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EPITOME OF CORRESPONDENCE

RELATING TO

M E R V,

WITH

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS OF
THE PLACE,

AND

ITINERARIES.

*(Reprint, with Corrections and Additions, and with the latest and best Map,
specially prepared.)*

INDIA OFFICE,
16TH JUNE 1875.

**In all the quotations and abridgments I have preserved the modes
of spelling proper names followed by the several authorities.**

M E R V.

PART I.

(GEOGRAPHICAL.)

MERV was visited in 1843 by Mr. Tylour Thomson, who gave a description of the place in a memorandum of his journey. This memorandum appears, on inquiry, to have been mislaid or lost in the Foreign Office.* I am therefore obliged to quote it at second hand from the Appendix to Lady Sheil's invaluable work on Persia,† and as there is no copy of it in the India Office, it has been considered advisable to print it here in its entirety :--

“ From Meshed Moozderan is about 55 miles. This is the frontier station of Persia on the road to Merv, and is occupied only by a small military guard, to watch the movements of the Toorkomans, and give speedy intelligence of their inroads from this side of the desert. It is situated at the top of the pass leading to Serrekhs, and the guards find security in round towers, loop-holed above, with a low entrance at the foot, which can be readily barricaded when any suspicious looking parties are observed in the distance. At night, the guards being few, they do not in times of danger venture to remain outside the tower, and, on retiring to their hold, they sweep the ground across the narrow ravine, and are thus enabled at break of day to ascertain what number of people have passed, whether foot or horse, and give notice to the nearest station in what direction the plunderers have gone. From Moozderan to Serrekhs, about 50 miles, is desert, and destitute of water. It is situated on the river Tejjen, which at this point contains a considerable volume of water, but after flowing some distance to the north, it is absorbed by the sand of the desert. Serrekhs was formerly a thriving town, celebrated for the excellence of its carpets, but, having been attacked in 1832 and plundered by Abbas Meerza, grandfather to the present Shah, it has since remained in a state of ruin. A large number of Toorkomans of the Tekkeh tribe occupy the lands in its vicinity and the banks of the river, and cultivate them to the extent required for their own wants.‡ This tribe possesses the best breed of what are called Turkoman horses. It is a cross between the Arab and Native horse in which a good deal of the symmetry of the former is preserved, and in height, power, and figure resembles the best breed of carriage horses in England. They are much esteemed by the Persians, and good specimens find a ready market in Teberan, at prices varying from 50*l.* to 75*l.* The road as far as the Tejjen is firm, and adapted for the employment of wheeled carriages, but beyond it to Merv, a distance of about 110 miles, a considerable portion of the way being koom, sandy desert, guns, although of small calibre, are with difficulty dragged across it. Water, too, is nowhere found between the rivers Tejjen and Murghaub, unless in one or two cisterns and wells. In spring the former is drinkable, but later in the season the traveller who cannot afford to transport it on camels, in skins, must content himself with the fetid and brackish produce of the wells, which are found at about 10 or 12 miles distance from each other. In spring the distance between these two rivers, and between the Murghaub and the Oxus, can, by eating sparingly, be passed without suffering much from thirst; but after the heats have commenced, fluid of some sort, however offensive it may be to the palate and smell, must be largely drunk, to supply the constant drain from the system which a temperature of from 115° to 120° in the shade creates; and when this has been continued for a week or ten days consecutively, the degree of thirst to which the wayfarer is exposed may be readily understood, when it is remembered that during that period he has been forced, to obtain momentary relief, to swallow draughts of saline liquid, which only add force to the insatiable craving which devours him.

* It is said to have been recently discovered.

† “Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia.” 1856. Appendix, Note F, p. 358.

‡ Mohan Lal says the same thing in the same words.

“ Four towns of the name of Merv have existed at different epochs ; that of the present day hardly deserves the name, it being only an assemblage of wretched huts commanded by a small mud fort, in which a Governor on the part of the Khan of Khiva resides, and defended by a few patereros and swivel matchlocks. It is the resting place for a few days of all caravans passing between Persia and Bokhara, and has nothing to boast of beyond affording accommodation for travellers, and a small bazaar to supply the wants of the Saruk and Salar tribes of Toorkomans encamped in its neighbourhood. But the soil for some distance around is highly fertile, and as the Murghaub affords an abundant supply of water for irrigation, grain, fruits, and all the necessaries of life might be raised to supply the wants of a very populous city. Near this still stands the roofless town of Merv-e-Kajjar. The streets, walls of the houses, mosques, and baths still remain as when it was inhabited, but silent as the desert, for not a human being is found within its walls. This town was built by a portion of the royal tribe of Persia, when it was transplanted from Georgia by Shah Abbas the Great, but the town having been captured about seventy years ago by Shah Murad Bey, the Uzbek Chief of Bokhara, it has remained unpeopled since that date. At some little distance the site of the Merv of the Seljukian dynasty is marked by a number of low hillocks and a single tomb. This the tradition of the place assigns as the resting place of the magnificent Alp Areslan, the second of his line. Here the wandering Toorkoman, and the followers of the Soonnee faith, still in passing alight from their horses and repeat a prayer for the repose of the soul of the only known tenant of the once populous city. Of the Merv of remote antiquity no traces meet the eye, and its site is no longer known by the rude and ignorant tribes which now wander around the proud capital of former days. Among so barbarous a race, it is gratifying to find that there is one individual in whom interest can be felt, this is a Toorkoman Moolla, who is known by the title of Caliph. He is a man of a mild disposition, respected by the Chiefs of the neighbouring principalities, and although active in repressing, to the best of his ability, the system of kidnapping and traffic in slaves practised by the people of his tribe, has maintained a degree of influence over them amounting to veneration. On paying him a visit I was much pleased with the gentleness and courtesy of his manners, but somewhat puzzled what to do when presented, after tea had been served, with some of the leaves from the teapot, and a lump of sugar of about a pound in weight, until I saw what the other guests did with their smaller portions, and, following their example, munched up the leaves, and stuffed the sugar into the breast of my coat for home consumption.

“ Shortly after leaving Merv the traveller again enters the sandy desert, and through it continues his way until he reaches the Oxus at a place called Kabaklee (the pumpkin ground), a distance of about 170 miles. In spring, after the winter snows have disappeared, and the soil has been moistened by the vernal rains, the surface is everywhere covered with a bright coat of verdure, scanty indeed when looked at near, but when viewed in the distance giving the appearance of a rich sward in all directions until lost in the horizon. At this season the immensity of the space, the freshness of the air, the richness of the green tint under foot, and the clearness of the sky above exhilarate the body and give an elasticity to the spirits, similar to what is experienced at sea when, under easy sail and on a smooth sea, the ship, a solitary speck on the watery desert, is gaily advancing on its way to the promised port, and enables one to understand the feeling of attachment which binds the nomad to the place of his nativity. Some portions of the desert are, however, covered with the shrubby tree called fak. It grows to the height of 15 or 20 feet, and some of them are, near the ground, of considerable thickness. But the wood is so dry and brittle that it is an easy matter to snap even the trunk asunder, and it has so little of the sap of vitality, that when thrown on the fire, it ignites at once with a clear but short-lived flame, and burns with little or no smoke. The dingy colour of the trees, their stunted and aged form, and the silence which reigns among them give those wooded tracts such an air of isolation and sadness, that the traveller gladly exchanges the shelter and warmth they have afforded for the cold night breeze on the open steppe. In summer the wind almost always blows from the north, and as then every blade of grass has been burned up, the light sand is drifted along and deposited in waves, whose slope is abrupt towards the north and falls gradually on the other side.

“ The chief wells on this line of road are those of Kishman, Yok Kepen, Yandaklee, and Sartlanlee. At one of these I found the body of a derveesh, who unable

to proceed with the caravan, had, in that place of solitude, lain down and died. The wind alone had done the last rites by depositing a small tumulus of sand over the corpse, except on the sheltered side, from which an elbow protruded. Wretched and dreary must have been the last hours of this lonely and abandoned being, were it not that alongside of his scrip, containing some stale bread and parched peas, and within reach of his hand, were a small pouch of medicated tobacco and an unfinished pipe, and with the aid of this drug his last breath probably passed away in some fancied vision of terrestrial or celestial bliss. Quintus Curtius, if I remember rightly, has been called to task by the translator of Arrian, for having stated that Alexander, on his way to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, had been guided through the desert to the spot of the oasis by crows; but however much that author may have exaggerated, in this he was probably correct, for I have myself been frequently escorted in a similar manner by these birds from one well to another. They fly a short distance ahead and await the approach of the caravan, and so on until the station has been reached, where the stray grains from the horses' nosebags, or, as is frequently the case, the carcase of an overspent animal, is the reward of their unconscious services. About 36 miles before reaching the Oxus, a low range of hills of pure sand rises above the level steppe; and, in gratitude for the blessing of pure, sweet water it dispenses, has received the name of Takht e Suleiman (Solomon's throne). Water is only found, as on the steppe, at the depth of many fathoms beneath the surface, and both saline and fetid, while here at a high elevation, and by merely scraping the sand for a few feet with the hand, sweet water oozes out and fills the cavity. This circumstance is considered by the Uzbeks as a miracle, and attributed by them to the son of David; but the more natural explanation would be, that a considerable fissure from the bed of the Oxus which, from a point at a greater elevation, finds its exit here, and in the lapse of ages, having discharged its stream of water impregnated with fine sand, has given rise to the monticule as it now appears, and whose dimensions will probably increase.

"At Deveh Boyoon the cultivation begins, and the road, leaving the river, branches off to the left to the town of Hezar-Asp; but it is only on reaching this latter place that the highly cultivated lands of the Khivan oasis are fairly seen. From this place to Khiva, about 42 miles, the whole country is covered with smiling fields, unwallled villages, and, as in Europe, houses and gardens in the open fields, a proof of the feeling of security from oppression rarely met with in more civilized Persia. The alluvial tract is of little breadth, but is intersected in all directions by canals for irrigation. Every spot which has been reclaimed or preserved from the encroachment of the surrounding desert is carefully brought into cultivation." * * * *

DESCRIPTIONS of MERV, by BURNES, ABBOTT, DE BLOCQUEVILLE, and DAUD-KHAN.

Extract from Lieutenant Burnes' Travels into Bokhara.*

"Amid the sterile regions of Turkomania, and between Bokhara and Persia, Burnes. lies the once fertile land of Merv, the capital of which is said to have been built by Alexander. It is better known to European readers from a celebrated epitaph on one of its kings, often quoted by moral writers: 'You have witnessed the grandeur of Alp Arslan exalted even to the skies; repair to Merv, and see it buried in the dust.' . . . Under the Persians Merv rose to a great and opulent country, and the waters of its river, which before had wasted themselves in the desert, were distributed, by canals and a judicious use of dams, throughout the territory. The soil was enriched, the people were prosperous. 'From one maund reap a hundred,' is a proverb which attests the fecundity of the earth, † the prosperity of the people. A portion of a Persian couplet bids the members of the 'faithful' rejoice to say their afternoon prayers in the dry and delightful climate of Merv. Here, also, the wheatfields furnished the astonishing pheno-

* Vol. II, p. 258.

† Strabo affirmed that it was no uncommon thing to meet with a vine whose stock could hardly be clasped by two men with outstretched arms, while clusters of grapes might be gathered two cubits in length. Moore's well known verse celebrates the beauties and luxuriance of Merv and of the banks of the "Murga."

menon of three succeeding crops of the same seed, as has been described in the districts of Andkho and Meimuna. Such was the prosperous condition of Merv under a well-known Chief named Beiram Khan, who was conquered in the year 1871, by Shah Murad of Bokhara. That King demolished its castle and canals, and forcibly marched the greater portion of its inhabitants to people his capital, where they still exist as a separate community. At a later period the remnant of its population has been driven into Persia, and this flourishing land, which presented so beautiful a contrast to the rest of Turkomania, now partakes of its sterility, while the Turcoman hordes have usurped the place of its once fixed population. From the ruins of the castle of Merv, the traveller may yet behold a depopulated circle of 30 miles, studded with deserted villages and decayed walls. The fields on the verge of the Murghab alone are cultivated, and here the Turcomans yet rear the finest of wheat, juwaree, and excellent melons."

Abbott. Abbott* says, Merv "was one of the most ancient cities of Asia. It was situated in the plain, about 12 miles east of the little bazaar, which at present (1840) bears its name, and was watered by a canal from the Moorghaub† or Awb-i-Mowr. . . . During the misrule and anarchy of the last 60 years, the ancient dam" (called Bend or Bund) "of the Moorghaub was neglected and carried away. The city, in consequence, became uninhabitable, and was utterly abandoned. The dam is again set up, and the lands are brought under culture, but the ancient site continues a deserted ruin. The present Merv is an assemblage upon the Moorghaub of about 100 mud huts, where a considerable bazaar is held. The entire waters of the Moorghaub are dispersed over the sandy plain for the purpose of irrigation. This profusion of water renders the soil productive, but it has not strength to bear any but the poorer kinds of grain.‡ The plain is, perhaps, an area of 60 miles by 40, or 2,400 square miles, running on every side into this desert. About 60,000 Turcomans are said to live upon this plain, chiefly as cultivators."

"The trade passing through Merv is very considerable, Merv connecting Bokhara and Persia, Khiva and Afghanistan."

Leaving Merv, Captain Abbott crossed "the dry channel of the Moorghaub, and proceeded by a well beaten road in direction E.N.E." He "soon perceived, upon the eastern horizon, the ruins of the ancient Merv, of which a mosque and several forts form the principal features. The city is said to have been smaller than Heraut, *i.e.*, less than 4 miles in circuit. From this distance I might have estimated it at eight times the dimensions. The fact seems to be that several sites have in turn been occupied and abandoned, retaining each some vestige of its former fortifications, and these lying in a continuous line give an impression of vastness to the deserted site. . . . On the horizon around us were many tuppahs, or artificial mounds, of considerable elevation. These are supposed to have been forts."

Shakespear. "Captain Shakespear,§ who likewise visited Merv in 1840, says:—"There is a small shell of a fort here, and a considerable bazar." He was shut up with his party in a small enclosure, and no one was allowed to come and see them. "On the grand market day" (May 25th), horses, camels, grain, and slaves were to be had in abundance."

