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VASSILI VERESTCHAGIN

VOL. I.

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VASSILI VERESTCHAGIN

Vereshchagin, Vasily Vasil'evich
(VASSILI VERESTCHAGIN)

PAINTER—SOLDIER—TRAVELLER

Autobiographical Sketches

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN AND THE FRENCH
BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AFTER DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

*German translation
has title: Skizzen und
Erinnerungen.
Original Russian text
entitled: Ocherki,
nabroski, vospominaniya...*



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON

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Vols I & II

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.



As it would take too long to give a complete account of all my travels, I have selected certain characteristic episodes here and there from my recollections and put them together in a book of sketches about the Caucasus, Central Asia, India, &c. The reader must understand that this is but a collection of notes without any pretensions to literary style—studies, not pictures.

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1 pood = 36 lb. English.
 1 arshin = 28 inches.
 1 verst = $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile.
 1 silver rouble = 38*d.*
 1 paper rouble now (1887) = 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.*
 100 kopecks = 1 rouble.

Notes by the translator are marked Tr.

Errata and Addenda.

Vol. I.

Title-page.—The spelling 'Vassili' was adopted by the author when it was too late to alter the spelling 'Vassily' in the text. The reader's indulgence is requested for this and other inconsistencies and inaccuracies which he may detect in the spelling of foreign names.

Page 147, line 16, *for archin read arshin*

„ 215, lines 9 and 24, *for Kantchinga read Kantchinjunga*

„ 225, lines 11, 12, and 16, *for Yung read Jung*

„ 232, line 8. The so-called trout of the Himalayas are not true trout

„ 306, lines 16, 18, and 25, *for Guserabad read Guzarat*

„ „ line 21, *for Jumna read Chenab*

„ 307, lines 10 and 15, *for Wimbar read Bimbar*

Vol. II.

Page 23, line 18, *for postillion read post-messenger*

„ 28, line 19. This bird is not the European blackcock, but a black-skinned jungle-fowl

„ 60, line 5. The *lombardar* is not a magistrate, but an official whose duty it is to provide for the wants of travellers

„ 88, line 2, *for 'Abi-jan!' read 'Abhi jao!'* The literal English rendering is 'Now go'

MY NURSE ANNA

1848—1849

VOL. I

B



MY NURSE ANNA

(1848-1849)

My memory goes back to my fourth or fifth year, but my recollections of that time are still indistinct; those of my fifth or sixth year, on the contrary, are clear enough.

I remember very well bringing to my mother a lesson which I had been given to learn by heart out of a geography book called 'From Here to There.' My mother was sitting on a divan in the parlour, and my father was reading the newspaper in the adjoining drawing-room. I gave as an answer: 'Air is a matrimonial¹ body having weight, and necessary both for animals and plants.' 'What is that? Repeat it again.' 'Air is a matrimonial body——' My mother laughs. 'Vassily Vassilievitch,'² she calls out to my father, 'please come here.' 'What can I do for you, mother?' 'Come

¹ Should be 'elastic.' The two words sound very much alike in Russian.

² 'Basil son of Basil.'—TR.

and listen how Vassia says his lesson.' Paper in hand, my father comes into the room, sinks down heavily on to the divan, and exchanges a glance with mamma. I begin to notice that something is not right. 'Now begin.' 'Air is a matrimonial body——' 'Ha-ha-ha!' laugh the parents; but tears come into my eyes. 'Elastic,' corrects my father; does not, however, explain why it is so called, and what the difference is between the two expressions.

I was then six years old, could already read and write well, and was not bad at sums. That period was an interregnum for us, or, what is the same thing, a teacherless period. Our first tutor, Fedor Ivanovitch Wittmack, a good but passionate man, fell out with my mother, and bade farewell to teaching in order to take service in St. Petersburg as a government-courier.

I scarcely remember him, and know him only from the stories of the nurse, with whom he was constantly at war on account of us children; especially on my account, because I was a weak, sickly child.

I recollect how I looked from the dining-room and saw our new teacher, Andrei Andreyevitch Sturm, from Kiel, who had just arrived, talking with my parents in the drawing-room,—a tall,

serious-looking man, with smoothly combed hair, who proved later not to be so severe as I thought him at first, but a very kind man, although he was a German,—i.e. was very precise and a little methodical. His acquirements included the elements of arithmetic and the German language, and in these branches he began his instruction.

Theology, history, and geography we were taught, or rather had instilled into us line by line, by Joseph Stepanovitch, the son of our priest Father Stepan, a seminarist, who had finished his studies and was waiting for ordination. He was a good fellow, and was chiefly occupied with my eldest brother Nikolai and the son of Madame Krafkova, a friend of our mother's, as well as with our cousin Natasha Komarovskaya. I, being little—I was three years younger than Nikolai—only came into the schoolroom for a short time with Madame Krafkova's second son, to say my lessons and have new lessons set. How learned then seemed to me the instruction which the teacher was giving to his elder pupils! I always went into the room trembling, especially as neither Joseph nor his scholars were disinclined to amuse themselves with us little ones.

I know nothing more horrible than the joking and ridiculing of young people by their elders. It

burdened me for a long time ; and in whatever way I tried to explain it, I always ended with the conclusion, unfavourable to myself, that the ridicule was well-deserved. My natural shyness and timidity were thereby increased.

When my contemporary and namesake Vassia, the son of Elias the gardener, expressed a wish to share in our instruction, Joseph Stepanovitch was informed of the fact. He summoned Vassia. 'You wish to learn?' he asked him. 'Ye-yes.' 'Very well. Say: "I am wise."' The boy repeated: 'I am wise.' 'Like Pope Semen.' 'Like Pope Semen.' 'Cross yourself.' Vassia did so. 'Now be off with you.' The boy hurried away. We laughed at the scene ; but the incident was rather painful to me, and I was sorry for Vassia.

* * *

In my memory of that time, the person who is the most prominent, the nearest and dearest, is nurse Anna, then already an old woman. I loved her more than anybody in the world—more than father, mother, and brothers, although her nose was constantly disfigured with snuff. It was not that she was not cross and did not scold ; on the contrary, she often grumbled and scolded us ; but her displeasure soon disappeared without leaving the

slightest trace. In extreme cases—e.g. when we were disobedient—she threatened to leave, and to return for ever to her village ; and in fact she did sometimes go away, only not for ever, but for an hour or so, to her brother Yolyu, who, I remember, lived in one of the furthest peasants' cottages. But even then my grief knew no bounds. I ran alone behind her ; followed her to the village, holding on to her dress ; thought I was done for ; cried, and conjured her to turn back, and was not to be soothed until I heard the words, ' Go, darling ; I shall be sure to come back ; but another time—— '

And when she returned from her family she brought warm milk or something else with her, as compensation for the tears that had been shed.

This nurse loved us all without exception, but I seemed to be her particular favourite ; perhaps because I had a very delicate constitution. I, for my part, loved her to such a degree that a stronger attachment seems hardly conceivable.

She acknowledged the use of learning, and always talked to us about it ; but when it came to practical application, she showed herself to be of quite a different opinion, and snatched us out of the hands of our teacher and tutor on every convenient pretext. She not only lived in a state of feud with the latter, but she allowed herself to oppose

our mother also when it was a question of the 'sick child.'

Our leisure time we passed in the company of our nurse, who took us out walking—in the wood perhaps, to look for mushrooms and berries, which I was passionately fond of doing. Those hours are to this day among my pleasantest and most precious recollections.

The nurse was called Anna Larionovna ; I did not learn her surname, Potaikina, until later, and so it always sounded strange to me. We only knew her as nurse Anna, and troubled ourselves little about her origin.

In later years I was told that, having become a widow early, she had been taken on to the estate by my grandmother, Natalya Alexeyevna, having previously been in service at St. Petersburg. Later she came to my father. When a very young girl, she narrowly escaped the snares of the proprietor at that time, a brother of my grandmother, Peter Alexevitch Bashmakoff, a very rich landowner, who, whenever he saw at work a girl whom he fancied, would order the *starosta* to send her to this place or that. This time he ordered that Anyutka should be sent from one village to another, and waited for her in a meadow by the way. The *starosta*, who had compassion for Anyutka,

whispered to her to take another road, and my grandmother's brother got nothing that time. He had, moreover, no reason for expressing his anger, as his order had been executed, but Anyutka had happened to go another way. He certainly made



NURSE ANNA.

another attempt, later, to approach the girl. He went up to her when she was at work; but she ran away, terrified, as fast as her legs could carry her. He honoured her with the epithet of 'fool,' but no longer molested her.

Peter Alexevitch was afterwards knocked down and killed by some peasants, on account of his intrigues.

Anna Larionovna married, and after her husband's death she came to my grandmother, when the property of her late brother passed on to her. Anna had to submit to a great deal—had to endure harsh words and cuffs, particularly when my grandmother had lost at cards, and she played constantly. 'But if she had won,' the nurse would say, 'I could see it at once by her look; she would then let me kiss her hand, and give me a shilling, saying: 'Take it, Anna, you silly creature; nobody else gives you a present, poor thing!'

INCIDENTS FROM THE LIFE OF
A HUNTER-PEASANT

(In the District of Tcherepovetz in the Government of Novgorod)

*INCIDENTS FROM THE LIFE OF A
HUNTER-PEASANT*

AMONG the friends of my childhood was an old hunter, a good fellow, very skilful in his calling, intelligent, indefatigable, hoarding with religious care the powder which he received from my father. In exchange for this powder, he was bound to supply our table with game ; and I always took advantage of his visits to converse with him about his hunting adventures. He was willing enough to talk, and told me all his experiences with wonderful modesty and simplicity.

* * *

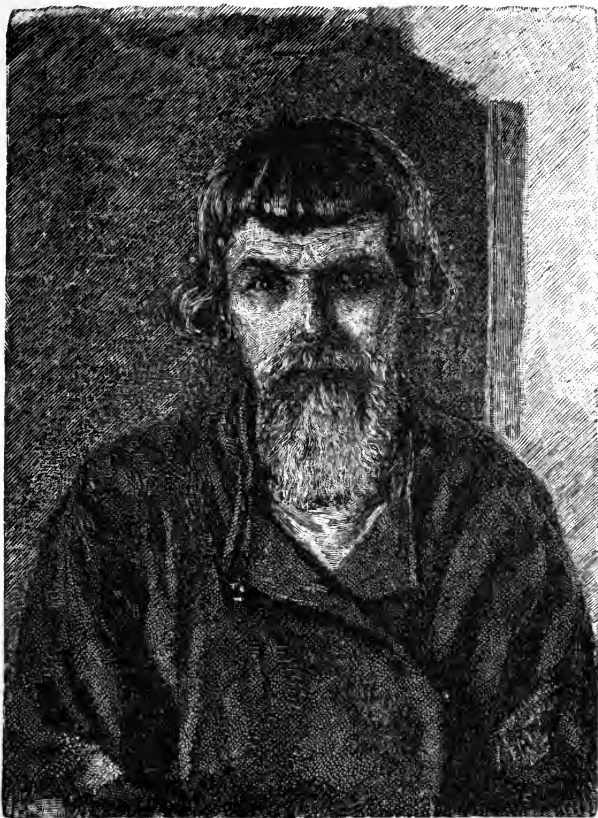
‘ Formerly roe-deer abounded here, but now we never find them ; God knows why. Elks stray here now ; but as long as the roe-deer were here there were no elks ; and so I cannot help thinking that the elks have driven away the roe-deer. The roe lives on grass and the moss from young fir-trees ;

but the elk feeds on juniper bushes, and gnaws the bark of the elder and of the young aspens and spruces. If you find the marks of teeth upon an aspen or young spruce, be it standing or lying, you may be sure that there are elk in the forest. The roe lets you come quite near him—sometimes within forty yards; but the elk scents you half a verst¹ off. Last winter I and my son only killed one elk. One's feet begin to fail, so I have given up the business; but in P—— they killed a great many.

‘ You ask how one can compare the two? Well, the senses of the elk are far keener: you are still a long way from him, and off he goes; so it is hard to get him. If two or three men combine to hunt the roe, one stands where the quarry is found; the others go after him. The roe always follows his old track, and so, sooner or later, he comes back to you. When you hunt in snow shoes, you stoop down and creep along in your shoes perhaps half a verst, till you are quite close, and then suddenly stand up and shoot. Once I had the luck to kill two roe-deer at one shot, hitting the second through the first, at eighty yards. The bullet passed through the chest and heart of the first (he dropped at once where he stood), and struck the other in

¹ The Russian verst is about two-thirds of an English mile.—TR.

the flank ; he made off, and got about a verst away, and then fell dead.



PORTRAIT OF THE HUNTER.

‘I had another adventure with a roe. As I was going through the wood, I saw him lying down ; he

was rising, when I fired and struck him in the neck, and he fell. I aimed at his heart, but, as he turned, the bullet hit him in the neck. As he fell, I left my snow-shoes and ran up to him with my knife drawn and cut his throat. But while I was re-loading he suddenly jumped up and made off. He ran twenty yards before he dropped. What do you say to that? With his throat cut! Another time, when in the middle of the forest, I saw traces of roe-deer. I followed the trail on and on, till at last I came out of the forest into the open country; and there they were coming towards me—no less than six. I levelled my rifle and fired. The bullet struck the one I aimed at, fairly behind the shoulder, passing right through his body, and he fell. I reloaded, in hopes of getting the others, when suddenly this one, that I fancied was dead, starts up and plunges into the thicket and is off—runs some forty yards, and then drops again. As I come up to him, he jumps up again and makes off. The place where he fell was all dabbled with blood. I followed him the whole day, but stopped at night. The next morning I came, expecting to find him dead; but he jumped up once more and made off, and I could not get near enough to shoot. So I pursued him almost to P——, where I got my snow-shoes and crept towards him. When I was

about forty yards off I raised myself. He saw me, and was just attempting to get up when I pulled the trigger, and he fell in the snow.

‘Only an animal—and yet it struggles hard for its life. Two whole days I hunted this one. Sometimes when you hit a deer, and it runs, you have to leave him alone, or else you get into the depths of the forest and cannot find your way home; and at home too they do not know what has happened to you, and what is the meaning of your staying out so long.

‘I have taken roe-deer with traps too—like the traps used for hares, only much bigger, weighing half a pood¹ (I have a number of traps—about twenty hare-traps, and perhaps ten wolf-traps). I had once set a trap in the track of a roe. He was caught, and made off, dragging the trap with him, and would not let me come near. So I pursued him three whole days. I could not shoot: he was too far off. I was willing to lose the animal, but I was vexed about the trap; for I should have lost that as well. I made a circuit round the roe, and came towards him from the opposite side. I watched him going from tree to tree and nibbling at the young firs and spruces, and coming nearer and nearer without seeing me. I fired, and hit him

¹ The pood is thirty-six English pounds.—Tr.

in the hind-legs; so I carried him alive up to the house, and his throat was not cut till he got there. He was quite alive—you could hardly see that he was wounded; and your mother found fault with me: “You ought to have taken the trouble to bring the animal here uninjured.” Yes, but how was that to be done? If you don’t shoot, the animal gets away, and then you may look for him in vain.

