horse Artillery and about 36 of Foot Artillery.

The province of Orenburgh is a recent acquisition of Russia. The population though rapidly increasing is still scanty, and from the total want of a demand for produce little more is cultivated than is required for the use of its own inhabitants. The small quantity of corn required by the Russian mission, could not be furnished in the market of the capital town of the province. The soil and climate is however considered good; many of the best studs of Horses are kept there.

The conquest of this country was achieved by emigrants from the Cossacks of the Don, and Pirates of

the Volga who removed from that river to the Yaik, along which Russia soon established her frontier, and formed the Cossacks into 10 Regiments for the defence of the line, under a separate Hetman. These troops were not sufficient to repulse the constant irruptions of the Tartar tribes and several fortresses were constructed and garrisoned by regular troops, which have been gradually augmented to the force stated above— In 1828 it was ordered to be carried to 30,000 men.

The frontier has again been advanced to the Emba beyond which the country is generally desert and ill supplied with water, but inhabited by several tribes of Tartars viz. the Toorcomans, Kara Kalpaks and Ural and it abounds beyond any other country in cattle Sheep and Camels. The two former divisions extend to the Caspian occupying its whole eastern shore to the mouths of the Gorgoon or frontier of Persia, a lawless race of plunderers ready to follow any Chief or State who can hold out a sufficient prospect of booty. Rhahim Khan the late Chief of Khiva gained great influence among them; at one time he succeeded in forming a general confederation against Persia. A large body of horses actually entered the Persian frontier, but were defeated and the Chief killed by a party of the regular troops. The attempt was not renewed except by predatory bodies of horses, composed principally of Toorcomans, who generally carried their plunder to Khiva.

During the year 1820 Russia appears to have seriously turned her attention to obtaining a footing or establish relations with the different states of Tartary. One Mission under Captain Moravieff was dispatched from Bakoo by General Yermaloff to Khiva, where he was at first arrested and threatened with death by *Rhahim Khan*. Captain Moravieff was at last permitted to return and appears to have held out some inducement to Rhahim Khan as to Russia's willingness to promote his views on the Persian frontier.

However that may be. The Chief of Khiva sent some fine horses and two of his most confidential servants to Tiflis. Captain Moravieff again was charged with a Mission which was cordially received, he did not however succeed in obtaining the liberation of the Russian subjects in slavery at Khiva.

During the same year Monsieur Negri a Greek by birth and interpreter to the embassy of General Yermaloff, was dispatched to Bokhara. The proceedings of both Missions were published, but are now either out of print or very difficult to be procured.

The Russian Government have for a century been bent on the occupation or capture of Khiva*—the last 20 years the preparations are open and avowed. The different roads have been carefully examined—whether the Russian troops have or have not yet entered Khiva appears doubtful, but there can be none as to its assembly for that purpose.

The route described by the Russian Mission is evidently unfit for Military purposes, and is only frequented by Caravans, being much shorter, small numbers carry both provisions and water for the passage of the deserts. The line followed by Timour in his wars with Tonktammish Khan of Kipchak, was under the Alla Dagh by Kou Khan and Tash Kend, then descended the Jaxartes or Sihoon crossed the desert in its least extent. This is without doubt the best route leading to Bokhara, this track is partially cultivated and forage is abundant except in a small portion of the desert but is altogether out of the direction

* One of the vast projects of Peter the Great was to extend the Russian frontier along the Oxus. In 1716 he built a fortress on the East shore of the Caspian and dispatched Prince Bekewitz a Circassian or Georgian with 3000 men who advanced nearly to Khiva. The Usbeks offered no resistance but proffered submission and induced the Russian General to separate his men into small parties who were then cut to pieces. Hanway, vol. 1st, p. 188. I saw when in Russia a plan on which Peter the Great had traced the Frontier. It extended to the Arras along the South shore of the Caspian and up the Oxus which was evidently considered to fall into the Caspian.

of Khiva. The route along the east shore of the lake of Aral, has been described to me as not wanting water, forage though scarce is procurable at intervals and it has been used by troops.

It appears the Russian Army has marched by the Western shore of the lake which is bounded by steep hills, and in that respect corresponds with the Western shore of the Caspian, they are however of inferior heights and said to be but scantily supplied with water; if the case it is very different from those in Persia. This line has the advantage of being about 1-3d shorter than either of the others leading from Orenburgh, the frontier extending to the Emba which is at some seasons a considerable river and the banks abounding in Forage.* The Tartar tribes inhabiting this part are hostile to Khiva and possess great number of Camels, Cattle, Horses and Sheep; a great portion of the Tallow exported from Russia comes from this province.

Timber is very scarce and rarely met with on the plains, the few boats which navigate the lake of Aral are constructed on the Oxus, the wood being floated down the river from the mountains East of Bokhara some is also brought from the Toorcoman Country by land, but is dear and difficult to be obtained in quantity.

I was very intimate with Birdeh Beg an Usbeck of good family and Native of Khiva who was obliged to emigrate to Persia, and for many years held a confidential situation (Ousbaske of Gohlams) under Abbas Mirza and frequently commanded the troops furnished as an escort to me during the war with Rus-

* A fishery is established on the banks of this river which is said to be navigable to some distance from the Caspian. It is a singular fact that at the upper part of the river the water is brackish and there are few fish and those of a bad quality, near its mouth it becomes fresh and abounds with fish; boats in great numbers annually visit it, from Ashlerkhan for fish.

sia. He had been in two expeditions undertaken by the Khivans against the Khirgis Cossacks in one of which they crossed the Sir or Jaxartes and penetrated to the Northern extremity of the lake of Aral, the route he stated was seldom distant from the lake and some boats followed the troops, who found abundance of provisions in the stores of the Khirgis, who at that time cultivated the country on the banks of the Sir. On this occasion many were cut to pieces or made slaves by the Usbeks who brought off a great quantity of plunder. The other expedition marched by the Western shore which they only saw at three or four points, and from his account must have nearly reached the Emba, the country where they came on the encampments of the Khirgis, he described as abounding in Forage, water was found in the ravines several of which had dams across, made by a party of Aral Tartars who favoured the Khivans.

The wild fowl he saw was innumerable and a great quantity of feathers is collected and exported by the Tartars. Birdeh Beg subsequently returned to his own Country and entered the service of Rhahim Khan by whom he was made a Mine Baski or head of 1000 horses. He wrote to me from Khiva and offered to assist me in a journey through Tartary to Russia. At that period the state of those countries and our relations with Persia were thought of little importance. I anticipated no difficulty or danger beyond the passage of the frontier which I could have avoided by landing at a point without the Persian frontier and to which Rhahim Khan's influence then extended. My principal object would have been to follow the traces of the reputed old bed of the Oxus—I did not consider the undertaking one of great danger or difficulty.

From the contradictory nature of the reports in circulation, it appears a force far exceeding what

Russia has on the whole of her Eastern frontier, have been assembled on the banks of the Emba, and have pushed forward a Corps to take up a position on the Lake of Aral previous to the advance of the main body.

In the latitude where the operations will principally be carried on, the cold though sometimes great, never lasts for any length of time, and the winter has always been the favourite season for Russian operations in Persia and Turkey. The Elliat or wandering tribes are then incapable of removing their flocks and herds and will make any sacrifice rather than abandon them. Large quantities of grass and straw must be collected for winter even in the most favourable situations, and it is impossible to suppose a tract of country inhabited by at least 50,000 families of shepherds can be altogether destitute of the necessary subsistence for them.

From the nearest points of the river Emba to Khiva is about 600 miles, Orenburgh is 800 and the Bay of Koura Bojas on the Caspian 350. The latter was once the great Caravan route by which much of the Indian trade with Europe passed, the ruins of Caravansars and wells are visible, it is still a principal line of trade. An army would never find water or forage in this direction, the most probable route from the Caspian leads from Balkhan Bay which increases the distance about 50 miles making 400 total distance, both routes have the disadvantage of requiring the means of conveyance and horses, being landed from vessels, or slowly collected from the surrounding tribes, who are not likely to be cordial in such an enterprise.

The army of Prince Paskewitch which invaded Asia Minor when the resources of a regular Government were to be encountered did not exceed 10,000 Infantry, 4,000 Cavalry and Artillery, and the army which dictated the peace of Adrianople was little above 20,000 men; so much had it been reduced by

disease and famine.* Considering the length of the line of communication 24,000 men is probably not more than sufficient for the purpose, however well the Tartars may at first receive the Russians or even assist them, a very short period will pass, before they have a troublesome and destructive war to support.

The army of the Caucasus which is returned at 80,000 men of all arms, could never assemble for the Persian war more than 22,000 men. The Russians generally occupy the countries they take possession of by forces of from 3 to 6,000 regular troops, besides Cossacks, and seldom risk detachments at any distance, who invariably be they large or small have one or more guns.

Whenever they have deviated from this rule the consequences have been disastrous. The maps I believe to be very correct, so far as the personal observations of the Russian officers went; and they have better means of collecting information than any other people. There are always Tartars of all the different tribes employed by the frontier authorities in situations Civil and Military, generally deserters or disaffected persons obliged to fly from their own people.

* The Army of the Danube was, on leaving that river, 60,000 strong.

RUSSIAN MISSION FROM ORENBourg TO BOKHARA.

TRANSLATION.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Preparations for the Journey—Departure—Dangers on the Road.

The persons attached to the embassy to Bokhara arrived at Orenbourg in the course of the month of August. About the same time, an order was given by General D'Essen, military governor of Orenbourg, for the Cossack soldiers and Baschires intended to form the escort: but the party could not be assembled before the middle of September, and the fine season was passed away. From economical motives, we had at first intended to use carts for the carriage of provisions, &c.; but we were obliged to give up this plan, from the information we received of the nature of the country, through which we had to pass, and we determined to substitute camels to carry the baggage, and merely to take 25 carts for the transport of any of the people who might fall sick or meet with accidents by the way. Each cart was drawn by four horses, driven by a Baschire. As we had to cross rivers in the steppe of Kirghiz, we were provided with two boats placed upon carts—the carts being so constructed, that, by fixing them upon the boats, they formed rafts capable of bearing 20 men.

Our march in the desert being likely to last two months, it was necessary to carry about 500-lbs. of biscuits for each soldier, and 5 quintals of oats for each horse; besides meal for the people, a double allotment of ammunition for our two pieces.

NOTE.—It is to be remembered the dates here are according to the Russian or old style—13 days must be added for our time.

of artillery, 15 kabitkas, or felt tents, 200 casks for carrying water across the desert, and several barrels of brandy, 320 camels we loaded with the provisions, &c, for the escort, and 38 with the baggage and provisions of the ambassador's suite. The military governor had made arrangements with the Kirghiz chiefs, that, upon the payment of 110 paper roubles (about £4 10s. general exchange, 25 to the £ sterling, the 358 camels we required, were to be at the gates of Orenbourg on the 6th of September, ready, each to carry a burden of 640-lbs. The long wished for day came, but not one Kirghiz appeared. The market of Orenbourg was unable to provide us with the quantity of oats indispensable for our escort, and we were therefore obliged to dispatch messengers to seek it in the surrounding country, that is to say, 150 verstes from Orenbourg, and we did not obtain it till 20th September.

The expense of the escort during its absence from Russia, was calculated at about 72,000 roubles, which it was absolutely indispensable to take with us in cash, that we might obtain supplies at Bokhara. The export of Russian coin being forbidden, it was necessary to obtain ducats, but the merchants at Orenbourg did not possess a sufficient number of that coin, and we sent to Troïtski, a town about 600 verstes distance, and being there also unsuccessful, we were at last obliged to have recourse to the exchange at Moscow, a distance of 1,500 verstes from Orenbourg. Many unexpected difficulties thus retarded our departure. The fine season had passed, half the month of September was already gone, and hard frosts were beginning to appear, and the cold had set in with a constant succession of rain, hail and snow.

We were therefore on the eve of commencing a journey during the storms and fogs of October and November. I thought of the sufferings endured by the army of Timour against Khiva, related by Sherif Oudin, when "some lost their ears, noses, hands and feet; the sky looked like a cloud, and the earth was but a mass of snow."

We were about to pass through a colder country, than that which caused the destruction of this famous conqueror; and I felt compassion for our poor soldiers; who, unprovided with furs, would be exposed to the inclemency of a very severe winter. We had much consultation with the Kirghiz, to determine which route we were to pursue, and to make ourselves acquainted with the difficulties we were likely to encounter. Five of them were chosen as guides; the principal of whom

was named chief; having also the command of sixty other Kirghiz, who were engaged to load, drive, and take care of the camels.

These animals belonged to different proprietors, and are usually in herds of from twenty to sixty, called *koch*, led by a Kirghiz chief. The baggage was distributed among the different *kochs*; we made a trial of the way of loading the camels, and found packs of a long shape the best for that species of carriage. On the 9th of October, arrived the last of the camels we required, and our departure was positively fixed for the following day.

At last, on the 10th, the whole escort assembled in the great square at Orenbourg, and passed in review before the governor-general. He caused mass to be said, and a blessing pronounced upon the travellers. There was something solemn and imposing in the religious ceremonies, the loud vocal music, the benediction bestowed on the eve of so long a journey through immense deserts; and it acquired a fresh interest from the presentiment of the dangers and difficulties to which such an expedition was likely to be exposed.

In fact, the dangers to be apprehended were sufficiently numerous: it was very possible, that the Kirghiz, always greedy of plunder, and unwilling that the Russians should explore these deserts, might attack us during the night, nor was this fear without foundation, for not far from Sir-déria in 1803, Lieutenant Gaverdvosky was attacked by the Kirghiz. He himself escaped after the most obstinate resistance, but his wife, his physician, and the fourth of his escort fell into the hands of the savages. Even supposing the Kirghiz did not dare to attack so numerous a party, they still had it in their power greatly to increase the difficulty of our journey, nay, even render it impossible for us to go on, by burning the grass and reeds on the steppe through which we had to pass. Another very usual species of attack among those tribes is by stealing nearly all the horses, when grazing at night, carrying off a number of them with incredible celerity. These sort of attacks are greatly to be dreaded, as a small band of robbers might occasion us irreparable injury, if they surprized us from the negligence of our sentinels.

General D'Essen, who foresaw all these dangers, gladly accepted an offer made by the powerful Sultan, Haroun-ghazi Aboul-ghazi, of accompanying the embassy as far as the Sir-déria, with a party of a few hundred faithful Kirghiz. The

effect this offer would have upon the minds of the Kirghiz, greatly enhanced the value of the offer in the general's eyes.

The Khivians who occupy a part of the country to the south of the sea of Aral, were however much more to be feared than even the Kirghiz, as they are no less skilful, and more united; sometimes making predatory excursions in bodies of from 4000 to 5000 men. Though a party of horse like these would not give much cause of alarm to our soldiers, the escort would still not be sufficiently strong to defend a troop of 700 camels, including those of the Bokharian merchants who had placed themselves under our protection.

The cunning displayed by the predatory tribes in plundering the caravans, increases the difficulty of defence. Their attacks are always very sudden, and unexpected. They terrify the camels by shouts and yells, and the animals once dispersed, easily fall in their power. The best way of preventing so dangerous a disorder is, by making the camels crouch down, as they do not willingly rise again, but often there is not time to take these precautions—and then the caravan is certainly lost; for being without camels in the steppe of the Kirghiz, is attended with the most imminent danger, and often with the loss of life.

It was very possible, that it was not during the journey alone we were exposed to danger; we might well feel doubts of our safety in Bokhara, a country belonging to a warlike and uncivilized nation. Before our arrival at Orenbourg, some Bokharian merchants had said in confidence to their friends—"Perhaps none of the Christian travellers will return to their own country. Even supposing the Khan of Khiva allows them to pass, our own Khan would not commit that folly. Why should we allow the Christians to become acquainted with our country?"

CHAPTER II.

Appearance of the desert—Kirghiz Encampments—Junction of the Mission with Sultan Haroun-ghazi—Hunting of the Antelope.

The distance to be traversed is divided into three parts;—the first includes a space between Orenbourg and the mountains of Moughodjar, which we passed between the streams of Cara-akenti, and Touban, about 434 verstes from Orenbourg; the second, the space between these mountains and

the Sir-déria; lastly, the third, between the Sir-déria and Bokhara.

The ground through the whole extent of the first portion is nearly the same. You see generally an undulating surface, divided by chains of hills, of which the slopes are so gentle as frequently to extend to fifteen and twenty verstes. The absence of wood, and the trifling elevations of these eminences, always offer an extensive prospect, when the eye in vain seeks an object to fix itself on. Sterility, uniformity, and silence, are the characters of a steppe. Towards the end of May, the sun had burnt up the vegetation, and the ground assumed a brownish yellow colour.

Through all this extent, trees are only found in two places; every where else, a few thorny bushes, about three feet high, are so thinly scattered, that to the eyes of an European they scarcely break the monotony of these vast deserts.

A considerable number of streams cross the route, presenting almost always the same appearance, and generally follow the same direction. From the Oural to the Sir, they are fordable, and are nearly dry in summer and autumn. The Ilek, Emba, Temir, Or and Irghiz, merit however the name of rivers, and are never dry, though sometimes very shallow. Many of these streams only leave ravines to mark their course in the dry weather; others form a chain of ponds, frequently several toises in depth joined by a minute thread of water but sometimes unconnected. The steppe is every year covered with deep snow, which melts with great rapidity early in spring, when the heat is frequently great. At this period the rivers and streams rise, and from rapid torrents, which scoop out deep ravines in the clay soil which universally characterizes these plains.

Thirty verstes from Orenbourg, we found on the Djilandutepeh, the highest hill in the neighbourhood, two fossil specimens, a belemnite and ammonite. Between the Ouzoun-Bourté and the Cara-boutak, and from that to the mountains of Moughodjar, we saw also many of these fossils, and a vast quantity of shells.

The soil is generally clay; dry and strewed with flints of different colours. The hills are usually round, with gentle slopes, as if water had smoothed the inequality of the ground.

Near the hills, of Bassagha, we saw a number of petrifications, shells, and even a shark's tooth, which appeared to us a proof that the sea had once covered this spot. At Berdian-

ka we observed traces of an exhausted copper-mine, mentioned by Pallas, and also of another near the Kizil-ova. They were merely excavations of an inconsiderable depth, beside which there were heaps of stones intermingled with copper ore, about 7 verstes from our encampment. On the Ouzoun-Bourté we found coal, which we tried in our forge and it burnt very well. On our arrival at Cara-boutak, we were agreeably surprised by the sight of a small wood of black alders; there also appeared to be an improvement in the soil; we had hitherto not seen any thing approaching to a healthy vegetation in the steppe, and were rejoiced to perceive it shortly after, on the banks of the Ilek. The eyes of the traveller, wearied with the nakedness of the desert, are refreshed by the sight of plants, trees, bushes, poplars and willows which are here very numerous; the pasturage, also, wherever the river overflows its banks, is very fine, and therefore a favourite resort of the Kirghiz. This is the largest river we met with, before reaching the Sir—it is 10 fathoms broad and very rapid, flowing over a gravelly bottom, and abounds with various sorts of fish, such as pike, perch, gudgeons, carp, &c. It was on the banks of this river, we saw the first village of Kirghiz tents. Our attention was first attracted by the flocks of sheep, to the number of from 5,000 to 6,000—and, on approaching nearer, we saw 50 tents of white or brown felt, of all dimensions, pitched in irregular groups of three, four and six.

We learned that it was the camp of the Sultan Harounghazi, one of the principal Kirghiz, who was waiting to accompany us as far as the Sir; anxious by this act of kindness to demonstrate his attachment to the Russian Government, whose support was in truth necessary to him on account of his incessant quarrels with the Khan of Khiva. The day after our arrival, the Sultan came on horseback to visit Monsieur Négri. He was accompanied by a hundred Kirghiz, and wore a turband, though it is not customary in the desert, but considered as a mark of piety in a Mahomedan who is desirous of being distinguished from the general mass of the Kirghiz. All the people that had accompanied him insisted upon entering the ambassador's tent, and as many as it could hold made their way in, and immediately squatted down after their fashion.

The interior of the tent filled with these bearded faces, had a most grotesque appearance. The Sultan was the only person with a fair complexion, fine and large black eyes, and a mild though serious expression, denoting a character of strong

natural sense. He remained an hour and a half. The following day I returned his visit. On the road we encountered about fifty Kirghiz, assembled to carry into execution the sentence awarded by the Sultan against one of their countrymen, who had stolen a horse. He was condemned to death according to the law of the Koran,—but the elders of the Kirghiz interceded for him, that Providence might prosper the journey on which they were going, and that mercy extended to the culprit might be a favourable omen to their union with the Russians. The Sultan yielded to their solicitation, and substituted a corporal punishment for the sentence of death, which had first been awarded. This was immediately carried into execution in the following manner. The robber, half naked, having about his neck some stripes of black felt, was forced by two men on horseback who carried large whips, to run to the nearest tent, where his face was blackened with soot and marched through a group of Kirghiz; they then tied him to the tail of a horse, and forced him to hold a cord between his teeth. He was thus constrained to run after the horse which was pushed into a smart trot. The rest of the Kirghiz followed flogging the culprit with whips. The greater part of those engaged shouted and laughed with all their might. In a few minutes he was set at liberty, and immediately went to thank the Khan, promising never more to be guilty of theft. During this time the horse of the robber suffered the punishment at first intended for his master; the throat was cut, and the carcass divided into pieces, and instantly portioned among the spectators, but not without much noise, disturbance and blows of the whip.

After witnessing this scene, I proceeded to the habitation of the Sultan, who made me wait some minutes, to enable him to decorate and arrange his habitation. At last we entered, and found him seated, in the middle of a large round tent: his friends were placed in a semi-circle on one side; on the other seats had been prepared for our accommodation. The floor was covered with a carpet, wearing apparel hung on a cord, and skins of tigers were stretched against the sides; a rich diadem of gold, very high, and ornamented with turquoise and rubies, the head dress of Kirghiz women; by their side might also be seen raw meat hanging on hooks, large leather bags of mare's milk, and some wooden vessels of different kinds. It was a strange

mixture of rich objects placed beside those of the most ordinary description ; the love of magnificence and show joined to the tastes and customs of a half savage society.

After quitting the Ilek, near the road to Tandy-iaman, on a hill of red stone we discovered some large ammonites, of nearly 2½ feet in diameter, besides some rich specimens of copper ore, probably brought down by the river. Not far from the junction of the Souioug-sou, four rivers fall into the Ilek, which, as well as the country through which it flows, from this point, is called *Bech-tomak*, or the five rivers.

There is a very extensive view from the summit of the *Bassagha*, the ascent to which is so gradual that one is quite surprised at finding so great an elevation. This hill is composed of crystallized gypsum, and the whole steppe in this neighbourhood is covered with the same substance. The *Bassagha* appears to be only about thirty fathoms high, the slope is very easy on the north eastern side, and steep in the south western, a peculiarity observable in almost all the hills, on this side of the *Sir*.

Beyond *Bassagha*, the soil becomes more and more barren — *hawoul* (camel grass) hitherto abundant, becomes uncommon ; and nothing meets the eye, but a clayey barren soil producing but a few miserable plants of a species of wormwood ; the ground is burnt and cracked in a thousand places by the excessive heat of the sun.

We forded the *Koubleili-témir*, after having broken the ice that covered it with a hatchet. This river was about three fathoms broad, and was in some places a fathom deep. The water is good, the bottom sandy, and the banks are covered with reeds ; among which the wild boar is occasionally seen. I here observed a gang of Kirghiz, who had been working in the water for about ten minutes to break the ice. They returned to the land to deposit their axes, and then without appearing to dread the painful degree of cold that existed, they plunged three times into the water, a striking proof of the physical insensibility of the wandering tribes. The *Koubleili-témir* is merely a brook, and I should not have considered it worth mentioning, but from the circumstance of our having found a great number of belemnites and skeletons of mice at the foot of a precipitous spot, about ten fathoms high. This attracted our attention to the bank of the river. It was composed of many layers of conglomerate, of gravel, and clay, very interesting to a geologist. I was walking along by the precipice,

Sometimes on the ice, and sometimes on the ground seeking petrifications, or other curious objects, when I suddenly saw in the air, a large animal that had just sprung from the top of the hill, and appeared about to precipitate itself upon me. I drew back, and he fell directly at my feet, on the ice, fracturing his limbs in his fall. It was a saiga, a species of antelope, the first I ever saw. It had been hunted by the Cossacks belonging to the escort, and they had pursued it from the plain to the top of the precipice. In its anxiety to escape them, it met its fate, owing to the blind terror characteristic of the saigas, and which often throws them into the hands of the hunters. The Kirghiz know how to take advantage of it; they station themselves by the rivers, near the places where these animals are accustomed to resort, for the purpose of drinking—and they drive upon an inclined plain several rows of sharp reeds placed in a semi-circle, one behind another; at intervals of about twelve feet on each side of these reeds, they raise mounds of earth, and thus form an arch, of which the extremities are about fifty fathoms apart. When the herds of antelope come, the concealed Kirghiz start up, and frighten them towards this arch. The animals take the mounds for men, and fly towards the reeds, and entangle themselves in great numbers. The Cossacks of the Don chase them in another manner. During the great heats of summer, the antelopes assemble in flocks of from 400 to 500, and emigrate to a cooler region, when they swim the Don; the Cossacks throw themselves into the river armed with a knife, and kill vast numbers in the water.