Wolff. In 1844, Merv was visited by Dr. Wolff. He was received very hospitably by the "Khaleefa of Khiva and Bokhara." Nathan, and other Jews, who had known him in 1831, when he was "the only Englishman known in the desert of Mowr," received him very hospitably. Wolff only mentioned that a school was kept in Merv, on account of its antiquity.

* "Narrative of a Journey from Heraut to Khiva, &c." By Captain James Abbott. Second Edition, 1867.

† This river, the ancient Margus, takes its rise in the eastern slopes of the high mountain Ghur, and flows in a north-westerly direction past Martshag and Pendshdel, and then disappears in the sandy plains of Merv.—"The Russians in Asia." By F. Von Hellwald. H. S. King & Co. 1874.

‡ In this Abbott differs from most authorities.

§ "A Personal Narrative of a Journey from Heraut to Ourenbourg on the Caspian, in 1840," by Captain Sir Richmond Shakespear. Blackwood's "Edinburgh Magazine," June 1842.

M. H. De Blocqueville* entered Merv in 1860 with a Persian expedition of which the object was the suppression of brigandage in the Turkestan country east of Khorassan, and putting an end to the incessant incursions of the Turcomans into Persian territory. Marching from Meshed, the expedition approached Merv "through a country cut up by canals, and almost covered with water, and difficult of access, especially as the troops were supplied with only spades and picks, and a few beams." Merv, which was at that time uninhabited, was "surrounded by a strong wall of earth and sun-dried bricks, flanked by several towers, and protected by a broad ditch. The enclosure can contain about 30,000 tents. A branch of the Murgab, flowing from about midway between Merv and Yoleten, traverses this intrenchment along its length, and afterwards takes the name of the Caraiab."

De Blocqueville.

"Some remains (*pans*) of ancient walls, built of large bricks, small walls of earth, which had served to enclose the flocks of the Turcomans, a few houses, likewise of earth and roughly constructed,—this is all that is to be seen on the site of the ancient city, founded by Alexander, and embellished and enlarged later by Antiochus Nicator, who left to it the name of Antiochia."†

Daud Khan‡ gives the following description of the place:—

Daud Khan.

"Its forts are entirely out of repair, and the people live in woods and in cottages of reeds. Of these forts one is Killa-Sanjari, at a corner of which the tomb of Sultan Sanjar is situated, under a high fort, which was in good order until the death of Bairam Ali Khan. One of the predecessors of the Khan of Bokhara attacked it, killed him (Bairam Ali Khan), destroyed the fort, and took 12,000 families of Merv to Bokhara, some of whom still live there, and others have run away to Meshed, Herat, Killa-Mawez, and Shikeban in Herat, and taken their residence at those places. The other forts are Chahl-Burj and Killa-Kashan, and some other forts on the Merv river, which flows towards Bokhara and Khiva. There is also a fort this side of the river,§ in the direction of Meshed, which had been built by the Turcomans of the Sarak tribe. The Persian troops occupied it ten years ago,|| when they attacked Merv, and were repulsed from it; since then it has been abandoned.

"Of the guns which have been left by the Kajars in Merv, 40 guns, on which the names of different kings are inscribed, were seen by me on the bank of the Merv river. There is no city in Merv, as the old cities have been entirely destroyed. At present there is an enclosure with walls on all sides, and with shops of reed roofs. A bazaar is held twice a week, in which articles of all descriptions are sold; one side of the bazaar is occupied by horse dealers, and the other by the sellers of other articles. Barley, wheat, and Indian corn ('jowar') are most abundantly cultivated, and sold at ten maunds a 'kiran.' Rice is produced in small quantities, but melons, cotton, &c., grow in plenty. Horses, camels, cows, sheep, and *owls* (?) are very numerous. The skill of the people consists in the manufacture of carpets, namdas, saddles, rifles, and matchlock guns, and they also work as goldsmiths or blacksmiths. They do not pay revenue to any authority, nor is such the custom among them. They are not under the control of any Governor, but they act at the discretion and advice of the elders of the tribe, though they give nothing to them."

Daud Khan observes:—

"I have ascertained that in the first wars of the King of Bokhara against the Russians, Turkmans of all tribes, about four thousand sowars in number, went to assist him, and became his advanced guard, but they wanted money for their expenses, and authority in the conduct of the war and over the supplies of the army, which the King refused in consultation with his Officers, and they, therefore, became displeased, and returned to their houses in Merv, &c. In Merv I heard

* "Quatorze mois de Captivité chez les Turcomans. Par M. H. De Coulibœuf De Blocqueville, 1860-61." Published in "Le Tour du Monde," 1866. Hachette & Co.

† For account of this expedition, see "II. (p. 9) Historical."

‡ An account of Daud Khan's visit to Afghanistan and Khorassan (confidential) 1873. Secret Letter from India, No. 90, 26th September 1873.

§ Shown on the map attached to Captain Trench's "The Russo-Indian Question."—Macmillan & Co., 1869.

|| *Vide* M. De Blocqueville's account of the expedition against Merv.

them saying that, should the King spend money, place reliance on them, and join with them, they will fight for him. I questioned them verbally whether or not they would attach themselves to any power which would give them money and show kindness to them, and they said that they would do so to the Ameer Shere Ali Khan if he would spend money, and would fight for him against the Russians."

"The banks of the Moorghaub were once well inhabited, and thickly sprinkled with towns, villages, and gardens for a considerable extent both below and above the city of Merv; these are now all in ruins, and for a considerable distance round the site of the ancient city is totally uninhabited, except by marauders.

"Beyond and farther removed into the desert, these ruins serve as points of *rendezvous* and permanent encampments for the Turcoman tribes, who have formed them into strongholds for storing their booty and protecting their wives and families in case of attack. The vicinity of the stream gives encouragement to the more industrious among the Turcomans to cultivate a little ground, for wherever water is procurable, a rich crop of corn or fruits, such as water-melons,* cucumbers, and the like, invariably reward the husbandman."

* * * * *

"Like a Tadmor of the Desert, the ancient city of Merv spreads its ruins in the wilderness. The River Moorghaub steals sluggishly through a green strip of country, and occasionally swells into small marshy lakes. Here and there stunted broken trees, and an occasional huge sycamore, dipping their roots into the water, afford some scanty shade, and bear evidence of the existence at some remote time of luxuriant gardens with groves of orange, pomegranate, and other fruit trees."†

Sir Henry
Rawlinson.

Sir Henry Rawlinson says in a Memorandum on the Merv and the Téké Turkomans:—

"Merv, although at present a mere ruin and uninhabited during nine months of the year, is of much political importance, both from its strategic position and from its great actual advantages. Situated at the point where the high road from Persia to Bokhara crosses the road from Khiva to Herat, and possessing an unlimited supply of water, it will probably take a leading place in the future history of the East. At any rate, if Merv were garrisoned by the Russian troops, and order were established in the surrounding country, the city would rapidly recover its old condition of prosperity, and would completely overawe Herat and Afghan-Turkestan."

The Tékés, Sir Henry observes, can bring 40,000 horsemen into the field.‡

Abbott says that "the position of Merv is so important that it never will be long abandoned, and might, with judicious care, rapidly rise from its dust into wealth and consequence."

And Shakespear was told at Merv, by the more intelligent among the Asiatics,—
"Do you think we are such dolts as not to perceive what will be the end of all this? You and the Russians will meet and shake hands, and we shall be crushed in the operation."§

Colonel Valentine Baker, Lieutenant Gill, and Major St. John bear testimony to the facility with which Merv can be approached by an army from the Attrek river.

* These grow to such an enormous size that, according to the Sirdar Iskander Khan Barukzei, four or five of them constitute a camel's load.

† "The Kuzilbash;" a Novel, by B. Frazer, pp. 47 and 56. Vol. 1.

‡ For further particulars concerning the Turcoman tribes, *vide* Memorandum "On the Country of the Turcomans, 1873," by R. M. Amin Bai [Route VI., p. 36] states that the Tékés muster 50,000 tents, each tent is generally taken to include four individuals.

§ The same expression was used to me by Iskander Ahmed Khan Barukzei.

M E R V.

PART II.

(HISTORICAL.)

* Zendavesta E. Burnouf, pp. ciii.—cv. “Mòuru, the strong and pure,” was the third land of profusion “which I, Ormuzd, have created.”*

Merv was a flourishing city in the ancient province of Marghiana, comprised in the empire of the Parthians. It derives its name of Merv, Mawr, from the Marucæi (a people who inhabited the country) of the ancient Greek Historio-Geographers having lost that of Antiochia, conferred on it by Antiochus son of Seleucus Nicator, who converted the site which the Macedonian conquerer judged proper for an Alexandria into a city of considerable dimensions, surrounding it with a rampart of fifteen hundred (short) stadiæ.†

Mr. Taylour Thompson informs us that there are, not one, but three different sites of ancient cities by the Murghab. The Natives, Burnes says, point to the ruins of Merv-i-Mukan as the city built by the Greeks, but the exact site of the original city founded by Alexander, and improved and expanded by Antiochus, has not, I believe, been ascertained. Captain Abbott believed that “several sites had, in turn, been occupied and abandoned, each retaining some vestige of its former fortifications, and these lying in a continuous line give an impression of “vastness to the deserted site.”—*Vide* Geographical Description.

Throughout all Western Turkestan or Turan, Merv goes by the name of Meru, Maru,‡ or Mawr, and the country in which it is situated was styled by the Arabs Mawr-el-Nahr or Mawr beyond the river or trans-riverine, as it is even yet called in Bokhara. It is also called Meru-Rood,§ Meru-Errund, or Merv-Shah-Jehan, “as who should say soul or affection of the Sovereign,” an appellation dating, probably, from the eleventh century, when it was the favourite residence of Alp-Arslan, King of Persia.

It was within eight miles of Merv that Yezdegird II., the last sovereign of Persia of the house of Sassan, was murdered, A.D. 651, by a miller, his body being cast into a mill-stream.

Merv was surrounded with stately palaces, groves, and gardens by Alp-Arslan (A.D. 1063–1073) of the Soljukian dynasty of Persia. The tomb of Sunjur Shah or Sultan Sunjur, Alp-Arslan’s grandson, A.D. 1126–1157, who conquered all the country between the Oxus and Jaxartes, still remains at Merv. Toulai, the fourth son of Chinghiz, twice took the city of Merv. On the second occasion he took it after a siege of three weeks; the place was sacked, when an almost fabulous amount of treasure is said to have been secured by Toulai, who massacred nearly all the inhabitants.

|| Markham’s Persia, and Kinneir’s Memoir of the Persian Empire, p. 179. This was the fourth time that Merv had been desolated.|| Although the few settled residents

in Merv are Uzbeks, and the Turcomans are historical foes of Persia, yet the great deeds of the Persian sovereigns of the country are remembered by them and expatiated on, notwithstanding also the facts that Ismael Sefi, of Persia, A.D. 1510, defeated Sheibani Khan, the powerful founder of Uzbek dominion in Central Asia, who drove Sultan Baber from his throne, and that since the year 1787, when it was again taken and pillaged by the Uzbeks, Merv has been almost continuously independent of Persia, and has on more than one occasion successfully resisted Persian attempts to recover it.¶

† Burnes observes, p. 23, Vol. II. of his travels into Bokhara, that “our historians have erroneously called it Merroo,” but it is so called from Orenburg to Afghanistan. It is called Maru by the Kirghizes and the Sirdar Iskander Khan Barukzei pronounces the name in the same way.

¶ I am informed by Sir Henry Rawlinson that an historical description of ancient Merv has been written by a Mr. Stirling, who appears to have passed through Merv some twenty years ago, on his way back to India.

The Mokanna, or "veiled prophet of Khorassan," made Merv the head-quarters of his heresy in the eighth century, and in the early part of the fourth century that city was constituted a Metropolitan See, which with twenty-five others in Central Asia recognized the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon.

From the period of its conquest by Shah Ismael, Merv is said to have enjoyed great prosperity, until, after beating back† several Bokharian armies, it was captured by Shah Murad of Bokhara in 1857.*

* Burnes' Travels into Bokhara, Vol. II., p. 37. This Uzbek ruler forcibly transferred the whole of the population, or, as has been stated, 40,000

families,§ and, in addition to this customary measure of precaution against rebellion, he destroyed the "bend" or dam of the river Murghab, in order to impoverish the country. Merv being apportioned by Shah Murad to his son Din-Nasr-Bek, who was furnished by his father with an army of about 10,000 Bokharians to hold the city, held out against Mir-Haider of Bokhara (brother of Din-

Nasr-Bek), but after three years warring, the Mervites succumbed,‡ Din-Nasr-Bek's army

having been defeated in 1815 by a stratagem near Chardjui¶ or Chekhardjui on the Oxus, at a place still known by the name of Kelleh-Menareh or Pyramid of Skulls, so called from a pyramid actually raised by Mir-Haider of the heads of about 5,000 Mervites, who were massacred on this occasion. Mir-Haider, in imitation of his father, again depopulated Merv, removing about 25,000 inhabitants to the centre of Bokhara,** placing a garrison of 400 or 500 men in the city, when the number of inhabitants was reduced to about 500. Far from re-erecting the dam thrown down by his father, Mir-Haider allowed only a few canals to be used by the people of Merv for irrigation purposes, lest the population of Merv should again increase, and, profiting by their isolated position, seek to re-establish their independence.

Under the Bokharians Merv served, after its depopulation, as a place of banishment to which those criminals were transported who had not received sentence of death.

Merv was not long retained by Mir-Haider, for the Khivans under Mahommed-Rahim Khan took the place, and peopled it with Khorezmians or Khivans, considering it an advantageous point from which to carry on operations against Persia, and a desirable one to hold for the purpose of keeping in due subordination the lawless and disobedient Turcomans. Mir-Nasr-Ullah, of Bokhara, once more gained possession of Merv, but he did not hold it long, and the Khivans once more found themselves masters there. In order to eject them, the Bokharians incited the Turcomans to attack them, which the latter did in 1846, massacring the greater portion of the Khivans; from that time the Khan of Khiva almost every year assembled his army, and led them across the desert to Merv, but these expeditions were invariably barren of results. These military operations of Mahommed-Emin were generally confined to ravaging the country of the Turcomans, consuming their pastures, and laying waste their field, while the Turcomans, Merv itself, or what remained of it, not being the object of attack, withdrew to a safe distance, and harassing the Khivans laughed at the Khan's fruitless excursions, which only

† For instance, in 1770, Daniel Atalykh of Bokhara, accompanied in the expedition by the Russian Efremof, was beaten back by the people of Merv.