‘For elk I have a big gun; it kills at a hundred yards; but you must know how to hold it tight, for it kicks terribly. What a quantity of lead one shoots away! Sometimes you cannot find a rest for your gun; the trunks of the spruces are so smooth that you may as well fire without any rest at all; if your gun drops a hair’s breadth, you miss your aim. But I always try to rest my gun on a branch; then you can make sure of your game.’—

Roe-deer have, in fact, vanished from our neighbourhood. They used to be found in herds of perhaps thirty; now there is not one to be seen. Other animals, such as wolves, for instance, and foxes, have increased. It is very probable that wolves drive away the roe-deer. The elks that have lately appeared quite compensate for the disappearance of the roe-deer. An elk was lately

killed in our country that was three arshin¹ high (measuring from the back), and weighed fifteen pood. The hind-quarter alone weighed two pood, all rich and savoury meat. The elk is as stout in body and limbs as the roe is thin and lank. In the autumn the elk is like a well-fed horse in shape. His speed is very great—as great as that of the roe—and his endurance greater. His skin does not with us fetch more than three roubles.¹ The peasants tried to get the skins made into shoe-leather; everybody said that boots made of this leather were very strong and served well in dry weather, but would not stand damp, though this may have been due to improper treatment. No use is made of the fine horns of the elk, which sometimes are as much as one and a quarter arshin in length. But the elk is not sufficiently plentiful with us to enable the working up of the skin and horns to become a separate business.—

‘After August 6 the bear begins to prowl about the woods. What a number of cattle he destroys in the course of the summer! Your late uncle A. W. sent me once after a bear that had killed a cow. The distance was about five versts: “Go,” said he, “lie in wait for the bear, and shoot him

¹ The arshin = 28 inches: the silver rouble = 38*d.*: the paper rouble now (1887) = 21½*d.*—TR.

dead if you can." So I started before sundown. It was hay-harvest, and time was precious ; but I could not refuse. I see the bear come heavily along, making for the carrion—it was the same cow that he had killed. The fresh juniper twigs crackle under his heavy paws. Suddenly he scents me and makes for me ; he comes quite close, raises his snout, looks up and sniffs the air. At this moment he sees me, rises on his hind-legs and smells me. To my horror, my gun misses fire. Had it got damp in the grass? There was only a flash ; the charge did not ignite. But the bear started and made off. I stayed on the spot all night. He prowled round, but would not come near me. What was I to do? I meant business when I loaded my gun, but that had come to nothing. He was such a beautiful fat bear! Bears are very cunning. He would not have come at all if I had not gone the last two hundred yards on stilts. As soon as he comes upon the track of a man he knows what it means, and turns about. It is another thing when you are out after birds, or have no gun at all ; then it occurs to you that, if a bear comes, you are done for. You can sometimes defend yourself against wolves with nothing but a stick ; but a bear is not so easy to deal with : he is an ugly customer.

‘ Once I was starting for the forest when, in the

village, on the middle of the bridge, I met a bear. I had no gun, for I was going after mushrooms. I snatched a spar from the bridge, struck out with it, and called out at the top of my voice. He stopped quite close to me; roared, and ran away.

‘The bear is especially dangerous at night. Often he will not come up to the carrion, but leaves it alone. He will try to see if there is any one about, and if he finds any traces he will turn round and go back to the place he came from. It is the best plan to go bear-hunting by yourself. Choose the very next day after he has killed a cow; climb up a fir or any other tree; sit there as still as a mouse; even your pipe you must smoke very gently; have your gun in good order, and breathe softly. Then you have nothing to fear, if you do not get frightened through not being used to it. In bear-hunting you need the strength of twelve men, as a holy book says; and you must not speak: however gently you whisper to your companion, the bear will hear you, so sharp is his ear. It is a question of life and death: if you kill him, well; if you fail, you are a dead man. We only hunt the bear for the price set upon his head; that is all we earn, and all we have to live upon. But why do gentlemen go a-hunting? Only for pleasure, to see what it is like and to get

sport out of it. They care more for pleasure than for money.'—

It seems to me that the old man exaggerated the danger of an encounter with a bear. In fact I heard that when the peasant-women of the district go into the forest to gather berries they are often frightened by a bear, but very seldom attacked by one. I do not know whether there is any truth in the belief which all our peasants have, that if you see the bear first you can frighten him and put him to flight, but that if he sees you first you are in great danger.

Here are some specimens of encounters with bears:—

‘Sometimes he attacks a man when he is irritated or has not strength to run away. The bolder you are, the easier is it to deal with a bear. In L—— is an old man who always goes out alone; he has killed seventeen bears in his time, though he is not at all a skilful huntsman. So, once, when I was out after black-game, I came upon a bear turning up an ants’ nest. I grunted loud like a pig. He turned round, gave a faltering cry, and made off. I pursued him for a verst. He kept along a swampy bottom, so that I could not get a shot at him, and I lost sight of him in a bog. Another peasant was out after ducks.

Suddenly he met a bear, was frightened, cowered down on the ground, and sat there quite still. The bear roared, raised himself on his hind-legs, and so walked round him till he had almost frightened him to death, and then went away without touching him.

‘Once I had a regular struggle with a wolf: he had been caught in the trap, but got away, dragging the trap with him, to a great distance. For a long time I could not overtake him; but at last I came up with him, and he stood at bay. When this happens you must be very bold. I thought I should come off badly. I had no gun, only a stout stick. I struck out with my stick, and the wolf raised himself on his hind-legs. As for the trap, which weighed twelve pounds, he lifted it up with his fore-leg, and sat there like a peasant with his *icon*¹ on his arm. I was in my snow-shoes, and was afraid he would seize me; so I jumped out of them, and was in the act of aiming a blow at him, when he made a spring at my legs. I succeeded in dealing him a heavy blow on the back, and saw his ears droop, whereupon I redoubled my blows, letting them fall where they would. God be thanked that he did not get hold of my leg! Later on, when I

¹ Sacred picture, found in every Russian-house.—TR.

had killed a good number of wolves, I was less afraid of them. It is but a matter of a blow or two, and then out with your cord, bind your wolf to a branch, strip off his skin, and carry your prize home.

‘I never yet succeeded in getting a wolf without a trap; and I have very seldom seen one caught in any other way. They perceive you and get out of your way. I never saw a wolf’s lair either, though I have rambled through forests enough. Probably he makes his lair under moss, in places that a man cannot reach, in the depths of the forest, where spots of dry ground rise out of a morass. When you catch one in a trap, no wolf will show himself in that place for two months, so timid is he when he is free; but when he is caught in a trap he becomes very savage. Sometimes he will actually break the trap by knocking it against a tree. Some five wolves I have lost in this manner, losing my trap as well as my prey.

‘The best plan for wolves is to choose a desert place in the middle of the forest, and there in winter to build a little hut with a stove. Then you bring some carrion (horse or ox flesh) and lay it some forty yards off; but you keep away for some time. You let the wolves eat their fill once, and perhaps a second time. Then you may come,

light a fire in the stove, and lie in wait. Round the hut you make a screen of young firs so that the wolves shall not see you; also, they do not smell you so easily through the firs. Then you have as good as bagged them all; after one is hit, the rest come on just the same: in this way you may destroy more than one pack.

‘In former days the gentlefolk too used to hunt wolves. They used to have deep pits dug in the forest; the sides were made firm with stones and dry branches, with small stones and snow laid on the top, and carrion laid inside. The wolves, driven by hunger, venture on the dry branches, and presently are all in the pit. These pits are still dug; but few wolves are caught in this way now: it seems they have grown more cunning.’—

The old man was in error here, I think. Wolf-lairs are found in our forests, but he probably took them for badger-lairs. Badgers and also wolves make their lairs in old charcoal-burners’ pits, burrowing very deep in different directions. The difference lies only in the size; that is to say, the wolf’s burrow is larger—so large that a full-grown man can creep into it. You may know them by the earth piled up at the entrance. In winter the wolves are very bold in our country: they will run up to the windows of the houses in the villages.

One actually came once into the courtyard of our house, and, attracted by the smell of the cooking, made his way into the kitchen.

The following adventure befell a peasant not long ago. He was carrying wood into a charcoal-pit. As he came near the pit, four wolves sprang out and fell upon his little dog that was at his heels. He took the dog up into the sledge and turned back towards the village. The wolves followed the sledge—two on this side and two on that—and ran alongside almost as far as the village. They were very keen to get hold of the dog. The man could only keep them off by striking with his stick first on one side and then on the other. ‘They showed their teeth so savagely that I had to take care that I was not myself attacked by them,’ added the peasant who told me.

As I have already said, the wolves in our forests have much increased of late. This is natural when you consider that they are not much hunted now. In former times they were kept down by the land-owners, who used to have great hunting parties; but this is now gone quite out of fashion in our district.—

‘Do you know the pouched badger? he is striped black and white. He is found in our forests. I have killed numbers of them. He lives,

like the fox, in holes and burrows: he makes a burrow for himself at least forty yards long, with several galleries. To catch him, you must put your trap in the burrow, one trap in each opening; and you must look at your traps every day. The trap is set at the entrance, but you must take great care in setting it. It is hard to catch a badger when you are not used to it: if you do not know exactly how to set it, the brute finds it out directly. I always bury the trap in the earth, make the earth smooth, and shake fir-needles over it; he cannot smell the iron when it is covered with fir-needles. As the badger treads on the loose earth, he presses down the iron plate of the trap, and the teeth of the trap grip him. If you go with a dog, the dog scents out the burrow and runs in, and examines all the galleries, which turn and twist about in their course. They are of great length and have many exits and entrances. Sometimes you think your dog is lost: you can hardly hear him give tongue, so very long are the burrows.

‘Once I got right into a burrow. I wanted to see which way the galleries ran, to try my iron pole, and get some booty if I could. First, the burrow ran downwards, and then upwards again; and here I saw three badgers—a female with two

young ones ; I drew them out with my barbed iron and killed them. The creature is one arshin in length, and has a fat body. If you catch one in autumn, when he has been feeding well all the summer, he will yield at least five pounds of tallow, and good tallow too. I still have some badger-tallow at home, though I have given a great deal away. This tallow makes a good ointment for a sore foot or hand ; it is also good for horses. Once a great owl got caught in my trap. Its claws were so big that it was able to lift up a hare with the trap ; and it was fat too. The fat on it was in many parts as thick as your fist. I was able to get two pounds of fat out of it. It was good fat—as good as that of the badger, which, like it, does not freeze.

‘I have also caught many martens and otters, all with the same kind of trap. You cannot manage it unless you know the trick of it. With these animals too you must follow the traces, and in doing so you must go to work with the greatest caution. First of all, you must feed the beasts ; for you will never catch them without bait. You get a dead hare, and lay it somewhere in a little hollow in the ground ; the otter will soon creep quietly up to it. As soon as it is accustomed to come to the same spot, you lay a trap in its

run. Martens are caught in the same sort of way, —you shoot a hare, and hang him up on the lowest branch of a tree. If there be a marten in the forest, this will soon attract him. You then set your trap in his run, smooth down the snow, and then, to prevent his suspecting anything, you imitate his footmarks which you have destroyed. That is the way in winter; in summer it is more difficult. Or you may take a dog with you; but it is not every dog that can run down a marten: he will run from one forest to another, sometimes to a distance of five versts. How are you to overtake him? He is an active beast. The marten generally lives in a squirrel's nest. The squirrel builds his nest of moss in fir-trees, and lays up a store of provisions there. The marten eats the squirrel and lives in his nest. I have often taken them out of these nests. If you once go near his nest with a gun he abandons it: he smells the gunpowder and quickly makes off. We do not find many martens now. And what do you think his skin fetches? A good skin is worth from four to five roubles. The otter's skin is cheaper, and is sold for as little as one and a half rouble.'—

Excepting wolves and foxes (of which the former are not much hunted and the latter are difficult to catch and therefore not often caught) all the other

and lesser furred animals are gradually dying out, such as martens, badgers, otters, squirrels, &c. In the forests of this district at least their numbers have considerably diminished. The squirrels alone are still bagged in large numbers; I know a hunter who in three weeks killed over three hundred.—

‘We must think of hunting foxes now. Last year I went mostly after deer, and in the latter part of the summer after black-game and partridges. Do you know how we used stuffed birds as lures? You take the entrails out of a grouse and cram in old rags; or you simply take a bit of wood and cover it with a piece of blue cloth, only below, where the wings are, you must whiten it with chalk or paint, and draw the eyebrows in red. Then you put up a tent, and fix the stuffed bird on the top, and sit inside on the watch. As soon as the sun rises the grouse begin to fly up and down; they perch on a fir or a birch, see the stuffed bird and fly towards it; and you have only to shoot them as they come—that is a very simple affair. But catching foxes is far from easy. I believe the she-fox drops her litter about the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul; and that is the best time to take the young ones, while they still keep with their mother and do not venture out alone. When a fox has young she keeps everything in order about the lair—treads

the earth smooth, and carries all sorts of things inside, such as wool and feathers; and brings home hares and birds to feed them. In the day they are out after their prey, and not to be found at home, so you must wait till the evening; then they are all assembled together, and you can drag out the young ones with the tongs. I once had three young foxes, which I fed all the winter, from the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul to December. It is a simple matter to feed them: you give them bread, or a dead crow if you find one. You must keep them apart with little boards, else they will eat one another: lay a board on the top, and leave a chink or two to let in the air. I have seldom caught old foxes: they are very cunning. When an old fox comes to a trap, he at once raises his paw, sees his danger, and makes off. Those who know the charm can catch five, or even ten, foxes at a time: one recites the charm, the other drives the fox towards the line. Some hunters make friends with the Fiend of the Forest, and then they always make a good bag. In W——, for instance, we have a sorcerer who has killed eight head in two weeks—four foxes and four wolves. How does he manage that now? We asked him about it, but he could not tell us: for then he would catch nothing more himself: the Devil forbids him to tell. What! you don't believe it?

How does it happen, then, that when I have set traps all over the ground the fox avoids them all as if he were a man, and gets out unharmed? The Devil shows the fox the way out, because we do not serve him. He lusts after the soul of a sorcerer. From those who are not sorcerers he gets nothing in exchange for the fox. What is the use of talking about it? Have we not plenty of such sorcerers? With them the fox goes quietly on and does not smell the iron: with me, though the trap be buried as deep as you please, the fox and the wolf will smell the iron at once. Believe me. You may ask anybody, and anybody will tell you, even if he be not a hunter. Many of the sorcerers are in secret friendly to us, and have let out the truth: he (the Devil, I mean) appears to them, not in his own shape, but rather in the likeness of a man. But whoever sees him in his actual shape has not long to live. He hovers high above the forest. A sorcerer told me, 'If you are in the forest and come on his track you at once feel a pain in some part of your body.' Once, as I was stacking wood in the forest, I came on his track, I suspect; for a sudden pain took me in the side. The pain was so violent that I could hardly drag myself home; and it did not go away till a sorceress rubbed the place with salt. When you have toothache, too, there is nothing to

do but to go to the sorceress. I dare say you don't know what harm one of these sorceresses can do. She poisons the wind thus: she cuts the hair off a dog, speaks a spell over it, and then lets the wind carry the hairs about; they are driven against a man and poison him. But if the man has said a *Pater Noster* or any other prayer on the same day, the angel protects him. But he who does not know the prayers or forgets to say them is lost: the Devil settles himself in his body and grows there, and the man begins to howl and to scream. This happens to women too: they are taken to communion or confession, and that the Evil One does not like—he screams and howls. Weddings, too, are often fatal. Do you know the old woman in P——? Avoid meeting her as you go out hunting. She asked me for a hare once, but I had none at the time. What do you think she did? She bewitched me: since that day I have not been able to catch a single hare. We are greatly afraid of these witches: they can spoil a man's hunting and ruin him altogether. The forest has many terrors. There is many a man who cannot bring himself to spend the night in the forest though you offer him ten roubles. But we are often obliged to do so. If you are out after roe-deer, and get to a distance of twenty or thirty versts, you must stay there whether you will or no. Often

one cannot get to sleep, till at last one sleeps out of sheer weariness: one's thoughts are free at such times. What strange ideas come swarming into one's head! If you say a prayer God protects you. How great is the power of the Devil over man! There are twenty-four evil spirits—twelve brothers and twelve sisters. The power of the Devil is so great that he will make his way even into the church; but he cannot stay there after the cherub song; he must go away then. Don't you know that? Well, live and learn; when you are an old man you will know more of the world than you do now.'

NOTES
OF A
JOURNEY IN TRANS-CAUCASIA

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CHAPTER I.

A RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL OF THE SHIITES.

My first travels after I had learned to use a pencil and brush were in the Caucasus and Trans-caucasia, undertaken at the age of twenty-one, to the great horror of my mother. My impressions of these youthful travels are among the best and most vivid of my life. I remember that I was particularly impressed by the religious festivals of the Mussulman Shiites which I then saw and drew in the province of Karabagh.