People worthy of credit have assured me, that in the mountains of Gouberlinsk or Oural, during the season of the emigration of the antelopes, which takes place in June, herds of 8000 and 9000 are seen. The flesh of these animals is delicious, and the skins are used for clothes. It is in general very difficult to approach them, except during the great heats. The beasts then search some shade, and when there are no bushes or trees on the great plains, twenty antelopes will frequently place themselves close behind each other, the leading one putting its head behind a great stone, or in a hole; the hunter can then approach, and if he succeeds in killing the leading one, those that are behind will generally take its place, and several may be shot in succession.

The antelope has a very peculiar nose, it is arched like those of the Kirghiz sheep, formed with two large and deep nostrils,

covered with a soft and very elastic cartilage. These nostrils are so open, that flies and insects frequently enter, and oblige the antelope to stop and sneeze; their horns are not straight, as it is said, but spiral. Nothing can be more graceful than the motions of the antelope when not frightened; they change from a high trot to light and fantastic bounds. These animals, when young, are easily tamed; in the neighbourhood of Orenbourg they are seen, following their masters like dogs.

From the Témir, we marched towards the heights of Moussevil, which resemble those of Bassagha. We had got a sight of the mountain of Moughodjar, distant 60 verstes, the blue appearance of whose summits, which rise majestically and are strongly delineated on the horizon, have a very picturesque effect. Notwithstanding we were anxious to see them behind us, in hopes of escaping the extreme cold and storms of this region. By the account of the Kirghiz, the southern face of these mountains, enjoys a much milder climate. However thus far we had been fortunate. The sun had shone clear, and the cold at night seldom below 5 or 8 degrees of Reaumur; once only it was at 10°.

This cold, however trifling it may appear, was much felt by people who had been exposed all day, and had nothing but felt to cover them at night; and for fuel, miserable bushes of very small size—too happy when even they were to be procured.

The Cara-akenti, 15 verstes distant from the Moughodjar, has only brackish water, dirty and with an earthy smell; it is contained in a few holes, and was the worst we had ever seen. The Kirghiz laughed at the faces we made on first tasting it. To us it was hardly drinkable with tea; among the Kirghiz, who frequently came to drink tea with us, I have seen several who swallowed 8 pints of this liquid.

CHAPTER III.

Appearance of the Country—Kirghiz Tomb—Proofs of the diminution of the Sea of Aral—Mouth of the Sir.

On the 29th of October, we arrived at the foot of the Moughodjar rocky mountains, composed of irregularly grouped peaks; their appearance was wild, and they were covered with stones, rocks of porphyry, serpentine, granite, &c.

The valleys offer a remarkable contrast to the mountains; in

the hollows, wherever the water collects and lodges for any length of time, the vegetation is luxuriant, and the soil black and fertile; the Kirghiz take advantage of it both to cultivate grain, and also as pasturage for their cattle, pitching their tents among the hills, so as to obtain shelter from the inclemency of the latter part of the season.

The highest peak of the Moughodjar (almost 150 toises) above the level of the plain, is mount Airouk—a name signifying isolated, and it is in fact a very just denomination, as it is very much higher than any of the other hills. It is also called Airourouk or forked, on account of the two peaks which terminate the mountain. Generally speaking, the Kirghiz give very characteristic names to the spots through which they pass—as for example, the mountains lying to the south of the Airouktagh, are known by the name of *Iamantagh*, or bad mountains, those to the north, are called *Iakhchi-tagh*, or good mountains, the former, because they are almost destitute of herbage, whilst on the latter the Kirghiz find good pasture, and abundance of water.

The Moughodjar are evidently a continuation of the Gouberlinsk mountains, the union of the two chains may be seen between the fortress so named, and the fort of Orsk: it is near the same spot that the Oural has formed a bed for itself through the chain of rocks, and that it flows in a narrow channel between rocky and steep banks of the same nature and appearance as the mountains. The hills assume the name of Tachkitchou and of Caraultepeh, separated at first by the Kirgheldi, they reunite at the distance of about 30 versts from the Oural, from whence they extend to the south over an elevated plain, afterwards forming the Ourkatch, or mountains of the Our, thus called from the Our or Or, which flows at their feet. Near the sources of this river, the mountains Ourkatch join the Moughodjar mountains, which extend to the south-east. Two ranges of hills from the Ourkatch, one separates the basin of the Ileik from that of the Oural; the other separates the basin of the Ileik from those of the Tèmir, and the Emba. The Iakhchitagh lie on the right bank of the Our, and leave it to join the Karnadur hills, a name signifying the junction of the mountains.

The Moughodjar are the highest hills in the plain, inhabited by the Kirghiz of the lesser horde. They are the ramifications of the Oural, none of its branches, however, extend to the lofty range of the Altaï. The passage of the Moughodjar is about 6 verstes (4 miles) beyond these hills; the snow seldom falls

in any great quantity ; when the climate is hotter, and the soil more barren ; stunted plants of wormwood of a dark colour are thinly scattered over a country, which appears in dismal mourning. In a space of 400 verstes from the river Kaoundjour to the Sir, we did not find a single stream.

On quitting this range of mountains, we crossed a level country of moving sand, with some few mounds or hillocks of clay, bare and utterly devoid of vegetation near their base ; they were cut by deep fissures, which appear to have been excavated by water.

Supposing a level plain, with several brackish lakes, with a clay soil of a blue colour, so soft as to allow cattle to sink into it, with all the ordinary symptoms of having been once covered by the sea, a correct idea will be formed of the nature of the soil of this country.

The first plain of this kind which we met with, extended from the rivulet of Touban to the Kaoundjour in the bed of which we found only some holes full of water. The Kaoundjour, only flows in spring in a bed of from 4 to 5 toises. Every drop of water is precious in such a situation, and a Kirghiz never forgets where he has once found it in any period of his life. Our guide, Emantchi-beg, who had not visited these parts for 10 years, advised us to halt at the Kaoundjour, after a march of only 20 verstes ; as we should not find water again nearer than Khodjakoul, a lake distant 15 verstes further. We were not inclined to believe him, as the Kirghiz who had an interest in delaying our march had frequently deceived us. We therefore continued our journey ; the day closed, and we saw nothing of the lake. When night came on, which at this season of the year is generally dark, it became extremely difficult to find our road, which was hardly marked, even in the day. We could no longer see the tops of the hills, or Kirghiz tombs ; objects by which the people direct their course. The more prudent of the party advised us to halt, and save ourselves and cattle from useless fatigue, and sleep, in place of seeking to allay our thirst ; but as we had declared that we would go to the lake, we considered it necessary to persevere ; several Kirghiz did all they could to prevent our losing our road ; they dispersed in a line before us, endeavouring to discover some path, which is here a certain indication of being near water. A well, a hole filled with water, or lake, are points where the nomades of the desert assemble, and are the only places where even a path is discernible. We had already

wardered for some hours in a dark night, and we became alarmed at having lost our proper direction, when suddenly, a Kirghiz in front struck a light, which had a great effect on our tired party; who now hastened to join the person who had fallen on this expedient of assembling the dispersed travellers. It is the usual mode followed by the Kirghiz in the desert, when they halt, to unsaddle and refresh their horses.

We followed our new guide for 3 or 4 verstes, and at 8 A. M. arrived at the lake, on the banks of which we halted, near several tombs; this was the first lake we met with in the desert.

All the tombs are of clay, mixed with chopped straw, except that of Khodja, which is of unburnt bricks. In the interior of these sepulchres there is another, smaller, where the Kirghiz pray. These monuments become more numerous as you approach the Sir, and appear like cities. The rich Kirghiz frequently bring artificers from Bokhara to make their clay tombs; they are very durable on account of the dryness of the climate. The custom is to construct these buildings on the most elevated spots of small hills; if not built of clay, the friends and relations assist in elevating these rustic sepulchres; and each must bring a certain quantity of stone or earth.

The Kirghiz, like all other eastern nations, have a great respect for the dead; generally all the relations of the deceased attend the funeral, except the women, who remain at home tearing their hair, and uttering loud cries. The relations, after the funeral, condole with the widows, who soon yield to their solicitations, and kill horses and sheep to entertain their guests. There never is with the Kirghiz an assembly, festival, or ceremony, which does not end in a great repast.

One of the greatest festivals with these nomades, is the day the head of a family has died, and particularly the first after it. The sons assemble the people of their acquaintance to the number of 3, 4, or even 600; and the pleasures of the table are always joined to the ceremonies of religion.

We soon quitted the banks of Khodja-koul, which were covered with reeds. In autumn, the lake is much reduced in size; but in spring, when the Kaoundjour overflows, it extends to a great distance.

We proceeded towards Coul-koudouk (well of the slaves,) situated on the edge of the desert of Borzouk, 15 verstes of which we passed. It is entirely of moving sand, presenting the singular aspect of nearly perpendicular banks of sand, close to each other, and 3 or 4 toises in height; these change

their situation with every gale of wind, some thorny bushes, herbs, and a species of *robinia*, grow here and there. The long roots of these plants resemble serpents; and when totally uncovered, extend on the sides of these moving hills.

We had great difficulty in riding through these deep sands; the more so, as our horses had become weak from bad forage. After our arrival at Coul-koudouk, we burnt 10 of our carriages; the materials of which furnished us for some days with a comfortable fire, free from the smoke of green bushes, which had been for so long our only fuel.

At Coul-koudouk there are several abundant springs, the water of which, had a mineral taste, and in the dry bed of a pond we collected some bitter salt. Our Cossacks, guided by the Kirghiz, from a distance of about 2 verstes to the right, brought us common salt, which they found in layers of one or two inches thick.

The salt of these lakes is not so strong as our common kitchen salt, and is mixed with a great deal of earth, though perfectly white. From Coul-koudouk we met several of these salt lakes in the desert, and frequently a space of 10 verstes is covered with a white efflorescence of a fine white powder, which rises in passing through it.

The 9th November, we halted near the hill of Sari-boulak, after having passed near Sirkanatji, the highest peak of the mountains of Moughodjar, to the little Borzouks sandy hills, or dunes, which commence to rise about 10 verstes from where we were, and resemble the great Borzouks. Where we crossed them, they were not more than 2 verstes in breadth; the sand which was frozen did not appear to be deep. Both the little and great Borzouks are near the lake of Aral; these last have a northerly direction, and the other extends in greater masses between the lake of Aral and the Caspian, ending about 10 marches from Khiva. The country continued to undulate and the slopes were always very gradual, the armoise (mothwort) is the only plant which our horses had to subsist on, for from the Moughodjar there is no forage. After passing Akhchekoudouk we saw to us a new species of thorn, well known in the desert under the name of *saksaoul*.

The Kirghiz and all the people who dwell in the desert set a high value on this plant; the charcoal of which remains alive during half a day. If fire is made with the *saksaoul*, in the evening the embers slowly consume to a white cinder, keeping a gentle heat in the tent all night, this shrub is a species of the tamarisk; it has a leaf like the juniper, a brownish yellow

bark, the wood is very hard, heavy, and more easy to break than cut. The *saksamul* is little more than two inches in diameter in this quarter; but near the Djan-déria it becomes a tree of a half foot in diameter, and 12 in height, and so numerous as to form perfect thickets.

The southern part of the Sari-boulak is remarkable for a great number of excavations, extending two or three verstes. The northern side of the hill is covered with worm-wood, and the slope is easy; the south side is composed of barren clay ploughed up by torrents, or scooped into caves, surrounded by precipices 20 or 30 toises high. I climbed one of these eminences, and found layers three or four feet thick of little shells, as well as some fossil shells about 2 or 3 inches long, and a great quantity of the bones of fish, scattered over the sides of the hill. From the summit of the Sari-boulak, I discerned the hills of Kouk-ternak, which are at a distance of 60 verstes; the sea of Aral approaches their base.

I remarked to our Kirghiz the traces I had observed on the Sari-boulak of water having once flowed there, and they assured me that their fathers had seen the sea of Aral extending to the foot of this hill, though it does not now approach nearer than sixty verstes. So many Kirghiz have declared the same thing to me, that I can have no doubt of the fact, which shows how considerable and how rapid the decrease of the sea of Aral is; it still continues, and one of our guides recollected having seen the sea extend beyond Kulli and Sapak, places which we passed on the 14th and 15th of November, less than a year ago, the Camechlu-bach, a large bay of the Sir-deria, extended three verstes farther than at the time of our journey.

At about 25 verstes from Sari-boulak, we passed the solitary hill of Derman-bachi; it is known to the Kirghiz by the name of Termembés, and is so called by all their tribes, though it is common enough for them to give different names to the same place. The smallest of the hills we saw near the Termembès, and in fact all those we saw between the Sari-boulak and the sea of Aral, have their slopes, on the side towards the lake, intersected by ravines and destitute of grass. They present a mass of hillocks, barren and always round at the summit, whilst the slopes on the opposite side are gentle, and covered with worm-wood; signs of the action of water on all these hills is incontestible.

Before reaching the Aral lake, we entered the Cara-coum, or black sands, a desert thus called without its being possible

to assign a reason. All the sandy deserts offer nearly the same aspect. The Cara-coum is abundantly supplied with water, which is found by digging one or two toises. The Cossacks who preceded us, dug seventeen wells at Behratchai-koudouk, containing but little water, each more or less brackish.

The Cara-coum extends to the lake of Aral, and in some places to the river Sir, far to the eastward, where it is much wider. In returning from Bokhara, I crossed this desert in eight days, about 268 verstes, that is from the Sir to the Irghiz. After having passed near the Sari-tchaghanak, or yellow bay, a creek of the Aral, we again entered into the Cara-coum, and did not leave it till near Camechlu-bach. The banks of the lake of Aral, from Sari-tchaghanak to the mouths of the Sir, are composed of sand hills driven up from the Cara-coum. To the south of Kouwan, sand is again met with, intersected at intervals by patches of clay extending to the lake. From the Sir-dèria, to Kouwan it is entirely of clay, flat and capable of cultivation, if water could be procured for irrigation.

The water had for a long time been so indifferent, that we thought that of the Camechlu-bach excellent; and, lying down upon the ice, we drank it with inexpressible pleasure. The Camechlu-bach is a considerable bay, formed by the Sir, about 50 verstes in circumference; it is the largest collection of fresh water we met with during our journey.

The morning after our arrival, I started with some of my companions and Cossacks to see the mouth of the Sir. We went round the largest half of the Camechlu-bach, and observed two places where the bay becomes narrower and joins the Sir. After having travelled about twenty verstes by the side of the river, which had been covered with ice for two days, we reached the spot where the waters of the Sir, mingling with those of the sea of Aral, contract a saltish taste, and the river begins to widen. At the distance of fifteen verstes it becomes forty toises in width; the delta thus formed is covered with reeds, and the water upon it is not above four feet deep, while the river itself is navigable as far as Kokan, and is probably many toises deep the whole way.

We did not quite attain our end, the height of Caraiar, and of On-adom, small promontories on each side of the mouth of the Sir, partly concealed the view of the sea of Aral. We were still about 20 verstes from the summit of these hills, and had already travelled more than 50, but as we had accomplished the principal object of our excursion by seeing the mouth of the Sir, we turned back again.

Near the Camechlu-bach and along the banks of the Sir, we met a great number of Kirghiz, who had fled from the cold of the northern steppe, to seek a milder climate. We also saw others who had been robbed of their cattle by the Khivians. Their destitute condition had obliged them to become fishermen and agriculturists—occupations which among the Kirghiz indicate extreme poverty. These two tribes, half savages, have alternately pillaged each other for the last 30 years, sometimes as aggressors, at others to retaliate. After this period they began to make use of flour in their food. Habit and economy soon taught them to consider it almost indispensable. They use, however, but a trifling quantity, and come for the purpose of buying it to the frontier towns of Russia or to Bokhara, and give in exchange sheep-hides, goats and camels hair. This appears to them a far pleasanter state of existence than the painful cultivation of the ground. Besides which, they have a great dread of becoming serfs of the soil, and consider it the height of felicity to be as free as the birds of the air. This is their favourite comparison, when they speak of their wandering life.

It is therefore easy to imagine why Kirghiz in easy circumstances never cultivate the ground—besides which they have an ancient tradition which says “The Kirghiz shall lose their liberty whenever they begin to live in houses, and to follow agricultural pursuits;” and the tradition acquires new strength from the example of the Bachkirs, of whose fate they entertain a great dread. None therefore but the poorest Kirghiz, who have nothing to give in exchange for corn, raise it for themselves in a few spots near the Ilek, the Emba, the Irghiz, and the Or, in the valleys of the Moughodjar and Ourkatch mountains, along the banks of the Khodja-koul, and of the Ak-sakal, near the Camechlu-bach, and the Sir-deria, and above all between the Djan and the Kouwan-deria, inhabited about 15 years since by the Cara-Calpak, or Kara Kalpak (black caps) Tartars.*

They prefer the spots where the water collects during the rainy season, or from the melting of the snows, and often seek a soil which can be irrigated by means of small canals—the fields near the Sir and the Camechlu-bach are thus situated. In other instances they conduct the water of a river into reservoirs, out of which they draw it to water the lands. This

* A large portion of this tribe inhabit the shores of the Caspian near the mouths of the Emba and are nominal Russian suburbs.

laborious mode of cultivation is followed near the Emba and the Irghiz, and does not allow the fields to be of great extent—indeed they are to be seen only a few toises square. The Kirghiz sow them with millet, which produces a hundred fold, and very rarely, if ever, disappoints the cultivator.

Near the Sir, there are canals five and six feet deep, and dug before the Kirghiz, who I consider incapable of so arduous a work, had established themselves in the country. Fields of a much greater extent are to be met with there—the Kirghiz cultivate oats and barley—they sow the first in autumn and the other in the spring. There are also a few melon grounds, and they preserve their crop in small pits under ground. The fodder for the few horses and cattle they possess, consists of the leaves of the young reeds, whose growth is accelerated by burning the plants of the former year, giving a most hideous aspect to the banks of the Sir.

The embassy arrived on the 19th November, on the banks of the Sir-deria, opposite the hill of Cara-tepèh; during the last 15 verstes, we had crossed a large plain covered with reeds, and constantly overflowed during the spring.

This plain extends about 80 verstes from the mouth of the Sir. It is 10 or 15 verstes in breadth, and in some spots, especially close to the banks of the river, the reeds give place to very fine grass. After passing through this plain, we again saw the sandy plains of the Cara-coum, extending almost as far as the Sir, and running parallel with it for the space of 150 verstes.

Water is very abundant in the Cara-coum; it is principally inhabited during the winter. The Kirghiz retire with their kibitkas into some hollow, where they are sheltered from the wind. Near the Sir-deria, the usual retreat of the poor, misery had multiplied the number of robbers, and in crossing this part of the country, we perceived on the tops of the hills, Kirghiz who appeared to be watching an opportunity of seizing upon some straggler, or our horses. The guides had warned us, and we kept on our guard.

The Sir near its mouth is about sixty toises in breadth—fifty verstes higher, its width exceeds 150 toises. It is rapid and navigable, at least as far as Kokan. Some of the Kirghiz told us it was fordable about 150 verstes from its mouth—only during the very great heats. Others declare it cannot be forded at any season of the year.

CHAPTER IV.

Manners and Customs of the Kirghiz—Election of the Chiefs—their Dissensions—Examples of Cruelty—Severe policy of the Chinese, with regard to the Kirghiz.

The countries watered by the Sir, are the paradise of the steppe of the Kirghiz, who are proud of the existence of so large a river in their territories. To pass the winter with their flocks, on its banks, is the object of their most ardent wishes. The cold is much milder there than on the banks of the Ilek, the Or, and Irghiz; and also than the Moughodjar and Dourgatch mountains, and the sandy plains of the Caracoum. On the banks of the Sir, the frost is never sufficiently severe to kill the cattle, nor to incommode people living in their habitations of felt—but during the last six years, the rich Kirghiz are deprived of the pleasure of spending the winter on this favoured spot, as their enemies, the Khivians, come and plunder them whenever they have the opportunity.*

The Kirghiz delight in wintering amidst the reeds, which grow so thick as to afford a shelter from the storms of wind, which occasionally occur. The wandering tribes are generally of a melancholy disposition, and the murmur of the waters of the Sir has a charm for their idle moments, which are in fact pretty numerous. In truth, nothing disposes the mind to revelry more than the sound of a river, which, like time, runs its course with a monotonous rapidity. The Kirghiz often pass half the night seated on a stone, gazing at the moon, and singing melancholy impromptu words to airs not less so. They also have historical songs, which celebrate the great actions of their heroes, but these are chaunted only by professional singers, and I greatly regret not having heard them. I often told the Kirghiz I would willingly hear their songs; their impromptus were merely compliments, and did not deserve to be remembered.

These children of the desert have remained perfectly independent of foreign manners or civilization, except in religion, which, it is perhaps needless to observe, is the Mahomedan of

* This is the principal cause assigned by Russia for the present advance on Khiva. The Kirghiz being considered, tho' with little reason, as Russian subjects.

Sunni sect. After having seen the Kirghiz, a correct opinion may be formed of the nomade life—highly prizing his liberty, and despising every thing that can impose a restraint on his actions. Undaunted, warlike and ferocious, the Kirghiz, on horseback and alone, fearlessly enters the desert, and traverses five or six hundred verstes with the most astonishing rapidity, to see a parent or friend in another tribe. In his journey, he stops at almost every oba (camp) he meets, gives what news he may have, and is certain of a kind reception every where, even when not known; he partakes of the food of his host. This is generally krout (cheese known in Persia and Afghanistan by the name of *punneer*), hairan (tyre of India) meat, and when they have it, koumes, a drink prepared from mare's milk, and much esteemed in the desert. He never forgets the appearance of the country through which he has passed, and returns to his own home after some days stay, with abundance of new stories, and enjoys himself with his wife and children till some new object calls him away. The women are his only servants; they cook, make his clothes and saddle his horse, whilst he, with the most perfect nonchalance, confines himself to the care of his cattle, sheep and horses. We saw the brother of a sultan, much respected among the Kirghiz, leading his sheep during 15 days, mounted on a good horse, and dressed in a red cloth cloak, without considering it derogatory to his dignity.

The Kirghiz are governed by elders, heads of families, begs, behadirs, sultans and khans.

The title of beg, properly speaking, is hereditary, but any person who cannot support his situation by his talents, courage or conduct, soon loses it; whilst those who make themselves respected, obtain it either from the habit people acquire of calling them sultan, or by an assemblage of the tribe, who confer this honourable distinction.

An elder is generally an old man, whom the people have been in the habit of consulting; he must be rich and have a numerous family—he must possess these two requisites; besides a solid sound judgment. Whatever may be the moral character of a Kirghiz, if he is rich, he will always have friends, and will be powerful according to the number of his family.

The behadirs among the Kirghiz, are more celebrated for their courage, of an enterprising and clear judgment, and act as partizans during a war.

The sultans are the relations of the khan; who always exercise some influence among the Kirghiz. They are likewise

called, *toura*,* and this title always ensures them great respect from the lower orders. But without merit, they will possess no power among the tribe, who will not be commanded without some great personal quality.