§ Burnes, at p. 37, Vol. II. of his Travels into Bokhara, refers to Bairam Khan of Merv, and his chosen body of seven hundred that long resisted the arms of Shah Murad; and Malcolm, in his history of Persia states that Bairam-Ali-Khan was killed in battle with the Uzbeks on the banks of the Oxus, after which his son Muhammed-Hussein-Khan held Merv for some time, until he was forced to surrender the city, when he was sent captive to Bokhara, from whence he escaped to Persia. Mirza-Shem's "Bukhari," however, asserts, that it is known to him as a positive fact, that not alone Muhammed-Hussein, but also his father Bairam-Ali-Khan was taken prisoner on the capture of Merv in A. H. 1200, i.e., A.D. 1785, when both were taken to Bokhara, where Bairam-Ali, by order of Shah Murad, was hanged, while his son did really escape to Shahr-i-Subz, and from thence to Persia. Mr. Grigorief, in his annotation to Mirza-Shem's narrative, confirms this by quoting a chronogrammatic verse on this event, composed in Bokhara. According to Vamberi ("History of Bokhara," p. 352), Bairam-Ali-Khan "fell beneath the walls of Merv, and his authority, Mirza-Sadir, has it, that Bairam's head, severed from the trunk, was fastened to a gallows in Bokhara.

¶ Chardjui is written چهارجوي by Mirza-Shems, and Mr. Grigorief says he is correct, because Chardjui is but a common abbreviation of Chekhardjui.

** Meyendorff's "Journey to Bokhara." Chapman's translation from the French. It may be observed here, that the translation is full of absurd errors, such as an Indian Officer undertaking it should not have overlooked or reproduced even from a French edition, and which must be regretted, since the original is hardly obtainable. The map, too, should surely have been republished and attached.

ruined his own exchequer. In every encounter they defeated and dispersed his troops, and in the year 1850, when the Khivans, to the number of 6,000, after capturing some Turcoman horses, were about dividing the spoil, the Turcomans fell upon them unexpectedly and put nearly all of them to death.

The last expedition of Mahomed-Emin to Merv and Sarakhs, in the beginning of the year 1855, resulted in his total defeat by the Turcomans and Persians, and in the exhibition of his head as a trophy at Teheran.

Finally, in the year 1860, a Persian army, led by Hamza-Mirza, the Governor of Khorassan, occupied the enclosure now called Merv (July 19th), without any opposition from the Téké Turcomans, but after establishing their camp lower down the Murghab river, where they laid siege to another Turcoman stronghold, the Persians were disastrously beaten, and retreated through a country inundated by the Turcomans, to Merv, and thence back again to Khorassan, losing nearly all their munitions of war, including 50 pieces of ordnance (23rd October) one of which was subsequently recovered in a Persian foray from Sarakhs.

R. M.

M E R V.

PART III.

* Earl Granville to Lord A. Loftus, 7th Jan. 1874.
"Parliamentary Papers," Russia, No. 2, 1874.
[C. 919.]

† Through Baba Khan, son of Koshad Khan of Merv, who waited on the Ameer at Cabul, acquainting him that an attack by the Russians was shortly expected on the Turkoman Téké country.—(Cabul Diaries, 17th June and 1st to 3rd July 1873. Secret Letter from India, No. 69, 11th August 1873.)

Koshad Khan, elected Chief of the Turcoman tribes, represented to the Ameer, through his son, that the Russians had sent him the following message:—

"You Tekkeh people are independent, and have no King or Governor with whom we may make communications.

We have to make no communications to you, nor to ask you anything further than this, that, as our troops have to advance, we wish to proceed forward through your country. If you will not interfere with us, we will not meddle with your affairs. You should keep yourselves aloof from the front or the rear of our troops."

In reply to this Koshad Khan was said to have written as follows:—

"Undoubtedly we have no King or Ruler of our own tribe, and our people are independent, but at present the Ameer (of Cabul) is King of Mahomedans, and is allowed to exercise authority over the people of the Tekkeh tribe. We will act according as he directs us, and according as he considers it beneficial to us."

After this the people of Tekkeh-Akhal and Meer Birdi Khan unanimously appointed Koshad Khan their representative, and he sent his son, Baba Khan, to Cabul, placing himself entirely at the command of His Highness the Ameer.—(Cabul Diary, 10th July 1873. Secret Letter from India, No. 69, 1873.)

‡ The Ameer said to our Agent at Cabul that, unless the Turcomans accepted the nationality and religion of the Russians, they would seek shelter in the Herat Province, in which case "the Government of Afghanistan will be placed in a very difficult predicament, because, in the event of the Russians proceeding in armed pursuit of them, God knows what will happen."—(Wynne's "Confidential Précis," p. 223.)

The Ameer further said:—

"Time has approached very near when the Russians, after taking possession of Urganj and Merve-Shahjehan, will make communications for exercising some influence in my kingdom. It is as clear as daylight that, as soon as the Russians will take possession of Merve-Shahjehan, the Turcomans will necessarily take refuge in Badghees in Herat, and if they do not desist from their misbehaviour, viz., from causing injury to the Russians from time to time, the Russians will undoubtedly send messages to the Afghan Government that either the Turcomans should be prevented from aggression, or permission should be given to them (the Russians) to punish these hostile tribes. Under these circumstances, such difficulty will present itself to me that even the British Government, with regard to the interests of the Afghan and English Governments being identical, will have to adopt very serious measures for its removal."

§ Prince Gorchakof to Count Brunow, 21st Jan. 1874.

[Same Parliamentary Papers.]

|| "Aucune intention d'entreprendre une expédition contre les Turcomans."

CORRESPONDENCE relative to the Turcomans, and Evidence of Russian purpose to advance on M. rv.

Writing to Lord A. Loftus* on the subject of the treaty between Russia and Khiva, and with reference to "the reported intention to send a Russian expedition to capture Merv and reduce the Turcoman tribes of those parts," Lord Granville observed that the Ameer of Afghanistan "had applied to the Government of India for advice on the subject."

He pointed out that the Turcoman "tribes had applied to the Ameer of Cabul† for advice as to the attitude which they should assume towards the Russians," and stated that the Ameer "in his turn," while having "consulted the Government as to the reply which he should make," "expressed his apprehension that the result of a Russian expedition against Merv will be to drive the Turcomans to take refuge in the province of Badgheez, in Herat," the Ameer being apprehensive lest in such case the Russians should make him responsible for Turcoman acts of aggression.‡

In bringing "the fears entertained by the Ameer to the knowledge of the Russian Government," Lord Granville expressed an "earnest hope that the question of any further expedition against the Turcoman tribes may be carefully considered in conjunction with the results which the Ameer of Cabul" apprehended might "ensue from it."

Lord Granville wrote in the same Despatch that, on the strength of the rumours which had reached him from various quarters of a Russian expedition to be undertaken against the Turcomans, on the strength also of the plan being recommended by some of the most influential organs of the Russian press, in the face of the statement made by the tribes to the effect that they had received formal warning of such an expedition, and bearing in view also the system of Russian movements in Central Asia, he considered "it would be unwise not to contemplate the possibility that considerations of self-defence, or the necessity of punishing acts of plunder and hostility, may eventually give occasion for a Russian expedition against the Turcoman tribes."

In reply to this, the Russian Chancellor§ assured Her Majesty's Government that as regarded the eventuality of the Turcomans seeking refuge in Herat from the pursuit of Russian troops and thereby bringing about a conflict between Afghanistan and Russia, the Russian Government had no intention whatever of undertaking an expedition against the Turcomans,|| "that it depended entirely on the latter to live on good terms with the

Russians," but that if "they should give themselves to acts of aggression and brigandage against us, we should be compelled to punish them," and Prince Gorchakof added, "We are in any case the first to wish that this punishment, *if it becomes necessary*,* should be inflicted as near as possible to our own frontier."

* The phrase runs "sil y a lieu,"—if it takes place,—be resorted to.

Lord A. Loftus received the same assurance from the mouth of His Imperial Majesty, and the Imperial Chancellor added that the Ameer of Cabul should remove the possibility of the eventuality pointed out by him [an eventuality which was "scarcely probable"] by being advised to make the Turcomans understand that "they cannot count upon any assistance or protection from him if they provoke rigorous measures."

In subsequent Despatches from St. Petersburg, Her Majesty's Government were informed that there was no foundation for the ever recurring rumours of an intended Russian military expedition against the Turcomans and towards Merv, and in anticipation of the Emperor of Russia's visit to England, the contents of the communication† from the Government of India embodying the views of the Governor General in Council on the Central Asian question as a whole, were kept back,‡ in order that they might be made known to the Russian Chancellor after the termination of His Imperial Majesty's stay in England.

† Secret Letter from India, No. 60, 30th June 1873.

‡ Letter from Foreign Office, 25th August 1873.

Opinions of the influential organs of the Russian press, and of certain high placed and other Russian authorities, on the necessity of operating against the Téké Turcomans and of securing a footing at Merv.

Extract from an article which appeared, under the heading of "The New Step in Central Asia" in the Evropeiski Vestnik (European Herald), in the year 1870, on the strength of the occupation of Krasnovodsk Bay by the Russians:—

"As we have acted without any regard for our neighbours, we must expect that they will, in their turn, try to counteract our plans. Our undefined mode of proceeding must necessarily irritate Persia and her allies, and the results will inevitably be to our detriment. The supremacy we have enjoyed in Central Asia has not been in consequence of the superiority of Russian merchandise, but has been owing to the fact that the English have not commanded a cheap and safe road.

Abstract XXXIX. of 1870, in Secret and Political Department.

"The road through Afghanistan, owing to the difficulty of the passes, can never compare with our own easy channels of communication.

"This is perfectly well understood by the English, and they have not devoted their attention or their energies to the opening of another road, only because they have not wished thereby to bring

about *too soon a solution of their relations with regard to us in Central Asia*. Now we are ourselves forcing them to take this matter in hand."

"Their best road runs from Persia through Meshed and Merv, and across the Oxus. There is no doubt that whosoever first establishes security along this road will, for a very long time, command a supremacy in the markets of Central Asia. In our proceedings we have evidently not been guided by this consideration, or we should not have irritated Persia by petty attempts to possess ourselves of second-rate circuitous routes, instead of going straight to the main point. . . . The English will take this matter in hand. Nor is it so difficult as it seems at first sight to establish this road. Our rivals have only to lend a material support to Persia, which, being a Mahomedan Power, . . . will outweigh a Christian nation with her influence. With the aid of European Officers, the Persians will easily subdue the Turcomans. Abbas-Mirza made a successful attempt to do so,* As regards the Afghans, the English will find the means to curb their propensities, and then the road will be open. If this happens, and happens, too, independently of us, all the profits of the new road, and of the new markets to which it will lead, will be reaped by our rivals alone. This will be the result of our waverings. To oppose such a scheme by force would, to say the least, lead us into expenses out of proportion to the looked-for benefits. It remains for us, therefore, to conduct this business by diplomatic action, *i.e.*, by not alone taking part in, *but by taking chiefly upon ourselves, the pacification* of the Turcomans, leaving it to the English to protect the road from the Afghan and other robbers in the south. Persia, seeing the accord between the two European Powers, cannot refuse to co-operate. If by this means the road be established, there will be no necessity for England to risk her capital in the construction of a line of rail through Persia and Asiatic Turkey, *at least not at present*. By means of a mutual understanding, success can be more easily and more cheaply achieved, something positive may be realized; we must only guard against being carried away by vague desires which may not be fulfilled. Towards this object the occupation of Krasnovodsk Bay [Caspian] is not an all decisive step; it may be found valuable in time, but at this moment it would be much more profitable to occupy a position on the Gurgan river, which would give a first rate importance to our naval station at Ashurada.† This move would at once deprive the Turcomans of the power to inflict injuries on Persia, and would, once for all, make them succumb to our authority. At Krasnovodsk we can only operate from a front, without being able to prevent the Turcomans, as they retire towards the south, from joining our enemies, or from molesting our neighbours, which is equally hurtful to us.

* The Prince Abbas-Mirza did not subdue the Turcomans, but subjected the Kurds, whose fortresses he besieged in 1832.—*See, for instance, Ferrier's Caravan Jouunev, p. 92.*

† This, or something akin to it, is now contemplated at St. Petersburg. Foreign Office Letter, 10th Feb. 1875.

"In conclusion, the occupation of Krasnovodsk cannot be considered a successful move in the direction of a definition of our boundary, because, while

it does not give us a real hold over the Turcomans, it involves us in a degree of responsibility for their malpractices, whilst it also arouses the susceptibility of our neighbours, with whom in the end we must come to a reckoning."

[The Russian Government have taken measures in the sense of this suggestion, *vide* p. 18.]

The official editor of the *Turkestan Gazette*, in controverting some of the above arguments, and insisting on the advantages of establishing a firm footing at Krasnovodsk, makes some very interesting observations which deserve attentive perusal.

In order to explain the probable reason of the difference of opinion between the author of the article above quoted and his official *Turkestan* commentator, it is necessary to observe that the author of the above article, in condemning the position at Krasnovodsk and recommending the occupation of a point further south, argues exclusively in the interests of the military authorities of the Caucasus, whereas the editor of the *Turkestan Gazette*, the exponent of the views of the rival authorities of *Turkestan*, may not unnaturally be supposed to be unfavourable to the commencement of operations directed from the Caucasus, which would be calculated in the end to reduce the Russian military position in *Turkestan* to a second rate rear line of garrison defences.

The *Moscow Gazette*, dilating on the raids and murders which were reported to have been committed by the Turcomans after the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Khiva, and urging the necessity of a campaign against the Tékés, indicated a course of operations against them as follows:—

"The Turcomans, camping in the summer over the entire extent of the trans-Caspian steppes, congregate in the winter on the banks of the Attrek and Gurgan rivers, along the line of the Turcoman forts and on the confines of the Khivan oasis. In all these localities the Turcomans lead an almost settled life, from which it follows that they can be made to feel a blow dealt at them, and that the Tékés in particular may be effectively struck at. In order to prove to these inhabitants of the steppes their dependence (on Russia) we must *nolens volens* send an expedition into the country of the Téké-Turcomans.

"A single expedition will, however, barely serve the purpose."

"In order to secure one's hold on the Turcomans it is necessary to surround them on all sides; to confine them within certain limits."

The *Moscow Gazette* concluded with a recommendation to the effect that "a decisive expedition should be sent, such an one as we have not yet

Abstract XXXIX., 1870.