It was already late in the evening when I reached Shusha. Nothing was to be seen but the dark outline of the walls of the town, which is built on a steep and lofty mountain. Shusha, the capital of the district of that name, was formerly the residence of the Khans of Karabagh. Its

position is strong, being protected on two sides by steep rocks, and on the other sides by a very well-built wall with towers. The road that leads up to the town is very laborious, ill-made, paved with large stones, and so steep that five horses could hardly drag my carriage up. I had not yet reached the top when I noticed a bright light over the town, and a great noise reached my ears. The nearer I came to the town the stronger was the light, till at last it seemed like a fire, and the noise was recognisable as the murmuring of many thousands of voices. I passed through the narrow gates of the fortress, and a wild and unique picture, such as I had never seen before, presented itself to my eyes. The whole market-place was literally filled with people, some shouting as if they were mad, others merely looking on. Tartars, in groups of perhaps a hundred, formed lines and danced hither and thither in the market-place with wild cries, holding each other by the girdle with the left hand, while with the right they brandished a stick above their heads at every leap. There were three of these groups. Boys, dressed in motley rags and skins with the hair turned outwards, danced before them, making grimaces and yelling all the time, striking Turkish drums and plates of copper. Mollahs, who direct the proceedings, stimulate the dancers

with voice and gesture, and push about and revile the people; and some distinguished bey or noble, apparently the master of the ceremonies, moves backwards and forwards in the crowd, brandishing his sword with loud imprecations. The noise is swelled by the chattering of the spectators, the neighing of horses, &c. The scene is lit up by huge naphtha-torches,—i.e. rags, in baskets of open iron-work, which are constantly moistened with naphtha. Hundreds of these flaring torches are held aloft on long poles in the rear of the dancers. Groups of Persians are to be seen, distinct from the general mass of dancers; they do not take hold of each other, but carry their mantles in the left hand, as if they were starting on a journey. They too dance madly in all directions.

Every year during the first nine days of the month Mocharrem the Tartars spend the evening in this fashion, to commemorate the sufferings and martyrdom of the Imams, whom the Shiites hold in honour; the tenth day is devoted to the memory of the first Imam, Hussein, the son of Ali and the grandson of Mohammed. These ten days are a period of sorrow and mourning to the Shiites, who observe a strict fast during the whole period—i.e. eat nothing all day from sunrise to sunset. The more pious among them do not even shave them-

selves, do not smoke, nor go to the bath, nor start on any journey, but spend the time chiefly in pious conversation ; though the prosaic life of the Tartars generally makes this degenerate into mere gossip. Those who actually abstain all day from food and the use of the *kalyan*, or water-pipe, take full compensation for this abstinence at the lawful time by devoting the whole night to indulgence, from sundown to dawn. In the mosques, passages from the history of the sufferings of the Imams are read aloud, and sermons are preached on the subject.

The sufferings of the Imams also form the subject of a sort of mystery-play or drama, which is performed partly on the first nine days, and partly, with special solemnity, on the tenth day. According to the ancient custom, the whole drama ought to be performed on the tenth day ; but the performance is now divided and spread over several days for the convenience both of the performers and the spectators.

At Shusha the representation is arranged as follows. At the mosque, or in a caravanserai, or some other place where there is a large courtyard surrounded by buildings, a wooden flooring is laid down. The players are generally amateurs, though for the principal parts professional actors are often engaged from Persia, which, as the chief seat of



A PERSIAN.

the sect of the Shiites, has some very tolerable masters in the art. The manager has also the arrangement of the costumes, which are picturesque and original, but somewhat fantastic. For instance, among the actors in coats of mail, with helmets on their heads and shields in their hands, it is rather startling to see one in the modern undress uniform of a Russian official with an old plumed hat on his head. It was explained to me that this comical figure represented a French envoy who took part, according to the tradition, in some of the incidents of the drama. Another actor, who personates an Arab caliph, sits with an air of great importance, bearing on his head an old French cavalry casque with a long horsehair plume. The women's parts are taken by men, wrapped up to the eyes in shawls and drapery after the manner of the native women. The court in which the performance takes place is crammed with men; the upper galleries (if it be a caravanserai) are occupied by women.

The actors appear and take their places on a semicircular platform. Each has a little book in his hand, from which he reads his part in a sing-song voice, and generally with a plaintive intonation. I remember an actor from Persia who played the murderer of the Prophet, and declaimed with such

a fine voice and so much expression that he literally electrified his audience. The performances generally make a strong impression on the people: you hear sobbing and weeping on all sides. In some particularly moving scenes—that, for instance, in which the young Imam, the last surviving relative of Hussein, before going out to battle, takes leave of his mother and kinsmen—the groans and lamentations of the audience are so loud as to drown the voices of the actors and interrupt the progress of the piece. I saw old men crying and screaming like children, not to speak of women; the women are dissolved in tears, turn and twist about, and pour out their lamentations all through the whole performance. But whether this extreme grief is quite sincere one may fairly doubt; it probably is not unconnected with the belief of the Shiites that every tear shed on such an occasion washes out a multitude of sins.

During these nine days the Tartars parade the streets in processions, singing a variety of dirges and beating time upon their breasts. As soon as evening comes the parties of dancers stream together from every quarter of the town into the market-place, as I have mentioned already, and carry on their wild antics there far into the night. In this fashion they display their grief, and at the same time their

readiness to fight for their faith and their Imams ; or rather, as the Imams are no longer among the living, they wish to show to the world how they would have defended them if they had been still alive and persecuted.

Not long ago these nightly gatherings were forbidden by the Government, because they often led to scenes of bloodshed. For every Tartar state is as a matter of course divided into parties, whose origin dates from a remote past ; and without, as they should, entering into explanations with one another about the causes of their quarrels, they mix up the confused tissue of their past history with the gossip of their daily life and the intrigues of the present. In Shusha live the descendants of two parties which were once at feud with one another about two claimants of the throne of Persia, to which the country then belonged. These two parties, the Goidari and the Neemiti, transformed themselves at a later date into supporters and opponents of the Russian governor, and are still not disinclined, when occasion offers, to come to blows with one another like their fathers before them. These warlike propensities are well known to the local authorities, and accordingly one party is, with all courtesy, made to withdraw from the market-place when the other party announces

its approach by loud cries. In one town of Transcaucasia, as I was informed, on one of these occasions there were some dozens left dead in the market-place, not to mention those who received wounds and bruises.

Before I describe the last day of the festival I will say a few words about its origin.

The Imam Hussein, the son of Ali the nephew of Mohammed, and of Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, was for a long time secretly persecuted by the Arabian caliph Jesid, because the people in Medina were attached to him, till at last Hussein rose against his persecutor. He secured the support of the town of Kyufa, which was devoted to him, and collected an army; but the revolt was soon suppressed, and the Imam, deserted by his followers, was driven into the desert near the Euphrates, where his children and kinsmen, with the exception of his sick son, fell one after another in a very unequal combat, in which they displayed the greatest bravery. Their bodies were mutilated by the enemy and their property plundered; Hussein's wives and female dependents were brought to the Caliph at Scham (Damascus) along with the heads of the slain fixed on pikes. Nine days had the unequal combat lasted, and on the tenth day Hussein himself, the bravest of the brave, breathed

his last. His mortal remains were buried on the spot where he fell, which was hence named Kerbelai (the place of grief and mourning), and became a great sanctuary of the Shiites and the chief resort of their pilgrims. In commemoration of these ten days prayers are annually held, fasts observed, and the ceremonies performed of which I am now speaking. The celebration of the tenth day is particularly solemn. A huge procession, followed by the whole population, marches out of the town to a meadow in order to attend a representation of the last act of the bloody drama which was once enacted on the banks of the Euphrates, and which has since been adorned by fancy and has assumed a legendary character.

Among the people in the market-place of Shusha, I waited for the beginning of this performance, which for fanaticism and wildness is probably unequalled. Protracted cries of 'Hussein! Hussein!' announced the approach of the procession, which soon came in sight. At its head are men who gash their bodies as they move quietly on. Several hundred men march in two rows, holding one another by the left hand, and each grasping in his right a sword with the edge turned towards his face. The skin of the heads of these fanatics is covered with sword-cuts, and from the

wounds the blood flows literally in streams, and forms as it dries a dark red crust which completely covers their faces ; only the whites of their



A SELF-TORMENTOR.

eyes and the rows of their white teeth shine out conspicuously from the blood-stained surface. It is painful to see the boys, who gash themselves

as they walk in front of the procession. Each of the men has a starched napkin round his neck, to keep the blood from his clothes; but the napkins are stained with blood, or rather quite drenched with it.

Between the two rows march the heroes of the day, whose pride it is to emulate Hussein in bodily suffering—half-naked fanatics, who are wounded all over by various sharp instruments thrust into their flesh. Their heads are adorned in front with little pieces of wood like the points of a crown, which are stuck into the skin of the forehead and the cheeks as far as the ears; little padlocks, also, and small folding mirrors are attached to the same part of the person, and are likewise fixed in rows upon the arms, chest, and belly. The little mirrors are fastened into the skin with small hooks of wire. Upon the breast and back are laid two daggers, bound tightly together in such a way that the least awkwardness in movement forces the edge into the flesh. At the sides also two swords are fixed, sloping across the body, with their edges in dangerous proximity to the skin. To the tips of the swords are fastened light chains of copper or heavy chains of iron, according to the zeal of the self-tormentor. Besides all this, thin rods of iron or wood, sometimes longer and sometimes shorter, are stuck all

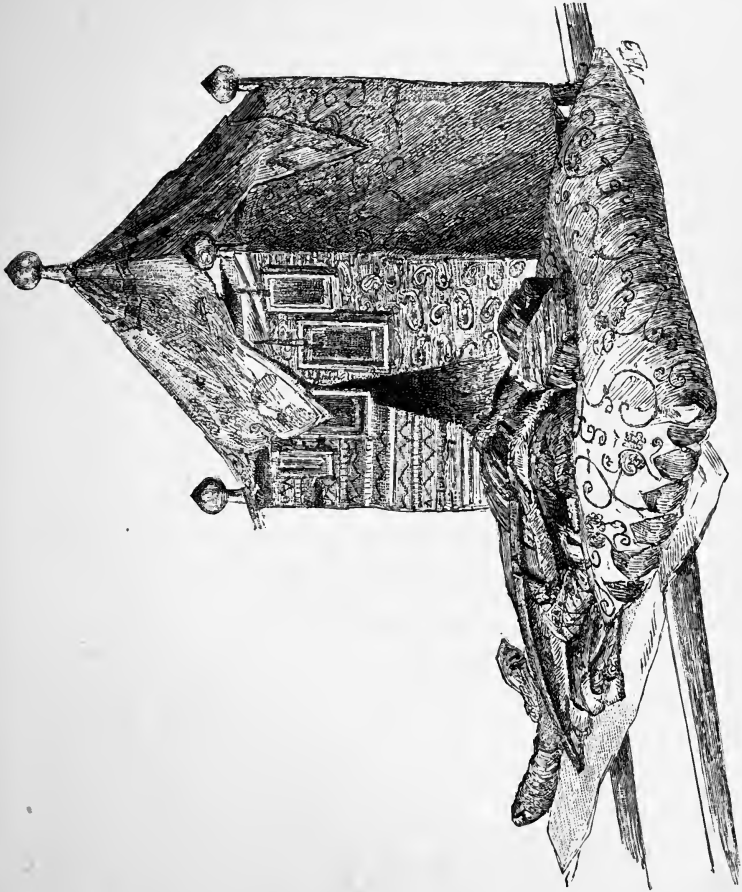
over the body, to represent arrows. Those who wish to parade before the people without much harm to themselves thrust their instruments a very little way into the skin, or do not thrust them in at all, but tie them on so cleverly that at a distance they seem to be planted in the flesh. The self-tormentors of this latter kind are not nearly so numerous—five or six at most ; and we may safely assume that they suffer less than the former, of whom several dropped fainting before my eyes or were removed by their relatives in a state of complete exhaustion.

The self-tormentors are followed by those who have chosen the better part and intend on this day of universal penance to make atonement by mourning alone. Their mourning garments, of black or violet, are open in front, and they beat their breasts with loud cries : some, not satisfied with the empty hand, use large and heavy bricks for this purpose. Their breasts are soon dyed red with the blows, and the people press round these fanatics crying, ‘ See, there they are, our saints, the pillars of our faith ! ’ A dervish, with a narrow pointed hat covered with inscriptions from the Koran, had chains about his neck, and a cord with a heavy stone whose weight quite bent his body down. Women following the procession thrust

themselves in turn to the front, in order at least to have a glimpse of the holy man. But most of the dervishes prefer to spend this sacred season in a less violent manner : they spread upon the road small carpets, on which they lay out wreaths, small stones, and other trifles from Kerbelai and other holy places, and, sitting down beside them, stretch out their hands to the passers-by, begging alms for the people of God.

Presently there appears a sort of square cupboard with a pointed top, hung with shawls and mirrors, and carried in the procession upon a bier. Across the bier is stretched the body of a man in rich clothing ; this is the corpse of the young Imam. The people press round, for every one holds it a piece of good fortune if he can but touch the bier. The young Imam, Hussein's nephew, had with difficulty induced his uncle to let him go out to the battle ; and Hussein before sending him to certain death carried out his long-cherished purpose and betrothed him to his daughter. Consequently a Tartar who follows the bier carries on his shaven head a painted dish with the symbols of the marriage ceremony. He is followed by a warrior with helmet and coat of mail, over which shawls are fastened. This personage carries in his right hand a small battleaxe

of beautiful workmanship, and represents the captain of the Caliph's host who put the Imam to



THE YOUNG IMAM.

death. After him is led Hussein's horse, with a gorgeous bridle and a richly ornamented saddle.

The saddle is stuck full of arrows, and so is the whole horse; only in the horse's case the arrows are replaced by little rolls of paper, fastened on with red wax to represent spots of blood.

At last the Imam Hussein himself is borne in the procession with every token of respect,—a richly adorned lay figure without a head. Some of the vertebræ of an ox, with bleeding flesh attached to them, project from the clothes and do duty for the neck. The breast of the corpse (to which two live doves are fastened as symbols of innocence) is stuck full of arrows. On the same bier kneels a boy, completely enveloped in a white blood-stained shroud; holes for the eyes are cut in the garment, and a long red tongue is sewn on to the place which corresponds to the mouth, indicating the thirst with which the Imam and his friends were tormented. The boy presses his hands to his head, and repeatedly throws himself down at the feet of the dead Hussein. The bier with its holy burden is followed by fresh crowds with loud cries of grief. Mollahs and actors bring up the rear of the procession, the latter fully dressed and armed. The people, men and women, on horseback and on foot, move along in dense masses after the procession. All the doors, windows, and balconies of the houses along the

route, as well as the town walls, are thronged with spectators.

At length the procession reaches the outskirts of the town, where the performance is to take place in a meadow. The self-tormentors range themselves in a ring in the front, then the rest of the people, with the horsemen in the rear of all. The performance begins, and the spectators fill the air with their mourning and lamentations. To increase the solemnity of the representation on this day, a Russian military band is engaged, which harmonizes but ill with the whole character of the performance. Still more unsuitable is the appearance of Don-Cossacks, who, for want of other actors, act as the Imam's murderers. Generally the Cossacks bring the performance to a conclusion with an attack; but when I was there a very amusing incident occurred. The young Imam who goes out to meet the enemy puts them all to flight. The Cossacks, who represented the Caliph's warriors, ought accordingly to have retreated before this boy of fourteen; but their part seemed not to their taste, for instead of giving way they pressed the lad so hard that he took to his heels. The progress of the piece was interrupted; the people loudly expressed their displeasure, and cried out to the Cossacks

that they must give way and take to flight. But the Cossacks would not hear of this; their blood was up, and they would not sheathe their sabres till their bridles were seized and they were led off the scene.

This performance brings the ceremonies of the festival to an end. They say that in former times the people considered it their duty at the conclusion of the festival to give a sound thrashing to all the players who had represented the murderers of the Imam, and that consequently it was hard to fill the part. This custom is now abolished.

CHAPTER II.