The khan has in fact the power of life and death among the Kirghiz, who have no security against his tyranny, except public opinion, and no where is it so powerful as among the pastoral tribes. The discontented party quickly desert an unjust judge, and choose another for themselves. The khan is consequently obliged to follow the established customs, and to conform to the laws of the Koran. This conduct increases his power. He, however, takes care to keep a *mollah* entirely devoted to his interests, and who will explain the laws according to his wishes; and as the sacred volume and its commentaries are susceptible of many divers interpretations, the khan knows how to take advantage of it to authorize proceedings he would never otherwise venture upon. He also is careful to be surrounded by counsellors, usually, all Kirghiz respected by the tribe, and he endeavours to render himself popular with them by means of flattery and presents. However all these precautions would be insufficient to overcome the natural inconstancy of his subjects, if he did not also insure their favour by his activity, boldness, courage, and also excite their awe by occasional act of severe justice when indispensably necessary. The power of the khan therefore depends upon the general consent of the people. When he has once received that, he may reign despotically, as long as he acts for the interests of the people; his power is limited by the public opinion on that head, it is necessary it should be in his favour to enable him to govern. Woe to him who would strive to brave it—the same power that established, would not fail to overturn him.

I saw the following instance of the cruelty of the Kirghiz: several of the people that accompanied us, fancied that in a beggar whom we met, they recognised a robber of their tribe—they took away his horse, tied his arms, and wanted to cut off his head, though they had no right to do so. They only waited for the order to be given by a young sultan to whom their chief had delegated his authority, and they had sent to solicit it. Permission was, however, refused, and the beggar was set at liberty; but had great difficulty in escaping from the ill usage and abuse with which he was assailed.

* This must mean *tera* or branch, a name generally given to the subdivisions of a Tribe.

I was witness to another case which shows their ferocity. The sultan Haroun-ghazi who accompanied us, caused the march to be led by several hundred Kirghiz—and they unknown to us, attacked the hamlet of the sultan Manem-beg Djanghazi, one of the enemies of Haroun, and attached to the party of the khan of Khiva. Manem-beg, warned in time of the intentions of his adversary, had prudently fled—but his wives, his brother Iakach, and all his flocks fell into the hands of Haroun-ghazi. We saw them near the Sir-deria—the flocks were sent into Bokharia, and the women confined in their tents on the banks of the river, were delivered up to the brutality of the brother of the sultan.

So far from pitying these unfortunate captives, they only laughed at them, and said it was the right of the conqueror which no person could dispute. Iakach, guarded by five Kirghiz, and mounted on the worst horse they could find, followed Haroun-ghazi, who would never consent to see him. Iakach had served as a guide to the Khivians some months before, when they had plundered Haroun-ghazi. This unfortunate person was only twenty-two years of age, of a prepossessing appearance, and seeing the fate that awaited him, had a melancholy and downcast look.

An old Kirghiz presented himself before the conqueror, and thus addressed him—"My sons were massacred by Iakach during the excursion of the Khivians; the institutions of God and man direct that the dead should be avenged." The law of retaliation is firmly established among the Kirghiz. Haroun-ghazi was obliged to deliver up his cousin, whose death was instantly decided on. The old Kirghiz approached Iakach, who was mounted, snapped his gun close to his back; it missed fire; but other Kirghiz fell on him, taking off his clothes to prevent their being dirtied; and deaf to the prayers of their victim, they cruelly cut his throat like a sheep, with one of the small knives which they always carry with them; thus satiating the revenge they had vowed against this unfortunate young man.

The Kirghiz are very passionate, the most trifling cause, and frequently an unsuccessful attempt, is sufficient to excite them to the most cruel revenge.

These people have for several years been molested by the Khivians, which induced them to solicit the aid of the Bokharians, several of whose caravans had also been plundered by these banditti; the Kirghiz supposed the government of Bok-

hara would not fail to lend their assistance.* Deceived in this expectation they became furious—one of their chiefs cut off the tail of his horse, and came to the minister at Bokhara, saying, “as this tail has been severed from my horse, so am I from you; henceforth consider me your implacable enemy.” He departed shortly after with two or three friends, and carried off eight camels and two men. They commenced the first hostilities, which this man alone dared to declare against all Bokhara. His ferocious and violent conduct gives an idea of the daring character of these people.

The most trifling motive is sometimes sufficient to induce the most honest Kirghiz to indulge in his favourite passion for pillage; so firmly is the spirit of rapine rooted in the hearts of these people. The great and little horde, have for the last fifty years been subject to a government, a little more settled, and now enjoy a greater state of tranquillity than the other Tartars. It is a warlike spirit, and indifference to the fatigues of long and fatiguing marches, but above all, the fanatical spirit so prevalent among this rude people, which their chiefs know well how to excite, which renders them so fit for any dangerous enterprize. It may be easily imagined, then, after a severe winter, which is attended with great hardship and loss to the Kirghiz, their shepherds assemble to make an irruption, or establish themselves under a milder sky, such as Bokhara, so celebrated by them, and so much more fertile and beautiful than their own deserts. Thus the emigration of these barbarians may again take place into countries where artillery is little used, and regular troops unknown.

I will finish this digression on the subject of the Kirghiz, by a remark, that they never make use of this name among themselves; they invariably style themselves *Kasak*; which, according to some, signifies horseman, and to others warrior. They say the Bachkirs call them Kirghiz, but are ignorant from whence the name is derived, and it is used only in speaking of the great horde. This tribe has no khan, and is governed by different sultans; many of whom have sought the protection of Russia, others that of China, but their sole object is to obtain presents and assistance from either party. The Kirghiz of the great horde greatly fear the Chinese, whose severe and even cruel policy is, however, justified by

* The Kirghiz then solicited the protection of Russia who was not slow in promising it.

necessity. A Chinese caravan was plundered near the frontiers of Soungarie, garrisoned by the advanced posts of the Mandchous Tartars. The Chinese retaliated, and thousands of the Kirghiz, innocent as well as guilty, paid with their lives this aggression. Some such examples have put a stop to the aggressions of these tribes on the frontier of the Chinese empire.*

In the other two hordes, the khans ought to be confirmed by the emperor of Russia, who exercises a great influence in their election, and they swear fidelity to him.

The tribes of Turkoman now pay a tribute to the khan of Khiva and Bokhara; probably one day the Kirghiz will be obliged to do the same to Russia. But it is necessary, in the first place, they should find the advantages of her protection, in defending them against the irruptions of the Khivians.

CHAPTER V.

Passage of the Sir—Bridge of reeds—Hunting the wild-boar—Ruins—Drying up of the Djan-deria—Route passed—Kizil-coum—Plunder.

In the month of June, the melting of the snow on the great range of Aba-tagh, swells the waters of the Sir-deria, and overflows the lands on each side, which are so greatly fertilized by it, that grain is produced with very little trouble. Fruit-trees, willows, plane trees, also thrive, and it appears capable even of producing the silk-mulberry and cotton. At the time of our journey, the river was frozen, and we crossed it with the greatest precaution. The ice gave way after the passage of our two guns. A camel even broke it with his weight, and was got out with the greatest difficulty. The Kirghiz burnt bundles of reeds, and spread the ashes on the ice, to prevent the camels sliding. At last, after much noise and quarrelling, we passed the Sir, so celebrated in antiquity under the name of the Jaxartes.

On our return in the month of April, the passage was much more slow and difficult. Two boats which we carried with us, served as a raft to transport our artillery—the horses were

* The Chinese at least on this frontier have a warlike and well appointed force of Tartars.

swam over. Three large Kirghiz boats used to ferry over caravans, served to transport our provisions, on the payment of a trifling sum. These boats were built of the wood of the poplar, without iron, and very frail; they had been brought from Khiva by the lake of Aral. A water communication exists between Khiva and the Sir, used by the poorer Kirghiz, as a simple coasting trade. The boats are sometimes brought from Turkestan, where they are dearer than at Khiva.

The camels were swam over, and it was a singular sight to see ten or twelve of these animals tied together, and directed by naked Kirghiz of the most athletic forms; sometimes they held hard on the camels, or swam by them shouting to encourage the beasts. They continued this work nearly a whole day, three camels were drowned, but brought on shore, and having their throats cut with the usual Mahomedan ceremony were eaten by the by-standers.

In swimming, the camel leans on one side, so as to present a greater surface to the water; his hump appears to assist him, and is always nearly covered with water. The passage of the river on our return kept us two whole days.

On our march towards Bokhara, we crossed the Kouwanderia with great ease, the ice being sufficiently strong. It is a branch of the Sir, very rapid, and the banks covered with reeds; it may be about 20 or 30 yards broad, and from 5 to 10 feet deep, the water is particularly clear.

On our return we halted at a part of the same river (Kouwanderia) where there were the remains of a bridge of reeds, and reconstructed for our convenience of great façines made of this plant tied together, and laid on cables of the same materials fixed to posts firmly planted into the opposite banks—these façines were attached with strong ropes and a second layer put on. In this manner they formed a bridge, over which camels passed with safety fully loaded; we were not however without fears that the current would carry away this new kind of floating bridge.

Sometimes in place of reeds they employ bales of cotton so tightly tied, that the water penetrated very little into the material.

The land between the Sir and Djan-deria is covered with sand-hillocks of 3 or 4 toises in height, resting on a bed of clay; after passing an extent of clay-soil, you frequently again enter a tract of sand.

On leaving the Sir, we crossed a plain covered with reeds,

evidently overflowed, which obliged us to make several circuits; the Kouwan which we followed for 4 days, flows in a clear stream, through beds of sand, which extend to 25 verstes of the place; we passed it, on going to Bokhara; and it approaches much nearer in some places. On our return, we came on the banks of the Aralu-Koullar, lakes which run parallel to the Kouwan, to the place where the Djan-deria detaches itself; some of the sheets of water are nearly 10 verstes in circumference, whilst others are mere holes filled with water—they dry up in summer, and the beds are then cultivated by the Kirghiz.

This is the least barren part of the steppe, and the marks of extensive cultivation are still seen in fields which were tilled by the Cara-calpaks, as late as 1806. These people, of the same race as the Kalmouks, poor and powerless, were unable to resist the incessant incursions of the Kirghiz. After having in vain solicited the aid of Russia, Khiva and Bokhara, they abandoned their fertile fields, and removed into the territories of Khiva and Bokhara; thus divided, they now wander, one party to the south of the lake of Aral, subject to Khiva, the other under the dominion of Bokhara, have their station to the west of Samarcand, and north of Sarewchan. Not being rich, and possessing few camels, they use carts drawn by oxen or horses.

The Djan-deria is bounded on each side by plains of clay, here and there intersected by sand-hills, which extend to the Kouwan and Kizilcoum.

In this plain there are several thickets of the *saksaouls*, affording cover to different kinds of beasts of prey; wolves, tiger-cats, and even tigers. The Kirghiz informed us that they have been obliged to withdraw their flocks from this quarter, to prevent their being destroyed by these animals, not venturing to attack them when they are in numbers together, should they appear singly, then 20 or more men will assemble, armed with matchlocks, near the reeds where the tigers hide themselves, and set fire to them; the heat and smoke forces the tiger to quit his haunt, when he is shot by the hunters. We had seen something of this kind of hunting on the banks of Aralu-koullar and Kouwan-deria, which are likewise covered with reeds, and swarming with wild hogs, of which we killed a great number, one day no less than eighteen in less than three hours.

This mode of hunting offers a very singular spectacle to Eu-

ropeans. In the midst of a great plain covered with reeds, rise columns of smoke and flame, through which may be seen a hundred Cossacks riding their horses at full speed, sometimes before us and then behind; our horses frequently leading us directly on these ferocious animals, who plunge into the swamps, or suddenly disappear into the reeds, to return with greater fury on the hunters. Shots from guns and pistols are heard on every side, with the neighing of the wounded horses, which were instantly purchased by the Tartars to eat. The Cossacks engaged, were every where attempting to spear the hogs; one officer of Cossacks, offended at being told he feared the chase, dismounted and laid hold of an immense boar which had been wounded, and fired his pistol close behind its ear. To comprehend the scene, it must be witnessed; no description can convey an adequate idea of boar hunting in the desert.

I cannot describe to the reader the pleasure we experienced in again finding ourselves among woods, the rustling of the wind among the branches, and a confined horizon, might be said to be for us a novelty, recalling a fond recollection of our country. It is in the deserts and among nomades, that the true happiness of an European life is felt.

The ruins of old canals are still to be met with in this country; proving that it was once much better peopled than at present.

Aboul-ghazi, khan of Khiva, generally passed some months of the summer on the banks of the Kizil-deria, celebrated for their fine pastures.

In no part of the Kirghiz steppe, are to be so frequently seen traces of ancient habitations as on the banks of Djan-deria. I have seen the ruins of Koul-tchomktau, which is composed of elevations of earth of 150 toises in length, and the highest may have 3 toises (18 feet) in height. It is clear these buildings, whatever they may have been, were built with sun-burnt bricks; near these ruins are small canals about 1 toise or 6 feet broad and two deep; a great quantity of broken pottery is also to be met with. These ruins are about 15 verstes from the Djan-deria. The Kirghiz could give us no account of their use or date, but supposing they must have been erected by the Nogais, the name by which they call the people, who occupied these steppes before them. They also stated that these ruins are much more numerous in the eastern part of the Kirghiz country, and are also met with on the Tobol, the Ilel and Emba, those

in the best preservation and most celebrated are those of Djankend, which they suppose to have been the residence of the Ouz chief. Djankend, situated about 40 verstes from the mouth of the Sir, between that river and the Kouwan, was built of burnt-bricks. The ruins are surrounded with canals of irrigation and cultivated fields of far greater extent formerly than at present.

The Djan-deria is probably nothing more than the ancient bed of the Kizil-deria; it is also possible, this river might have flowed more to the south; for, 40 verstes in that direction from the Djan-deria, we found the traces of the bed of a great river. The Djan-deria was a considerable river even in 1816, of greater dimensions than the Kouwan. At present its dry bed only marks the former course. It may be 100 toises (600 feet) broad, and the banks 18 or 24 feet in height. A few holes here and there filled with water alone mark this once great river. This drying up has much astonished the Kirghiz, who are ignorant of the true cause; some attribute it to the construction of a dam to throw the water into the Kouwan at the spot it separated from this river.

Others suppose the bed has been filled with sand from the Kizil-coum, which appears the most probable; they may also account for this unfortunate drying up of the water to the great extent lost by evaporation and absorption into the sands of the desert. Whatever may be the cause, it is a most surprising fact, that the Djan-deria has disappeared. The water still found in the old bed, smells a little of sulphur, and is the most unhealthy we met with in our journey; it was still more dangerous from our not being able to replenish the supply during 5 days march in the great desert of Kizil-coum, which must be crossed to go to Bokhara. This water occasioned pains in the stomach to all our soldiers, and to some the most violent cramps. One died in strong convulsions.

We left the Djan-deria on the 3d of December, and found ourselves on the great road which leads to Bokhara. I call it the great road, for it was a track about 3 toises wide, and very much beaten by the multitude of travellers in that direction. The road first passed through a small forest of *saksaoul*;—it was less distinctly marked along a clayey plain which ends at the distance of about 57 verstes from the Djan-deria, and was again very visible in the Kizil-coum, where it crosses valleys formed by sandy-hillocks. This road is very much frequented by all the caravans which travel from Bokhara to Orsk, or to

Orenbourg, and by all the Kirghiz of the western side of the steppe who carry cattle to the markets of Bokhara, they take care to cross the Kizil-coum at the narrowest part and on their return, they provide themselves with water from the famous well of Boukhan, situated at the southern extremity of the desert.

The banks of the Djan-deria form a line of distinction in the nature of the country between Orenbourg and Bokhara; the clay, without being more productive, on account of the dryness of the climate, is much stronger; and the soil here rests on argillaceous rocks, whilst those of the steppe have for a base, sandstone or limestone.

The climate also is very different. Land tortoises, rare to the north of the Djan-deria, are very common in the Kizil-coum; very little snow falls during the winter, and it never remains long upon the ground, so that every thing denotes a warm climate. The banks of the Kouwan, and the Djan-deria are inhabited, principally in the neighbourhood of the sea of Aral, by some Kirghiz tributary to Khiva.

The barrenness however, is perfectly astonishing; from the Djan-deria, to the place where cultivation recommences, not a single river is to be met with in a space of 500 verstes, and water is only to be obtained from wells—sometimes abundant, sometimes the reverse; but in general containing brackish water.

At the spot where we crossed the Kizil-coum, it was 100 verstes wide. Its length is very considerable—for it extends from the Sir-deria, where it is much wider, to the sea of Aral and to the Amou-deria. This desert is remarkable for its sterility. Spring water is no where to be met with. It is said that there were formerly three wells near the road which we followed, and that they were filled up to prevent their being resorted to by the robbers, who generally remained in ambush among the surrounding hills. The robbers have actually been expelled from the Kizil-coum; but they at present hide in the ravines of the Bokhara mountains, and when they feel themselves strong enough, fall upon the travellers passing that way—pillage, and sometimes kill them, if they make any resistance.

The well of Boukhan, is at present as dangerous as the Kizil-coum used to be; particularly as it is the part of the road between Bokhara and Orenbourg, that is nearest to Khiva, and the Khivians are constantly on bad terms with the Bokharians, of the Kirghiz, or sometimes, as in the year 1820, with both

at the same time. Our party therefore was on the alert; and patrols were sent into the defiles of the Boukhan—fortunately we achieved this dangerous passage without any accident—but 10 days afterwards a caravan of Bokharians and Kirghiz, was pillaged by the Khivians, who assembled at the well of Boukhan, fell upon them, and pursued the fugitives as far as the Kizil-coum, where they met, and engaged with a troop of Kirghiz. On our return we found on the road the bodies of more than 100 people who had perished on the occasion of this irruption of the Khivians.*

Almost every day we met with caravans of Kirghiz coming from Bokhara; who, after selling their sheep, brought back barley, tobacco, meal and cotton, from that town. We felt much pleasure in conversing with these *bazartchi* (that is to say people returning from market), and felt great interest in hearing accounts of Bokhara, and enquired how long it was since they had left the city. We considered ourselves very fortunate in being so near the end of so long and troublesome a journey, of which we were beginning to get heartily tired.

We had travelled in the Kizil-coum, from 42 to 46 verstes (30½ miles) a day—the marches were very long, as we were constantly encountering deep sand-hills—it was absolutely necessary we should not loiter, so as to be too long without the opportunity of getting fresh water.

Our horses had met with very indifferent forage in the Kizil-coum, and were becoming visibly thinner. The Bachkir horses were skeletons, and could no longer draw the six waggons that remained of 25 which we brought from Orenbourg, and we were obliged to replace them by Cossack horses, which had until then been employed to carry forage. All our people, and particularly the foot soldiers, were much emaciated—in short it was absolutely necessary we should arrive very shortly. We carried ice, and the water of the Djanteria in leather bags, or barrels, notwithstanding it was very difficult to convey sufficient water for four and a half days, for our numerous party of men and horses.

On our arrival at Iouz-koudouk, one of the baggage horses drank to such excess that he fell, and was not able to rise for several hours. Notwithstanding these numerous inconveniences, but one of our saddle horses died, but we lost almost

* Two pages of my copy of M. Meyendorff's work are here lost.—
Translator.

all the cart horses ; particularly one day, when six were so perfectly exhausted, they could not follow us.

From the Djan-deria to Iouz-koudouk, the distance is two hundred and eleven verstes (51 leagues), which we traversed in five days with the artillery, through a sandy desert, destitute of water and grass, after having performed 1000 verstes with the greatest celerity, camels carried our infantry by turns ; but after all it was very difficult for a military body to accomplish such a march in so short a time.

CHAPTER VI.

Gold Mines—Aghatma—Fine country—Reception by the inhabitants—European prisoners—Interview with the Couch-beghi—Entry into Bokhara.

After passing the Kizil-coum, we crossed a plain covered with absinthe, bounded on the right by the mountains of Bokhara. The Bokharians, who accompanied us, dreaded a surprise from the Khivians ; as they said it was to take the nearest road to Iouz-koudouk ; this prevented our examining the mountains of Boukhan, which I was not able to do till our return the next spring ; like the mountains of Moughodjar, they rise to the height of about 600 feet above the plain, very much scarified, rocky, composed of quartz, mixed with sienite and diabase, forming numerous, but very narrow glens. Near the wells of Boukhan, a small spring runs from the mountains, which disappears a few hundred toises in the plain. The best road, and the shortest, is however that which runs from the Kizil-coum, near the mountains, Iouz-koudouk.

After passing the plain, I have just mentioned, we entered an elevated district, through which runs the mountains of Boukhan, Iouz-koudouk Kapkantach ; which are ramifications of the great range situated to the south of Khokhan and east of Bokhara.

Near the wells of Boukhan, this chain turns to the west, extending to the Amou-deria, separating near its banks into the hills of Tchavaswali and Vasilkara, famous for their rich veins of gold. It is said, this induced Peter the Great to send the expedition of Bekevitch. At present the khan of Khiva forbids the working of the gold mines of Vasilkara, not to at-

tract the cupidity of the Russians. There is perhaps exaggeration in these stories, as I saw at Orenbourg a piece of sulphureous pyrites, found at Vasilkara, which might have deceived people, who take every shining yellow substance for gold.

The mountains which we had just passed are composed of sienite and diabase, or greatly mixed with calcareous matter, they were generally of a dark green. These stones split into thin flakes like slate, and the hills have a much more rounded appearance, and less conical than those of Moughodjar. The soil and the valleys are also more sterile, even the absinthe is very rare.

In some places, the road is rugged, in others open, and easy for carriages. Iouz-koudouk, or the hundred wells, is a valley, where there are two wells about 18 feet deep, affording abundance of excellent water; besides thirty others, small, and generally dry.

The mountainous region commences at seven verstes, below Iouz-koudouk on the road we followed, and extends about thirty-four verstes to Kapkantach, when we again entered the plain, leaving on the left the Bech-boulak, or Bukbouldouk, a low hill. Bukbouldouk signifies a quail, a word invented by the Kirghiz, in imitation of the cry of that bird.

At Kapkantach, there are several sulphureous springs, with a strong smell, and very saltish; our horses would hardly drink it, but on our return in the spring, a horse emptied five buckets of this nauseous water. As the weather was very hot even at this season, the men suffered from thirst, and we had great difficulty to prevent, even for a few minutes, our soldiers from drinking this detestable liquid, which at the same time was very cool.

At twenty-two verstes from Kapkantach, commences the sands of Batkak-coum, which are twenty-eight verstes broad—there are, however, only the four last which are heavy—twenty-six verstes from these sands, we again entered a hilly country, which is called Sousiz-cara, (black without water.) These hills are in fact of a black colour; the surface perfectly bare, water is found in two wells, which we left ten verstes to our left. Our water being expended, we made use of the snow which lay in our route, principally on the hills, where, notwithstanding their slight elevation, we experienced a very sensible change in the temperature. We at last arrived at Cara-aghatch, after having performed the last forty verstes over a flat country, though surrounded with hills.

Two verstes from Cara-aghatch, four custom-house officers met the mission, and after a salutation, addressed us the usual compliments of *khoch amedid* (you are welcome,) informing us that the khan had sent provisions for us to Aghatma, distant thirty-eight verstes from Cara-aghatch. Monsieur Nègri politely expressed our gratitude, we resumed our journey and arrived with these officers at Cara-aghatch.

It was in this place we saw for the first time trees; about a hundred old mulberry bushes growing round a spring of sulphureous water—the heat of which was nearly 15 degrees of Reaumur, (66° Fahrenheit.) Some Mahomedan saint planted these trees—near which he had lived, and is buried there.

The water is said to possess some miraculous qualities: all the Mahomedans of our party bathed in it. The spring issues from a low hill of clay, and all the bushes are covered with pieces of cloth and rags tied on the branches as an offering to the saint.

The water of this spring is very abundant, forming a little brook, which is however soon lost in the clay soil. Notwithstanding we had been marching without intermission for four days, we set off again on the fifth, to get out as soon as possible of this barren region, and enjoy the provisions prepared for us by the khan of Bokhara.

We arrived at Aghatma the 25th December, after having crossed the Cara-aghatch, a mountain of considerable height, whose slope is very gentle towards Aghatma. The Bokharians say that in this place there was formerly a city, which a neighbouring hillock covered with broken bricks appears to confirm. Aghatma is a kind of basin, with some appearance of having been once flooded, forming a lake which supplies this city with water.

There are still two strong springs of sulphureous water, but not so hot as those of Cara-aghatch. We remarked at Aghatma, a small tower or hut of mud with a vaulted roof, serving as a kind of advanced post towards Khiva: here the Bokharians keep a guard when they dread an excursion of the Khivians, or the arrival of a caravan from Russia; the sentinel placed on the roof, commands an extensive view of the country round.