The Military Force at Krasnovodsk has been increased, and the place is developing into a town as centre of the administration of the trans-Caspian region.

Confidential Abstract, No. LXVI., 26th Oct. 1873.
Communication from St. Petersburg.

sent, and not to the Attek alone, but to the country of the Tékés also;" that "some one point" in that country be occupied, and that a line (of forts) be established, like that which was maintained for the control of the Kirghiz [the Orenburg and Siberian line as it existed previous to the Russian operations on the Jaxartes].

Mr. E. Schuyler's Report on Russian Turkestan to his own Government, p. 20, Secret and Political Department, India Office.

Communicated from St. Petersburg. Confidential Abstract, No. LXX., p. 2, 3rd Dec. 1873.

General Kryjanovski, Governor General of Orenburg, told Mr. Schuyler, Secretary of the United States Legation at St. Petersburg, that having involved themselves in a quarrel with the Turcomans of Khiva, "it would be absolutely necessary "to proceed further against the Turcomans and "to push an expedition to Merv, which Russia "should permanently occupy."

Early in November the compiler of this paper communicated from St. Petersburg to Sir Henry Rawlinson, and repeated to Lord Augustus Loftus, the substance of a conversation held with Colonel Veniukof, a well known Russian mover in Central Asian affairs, which was embodied as follows, in a Despatch to the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg:—

"Information has reached me from private unofficial sources on Russian notions of forming an independent State of Herat, detached from the sovereignty of Afghanistan, and in common understanding between Russia and Persia to keep under the Tékés."

Foreign Office Letter, 24th Nov. 1873.

Confidential Abstract, No. LXXXV., St. Petersburg, 24th Dec. 1873.

In December 1873, General Cherniayef, the conqueror of Tashkend, reiterated the following statement and opinions in a conversation with the compiler of this paper:—

Report of a conversation with General Cherniayef, from Captain Wellesley. Foreign Office Letter, 24th Nov. 1873.

"With reference to the projected expedition against the Turcomans, His Excellency remarked that when in Tiflis a short time ago, he heard that the Shah of Persia had expressed a desire that a Russian expedition should be sent against the Tékés, even as far as Merv; and as regards the English objections to a Russian occupation of the Attek valley, he said it was not of such great importance as it was generally considered to be, because if there were at any time any intention to attack or invade India, a Russian army might at all times be advanced with great ease from the Caucasus direct through Persia to Herat."

Confidential Abstract, No. LXXXIX., St. Petersburg, 7th Jan. 1873.

In reference to the reported expedition to Merv, M. de Stremoukhoff, head of the Asiatic Department of the Russian Foreign Office, in a conversation with the compiler of this paper, as reported to the India Office, alluded to it as a "newspaper rumour. "He was at the same time led to admit that the "Russian frontier might be stretched from Ashurada, "on the Caspian, to Merv, confessing that, although

“ the hiatus from Merv to the Oxus would in such case resemble the break in the Russian frontier line previous to 1864, yet that it might well be left to time to close it.”

His Excellency General Kaufmann, Governor General of Turkestan, likewise adverted to the expedition to Merv as to a hearsay, while he stated at the same time that a series of expeditions against the Turcomans and the occupation of the Attrek valley were an absolute necessity.

Subsequently to the receipt of the above intimation by Her Majesty's Government as to the designs of Russia against the Turcomans in general and on Merv in particular, the trans-Caspian region, a large portion of the Turcoman steppes and deserts, was formally annexed to Russia by Imperial ukaz, and made to form part of the trans-Caspian military circuit. The following significant passage occurred in an article on this subject in the St. Petersburg *Vedomosti*, an inspired paper, and one of the most influential Russian organs,*—“ Even recently Lord Granville, in his Despatch of the 7th January last, advised the Russian Government not to send an expedition for the purpose of subduing the Turcomans, in order to avoid the possibility of placing the Emir of Afghanistan, whose territories adjoin the camping grounds of those nomads, in a position of difficulty and embarrassment. No doubt can now exist on this point. The recent enactment or regulation states in plain terms that the trans-Caspian region, which forms part of the trans-Caspian military circuit, extends southwards to the River Attrek, and eastwards to the frontier of the Khanat of Khiva. As by the latter frontier must be understood the limits of the settled inhabitants, inasmuch as, at the conclusion of peace in 1873, it had become evident that the Turcomans were completely independent of the Khan of Khiva, *the whole mass of the Turcoman population* is therefore now included within the political limits of the Russian Empire. The regulation, however, contains an explanatory clause to the effect that the tent tax leviable from the Turcomans of the Krasnovodsk district will be imposed proportionately to the degree of their submission to Russian protection and authority. This clause must be apparently understood in the sense that the Russian Government, while abstaining from immediate occupation of the whole of the Turcoman steppe, reserves to itself liberty of action as regards the establishment of tranquillity and civil organization *among the Turcomans occupying the territories down to the borders of Afghanistan.*”

In November last (1874) it was notified that a Russian military expedition would march in two detachments, one from Krasnovodsk in the north, and the other from Chikishliar in the south, to within about 75 miles of the Téké forts, at the northern bases of the Kurren and Keppet-dagh mountains.

Before this notification was received in Europe, the expedition was over, and it was announced that

Confidential Abstract, No. LXXIII., 7th Dec. 1873.

Ibid, No. XC., 22nd January 1874.

Abstract No. XCVII., 30th April 1874.

Ibid.

* This paper has virtually been suppressed for its opposition to the Minister of Public Instruction, Baron Korff, the editor, to whom it was “farmed” by the Academy, being with all his staff opposed to the classical course of education favoured by the Ministry and advocated by the *Moscow Gazette*.

Abstract No. CXII., 8th Dec. 1874.

Abstract No. I., 20th January 1875, and “Times” Telegrams.

the salutary effect of it on the Turcomans was beneficial to the cause of the spread of Russian influence in the Turcoman country.

Foreign Office Letter, 10th Feb. 1875.

The St. Petersburg *Vedomosti* has dwelt on the necessity of erecting a Russian fort at some point where a control can be exercised over the Turcomans of the Gurgan and Upper Attrek rivers. This clearly indicates a site at the head of the Sumbar affluent of the Attrek, at the southern base of the Damani Koh mountains. The same Gazette, writing under inspiration, refers to the Kara Su or Astrabad stream as properly forming the boundary of Persia in that direction. This may fairly be taken to signify a desire on the part of the Russians to include the Gurgan within their dominions, and within the limits of the trans-Caspian military circuit. The importance of the establishment of a Russian garrison or garrisons on the south side of the mountains above mentioned cannot be over estimated. It involves proceedings against the Goklans and other Turcoman tribes in a country forming an integral part of Persian Khorassan, and brings the Russians into immediate contact and relation with the Kurds, a race traditionally hostile to Persia. It opens the road to Meshed, through the most fertile regions of Northern Persia, and leads to the opening of a question to which, in the course of events, Merv will be secondary, as constituting one of the "*points d'appui*" and points of observation to be held by Russian columns advanced from the Oxus.—(*Vide* Vamberi's map and map constructed to illustrate this Paper.)

The following note addressed to me by the Sirdar Iskander Khan, at present in London, may be of interest, as expressing the opinion of a native of Afghanistan. I reproduce the note in the Sirdar's own words.

Memorandum by the Sirdar Iskander Ahmed Khan,
Barukzei of Afghanistan.

Although my opinion has not been solicited, neither am I officially connected with the special crises affecting my country, yet, being an Afghan, I cannot look on the current events of my country's welfare without feeling a deep interest in their results.

Lord Granville's policy in fortifying Afghanistan on one side only, and leaving exposed the others to the inroads of enemies, excites my utmost surprise. It is like unto a man building a house with three walls, and leaving the gable end to adventurers.

Such is just now the case with Afghanistan. Lord Granville ensured, as he thought, the safety of Afghanistan in ascertaining its boundary on the

Oxus, and leaving exposed that towards the north-west, thus opening a passage to Russia by the way of Merv, to which she (Russia) is already approaching, as the recent movements of General Lomakin at once indicate.

I really think the English Government has no time to lose by looking indifferently at the question. It may be already predicated that Russia will certainly take Merv. When that is accomplished, it equally certain England will lose her prestige, not only in Afghanistan but likewise in Persia, and then she (England) must have recourse to an expedient after the fashion of a Chinese wall on the Indus to maintain her supremacy in India. Thus, the national expenditure on behalf of Afghanistan for these 20 years past will be merged, and finally lost, and that not through the treachery of the Afghans, or their unfaithfulness towards England, but through the misguided policy of England herself, in allowing the most powerful invader to take possession of the threshold of the house, and then tell the inmates to take care of themselves.

Merv, at this time, is only a refuge for marauders, but let Russia possess it, and it will then become a place of notoriety, and one of the richest in the world, both for its fertility and well known capacity for the maintenance of a corps of soldiers at little cost: example, five or six melons only will constitute a camel load. Hence the animals which rove at large become fat and sleek, without care of the owner, and vegetation everywhere is equally luxuriant. In short, if Merv pass into the hands of Russia it will regain its former splendour. But the question will not rest here, that Russia will take Merv merely, and hold it quietly, but she will take the Morgab river also, and march up to it and thus possess all the country. For example, when she leaves Merv, the first country worthy of note with which she will come in contact on the same river is Ulatan, with its ruined fort, and which was the country of the Salore Turkmans for some years after their defeat by the Persians, and who, through the invasion of the Teku Turkmans, were compelled to desert, and for these 15 years they have come under the jurisdiction of Herat in the fort of Marooghagh, and cultivate its whole territory. The next country which Russia will seize is Panjdeh, on the same river, where are Sarok Turkmans dwelling, which place is nearly equal in fertility to Merv. That country was frequently dependent upon Herat; for example, the Shah Kamran, the last sovereign of Sadozai, had always a commission there, and my father, at the request of the Sarok Turkmans, sent twice a Commissioner amongst them to collect the taxes.

One stage further on, and Russia will come to the Fort of Maroochagh, and from thence within one stage to the Fort of Morgab, which is situated on the high road betwixt Herat and Maimana, and further on still to Afghan Turkistan. When Russia shall have reached here, she will divide or cut off Herat from Afghan Turkistan, and thus extend her power from one side to Maimana, and the other

side to Herat Badgheese as far as the Coshk, which is separated from Herat Bason by the high mountains of Baba. The countries I have named are nearly equally fertile, and also favourable to any number of armies for marching through.

Russia having established herself in these countries, she will lose no time in exercising her powerful influence upon the whole of Afghanistan, by sending a mission under the name of commercial or scientific purposes,—a pretext which is not uncommon to European diplomacy, and which invariably achieves the desired policy. In that case Afghanistan will not be able to refuse the Russian mission, as she has done up to the present time, the enemy being at the threshold.

I cannot think that Russia will approach Merv without the secret consent of Persia, who must not consent to Russia's aggression thither, unless some specious proposition be made, which cannot be less than allowing her to take Herat by means of her aid.

Persia must have two points of interest, viz., 1st, the legitimacy of Merv, which belongs to her of ancient right: and, 2ndly, the cost of two armies which perished there. Therefore Persia must oppose any power approaching Merv, or if she be unable to do so herself, she must call for the help of England. Should she do neither (as she has done to the present, in not mastering her own territory and leaving it to the mercy of intruders), then the whole question has approached a solution.

In my opinion England has not long to reflect upon the matter indifferently; she must, as soon as possible, propose to Persia the conquest of Merv, and thus prevent Russia from taking it. Should Russia, notwithstanding, make aggression upon Merv, it will be clear that she has Persia in view (not a country left at the mercy of any aggressive power), by conquering which no power could legitimately accuse her. In the event of Persia's refusal to conquer Merv at once, it remains that England take care of that country, either diplomatically, by ascertaining the boundary beyond Merv, or by taking possession of the country by means of the Afghan forces, and thus reckoning Persia the closest ally to Russia.

ISKANDER AHMED KHAN.

8th January 1875.

M E R V.

PART IV.

ITINERARIES

(CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED).*

I.

The Journey of Lieutenant A. Burnes† from Bokhara to Meshed, with Annotations from Mohan Lal.‡

Lieutenant Burnes left Bokhara on the 21st July 1832, with a caravan consisting of about 150 horses, with 80 camels, under a safe conduct from the Emir.

Three short marches brought the party to

MIRABAD, 40 miles from Bokhara, and 280 miles from Merv; a small village of 20 houses, in the district of Karakùl. At a distance of four or five miles from the city, they entered on a tract which was at once the extreme of richness and desolation. To the right, the land was irrigated by the aqueducts of the Kohik, and to the left the dust and sand blew over a region of dreary solitude. After travelling for a distance of 20 miles in a W.S.W. direction, they found themselves on the banks of the river of Samarcand, 50 yards in breadth, but not fordable. It had much the appearance of a canal, for, a little lower down, its waters were hemmed in by a dam, and distributed with care over the neighbouring fields. The strip of cultivated land on either bank did not exceed a mile in breadth, and was often less, for the desert closely pushed in upon the river. The number of inhabited places was great, and each settlement was surrounded by a wall of sun-dried brick.

Every cultivated spot groaned under the gigantic water melons of Bokhara. The soil of the country is varied, but in the neighbourhood of the river hard and gravelly.

The direct course which the caravan pursued to the Oxus led it away from the Kohik, which was, however, again reached after crossing a belt of sand hills about three miles wide. Its bed was entirely dry, since the dam of Karakùl, which the caravan had passed, prevented the egress of the scanty waters at that season. Instead of flowing into the Oxus, that river forms a rather extensive lake, called Dengiz§ by the Úzbecks, and close to which the caravan encamped. The lower parts of the river are badly supplied with water, and it is only in certain seasons that it flows into the district of Karakùl. Thermometer 96° within doors.

After a detention at Mirabad of about one month, namely, on the 16th August, the caravan started for the Oxus, 27 miles distant. After journeying for 10 miles,

|| Ardal, on the verge of the desert. again at midnight, the caravan passed over vast fields of soft sand in ridges. The belt of the bare sand hills, which lie between Bokhara and the Oxus, varies in breadth from 12 to 15 miles. None of the sand hills exceed the height of 15 or 20 feet, and they all rest on a hard base. The thermometer, which had risen to 100°, fell to 70° at night.