THE DUCHOBORTZIS

NOT far from the town of Shusha, where these festivals took place, live the Russian sectarians who were banished from Russia proper on account of their indefatigable zeal in propagating their doctrines. They live as settlers among the Armenians and Tartars; and as their villages lay but a short distance off my route, I went so far out of my way in order to visit them, to question them, and to observe them with my own eyes.

From a lofty mountain ridge we looked down into a valley in which lies the village of Slavianka, inhabited by the Duchobortzis. A little further behind the mountains lie some more villages, inhabited by the same sect, but these I did not see. Presently we met some of the inhabitants returning home in large parties from their hay-making, and carrying their scythes and rakes. They wear white shirts, stuck soldier-wise into

their white breeches, and caps with broad peaks. Most of them had a merry air, and were talking and laughing together. When they saw me they politely raised their caps.

The village lies in a hollow, by a rushing torrent that falls into the Kura. The distance from Elizabetopol may be sixty versts or a little more. All round rise mountains, almost bare of vegetation; though in the place itself, which numbers 205 houses, and some 600 male inhabitants, there are trees and other vegetation in abundance. The Duchobortzis came, or rather were transplanted, to this place from the Taurus district, whither they had been forced to migrate from the interior of Russia between 1820 and 1830. Many of their old men still remember quite well their homes in old Russia, in the districts of Tamboff, Saratoff, and elsewhere. The first batch of these were sent here in 1840, others later. They had a hard time of it at first, as they had to take up their abode among the neighbouring Armenians and Tartars, who treated them with great cruelty, constantly robbing them and sometimes going to the length of murder. There are no forests in the neighbourhood, and the carriage of timber by the mountain paths is exceedingly laborious, so that they could not think at first of making a permanent settlement.

Many returned to the bosom of the Orthodox Church and went back to Russia. Those who remained behind gradually improved their condition, and to-day, after five-and-twenty years, the settlements of the Duchobortzis (four villages, if I mistake not) are so well built and well arranged as to be an object of envy to the natives of the district.

In earlier times severe measures were taken against their doctrines, and great efforts were made to prevent them from spreading; and it was with this object that the Duchobortzis were transplanted to the mountains of Trans-caucasia. The Czar Alexander I. visited them while they were still in the Taurus district, was present at their worship, and by his gracious behaviour not only left behind him a good name among the sectaries, but also improved their position in the community, which at that time was far from enviable. 'It is only since his visit,' say the Duchobortzis, 'that we are looked upon as human beings and suffered to drive our cattle into the town and to buy and sell in peace. Before that, when we went among our neighbours on business, we heard nothing but insulting remarks, such as "You are no Christians: you are people who are not fit to show your faces among men."' It is easy

to see that the Duchobortzis retain a vivid recollection of the persecution and insult which they formerly suffered, and that though better times came afterwards few of them would care to return to the interior of Russia.

The main thought of their religion may be expressed in a very few words—one God in three persons, viz. God the Father—the memory; God the Son—the understanding; God the Holy Ghost—the will: the Trinity in unity. They have no sacred books, and do not recognize the Old or the New Testament, or the writings of the Fathers of the Orthodox Church. ‘These books,’ say they, ‘are written by human hands, and the work of human hands is imperfect.’ Their conception of Christ is very obscure: beyond a confused notion that He is at once man and God, they have not the least idea how He lived or for what He suffered. The sources of their knowledge of Christ are their so-called ‘Psalms of David.’ These ‘Psalms’ are the only prayers in use among the Duchobortzis; some specimens which I have collected show how absurd it is to ascribe them to David, whom they hold in high honour. It may be that these prayers had more meaning at the time when the sect was founded; but in being handed down from father to son (for to this day they are preserved by

oral tradition only) it is not to be wondered at that many words and phrases have been so cor-



A DUCHOBORTZI.

rupted as to make the most ridiculous nonsense, especially as these people can neither read nor write. But the Duchobortzis are convinced that

these psalms have been handed down to them word for word as they came from the mouth of the Psalmist.

Their mistrust of, or rather aversion to, everything that is written sometimes leads them into strange absurdities. Besides the prophet David, for instance, there are three persons of the Old Testament whom they hold in special honour; these are Ananias, Asarias, and Misael; and the reason is that these three stood till the last moment by the cross of Christ. 'The apostle Peter,' say the Duchobortzis, 'was very near to Christ, and yet denied Him: these three stood by Him.' When I remarked that these three men lived long before Christ, and therefore could not be present at his crucifixion, they answered that it was not their business to criticize, it was enough to believe what had been handed down by their fathers.

'Is it not known to you,' said I to some old men with whom I was talking, 'that besides David there are other prophets of the Old Testament who prophesied a great deal of Christ,—for instance, Isaiah?'

'What Isaiah do you mean, little father?' was the answer. 'Do you mean Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob? Who can know them all? They are many, and it is a long time since they lived.'

As for the saints of the Greek Church, they allow that they may have been very good men, but no more.



A DUCHOBORTZI WOMAN.

The dogma of obedience to the authorities is beginning, under the stress of practical necessity,

to come into force with them ; and, on the other hand, the favourite dogma of the Duchobortzis, 'Fear nothing and trust in God,' is beginning to lose its significance. This reminds me of an amusing incident. One Sunday (which day the Duchobortzis spend in idling and drinking brandy) a discharged soldier (for many men of this class are found in the sect) was cursing and swearing under my windows. I sent down my guide, a Cossack, to tell him to take his curses elsewhere. I watched from the window how my Cossack accosted him : 'What do you mean by cursing and swearing here? Don't you see that a stranger, an official, is lodging here? It is most unseemly.'

The drunkard looked contemptuously at my envoy, rested his hands on his sides, and replied in a sing-song voice, 'I fear thee not, but trust in God.'

The Cossack made an angry gesture, and returned to me in great vexation. 'It is no good speaking to him, sir ; a rude fellow, as drunkards are wont to be.'

The Duchobortzis protest that they honour the Czar, and that it is a slander to say they do not. 'It is impossible not to honour the Czar : only, we do not call him our father as the orthodox do.'

Their worship is extremely simple. One Sun-

day I was taken into a peasant's house where the service was to be held. The room was such as you may see in an ordinary peasant's house, very clean, spacious but low, with a great Russian stove, and decorated with fine towels. It was crowded with people—the men on one side, the women on the other—the elders seated on benches, the rest standing. They repeat the prayers in turn. When one makes a mistake the others correct him: 'That is not right.' 'How should it be then?' 'Thus,' and then the prompter himself makes a slip, and is corrected on all hands. I observed that the mistakes are mostly made by the men: the women know the prayers better, and the corrections come chiefly from their side. The saying of the prayers lasts a considerable time, till the whole stock is exhausted, or (as more frequently happens in seasons of hard work) till the congregation show signs of exhaustion and snoring is heard from the corners and comfortable places. Then some one suggests to the meeting that it is time to pass from praying to singing.

'What think you? It is close here: shall we not go into the court-yard and sing?'

All turn out into the court, and the men again take their places on one side, the women on the other. This custom is strictly observed, for it is

counted as obedience to the precept 'During prayer have God's image before thee.' The singing also lasts a long time, and is always in such a sad and pensive strain as to make one quite melancholy; one's thoughts turn to the distant home—to the Volga and the Burlaks with their songs. At the head of the men stands a precentor who begins each psalm. In the village of Slavianka this post of honour was held by an old man, who often came to chat with me, and never came empty-handed: one day he would bring a piece of honeycomb, another day some fresh cucumbers; and I, on my side, never failed to slip into his pocket a handful of cigarettes, with which, as I heard, he made a great display before the neighbours—'All these the Government official gives me, to show his respect for me.' Often he alluded complacently to the importance of his office—'It is not every one that is equal to it: one must have a calling to it.' Only the precentor and perhaps a few others keep to the words in singing; the rest merely make meaningless sounds.

Before the end of the service the congregation form a semicircle, bow, and kiss each other, the men passing in turn along the men's ranks, and the women doing the same on their side. They grasp each other by the right hand, bow twice, kiss,

and again bow twice. A final and more profound bow is made by the men in the direction of the women, and by the women in the direction of the men. The bows look very awkward, and are made rather to one side. Each member of the congregation goes through this ceremony with every other member, without any distinction of age. But I did not see any very small children at these services. The singing goes on during the salutation; as soon as it is finished, they put on their caps and all go to their houses.

I wrote down their psalms as dictated to me by members of the sect—some old, some young. Both the old and the young, but especially the old, have a very imperfect understanding of what they say, and gabble the words off by rote without any regard to the sense. If I asked them to explain a passage the old men would answer, ‘Who can understand it? The wisdom of God is hard to grasp’; or, ‘God knows; I know not. So prayed our fathers before us, so pray we and teach our children to pray. As for what it means, we leave that to God.’ I did also get some explanations, but they were mostly very obscure, and it was impossible not to remark that likeness in the sound of words and phrases was taken for identity of meaning. When they are repeating their psalms, if they forget a word they

at once get confused and have to go back to the beginning. It also sometimes happens that a good Duchobortzi leaves out a long piece in the middle of a prayer and is not conscious of the omission till he comes to the end. After a little reflection he will say, 'I seem to have left out something, for I have come to the end too soon.' Sometimes he will notice the omission at once. 'No, that is not it. Read, please, what you have written down there.' I read 'and we become partakers of the holy communion of the divine, the life-giving——' 'Yes, yes. Now write "Saviour,"' and he begins to gabble through the words by rote, "'the divine; the life-giving Saviour—the divine, the life-giving" —add "the immortal." How does it go on? To make sure that I am forgetting nothing, read it right through again from the beginning.'

When they are saying their prayers together of course this does not happen, because each mistake is at once corrected by those present.

They have prayers not only on Sunday but also on week-days, late in the evening when their work is done, especially on Saturday.

It is strange that the Duchobortzis, with their sound common sense, should ascribe their psalms to the prophet David, seeing that the greater part of them contain the plainest allusions to the time and

the circumstances of the foundation and development of their sect. As an instance of this I here give a prayer or psalm which serves as a sort of catechism of the doctrine of the Duchobortzis. I repeat that I wrote it down word for word as it was dictated to me.

‘The God whom we serve in the spirit we glorify in Jesus Christ. The spirit was given to us ; of the spirit we partake, and are of good cheer. We believe in the universal almighty God, Creator of the heavens, and the earth, and the bright light. In Him we believe. We are baptized ¹ in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We pray to God in the spirit : in the true spirit we pray, and to the true God. With my voice I call upon God, and with my voice I pray to God. We make confession to our heavenly Father, for He is gracious, His goodness is everlasting ; and as our sins are remitted we receive the holy, divine, agonizing, life-giving communion of the immortal Jesus to the forgiveness of sins. We go into the church of God, into the only holy apostolic cathedral, where the true Christians are gathered together. We have an upright and honourable priest, not a false and wicked one, who is set apart from sinners.

¹ The Duchobortzis have discarded baptism and all the other sacraments. Their religion, in fact, has no ceremonies at all, and by this they are distinguished from all other sects.

The mother of God we name and venerate, for she bore Jesus Christ to the forgiveness of the sins of Adam. We honour and emulate the saints.¹ We adore the holy picture of God, the priceless picture of God, the holy picture, which sings and speaks : true pictures of saints, unlike written parchments,² made by the Son of the Father and of the Holy Ghost.

‘ The Czar we hold in honour : God save the Czar ! Hear us, O God ! We observe the fasts—contenance in thought. Keep me from all evil, from murmuring with my lips, from sudden death, from incontinence. Take from me all untruth. We have marriage, an institution of eternal welfare, wherein we make ourselves sure. Into a church built with hands we will not go. The painted images of saints we do not adore, for in them we see no holiness and no saving virtue. Therefore we practise not the laying on of hands, but turn to the word of God, the life-giving cross.—To our God is all honour due ! ’

After I had written down the psalms, of which the above is a specimen, I read them to various members of the sect in order to make quite sure that they had been given to me correctly. All

¹ I must here remark that much in this prayer contradicts what the Duchobortzis tell you.

² Probably ‘ unlike pictures or icons.’

assured me that, with some unimportant exceptions, what I had taken down agreed with the tradition as known to them.

These same Duchobortzis, who glorify God and their faith in this wise, live an honest, reasonable, and prosperous life. These qualities, indeed, they share with other religious communities that have been banished and forgotten, such as the Molokanes, the Subbotnikes, and the Skoptzis in Transcaucasia. But, being acquainted with the Molokanes as well as the Duchobortzis, I place the latter far higher than the former in respect of morality. For instance, among the Molokanes the use of wine and tobacco is forbidden, and they do not take either in public; but in private they indulge in these forbidden pleasures. The Duchobortzis, on the other hand, openly drink and smoke and grow tobacco. The Molokanes are not averse to cheating, or even to stealing when the opportunity occurs; with the Duchobortzis, on the contrary, acts of this kind are so rare that you might count them upon your fingers. It is remarkable that the Duchobortzis regard the Molokanes as apostates from Duchobortzism, while the Molokanes declare that the Duchobortzis are apostates from Molokanism. Probably the Molokanes are right. The two sects hate each other. 'Godless creatures, worse than

dogs,' say the Molokanes of the Duchobortzis, who, in their turn, say of the Molokanes, 'Are they human beings?'

With regard to myself and my occupations the Duchobortzis showed much less distrust than the Molokanes, who apparently persisted in believing that my visit had secret inquiries for its purpose, and their transference to Siberia for its probable result. The Duchobortzis, indeed, were not at once ready to talk. 'You question us about this and that,' said an old Duchobortzi to me, 'but you have not yet told us who you are.'

'Why do you want to know that?'

'So that we may know what we may say to you and what we may not. We want to know whether you are an official or not, whether you are a noble or a simple gentleman, and by what name we are to call you.'

I explained as simply and clearly as I could that I was nothing but a traveller who wanted to see what sort of a life is led by Russians, Tartars, and Armenians.

'You live in the mountains,' I said, 'and it is seldom that any one comes to you, or that you leave your villages. Hence various rumours about you are spread abroad, and I wanted to ascertain what was true in these rumours and what was false.' Some

seemed to understand my motive, and nodded their heads in assent: 'So is it, indeed; much nonsense is talked about us.'

There were even some politicians among them who thanked me for the honour I did them by my questions.

As I have already mentioned, the Duchobortzis have no books and keep no kind of records. The old men cannot read, and do not get their children taught, for they consider such knowledge superfluous for peasants. The only exceptions are the clerks to the village governments, who are generally discharged soldiers that know how to read. When I learned about this systematic ignorance (for so it may be called), I saw that an old man had not been joking when he asked me to reckon how old he was now, having been a boy of fourteen when he moved with his father from the Government of Tamboff into the Taurus district in the year 1822. 'I have long been trying,' he said, 'to find this out; but there is no one here whom one could ask.' When my old friend learned that I had travelled a great deal he would have me tell him where the sun goes to rest. 'Is there,' he asked me several times, 'is there, then, no place at all where the sun rests?'