On the road to Aghatma an officer of the khan, having the title of *Iouz-bachi*, with about 20 horses met the ambassador, informing him he was directed to be his conductor to Bokhara, and provide every thing the mission could require. Se-

veral of the horsemen then approached Monsieur Négri, and took his hand in the European manner.*

We here quitted the desert, through which we had performed a tedious and monotonous journey of 70 days. The desert ends at these last mentioned sandy plains, beyond which we found ourselves every where surrounded with villages, gardens, plantations, mosques, &c.—in fact, we appeared to be suddenly transported into a fairy land.

If the appearance of this country excites feelings of admiration in Europeans accustomed to the sight of populous and well cultivated fields, how strong must be the impression produced upon the Kirghiz, and other inhabitants of the desert? How is it possible they should not long to invade a country so much favoured by nature, and which in summer would afford them vast plains for the indulgence of their wandering habits—whilst in the winter they could take refuge in the numerous towns and villages from the inclemency of the season.

Every thing excited our curiosity in this country, which is almost unknown to Europeans. It may be imagined with what interest we contemplated the oriental tribes, dressed in their blue clothes, and white turbands, who flocked to meet us—some mounted, others on foot—some riding on horses, others on asses—who crowded round us, saluting us after the fashion of this country. Several showed their joy on approaching us, by addressing us a few obliging words in the Russian language. Their signs of astonishment—their cries, and in fact, the tumultuous agitation of the whole crowd, gave our entry into Bokhara the appearance of a festival, which we should have enjoyed, but for the presence of the people connected with the police—whose voice sounded above all the tumult, and who armed with great sticks, struck indiscriminately on every side to make room for us. The sight of this violence saddened us when we remembered that our arrival was the occasion of all this confusion, and that the wish to see so many Ourousses was stronger than the fear of blows.

It was with feelings of the most painful nature, that we observed, in the midst of this Asiatic population, some Russian soldiers reduced to the sad condition of slaves. The greater part of them were old and infirm; at the sight of their countrymen they could not restrain their tears; they faltered out a few words of their mother tongue—they strove to cast them-

* Here, also, is a hiatus of two pages of unimportant matter.—*Translator.*

selves among us—so great was their emotion at the sight of our warriors. It is impossible to describe these affecting scenes which wrung our hearts.

We were informed at Khatoun-koudouk that the Couch-beghi, one of the principal officers of the Bokharian government, was waiting for us at the next village—at the distance of about a verst, from where cultivation begins, a chief of 100 men, Pendja-bachi, came to meet us with 200 horsemen. He led us through the crowd, and our infantry, beating drums, marched to the tent where the Couch-beghi was seated. We dismounted about 30 toises from it to advance through two rows of foot soldiers seated on the ground, who rose when the chargé d'affaires passed. We saw several tents of different colours, a great number of richly caparisoned horses, covered with chabragues embroidered in gold were picketed, tied by the head and the hind feet; the tents were surrounded by officers and slaves; and, in short, every thing that surrounded us added to the solemnity of this our first interview.

* The Couch-beghi, named Hakim-beg, was seated in his tent with four Bokharian noblemen; when Monsieur de Négri had taken the seat assigned to him, the chief addressing himself to the persons attached to the embassy, said "Be seated, for you are strangers to us, and we feel great pleasure in seeing you." M. de Négri having afterwards conferred with the Couch-beghi, about the ceremonies to be observed on his presentation to the khan, did not agree entirely with that officer. The audiences had begun under most favourable auspices, but before its termination, the Bokharian character was completely unveiled. The Couch-beghi was so indiscreet as to request M. de Négri would present our two pieces of artillery to the khan; when he found he was unable to obtain them, he did not hesitate to ask for M. de Négri's carriage for his master; yet he was not ignorant that we had several camels loaded with presents for the Court of Bokhara.

The Couch-beghi might have been about 50 years old, his long dark brown beard was beginning to turn grey. He was tall, the expression of his countenance pleasing and benevolent. He spoke with great ease in Persian, wore a white Cashmere shawl for a turban, a khilaut of the same material, figured with large flowers, and a sable pelisse, covered with striped cashmere.

* Literally great Falconer, a high office under the Tartar governments.

Our journey had been as pleasant as we could have wished. With the exception of some foggy days, and a few hours of snowy weather or drizzling rain, the weather had been generally so fine, that the Kirghiz said we had doubtless a saint in our party. This continued fine weather, rendered our march much easier, by preserving us from all the discomforts that would have been caused by rain, snow and cold.

We passed the night of the 17th of December, near a small town, called Wafkend, after passing through a well-cultivated and populous country, the same flourishing appearance continued the following day, when we arrived at Bazartchi, a large town about two verstes from Bokhara. We had travelled 40 verstes since our interview with the Couch-beghi, and during the two last days we were constantly surrounded by a crowd of people. The police were constantly driving them off with their sticks, the most inquisitive allowed themselves to be beaten, fled and then returned. Our soldiers marched in the greatest order, they were in complete uniform, and the beat of their drums, which was heard every now and then, caused exclamations of astonishment from the crowd. We pursued our course in the midst of tumult, and public marks of the joy excited by our arrival.

Near Wafkend, four chiefs paid a complimentary visit to Monsr. Négri, delivering a letter of congratulation from the khan. One was a relation of this prince, but did not understand a word of Persian, he was the only Ousbek I saw, who did not speak that language. Two others were slaves of the khan; one an Affghan, the other a Persian, the latter was simply dressed in a cloak made of camel wool, the others in rich dresses of gold and red silk.

About 15 verstes from Bokhara, the chief of the Iassaoul, with about 30 of his men, came to meet the ambassador, and accompanied us to Bazartchi, where we were lodged in a house belonging to the Couch-beghi; the rooms were so damp, we preferred sleeping in our kibitkas, notwithstanding the strong inclination we had to quit them.

After thirty-six hours of discussion, the ceremonial of our reception was arranged; and the khan agreed that Monsieur Négri should be seated in his presence.

On the 20th December, we made our public entry into Bokhara, a detachment of Cossacks marched in front with the presents, which consisted of furs, China, crystals, watches and guns. Another party of Cossacks were in the rear, and the

march was brought up by a detachment of infantry. An Ouzbek of rank, who perfectly understood Persian, conducted the ambassador to the palace.

In this order we slowly advanced, and after passing the gate which was very lofty, we continued our route through a narrow winding street, of gloomy houses, built of earth, and flat roofed. At last we arrived at the great square, surrounded with mosques, colleges or madrissa, and the enclosure of the palace.

After dismounting, we entered a vaulted corridore built of brick ; but with soldiers on each side, in number about 400, armed with muskets of every different shape and length. We then entered a small court, the passage, in which there were about 10 guns without carriages, and at last arrived in a square court, bounded by walls, round which were seated 300 or 400 people of Bokhara, dressed in white turbans and coats of gold brocade. Turning to the right, we reached the anti-chamber, which joins the hall of audience, where the khan was seated on cushions, covered with red cloth, ornamented with rich gold fringe ; on the floor was a common Persian carpet, the walls of white plaster and the ceiling of coloured planks.

This hall was double the length of its breadth ; the khan was seated with his back to the wall opposite the door we entered ; on his left were his two sons, one about 15 years of age. On his right was the Couch-beghi, on each side of the door were five grandees. Monsieur Négri supported by two chamberlains, advanced to within 12 paces of the khan, whom he addressed in Persian, presented his credentials through the Couch-beghi ; the officers of the mission remained standing with their backs to the wall, on each side of the door.

The Couch-beghi immediately presented the emperor's letter to the khan ; the prince read it aloud ; after which he requested Monsieur Négri to order some of the soldiers to enter the anti-chamber, who left their arms outside ; on seeing them, the khan laughed like a child ; in the expression of his countenance, there is very little intelligence ; he may be about 45 years of age, with a full beard, black eyes, and an olive complexion ; appearing much debilitated. He wore a dress of black velvet, ornamented with precious stones ; a muslin turban ; on it was an aigrette of heron's feathers, with a gold band crossing obliquely, and much resembled the Kalewi or head dress, of the grand vizier or kizlar-agassi, of Constantinople. The Couch-beghi, and three other principal officers,

in place of turbans, wore cylinder caps of fur. The master of ceremonies carried a sort of halbert, with an axe-shaped head of silver. The presents were delivered to the khan in another room ; the audience broke up in about 20 minutes, when we all assembled outside the palace. Our escort returned to Bazartchi, and bivouaced in a garden, during the whole remaining part of the winter. Monsieur Nègri and the attachés of the mission, were lodged in a large house, within the city of Bokhara, belonging to the Couch-beghi.

We remained in this city from the 20th December 1820, to the 10th March 1821 ; the weather was very fine, when we proceeded to Bazartchi. The bivouac in the garden appeared preferable to us to the dull houses of the town.

The 22d of March, we left Bazartchi, and on the 25th, quitted the country of Bokhara, well pleased at having seen this country, and still more so at leaving it.

Route from Orenbourg to Bokhara as followed by the Russian Mission in the year 1820.

DATE.	ENCAMPMENTS.	WHAT WAS FOUND AT THE HALTING STATIONS.	DISTANCE IN VERSTES AND TOISES.	
			Verstes.	Toises.
Oct. 10	Rivulet of Berdianka	Water and grass	20	251
11	—	—	—	—
12	Bitli-sou	A little water	25	469
13	Bourté	Water	33	280
14	Ouzoun-Bourté	Water, grass and bushes	26	120
15	—	—	—	—
16	Cara-Boutak	Good water and grass	35	302
17	River Hek	Do. do.	27	403
18	—	—	—	—
19	River Hek	Do. do.	31	60
20	Brook Tandy-ïaman	Do. do.	27	380
21	—	Bushes, reeds, water-grass	29	470
22	—	—	—	—
23	Brook Talach-beg	Bushes, water and grass	35	37
24	Mountain of Bassagha	No water, a few bushes, little grass	31	386
25	River Koubleïli-temir	Bushes, a little grass, water brackish	29	89
26	—	—	—	—
27	River of Tiraklu	Good water, a little grass, and a few bushes	31	219
28	Brook of Cara-akenti	Bad water, little grass, and few bushes	34	110
29	—	—	—	—
30	Brook Touban	Water, bushes and grass	27	123
31	—	Do. do.	22	101
Nov. 1	—	Do. do.	29	260

Route from Orenbourg to Bokhara as followed by the Russian Mission in the year 1820.

DATE.	ENCAMPMENTS.	WHAT WAS FOUND AT THE HALTING STATIONS.	DISTANCE IN VERSTES AND TOISES.	
			Verstes.	Toises.
Nov. 2	Lake of Khodja.	Water, reeds, grass.	44	450
3				
4	Wells of Coul-koudouk.	Water, reeds, grass, a few bushes.	29	520
5				
6	Adji-koudouk.	Water, reeds, grass, a few bushes.	24	383
7	Tchouber-tepeh.	Brackish water do.	29	35
8	Source Ok-tani.	Bad water, bushes and grass.	26	432
9	— Sari-boulak.	Do. do.	39	229
10				
11	Mountain of Derman-bachi.	Bushes, grass, no water.	30	161
12	Wells of Ouratchaï.	Bushes, bad grass, bad water.	20	407
13	Kulli.	Do. do. salt water.	30	268
14	Hill of Sapak.	Bushes, no water or grass.	26	162
15	Bay of Kamechlu.	Scattered bushes, good water, a little grass.	25	219
16				
17				
18	Ialter-koul.	Scattered bushes, fine grass, good water.	27	19
19	River Sir.	Good water, reeds, grass, bushes.	26	12
20				
21				
22	Small lake.	Water, bushes and grass.	9	378
23	Plain.	Bushes, no water or grass.	24	79
24	River Kouyan.	Scattered bushes, number of trees, good water.	29	329

25	River Kouvan	Scattered bushes, number of trees, good water ..	29	304
27	River Kouvan	Bushes, grass, water	28	14
28	River Kouvan	Bushes, grass, water	30	40
30	Halted in the Desert	Bushes, grass, no water	33	449
1	Djan-déria (Janghi Derrias) or new River	Bushes, indifferent water, a little grass	35	109
3	Near the sands of Kizil Coum ..	Do. do.	42	162
4	Desert of Kizil Coum	Do.	44	69
5	Desert of do.	Bushes, no water or grass		
6	Edge of the sandy desert of Kazil Coum	Do.	46	5
7	Wells of Jouz Koudouk	Bushes, no water, little grass	43	311
9	Desert	Good water, a few bushes, a little grass	43	300
10	Sands of Batkak	No water, little grass, few bushes	43	180
11	Hill of Sousiz Cara	Do. do.	38	442
12	Springs of Cara Aghatch	Do.	40	58
13	Do. of Aghatma	A few bushes, salt water, no grass	38	275
15	Wells Odeun Kondouk	Do.	38	386
16	Kaghatan	Good water, a few bushes, no grass	17	366
17	Town Waskend	} Fertile well cultivated country	17	289
18	Village Bazartchi		23	169
20	City of Boukhara		2	

NOTE.—104 verstes are equal to a degree or 69½ English miles.

BOOK SECOND.

DESCRIPTION OF BOKHARA, KHIVA AND THE SURROUNDING STATES.

CHAPTER I.

Observations on the Khanats in the vicinity of Bokhara—the ruling race in Central Asia.

The Asiatic people to whom the Russians give the name of Tartars, have the nose slightly flattened, the cheek bones prominent, little beard on the chin, and small eyes, frequently with a cast in them. Gengis Khan, at the head of the Mongols, subjugated the Tartars, who became incorporated with his army, and those of his successors. As they were the most numerous, the conquerors adopted the Turkish language, barbarous as it was; from this mixture of Tartars and a race similar to the Mongols, sprang, I think, all those tribes regarded as Mongol Tartars: they ought to bear this name, which is appropriate to them, and which prevails in Turkistan.

What difference is there in fact between the features of a Kirghiz, an Ouzbek, a Turkoman, a Kezareh, an Eimah, and those of a Turk of Constantinople, or a Tartar of Kazan or Crimea.*

* The author must speak of the Turkoman tribes in Asia Minor, for the Turks of Europe, by constant mixture with Europeans, have decidedly Greek features, full beards, and generally a fairer complexion than the people of the South of Europe.—*Translator.*

Some modern geographers affirm, with but little foundation, I think that the Kirghiz possess the features of pure Tartars, which resemble those of Europeans; but it is impossible to confound the Kirghiz, and the other Mongol Tartars, with the Kalmoucks, since they do not possess the same corpulent frame, or features so strongly marked.

The Kalmoucks speak a different language, and have the Tartar features to the most exaggerated degree.

A part of the Kalmoucks who fled from the banks of the Volga, in 1770, were obliged to remain, or were captured by the Kirghiz; this has tended in some way to increase the strongly marked Tartar features, which are still met with among the Kirghiz.

Having on the road asked a man, who possessed completely the Mongol feature, if he was a Kalmak (that is what is called a Kalmouk), his companion began to smile. On enquiring what there was in the question to excite their mirth, I learned that the Torgout Kalmouk, having been reduced to a state of slavery among the Kirghiz, it was considered as a disgrace to have descended from them. I then understood what it was that had caused a smile at the expense of the Kirghiz, whom I had so unintentionally offended.

The boundary which is generally assigned to Tartary, does not appear to me correct: for, under this name, the country inhabited by the Tartars of Siberia, Kazan, Astracan, Crimea, and that which extends from the Belour mountains to the Caspian Sea; for the Turks of Constantinople ought to be included in the same race: in Dzoungarie in the little Kouldja, five hundred dwellings belong to the Doungani Tartars, who are the same race with those who occupy one thousand dwellings in the great Kouldja, and who all speak the Tartar and Mongol languages.

The Tartars, who dwell and reign in the country, erroneously called by us little Bokhara (a name unknown to any Asiatic, and for which I will henceforth substitute that of Chinese Turkistan), although subjugated by the Kalmoucks, have nevertheless not become entirely extinct; they are, however, more of the Dzoungar Kalmouk, who passed into Chinese Turkistan, along with the Mandchous in 1759. Tartar is still the prevailing tongue in Cachghar, Jarkend, Khoten and Ak-sou. These then are the countries which belong to Tartary in a literal sense.*

* I have seen many of these people who speak Tartar, and not Mongol.—*Translator.*

I do not coincide in the opinion of those who maintain that geographically, Tartary should be regarded as extending eastward, as far as the Belour mountains, and to the south-east as far as Hindoo Koosh, which there separates it from Afghanistan.

In this case, the race of Tartars, who never extended so far southward, would at the same time comprehend, under the denomination of Tartary, some countries which are not of Tartar origin, while it would exclude Chinese Turkistan, which is literally so. If in geography we give to a country the name of a people, it should be conditional on such people inhabiting that country.

It appears to me then, that Central Asia would be a more appropriate name to introduce in lieu of Tartary, since I have found it more correct, and more geographical.*

CHAPTER II.

Central Asia—Division—Appearance—Mountains—Rivers and Streams—Sea of Aral—Marshes—Climate.

I consider Central Asia to be the country bounded by the Irtich, the Altai, the Tarbaghatai, the Moussart or Mous-tagh (ice mountains), the Belour (crystal), the Hindoo Koosh, mountains of Ghaour, which bound the north of Persia, the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, the Oural, and the northern boundary of the steppe of the Kirghiz.

Independent Tartary is applied to those states, which are still unsubjected; in which sense, they belong to political geography, but to preserve consistency in any description, I will adopt the name of Independent Mongol-Tartary.

The great table land, inhabited by the Mongols, may be called Mongolia, and to avoid confusion, I will adopt the names of great and little Tibet, Chinese Turkistan and Dzoungarie, or province of Ily, as the Chinese call it.

The regions of Asia, which I have either visited, or obtained certain information regarding, are, to the north, the countries of the Kirghiz; to the west, the Khanat of Khiva, the Caracalpak, the Aralians, or inhabitants of the banks of the Aral

* It is almost impossible to translate this chapter, which is obscure even in French, which is generally the case with the Count's style of writing, it not being his native tongue.—*Translator.*

lake, and Turkomans ; to the east, the Khanat of Khokhan (called Ferghana by the Arab authors), including the towns of Tachkend and Turkistan ; to the south, Bokhara, the desert inhabited by Turkomans, the Khanats of Meimeneh, Ankoï Balk, Khoulm, Badakshan, Koulab, Hissar, Cherzabés (green city), the country inhabited by the Gillijes Afghans, or eastern Persians, the Kezareh, the nomade Chiites, Chgaanies, the Dervazeh Pagan nomades.

The elevation of the steppe of the Kirghiz is very low, by our observations, the barometer, during a constantly calm atmosphere, stood at 27 inches, seven and eight lines, the thermometer being at about 8 or 10 degrees of Reamur. The steppe, about the 52 degrees north latitude, has a fertile soil, producing forests of pines, birch, and good grass. To the south, the country is deficient in moisture, a few fir trees here and there met with in some spots of the Olou-tagh, a chain of mountains, which, generally speaking, only present valleys, devoid of vegetation, granite rocks, and mines of lead.

In the western parts of the deserts, that is to say, the route from Bokhara to Orenbourg, grass is only found near the mountains of Moughodjar. Beyond the Orsk it is not met with to within 250 verstes of the Oural. Not a bush is met with in this space, so that caravans are obliged to carry fuel to cook or warm themselves. It is impossible to make use of cow-dung except in dry weather.

The greater part of the Kirghiz steppe, is composed of argillaceous plains, slightly undulating and covered with wormwood, a few thorny plants, and on approaching the south, the bush called saksaul.

This dreary waste includes some extensive sandy deserts, the largest of which is the Cara-coum, bounded on the south by the Sir-deria, and the Bitipak which extends to the north and N. E. of Turkistan: having before described these deserts, it is unnecessary again to mention them ; cultivated spots are to be met with, on the banks of the Sir-deria, and between the river Kouwan and the Djan-deria ; they are also found near all the towns, for instance, near Turkistan, Tachkend, and others.

The country between the Sir and the Amou-deria, is occupied by the Kizil-coum, the soil on the northern and southern extremities is clay, with less admixture of sand than the steppe of the Kirghiz, but more arid, and consequently more barren.

Between the Caspian and the Sea of Aral, the soil is gene-

rally sandy, water is here procured from wells, said to be from six to nine toises, or fifty-four feet deep. A rocky chain of mountains called Karaghoubet, runs along the Sea of Aral, and from the banks of the Bay of Bourzouk, or Koul-Madjar, to the nearest point of the shores of the Caspian, the ground is covered with shells, apparently indicating an ancient junction of those seas.*

The cultivated spots near the towns, or on the banks of rivers, are merely small patches, rendered fertile by means of irrigation; the greatest part of this region is a desert, inhabited solely by a small number of the wandering tribes.

The vast plains of Central Asia, are intersected by chains of mountains. In the midst of the steppe of the Kirghiz the group of Olou-tagh rises above all the mountains of the desert; it terminates the Arghamat chain, running from east to west. Two ranges branching off from the Oural mountains, runs into the steppe, the one near Gouberlinsk, of which we have already spoken, the other near Akto-caraghai, passes to the north of Verko-ouralsk; this branch retains its name as far as the source of the Tousak; then it is greatly diminished in height, and takes the name of Dajabouk-caraghai, after which it again attains a great elevation near the source of the Soundouk, it again sinks, takes the name of Karaadir-tagh, and joins one of the branches of the Moughodjar mountains.

The Karaadir-tagh mountains, extend to the east, as far as the Toupalak-tagh, a branch terminated by the heights of Teke-tourmaz and Kotour-tagh, near the Səri-tourghai. It is worthy of remark that not a single salt lake is to be met with in the western side of the Atko-caraghai, though there are several immediately on the east of this chain.

The Boukhan hills, to the south of the Kizil-coum, extend to the west, as far as the Amou-deria, near Khiva; they then form the chain of Vassil-cara, and are well known by that name, and perhaps close to the Amou-deria, they are the origin of the Djani-chir, or Lion's heart, a name which is found in Hadji Khalfa's Turkish geography, though actually unknown in Bokhara.

On the eastern side the Boukhan hills unite with the Koukertli, and apparently only a branch of the Alps, situated to the north of Samercand, as well as the whole mountainous country of Bukbouldouk, Sousiz-cara, Koulchouk, and Ars-

* The same indications are distinctly visible between the Caspian and Black Sea.

lantagh, is a branch, which detaches itself from the Alpine country, lying to the north-east of Samercand, and probably between it and Djisagh. The southern ramification of this branch is terminated by the Noura-tagh (mountain of light,) which is very high, we had a view of its summit from Caraghata, which in the month of December, was covered with snow, of which there was none on the plain. It will be hereafter shewn, that this mountain favourably affects the cultivation of the lands, between it and Bokhara.

The south-eastern extremity of this table land, is the most elevated, and from the space between Khokhan, Nissar and Dervazeh, spring those mountains covered with eternal snows, of which I was unable to learn the names from any native of Bokhara; the highest of these chains lies to the north of Dervazeh, the next in height are those to the north of Khokhan, which in the first instance, extends along the road, leading to Kachghar, cross it near mount Terek, which is also almost constantly covered with snow, and then spread to the left of the road. Monsieur Nasarov, who was obliged to halt at Khokhan, and at Margakhaneh, in the year 1819, and who has since given an account of his journey, calls these mountains Kachghar-divani; they are joined by the Terek to the Ala-tagh, where the Sir-deria has its source. The Ala-tagh extends from Turkistan, Tackhend and Khokhan, to the frontiers of Dzoungarie, all the mountainous country is inhabited by tribes of Kirghiz of the great horde, called the black or savage. These mountains are called Ala-tagh, which means pie-bald form, some of the summits being constantly covered with snow, whilst others are brown and free from it.*

There is a very high mountain situated to the north of Ramit, a city to the east of Bokhara. This mountain joins the chain extending to the north of Iagnaou, and unites to those of Bokhara; then separating into a number of ramifications, the general direction of which I have attempted to lay down on the map. Between Samercand and Chersabés (green city,) there is a very elevated chain, which gradually diminish as they divide before reaching Carchi. In following the road to Ghoussar by Deïnaou, to Hissar, there is on the north side a very elevated chain of mountains, which become lower on approaching the Amouderia. Hereafter I will describe the route followed by the caravans from Balkh to Caboul, a route,

* I think this is a mistake, Ala-tagh is literally high mountains, and a very just name for them, they divide China from Tartary.—*Translator.*

which if accurately kept, would throw much light on the topography of these countries. The two great rivers the Amou and Sir, water the countries through which we passed. The Amou only takes this name after the junction of the Zour-ab or Wahch, with the Badakhchan, two considerable streams, one coming from the north-east, the other south-east the Amou. These receive the Kafernihan (name of the infidels,) the Toupalak; the Ghouloum majestically flows in a bed of from 200 to 300 toises broad, it then divides into two branches, and falls into the lake of Aral, after a course of nearly 1,400 verstes, or nearly 1000 miles. I do not imagine that the Mouhrab can reach the Amou, and it appears to be lost in the sandy desert through which it flows. It is certain that the river of Samercand called Kouwan, and also Zer-afchan, is lost in the Cara-koul lake, which has no apparent communication with the Amou-deria (Oxus,) and is distant from it nearly 30 verstes.