An hour after sunrise this dreary route was exchanged for verdant fields, irrigated by the Oxus, and after winding about them for about four miles, the tents were pitched on the verge of the Oxus, at

BETIK, opposite to Chardjui, one of the greatest ferries between Persia and Turkistan.

[The Oxus had been frozen in the preceding winter from shore to shore, and caravans had passed over the ice.]

* Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo passed through Merv in August 1404, on his way to the Court of Timour, and Mr. George Thompson visited it in 1740 on his way from Andkui to Meshed, and others before and after have crossed the Murghab, but the accurate itineraries of later travellers are sufficient for the purpose of this paper.

† Travels in Bokhara, &c., by Lieutenant A. Burnes, F.R.S. J. Murray, 1834.

‡ Travels in the Punjab, Afghanistan, Turkistan, &c., &c., by Mohan Lal. Allen & Co., 1846.

§ The Turkish word for the sea.

The Oxus at this point was found to have a breadth of 650 yards, and a depth in some places of 25 and 29 feet;* banks depressed, and completely overgrown with a rank weed which chokes the aqueducts. The beasts and baggage were likewise carried over in boats, and the caravan soon reached

* Low water season. "Nadir-Shah, on invading Bokhara, constructed a bridge across the Oxus near a place called Kiliff. Thirty boats are sufficient to form a bridge in the dry season, but in time of snow double that number is required."—M. L.

CHARDJUI, six miles distant from the Oxus, pleasantly situated on the verge of culture and desolation, with a pretty fort that crowns a hillock and overlooks the town. Population, 4,000 to 5,000. Here the caravan halted four days. Every skin, pot, and pitcher were filled to the brim from the canals of the Oxus, and at noon of the 22nd August the march was resumed, and, entering upon the desert at a distance of two miles from Chardjui,† the caravan reached, at sunrise next morning.

† Public granaries and arsenals abundantly supplied.—M. L.

KARAÛL, a well of brackish water, 30 feet under ground. Distance, 22 miles from Charjui. The whole tract in view from this point was a dreary waste of sand hills, but by no means so destitute of vegetation and underwood as on the northern bank of the Oxus. Here and there was a sheet of indurated clay. In the hollows and on the brow of the hills a shrub-like tamarisk, called *kasura*, and a kind of grass called *salun*, were found to grow, also two thorny shrubs, *kuzzak* and *karaggan*, neither of them the common camel thorn on which the camels delight to browse. There was no water throughout this march, and no signs of inhabitants, only a ruined fort, that had once served as a look-out from the Oxus.

In marching from Karaül, the caravan quitted the high road to Merv, and proceeded westward by a way altogether unfrequented, the Officer in command of the Khivan army having ordered this route to be taken. On the morning of the 23rd August it reached

BALGHUI, 24 miles distant, a small and single well of good water, four feet in diameter, and as deep as that at Karaül. It was soon emptied, and the caravan had to wait a night until it again filled. In this march, the desert was overgrown with brushwood, and entirely destitute of water. Some of the sand hills attained a height of 60 feet, and were at that elevation invariably bare of vegetation. The sand was quartzose; no turf, grass, or creeping plants. The heat of the sand rose to 150°, as that of the atmosphere exceeded 100°, but the wind blew steadily in one direction.

The caravan advanced at a firm and equal pace, the camels moving at the rate of 2½ miles per hour (3,740 yards).

[Burnes mentions that, on a recent march into the desert, the Khan of Khiva lost 2,000 camels, that had been loaded with water and provisions for his men.

He dug his wells as he advanced, but the supply of water was scanty; also, that camels generally pine and die on the fourth day when without water, and under great heat will even sink sooner.]‡

‡ The following quotation from Mr. Gladwin's translation (p. 51, *et seq.*) of Abdul-Kurree'm's account of Nadir Shah's march to Khiva serves to illustrate the system adopted by an army for availing itself of the scanty aqueous resources of this desert:—

"Whilst employed in the conquest of Khowarezm (1740), he (Nadir Shah) informed the Governor of Meru-Shahjehan that, on his return, he should march from Charjoo, on the Jihon, by way of Meru and Kelat, to Meshed, his capital, and gave him the following information and instructions: "That from the river Jihon (Oxus) to the borders of Merv, being a sandy desert, the army could not march above 11 farsangs a day [cosses of two British miles are probably meant; a farsang is nearer "four], so that it would take them up four days [it should be five] to go from Charjoo to Merv. "That for the first day's march they could carry sufficient water from the Jihon. That although, at "the second stage, there is a lake called Al-Issar, yet, for fear it should not be sufficient for so large "an army, the governor should order about 30 *boghleyeh* wells to be sunk there. [The well so "called, and which is used in all sandy soils, is made by sinking a frame of wood, stuffed with "straw or grass, to line the inside of the well, and prevent the sand from falling into it.] At the "third stage, 18 such wells were to be made. For the fourth day he was ordered to dig a large "reservoir, and to supply it with water, by making a canal, three farsangs in length, from the river of "Merv. This last stage was 15 farsangs [more probably cosses]. Finally, he directed him to make a "great number of water bags for camels and mules, and to borrow as many more as he could find, "which were to be filled at the *new* reservoir, and sent onwards five farsangs, that the men might be "able to allay their thirst on the march. The Governor of Merv punctually obeyed these several "commands."—(Rennell's "Herodotus," p. 258.)

After a day's rest, the march was resumed at sunrise (24th August) and continued, with a short halt, till the same time next day, when the caravan reached

SIRAB, after a journey of 35 miles. This is a fetid well, and from well to well the caravan had no water. The great sand hills disappeared on the advance westward, and the desert, although presenting the same features as before, became an undulating and uneven country of sand, partially covered with shrubs. The soil was salt in some places, but the water of the well was good enough after it was some time drawn.

The next march brought the caravan to

UTCHGUI,* or the three wells. The water here was bitter. The country continued to change, becoming more flat and free from sand, but still running in alternate ridges and hollows. The wells which were dug in them (the hollows?) did not yet exceed a depth of 30 feet.

* Mohun Lal's Uzkhū.

[The Turcomans whom Burnes met at this point spoke of the piercing cold of the winter in that country, and assured him that the snow sometimes lay a foot deep. Burnes had himself experienced a depression of 10° in the temperature since leaving the Oxus.]

Setting out at noon the caravan reached at sunset the ruins of the forts and villages of the once famous kingdom of Merv, rising in castellated groups over an extensive plain. The caravan was now approaching the water after a journey of 150 miles through a sterile waste, where considerable inconvenience had been suffered from the want of it.

After a cool and pleasant march over a perfectly flat and hard plain, everywhere interspersed with forts and ruins, the caravan arrived at about 9 in the following morning at

KHWAJU ABDULLA,† a Turcoman camp of about 150 huts, perched on a rising ground near the banks of the Murghab. The Khivite camp lay on the other side of the river, which was only fordable at certain places.

† Shah-Rukh of Mohan Lal.

[Burnes remarks here on the subject of the route to the Murghab:—

“In a military point of view the scarcity of water is a great obstacle. In some places the wells were 36 miles apart, and generally the water was both bitter and scanty. The water which we had transported with us from the Oxus was not less nauseous than that of the desert, for it must be carried in skins, and these must be oiled to prevent them from bursting. The grease mixes with the water, which latterly became so tainted that the horses even refused to drink it. There is nothing of which we feel the want of so much as good water. In the march several people of the caravan, particularly the camel drivers, were attacked with inflammation of the eyes, I suppose from the sand, glare, and dust. With such an enumeration of petty, vexatious, and physical obstacles, it is doubtful if an army could cross it at this point. The heavy sandy pathways, for there are no roads, might certainly be rendered passable to guns by placing brushwood on the sand, but there is a great scarcity of grass for cattle, and the few horses which accompanied the caravan were jaded and worn out before they reached the river. A horse which travels with a camel has great injustice done to him, but an army could not outstrip the motions of a caravan, and fatigues would still fall heavily upon them. History tells us that many armies have fought in and crossed this desert, but they consisted of hordes of light cavalry that could move with rapidity. It is to be remembered that we had not a foot passenger in our party. Light horse might pass such a desert by divisions and separate routes, for, besides the high road to Merv, there is a road both to the east and the west. It would at all times be a difficult task for a great body of men to pass from the Murghab to the Oxus, since our caravan of 80 camels emptied the wells, and it would be easy to hide or even to fill up these scanty reservoirs. Where water lies within 30 feet of the surface an energetic commander may remedy his wants, since we have an instance of it in the advance of the Orgunje Khan (Khan of Khiva) to the banks of the Murghab.”]

On the morning of the 29th August the caravan began to follow the course of the Murghab for 12 miles before it could be crossed. It was found to be about

80 yards wide and 5 feet deep, running within steep clayey banks at the rate of five miles an hour. The river was crossed at

ULISHA, an indifferent ford, over a clay bottom with many holes. There was no village at the spot.

[The Murghab, says Burnes, rises in the Huzara mountains, and loses itself in a lake about 50 miles north-west of Merv. "It was formerly dammed above Merv, which turned the principal part of its waters to that neighbourhood, and raised that city to the state of richness and opulence which it once enjoyed. The dam was thrown down about 45 years (*i.e.*, about 1787) ago by Shah Murad, a King of Bokhara, and the river now only irrigates the country in its immediate vicinity, where it is covered with the tenements or 'obas' of the Turcomans, for there are no fixed villages. These people cultivate by irrigation, and everything grows in rich luxuriance. The juwaree (*holchus sorghum*) has a stalk thicker than a walking stick, and, in the uncultivated parts, there is the richest fodder for cattle and the finest thorny shrubs for the camel, an animal which is here found in vast herds. Above Merv, the country is called Maruchak, and is said to be unhealthy. This river (the Murghab) is the Epardus of Arrian, a word which, I observe in our author, is said to mean *irrigator*, nor is it here misapplied."

Burnes mentions that "the people of Merv, in their loss of country and liberty, retain the same reputation for valour which characterized their ancestors."

On the 30th August the caravan retraced the greater part of the previous day's route, and travelled down the opposite bank of the river for about 16 miles, when it again halted among the Saruk Turcomans, at an encampment called

KUNJUKULAN. From this point it commenced a march in the desert westward of the Murghab river, and made a progress of 35 miles. The tract was entirely different from that on the opposite side, and about the middle of the journey the desert changed into a level, hard, flat surface, which it ever afterwards continued to preserve. Patches of bushes were met with. The country was destitute of water, but there were many remains of caravanserais and cisterns that had been built by the philanthropic Abdulla, Khan of Bokhara. In this neighbourhood, and more particularly while on the banks of the river, Burnes witnessed a constant succession of whirlwinds that raised the dust to a great height, and moved over the plain like waterspouts at sea.

Early on the 1st September the caravan halted at

KALURNI, a ruin from which the hills of Persian Khorassan were descried. On leaving this point a gradual though almost imperceptible rise in the country was distinguished. The shrubs above mentioned were replaced by the tamarisk and the camel's thorn. At sunrise on the 2nd December Burnes reached

SHURUKH (Sarakhs), after having performed a journey of 70 miles in 45 hours, including every halt. During this period the caravan had only marched for 32 hours, and the camels sometimes stepped out at the unusual rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. The Turcoman settlement of Shurukh consisted of a small and weak fort, almost in ruins, situated on a hillock, under cover of which most of the tenements had been pitched. A few mud houses belonged to Jews of Meshed, but the Turcomans inhabited the conical houses, or *khirgahs*, peculiar to this tribe.

The country around was well watered by aqueducts from the Tejend rivulet, which is a little brackish, but its waters are usefully employed in fertilizing the fields. The soil is exceedingly rich, and possesses great aptness for agriculture; the seed is scattered, and vegetates almost without labour. There was not a tree or a bush to enliven the landscape. The crops of wheat and *juwaree* were most abundant, and the melons were only inferior to those of Bokhara.

After a detention of 10 days, caused by the fear of being attacked by marauding Turcomans, the caravan left Shurukh on the 11th September, after being joined by two other caravans. In the afternoon it reached a

HALTING-PLACE AT A CISTERN, 18 miles from Shurukh, the fort of which was still visible, for the country was level, and only broken in places by gravelly hillocks. At the third mile the dry and pebbly bed of the small river of Tejend was crossed. It rises in the neighbouring hills, and is lost in the sands. Burnes states that this

is neither the Ochus nor the Herat river. Its pools were saline, and much of the soil was also salt. There were remnants of civilization, but neither fields nor inhabitants.

Setting out at about eight at night, with a full moon, and after an advance of seven or eight miles, entered among defiles and hills; the caravan arrived at

MUZDERAN or DURBUND, the frontier post in Persia, a little after sunrise, and 45 miles from Shurukh, and 38 miles from Meshed. The whole of the latter part of the route lay in a deep ravine, where imminent danger was apprehended from the Turcoman "Allamans."

After a night of great anxiety, the travellers beheld with pleasure the look-out towers of Durbund, 11 of which crowned the crest of the ridge, and commanded its passage.

After surmounting the pass of Durbund, the caravan alighted in the fields beyond the pass of Muzderan, which stands on an isolated spur of table land, as the pass is descended. The place had once been peopled, but the Khan of Khiva had some years previously seized its inhabitants *en masse*, and razed their defences. In repair, says Burnes, it might protect the road into Persia. A beautiful fountain of tepid water springs up under Muzderan, and makes for itself and some kindred streams a channel down the valley, where the fruit trees and gardens of the exiled inhabitants were still in existence.

At nightfall the journey was resumed, the route lying up the valley of the Tejend, which was then a beautiful brook; and a little after mid-day (13th September) the caravan halted at

GHUZKAN, the first inhabited village in Persia (population 1,000), about 14 miles from Meshed. At last, on the morning of the 14th September 1832, Burnes reached

MESHED, the capital of Khorassan.

[Deducting the detention of one month at Mirabad and of 10 days at Shurukh, or Sarakhs, Lieutenant Burnes performed the journey from Bokara to Meshed, with a large caravan, in about 18 days.]

II.

Captain ABBOTT'S* Journey, in 1839-40, from Herat to Khiva.

Captain Abbott left Herat on the 24th December 1839, with an escort of five horsemen under an Affghan commander. Next day he reached PURWANA, in a high valley, about 11 miles from Herat. The road lies between close hills of no considerable height, and ascends the entire distance of Purwana, a village which was then depopulated by forays of the Jumsheedees, people of Turkish origin, tributary to Herat. Chains of wells and a little cultivation exist here. Around the village, of which the population was of the Tadjik race, are hills and high plains producing wormwood.