I wanted to know where the men's dress came

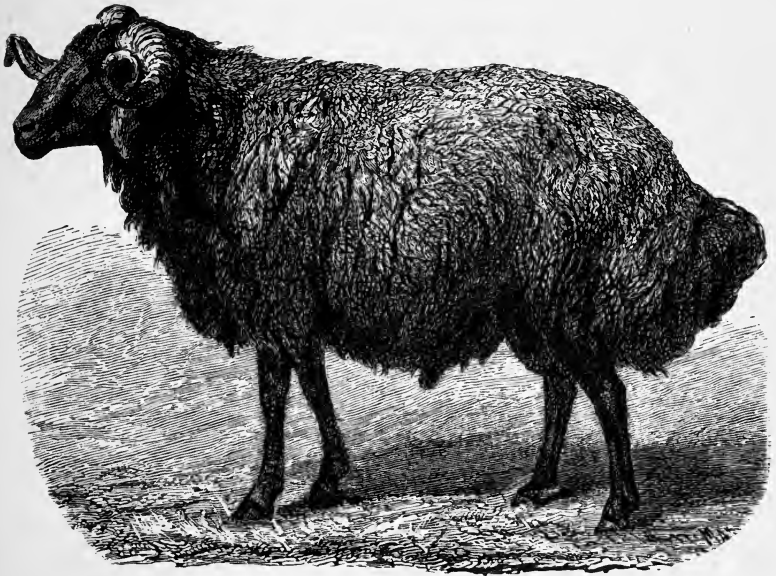
from. In answer to my questions the Duchobortzis said theirs was a genuine Russian costume ; but it is not found anywhere in Russia. As to their long and broad trousers, there may be truth in what they say ; but what is the origin of the short *archaluk*, embroidered in soldier fashion, with a stand-up collar, which is always fastened with hooks, as among the Cossacks ? This *archaluk* is worn by all without exception. The women wear the ordinary Russian dress, but their head-dress is shaped like a sugarloaf, and has a kerchief or piece of stuff tied round it with the ends hanging down. The houses of the Duchobortzis are like the peasants' houses of Southern Russia. On the outside they are decorated with wood carvings representing a little horse, a man on horseback, a cock, &c. ; the interior is always extraordinarily clean ; the walls neatly adorned with embroidered towels, samplers, popular pictures, and other knick-knacks.

Their carts are very like those I saw in East Prussia—great ladder-wagons ; i e. with the sides not made of solid boards, but of rails sloping outwards. A *telega* of this kind will hold twenty persons, and even a twenty-first can find a corner.

The village abounds in beehives, and a good bee-master will make as much as a hundred roubles

a year out of his honey. Besides honey they sell yarn and linen-cloth, and in good years other products, especially potatoes and corn.

The soil is somewhat stony, but nevertheless bears good crops. They sow oats which yield ten-



A TRANS-CAUCASIAN SHEEP.

fold, or even fifteen-fold; wheat and barley do not succeed so well as oats; buckwheat does well; millet, again, not so well. They also grow good crops of spelt. From hempseed they extract an oil which they use for food, and also bring to

market. Their potatoes and linseed are nothing to boast of.

The Duchobortzis in the village of Slavianka, with 205 houses, have about 7,000 head of cattle. Their horned cattle, a cross between the native and the Black Sea breeds, have a splendid appearance. Their sheep, too, which they call 'Shpanki,' and which probably come from Spain or the south of France, deserve notice: their wool fetches from eight to nine roubles the pood, while the natives in the neighbourhood only get three, four, or five roubles for theirs.

It is evident that the Duchobortzis are thriving; it is only of their neighbours that they complain. About these neighbours—i.e. the Tartars and the Armenians—they express themselves in very severe terms. The only difference between them is that the Tartars have recourse to robbery and murder, while the Armenians deceive you and cheat you on every opportunity. There is no end to their tales of robbery and murder.

'It is only since the arrival of the new governor of the district,' say the Duchobortzis, 'that we have begun to live in any tolerable manner; before that we had no chance against the Tartars. They robbed us in open day; they would seize you, bind your hands behind your back, and hold a

dagger to your throat while others drove off the cattle. It is useless to think of getting satisfaction or appealing to the law; if you do, you are summoned before the court from your work just when the day is worth a rouble, and have to go into the town merely to learn that the thieves have not been discovered. "So sign this paper, little brother, so that we may have no more charges brought on this score." And there the matter ends. When you undertake a journey, your friends do not know whether they will ever see you again; and if you come back safe from even the shortest excursion you say, "The Lord be praised!" If a night passes quietly, without a single theft being committed, we all thank God and think, "Perhaps we shall get through the day too without any misadventure."

CHAPTER III.

THE MOLOKANES.

ON leaving the Duchobortzis I paid a visit to the Molokanes. In Trans-caucasia there are a great many Molokanes. They live orderly lives, and are well-to-do, but are not so united as the Duchobortzis. In fact discord is frequent among them; those who, from whatever cause, are discontented with the existing order of things invent something new, separate themselves from the rest, and make a fresh party. The society thus formed then holds its meetings in a separate house, under the guidance of a new teacher. Thus the difference, which at first was scarcely perceptible, grows greater and greater, and at last comes to an open quarrel. And so it has come about that the sect of the 'Spirits' (for thus the Molokanes call themselves) has sundered itself into several communities. First there are the pure Molokanes, the more rational part of the sect as far as the observa-

tion of their customs is concerned. They recognize the Old and New Testaments, and read and sing the Psalms of David, which, as well as their author, are



A MOLOKANE.

held in high respect by all the Molokanes. They keep some of the festivals of the Old Testament like the Orthodox Church ; but this is a point on which

the pure Molokanes differ from other divisions of the sect. Some are inclined, like the Subbotnikes, to keep all the Jewish festivals; another party takes up an intermediate position between the pure Molokanes and the Subbotnikes or Judaizing party. But the latter party is not numerous, and I did not hear that it had any separate settlements.

Other unimportant matters are made a ground of difference. For instance, some take exception to the custom of kissing, which is observed by the Molokanes at all their prayer-meetings; and this has led to fresh quarrels and divisions. Less trifling is the dispute between the pure Molokanes and the Leapers. The Leapers take the pouring out of the Holy Ghost to mean that the Holy Ghost manifests Himself visibly in such a manner as to throw the devotees into transports, i.e. to put them beside themselves, and even to make them speak in other tongues. And so their devotions, especially those that are held in the evening, or rather in the night (for they are protracted far beyond midnight), excite the aversion, and at the same time the laughter, of those of the Molokanes who do not belong to this party. 'The masses do not understand the matter, and actually associate us with these noisy antics,' say the pure Molokanes, who express in very strong terms their dislike of these

innovators. Indeed, their dislike is so deep that they will not on any account set foot in a meeting



A MOLOKANE WOMAN.

of the Leapers, through fear of contamination. Another circumstance, which has been no less

fruitful of strife and bickering than the leaping, is the introduction of new songs, composed by the prophets and psalm-singers of the Leapers. These songs are sung to a new melody, generally before the leaping, and, rising gradually to a more and more exalted strain, stimulate the access of frenzy.

Even the Leapers themselves are divided into parties. Some of the sect, supporting themselves on the authority of the writers of the Old Testament and the example of the ancient patriarchs and kings, allow plurality of wives; but their number is at present small, and they are cautious in propagating their tenets. These people, or rather their leaders, supposing that I was an official personage, requested me to lay before the Government an explanation which they had prepared of the well-known doctrine of the Leapers. I had to refuse the request, but I obtained a copy of the explanation.

So far as I could observe, the personal and private views of the teachers play a very important part in these quarrels. The masses of the community, who are comparatively uncultivated, are very ready to accept any innovation which promises to gratify this or the other desire. Thus the party of the Leapers is principally composed of young

people, who like dancing and a lively style of singing, and also are not disinclined to polygamy.

It may be remarked that the Molokanes who adopt polygamy differ in no other respect from the Leapers; so that the whole sect may be divided into two great groups—the pure (or ordinary) Molokanes and the Leapers.

We will turn first to the pure Molokanes.

One Sunday, I entered the room in which they held their meetings. It was a simple Russian peasant's parlour, quite filled with benches. The congregation were not yet assembled, and there were only a few persons in the room. A stout old peasant with a puffy face (the presbyter, as I afterwards learned) addressed me in these words: 'If you please, little father, take a seat nearer to me, and let us have a talk.' While I exchanged the usual greeting with those who were sitting near the worshippers assembled, and the room became hot and close.

The presbyter (i.e. the teacher) sits in the place of honour in the higher corner under the icon-cupboard, which is covered with a curtain. As the Molokanes have no icons, they use the cupboard as a receptacle for books and other articles—paper, inkstand, bills, candlesticks, and other church and house furniture. At service-

time the books are laid on a small table which is covered with a white cloth and placed, according to the Russian custom, in the same high corner. By the presbyter sits his assistant or assistants. Round the table are seated on benches the more venerable of the men; the younger men farther back. The women also do not press to the front, but seat themselves mostly by the door and in the corners.

‘Why do the women with you sit behind the men?’ I asked afterwards when we were conversing. ‘Because they are inferior to the men in dignity, little father,’ answered several speakers at once, and proceeded to quote texts in support of this view.

Till prayers begin, the assembled worshippers converse on all sorts of topics, and most of them sit in coats trimmed with fur in spite of the terrible heat and closeness of the room.

Then the presbyter raises his voice: ‘What shall we read to-day? I never was a good reader, and my eyes are weak now. You read, brother Ivan Vlassyitch.’

‘No, no, Jakoff Nikiforovitch¹; how could I come up to you? You must read.’

‘Perhaps I might, but my eyes are weak.’

¹ Jacob son of Nikifor.

‘Never mind; read us something from the Apostle John.’

After this little piece of affectation, which was probably occasioned by the presence of a stranger, he placed his spectacles on his nose and began to read from the Epistle of John, stopping to explain every phrase. His commentaries were often very arbitrary, but, again, were sometimes distinguished by sound practical sense. For instance, one of his explanations ran as follows: ‘See, brethren, the Apostle forbids strife; but among us the day before yesterday the lads fell out in the hayfield, and then went to the assessor of the court to make complaint. Now that is not what the Apostle bids us do. If you fall out, go to the elders; they will settle the matter, reconcile the disputants, make them kiss one another, and so an end of the business. But you take it into your heads to go and trouble the assessor; that is a sin. Now let us go on.’ At certain passages, where, I suppose, he was doubtful about the meaning, he would evade an explanation by such phrases as ‘This again the Apostle does not bid us do,’ or ‘You must bear this in mind, and not forget it.’

The words of the Apostle about the future kingdom of God the presbyter explained as follows: ‘When it will come no one knows, and it

may be that our grandsons will not live to see the second coming of Christ.'

When he had finished the chapter from the Apostle he called upon the congregation, 'Now, children, sing something.' The congregation at once became animated. One of the presbyter's assistants opened the Psalter, and, when he had in conference with his neighbour chosen a psalm, read out the first verse. The congregation followed him, and began to sing in a strain like our national songs, only still more melancholy. So they went on, verse after verse, one reading it aloud and the others then taking up the words and drawling them out monotonously. The Molokanes sing very loud, and the women's voices are so shrill that the singing may be heard from one end of the village to the other. On Sunday evenings, when singing was going on in several meetings at once, I often found it impossible to fix my attention on anything. I shut doors and windows, but all in vain: the shrill wail was as penetrating as if the singers had been close under my window. After the singing a small carpet was spread; the people placed themselves round it and prayed, some standing, some on their knees; the presbyter in a loud voice, the rest whispering. Then they took their places on the benches again and sang once more. Now followed the

ceremony of kissing. All ranged themselves in the room in a circle, and each in turn, John or Peter, went the round, bowing low to each person in the circle and kissing him twice. The presbyter alone received the salutation without bowing. Among the Duchobortzis it is the custom for the men to kiss only the men, and the women only the women; but among the Molokanes the custom is different: men and women kiss each other. The men, however (probably because they count themselves superior), take the initiative. The singing is continued all through this ceremony; then follows another prayer, then singing again, and then at last the concluding prayer. At the end of the service the presbyter generally invites the congregation in the following terms: 'To-morrow, brethren, come together again in the afternoon that we may pray to the Lord our God.'

Here I may mention a beautiful custom of which I have not yet spoken. During the service those who come late do not enter the room singly, but in groups, availing themselves of a pause between the singing and the reading. They remain standing by the door, and softly murmur prayers, to which the others, rising from their places, respond in similar fashion. Then they exchange bows and the service resumes its course.

During the reading and expounding of the Scripture by the presbyter, his assistants supplement his remarks by further explanations, the congregation putting questions if there is anything they do not understand.

A passage being read in which baptism was mentioned, I asked, 'Why do the Molokanes not baptize with water, though Christ gave an example in His own person and was baptized by John?'

'That is true,' was the answer; 'but He did that only for discipline. What say the Scriptures, little father? John the Baptist says, "I baptize you with water: but One cometh after me whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with water and fire." If, then, we are to undertake the water-baptism we must also undertake the fire-baptism. Now tell us, if you please, what is to be made of that.'

The texts which the Molokanes choose for instruction show that they lay great stress upon the Christian dogma which teaches that God's grace is infinite, and that every sin of word or deed may be expiated by repentance. Nay, they go further and say, 'If you sin not, you do not repent; if you repent not, the Holy Ghost has no part in you, and you are not saved. It is not till the

moment of repentance that the Holy Ghost we long for comes to a man.' Among the pure Molokanes there is no outward and visible sign of the process; the happy one only heaves a sigh and begins to weep when he feels his sorrow lightened by prayer. Among the Leapers, on the contrary, the repentant sinner, when he feels the Holy Spirit coming upon him, counts it his duty to manifest his inspiration. He begins to twitch and to tremble as if he were drunk; then all the company begin to beat with their feet, to skip, to spin round, to leap on the benches, and even on the tables; some seize hold of the table and drag it about the room. Men and women rave together, only the women still more wildly than the men. This enthusiasm is to some extent intelligible when we consider that the Leapers are mostly young people whose natural impulses are cruelly suppressed by the Puritanical rules of the sect, forbidding all expression of worldly joy, such as singing and dancing. However this may be, at any rate they compensate themselves in full for the deprivation. Moreover, the prayer-meetings of the Molokanes last an enormous time. Their evening meetings go on continuously for four or five hours, and even longer; and all this in a hot and close atmosphere, in the middle of the night, and after the hard labour of

the day. Under such circumstances, it is easy, not merely to forget yourself for a moment, but altogether to lose your senses.

It was already past midnight when I entered the meeting-house of the Leapers. The atmosphere of the room, which was almost dark, reminded one of a bath-room; one dripping candle was the only light. The worshippers lay on the floor, packed close together, with their faces downwards; only the presbyter stood, with folded hands, and his head bowed upon his breast, praying in a low voice. His tones are solemn and the words distinctly audible: 'Lord, be gracious; Lord, be gracious. Honour be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' For want of space some are standing upon the benches, leaning against the wall as if exhausted, but with their arms extended and their heads raised. One man who is standing on a bench has pressed his face into the corner, and is weeping gently but bitterly. Now and again sighs are heard from the middle of the throng, and even articulate words: 'Why dost thou punish me, O Lord? Why do they smite me? They themselves know not.' At another passage, one bursts out weeping and sobs for a long time. Suddenly one leaps up from the ground into the air, raises his hands and head, and stands as if en-

tranced ; he finds himself in a state of repentance, and declares his readiness to fly to Sion ; only he still lacks the wings.

These devotions went on for more than an hour in my presence, and then all rose up almost at the same instant and sang new songs, at first quietly enough, but gradually the time became quicker and quicker, and their bodies began to move in a more and more animated manner. Suddenly a young fellow, who till now had been standing quiet, stamped madly with his feet, shook his head, and reeled from side to side. I thought the lad must fall ; but he not only did not fall, but executed with his feet and his whole body a variety of elaborate movements. Presently the whole meeting was in a state of ecstasy. The air was filled with loud groans. They leaped ; they beat the ground with their feet ; the women whimpered ; all gesticulated with their hands, and their faces assumed a wild expression. I squeezed myself into a corner and looked on, not without anxiety : every moment I expected some one would be hurt. At last a hand knocked the candle off the table and the room became quite dark ; however, the candle was lit again at once.

As an overwhelming argument in justification of their ecstasies at prayer the Molokanes quote the

example of David, who sang, danced, and played the harp before the Ark of the Covenant. In the village of New Saratoff, which I also visited, the desire to imitate the beloved Prophet even more closely led the Leapers to try to procure a harp ; but as they failed to obtain one they contented themselves with a simpler instrument, and proceeded to glorify God with songs accompanied by a drum. But at the time of my visit this drum was no longer in use ; it had aroused so much opposition that even the advocates of this innovation gave it up, in order to avoid quarrels and divisions.

I have already mentioned that among the Leapers there are elect persons, who, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, are supposed to speak in various languages. I had no opportunity of hearing this speaking with tongues myself ; but others who had heard it told me that it is nothing but silly gibberish, as, indeed, with people who can scarcely read, it could not fail to be.