Much discussion has taken place regarding the ancient mouth of the Oxus. Some geographers have supposed that the travellers of the 16th and 17th century, have less expressed what they have seen with their own eyes, than what they have endeavoured to reconcile with the frequently false geographical statements of Ptolemy, and even deny that the Oxus ever flowed into the Caspian, though Jenkinson, Bruce, Hanway, Beckevitch, all state that a branch of this river actually falls into the Caspian. It appears to me there is some credit due to these travellers, particularly as Monsieur Monraviev,* a colonel in the Russian service, who went from the Balkan bay to Khiva in the year 1820, himself saw traces of the branch, mentioned by the before mentioned travellers. M. Mouraviev thinks the Amou, about 160 verstes north of Khiva, turned to the west, and divided into two branches before entering the bay of Balkan. However it is not Monsieur Mouraviev alone who has assured me of his having seen the ancient bed of the Oxus in many places between the Caspian and Khiva, in which bushes now grow: a Major of Cossacks and native of Khiva, who was a very well educated man, considered it would be easy to restore the ancient course to the Amou-deria, which he supposed was too notorious to be doubted. It is currently reported that this river was turned by the Khivians during

* I have generally seen his name spelt *Mouravieff*, now a general, and lately employed on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople.—*Translator.*

the piracies,* of the Cossack Stenko-Razin, in 1670; but Jenkinson says in 1559. The Oxus formerly fell into the Balkan bay, but now does not reach so far, but flows into the lake of Kitai, or Aral; all the water in this country is procured by canals from the Oxus, which is the reason it no longer reaches the sea.

The general opinion at Khiva is that an earthquake, about 500 years ago, changed the course of the Amou-deria. This assertion has nothing impossible in it, as the countries of Khiva and Bokhara are very subject to these natural convulsions: it is therefore quite possible that the Oxus formerly divided into two branches north of Khiva, one falling into the Caspian, and the other into Aral: this, if correct, will reconcile the conflicting opinions of geographers on this subject.

The upper Amou-deria or Zour-ab, near Dervazeh, is about 40 toises broad, and exceedingly rapid, till its junction with the Karateghin. Gold dust is found in the sand; the banks are very high and precipitous, and the bed obstructed with rocks, over which the stream foams with great noise and force. We will leave to Mr. Elphinstone the task of describing its source, as I heard nothing regarding it, which could be depended on.

The Sir-deria which has a course about 1200 verstes or 800 miles, only becomes considerable after its junction with the Akboura, which runs near to Tadj or Takht Suleiman, a mountain also called Och. Here its valley enlarges, and the stream becomes more rapid. Its source is hid in the mountains of Belour and Ala-tagh. None of the travellers who annually go from Khokhan to Kachghar, could give me the least information on the subject. Many streams fall into the Sir between Khokhan and Kodjend; near the last city it is larger than at its mouth, in the Aral; the

* This river is expressly stated to have been turned by the Khivians, about the time of the Russian expedition under Prince Bekevitch, in the reign of Peter the Great. The troops were massacred or made slaves by the Usbecks; from which time, the Russians have constantly had in view the conquest or punishment of this state. I fully coincide with those who assert that the Oxus once fell into the Caspian; at least its principal branch. An intimate friend of mine, Berdey Beg, who was in the service of Persia, and subsequently entered that of the Khan of Khiva, considered it a point beyond dispute, and asserted that, in high freshes, a part still took that direction. Should Russia occupy permanently that position, Khiva, I believe there will be no doubt of the Oxus being again restored to its ancient-bed, which will throw the whole of Tartary open to any enterprize of hers, either warlike or mercantile.—
Translator.

sandy deserts through which it flows absorbing a great quantity of its waters. About 350 verstes from its mouth the Kouwan separates from it; this last then divides into five channels, which again unite, and form a number of lakes called Aralu-koullar, near which the country is fertile and well cultivated. Before the Sir enters the lake of Aral, it again unites with what remains of the Kouwan. Higher up it also receives a small stream from it, when the river is full at the melting of the snow. This branch certainly offers facilities for irrigation. The people who reside on the river assured me both the Amou and Sir are fordable at several points; but I have never seen any person who had actually crossed in this way.

They have recourse to different methods for crossing these rivers. I passed the Sir in a row boat; M. Nasarov crossed it near Khokhan in a boat drawn by horses, swimming across. Another and rather a singular method was told me; the traveller's clothes are put into two leather bags,* which are afterwards filled with air, and on which he takes his seat; they are then tied to the tail of a horse, which swims across the river; the traveller being buoyed up by the inflated bags. From what I was told in Bokhara, I am inclined to think the Amou-deria is passed in the same manner. I was assured that people who cannot swim lie down on one of these inflated bags, and paddle themselves along, with one hand without any danger; as for the Kirghis their skill in swimming is of little use to them, as they always hold fast their horse's mane with the right hand, swim with the left, and thus cross from one bank to the other of the Sir.

The Irghiz and the Tourghai, the junction of which I witnessed in the Tonghouz-khan, are inconsiderable rivers; in many places they are almost dry. They form the lakes of Aksakal, extending to the north-east, and the most westerly of which is separated from the sea of Aral by chains of clayey hills, in the midst of sandy deserts, making it very unlikely any subterranean communication should exist between them: the distance is 130 verstes. The names of Taraz and of the Talaz are at present unknown.

The sea of Aral, called by the eastern nations Ourghentch, is surrounded on the east and north-west by sandy hillocks and clayey plains; on the north-west the banks are twenty or

* This is common on the Tigris and Euphrates also.—*Translator.*

thirty toises above the water ; on the north-west are the bay and lakes of Koulmaghour. Near them are to be seen the remains of an ancient fortress, a well of fresh water, and the traces of the ancient bed of the sea, extending a considerable distance on this side. On the west of the Aral is the chain of Karaghoubet hills, very steep on the side next the sea, but with a gentle slope on the other side, and giving vent to numerous small streams. The easiest route by which Russian troops could reach Khiva would be along the foot of these hills, at the distance of five 5, 10 or 15 verstes from the sea of Aral. The road then passes near the Aksouat, and the Khodjabeg, two lakes about 40 verstes from each other. The latter is about 100 verstes from Khiva. It is only after reaching this lake that the water of the sea of Aral becomes fit to drink ; the water here changes colour, becoming whitish by their mingling with the Amou. The southern part of the sea of Aral is full of islands, inhabited by Aralians, a people subsisting entirely on fish, and tolerably expert in the management of their vessels. They make use of sails ; the Kirghiz, on the contrary, content themselves with coasting along in row boats as far as Khiva. I was assured they never used sails ; being in that respect different from the Kirghiz at the mouth of the Emba, who have lately begun to make the journey by water. The Aralians are the only people who fish in the sea Aral ; the Kirghiz confine their fishing to the Sir. The same kinds of fish are probably found in the sea of Aral and in the Caspian. We saw at Bokhara a small kind of sturgeon, found in the former sea ; it was 3 or 4 feet long. I imagine the western part of the sea of Aral is the deepest, as its banks are mountainous.

There are no marshes in the steppe. The Sir forms lakes from overflowing its banks at about 50 verstes from its mouth ; some of them are dried up by the heat of the sun, and 10 verstes from either side of the river are plains covered with reeds. They resemble marshes, in spots where the inequalities of the soil have permitted the water to lodge every where ; else the water filters through the road, without ever becoming stagnant. There are, however, places in the steppes where the soil is clayey, impregnated with salt, and where a person sinks in crossing, though no water is perceptible.

The climate of the Kirghiz country is very healthy ; almost all strangers who reside some time have a disposition to grow fat ; the air is very pure and light ; in passing through we felt

frequently the greatest pleasure from its fresh invigorating quality. Consumption or other diseases of the chest are seldom felt, and the small pox is unknown. The Kirghiz, however, who came to Russia, are particularly subject to take the infection; as likewise in Bokhara, where it sometimes exists. The Kirghiz have a great dread of this disease and with reason, as they generally take it at an advanced age, when it becomes most dangerous.

It is a great mistake to suppose the steppes of the Kirghiz enjoy a cool or temperate climate. The heat is excessive, and the clay plains, or burning sandy deserts, retain a long time the heat, more so from the total absence of shade or vegetation.

In the commencement of May, the heat had already become almost unbearable. We moved with difficulty; all animals had sought what shelter they could find, and there reigned a dead silence. Dew is seldom known at this season, and towards the end of April the grass is already burnt up. In the month of June 1821, the thermometer at Orenbourg rose 49° (Reaum) in the sun, and was 27° at 10 p. m. In the winter it often fell to 30° . The Kirghiz during the summer go almost naked; wrapping the skin cloak round the middle, leaving the back and upper part of the body exposed during the time they are at work.

To these burning summers succeed very severe cold in winter, but they are more temperate to the south of the Moughodjar mountains and deserts of the Cara-coum.

CHAPTER III.

Khanat of Khiva—Route from Saratchik to Khiva—Khanat of Khokhan—Wild Kirghiz—Mountains of Ala-tagh.

It is not necessary to dilate much on the Khanat of Khiva,* M. Moravieff, who visited it in 1820, having published a detailed account of his journey. A daughter of Abulfaiz of Bokhara, contemporary of Nadir Shah, married the Khan of Khiva, named Kaip, of a Kirghiz family, from whom is descended Mohammed-Rahim,† now governor, who is as enter-

* Khiva was built after the destruction of Urgung, once a great and powerful city, and capital of the kingdom of Kharasm, which Khiva now is.—*Translator.*

† Mohammed-Rahim is since dead and succeeded by his son.

prising as fortunate. He has succeeded in bringing under subjection many of the Turkoman tribes, situated to the south-east and west of his dominions. His power at present extends from the shores of the Caspian to the boundaries of Bokhara; the city of Khezarist or Hizarasp is his southern possession, and the tribes under him wander as far as the 40th degree of north latitude; the determined enemies of the Turkoman tribes subject to or bordering on Persia and Daghestan.* These Turkomans have rebuilt the city of Seraghs (Seera-kees,) a town about 200 verstes south-west of Mawri.

After the conquest of Mawri, Mohammed-Rahim Khan seized Seraghs; but, not being able to retain it, made it over to his Turkomans as a protection to his hereditary states. From the invasion of Persia other tribes of Turkomans have been incorporated with these people, who were expelled from Mangkichlak by the Kirghiz, and occupy the country as far as 44° north latitude.

The Turkomans who inhabit the shores of the Caspian have constant intercourse with Russia, from whence they import wheat and flour. They are determined enemies of Persia, and in 1813 sent a deputation to General Rilischieff (Governor General of Georgia,) begging him not to conclude a separate peace with Persia, as they hoped soon to gain some decided success over the common enemy.

The Khan of Khiva has succeeded in seducing the remaining tribes of Turkomans from their subjection to Bokhara, whose territories they now plunder to shew their attachments to their new master.

The rapacious Mahommed-Rahim is suspected of encouraging the plunder of the Bokharian and Russian caravans, and his subjects make excursions into Bokhara, but in small numbers, and secretly; their power being unequal to resist that of Bokhara, which is six times more numerous. In the year 1808 the Khan of Bokhara took Khiva, but restored it to its prince Veledi-Nassar: he died within a short time, and was succeeded by Mohammed-Rahim, who lost no time in recommencing his pillage of the territories of Bokhara. This he continues to the present time, returning evil for the favours conferred on his brother. He likewise attacked the Kirghiz who were established on the banks of the Sir, and carried off a great number of prisoners, whom he has obliged to take lands

* There are two provinces of this name, it must be a district of Mazanderam.—*Translator.*

under Khiva. Mohammed-Rahim has dug a number of canals for the purpose of irrigation, one of which extends 120 verstes from the point in the Amou from which it originally is drawn off.

New Ourghendj is the most commercial of all the towns subject to Khiva, and the principal mart of caravans; it however contains no public caravanserais, where the merchants can dispose of their goods.

The inhabitants of Khiva are composed of Ouzbeks, the conquerors and masters of the country; Turkomans, part of whom cultivate the soil without entirely abandoning their pastoral habits, Cara-calpaks and Aralians, Kirghiz, some Jews, besides the Tadjiks, or fixed inhabitants, of whom we will speak in the description of Bokhara.

Though the inhabitants of both Khanats are of the same race, language and religion, the Khivians have not reached so high a state of civilization as their neighbours; agriculture is less attended to; the habitations inferior; commerce more restricted, and customs more barbarous. The climate is colder, but the soil and productions are nearly the same as those of Bokhara, but not so abundant in Khiva; silk is not exported and bread generally dearer than at Bokhara. We will hereafter speak of the trade with Russia and the Khanat of Khiva, confining the description at the present moment to the route from Saratchik to Khiva. Saratchik to the wells of Belawli, affording an abundant supply of water—4 marches.

Some wells are met with between that and the Emba of Djem—3 marches.

Sulphurous springs of Ioutch Kanata—2 marches.

To Mansoulmas 3 wells and abundance of water—3 marches.

Here commence the sandy hills, which cannot be passed in less than nine days, three of which are in very deep sand; water is found every two or three days; hills called Aiboughour.—6 marches.

Near these wells runs a river cut from the Aral, and ending in a lake surrounded by sand, no water till within sight of Ourghendj—3 marches.

This route, which was performed in twenty-four days, was much more difficult than the one near Aral lake, which is, however, much longer. From Khiva to Bokhara it is 350 verstes.* The Amou is crossed opposite new Ourghendj, or

* Two hundred and thirty-four miles.

at Khanka, distant from it twenty-five verstes, or at Khezarist, fifty verstes ; still lower down there is cultivation for about twenty verstes on the banks of the river. The most frequented passage of the Amou in going from Khiva to Bokhara is at Koukertli (sulphur) ; the right bank of the Amou is here very steep. In leaving Khiva the road lies on the left bank of the river ; the cultivation here extends about five verstes from the stream. The sands commence at Koukertli. There is another road by crossing the river at Tchoutchak (Outchchak) three legged, because these small hills here approach the river. This route is through many sand hills among which are frequently experienced very violent gusts of wind. This is the nearest road.

At Koukertli water must be carried, for the distance between that place and the cultivated lands at Bokhara, which extends to forty verstes of that city ; indifferent water is procurable at Tcharkoucha. The route along the banks of the river has less sand, and is much better, but increases the length by 150 verstes.

The Khanat of Khokhan lies to the east and north-east of Bokhara ; this country has been greatly increased since Tackhend was added to it in 1805, and Turkistan, and all the adjacent cities. It is bounded on the east by deserts, or the Sir-deria ; on the south Kachghar-divani ; on the east Ala-tagh ; on the north Kazakli-djoulak and Sousak ; on the south Och and Takht-Suleiman are its frontier towns. The Ak-mesdjid, on the Sir, is very well known by this name, which was given it on account of an ancient mosque situated there, of which the ruins alone are now to be seen. All the caravans from Bokhara to Petropavlosvk pass through this country. I have been told that the Isoun tribe, belonging to the great horde, frequents this neighbourhood. 100 verstes to the east of the Ak-mesdjid is Kazaklu-djoulak, a small town upon the Sir. In the distance may be seen the northern extremity of the Ala-tagh—this chain of mountains in separating from the Sir loses itself in the steppe and bears the name of Cara-tagh, from the neighbourhood of Turkistan.

Turkistan is defended by a fort, with a ditch of about fifteen feet wide, which can be filled with water. The Karatchik river runs about five verstes from the town, and irrigates the fields. The town has twenty-two wells, and about 1000 mud houses ; it has the appearance of decay.

The tomb of Kara-Ahmed-khodja, one of the most revered

Mahomedan saints of Turkistan, is situated near a Mesdjid which bears his name; in which there is an immense pot, at least twelve feet in diameter, resting on a stand of cast iron. The rich people dress food for the poor in this utensil, which is distributed on certain days in the year.

The population of Turkistan is composed principally of Kirghiz and a few Ouzbeks.

Tackhend, has at least 3000 houses, and is surrounded with a mud wall falling into decay; as are likewise the houses. The buildings, though intended to resemble those of Bokhara, are much inferior both in construction and materials. There are ten schools on the same footing as those of Bokhara. Canals from the Tchirtchik, which runs about twenty verstes to the south of Tackhend, supply the city with water, and irrigate the lands about it.

The territory of Tackhend produces cotton and silk; of which Turkistan has but a small portion.

The artillery of the beg of Tackhend consists of a few small guns (zumbarooks), carried on camels, like the Persians. In the neighbourhood of the town there are many villages, the principal Djiti-kend, Sairam, Karaboura, Tchingha, Ikan, inhabited by the Ouzbeks; there are only a few Tadjiks and no Jews.

I have traced the map of this part of the country from a great number of routes. From Turkistan to the mouths of the Sir, from Bokhara, Tackhend, Khokhan, Khodjend, Ouratoupa and Samercand. From the information we were able to obtain it is clear the Russian map of Central Asia is very incorrect for the steppe of the Kirghiz; it is however, far superior to Arrowsmith's, which is still more so. In the constructions of this map, I have not adopted the Russian longitude and latitude of Khokhan and Khodjend; I have approached nearer that assigned by Arrowsmith, without having followed him as an authority.

Khodjend stands on the bank of the Sir, and it is necessary to pass through it on the road from Ouratoupa to Kkokhan. This the best but the longest route, a difficult and mountainous country being avoided. The desert road leads from Marghalan to Samercand. Khodjend is a fortress surrounded with fields and gardens like Bokhara.

Khokhan, situated about ten verstes from the Sir, has at least 6000 houses, and is little less than Bokhara. Canals from the Sir convey water to the city. There are no walls

round the town, but the palace is fortified and has two gates built with brick.

Khokhan has four caravanserais, where a great number of foreign merchants constantly reside. All the trade between Tackhend, Kachghar and Bokhara, passes by Khokhan. The two countries are constantly at war, but Bokhara is much the most powerful. During the last ten years, the Bokharians have taken Ouratoupa, which was formerly an independent district.

Omar Khan, the present ruler of Khokhan, succeeded his father, Nabouta, and lives in good intelligence with the Khan of Khiva, to whom he is related, and with the chief of Badakhchan, to whose daughter he is married. Marghalan, it is said, is of the same size as Khokhan. This is a very ancient city, as are also Andidjan and Namanghan.

Och, situated at the foot of the Takht-Suleiman, is not so large. This is a great place of pilgrimage; people come to pay their devotions at a small square building situated on the top of the mountain. Tradition states that Solomon sacrificed a camel on this spot; where the blood is shewn on a stone still perfectly red. It is, however, particularly frequented by people suffering rheumatic or other pain; who are said to be cured by extending themselves on a flat stone near the building. M. Nasarov states having seen the ruins of two ancient buildings, under one of which there is a cavern. This is not confirmed by other travellers, who likewise deny the existence of columns. This superstition draws a great number of people to Och.

From Och to Kachghar no towns or cultivated fields are met with; the country is mountainous; the black or savage Kirghiz wander about with their flocks in the valleys of the Ala-tagh. These people have more the physiognomy of Kalmouks than the other Kirghiz, they are brave, and their horses said to be as swift as those of the Tcherkes (Circassians.)

The Chinese merchants unite in small caravans, and trade with the Kirghiz of the Ala-tagh; they come from Kachghar and Kouldja, and have nothing to fear from this small nation. The Kirghiz pass the winter in the valleys of these mountains, cultivating a little barley and millet. The district of Iedi-sou (Yedi), seven rivers, is their favourite resort.

In the spring of 1818 they pillaged some villages about Tackhend; this incursion was quickly chastised by 5000 of the people of Khokhan, who made a fortunate irruption into the

mountains. I owe the description of these people to a Tartar, who was made captive by them, and was kept a prisoner for seven years. He informs me there are seven of the summits of these mountains covered with perpetual snow, and some fir and cedar trees in the valleys. This Tartar was once exchanged for *thirteen* horses;* another time he formed part of a marriage settlement. He at last escaped with some Chinese merchants, and remained some time at Kachghar; from thence he made his way to Bokhara, and was carried by us into Russia.

From Kachghar to Och, this Tartar forded several rivers, and travelled through a very mountainous country, which was covered with snow, though none was in the valleys. There were many very large trees, but he remarked neither oak nor firs. The descent of the mountains was much longer than the side by which he had ascended, and the cold very severe.

Another traveller informs me there exists almost eternal winter on the Terek. There are three routes to choose in passing these mountains, in which the valleys are avoided on account of the depth of snow. The first that of Belawli or Tallig, to the north of the mountains; second, by the Terek in the centre; the third, that of Chart to the south.

CHAPTER IV.

Kachghar.

From all the information I was able to obtain, the Bokharians call Chinese Tartary, *Alti-Chakan*, or the six *cities*,† viz. Kachghar, Iarkend, Khoten, Aksou, and the two Ilys.

Kachghar is a large city, with a Chinese garrison, to which strangers enter and depart without difficulty. It is situated on a river of the same name, which falls into the Kizil-sou (golden river), which flows between Kachghar and Iarkend, a town on the great road from Kachghar to Cashmere, where they speak the Tartar language.

* I think this must be a mistake; for nine Russian soldiers taken by the Persians were exchanged by the Prince of Casbin for a Turkoman horse, which is always considered the most valuable animal of the two.—*Translator.*

† More properly countries or provinces.—*Translator.*

From Iarkend, the route lays through the towns of great and little Tibet; the country is very mountainous, and the caravans are obliged to make very short stages. The traffic is entirely carried by horses, as camels cannot pass over the rocks and mountains. The route is, Iarkend, four days journey; great Tibet, thirty-five or forty; and Cashmere, twenty-two. Half way between the two last named places, is the town of little Tibet. The river which passes this place is the same as the Cashmere stream, or one of its branches.

It appears probable that the towns, called great and little Tibet by the Tartars, are those more generally known by those of Ladak and Draouse, or Dervazéh. It is strange that none of the Tartars know them by this name;* all the Bokharians with whom I have conversed on the subject invariably gave them the application of great and little Tibet; also the Russian merchants, who trade between Semipalatinsk and Cashmere, call them by the same name.†

* The names of great and little Tibet comes without doubt from the habit several Oriental nations have, or giving the name of *belad* or *chehr* indifferently to a province, district or town.—*Note by M. Jaubert.*

† After the publication of this work I met with an account of the travels of a Georgian gentleman, Danibeg, translated from Georgian, and dedicated to the emperor Alexander, from India to the Russian frontier town of Semipalatinsk. I have abridged the facts related by the Georgian as much as possible, the work containing no other matter of interest.

From Cashmere I reached Tibet, a distance of 200 verstes, performed in twenty days. This town is built on rocky hills, among which grow some oats; the inhabitants make a kind of paste of this, by boiling it in milk, which composes their sole provision. They are miserably poor, and the custom exists of several brothers having only one wife. A great deal of tea is used at this place. The wool from which the shawls are made comes from Lassa. Merchandize is here carried on sheep. From here to Cashmere the transport is however on horses.

NOTE.—Russian goods in considerable quantities might be sold at Tibet, such as silk and goldsmith's works. The Tchabas would readily purchase them. These people bring a great deal of goats' hair from Lassa, which is dispatched from hence to Cashmere. The journey from Lassa to Tibet occupies about three months.

I was six weeks travelling from Tibet to Iarkend; the journey was very tiresome, the looseness of the soil, the great precipices, the immense height of the mountains interspersed with glaciers, made a most melancholy impression on my mind; which was augmented by the complete solitude, for these districts are uninhabited. At last we came in sight of Iarkend; it is surrounded by clumps of trees, and has a very cheerful look.

The Chinese garrison contains about 2000 men; their chief is called

Between Cashmere and Kachghar, there are no other towns than those I have already mentioned. Immediately in their neighbourhood, there are a few villages scattered in the mountains. Both great and little Tibet are surrounded with gardens. The houses are of wood, as in Russia, and the pent of the roof very high. They are followers of the Grand Lama.