Avoiding the more direct and difficult passes of the mountain ridges of Kytoo, the summit of which was covered with snow, Captain Abbott's party crossed the latter chain without accident, meeting neither dwelling nor tent, excepting two ruined *rabaht* (*hospitia*) in the valley, and, descending some grassy heights, they pitched their tents at evening in a hollow, where they found a little water.

The party had thus emerged from the road to KHOOSHK, the capital of the Jumsheedees (a collection of black tents),† which they reached by a very distressing country, both over steep hills covered only with grass, and along the banks of the Khooshk rivulet.

The distance to this point was estimated by Captain Abbott at about 50 miles.

* "Narrative of a Journey from Herat to Khiva, &c.," by Captain James Abbott.—Smith, Elder, & Co. 1867. Second Edition.

† The Jumsheedees reckoned their number at 15,000 families or 75,000 souls, but Captain Abbott considered this an exaggeration of their real number.

Leaving Khooshk, the party passed down the valley of the Khooshk rivulet, averaging about a mile in width, and bounded on either side by sloping grassy downs, sprinkled with flocks of sheep and goats. The valley was highly susceptible of culture, and had once been well tilled.

They next passed a place called CHHEHL DOCHTUR, or "the forty virgins."

KARA TUPPAH, the "black mound," an artificial hill about 150 feet in height, and crowned by a ruined circle of defences, then came in sight. It stands in the elbow of the valley, overlooked by lofty hills on the west. The bend of the valley is very wide, and Kara Tuppah was not only girdled by black tents, but crowded by caravans from Merv, proceeding with grain to Khooshk.

Beyond Kara Tuppah there were few black tents, but large flocks of sheep were still met with. Shepherds came even from Merv to that pleasant valley, bringing water and all other necessaries on asses.

The next halting place was a spot about two miles short of KULLAH CHUMMUNIE BHAYD, a ruined and deserted castle, and where the jungle grass was on fire. Leaving this spot at daybreak, the party again followed the Khooshk rivulet. Large flocks of white sheep still sprinkled the hills on either side, but the hills were growing more arid and sandy as the party advanced.

A few miles further they came to the ruins of another castle, called HOWZI KHAUN.

They next quitted the district called BAUKISS. The names of the succeeding district was MOWREE, where they found the ruined castle KULLAH-I-MOWR, having still one wretched cell capable of sheltering a traveller. An extensive *kawreeze* in the middle of the valley attested its former high state of culture, and suggested the idea that in other days the waters of the rivulet were expended in irrigation ere they could reach KULLAH-I-MOWR. Not a single inhabitant could be seen in the valley, but six or seven caravans of grain from Merv were met with.

The territory of the Khanate of Khiva began at Kullah-i-Mowr.

Passing the night in a reed jungle, and starting with daylight, the party tracked the Khooshk until its valley was lost in that of the Moorghaub or Awb-i-Mowr. They ascended the latter river to the largest *khail* or camp, that of PUNJ DEEH, where about 300 black tents of the Yomud Turcomans were pitched.

After leaving this camp the route lay along the left bank of the Moorghaub, and the party crossed by a bridge the dry channel of the Khooshk, at its junction with the former river. At this point the Moorghaub was a deep stream of very pure water about 60 feet in breadth, and flowing in a channel mined to the depth of 30 feet in the clay soil of the valley. The banks are very precipitous, and fringed with tamarisk and a few reeds. The valley itself was, at Punj Deeh, about nine miles in breadth. On the east bank are sloping sand hills about 600 feet higher than the valley. On the west is the desert, a high sandy plain, overrun with low bushes and camel thorn, and extending to the mountain barrier of Persia. The valley of the Moorghaub had once been well cultivated, but Captain Abbott found it utterly deserted from Punj Deeh to Yoollataun, "owing to late distractions of the country." It abounds in pheasants, chuccores, and rock pigeons. The panther and bear are also to be found. At long intervals are seen the ruins of buildings.

Resuming their course, the party passed by a good and much beaten road down the river valley. Scene as before. The course of the Moorghaub was still pursued. A caravan was met with at every third mile laden with wheat and barley from Merv.

As the party approached YOOLLATAUN the desert aspect of the country was a little broken by symptoms of recent culture.

After some further advance, a few mud walls became visible, and amongst them, here and there, a black tartar tent. The road was now everywhere entangled among sluices and canals of running water. The *khails* increased in number, and the valley opened widely on either side, being, in fact, a large plain bounded by the desert.

At Yoollataun, Captain Abbott was received by the Governor and Cazee. The residence of the former consisted of a few low walls, and two or three Turcoman tents.

Continuing to pass over the sandy plain, the party reached MERV. (Date not given.)

Captain Abbott's camp was at Kara Tuppah, where there was a small *khail*, and a sluice of pure water from one of the canals. Early in the morning he resumed his march, over a plain encumbered by sand hills, and sprinkled with low jungle. The lower lands were occasionally cultivated, and had old watercourses and remains of habitations, speaking of a more prosperous period. The country was rather a wilderness than a desert, producing an abundance of dry firewood and plenty of camel thorn, but no grass whatever. The water bags were filled at Kara Tuppah.

In crossing the desert the party generally rose at midnight, and sat at a blazing fire, drinking tea, until the camels were laden and started. They then mounted, and followed the camels, which were soon overtaken, as they walked something less than three miles an hour. The cold was intense, and large fires were occasionally lighted in order to warm their limbs, which were frequently numbed. Wood was very abundant and quite dry, but so deficient in solidity that a stem, the thickness of a man's body, could be torn up by the roots without difficulty. The path admitted of only two abreast. A halt was usually made until the day was fully confirmed. Before the sun broke the party were once more mounted and away. The magnificent camels, in their long shaggy fur, little heeded the cold, although icicles hung from their beards and hoar frost covered their heads. At ten o'clock in the morning a halt was usually made in a hollow off the road, sheltered from the wind and exposed to the sun. Mounting after a short rest, they rode on until 4 p.m., when a halt was again made until midnight.

After the second march in the desert, the path became both vague and difficult as the sand hills increased, and the track was often quite effaced by the wind. In this difficulty landmarks, consisting of skeletons of the camel or masses of dark wood piled upon some conspicuous spot, had to be sought. At night, however, the latter were quite invisible. They were, in any case, few and far between, but wherever a camel's bone was found it surely indicated the route.

One night Captain Abbot found the snow a foot deep. The road was once lost, but again found, after which it became necessary to follow the camels, which found the way instinctively.

When the wind, which was generally N.N.E., changed to west, it brought clouds from the Caspian, which always fell in snow. The air at other times was excessively cold, and the party preserved their noses only by constant manipulation. They found that a casing of felt outside of the boot alone effectually protected the feet.

The greater part of the tract was at that time safe to travellers provided with passes, but at about the fourth march the party approached a well, when caution was requisite, as Tartar horsemen, subjects of Persia, made occasional forays in that direction from Deraguz. They therefore only remained long enough at the well to procure a supply of water.

Several marches were considered perilous from that cause.

After losing their way again in jungles of camel thorn and bushes of tamarisk, they met with some Turcomans who were carrying despatches from Khiva to the Government of Merv. These men had no camels, but carried water for themselves and cattle, their own and their horses' food and clothing, on the crupper of their saddles, making the whole distance of about 360 miles in six days. The horse's barley alone for the journey weighed 60 pounds, and the horse's clothing at least 20 pounds more, and yet the journey was constantly performed by the Turcomans.

In conclusion, Captain Abbott states,—

"The aspect of the desert, or rather wilderness, from Merv to Khiva, is that of a sandy plain, broken into most irregular surface by deep pits and high mounds, the whole thinly sprinkled with bushes of three several kinds, between which grow wormwood and the camel thorn. On approaching Khiva, the surface is often ploughed into ravines and ridges, whose course is north and south, giving some idea of abandoned watercourses, and traditionally reported to be the old channels of the Oxus. It is more possible that they may have served such purpose to the Moorghaub, when, previous to the monopoly of its waters at Merv, it flowed into the Oxus, but my observation was too limited to enable me to decide the question. The ridges are gravelly, but there is no want of sand. Wells on this route are found at long intervals, in one case of 160 miles. The water is generally brackish, but there are exceptions. On approaching Khiva there appeared a very thin

sprinkling of grass, which our horses eagerly devoured ; but no dependence is to be placed upon the pasture of this wilderness, and the traveller must provide barley or jowarree sufficient to supply the place of fodder. The latter is preferable when the horses have been trained to eat it, 10 pounds of jowarree being in respect of nourishment equal to 12 pounds of barley."

III.

Captain SHAKESPEAR'S Route from Herat to Khiva.

Captain Shakespear* left Herat at sunset on the 14th May 1840, with a party of 30 (including 7 troopers), and with 35 horses and mules and baggage. The march was to

PURWANNAH, about $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles, through the hills north of Herat ; a capital road. After a very pleasant march they arrived on the 16th May at

KHUSH-RABAT, $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles ; the road, generally excellent, crossed a pretty little stream, where are the remains of an old bridge. The Khush is a small stream ; the caravanserai here is magnificent, long enough to quarter a brigade of infantry. About halfway they passed a reservoir of water. On the following day (17th May) they reached

KILLA-I-JUPPAT, on the Khush river, $45\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The first 17 miles of the road truly beautiful. Shakespear estimated the elevation of the hills over which he crossed on this stage at 7,000 feet. Hundreds of hills slope in all directions, covered with the most luxuriant grass. Every little valley had a stream of the purest water. This part of the country is called the Badkhyss, and the Herautes boast of its beauties in spring. The remainder of the road is in some places destitute of water. Herds of cattle frequent. Plenty of grass. The road passes through the country of the Jumsheedees Demauks, who are said to be notorious and expert thieves. Marching at night, the party reached on the 18th May a

HALTING PLACE ON THE KHUSH, 30 miles. They marched 18 miles during the night, the first half of the road being through the different little valleys close to the banks of the Khush, and the remaining distance along the bed of the river, which was crossed at a tolerable ford. Starting again at sunrise the party moved 12 miles along the banks of the Khush, until they reached the halting place, where the heat was great, the flies troublesome, grass indifferent, and water distant. Leaving again at night, they reached the

MOORGHAUB RIVER, 45 miles. During the night they travelled $6\frac{3}{4}$ hours ; road generally good, but many quicksands in crossing the Khush. Loading and mounting again at sunrise (on the 19th May), the party marched $5\frac{1}{4}$ hours until they came to the Moorghaub, a muddy rapid stream, the banks of which are thickly fringed with tamerisk jungle. Marching through the night, the party reached a

HALTING PLACE IN THE VALLEY OF THE MOORGHAUB, 22 miles ; plenty of sward and grass along the road, which was generally good, although there were some steep sandy ascents. The valley of the river is narrow, and bounded by sand hills, which are covered with bushes of camel thorn and other stunted herbs. The valley itself has a fine soil, and, although highly cultivated in former years, was deserted in 1840. After stopping to sleep and feeding the cattle for a few hours, the party started a little after sunrise, passing a place called Sundook Koochan ; the distance marched is not given. Starting before sunset (21st May), they slept and fed the cattle at about two miles from the

BUND-I-YELLATOON (22 miles), or bank which throws the water of the Moorghaub into the canal of Yellatoon. This part of the journey was much dreaded by travellers, as the *Turka* Turcomans often crossed it when on plundering excursions. The jungle was very heavy on that part of the road, which was still along the Moorghaub. The flood had been so great that it had completely destroyed the

bank (Bund-i-Yellatoon), and the canal was consequently dry. At sunrise they started again, and marched to a

HALTING PLACE, 10 miles; heat oppressive. After visiting the camp of a friendly Turcoman, the party reached (22nd May)

YELLATOON, 27 miles, where they were heartily welcomed by the authorities (a governor and a cazee). Marching during the night along a good road, they reached on the morning of the 23rd May,

MERV, about 10 miles from Yellatoon.

[Summary of itinerary from Herat to Merv,—

Distance according to marches, as recorded	-	230½ miles.
" " to Captain Shakespear's statement	-	260 "
Time occupied by Captain Shakespear's party, about	-	8½ days,
" " " messenger, about		4½ days.*]

On the 26th May, Captain Shakespear and his party left Merv, and made a

MARCH of 12 miles. The heat was very great. The regular road crosses the River Moorghaub close to the town (Merv), but the boat being injured, the party were obliged to follow the river in the hope of finding a ford. Captain Shakespear became the guest of a Turcoman, who had an extensive *khail*. He had now fallen among the Surruk Turcomans who then numbered 15,000 families. The Turcomans whom he had previously met were of the Salore tribe (10,000 families).

There are two roads from Merv to Khiva; one is called the Rah-i-tukht, the other the Rah-i-chushmah. Captain Shakespear took the former as it had more water, but it was said to be longer by two or three stages. He ascertained that for four days he would have found no water whatever on the Rah-i-chushmah route, which was also said to be often dangerous.