‘How can you check them,’ I asked, ‘since none of you knows any other language—not even Tartar or Armenian? They may talk any nonsense they please before you.’

‘Quite true ; but when the Holy Ghost inspires a man he can speak any language, since God has given him the power.’

They explain, I may observe, that these speakers with tongues will be needed when the kingdom of Zion is established, embracing many peoples, among whom the Molokanes will take the first place. The nature of this kingdom they do not yet know nor attempt to explain; but the idea is deeply rooted in their belief. A prophet or leader of the Leapers (a very clever peasant who had all the important passages of the Old and New Testaments at his fingers' ends) gave me the following account of the kingdom of Zion.

‘Mount Zion (Rev. xxi.) is the eternal Zion; but besides this there is a visible Zion (Rev. xx.), a kingdom of the people of God, where Christ Himself will reign. When this kingdom will be established is not yet known; but its establishment is certain; it is also the fact that only the elect will enter it. Round about this Zion will lie the New Jerusalem, full of all sorts of people of different races and tongues.’

In this connection I may give the following story. ‘One evening,’ said my informant, ‘as I entered the meeting-room of the Leapers, I noticed something moving about in the dark on the top of the stove. I looked closer, and perceived that it was a very stout old peasant, quite naked, who kept turning himself from side to side. I thought he

was a lunatic, but it was pointed out to me that feathers were growing upon him.'

'What does that mean?'

'It means that he is set free from his sins and is now praying to God for wings to fly to Sion.'

I told this story to some of the teachers of the Leapers; but they only laughed and repeated their usual phrase: it was a spiteful invention. 'Certainly,' they added, 'it does sometimes happen that a man who feels the Holy Ghost in him will raise his hands as if he were preparing to fly away whither the Lord directs him from this world of sin; but it is not true that he will strip his clothes off.'

The raising of the hands I often witnessed, and could not but ask myself in astonishment how they could maintain this posture for nearly an hour without exhaustion.

The Molokanes assert that the sins of a brother who does not repent are invariably revealed by the Holy Ghost during prayers to one of the congregation: he informs the presbyter, and the offender is then admonished before the congregation. These cases, they said, are of frequent occurrence. When an offence has been committed, they punish the offender according to the degree of his offence,

by excluding him from the ceremony of kissing, or even altogether forbidding him to attend the meetings.

He who wishes to join the community of the Leapers must first express his penitence before the presbyter, and promise that he will in future, to the best of his ability, abstain from all sin. Then the presbyter at the next meeting announces: 'M. or N., brethren, expresses his penitence, and prays to God for the Holy Spirit.' In order to help the new member to obtain this benefit, the 'holy choir'—i.e. all those who have already expressed their penitence and received the Holy Ghost—lay their hands upon him after the example of the Apostles, and bestow upon him a visible token, viz. a girdle, which he thenceforth constantly wears. The customs of the Molokanes are very simple. For a baptism they meet together, read and say prayers, sing, and give the infant a name—generally that of the saint on whose festival it was born. The marriage ceremony consists in reading prayers, singing psalms, and blessing by the parents; the bride is then given away and the business is over. After the ceremony follows, according to the Russian custom, an entertainment, more or less sumptuous, according to the condition of the couple.

Their dead they place in coffins and bury with their own hands.

The Molokanes profess to use neither alcohol nor tobacco, which they call Devil's incense. In secret, however, they indulge in both, especially in brandy.

It is said against the Molokanes that they are sly and given to intrigue. A hasty acquaintance with them certainly suffices to show that they are not nearly so honest as their neighbours the Duchobortzis. I often heard them complain about lack of land and other inconveniences, though they live in a sufficiently comfortable manner, and seem to have no ground for discontent.

Many of the Molokanes are dealers in raw products, and not a few are engaged in the carrying trade between Tiflis and various towns of Transcaucasia.

It is to be remarked that nearly all the Molokanes can read.

The Molokanes were removed to Transcaucasia about twenty-five or thirty years ago by order of the Government. They are now permitted to return to their homes; but the conditions on which they may return are not yet settled, and they do not yet know how much land and stock will be assigned to them; and so for the present they

maintain a very cautious attitude, and are in no haste to move. But it is safe to assume that if land enough be given them many will leave Trans-caucasia, where they are unable to make themselves at home. It is plain that they have no particular affection for the mountains. 'How can you compare the two countries?' you hear them say. 'There, all plain; here, nothing but these giant mountains.'



NOTES
OF A
JOURNEY THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA

VOL. I.

H

NOTES OF A JOURNEY THROUGH
CENTRAL ASIA.

I.

IN 1867 I started for Central Asia. My official position was that of *attaché* to the Governor-General of Turkestan, General Kaufmann, who left me entirely at liberty to travel where I pleased and to draw and paint what I pleased. Some of my sketches and pictures are reproduced in this volume, with some of my impressions of town and country life in Turkestan, whose inhabitants are widely different from Europeans in features, manners, and customs.

First a few words about the slave-caravanserais and the slave-trade. Both, indeed, have now ceased to exist in Tashkend; but some information on the subject will, I think, be neither superfluous nor uninteresting. The buildings erected for this purpose in the towns of Central Asia are like the

ordinary caravanserais, except that they are divided into a number of little cells, each with a separate door. If the courtyard is large a shelter for the beasts of burden is set up in the centre, and here too are ranged the greater part of the human cattle that are for sale, those that can be least trusted being bound to the wooden pillars that support the roof of the shelter. The courtyard is generally thronged with a motley crowd, some dealing, others merely looking on.

The buyer informs himself about the chattels—what they can do, what handicraft they understand, &c. Then he is taken into one of the cells, and there in presence of the owner examines the slave to see if he has any physical defects or is in bad health. The young female slaves are not exposed to view in the court, but are kept within the cells, and are examined, not by the buyer, but by experienced old women.

The price of slaves varies according to the season, and the larger or smaller supply. In autumn trade is generally brisk; in the town of Bokhara, for instance, I am told that you may find at that time from 100 to 150 human beings exposed for sale in each of the slave-caravanserais of the place. Since the greater number of the slaves are supplied by the unhappy country that lies

on the frontiers of Persia contiguous to the Turcoman tribes, the success or failure of the



SLAVE-DEALER.

Turcomans in their slave hunts in these districts is what chiefly determines the price of slaves, in Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand. But often the

price in these markets will be suddenly altered by a war, and the enslaving of all the prisoners (provided they are not Sunnites) which is the invariable accompaniment of war. At such times you may buy a man for a very small price—twenty or thirty roubles, occasionally even for ten. The supply of men is generally greater than that of women; partly, no doubt, because the Turcomans, who are glad to sell the men, keep the women for themselves. A young and beautiful woman will fetch a very high price—as much as a thousand roubles or more.

Large prices are also paid for boys, for whom there is a great demand throughout Central Asia. I have more than once heard men of Persian blood who had been slaves¹ tell how they were carried off by Turcomans—some from the fields while they were at work with their fathers and brothers, others from the middle of the village in broad daylight, while the cowardly villagers did nothing but scream and howl. The history of the subsequent wanderings of these unfortunates as they passed from the hands of the Turcoman robber into the hands of the slave-dealer, and then into the house of the purchaser, is terribly sad. That

¹ One of my servants was a Persian slave who had escaped from Bokhara.

the cleansing of this foul cesspool has begun, thanks to the interference of Russia, is at any rate a matter of congratulation. The wholesome influence of Russia in the matter of the slave-trade is clearly indicated in these three conspicuous and remarkable facts: (1) the total number of slaves generally has decreased, owing to the liberation of slaves in the territories annexed by Russia; (2) the demand for fresh slaves has diminished, since they can no longer be disposed of in the annexed districts,—and in Tashkend, Chodshent, and other towns in those parts the demand used to be considerable; (3) there has also been a considerable decline in the slave-trade in all the neighbouring uncivilized countries of Central Asia, because the inhabitants believe, not without reason, that the Russians may come any day and pay them a visit and mercilessly free the slaves, as they always do wherever they go. This belief introduces an element of uncertainty into all purchases and contracts which has a very discouraging effect upon the whole trade.

But it is not only the regular slaves that breathe more freely now: the poor and the oppressed everywhere begin to look boldly in the face of the capitalists, the gentlefolk, the ruling classes, who are not a little put out thereby.

And that other class of slaves, who are not called slaves in any text-book, but whose slavery is yet the most terrible of all,—the mothers, wives, and daughters of the barbarians of Central Asia,—do not they also already feel the slow but sure influence of the laws and civilization of the Caffir (infidels) upon their position and their destiny? Yes, assuredly; and proofs of this are not far to seek. It is enough to quote the complaints which my landlord poured out in conversation with me—complaints which show no less foresight than bitterness. ‘The end of the world is coming,’ he cried, with a gesture of despair. ‘How so?’ ‘Why, what else is one to expect when a husband may no longer correct his wife? If you beat her, she threatens to go to the Russians.’ And in fact how can the Asiatic fail to be put out when his property, his lawfully acquired chattel, begins to speak of her rights, and in particular of her right not to be beaten arbitrarily? How can the Asiatic fail to be embittered by this apostasy and to suspect the authors of this discord?

Enough has been said by a number of travellers about the degraded position of women in the East, and I will not repeat commonplaces. I will only say that the lot of woman in Central Asia generally is even sadder than that of her sisters in more

western countries, such as Persia and Turkey. Her social status is even lower than in those countries; her seclusion,¹ and the separation between her and her husband, still greater; the limitation of her activity to the merely physical, or, to speak plainly, to the merely animal functions, still more clearly marked. Sold to a man from the cradle, taken from her parents' house while still an undeveloped thoughtless child, she has even as a breeding animal an incomplete life; for she begins to age almost before she is grown up, disfigured morally by the brutal part assigned to her, and physically by the labour of a beast of burden. Her mind can find no room to expand and develop itself except in the lowest of all the manifestations of the human understanding—in intrigues, gossip, &c.; and so it is no wonder that she is given to these pursuits.

* * *

I had many opportunities of being present at the public displays of dancing-boys (called *tamasha*), and have a particularly distinct recollection of the first of them that I saw, at the house of a rich merchant, Said Azim.

¹ Except among the nomads, where the women are freer.

One of these performances is given almost every day in one or the other house in the town, and occasionally in several houses at the same time, especially before the fasts of the great festival of Beiram, when most of the weddings take place. At these times the whole town from end to end resounds with the clang of bells, the beating of drums, the cries and hand-clappings of the spectators as they beat time to the singing and dancing of the *batshi* (boys). As I knew but few people in the town, I asked Said Azim to arrange a *tamasha*; and late one evening, word having come that the performance was soon to begin, I went to his house in company with a few other persons.

In the doorway and in front of it we found a great many people, and the courtyard was crowded; only a large circle was left in the middle, round which the spectators sat upon the ground. The rest of the court exhibited a dense mass of heads; and people were seated on all the doors, galleries, and roofs, the occupants of the roofs being mostly women. The musicians with drums—some large and hung with bells, some small—stood on a raised place on one side of the circle; and close to them a place of honour was assigned to us, to the great detriment of our ears. Great naphtha-torches filled all the court with a strong red light, which

with the bright blue star-spangled sky made the scene extremely effective.

‘Come this way,’ whispered a Sart to me, winking as a man does when he offers you something forbidden. ‘What is it?’ I asked. ‘Let us watch them dressing the *batsha*.’ In a room opening on to the court by a door now shut, some of the chief personages of the place were standing in respectful attitudes round the *batsha*, a very beautiful boy, who was being dressed up as a girl. Long hair, in several fine plaits, was fastened on his head, which was then covered with a large bright silk kerchief, while another bright red kerchief was folded and placed in a narrow band across his forehead. A mirror was held before him in which he looked all the time with coquettish glances. A stout thick-set Sart held the light; the others watched the operations, scarcely daring to breathe in their devotion (I am not exaggerating), and counted it an honour to be allowed to lend a hand or to make any little improvement. Last of all, the eyebrows and eyelashes were painted black; one or two patches were fixed on the face; and then the boy in the guise of a girl appeared before the spectators, who greeted him with loud cries of approval.

The *batsha* goes gently round the ring, the drums softly beating time as he advances with graceful

and supple steps and with speaking gestures of hand and head. His beautiful large dark eyes and little mouth assumed a provoking expression, carried sometimes beyond the verge of modesty. The happy ones among the spectators on whom these meaning glances were directed were quite overcome with joy, and responded to these flattering attentions by putting on the most submissive air, and giving their faces a cringing and appealing expression. 'My joy! my heart!' you heard on all sides. 'Take my life! there is nothing to compare with your smile,' &c. The music grew louder and louder, and the dance more and more animated. His feet—the *batsha* danced barefoot—flashed in rapid movements; his arms twisted like serpents round his body. Louder and louder grows the sound of the drums, quicker and quicker the movements of the *batsha*, till the hundreds of eyes can scarce follow them, and at last, amid a terrific clash of the instruments and mad cries from the spectators, the last figure is performed, and the dancing-boy (or girl as they persist in saying) is refreshed with tea. Then he again moves quietly round the ring with gentle motions of his hands, making here and there an individual happy with a smile, and throwing tender, languishing, sly glances right and left.

The musicians are extremely interesting. As the time gets quicker they become even more enthusiastic than the spectators, and at particularly loud passages they actually leap into the air as if they were dancing with their knees bent, plying with indescribable vigour their instruments, which were loud enough before.

Presently appeared another *batsha*, not dressed up, whose dancing differed very little from that of his predecessor. The dance alternates with a song of an original though monotonous kind, generally of a melancholy character. The subject is usually a lover's sorrows—disappointed, suppressed, but still passionate love; very rarely prosperous love. The natives sit absorbed while the singing goes on, occasionally bursting into tears.

The most interesting part of the business, though not a part of the regular performance, nor open to all, begins when the regular performance, the dancing and singing, is over. This is the entertainment of the *batsha*, which lasts a long time, and seems very strange to any one who is not acquainted with the manners and customs of the natives. On entering a room in which a ceremony of this kind is going on this is the scene which meets my eyes. The little *batsha* is seated with great solemnity and importance against the wall; turning up his

nose and blinking his eyes, he looks arrogantly round, conscious of his dignity. All along the walls of the room, with their feet tucked under them, sit Sarts of every age and appearance, young and old, short and tall, fat and lean, packed close together. All lean on their elbows, and look in the most abject and pathetic manner at the *batsha*, following all his movements, trying to catch a glance from him, and listening intently to every syllable that falls from his lips. Happy the man whom the lad deigns to honour with a look, or even a word! The individual who is thus honoured responds in the most reverential, nay, slavish manner, endeavouring by his face and his whole figure to express his consciousness of his own utter nothingness, and making the *batu* (a kind of salute, performed by pulling your beard), repeating the while, as an additional token of respect, the word *Taksir* (lord). The man who has the honour to hand anything to the *batsha*—a cup of tea or what not—never thinks of doing so without crawling on his knees and making the customary *batu*. All this the boy takes as tribute due to him, for the payment of which he owes no thanks.

* * *

Kalendarkhan is the name the natives give to their asylums for the poor. The sites on which they are built are always shady spots, among the best sites in the town.

In the middle of the court is erected a platform for prayer, such as is always found in every public place. Besides this there is another larger platform, in the middle of which stands a sort of pavilion—a wretched, low, dirty, and ruinous structure. Here the poor people generally sit, ranged against the walls inside, or on the platform outside. Some talk together; others smoke, drink tea, or sleep at full length intoxicated with *kuknar*.

Pauperism is highly developed and well organized in this country. The poor form a sort of brotherhood with a head, who is descended from the saint who gave the poor an organization and secured them in the possession of the land granted to them by the community; any one is free to take up his abode here and become a *divana*. The house of this head, which is very different from the filthy little house occupied by his subordinates, is placed by the road-side, where the main street of the town slopes down into the open place on which the *kalendarkhan* stands. I tried several times to see the *Tiura* (lord) of the poor, in order to question him about the history of his order of

beggars and the date of its foundation ; but I never found him at home : I was always informed that the Tiura was away at Tashkend, or Chodsiend, or some other town. As head of the brotherhood of beggars, he spends several months of the year in the various towns collecting dues from his subordinates, and giving judgment and settling differences as occasion requires. His income, I expect, is considerable, as every divana (beggar) is bound to hand over to the Tiura his daily takings, keeping only what he needs for his maintenance.