I have fixed the frontier of great Tibet in $35^{\circ} 50'$ N. lat. and $76^{\circ} 35'$ E. long. from Paris. The following latitudes and longitudes I have drawn from the tables of the great Oriental geographer Oloug-beg, which I procured at Bokhara; and I place them beside those to be seen in the edition published by Gravius in 1652; the latitude of Bokhara is the only one I have been able to verify, and found correct to within about two minutes.

Amban : more than three thousand Chinese are employed here in commercial pursuits. The climate of this town is healthy, but the water is bad. There are no fine buildings; the inhabitants appear in tolerably easy circumstances. In saying the climate is healthy I must except the autumn; I never met with any worse. The sky was covered with clouds of a singular kind of dust, of which the cause is unknown: it fell like rain; and the great dampness of the atmosphere gives birth to a kind of insect, called karbitas, by the inhabitants, the sting of which is almost always mortal. When the inhabitants see clouds of the above-mentioned dust instead of rain, they hope for a good harvest; and an indifferent one when they have only common rain. The gale of dust sometimes lasts seven or eight days; it is so thick that the rays of the sun cannot pierce through it, and at the same time so fine that it finds its way through the smallest opening.

Besides Iarkend, the Chinese possess Hondam (Khoten,) Gachghire (Kachghar,) Aksou, Douroban and Ily; each of these cities have a governor of this nation. The Chinese are very numerous at Ily or Kouldja; indeed the number is said to amount to above 10,000. They are very proud and lazy, and spend all their time in smoking. No inhabitant can leave the town without a passport; and it is very difficult to escape this precaution, as the surveillance of the authorities here is very severe. It is one of the means made use of by the Chinese to put a stop to disorders of all kinds.

From Iarkend I took thirteen days to reach Aksou. This town is not larger, but contains many tolerably well built houses; it is situated in a valley, and divided into two parts, the one inhabited by the Chinese, the other by Mahomedans, who keep up a constant communication with each other. From Aksou, I was three days going to Tourfan, a small and ugly town. As its inhabitants are very few, it contains nothing worthy of remark. The frontiers of the Kirghiz country are about twenty verstes from this place. After leaving Tourfan, I passed several wandering tribes of Kalmouks, Kirghiz and Kaisaks, and at last arrived at Semipalatinsk, after a three months journey.

Table of Latitudes and Longitudes according to the Bokharian Manuscript.

Names.	Latitude.	Longitude.	By Gravius.	
			Lat.	Long.
Bokhara	39 50	97 30	....	96 30
Samercand	39 37	99 16		
Carchi or Nesef	39 0	98 0		
Khodjend	41 55	105 35	....	100 35
Badakhchan	37 10	104 24		
Anderab	36 0	108 45	....	103 45
Kech	39 30	99 30		
Koubadian	37 45	102 0		
Talikhán	37 25	102 50		
Khowarezm or new Korkandj	42 35	93 45		
Darghana-tach or Korkandj.	42 17	94 30		
Hezarasp	41 0	95 0		
Kath	41 36	95 0		
Darghan	39 30	94 15	....	95 5
Izfidjab	43 36	99 50		
Taraz	44 31	99 50		
Ourouchna or Osrouchnah..	40 0	105 0	....	100 0
Saghanian	38 14	105 30	....	100 30
Bech-kend or Penkat	43 0	101 0		
Ilak or Tounkat	43 25	101 0		
Ferghana or Akhsekat	43 25	101 20		
Ourkend	44 0	102 50		
Och	43 20	102 20		
Kachghar	44 0	106 30		
Houchach or Tchadj	42 30	109 0		

The accounts given by Oloug-beg do not agree with these I have obtained elsewhere; they are, however, so far curious, that this author mention towns which no longer exist, and of which no traces even are left: perhaps, however, I might have been able to give some interesting information concerning the ruins of these towns and the history of their destruction, had opportunities occurred of consulting Bokharians possessed of more intelligence than those that fell in my way. From Kachghar Semipalatinsk, the journey occupies fifty-five days, twelve of which are to Askou, and twenty-five to Kouldja.

We are informed in the excellent work by M. Ritter, that the easiest passage among the mountains to the north of Kachghar is near Aksou. I ascertained the truth of this state-

ment; nevertheless the caravans always go round, and have good reasons for taking another road.

In going from Kouldja to Aksou they keep near the Chinese frontier, because they are sure of not being pillaged. In the same way, the caravans from Khiva, when they go to Orenbourg, pass by Saratchik or Saratchikova, and afterwards keep along by the Oural, instead of going from Khiva to Orenbourg by crossing the steppe of the Khirghiz.

From Kouldja to Semipalatinsk, the widest river is the Alaghouz; it flows to the north of the Tarbaghataï hills; the highest mountains are the Tchoulk-garaghai, 100 verstes from Kouldja; it takes two days to cross them.

There are two Kouldjas, the great and little; both situated on the Ily, and about forty verstes from each other. The caravans pass by little Kouldja, which lies to the north of the other. It is a fort without the slightest resemblance to those of Bokhara. It is more like an European fortification, having projecting angles and a species of bastion; a gun fires at sun-set, and the gates are immediately closed. The governor of the place has the title of Dziangghioun, and the police master that of Kalatai. Three Kirghiz and five Chinese had been beheaded for various crimes in the course of three months. Near the temples are idols of different sizes, made of clay, with embroidered dresses, and their hands folded over the stomach. Inside the temples the idols are generally of gold, enclosed in glass cases; bread is placed before them.

Kouldja, in the Chinese Dzoungarie, is defended by a garrison of about 10,000 Tchanpan, or Chinese foot soldiers. This town has six gates, and contains about 9000 houses, built of mud or wood. There are also some built of stone, and they all have roofs like Russian houses. Kouldja is not surrounded by fields; there are half a dozen villages inhabited by Chinese, at about thirty verstes from the town.

The Talku mountains are covered with magnificent forests, which supply Kouldja with wood. Generally speaking, the Kalmouks in this country are wandering tribes; a few have taken service under the Chinese, but in general there are very few with fixed occupations.

Besides the Dounganu-Tartars, a great number of Chinese are found at Kouldja: they are distinguished from the Kitaizi, or black Chinese, whose women have small feet.

Near Kouldja the Ily is hardly more than 100 feet wide, and it may be forded in most places.

CHAPTER V.

Khanats of Hissar, Koulab, Ramid and Badakhchan—The Ghaltchas—Gold found in the Derwazeh river—The Siah-pouches—Khanats of Chersabés.—Itinerary from Balkh to Caboul, and from Bokhara to Herat.

We have now to consider the countries situated to the south and west of Bokhara. We find the Mahomedan Khanats of independent tribes, who profess the religion of the false prophet, and others who do not believe in him, and are called by the Mahomedans infidels; all their people inhabit a mountainous country.

The richest of these states is the Khanat of Hissar. The Khan resides in the city of the same name as the province; it is situated about fifteen verstes to the west of the banks of the Saridjouï, or Kafer-nihan. He is a father-in-law of the Atalik; and the faithful ally of the Khan of Bokhara.

The town of Hissar contains about 3000 houses; it is situated in a well cultivated valley, abounding in pasturage; almost all the inhabitants of this country are Ouzbeks, but a few Tadjiks are found in it, most of them very rich. It is said that the Ouzbeks sometimes bring millet to the market; and, if they are unable to sell it, they throw it away, to save themselves the trouble of carrying it home. They possess considerable flocks, and are, to a certain degree, in easy circumstances.

The towns depending on the Khan of Hissar, are Deïnaou, the most considerable after Hissar; Saridjouï, Toupalak, Regar or Reg-ara, Caratagh, Dehtaband, Tchockmazar and Khodja-Taman. At the last place there is the tomb of a saint highly revered by the Mahomedans.

Ramid, 100 verstes north of Hissar, is a pretty large town; its khan commands the services of 10,000 men in his excursions. One of the highest mountains in the country rises near Ramid.

Koulab, containing about 3,000 houses, is to the east of Hissar, on the road from Badakhchan to Khoïhan; it is independent. All these towns are inhabited by Ouzbeks, of whom a great number are agriculturists.

The Khan of Abi-gherm is often at war with that of Hissar. To the south of all these towns is the Khanat of Badakhchan; its capital, which bears the same name, but which is also known

by that of Feizabad, is situated on the banks of the Badakhchan, which falls into the Amou. It is one of the most important Khanats of this quarter, though it furnishes no articles for commerce that I am acquainted with, except lapis-lazuli; besides it is not on any of the great commercial roads.*

To go to Cashmere from Badakhchan, the route lays either through Kachghar or Peichawer,† which appears to indicate that the mountains which separate Badakhchan from Cashmere are impassable.

In the mountainous country east of Bokhara and north of Hissar, are found the Ghaltchas, a poor but independent people, professing the Mahomedan religion, of the Sunnie sect. Russian travellers give them the name of Eastern Persians, and they know no other language; their features differ much from those of the Tadjiks, and are even of a darker complexion than the Arabs of Bokhara. They inhabit miserable cabins in the valleys, are all cultivators, possess some cattle and very few horses.

Matcha and Ignaou are towns inhabited by the Ghaltchas, and situated to the north of Khokhan. A great number of Ghaltchas frequent this place, to exchange their goods for what they require.

This people extend further and further into the mountains, which are at present little known. Beyond is the country of the Kafirs, who they represent as a savage and barbarous race.

After passing Karateghin no more Mahomedans are met with. The inhabitants of this town are, however, not barbarous; the redoubtable Kafirs dwell in Calei-khoum, called also Derwazeh, and situated on a river of the same name. The country between Hissar and Derwazeh is so mountainous, that it is often necessary to lead the horses by the bridle. The roads are excessively narrow; and the precipices very steep, at the bottom of which the Derwazeh rolls with a thundering stream. Gold is found in the sands of the Derwazeh. For carrying water, skins are generally used in Bokhara, which preserve the form of the animal to which they once belonged. Those of sheep or wild goats are considered the best. They are filled by an opening left at what was the neck of the animal. The Bokharians tie the water-skins to a

* There is a route through Badakhchan to Cashmere and Tibet, not through Cashghar or Chinese Tartary.—*Translator.*

† A third road, as I before mentioned, ascends the Oxus to its source, and goes by Juduck.—*Translator.*

rope, and throw them into the Derwazeh; the violence with which it runs soon fills the skins with mud, sand, and some gold; which last it is easy afterwards to separate from the mud by washing; but as it is never without alloy, its relative price to that of pure gold is as 18 to 21. This custom may serve to elucidate a passage in Herodotus, where he describes the means used by the Indians to obtain gold from sand.

CHAPTER VI.

Frontiers of Bokhara—appearance of the Country—Rivers— Climates—Villages—Towns.

Bokhara being a country not only surrounded by deserts but itself containing several, cannot have any very fixed boundaries. The cultivated tract of country along the route we have just followed only extends within 40 verstes of Bokhara.

Nevertheless it is necessary to place the frontier farther North, as the Khan sometimes advances his troops as far as Aghatma, where a small building serves as a shelter for his soldiers.

The herds and flocks of his subjects constantly seek pasture as far as the Northern extremity of Aghatma—and the Tadjiks go to the North West to fetch brushwood which they bring on Camels to the market of Bokhara, and finally the Officers of the Customs of Bokhara go as far as Caraghata to examine the Caravans from Russia. The Bokharians never go beyond Caraghata unless they are about to undertake a long journey, and I therefore consider that place as forming the Northern boundary of Bokhara.

Ouratonpa to the North East of Samercand being a fortress which serves as a limit to Bokhara, on that side I draw a straight line from Caraghata to Ouratanpa designating as nearly as possible the Northern frontiers. From Caraghata I trace the Western frontier by a line which includes the well of Itch-berdi on the route from Bokhara to Khiva, and near which there is a Bokharian outpost, Ioitchi a Bokharian village on the Amon Deeria and Mawri formerly a considerable Town but now deserted; the most advanced outpost belonging to Bokhara is at this spot.

I trace the Southern frontier of Bokhara by drawing a line from Mawri (Merve She Jehan) to the Amon Deeria, which

passes to the North of the independant Khanats of Ankoï and Balkh and includes Aghtehon, and I continue this line to Deinaon a frontier Town on the territory of the Khan of Hissar. The Eastern boundary is pretty accurately indicated by a line going from Deinaon to Ouratoupa and including Fani the most easterly town in Bokhara.

Bokhara lies between the 41st and 37th degrees of North latitude, and the 61st and 66th degrees of East longitude, (from Paris,) forming a surface of about 10,000 square miles.

The Eastern part of Bokhara is mountainous, the hills end at the Northern extremity of the country to the West of Samercand near Carchi, to the South of the Amon Deria. All the Western part of the country is a plain extending as far as the eye can reach, with occasional isolated hills from one to three toises in height and 3 4, and as far as 100 toises in breadth. They are of a clayey nature like the soil of the desert, particularly those through which the Amon Deria takes its course.

There are but two rivers in Bokhara worthy of remark from their size and the effect they have upon cultivation—they are the Tyer-afchai and the Kuchba—the first flows at a considerable distance to the East of Samercand and is also called the Kouwan, it flows about 12 verstes to the North of Bokhara, and is there about 9 toises broad, and two or three feet deep, after dividing into branches of which the most northerly loses itself in the plains to the west of Oofkerd.

The Zer-afchan near Bokhara takes a southerly course and forms 40 verstes from the Amou, a lake called Carakoul about 50 verstes in circumference, and the waters of which are only drawn off by small channels for irrigation extending as far as Tchar-djoni. This river is made the means of fertilizing all the country comprized between Moudjan to the East of Samercand and Tchar-djoni, more especially Miankal a district extending from the town of Bokhara to Samercand which is the most fully peopled and most fertile part of Bokhara.

The largest of those canals is five toises in breadth and is continued to the distance of 20 verstes from Bokhara from the East to the South West.

Near Samercand small rivers flow down from the mountains like the Cara-batcha, that is to say "*black fish*," and fall into the Zer-afchau.

The Nouratagh a very high mountain already mentioned 70 verstes to the north of Bokhara—gives rise to a small river

which dries up in the summer. This river swells the Wafkend Deria in proportion to the quantity of snow that has fallen on the Nour-atagh—and thus contributes to occasion the fertility of the country near Bokhara. It thus appears that the cultivation depends in a great measure upon the quantity of snow that falls on the Nour-atagh, which explains the custom that exists of giving a reward to the person who first gives notice in the autumn, that the mountain is beginning to be covered with snow.

The Nour-atagh being the only mountain visible from the city of Bokhara the inhabitants have not failed to invent many marvellous stories which are implicitly believed, amongst other things they declare seriously that Noah's Ark alighted on its summit.

The water of the Kachka serve to water the fields and gardens surrounding Carchi. This district is very fertile rice cotton and fruit are carried from them to Bokhara—the Kachka is entirely absorbed by this irrigation—Two other small rivers, the Toupalak and the Zouhrab fall into the Amou near Termez but are of little importance.

The oasis of Bokhara is most pleasing in its appearance; cultivation can hardly be carried to a higher pitch than in these plains, which are covered with houses, gardens and fields, the latter are divided into small squares called Tanaf with the partitions covered with turf and raised about a foot high to retain the water. Thousands of channels for irrigation intersect the plain and are generally fringed with trees, as well as the roads which are very narrow. The waters of these channels, not having all the same level, form little cascades at their junction whose murmur is very soothing to the ear. The multitudes of trees in every direction greatly obstruct the view, still there is something pleasing in it, as it is a proof of the endeavours of the people to fertilize the country.

The habitations are so numerous that the country must be very thickly peopled, perhaps too much to allow of the greater part of the population being in easy circumstances. The houses are generally disposed in villages half hidden by the fruit trees in their gardens I have seen villages entirely surrounded with walls being a kind of Fort, others are open, nothing but the gardens being enclosed and the walls often surmounted by battlements. These small towns contribute greatly to the picturesque appearance of the country; they also shew the constant fear of pillage entertained by the inhabi-

tants, in fact the frequent incursions of the wandering tribes in the Mawarennahar* shew the sad necessity for all those precautions.

A Bokharian village generally contains 100 houses built of clay and separated from each other by streets which are not more narrow than those in the town. In the centre of the village there is generally either a well or a small tank which is kept constantly full by means of a channel, each village is situated near a canal in order to provide the gardens with water.

The climate of the mountainous part of the country, must necessarily differ from the western side which is level, I shall confine my accounts to that of the plains.

The seasons are very regular ; in the middle of February the fruit trees begin to blossom, and bud in the beginning of March ; the fine weather then begins and the heavy rains cease after having lasted about three weeks—this is followed by the heat which becomes overpowering and is the more severely felt from the circumstance of the air being seldom refreshed by a shower.

The fine season continues till October, when the rains generally last a fortnight or three weeks ; and in November and December slight frosts and occasionally a little snow indicate the approach of winter, on the 20th of December we still found Melons in the fields shewing the frosts could not have been very sharp. The month of January is the coldest in the year—the usual temperature is 2° cold, (Reaumer) it is sometimes 8° and the water freezes 3 or 4 inches thick, snow has been known to lie a fortnight on the ground without melting.

The winter we were in Bokhara, was universally allowed to be very mild, the cold was only sufficiently intense to freeze the ice two inches thick for four or five days ; the people took it up immediately and collected it in heaps which they afterwards covered with earth to preserve it.

The rains recommence between the 7th and 15th February and continue to the end of the month and in a few days afterwards everything is covered with verdure, flowers appear to spring up suddenly. Nothing is a greater proof of the heat of the climate of Bokhara than the power of the sun even in the winter. In the month of January we used to dine in the open air, the thermometer in the shade stood at 10° and 22° in the sun.

* Name of the Country of Bokhara.

Strong winds blow particularly in summer and winter, bringing an extremely fine dust; of which I have already spoken which completely obstructs the sight and communicates a greyish tint to the atmosphere. These clouds of dust prevail in the whole of one district, and may be seen at the distance of above 20 verstes. The climate of Bokhara is in general very healthy, the winter and the rainy season refresh and purify the air, and there is no miasma to occasion sickness. Rheumatism is a common complaint occasioned by the dampness of the houses, and diseases of the eye are frequent, caused probably by the violent winds and dust, which are always hurtful to the sight.

Blindness must be very common in this country, for the father of the present Khan built in the town of Bokhara, the Fathabad, an hospital or rather a monastery for the blind, where a hundred persons so afflicted are lodged in small cells ranged round a mosque, and each containing two or three sufferers.

All the towns in Bokhara are built near the rivers, and are consequently surrounded with cultivation. In summer, the draught is sometimes so great, that the inhabitants can only obtain water by digging for it, and it is found every where at the depth of 5, 7 or 8 feet below the surface; as the plain of Bokhara lies very low. This stagnant water breeds a quantity of worms, which are unconsciously swallowed, when the water is drank, hence ensues a disease called "*richa*" by the Bokharians. The whole body is covered with pustules occasioning very painful ulcers—from which worms are discharged, the people of the country have no cure for this complaint.

A Russian prisoner who was a slave in Bokhara, was speaking of the want of water constantly felt there, and said with great bitterness—"It is a country created by God in wrath." The Bokharian city to the north of the Amou are Kirki, Aghlchou, Mawri and Tchar-djoui.

Mawri Merve Sha Jehan, formerly belonged to the Persians and was a very flourishing city. Mourad Beg, father of the present Khan of Bokhara, took possession of it, and his son Emir Haider apparently fearing the popularity enjoyed by his brother Nassir Beg, who had been appointed Governor of the city, ordered all the inhabitants to the number of 25,000, to be removed to the interior of Bokhara. Nassir Beg fled to Meshed in Persia, and Mawri became deserted.

The Khan Emir Haider maintains a garrison of 4 or 500 men at Mawri, which is relieved three times a year, Mawri is considered as a place of banishment, for such malefactors as

they are unwilling to punish with death. The town contains about 500 souls exclusive of the garrison, and the surrounding country begins again to be cultivated. Only a small number of channels of irrigation are derived from the Mouhrab, a river 20 verstes from Mawri, which is lost among the sandy plains to the north.

To prevent Mawri from being re-peopled, and lest the inhabitants taking advantage of their isolated position should assert their independence, the Khan of Bokhara has turned the streams which supplied the city and gardens with water.

Tchar-djoui which contains about 1,000 houses is pretty well garrisoned, because some attack on the part of Khiva is constantly apprehended, it is said that in the autumn of 1821 they made an attempt in the town, and occasioned great uneasiness to the inhabitants.

The cities surrounding Bokhara are Carakoul, Khairabad, Douchembeh, Zindani, Tcharchembeh, Karmtar, Zarimtan, Penchembeh bazar, Wapken or Wafkend, Ourdenzie, Ghedjoudouan.

After Bokhara, Samercand or Carchi Carakoul is the largest town in the country, and containing about 30,000 inhabitants.

Ourdenzie is a little fortress which I saw when we were returning into Russia, I could not however obtain permission to enter it, indeed the gates were shut against us apparently through an order received from a higher power. It takes the name of a fortress from the circumstance of its being surrounded by mud wall about 4 toises high. Cultivation ceases at the distance of about five verstes to the north of Ourdenzie, but for 8 verstes farther we continued to travel through a sandy district covered with the ruins of houses, and some remains of ancient channels for irrigation, all indicating that not very long since it had been a fertile country. These remains extend far beyond Ourdenzie, and it is impossible to imagine any thing more expressive of desolation shewing that this country evidently once was in a state of high cultivation, and now it is entirely deserted and barren. The ruined village near Kataghan was only destroyed six or seven years ago by sand carried thither by a hurricane under which it was almost buried in five days. The part of the country previously cultivated near Ourdenzie, is farther north than Kataghan and consequently more exposed to the north-east wind. During the last 10 years, this phenomenon has been a scourge and cause of

the entire ruin of the country. The wind was felt during our journey, and extremely disagreeable to the feelings; I noted carefully all its terrible effects.

We passed near Ourdenzie on the 25th of March when the wind was rather strong, but by no means violent, we had scarcely left the clayey grounds and were passing between sandy hillocks when it appeared to increase suddenly. The sand was raised in whirlwinds and penetrating every where, I was wearing spectacles made on purpose to preserve my eyes from the dust, of which I entertained a great dread, but they were of very little service to me. The sand produced such an obscurity that we could only see to a little distance before us, and our Kirghiz guides could no longer find the road; fortunately we were overtaken by a horseman from Bokhara, who had been dispatched after us to discover whether any Russian slaves had concealed themselves among our escort. We forced him with a pistol to his head to serve us as a guide, and though he rendered us most unwillingly this service he prevented our losing our way.

It is impossible to conceive anything more inconvenient than this sand, though very coarse it gets into the eyes, the mouth and the ears. We had all inflamed eyes owing to this cause, and I can easily understand how Nadir Shah after crossing the deserts to the west of the Amou during a hurricane, lost many men in consequence of an ophthalmia. The deserts situated round Bokhara thus serve as a natural defence to that country.

The sand driven by the wind soon fills up ditches, collects near the walls, and rapidly rises to their height, chokes up the streets and covers the houses, just as the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried under the ashes of Mount Vesuvius.

Near Ourdenzie the sand always collects upon the cultivated tracts, it is useless to attempt to clear it, for they very rarely succeed in doing so, and it is not at all improbable that the most smiling and fertile oasis of Bokhara may some day become barren and uninhabitable, like those of the Sedjestan which are now deserts covered with sand and gravel, though their ancient fertility is attested by the magnificence of the ruins which still exist. The other towns situated round Bokhara are of trifling importance, they generally contain from 300 to 500 houses, and a market place and fairs are held in them. In going to Bokhara I passed by Waffkend, and can therefore form a very correct idea of these little towns,

which appear to be very much like each other. Waffkend contains about 300 houses or Barracks, arranged without any regard to order, the minaret of the mosque is very handsome.

These towns are generally only distinguished from the villages, by the names of the officers of the government and by their market, where many of the merchants of Bokhara repair to lay in a stock of provisions which they carry out of the country.

In the Meankal district are Kerminih, Penchenbeh, Zia-woudin, Catirtchi, Kattu-kourghan, Jenghi-kourghan, Kart-chighali-kourghan and Tchalak, all these towns are of considerable size being situated in a fertile country, and the rich Ousbeks have houses there, where they reside during the summer, for the sake of being in the vicinity of their flocks.

To the south of Nouratagh, are Nour-atasi, Metan, Diourtaoul, Jar-bachi and Cara-cazen.

Samercand is attached to Bokhara since the conquest of that Khanat, by Abdullah Khan of Kherminih, celebrated for the number of buildings he erected—he reigned from 1564 to 1592.