After some detention the party left the *khail* on the 27th May, and made a

MARCH of 16 miles. Water and grass abundant; camel thorn most luxuriant; wood rather scarce. Stopped during the heat of the day, and in the evening made a

MARCH of 17¼ miles to the River Moorghaub. Grass scarce, wood plentiful. On the morning of the 28th May, the party made a—

MARCH of 15 miles along the banks of the Moorghaub, which was crossed at an excellent ford, the stream being about 30 yards wide, 3½ feet deep, and the bottom hard. The river is, however, full of quicksands, and the greatest care must be taken in searching for a good ford. There is but little grass on its banks; wood is abundant. In the evening the party started again, intending to make a long march, but after a—

MARCH of 5 miles, reached another stream, when Captain Shakespear, in attempting to find the ford himself, got into a bad quicksand in which he nearly lost his horse. The mules and camels crossed lower down without any accident. On the morning of the 25th May the party made a—

MARCH of 4 miles, when they came to a third stream of the Moorghaub where they had difficulty in finding a good ford. At 1 p.m. they started, and made a—

MARCH of 15 miles, when they reached a fourth stream, nearly as large as the first, which detained them two hours. Leaving this stream, they made a—

MARCH of 4 miles into the desert. From this point it was necessary to find two reservoirs of water which, the guide asserted, existed in the desert. Starting at night (May 30th), the party made a—

MARCH of 11¼ miles. The Turcoman guide succeeded in finding the reservoirs, which were mere pools dug in the bed of a small ravine. The water was muddy, but of good flavour, and the coarse grass on the edges of the banks proved a treat to the horses. Having reached this water, the difficulty was to hit upon the road to Khiva. The Turcoman guide hoped before night to hit upon the road from Meshed

* Captain Shakespear sent a Kipchak trooper from the Murghab to Herat, a distance of 140 miles, which the trooper accomplished in 36 hours. Getting a fresh horse at Herat, the trooper rejoined Captain Shakespear at Merv in 105 hours.

to Bokhara, which crosses the road to Khiva. Starting again in the evening, Captain Shakespear and his party made a—

MARCH of 15 miles, until it was so dark that it was feared the camels might lose the track of the horsemen. There were as yet no signs of the road, and the guide insisted on moving all night, as no water would be reached until late on the following day. Moving at the tails of the camels, at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, without any road, the party made a—

MARCH of 13 miles. By the greatest good luck the road was discovered. A halt was made until the morning lest the track should be lost. After sleeping two hours the party started again. It was difficult to trace the road even by daylight, the soil being nothing but loose sand which drifted at every breeze. The only good marks were the bones of dead camels or other animals, of which there were great quantities. Occasionally a camel's skull was found stuck on a bush, and at one or two places branches of trees were also heaped together as a mark. The desert is very uneven. There are innumerable bushes of a dwarf description, and in places the ground is almost hard. Some of the sand hills are of great height, and of the finest red sand. On the morning of the 31st May the party performed a—

MARCH of 27 miles. Heat dreadful. The loose sand, and the fatigues of the previous night, increased the thirst felt by all. All the water in the leather bottles with the horses was consumed. A well was found, but the water being strongly impregnated with saltpetre was so very offensive in smell and taste that Captain Shakespear could not drink it. The servants, however, and the horses drank it most greedily. Late in the evening the camels came up with supplies of water. Halting on the 1st June, to allow the cattle to recover, the party started in the evening along the same broken sandy ground, with the same ugly dwarf bushes, and during the night made a—

MARCH of 30 miles, and reached a well of delicious water. A camp of Turcomans, with large flocks of cattle was reached; they were moving to the Oxus, having found it impossible to feed their cattle any longer in the desert. Leaving again at night, they made a—

MARCH of 12 miles; slept till near daylight, after which reached—

TUKHT, 6 miles. This is only a large sand hill. The Oxus is said to have formerly flowed near this spot. During the night of the 3rd June the party made a—

MARCH of $18\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Slept for two hours, and on the morning of the 4th June reached—

RUPPA KALLA, close to the Oxus. 22 miles. The camp was pitched on the edge of a small branch of the river. The last 20 miles of the road was generally hard. The ruin of a fort was found at Ruppa Kalla. During the night of the 5th-6th June the party made a—

MARCH of 18 miles. At 4 miles from Ruppa Kalla a fort called Koosh Gullah was passed. The road ran along the high bank of the Oxus, the breadth of which Captain Shakespear estimated at three miles. Through this channel the waters took a serpentine course, now on one side, now on the other, leaving large portions of dry ground invariably covered with moist luxuriant jungle. The desert begins on the high bank of the river. About halfway on this march the stream appears to be 500 yards in breadth, but at the halting place scarcely 300 yards. At daylight, on the 6th June, the party again made a—

MARCH of 11 miles to a high mound. Here they approached the bed of the river for water, and passed, before they reached it, through four miles of ground that had been highly cultivated, but which was then neglected. On the 7th June they made a—

MARCH of 30 miles, passing, at four miles, HUZURIT-MADURI-BABA-ADAM, or the "Tomb of Adam's Mother." At nine miles they came to the separation of two roads, one leading inland, the other following the river. They took the latter, although the longer of the two, as water and grass were obtainable. On the 8th June the party made a—

MARCH of 17 miles, along a good road, through heavy jungle, in immediate vicinity of the river and sandy ground on the high bank. During the night of the 8th-9th June, they made a—

MARCH of 25 miles. After the first 11 miles they left the river, and turned inland. After sleeping until daylight, they made another

MARCH of 10 miles. At two miles from the sleeping place they came to a small village, with a few trees and some cultivation, in a hollow, with a somewhat precipitous ascent. These were the first fixed habitations they had seen since leaving Merv. About one mile beyond they passed another village, still smaller, and soon afterwards came in sight of Phitunk, a very extensive, thickly populated, and highly cultivated village, with large trees in every direction, and many carts.

On the morning of the 18th June they reached

HAZAR-ASP, 13 miles. About a mile of the road was through the village of Phitunk, then eight miles across rather high barren ground, and the remainder through a cultivated country. After being hospitably entertained by the *Inak*, the party made, on the 11th June, a

MARCH of 38 miles. The road was very circuitous, through a densely populated, highly cultivated, and beautifully wooded country, and on the next day, June 12th, 1840, they entered KHIVA.

[Summary of Itinerary from Merv to Khiva:—

Distance according to marches recorded	-	-	405 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles.
"	"	Captain Shakespear's statement	- 432 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Time occupied by Captain Shakespear's party	-	-	17 days.]
Total distances, according to Captain Shakespear:—			
Herat to Merv	-	-	265 miles.
Merv to Khiva	-	-	432 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
		Total	- 697 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

This distance was performed in 25 days, at an average rate of 25 miles a day.

Note.—Captain Shakespear remarks that, although the whole of Turkistan is described as a desert, and the people as a miserable race, living in tents, and possessing a few flocks of cattle, yet that from Merv he marched through 20 miles of cultivation, watered by the Moorghaub. This cultivation appeared to extend for many miles inland, the *khails* being numerous, the whole face of the country appearing like a garden, and each family with its own farmhouse.

He performed the journey from Herat to Khiva in 25 days, but he might have done it in shorter time, the fording of the Moorghaub and the sickness of one of his attendants having detained the party. The only part of the road trying to man and beast was the 170 miles across the desert from the Moorghaub to the Oxus, and that portion was certainly fatiguing, uninteresting, and disagreeable. The heat during the six days passed in crossing the desert was very great, and the doubt as to finding water was harassing. During every part of the road, particularly in the cool of the evening, it was pleasant enough pushing along with the mules.

IV.

Dr. WOLFF's* Journey from Meshed to Bokhara.

Dr. Wolff left Meshed on the 25th March 1844, but was delayed some days at KANAKUSHA, 12 miles from Meshed, and at

NAZARIEH, four miles from Kanakusha.

It was only on the 31st March that he fairly entered the desert, and encamped on the plain covered with shrubs, called

JESHAAR GUNBAZ. On the 1st April he reached

RABAT MAHAL, a desert place. He next mentions

* "Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara, in the Years 1843-45," by the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D., LL.D. W. Blackwood & Sons, 1848.

MASTERUN, 60 miles from Meshed, a fortress built upon the top of a mountain, in order to watch the movements of the Turcomans of Sarakhs, and to prevent them from plundering the caravans. Fifty artillerymen and some cavalry were stationed there for that purpose. On the 3rd April at

KARAGOSH, or "black strait," for the water is black there between two straits, and very salt. On the 4th April, he passed the desert place of

ABE-SHEROK, on the road to Gonbazi, 20 miles from Sarakhs. Here he had only rain water to drink. On the 5th April he reached

GONBAZI, 12 miles from Abe-Sherok. This was nothing but a well in the desert with very salt water. On the 6th April he halted at a

HALTING PLACE IN THE DESERT, after which he crossed the

DERIA SARAKHS (river of Sarakhs), "which flows from Herat." On the 7th April he arrived at the

CAMP OF NAFAS BEYK, 24 miles from old Sarakhs, a ruin since Abbas Mirza passed through the place. On the 8th and 9th April, marches were made in the desert and the road was once lost. On the 10th April the party reached a

HAUSEE KHAN, a "house of water made by the Khan," 24 miles (60 miles from Merv). On the 12th April he arrived safely at **MERV**.

[Dr. Wolff performed the journey from Meshed to Merv in about 13 days.]

On the 14th April, Dr. Wolff left Merv, and made a

MARCH of 12 miles into the desert. On the 16th April he reached

KALJA, between Merv and Chardjui, "100 miles in advance in the kingdom of Bokhara," An immense quantity of snow fell at this place, "a remarkable occurrence in the month of April in these regions."

From Kalja, he reached

RAFITAK, after being three days without water. There were four wells at Rafitak, two with bitter water and two with sweet, about 40 feet deep. The Turcomans fitted them up with sand and stone. From this place he reached

CHARDJUI, the first place in the Ameer of Bokhara's dominions. It was then a place of considerable importance, with about 2,000 inhabitants. The population, 14 years previously, had numbered 20,000. He found a fortress or castle there. The next places he mentions are

KARAKOL, and

SHAHR-ISLAM, eight miles from

BOKHARA, which he reached on the 27th April 1844.

[Dr. Wolff performed the journey from Merv to Bokhara in about 13 days, or 28 days from Meshed.]

Dr. WOLFF's Journey from Bokhara to Meshed.

Dr. Wolff left Bokhara on the 3rd August 1844, in the train of a Persian Envoy, and reached a village called

JESMAN-DOO, when the party halted for a time in a garden on the border of a tank. From thence they marched to

SHAHR ISLAM, the city of Afrasiab, and to

KARAKOL, where they stopped two days. The next places mentioned by Dr. Wolff are

ALLAT and

CHARJUI. After sending some horsemen in advance to clear the wells at Rafitak, the party rode two nights and two days without ceasing from fear of the Khivites, and then reached

RAFITAK, a rallying point of the Khivites ; here they rested two days. Dr. Wolff next mentions

UJAAJE, near a river, where the Turcomans conspired to stop the party, but were prevented by some of the tribe of Tekke. They next reached

MERV, when Dr. Wolff was hospitably entertained by the Khalifa, the Grand-Dervish, who succeeded in preventing the Turcomans from molesting the caravan by threatening to leave Merv, settle at Herat, and give them his "curse."

From Merv the caravan was accompanied by the Khalifa two days through the desert towards Sarakhs, and left by him with the friendly Tekke Turcomans, who were more attached to the Khan of Khiva than to the Emir of Bokhara, and therefore the people of Merv did not dare to pursue the caravan. The party then reached

OLUGH BABA, another camp of the same tribe, and then arrived at

SARAKHS, "a horrid place," nominally under the protection of Persia, but in the hands of the Tekke Turcomans. The inhabitants were divided into those who were allied respectively to Bokhara and Khiva. As in his journey to Bokhara, Dr. Wolff next passed through

MOSTRUN (Masterùn). (A well of most powerful mineral water is situated at about ten minutes walk from that place.)

NASARIEH, a place containing about 20 houses, 24 miles from Mostrùn, inhabited by Mervees.

GASKUN, a village of 200 houses, with a strong castle ; and lastly arrived at

MESHED, the capital of Khorassan. (Date and distances not given).

V.

M. DE BLOCQUEVILLE'S MARCH FROM MESHED TO MERV.*

M. de Blocqueville, a French photographer, accompanied a Persian expedition against the Turcomans of Merv in 1860.

On the 19th May 1860, the troops marched to

KALYAGHUTI, three leagues from Meshed on the road to the valley of Arderbend. Water and forage obtainable. The army was here divided into two corps. M. de Blocqueville accompanied the first column, which marched in the direction of the

ARDERBEND valley, through which the Pol-shai flows ; water very bad. This river flows east, and falls into the Tedjen or "Herat" river. Following its course the troops passed

KARABAGHRA village, surrounded by strong walls to protect it against the Turcomans, and a little farther another village of the same kind, but in ruins and uninhabited. The next places mentioned are

CHARGOMBEZ, or "four domes," a ruin close to the stream.

MUZDÉRAN, a fort on the summit of a mountain, and visible from the banks of the river. It guards the mountain pass against the Turcomans. Sarakhs is reached from this point by a shorter road than that through Norùzabad.

ARDERBEND, or "gate," which guards both the mountain pass and the passage of the river flowing between scarped banks. The fort was held by 40 or 50 men, with two cannon. It was later abandoned and replaced by the fort of Surdjé, with a garrison of 200 men. The river bank was overgrown with reeds, which had to be fired. At

SURDJÉ, the column took a mountain road to

* "Quatorze mois de Captivité chez les Turcomans," published in the "Tour du Monde," 1866.

NORUZABAD, a fort with 200 men, at the entrance to the plain of Sarakhs, on the left bank of the Tedjen river. This fort must be considered as marking the limits of the province of Khorassan, as the fortress of Sarakhs, although belonging to the Persians, does not give them possession of territory which they cannot cultivate, and on which the garrison sets foot only for the purpose of cutting wood and grass. On the 1st June the column reached

SERBEND, when it encamped; distance, 30 farsakhs (120 miles) from Meshed. Here the troops were employed in constructing a dam on the Tedjen, a branch of which had flowed in a northerly direction, and had even reached Kutchakum by means of canals, after watering ancient Sarakhs. Modern Sarakhs was built by the Persians in about 1850, and is surrounded by a ditch and by high walls, with some towers armed with cannon.

The second column of the expedition joined on the 7th April, and on the 14th the united force forded the Tedjen.

After several short but fatiguing marches through a sandy country, covered with a crust of salt ankle deep, the expedition reached

KURKTÉPÉ on the 28th June. The advance was made in the greatest disorder, and the quantity of baggage was immense. Provisions for three months were carried on mules and camels. The camp was raised on the 2nd July, after taking in a supply of water, and on the morning of the next day the head of the column reached

KUTCHAKUM. Road sandy, heat extreme; troops suffered dreadfully from want of water. The Turcomans harassed the column on all sides, killed a few men, and drove away 15 camels. On the 6th July, the camp was established on the left bank of the

MURGHAB River, opposite an entrenchment of the Tekkes. On the next day the camp was moved closer to that of the enemy. In this position the troops remained three days, seizing as much of the harvest as they could. M. de Blocqueville considers that a great mistake was made in deciding to reach the walls of

MERV. Although the distance was only 6 farsakhs (24 miles) it took the troops nine days to reach the place, through a country cut up by canals, almost under water, and very difficult of access. Merv was reached on the 29th July 1860, or really two months after leaving Meshed.

The Turcomans subsequently compelled the Persian troops to retreat from Merv, and M. de Blocqueville was taken prisoner by them.

VI.

AMIN BAI'S (Khivan Envoy to India, 1871) Journey.*

In the year 1870, Amin-Bai, Governor of Khanki in Khiva, was despatched by Mahomed Rahim Bahadur, Khan of Khiva, *via* Merv, Herat, Candahar, and Cabul, to India, to solicit the aid of the Viceroy in resisting the expected Russian invasion of the Khanat.