Any one who prefers a vagabond life to labour may become a divana, or licensed beggar. Those who are unmarried live together for the most part in a kalendarkhan, the married people in separate houses. A family was pointed out to me consisting entirely of divanas, from the grandfather down to the grandson.

Each new member on entering the brotherhood receives a special uniform—a red cap of peculiar shape embroidered with wool and trimmed at bottom with sheepskin, a broad girdle, a vessel made of a gourd in which is stowed broken meat, rice, &c., but which is also used without ceremony as a receptacle for copper *tchecha*.¹ The rest of the clothing of the divana is his own, but has to be made in

¹ The *tchecha* is a copper coin, equal in value to $\frac{1}{3}$ of a kopeck.

a prescribed fashion. The robe must be covered all over with patches, and there are people among these beggars who are quite masters in the art of making up a motley dress of startling colours.

Besides the old dress which he wears every day, a mass of rags in which there is not one sound spot, every divana has a holiday suit, composed of a number of scraps of new stuff of various colours, begged in the bazaar and put together in picturesque confusion. Sometimes you may see among these scraps a piece of silk or of cloth, but they are mostly cotton stuffs, some of Russian, some of native manufacture, which compete with one another on the divana's person in colour and durability.

‘What do you use this little stick for?’ I asked of a beggar who carried in his hand a thin green switch, in the bark of which a pattern was cut.

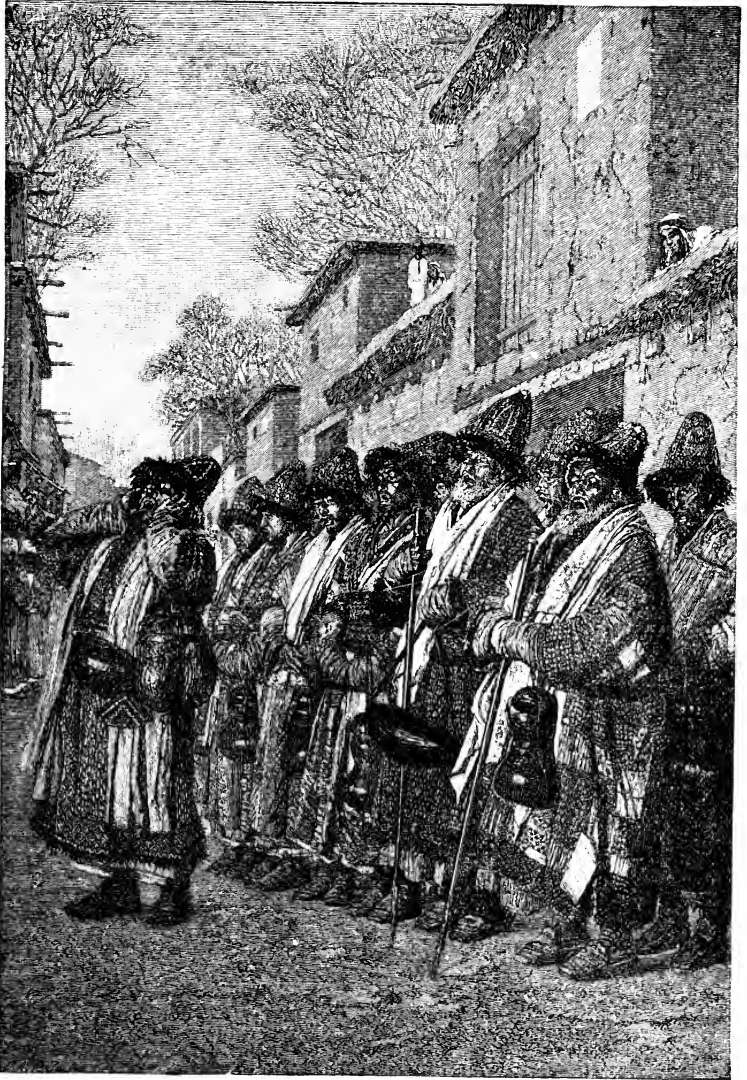
‘I use it in begging,’ he answered. ‘When anybody refuses to listen to me I touch him gently with my stick.’

Every morning the company of beggars go forth to ply their trade, and every evening they meet again to count their gains and tell each other what they have seen and heard, the news of the town and the latest gossip. In every street and every bazaar

divanas are to be seen, sometimes singly, sometimes in groups, some performing as soloists, others bellowing in chorus. You may see some ten or fifteen of them, or even more, all with tall caps trimmed with sheepskin, and all with puffy yellow faces. In an apathetic way they repeat the hackneyed words after their chief, the skilful director of the whole band, who, standing in front of the rest, leads the chorus in so ridiculous a fashion that the stranger cannot refrain from laughing. He stops his ears with his fingers, bends his body forward, and blows himself out as if he would burst when alms are refused.

In the evening the divana returns to his dirty cabin; the uniform is taken off, the gourd emptied of its contents and laid in a corner or hung on a nail, and then the holy man seats himself by the fire, tells his adventures and retails his gossip, listens in turn to his comrades, smokes strong *nasha*, and drinks his tea, or *kuknar*. The *kuknar* completely intoxicates him, and under its effects he will sleep soundly till the morning rouses him to renewed activity.

Nearly all the divanas are confirmed drunkards, nearly all are opium-eaters. They take *kuknar* and opium three or four times a day, the *kuknar* in large cups, the opium in small morsels; though,



CHORUS OF DIVANAS.

indeed, many of them are ready to swallow the one or the other in any quantity at any moment.

I once fed a divana with a whole stick of opium, which I bought at the bazaar, and have a most vivid recollection of the greediness with which he swallowed it, and of the whole figure and appearance of the opium-eater. He was tall and horribly pale and yellow, looking more like a skeleton than a living man. He scarcely heard what was going on around him, and passed day and night in opium-dreams.

At first he paid no attention to me, answered nothing, and probably did not hear what I said. But when he saw opium in my hand his face suddenly brightened and lost its vacant expression, and with wide eyes and expanded nostrils he stretched out his hand and murmured 'Give, give!' I did not at once give him any of the opium, but concealed it. The skeleton became animated, began to behave like a child, and cried 'Give me *bang*, give me *bang*!' ('Bang' means 'opium.') When I at last gave him a piece he seized it with both hands, and setting his back against the wall began slowly gnawing it with his eyes almost closed, like a dog gnawing a savoury bone. Presently he began to smile strangely and muttered incoherent words; from time to time a twitching was visible in



OPIMUM-EATERS.

his face, which became dreadfully distorted. He had already consumed about half of the opium, when another opium-eater who was sitting by him, looking with envy at his more fortunate comrade, snatched the remainder from him and hastily put it in his own mouth. Then the poor skeleton was a sight to behold. He threw himself upon his comrade, hurled him to the ground, and pulled him about unmercifully, crying wildly, 'Give it to me! Give it to me, I say!' I thought he would dislocate the other's jaw.

* * *

The kalendarkhan is not only an asylum for beggars, but also something between a *café restaurant* and a club. A man who wants to smoke nasha, or perhaps to enjoy the forbidden luxury of opium, and who is ashamed of the practice or cannot get the means for it at home, goes to a kalendarkhan. The drunkard also will go there for his draught of kuknar. Of course, there is always plenty of news to be heard among these vagabond divanas, and consequently a number of people who are fond of gossiping, smoking, drinking, and sleeping are always to be found in these places. I have met there persons of some position, who, however, seemed to be ashamed that I, a Russian tiura, should see them in the company of

opium-eaters and kuknar-drinkers. Among the opium-eaters you see very extraordinary persons ; the face of each says plainly, 'I am an opium-eater.' Those who have taken the drug for a long time and in large quantities are characterised by a remarkable decrepitude, immobility, a certain shyness in their movements, a confused apathetic glance, a yellow complexion, and an extraordinarily puffy face. I was told, and I was afterwards convinced by my own observation, that an opium-eater is invariably a coward.

In summer the life these vagabonds lead is by no means a hard one : like the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather the harvest into barns ; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that, though they sow not nor gather into barns, they reap a harvest, and that a plenteous one. On the produce of this harvest the brave divana is able to live well, to get drunk when he pleases, and to lie about in his leisure hours under the shadow of the trees.

In winter their life is not so comfortable. Wrap themselves as they may in their tattered garments, they are benumbed with the cold, for the winter here is generally pretty sharp in comparison with the great heat of the summer.

On entering a kalendarkhan once on a cold day

a picture presented itself to me which is deeply impressed on my memory. A whole company of beggars sat against the wall, packed closely together. Probably they had recently taken a strong dose of opium, for their faces wore a dull look ; some had their mouths open and moved their lips without a sound ; many, with their heads sunk upon their knees, breathed with difficulty, and a shiver passed through them from time to time.

Near the bazaar are a number of wretched dwellings where the opium-eating divanas live—narrow, dark, dirty cabins full of filth and vermin. In some of these kuknar is prepared, and these look like drinking-shops which are never without customers. Some go away content with a slight intoxication ; others, less moderate, go on till they fall to the ground, and sleep off the fumes of the drug in the dark corners.

Kuknar is a narcotic drink prepared from the seed-vessel of the common poppy. It is cut into small pieces and steeped in warm water ; as soon as it is thoroughly softened it is squeezed between the hands, and gives the water a muddy red colour and a bitter taste. This bitter taste is so unpleasant that I could never swallow kuknar, though the hospitable divanas often offered it to me.

The booths for opium-smoking are of a similar

description ; the floors, walls, and couches covered with mats. The smoker lies down and inhales from a *kalian* the smoke of a little ball of opium, which is held by another person with a small pair of tongs at the opening of the *kalian*. The narcotic effect of opium smoke is, if possible, even more powerful than that of opium taken as a drug ; it may be compared to that of tobacco, but is much more violent. Like tobacco it banishes natural and refreshing sleep, and gives in its place, they say, waking dreams—restless, quickly-changing dreams and hallucinations, alternating with a sense of weakness and languor, but a pleasant kind of languor.

One can hardly doubt but that sooner or later opium will come into use in Europe ; from tobacco and the other narcotics which we already take the step to opium is natural and inevitable.

II.

If I were to ask where houses are most quickly built, the unhesitating answer would be, ‘ In Paris and London,’ but the answer would not be correct. Central Asia is undoubtedly the place where a house is built more quickly than anywhere else in the world. All the towns of Central Asia, Tashkend and the rest, are built of clayey earth, which becomes

so hard that the houses in this dry climate last a very long time. It is true that after a persistent fall of rain all the dwellings threaten to fall in ; one loses its roof, another is quite out of shape, and the water stands in those that lie low ; but so soon as the rain stops, all is put right again in a couple of hours. The earthquakes, which are very frequent in these parts, do much more damage, and will sometimes raze a whole street to the ground.

Wood is so dear here that even the richest of the natives would be ruined if they used burned bricks in their buildings. Seams of coal have indeed been found in these parts, but the coal got from them is exceedingly dear. It is not worth while to bake bricks in the sun, as a house built of clay is almost as durable as one built of sun-dried bricks. And so, in spite of the example of the Russians, who generally use bricks, the natives still go on building as their fathers built before them. Their public buildings, however—their mosques, bazaars, and seraglios — are made of burned bricks.

The houses of the Sarts are, as I have said, built with marvellous rapidity. A sort of mortar is made of clay and chopped straw, and blocks of clay are put out to dry in the sun. While they are drying, the wooden framework of the house is

fixed in the earth, and then this framework is filled in with the blocks which are now ready for use, and the mortar is poured on to bind the blocks together. The whole is completed by a roof which consists of a layer of clay resting on wood. The houses of the rich are generally two stories high, and may thus be distinguished at a glance from those of the poor. The latter are mere dog-holes, dark and extremely filthy, with niches in the walls; the floor is covered with a piece of felt or a straw mat; a clay fireplace stands in a corner or in the middle of the room. No tables or beds are to be seen. In summer it may be possible to live in these filthy dens, but the winter must be very trying to the occupants; the rain comes through the roof, the wind howls through the chinks in the frail walls, the cold pierces in on all sides, and fuel in Central Asia is scarce.

The well-to-do people have much more comfortable dwellings. Outside the house, round the court, runs a broad gallery supported by graceful wooden pillars. This gallery is the place where for three-quarters of the year the occupants take their meals, work, chatter, and smoke. From the gallery several doors open into rooms, which are clean, and decorated always with originality and sometimes with great skill; but though the patterns

which adorn the walls of the rooms and the gallery are very attractive, and sometimes show good taste, the colours are always extremely glaring. The patterns are mostly composed of leaves and flowers in Arabian style. Along the walls are recesses which often make very pretty little rooms. The floors are covered with carpets or pieces of felt. In some districts there is an opening in the floor which leads to a lower suite of apartments, used for social purposes. Another larger square opening is occupied in winter by a brazier. The brazier is covered with a top which forms a sort of table, from which hang curtains that reach the ground; this contrivance, by partially excluding the air from the charcoal, makes it burn more slowly and effects a saving of fuel. When it is cold outside, the household gather round this table, wrapped in their dressing-gowns, which are wadded, and thrust their hands under the curtain over the brazier.

Since the annexation of Tashkend by Russia, some of the wealthier householders have made up their minds to substitute panes of glass for the lattice-work covered with oiled paper which used to serve them as windows.

It is scarcely necessary to add that these windows all look on to the court; probably many

years will pass before the natives venture to make their windows look on to the street.

I will not dwell long upon the mosques of Tashkend. They are built of brick, except one or two, which are of clay; not one is of stone, and not one is entirely of wood. They generally consist of a large hall, surrounded on three sides by a broad open gallery, the roof of which is supported by pillars made of carved wood or encrusted with marble. The walls and ceiling of the gallery are generally painted in bright colours or adorned with carving. I may mention that the believers leave their shoes in this gallery before they go into the place of worship. The true believer keeps his face turned all through the service towards a niche in the wall surmounted by a pointed arch.

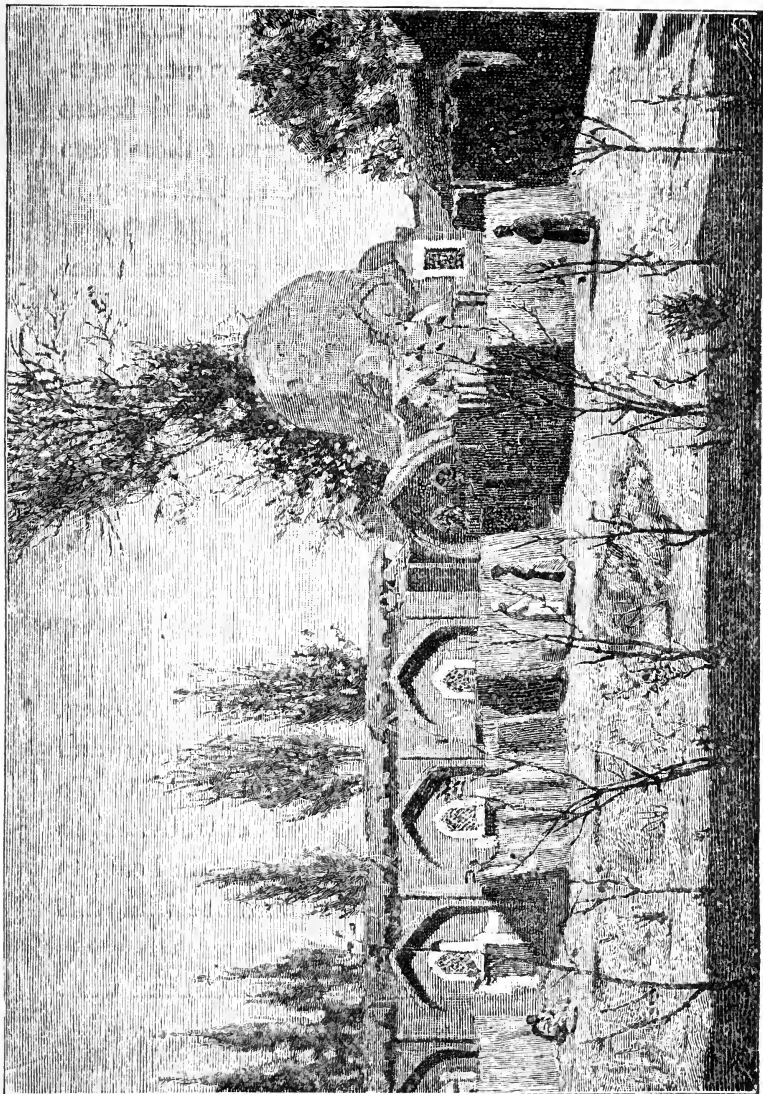
In the principal mosques, but in them alone, are pulpits, approached by a small flight of steps. Though the walls are carefully whitewashed, the windows are so small and so far apart that it is always dark inside. Mats and carpets of white wool are spread over the floor.