The Khan of Bokhara goes every year to Samercand, and on his accession to the throne he must sit on the Kouk-tach at that place. It is a bluish marble of a toise and a half square and 28 inches in thickness. It is covered with a white silk upon which the Khan is placed, and the corners of the silk being held by Ulemas, Foukiers (paupers) fouzelas (doctors) and Seids; he is thrice elevated upon it. It is said to be in contemplation to make a throne of this stone which was brought from Mount Ghazgham.

Samercand is supposed to contain about 50,000 inhabitants. The mosques and squares are handsomer than those at Bokhara—they are all built of white marble of which there are quarries at a trifling distance from this ancient residence of Timour. The fronts of the houses are covered with varnished tiles like those of Bokhara, but are said to be superior to those at that place. The tomb of Timour, built of Jasper is still to be seen at Samercand, but the Observatory of Olong-Bey no longer exists, and all traces of it have disappeared; the civilization of the descendants of Timour must have given way before the barbarism of the Ousbeks.

To the north of Samercand are the fortresses of Ouratoupa-Zamir and Djisagh which are always strongly garrisoned, and the towns of Djam, Caratepeh and Jeni-kourghan.

Fani is a small town to the east of Samercand near the courses of the Zar-afchan, I was informed this river did not form any lake before reaching Carakoul, which is contrary to the accounts given by the Arabian Geographers. Falgarmougian and Kastout lie along the banks of this river.

Ourgout, Pendjakend, Ourmitan, Caratepæh, and Katilas, lie to the south of Samercand. I merely mention the names of these towns as their position alone was pointed out to me.

Carchi or Nackhchele is a town of some importance from its size—it is situated on the principal commercial road and a portion of the caravans coming from Herat or Canboots, halt at Carchi or pass from them to Samercand without going to Bokhara. Carchi also serves as a mart for the skins of badgers, foxes, and lambs, which come from the south of Bokhara and which are afterwards sold in the Capital.

Carchi exports a great quantity of dried fruits, Cotton, both raw and spun, Tobacco and a small quantity of Silk. It has always a garrison of 2 or 3,000 men.

To the east of Carchi lie Tcharaghtchi, and Ghaussar, two considerable towns, near the first the Khan has several estates. Many Ouzbeks, half wanderers, inhabit the second during a part of the season: the situation of Governor of Ghoussar is one of the most important in the Khanat. Emir Haider held it during the lifetime of his father; Tourakan eldest son of the present Khan was Governor. Hakim or Bey of Keminik a town inhabited principally by Ouzbeks who are equally numerous in the neighbourhood but having quarrelled with his father he was recalled.

Termez or Termouz a ruined city on the Amon is situated opposite to Chemed on the left bank of the Amon. Nothing is seen there but heaps of rubbish and stones, the few existing habitations are all built of mud. Every thing proves that Sogdiana or Mawaremahar was formerly richer than Bokhara is at present. I have only to mention Bosion and Chir-abad situated to the north of Termez to complete the list of the cities of Bokhara.

I was assured by a native of the country, that the ancient city of Oustrouch is half way between Balk and Chirisebz, and from his assertion can it not be situated on the spot which the Arabian Geographers designate as the country of Osroughna.

No body was able to give me any information concerning a cavern of Ouroushora, from which arose a vapour having at night the appearance of fire, but in fact Ferghana having changed its name, Ouroushna, may also be no longer come under its ancient denomination.

BOOK THIRD.

19TH SEPTEMBER.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN MOURAVIEV FROM THE BALKHAN BAY ON THE CASPIAN TO KHIVA, AND RETURN TO THE SAME PLACE, UNDERTAKEN IN THE YEAR 1819.

In the year 1819 General Yermaloff determined to send two Officers on the Eastern shores of the Caspian, for the purpose of establishing a more intimate intercourse with the Turcoman tribes, as likewise the Ousbeck state of Khiva, which was the great mart for the slaves carried away from Russia, by the Kirgis and other Tartar tribes on her frontier.

General Yermaloff from the moment of his appointment as Ambassador to the Court of Persia as well as Governor General of Georgia, manifested the most hostile feelings, and a

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—After completing the extracts from Count Miendorff's *Journal to Bokhara*. His Excellency Sir S. Whittingham kindly lent me the work of Captain Mouraviev, (I write the name as I find it in his own work, the variations in spelling I think arises from the different value attached by the Germans, French and English letters to the Russian alphabet.) He is from an old Russian family, and I think the terminations should be in *Off* so common in Russia. This Mouravi^{off}, I was intimately acquainted with, when A. D. C. to General Yermaloff in Persia, and subsequently when in command of a Regiment of Infantry in Georgia; he distinguished himself in the Turkish war, was made a Major-General, and subsequently employed on a high diplomatic mission to Constantinople. He gave me a copy of his work with much fuller details but unfortunately I lent it in India and never saw it again, my object in making the extract is simply to show the routes the Russians have reconitered. The line by which the last advance was made, along the western shore of the lake of Aral, tho' printed, has not fallen into my hands; I have not followed Mouraviev in the description of the Bay and Promontory of Balkan.

determination to recommence the war as soon as possible. General Yermaloff I believe considered the line of the Arras as indispensable to the security of Georgia, and coveted the districts of Erivan and Nuckshevan, of the value of which he had most exaggerated ideas. As a frontier the Arras is no barrier, the country has been so totally ruined that its occupation in a pecuniary point of view is worthless, but in a war of aggression it certainly gives Russia a great advantage.

It is evident from the language held in the work, that hostility to Persia, as well as to England was entertained; in the edition I had, this was more openly hinted at.

Major Ponamareo who appears to have had a general control over both missions, was appointed as Agent to the Turcoman tribes, and Captain Mouraviev to that of Khiva, which though by far the most arduous, was the least important for the particular object then in view.

On the 18th June these Officers left Tiflis, and on the 8th July embarked on board the *Kazan* Corvette of 18 guns, and the hired transport *Saint Policarpe*. After an examination of the coast of the Caspian, from the frontiers of Persia to the Balkan Bay, they cast anchor on the 10th September (old style) in one of the numerous Creeks of Balkan Bay.

This was at one time an important station, by which the greater part of the trade with India passed, and extensive ruins are still visible, as also two dry beds of rivers, the former channels of the Oxus or Amon Deria.

The Bay is surrounded by hills, the highest of which is situated at its western extremity and throws off two branches, in the greater and less Balkan extending round the North and South shores of the Bay, the great forming the Northern promontory between Balkan Bay and the deep inlet of Kurra Bogas. This promontory which is about 12 miles long and 3 broad abounds in springs of fresh water, though there is good pasturage, it is not to any great extent, and in some vallies, even large timber can be procured, and brushwood for fuel is met with through the whole extent of both ranges. My object being solely to give the route, I must refer more curious readers to the work itself, as published at Paris by Monsieur Louis Tenré.

On the 19th (old style) September, Captain Mouraviev commenced his journey, and after passing some Turcoman camps, arrived at that of Oba Sied, 28 verstes from the anchorage in Balkhan Bay, bearing north $\frac{1}{4}$ East, towards evening he ar-

rived at another, Oba Sied, and from thence at Soudji Kahil, (where there were 3 wells of good water,) about 12 miles from the sea, the total distance to this point being about 50 verstes, and 22 from the last stage. Here the Caravan, then only consisting of 17 Camels and 4 Horses, halted one day.

On the 21st September after a march of 28 verstes over a sandy country with wells of brackish and salt water, joined another Caravan going to Khiva for grain; small parties continued to drop in from the different camps on the road so that on the 3d day there were united more than 200 camels, proceeding on the same road to Khiva (for grain.) On the evening of the (21st) after making another march of 20 verstes, halted near the camp and wells of Suleman. We crossed a low range of hills evidently a branch of the Balkhan, which mountains were still visible on our right, though we had now fairly entered the desert where there appeared no signs of life or vegetation, except a few stunted dry bushes, neither animals or birds were to be seen.

On the 22d recommenced our march about 1 A. M., the cold at night was even now very sensible, and there fell an abundant dew. Halted at daylight near the wells *Suili*, near which there was a camp of 24 Turcoman tents. The wells are about 100 feet deep and water indifferent. Near this is an immense burying ground and some considerable mounds. Continued 12 verstes to some others and halted; the extremity of the Balkhan being on our right, where the Turcomans said there was abundance of good pasture and fresh water.

Soon after midnight, of the 23d, we resumed our journey, and by day light, or at 18 verstes, halted between the wells of Demour Djem and Jassak Djem, the wells are almost salt, and appear to be in the bed of a Lake long since dried up, there are however some Turcoman tents near this. We halted 6 verstes further in the desert for a few minutes, as we could not expect to find water for some days; the Turcomans had filled their water skins at Demour Djem with the water, bad as it was. We performed another 30 verstes to sun set, in a direction about East $\frac{1}{4}$ North, not a blade of grass had been seen on this march, which was evidently in the dry bed of a Lake, at 17 verstes from Demour Djem we passed the wells of Ghe-raidon, near which there was another camp, the water is better, but one was 250 feet deep and lined with timber. These wells are said to be very ancient, and the Turcomans are ignorant who dug them. It is singular in this desert that wells

of fresh and salt water are frequently found close to each other.

24th. About midnight set out, and after 28 verstes of road, had about 5 verstes on our left, a great salt Lake which unites with the Gulf of Karra Bogas, in which is said to be the Whirlpool by which the waters of the Caspian are carried off. The Lake which is very shallow is called by the Turcomans Koul Deria or the Slave Sea, also Adji Komjouju or bitter wells. The shores are frequented by some tribes who here catch seals, but they seldom venture on the lake and in fact regard this with much superstitious dread. It is unknown to the Russians and has never been entered by any of their vessels. The water is said to be exceedingly salt, and such birds as attempt to fly over it are reported to fall into the water from the pestilential exhalations. Near the place we halted at the head of this gulf, the roads separate one going to Monghichlak the other to Khiva—near this spot are a number of graves and tumuli like those of Sali Said, to mark the spot where a number of Turcomans were killed in a great invasion of the Kirghizes Kassaks—continued our route for 30 verstes and halted on the summit of the Sara Baha which run from North to South. We in this part of the road passed some deep ravines excavated by former torrents which appear to have fallen into the Kouli Derria, this spot is called Belcher Ingri; the route is here very indifferent being generally on a clay soil. We were encountered by a strong wind on this elevated spot, and with the greatest difficulty succeeded in collecting a few small bushes to light a fire.

25th. About midnight of the 24th, again were on the road and soon passed the summit of the Hills, our direction had generally been East $\frac{1}{4}$ North, and at 25 verstes halted near the wells of Touïr, near which were a few tents of the Turcoman tribe Ata, which was under the Government of Khiva. We remarked this tribe had the Tartar features more strongly marked than the Turcomans at Touïr; there are 6 wells of good water but the country is so barren we did not see the least sign of bush or other vegetation during the latter part of the route.

From Touir there are two routes to Khiva, the most direct has the inconvenience of wanting fresh water, and approaching the tribe of Teki Turcomans, who are always on bad terms with the other people of this desert. The want of water, is not felt in winter, *where* the travellers collect the snow

which then covers the plains—the Turcomans always follow this route.

The 2d route is to the left and though equally destitute of water, is less dangerous. The last days journey was about 40 verstes, ground rather broken.

On the 26th continued 23 verstes in the same direction East $\frac{1}{4}$ North (and arrived at the Derin Chie (deep well) situated in a deep valley, and lined with stone; though the water was brackish, we were obliged to fill our skins with it, being on the point of entering a desert perfectly destitute of water and barren; this spot may be considered the true boundary of Khiva and the Turcomans; this deep ravine is said to be the ancient bed of the Oxus, and it has every appearance of being the case. It is at present perfectly dry and barren, nature appears absolutely dead in this country; from this it is 5 or 6 stages to the wells of Bech Dichik and commencement of the cultivated lands of Khiva. This forms by much the most difficult part of the journey—continued for 28 verstes further and halted in the desert, our direction had been North East by East $\frac{1}{4}$ East.

27th. Continued over the same desert for 31 verstes leaving on our right the wells of Kazazli which are too salt to be fit for use.

28th, 29th. Performed 128 verstes to the wells of Bech Dichik (five openings) the water is excellent, the country over which we had passed the last 2 days is a bed of moving sand, before us was a perpendicular cliff said to be the ancient shore of the Sea, here and there it is broken in large fractures admitting of ascent; 15 verstes before arriving at our stage, the route lay along the same ravine or bed of a river before seen, it was about 650 feet broad by 90 deep and could only be passed at certain points, from the perpendicular nature of the banks. The bed was here and there covered with bushes and some grass.

We continued in this way for about 3 verstes more, among small hills of moving sand, and halted near the wells of Sari Gamish situated in the bed of this river; at 7 verstes more we halted at our stage as before said of Besh Dichik near which was a large Caravan from Khiva. Two verstes from us was the high cliff before mentioned, parallel to which runs the dry bed of the River, still pursuing the sinuosities of its former course, and when not covered by sand the soil is totally different from that of the desert. My conductor Kiat said, though

the mouth was obstructed by a bed of sand, it could easily be opened, and the water restored to its old course. Not far from this is said to be a small building, constructed with a pent roof like those in Russia and covered with tiles. It may have been erected by the people sent by Peter the Great to search for the Gold sand said to abound in the bed of the Amon Deria. The present inhabitants have lost all recollection of this expedition, which is the less extraordinary as the tribes who then inhabited these parts have since emigrated to Bokhara. From this point the country was tolerably covered with bushes—previously, except at 7 or 8 halting stations the desert was perfectly bare of them.

On the 30th set out at day light, but advanced to sun set only 25 verstes, we had crossed the ravine and the route was less barren and more agreeable than before, still having the high cliff on our left which might be 130 feet on height. The ground above, appeared as flat as the plain on which we were marching. On the route we passed the true Bech Dichik or 5 entrances, which gives the name to the wells where we had passed the night. They were 5 regularly hewn doors with passages leading under ground, and to which many strange and mysterious stones are related, as leading to a subterraneous palace inhabited by some, Genii possessing great riches and a large and beautiful family, and none who had attempted to enter had ever returned. I penetrated to the entrance and could easily have reached the caves, but the Caravans had passed on and there was no time for such researches. We now passed several dry canals, which still bore the marks of water having once flowed in them.

We performed in the night between the 30th September and 1st October 33 verstes. The ruins of houses and the Canals evidently shew a country once inhabited, our course was now nearly South East.

On the 1st October we made 34 verstes in the same direction, country covered with bushes and traversed by dry Canals, and 31 verstes more during the night. Where we halted there were some herbs which are poisonous and much dreaded by the Turcomans, who say Camels are frequently killed from eating them. We met a Caravan of at least 1000 Camels, returning to Mongushluh laden with grain.

NOTE.—This must be the singular cliff called by the Kirghiz, Tchinh, and separating the Oust Oust or upper place from the lower, it extends from the Aral to the Caspian.

On the 3d we made another 33 versts through a naturally fine country, crossed in every direction by paths leading to the different villages and camps of the Turcomans or Khivians. There were also people going to burn charcoal from the bushes we had passed thro'—performed another 39 verstes and crossed a canal cut from the Amou river, and thro' which water still runs; at the time we crossed, there was no water, but it could be let in at pleasure, we now crossed a succession of canals, on the banks of which were numerous Kabitkas or Turcomans tents. These people cultivate the soil, and after harvest make incursions into Persia, selling their slaves at Khiva.

The soil tho' sandy, yields abundant and excellent crops of wheat, barley, millet, sesame, (an oil plant) and some other small grains.

There is also abundance of fine fruit and most excellent melons, both musk and water.

Cattle are numerous, the domestic animals are the camels, horse, cow, sheep, and ass. The horses of Khiva tho' good, are inferior to those of the Turcomans, whose best breeds are from the banks of the Atrick and Gourghan. My worthy host informed me the news of my arrival had already reached Khiva, and strongly recommended my proceeding direct to the residence of the Khan. Report said he was likely to be at Ak-Serai, and at any rate, soon intended going on a hunting excursion into the desert, which generally lasted a considerable time.

On the last stage we were taken in a sand drift, which lasted almost the entire day.

We were forced to proceed, but at last our camels refused to advance, and turned their backs to it. Sied, our conductor, fortunately found some Turcoman tents where we were well received by Atanmaz Merghan, the head of a small party of the great tribe of Yamont, who have taken refuge in the territories of Khiva, and with his men entered the Khan's service; without exception he was the best man I had met with among the Turcomans. He accompanied me 12 verstes on the following day, as the sand drifts had not yet ceased, and for the first time I had a painful experience how the hills of sand form in the deserts, and are so rapidly removed from one spot to the other. The wind acting strong on these bodies carries them generally in a circular direction, the smallest bush or stone forms a centre round which the sand rapidly accumu-

lates, and remains a rounded mass till again acted on by these whirlwind. After a march of 24 verstes, thro' a country covered with signs of former habitations and cultivation, we came in sight of the canal of Ak-Serai, surrounded with a number of Turcoman tents, some well cultivated fields, and even trees, the general direction had been South East. We now began to meet with permanent buildings tho' the tribes still inhabited tents, their cattle &c. were lodged in rude stables surrounded with a fence of dry bushes; we had some difficulty in getting lodgings in the miserable Turcoman station we halted at. This tribe were from the frontier of Bokhara, towards China.

The 5th, marched 10 versts in the direction East South East, we reached the village of our conductor, Sied, surrounded with fields bearing a rich harvest, and strongly contrasting with the country thro' which we had passed; not in Europe could cultivation be carried to a higher point than here.

We were very well received with the greatest kindness by the relations of Sied, our Turcoman conductor.

The conversation of my fellow travellers gave me great uneasiness as they considered I must be an extraordinary person, knowing how to read and write, and having measured the depth of all the wells on the road, and noted the distance of the stages. These stories as I found to my cost, had nearly cost me my life. The sentence of death had at one time been actually pronounced against me as a spy.

Birdi Khan came to visit me immediately on my arrival. He had been wounded and taken prisoner by the Russians, and served for 2 years under General Sissennevitch, and subsequently took refuge in Khiva.

After having received the necessary information from Birdi Khan regarding his Master Mahomed Rahim Khan, I wished to proceed direct to Khiva, from which I was only distant 40 verstes, but my Turcoman conductor Sied, would not on any consideration agree to my proposals. It was in vain I attempted to hire horses or find means to continue my journey, for whatever were the motives, it was impossible for me to proceed. In the night I was visited by another Officer of note who came solely from curiosity. On the 5th, there were some Russians brought in prisoners, who had attempted to make their escape and join our Vessels in Balkhan Gulf. The least punishment these unfortunate people had to expect, was to be nailed to a post by the ear for 3 days.

On the 6th, I was informed the horses were ready, but was detained by one of the Chiefs to breakfast, after which we set out, hardly had I advanced 8 verstes when a courier overtook me, with a request that I would wait the arrival of 2 Officers of the Khan of Khiva, who had been sent the night before from their Master.

They quickly made their appearance, one an old man of Persian origin who had embraced the Sunney faith, and acted as confidential courier to Mahomed Rahim Khan, he might be about 60 years of age, short and of a malignant artful look. The other was Ech Nizar, a powerful man about 30 years of age, with a fine manly open countenance. He held the rank of Ous Bashi (head of a hundred men) which is a vague term, as he might be charged with any number under 1,000.

The 2 Officers were attended by 4 horsemen, and brought me the order to proceed to the Fort of Il Ghildi, belonging to the courier at Chahan, Aley Birdih, who I have mentioned as one of those sent to me from Khiva. He had requested the Office of my keeper, as he had some commercial relations with Russia, and hoped to advance his interest there if things went well; or otherwise please his Master by being my executioner, an Office which he was perfectly willing to perform. Our direction as well as I could observe, was East $\frac{1}{2}$ North for 18 verstes through a highly peopled and well cultivated country. The small fort of Il Ghildi which was to be my prison resembles all the country houses of the rich people in Khiva. It was a small square with 4 towers at the angles, walls of clay and rough stone about 20 feet in height; it might have about 60 Inhabitants, some living in houses, others in tents, in the centre of the Fort; as were also a number, without. On one side was a garden containing some fruit trees and excellent wines, this was surrounded by a wall about 10 feet high with a mosque and house of the Mullah, at the further extremity. These forts are exceedingly common about Khiva, where it is necessary for the

NOTE.—This must be a mistake, at the battle of Oslandoose, he saved 2 Ladies, of the Harem of Abbas Mirza from being taken prisoners, and remained some time longer in Persia. As I have said he was an intimate friend of mine.

He stated having been wounded in the hand in an action with the Kirghis Cosacks before he was obliged to take refuge in Persia.

NOTE OF THE TRANSLATOR.—It is evident from Captain Mouraviev's own Journal, that the orders to stop him had already been received probably by Birdih Beg, who would never have volunteered a visit detesting as he did Russia and the Russians.

people to be able to defend themselves for some time against parties of plunderers, as well for foreign, as their own people, during Civil wars which here are but too frequent—for the first three days I was treated with every consideration, well supplied with provisions, and allowed to walk in the Court yard and garden near the fort, sentinels were certainly at every door, which at first I took for a guard of honor, but I soon discovered I was in fact a prisoner. The 4 Turcomans who had accompanied me received permission to go to their friends, I had been assured that the Khan intended to receive me on the day after my arrival, but here was the 7th October and no person yet appeared. On the 8th, Yokoub Beg a servant of the Khan's who spoke a little Russian, came to see me and demanded in the name of the Khan my business, the presents, and papers I had for the Chief of Khiva.

I replied I had brought letters and presents to no other person than the Khan, and if he refused to receive me, he had only to allow me to return, Yobouk Beg then rose in anger and departed. He was accompanied by another Yokoub, a Jew by birth, who had long since adopted the Musselman faith, and who spoke a good deal on the commercial lines of trade to Kashmeer and Russia, from Khiva.

One of the Turcomans who came with me had learnt in the neighbouring market that Rahim Khan had left Khiva and intended giving me audience in a neighbouring fort but on asking my guards they assured me it was not the case. The Khan had however, as I heard, left Khiva.

My treatment now began sensibly to alter, and the Guards every day treated me with greater rudeness, besides diminishing my allowance of provisions, and even preventing my purchasing the necessary fuel to cook them.

From the Turcomans of my Caravan who still continued to attend me, I learnt a Council had been held in which the Mulla Bashi had advised my execution—to this the Khan totally objected but desired I should be kept in prison till he had decided as to my future destination, and learnt what had brought me to Khiva; some thought I was come to ransom the Russian Slaves in Khiva, others, to demand satisfaction

TRANSLATION—NOTE—I do not propose to give a translation of the work before me but solely to extract what relates to the route and the difficulty experienced by Captain Mouraviev in the execution of the duty assigned him.

Therefore omit the statement of his captivity, &c.

for two Russian Vessels burnt and plundered in Balkhan Bay 10 years before, others that it must be to exact retribution for the murder of Prince Bekowitch in the reign of Peter the Great, others that Russia had declared war with Persia, and was building a large fortress in the Turcoman Country intending to join the Khan of Khiva in an expedition into Persia—a number of people at different times came in secret to endeavour to discover what was the true object of my mission, all this gave me the most distressing anticipation.

Interesting as it is, the limits of this sketch does not allow of the insertion of Capt. Mouraviev's captivity which lasted 48 days regarding which, I must refer the curious to the Book itself. On the 17th November, Capt. Mouraviev left Ill Gheldi for Khiva, from which it is distant 35 verstes in a N. E. direction, the road passed over two beds of sand but not of any extent, they were traversed by 2 Canals on the banks of which were several large flourishing Villages.

The entrance to the City on this side was for five verstes thro' Suburbs and Gardens, the Town is surrounded by a mud wall, contains many fine Mosques covered with blue tiles and elaborate Moresque ornaments, the Mission was lodged in the house of Mekhter Agha Joussof, prime minister. The Khan sent for the presents during the night, and I found that a tray containing some fine Gunpowder, shot, and two loaves of Sugar, which formed part of them was according to the ideas of the Usbecks, an offer of peace and friendship, which if rejected announced a declaration of war. Behind the door of the apartment I occupied, a Russian who had changed his religion was always concealed, when any strangers ventured to come, or even whenever I spoke to my servant.