AMIN BAI left Khanki on the 28th of February with a caravan of 15 camels, 32 horses, and two ishaks or mules, with 25 attendants.

NAIMAN, first march, 4 farsangs from Khiva; three marches across waterless desert brought the caravan to—

SAKHDJA. Four of the camels were laden with tursaks (two each) or leather water-bags, containing from 25 to 30 bowls of water; each camel-load weighing about 400 lbs. Amin Bai observes "We always carry water with us for ourselves and horses in traversing the steppes; the camels are watered only at the wells; water is given to the horses twice a day, morning and night; each horse gets two ordinary wooden bowls full." It is customary to perform two marches a day, the first from night to daybreak, and the second from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

* Narrative of a Mission to India, *Turkestan Gazette*, No. 11, March 1875.

At Sakhdja, the tursaks had to be replenished and seven camels were laden with them for the next seven marches, viz. :—

1. YOL-AIRUTI or KHIVALIK KOMUR, where the road forks, one track leading to Merv and the other to the country of Akhal Tékés.
2. SAZAKLI-TEPE, deep shifting sands.
3. UYUK MAKAN, a hollow between sand hills.
- 4, 5, & 6. Halted in the sandy and waterless waste.

7. MURZA-CHILLA (Chirla), three or four wells with brackish yet, withal, drinkable water; sand desert around; hillocks with scanty growth of saxaül; this part of the country is said to belong to no one. Refilling the 14 water-bags at these wells, seven more marches by caravan road brought to

KHAN-KUI (wells) dug in 1855 by Madamin Khan during his expedition to Khiva, where he perished; these wells are surrounded by copses of saxaül. With one camel laden with water, two more marches brought the party to

OKSHUK-KUI, two wells, 42 feet deep, water brackish. Country around belonging to Tékés, but unfrequented on account of incursions of Ersaris, who drive away all cattle brought to water. After two more marches they reached

CHASHKIN WELLS, occupied by 200 tents of Téke Turcomans of the Aman-Shah line of the Seidli Bai branch, camping at the extreme lower course of the Murghab river.

Amin Bai was cordially received by Seidli Bai on the Murghab, which even here is described as being equal, in respect to bulk of water, to the large Shahabad canal in Khiva.

“Although the Murghab swells from increase of water, it does not overflow very much because of the height of its banks;” the Turcomans raise the water to the level of their fields by a system of dams. After a few more long marches, two days journey,

OLD TÉKÉ FORT, (SENGAR), on left bank of Murghab, occupied by Kausht-Khan,* principal Elder of Téké Turcomans. This fort was erected in or about 1850–55, during the warfare between the Turcomans and the Khajars of Persia.

One march of 6 (Khivan) tashes or miles from the Sengar brought the caravan to (the camels made two marches of it),

The DAM or BEND, the dam is 39 feet long by 29 feet wide, and is guarded on each side by an encampment of 500 tents of Tékés under Hakim Bai.

MERV is said† to be 8 (Khivan) tashes or miles above the dam.

After one day's march of 6 tashes (miles),

YOLATAN, occupied by Sayun Khan, Chief of the Saryk Turcomans, numbering 20,000 tents. On the right bank, after five more marches along the river, a bazaar with sheds.

PEND SARYK, a fort on the right bank.

The road from Kausht Khan's camp to Pend is good with occasional sand patches and copses or clumps of bushes. There are ruins of a Turcoman *Sengar*, with 8,000 Saryk tents. A bazar. Abda Khan is Chief of the Saryks at Pend; Between Yolatan and Pend no encampments were found.

From Pend the route left the river and struck eastwards. Eight hours journey brought the caravan to

KHATCHA stream, said to be in the occupation of Saryks.

MARCH across waterless desert, and further,

CHUNGURAK, unpeopled, meadows with springs. After two more marches,

KESHK, in the mountains of Baigys (Badgeez) on the frontiers of Afghanistan and Turcoman steppes, occupied by Djemshidis.

* Koshad Khan, *vide* p. 13.

† From this it would appear that Amin Bai avoided the “City.”

From Keshk the road was even and lay across meadow lands for about six miles, after which it led through the mountains, where a high and tedious pass, about three and a quarter miles, obliged the people to foot it, as the horses were hardly able to ascend.

VII.

DAUD KHAN'S* journey from Meshed to Merv and Chardjui.

On the 6th September 1872 Daud Khan left Meshed with two companions. The first stage was

KUNAH-GOSHA, two leagues from Meshed ; from thence the places mentioned on the route are,—

LABAGDAN, a town ;

KARAWAL-KHANA ;

GARM-AB, the demolished Serai (there are hills between this and Darband-i-Chahcha) ;

CHAHCHA, a village in Kalat ;

DARBAND-I-CHAHCHA, the desert, and the ruined fort of

CHAHCHA, which is the demarcation line between the Merv-Turcomans and Kalat.

“ All these places are utterly deserted ; no person lives there, but water is found in them.”

From Chahcha, Daud Khan came to

KARRAH-JANGAL, and then travelled along the bank of the Tajan stream. He states that this is the same Herat stream which, after flowing through Sarakhs, reaches Tajan. Another large stream, which comes from Darrah-Ghaz, joins with it, and they then go together to Turkman-Akhal, Kazal-Arwad, Turkman-Koklan, and Turkman-Babit, and afterwards fall into the Mazandran river.

Having crossed the Tajan stream, Daud Khan encamped one night in the

BE-AB DESERT. The next night he spent at

SHAHIDLI, and the third at

DASH-RIBAT ; after which he reached

MERV, 60 leagues from Meshed.

Daud Khan states,—“ All these stages contained nothing worthy of notice, except water and a small population, as the road passes almost entirely through deserts and woods. . . . No stream except the Tajan stream was found on the way.”

After a few days' halt in Merv, Daud Khan proceeded to Chardjui, 32 leagues distant. The road passes through woods, and for two days he travelled through a desert destitute of water. After two days the traveller encamps at

BARBATAK, a well. After this stage another desert is to be traversed for three nights. Daud Khan then reached

CHARDJUI, which, he states, is situated on the bank of the Oxus, on the Khorassan side. There is a fort near the city, which is furnished with bazaars, shops, serais, baths, &c. People of various professions, merchants, &c., are in it. Land is cultivated largely, and the trees in gardens are laden with fruit of all kinds. The Governor was a son of the Khan of Bokhara.

* “An Account of Daud Khan's Visit to Afghanistan and Khorassan, &c.” Simla, 1873. *Confidential*.

DAUD KHAN'S Journey from Merv to Meshed, *viâ* Sarakhs and Kalat-Nadri.

Daud Khan remained two nights at Chardjui (*vide* preceding route), and then returned to Merv by the same road, and after halting two nights in Merv started for Meshed, *viâ* Sarakhs, 32 (36?) leagues from Merv. The road lay through jungle, and no habitations were met with. Wells of water were however found at the following stages:—

DASH-RIBAT, 6 leagues.

SHAHIDEH, 6 leagues.

AKAR, 6 leagues.

SHORKAL, 6 leagues.

UNFALI, 6 leagues.

SARAKHS, 6 leagues.

Sarakhs contains two old forts, in the direction of Merv, which are quite ruined, and no person lives in them. On this side of the river towards Meshed, however, is a fort constructed by the Kajars in about 1858, occupied by one infantry regiment and two companies of an artillery battery, but none of the people of the country dwell in it. Daud Khan found nothing worth describing there. Staying therefore only one night at Sarakhs, he continued his journey to Meshed. The distance to the latter city from Sarakhs is 30 leagues, and the stages are as follows:—

GHAZAL-GHAYA.

NAUROZ-ABAD.

SHER-TAPPA.

PHUL-I-KHATUN, where the Meshed stream and the Herat stream join. The road then goes along the bank of the Meshed stream to

KARDARBAND,

BAGH-BAGHO,

RIBAT-I-MAHI,

CHAHAR-GUMBAD,

KINGARAK, and

MESHED. All the foregoing places contain forts and water, but no person lives in them except in Kingarak.

From Merv, Daud Khan visited

KALAT NADRI, "a district of Khorassan, situated at a distance of 18 leagues from Meshed to the north-west. A chain of hills about 16 leagues in circumference encircles the city. A small stream enters it from the south-west direction and goes out in the north. At the place where it enters the city a tank called Kurrah Sanmunfam is formed. A fort is constructed on the hill with two gates. Nadir Shah-Afshar constructed several towers round it so strongly that, even if there be ten armed men in them, a large number of troops will not be able to overcome them. At the above-mentioned entrance of the water three masonry recesses are built, with doors in each, and water flows through them, but there are no sluices or doors at the place where this water goes out. They are called Arghawansbah and Nafta. There are three other mouths a little higher than this place, and two sepoy are appointed at each of them not to allow any person to cross them, and it is therefore difficult to visit them. The city of Kalat Nadri contains gardens, a fort, shops, cultivated land, water, mosques, tomb of Nadir Shah, baths, a yellow tower and three villages round it, one of which is called Nakid, and each of which contains a population of 350 families. There are three other villages called Ghulghula, Zawak, and Atash, of similar population, to the south-west of this city. . . . Another village called Khisht is well cultivated. . . . The cultivation outside the city of Kalat is considerable, and about 1,000 kharwars

“ of grain are produced every year. In the lands which depend on rain, wheat, barley, sesme, cotton, and melons are produced, and 1,000 kharwars of the produce are reserved as seeds for the cultivation of the next year. The cultivators of land irrigated by streams or wells are contented only with the growth of rice and the fruit of trees in their gardens, and do not cultivate wheat or barley. One thousand kharwars of irrigable land and gardens are attached to the city. The valley and grass preserves are enough for the grazing of 1,000 mares and 50,000 sheep a year, and grain, ghee, cotton, silk, and wool are sufficient for 10,000 families.” Daud Khan mentions the existence of mines of sulphur, alum, &c.

VARIOUS ITINERARIES.

From KINNEIR'S "Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, 1813," pp. 405 to 408. These routes will also be found in McGregor's "Central Asia, Persia," Part IV.

Meshed to Merv, by Sarakhs.

	Farsangs.	
Mussing Passa Koh Jam	8	
Akdurbund	8	
Killa Muzdooron	5	
Zoorabad	12	
Serukhs	10	
Deh Gumbud	10	
Sir Chah	6	uninhabited.
Abe Merv	6	or the stream of Merv.
(When you reach the Abe-Merv you are in fact in the city.)		
Baghat Merv	1	or the garden of Merv.
Merv	1	
Total	62	

From Merv to Bokhara is 60 farsangs.

Meshed to Merv, by Dereguz.

	Farsan	
Guvesh	7	
Killa Shadalooka	8	
Dustjird	10	
Kanarah Tujurd	10	
Killa Mahooyah	10	
Seroujee Zumanabad	10	
Merv	12	
Total	67	

Meshed to Merv, by Kelat-i-Nadiri.

	Farsangs.	
Firmey	6	
Faz	4	
Dustajird	4	
Khelat	2	
Arttuck	10	
Chachah	10	
Choh Babar	10	
Merv	6	
Total	52	

Meshed to Merv.

In which no mountains are passed, the road being level.

	Farsangs.	
Kunnah Gashab - - - -	5	
Darbund - } - - - -	5	
Khajah - } - - - -		
Kenareh Tejurd - - - -	10	
Chahar Gumbeiz - - - -	14	uninhabited.
Kuroogku Chikaga - - - -	5	upon a stream or canal.
Merv Shah Jehan - - - -	12	
Total - - - -	56	

Supplying in this route the omission of Chuhee Shoor, between Chahar Gumbeiz and Kuroogku Chikaga, we can account for the total of 56 farsangs, as given by Kinneir.

This correction is not made in route 82 to McGregor's "Central Asia, Persia," Part IV., and the distance between Meshed and Merv by this route is put down at 51 farsangs in correction of Kinneir's apparent error in summing up, and notwithstanding that the latter observes that the *preceding* route by Kelat-i-Nadiri, and not this one, is the shortest of all.

From Colonel VENIUKOF'S Compilation. (Military Review of the Russian Confines in Asia, 1873.)

From Bokhara to Maimena.

	Versts.
1. Khosh-Rabat - - - -	—
2. Shakha - - - -	—
3. Karatinde - - - -	—
4. Kirki (Oxus) - - - -	180
5. Akcha - - - -	—
6. Andkhui - - - -	145
7. Khor-Abat - - - -	—
8. Kahdyf-Kala - - - -	—
9. Maimena - - - -	130
Total - - - -	455

Or about 303½ miles.

From Bokhara to Merv.

	Versts.
1. Shahr-Islam - - - -	24
2. Kara-Kul - - - -	32
3. Ardan - - - -	36
4. Denghiz - - - -	28
5. Chardjui (Oxus) - - - -	32
6. Kuttaminar - - - -	30
7. Shirk-Robat - - - -	30
8. Balgui - - - -	25
9. Nisasher - - - -	60
10. Kalcha - - - -	30
11. Merv - - - -	40
Total - - - -	367

Or about 244½ miles.

From Astrabad to Herat, *viâ* Budjnurd (199 miles), Kabushan (268 miles), Meshed (364 miles), is a total distance of 580 miles, along the best road imaginable.

Mr. Ogorodnikof, the Russian Commercial Agent whom Captain Napier saw at Shahrood in July 1874, recommends the northernmost route from Astrabad to Meshed as the best, although the most hilly of the two routes through Northern Khorassan.—[Proceedings of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, April 1875.]

From FERRIER'S "Caravan Journeys."

Meshed to Kaziz and Herat.

	Hours.	Farsangs.	
To Sangbut - - -	11	6	Village well inhabited.
„ Hedireh - - -	10	6	
„ Mahmoodabad - -	13	8	{ Desert plain, ruins of villages destroyed by Kazarcks and Turcomans.
„ Toorbut Sheikh Jamee -	7	4	
„ Kaziz - - -	13	9	{ Hazarabs country, once largely populated.
„ Kussan - - -	9	5	{ First halting place in Herat district.
„ Rosanuck - - -	8	5	
„ Shekwan-Mimizak - -	6	4	
„ Herat - - -	9	6	
	<hr/> 86	<hr/> 53	

Or $185\frac{1}{2}$ miles, a parasang being taken at $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Ferrier, journeyed from the 29th May to 8th June inclusive, 1845.