On the 20th November, the public audience was granted by the Khan in an inner Court of his Palace, and seated in a tent ready to take his departure for the desert, where he intended hunting for sometime. A Russian malefactor who had probably escaped from Siberia, and was branded on the forehead was the Officer appointed to conduct me and attempted to lay hold of my sash, this I instantly resisted and the man retired with a threatening air, when I advanced he approached with his hand lifted up, but did not venture again to lay hold of me. The interview was short and abrupt. The first proposal was simply that Caravans should in future pass by the Bay of Balkhan direct to Khiva, in place of taking the long and difficult route of Mongushluk. This was refused by the Khan on the

plea of the Turcoman tribes on the Bay being more or less subjects of Persia, therefore not under his control. The Mongushluk route on the contrary, was entirely his own people.

2d Proposition—When the Khan shall enter into friendly relation with Russia, her enemies will be ours * * * * *
* * * * * The Khan replied that he would send confidential servants with the Envoy to Tiflis, and he trusted to see a true friendship established between the two states; Farewell.

This was a sign for me to depart which I had prepared to do, when Mahomed Rahim Khan desired me to repeat all I had already said, this I accordingly did, observing how much I was flattered with my reception and would be happy to return next year. He replied drily, you will come if sent. I have given orders that my servants shall be put entirely at the disposal of the General in Chief, he can send them to the Emperor if he thinks fit.

On the evening of the 21st, I left Khiva for Ill Ghildé, where I was to be joined by Jores Bachi, Ech Nezer, and Jassaul Bey, who were destined to accompany me to Tiflis. I was well received by the inmates of my former Prison, who appeared really rejoiced at the fortunate turn my affairs had taken. In the barrel of my Gun which I had left at Khiva to be repaired, I found a Petition written in the name of the Russian slaves in Khiva, entreating the Emperor to do something for their deliverance. There are about 3000 of these unfortunate people in this small state alone, and about 30,000 Persians. It was with sorrow I felt, I had it not in my power to do any thing for their relief.

On the 27th, all our party being assembled, we quitted Ill Gheldi and halted at a Turcoman Camp 12 verstes distant; we did not follow the route we came, determining to take the short cut to Touer, which passes close by the great tribe of Teki, from whom we had nothing to fear, and information had been received of snow having fallen on the plain which would partly supply our wants. The Caravan consisted of 20 Turcomans all of whom had come with me to Khiva, and wanted to know the result of my mission.

* The omissions here are supposed to relate to the offered co-operation of Russia with Khiva in an attack on Persia, at least the current report at Teheran at the time was, that such a proposal had been made by the Russian Envoys both to Khiva and the Turcomans.

On the 28th, marched. We arrived at the Canal of Bouz Chemen which is the last towards the desert, beyond this a few Turcoman Camps are met with, and a country entirely uncultivated. On the 29th we left the canal, carrying with us a quantity of ice with which it was covered. Our route lay over a plain here and there sprinkled with many ruins. The 30th, the country resembled that of yesterday, we passed the ruins of the fortress of Daondan, and on the first by that of Kizil Kulla, we continued to march during the most of the whole nights of the 1st and 2nd December, as our camels had not been watered since the 29th (or 4 days.) On the morning of the 2d we arrived at the ruined fort of Chakh Senem and which was the last signs of buildings we met with in the desert; we had been informed the melted snow had formed a swamp or pool at this place, which we certainly found among the ruins, it was only a few inches deep about 3 yards broad and 11 in length, on such a trifling supply do the Caravans look for the means of supplying their wants.

On the 3d, almost all the horsemen left the Caravan in hopes of reaching the wells of Ak Nabaut, the night came on before we arrived at that station, we lost our road and wandered all night in the desert; we rejoined on the morning of the 4th, having a large Caravan of Teki Turcomans on our right who followed us for several days but did not venture to attack, for fear of the Khivian Envoys who were with us. We arrived about mid-day. All the route as far as Touïer was strewn with dead Camels who had perished on the route after having fallen from fatigue, here and there were also the bodies of men which from their Clothes and long beards appeared to be Persian prisoners, brought from Astrabad. The Turcomans and Ousbecks remarked that generally half, died of hunger, fatigue, and cold on the road.

The water of Ak Nabat is brackish, but our horses drank it, and for want of other we were obliged to be content with the same. On the 5th, we passed through some bushes and on the 6th at day light reached a place called Tunuklou we went with several Caravans of the Turcoman tribe of Ata, halted near the steep banks of the Amon Deria. Tunuklu is the name of a large pit about 130 feet deep and 975 in circumference, at the bottom of which there is a salt spring; this I have seen on some Maps erroneously laid down as a Lake.

After 6 verstes along the ravine, we crossed it and enter into a country absolutely bare, the bed of the river is here called

Engoody, and is not so deep as at Bech Derhch, the bed was covered with bushes, we halted on the night of the 6th, on the 7th the cold appeared to me excessive and appeared to reach 12 or 15 degrees, we passed the night of the 7th in a desert without the vantage of a plant.

On the 8th, we arrived at sun set at the wells of Deli which is half way between Khiva and Krasnovodsk* near here are some ruins and Camps of the Ata tribe. Unfortunately we could not water our cattle at this place, as a Camel had fallen into the well and it was impossible to get at the water. Notwithstanding we had now performed more than the half and that the most difficult, of my long and painful journey, I could not help being tormented with the most gloomy forebodings, fully expecting to be either frozen up on the bay of Balkhan or find the the Vessels, had taken their departure for Sari, when I should be left almost without money, on the shores of the Caspian among rapacious tribes. To attempt the passage of the Sea at this season in a Turcoman boat hardly able to contain 12 persons in fine weather, was perfect madness; to pass by Monghechluh, appeared equally difficult, the greatest obstacle to taking that of Astraabad, was the want of sufficient funds to supply the people by whom I was accompanied.

I had determined, as a report had gone abroad, that Russia and Persia were at war, to have collected a body of Turcomans and made an irruption on the Persian Territory troubling myself little about the future consequences. Determining at once to know my fate, I quitted the Caravan, and leaving the Envoy and my Russian servant, proceeded with Sied and 3 Turcomans on horseback to the Sea Coast. I hardly eat or slept during the 9th and 10th, we here passed the wells Tongra leaving on our right those of Ak Koueny. This Tongra is 3 days march or 90 verstes from the station of Deli, we here found a Deer drowned in the well.

On the 10th at day light I reached the wells of Trüer, here a sheep had likewise fallen into the well. We halted in a ravine where we found a hut constructed of the branches of trees, and 2 abandoned packs containing grain, dried fruits, and Tobacco.

We traversed after this the range of Sari Borba and made the lake called Kanli Derria of which I have spoken before and

* The old Russian Port in the Balkhan Bay.

watered our horses at the wells of Demour Djem. The Turcomans who were here when we passed on the route to Khiva had quitted it. At day light on the morning of the 10th, I found myself alone in the desert and made towards a Turcoman I saw advancing with two Camels my dress induced him to take me for a Kirghis robber and in great alarm he drew his sword and advanced towards me, on presenting a pistol at him, his fear almost deprived him of the power of speech, but on Sied's reaching us the mistake was cleared up, and I heard with the greatest pleasure the Corvette was still at anchor waiting my arrival.

On the 11th, we halted among some bushes near the wells of Suly. The night between the 11th and 12th, I had the greatest difficulty to make my guides keep awake, fatigue had so overtaken them, they fell asleep on their horses and some got severe falls. When morning came I again found myself with only one of the party and saw two men one on a Camel the other on horseback making towards us, at first we thought they might have some bad intention, but I was delighted beyond measure when the youngest saluted me speaking some words of Russian, it proved to be Jakchi Mahomed son of Kial Aga. On the evening of the 12th, we arrived at the Camp of my conductor Sied. On the 13th, reached the Bay, opposite to where the vessel was at anchor and in vain made signals, no attention was paid, but soon after a boat left the Corvette and quickly reached the shore, nothing could exceed the joy occasioned by my return.

The state of the Corvette was by no means satisfactory, after taking from the transport all the provisions she could spare, they had sent her back; out of 80 men 20 only were in good health, 5 had died on board and the remainder more or less sick. Lieutenant Bassarghini had demanded permission to return not only as the vessel was in want of provisions, medicines and stores, but the Bay had begun to be frozen in some places. It was agreed to delay 15 days more and the crew were put on half rations, that being expired 8 days additional were granted when it was determined to sail; fortunately the Turcomans by whom I wrote on leaving Khiva arrived, and the famished sailors now determined to wait my return.

On the 17th, the party left behind joined, and on the evening of the 18th, we weighed anchor, on the 21st made the Island of Filoi a short distance from the Cape of Abashevan, inhabited by fishermen who here catch some seals.

On the 24th at mid-day we landed in Bokau and on the 17th January 1820 met General Yermaloff at Derbund, returning from the Campaign of Dagestan, and by his order took the Khivian Ambassadors to Tiflis.

Here a similar petition was received to the one brought by Major Ponamaroff, it arrived thro' the Governor of Ashter Khan; offering the submission to Russia; of all the Turcoman Tribes on the Persian Frontier.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF KHIVA.

Like Bokhara, Khiva cannot be said to have very fixed boundaries. Its most valuable territory and what properly is called Khiva, includes the lands on both sides of the Oxus from the Frontier of Bokhara to the lake of Aral—many wandering Tribes who either from fear or interest have at present placed themselves voluntarily under the Khan, Mahomed Rahim, the most powerful and able Chief, Khiva has had for many centuries. His influence now extends over all the tribes as far as Mongushluh to the North, and the Turcomans subject to Persia on the South. In 1819 he even sent troops with the intention of bringing the Kirgis South of the Sir under subjection; and establishing a fort at the mouth of that river.

It is unnecessary to state Khiva contains at present the most productive portion of the once powerful kingdom of Kharason; one branch of the Oxus formerly discharged itself into the Caspian at the Balkhan bay the other further South.

According to the ancient histories of Persia, the Oxus formed the boundary between the great states of Persia and Turkistan. These countries must have undergone some great changes from natural causes, which have turned the courses of some rivers, and transformed a once fertile country into the frightful desert, it now is.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—The Khivians as I have before stated had made two incursions before the year 1806 into the country of the Kirgis, one penetrated by the eastern shores of the lake, and reached its northern extremity, the other by the western bank and got also by this route to the north west end; in both excursions they were successful, and brought much plunder from those tribes.

The sea of Aral is the only lake of any consequence within the territory of Khiva, and receives two great rivers the Oxus and Sir, both form innumerable Islands at their mouths, there are also several considerable ones within the lake itself. The mouths of both rivers are very shallow, and the people assert that in the dry season a man on horseback can pass them by following the lines of reeds which every where grow in the bed of the river. From the Oxus numerous canals fertilize the country to a considerable extent, on both banks. It is recorded the trade with the Indra was once carried on by it.

Peter the Great in the year 1717 despatched General Bekowitch in search of a dam which it had been reported the Khivians had thrown across the river, to turn its waters into the lake of Aral; as well as to look for the Gold mines, or sands which were said to exist in this quarter. Bekowitch with his army perished in this expedition, which put an end to all further attempts on the part of Russia.

The Khivians declare their total ignorance of this dam, and assert that according to their traditions a great earthquake about 500 years ago, changed the course of the river and ruined the cultivated lands, which still bear the marks of the former habitations. During my route I several times came on the bed of this river which flowed as I have marked it on my chart, dividing, before arriving at Balkhan Bay into two branches, one of which falls into the Bay before mentioned, and the second some distance to the South. The soil of the bed of this ravine differs entirely from that of the desert, and has in many places a few scattered trees, some small springs of fresh water, and even extensive spaces covered with reeds. The Caravans going to Khiva generally shelter themselves here, and they also serve to conceal the Turcoman robbers who infest this route. There are in the desert several beds of lakes which have now entirely dried up, the principal one being near the place we halted at, after leaving the cultivated lands of Khiva, near which approaches the remarkable rocky banks which appears to extend the whole distance between the lake of Aral and the Caspian; tradition states it to be the former

NOTE—TRANSLATOR.—By the bed of this river or ravine, I consider the only practicable track exists for an army coming from, or going to Khiva. On the melting of the snow, much water lodges here which could now, and I heard had been retained, by drawing small dams across its bed.

boundary of the Caspian when it united with the lake of Aral. In this great sea of sand, if it may be so called, there are only a few spots of no great extent of good soil where vegetation exists. The besh ditch are 5 openings in the rock (which the name signifies in Turkish) and lead to caves of a great depth, near them is situated the ruined fort of Outin Kala which must once have been of considerable extent. Near this is a deep hole at the bottom of which are some springs of salt-water. The remains of trunks of large trees still shew where forests once existed, before the face of this country was so entirely changed by some great convulsion of nature, and serve as fuel to the Caravans and tribes wandering in the desert. There are also several aquatic plants with large leaves which horses will eat, but it is difficult to account for their existence in a situation apparently so dry.

The fertile portion of Khiva is not more than 200 verstes in length by 150 in breadth, forming an *oasis* in the midst of the surrounding deserts, those to the east are less barren, than to the north and west, there, it is seldom caravans or travellers do not meet with water every second March.

The Territory of Teki, is another fertile district in the desert between Persia and Khiva.

The territory of Khiva to the south west is absolutely level, with the exception of the trifling hills of Sari Baba. To the east of the Amou or Oxus, rises the range of Chekh Djon which runs north of Khiva, on the south bank of the Lake of Aral, and contains mines of gold, silver, copper, lead and sulphur, the two latter are the only ones worked by the present inhabitants.

In the distance is seen an isolated hill called Kouba which is I understand the end of the Mongashluh chain, there is also a branch of this range said to extend on the west shores of the Lake of Aral, or it may be only the stone cliff which has been before mentioned, in the ravines, water is found in springs which are never dry.

The climate of Khiva is exceedingly hot in the summer, rain seldom falls and the wind which blows in the winter and autumn with great force, brings clouds of fine sand and dust which darken the air. The cold though it reaches as far as 16 or 18° below the freezing point, seldom lasts long, but the high wind occasions great inconvenience even at this temperature to travellers, or such as are exposed to it on the desert.

The country of Khiva is inhabited by four different races the Sarti or Tots, the original inhabitants and cultivators of the soil.

Kara Kalpak Tartars conquered by the Khivians and settled on the territory ; Ouzbeks or conquerors and military population. Different tribes of Turcomans who have at different times settled in Khiva.

The Sarti are numerous and entirely given to trade and agriculture, they are cunning, intriguing, servile and cowardly, they may amount to 100,000 souls and from being industrious and economical they are generally in good circumstances, when they undertake journies into Russia, they frequently become drunkards. The Ouzbeks despise them saying we live by our arms, and the Sarti by their roguery.

The Kara Kalpaks in part wander on the banks of the Aral and near the mouths of the Amou Derria, they cultivate the land in some places but are indolent, oppressed and poor, the greater part are forced settlers in this Country and subdued by the Ouzbeks, they may be 100,000 souls.

The Ouzbeks, or conquerors of this country as well as Bokhara, are brave, proud, and only employed in the service of the Khan. Their name signifies Master of themselves, but they now complain that since Mahomed Rahen Khan's time they are no longer so, but khitmitkars or servants, they do not count much above 30,000.

The Turcomans who are settled in this country do not exceed 15,000 and though they dislike agricultural labour the greater part are now cultivators and much addicted to pillage. They are excellent horsemen, brave and superior to the Ouzbeks on an expedition, but perfidious, cruel and dishonest ; numbers have taken service with the Khan, and others make annual irruptions into Persia, selling their slaves at Khiva. This is in fact an essential part of their living ; their numbers vary much according to circumstances or employment. Besides the people before mentioned there are about 3,000 Russian and 30,000 Persian slaves in Khiva. These unfortunate people lead a most miserable existence their lives entirely depend on the caprice of their masters ; many of them exercise different trades, there are also a few Jews in Khiva who have embraced Mahomedanism though still living separate from the rest of the population.

Since the accession of the present Chief the different people have been more mixed, now a Sarti may be seen in the Milita-

ry Service, an Ouzbek merchant; a Kara Kalpak a robber, and a Turcoman a Farmer. This arises from the policy of Mahomed Rahem Khan who thus hopes more firmly to establish his power. The number of his subjects may amount to 300,000. There are 5 Towns or Cities in the province, Khiva, the capital containing about 10 or 15,000 inhabitants is surrounded with walls, and stands on the banks of a canal drawn from the Amou. The only buildings of consequence are the palace of the Khan and a beautiful mosque, much venerated by the people in the neighbourhood. The walls of the city are built of mud and 20 feet in height, the parapet is not more than 1½ to 2 feet thick. The Town is surrounded for several verstes with small forts and gardens, belonging to the principal people of that place.

• New Ourghendze is a much larger city than Khiva, governed by the brother of the Khan, and the place of great trade, which all the foreign Merchants frequent, and principal artisans inhabit, it has not however more than 1500 houses. The Towns of Chinat, Kiat have not above 2,000 inhabitants respectively these are the depots for the trade of the Kirghiz, Gurlin is rather more considerable, and carries on a large trade.

The buildings in all these towns are only of mud with flat roofs, some few mosques are of brick and mortar. They are however very permanent from the dryness of the climate.

There are numerous villages and some so large as hardly to yield to the towns before mentioned, either in population or commerce, as Donadankalassi, Kyzyl Kala, Chakh Senem, Outen Kala, &c. which are surrounded by walls.

The revenues of the Khan are derived from the tax on pots, or rather hearth money, paid by every person not in the service, from this the Ouzbeks are exempted, as also the Turcomans in the service.

2d.—The presents made to the Khan, by all classes.

3d.—Produce of the royal lands.

4th.—Taxes on trades and excise.

5th.—Customs.

6th.—Share of the plunder by the robbers in Khiva, made in foreign states.

7th.—The extra contributions levied in time of war. These taxes are levied thro' Khiva by means of the heads of tribes, clans, or districts, who are chosen by the people. The whole amount derived from all those sources, may amount to 4 or 5

millions of francs (200,000£.) There is said to be a considerable treasure in ready money, lodged in the palace of the Khan. The productions are much like those of Persia and Bokhara, but the country tho' favourable to rice, is less cultivated than either in Persia or Bokhara. Khiva is sufficiently productive, not only to supply its own wants, but those of all the surrounding states, it has always been a warlike state, or turbulent province of a large kingdom, and the high military spirit of its present inhabitants is one of its most characteristic features. Its situation, surrounded by almost impracticable deserts gives it a great advantage, and under a warlike Prince, it might become dangerous to the surrounding States. The intestine disturbances which have torn this country till the accession of Mahomed Rahim, had obliged all the people to construct small forts in their villages, they were simply four walls with towers at the angles, and no ditch, incapable of protecting a garrison except from a small body of horse, unprovided with either cannon or ladders.

The Military force of the Khan cannot amount to more than 12,000 well armed and fully equipped men, composed almost entirely of Ouzbeks and Turcomans; about the same number of the Sarti, Kare Kalpaks, and other tribes in the event of war will double this number but add little to its force, from their unwarlike habits and miserable equipments: some of the troops receive pay but generally they hold lands on Military tenure, but all are obliged to supply themselves with provisions during the campaign. A Khivian army is accompanied with a great number of cattle and followers, and therefore cannot march above 30 verstes per day, a few European troops would disperse any numbers of these Oriental warriors, but at the same time our Cavalry must never venture to skirmish with the light horse of Asia which is their sole occupation and instruction, our mode of breaking horses and the weight of appointments utterly unfits them for this kind of service.

Our army defeated without difficulty, the army of Persia*

NOTE.—Captain Mouraviev is mistaken, large bodies of Horses are frequently sent on distant expeditions, where great care is taken to furnish provisions by burying in the desert.

The Cavalry have 2 horses each, one of which carries a very light load, and will make 60 or 70 miles per day; for 5 or 6 days, 50 miles is very common.

* Not always with so much ease—the Russian were defeated with great slaughter both at Khada, Auferim, Mount Arrarat, and Kurpi, near Outch Kelisee, the Persian Artillery was equal or better, the Cavalry far superior, and the Infantry had no fear when well led.

which is far superior to that of Khiva, who would not be able to resist for a moment our infantry. She possesses about 30 pieces of artillery, but in a miserable condition, worked generally by Russian slaves. There are also some camel guns, but only 1lb. weight of ball.

I consider Russia might easily achieve the conquest of this state, 3000 good troops under an able and honest Chief, would be sufficient to take and keep it. The greatest difficulty would certainly be the passage of the surrounding deserts, but I consider this might be easily overcome, provisions must be provided for a certain time, in Khiva they are abundant and the Turcoman* tribes now well disposed to Russia, would be able to furnish Camels for transport, and horses are abundant. If it was necessary to augment the troops, great assistance in that way might be obtained from the Russian and Persian slaves, groaning under the greatest oppression and anxious for any means to deliver themselves.

To conclude it is sufficient to know that Mahomed Rahim Khan penetrated to the shores of the Caspian with 20,000 men, in his war with the Persians and Turcomans.

The arms of the Khivians are the sabre, the dagger, the lance, and bows and arrows, (the latter do not carry above half as far as those of the Circassians) and muskets, some of the horsemen are clad in armour and steel helmets, in attacking men armed in this manner, they also use a battle axe and mace.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

In making the above extracts I have more attempted to give the general meaning of the author than a true translation as I did with that of Count Meyendorff which is a work of a superior description to this: Captain now General Mouraviev is without doubt a most intelligent and able man, but I much doubt if this work contains any thing like the amount of the information he obtained, in fact it relates solely to his first Mission. The maps in his second were more detailed and made with greater attention, but that I do not now possess. In this it is even difficult to make out the distances of the stages or precise nature of the country. I will

* This may be true but I doubt if the Turcomans could ever be depended on, they will furnish any thing for money but Russia seldom expends largely in that way, and without very large disbursement no assistance would be got even in the first instance.

only observe without Captain Mouraviev is aware of much greater facilities than he has stated to exist in his work, the task of conducting an army landing in Balkhan bay, and there as it best can, collecting the means of transport would be nearly hopeless, besides the time necessary to make these arrangements would enable the Khivians to fill up or destroy all the wells on the route, and with their cavalry compel any force to advance slowly and with great caution; effectually depriving them of the only chance of achieving their object, by a rapid passage of the desert. As I have before stated I consider the bed of the ravine as the proper line to take, in such an enterprize; when early in spring sufficient water might be retained by dams in its bed from the snow which melts on the surrounding plain* some little forage would also at that season be procurable, but this would in a great measure depend on the good will of the Turcomans in the deserts, which notwithstanding the Mission sent by them to Russia in 1820, I much doubt; it was then supposed to be false and got up by some disaffected Chiefs expelled from their tribes, but by no means shewing the general feeling of the people.

It is difficult absolutely to decide on the proper season for an invasion of these countries, where the soil or more especially black salt mud, becomes absolutely impassable in wet weather and for some time after the melting of the snow. The black salt soil is particularly liable to injure the feet of horses, I have seen the greater part of the Cavalry lame, from the cracked heels called "Shekak." The sand on the contrary is always most firm after the snow has melted, there is then, and then only a little vegetation to be met with, water is also found in pools but soon disappears. Both the journeys were made in autumn when the water has generally disappeared as well as every sign of vegetation vanished.

I must likewise differ from the opinion of 3000 Men being sufficient to conquer and keep Khiva; to do the latter it would be necessary to occupy the Country, or at least the 5 principal Towns; not only to ensure their submission but protect the peaceful inhabitants from the incursions of the present Masters the Uzbeks, who would probably retire in the direction of Bokhara, (tho' not to that city,) and use every effort to regain what they had lost, but also of the surrounding Tartar States ready for any enterprize that offers a prospect

* The total distance in which the want is great, does not exceed 100 miles.

of plunder. The slaves would either be removed with the retiring force or massacred to prevent the contingency here mentioned. If set at liberty the Persian portion would without doubt return to their own Country, and but few of the Russians would be found fit for Military Service. The Turcomans would be the most immediately available, but they require a pay and opportunity of pillage, which Russia would not be disposed to grant. I have never known any Mahomedan population, except where their case is utterly hopeless, long remain attached or faithful to Russia. No state has granted such advantage to all foreigners as Russia, but as far as Mahomedans are concerned, the spirit of carrying them into effect by the delegated authorities, differs widely from what is intended by the Government. The total difference of Society feeling and customs, is alone sufficient to prevent any amalgamation or real confidential intercourse, and what is utterly insufferable to a Mahomedan, is any intrusion on his family or restraint on his personal liberty. The billets and passports have occasioned more revolts and discontents than any other measures Russia has adopted. The taxes levied by Russia are perfectly insignificant, and property is generally well protected.

F I N I S.