Near the bazaar is a large mosque with two minarets, built by one of the recent governors of Tashkend—one who sorely oppressed the people, but nevertheless has left a good name behind him, thanks to the schools and mosques which he built.

This brings me to speak of the schools. In Tashkend, as in the other towns of Central Asia, the elementary schools are generally in connection with small mosques, the higher schools with large mosques; sometimes they have a separate building to themselves. These buildings are very spacious, and are divided into small cells for the students, the whole forming a court or quadrangle. If I remember right, Tashkend has seven high schools (*medresse*), each conducted by a number of teachers (*mollahs*). The great want of these institutions is pupils; I seldom found one which had more than twelve young people, and often found cells shut which should have been full of students.

The mollahs, even the most learned of them, have but a scanty stock of knowledge; all their learning rests upon tradition. The instruction they give consists in reading and expounding the Koran and the commentaries on the Koran composed by the numerous company of Mussulman saints. To know the Koran by heart, to have read and to remember the greatest possible number of these commentaries, is what makes a man of learning. It is all a matter of patience and memory, a science which is transmitted from father to son by continual repetition.

When one commentary is committed to memory,



SCHOOL AT TASHKEND.

another is taken up, and so on. In real education—I mean the merest rudiments of elementary education—these learned men are almost as deficient as their pupils, but this does not prevent them from looking upon themselves and being looked up to by others as great masters.

I remember a little man whose acquaintance I made in the chief mosque—a mollah of ripe (perhaps over-ripe) years.

‘He is the lamp of learning,’ I was told, ‘to all this town; it is to him that all the mollahs of Tashkend owe their learning.’

‘That is a fine thing; but from whom did he get his learning?’

‘From his father, who studied in Bokhara.’

As he spoke, my companion made a solemn gesture towards the south-west, as much as to say, ‘There, at that brilliant focus of learning and civilization.’ To this there was no answer. To have studied at Bokhara means (in Central Asia) to have drawn knowledge from the fountain-head, to have acquired an intimate acquaintance with this world and the next.

Once I asked a learned man of Tashkend what he taught.

‘Everything.’

‘That is a great deal. But what do you specially profess?’

I regretted the question as soon as I had asked it, for with the aid of his fingers he at once began an endless enumeration of his acquirements. There was indeed nothing he did not know, nothing he was not prepared to teach.

The lower grade schools consist of one large room overcrowded with children. The noise they make tells you what the place is before you see it. Squatting on the ground or swaying to and fro on their knees, they repeat in a noisy manner one after the other the phrase which they are learning. The schoolmaster, armed with a long supple cane, keeps the unruly ones in order and stimulates the lazy to exert themselves. He has a sure eye and a steady hand, and distributes the blows of his long cane very liberally and very rapidly, but also very fairly.

I have seldom seen a population so mixed as that of Tashkend and the other towns of Turkestan lately conquered by Russia. It includes Sarts, Tadshiks, Uzbeks, Kirghiz, Kuramases, Turcomans, Nogais, Kashgars, Afghans, Persians, Arabs, Jews, Hindoos, Gipsies, and lastly Russians. I will say a few words about each of these races, as found in Tashkend itself or in the steppes which are subject to Tashkend.

The Sarts, who form the majority of the permanent population of Tashkend, are not properly a separate race; they seem to be a mixture of Tadshiks and Usbeks. I infer this from the fact that they have either long, hooked, well-shaped noses like those of the Tadshiks and Persians, or else (less frequently) blunt flat noses like those of the Usbeks. The Sart generally has fine eyes, and a thinner beard than the Persian, though not nearly so thin as the scanty tufts which adorn the chin of the Usbek.

I must confess that the Sart always seemed to me to bear a strong resemblance to the Jew; both have the same type of countenance, the same instincts, the same character, the same greed of gain, the same love of petty speculations, of dealing in second-hand goods, and the same cowardice.

The name 'Sart' means a retail dealer or trader, and, true to their name, the Sarts have got into their hands all the trade, not only in Tashkend, but among the nomad peoples in the neighbourhood. It is they who are supreme in all commercial matters both in town and country. Under the pretext of spreading the law of the Prophet they make the simple children of the desert pay four times the proper price for everything they buy. The only redeeming point in the coarse and selfish

nature of the Sart is his love of education—we may even say a certain tendency towards improvement and progress. But we must not exaggerate. If we say that the Sart is amenable to progress, we only mean that he is so in comparison with the other Mahomedans of Central Asia.

The Tadshiks have fine features, which they



USBEK.

owe to their descent from ancestors who immigrated to this country from Persia. They speak a dialect of Persian. They are the intellectual aristocracy of Turkestan, and every inhabitant of Central Asia who pretends to distinction tries to imitate their language and their manners.

The Usbeks, who are probably a mixed race of considerable antiquity, now form a very dense

population. They have prominent cheek-bones, great physical strength, but little capacity for education. In spite of this want, they are the lords of the soil; they take the place of a nobility, and all the emirs and khans of Central Asia are Usbeks. They have not yet quite abandoned the nomad life. Many of them have never yet settled down in a town, and even among those who have settled there are some who live almost the whole year round in tents which they put up near their houses. In this they are not altogether wrong: one need not be an Usbek to prefer a tent to a house in the unbearable heat of summer in Turkestan.

The Kirghiz are recognizable at once by their strongly marked characteristics; their stature is low, the skull broad and somewhat high, cheek-bones very prominent, eyes narrow, lips projecting, nose short and flat, beard small and untidy, skin of all shades of colour, from the brown of a South European to the deepest black.

They wander with their tents (*yrurts*) over a huge tract which lies partly among the steppes of Siberia, partly in Russian Turkestan, partly in the neighbourhood of Khiva and Bokhara. They number in all perhaps three million souls. 'Kirghiz' is not their proper name, and when they are so called they answer, 'We are not Kirghiz; we are

Cossacks.' 'Cossacks' in fact is their proper name, but they are gradually growing used to the name 'Kirghiz' by which the Russians call them, and which probably comes from one of the kindred clans, the Kyrgyz. It would be interesting to know how it was that an insignificant clan, which was wedged in among the gigantic mountains of Thian-Shan, came to give its name to a great assemblage of various tribes, which stretch from the plains of Siberia to the Amu-Daria and from the Ural Mountains to the Thian-Shan.

The Kirghiz, as everybody knows, are divided into three hordes: the Great Horde in the East, which reaches to the Chinese frontier of Siberia; the Little Horde (in reality the largest), which spreads from the Ural Mountains to the Aral Sea; and the Middle Horde, which lies between the other two. To these three ought to be added the Inner Horde, which in the year 1812 occupied the steppes of Astrachan, which till then had been uninhabited.

The Kirghiz are Mahomedans, but they follow the maxims of the Prophet only in so far as they agree with their wild love of freedom and their passion for a nomad life. In fact the principle which they observe most religiously is the principle of robbery. Their ceaseless plundering and their constant change of abode make not only

luxury but even comfort impossible for them. The tent of the Kirghiz is as unpretentious a dwelling as it is possible to conceive; the same may be said of his clothing, and his food is miserable.

Turcomans are very seldom found in Tashkend—indeed they are hardly known except by hearsay. The few whom I met seemed to me to answer so little to the type, to be in fact such wretched mongrels, that I did not dare to give them a place in my album, in spite of my wish to make it a complete collection of all the races of Central Asia.

Nogais are often met with in all the towns of Turkestan, in Tashkend no less than elsewhere. These people are of Tartar blood. They have gradually migrated hither from the South-East of Russia or Siberia, some to escape captivity, others to avoid military service (to which the Mussulman has a great aversion), and others for various reasons. As they are naturally intelligent and have had their wits somewhat sharpened by the intercourse with Europeans which was forced upon them in Russia, the Nogais are able to get along very well, especially when they hit upon the happy idea of passing themselves off as martyrs to their faith, who have been driven out of their homes by the infidel. Those who have been to a Russian school at Kasan or some other town, where educa-

tion stands at any rate at a higher level than in the schools of Turkestan, easily attain to the rank of a professor (*mudari*) and to a reputation for learning.

As most of the Nogais have lived in Russia, many of them serve as intermediaries between the conquerors whose language they speak and the natives whose religion they share. It is well to keep a watchful eye upon them, as they are far from scrupulous. Many of them rise to very good positions. For instance, Sharofey Bey has become one of the leading capitalists of Tashkend, and my excellent friend Hadshi Bunussoff, formerly a pupil in the high school of Kasan, is now a mollah and a distinguished member of the best society of the town.

The numerous Kashgars who are found in Tashkend come from the district of Little Bokhara, and mostly from Kashgar, the chief town of that district. The district is also called Kashgarei, Altysnar (six towns, from *alty*, six, and *shar*, town), and sometimes Upper or Eastern Turkestan. Besides all these names it used also to be called Chinese Turkestan in the days when it was subject to China. The Kashgars of Tashkend are descended from emigrants who left Little Bokhara in the course of the eighteenth century, especially

towards its close, on account of the constant fighting that went on there; no sooner was one



AFGHAN.

war ended than another began. It was in the Kashgar quarter of the town that I took up my abode. My host was a fine specimen of an Usbek,

but many of my neighbours had strongly marked Chinese features.

The Afghans, who are much less numerous, nearly all live in a caravanserai which is exclusively occupied by them. They are mostly merchants, or rather smugglers, who are very skilful in bringing green tea, which is largely grown in Central Asia, through India and so into Russia. In spite of the great detour they succeed in selling their tea cheaper than that which comes direct by way of Kiakhtha in Siberia.

The Persians are distinguished by their intelligence. In the khanates that are still independent it is to them that the most important and delicate functions are assigned. In Russian Turkestan, where they once were slaves, they are now free citizens, as Russia of course tolerates no slavery in her dominions. In Tashkend they form an important part of the population; their numbers are considerable, and in their new home they generally tend to merge themselves in the Sarts. They belong to the Shiite sect, and thus have a deep-rooted hostility to the general body of the Mussulmans of Central Asia, who are chiefly Sunnites.

This difference of sect, however, does not prevent them from frequenting the Sunnite mosques. Are they honest in so doing? Time

will show. The Sarts meanwhile have little trust in these sons of the sworn enemies of the Sunnite faith. I remember how a citizen of Tashkend once said to me with a smile, 'This dog goes to our mosques, but only to throw dust in our eyes. When he is at home again he says a different prayer.'



ARAB.



JEW.

The Arabs are not numerous in Tashkend, but they are often found in the other towns of Central Asia, and in the neighbourhood of Samarkand there are little colonies of them. So far as I can judge, they are remarkable here as elsewhere for their expressive countenances, their keen eyes, their bushy eyebrows, and their splendid beards.

The Jews, whose number is considerable, live in a separate quarter of the town, which daily grows in population. They are ill-treated in Bokhara and the other independent states, and find a more comfortable home in Russian Turkestan, though their lives are in danger if they are caught in their flight. The number of the Jews who have



JEWESS.



JEWISH YOUTH.

thus made their escape from Bokhara is so great that the emir (so they told me) was mad with rage ; he flung the Aksakal of the Israelites into a pit, and would probably have murdered him had not the son of Jacob purchased his life with some thousands of roubles.

The Jews of Tashkend and of Russian Turkestan

ought to be well contented when they compare their condition with that of their brothers who live in those districts of Central Asia which have not yet been conquered by Russia. The latter have to submit to the local customs and to severe laws regulating their dress and their behaviour in public. Some towns they can only enter riding upon an ass, in others they must be on foot. They are forbidden to wear silk or to go in any way richly clad; they must content themselves with cloth of the commonest texture and the most sombre colour. They are allowed to wear no other girdle than a cord, and no ornament to their dress except a little silken collar, which makes an edging to the shawl where it fits round the neck. The only head-dress they may wear is a little round cap, called *toppé*, over which they may in case of need put a fur cap. A Jew, unless he were out of his senses or reckless of his life, would never think of putting on a turban, or even of wrapping a piece of cloth round his head, though this is quite a necessary precaution in the hot weather. Being thus treated under the native governments, they hold their heads high in Tashkend; there they drive fiery horses, wear bright shawls, and when they meet a Russian (*Tira*) try to give him a military salute.

Before the Russians appeared on the scene, the Hindoos were almost as much oppressed at Tashkend as the Jews. They are not numerous in this town, but make up for fewness by their perseverance and activity. They are the most remorseless usurers in the world. Two or three hundred per cent. they consider quite a moderate rate. Though



HINDOO.



HINDOO MAHOMEDAN.

they are generally very rich, they live in a very simple style, without wives, in caravanserais, where each has a dark but clean little chamber to himself. They are extremely abstemious; eat no meat, drink only water, and prepare all their meals themselves.

They are a fine race. I speak from experience,

as I have more than once seen them bathing ; their bodies are well-knit and nobly proportioned, the skin bronze-coloured.

Next to their love of usury, their most striking characteristic is their religious fanaticism. If their *narghilies*, their earthen vessels, or other domestic articles are touched by a man of another faith, they throw them away or break them in pieces. They all wear on their brows various tokens, representing the sun or fire.

If I had to characterise the Hindoos of Tashkend, I should say that in their eagerness to scrape money together by every possible means they are comparable to the Jews. Only, whereas the Jew in the hour of danger buries his gold and his treasure and runs away without looking back, the Hindoo quietly seats himself on his strong box and awaits his death.

What country is there where you do not meet Gipsies? In Russian Turkestan, however, there are but few of these vagrants. He who has seen the Gipsies of Europe knows the Gipsies of Central Asia, who like ours keep themselves alive by vagabondage and begging, and are ready to tell the fortunes of every passer-by. Contrary to the universal custom of Mahomedan countries, their women go unveiled.

I cannot conclude this survey of the various elements of the mixed population of Central Asia without some mention of the latest comers, the Russians. I have but a few words to say of them. As yet there are but few Russians in Tashkend; and their predominance, which is an indisputable fact, rests upon the fear which the natives have of



HINDOO FAKIR.



GIPSY.

their uniformly victorious arms, and the great superiority of European civilization to the semi-barbarism of the peoples of Central Asia. Nearly all of them are either soldiers, officials, or merchants. Colonists have not yet appeared in this land of Sarts, Usbeks, and Kirghiz; but they are already slowly but surely approaching Syr-Daria,

and the time is not far distant when the country folk of South-Western Siberia will knock at the door of this new Russian province. The colonization of Central Asia by Russia no doubt presents serious difficulties; in the first place land must be acquired, taken from the natives and assigned to the Russians; and this is no easy matter. Nevertheless this problem must be solved, with due regard of course to the requirements of justice, and that as quickly as possible. On its solution depends the future of Russian supremacy in Asia, and the welfare of the peoples who have already submitted to us, who, when all is said, have much more to gain from the establishment of Russian rule in Central Asia than from a return to their former slavery. The overthrow of the Russian rule would be the signal for the recommencement of those civil wars, of that violence and robbery and perpetual injustice, of which hitherto the history of Central Asia has consisted under all dynasties and in all districts, on the Oxus as well as on the Jaxartes.

Until we set ourselves deliberately and systematically to colonize the country, Russian Turkestan, I am convinced, will be Russian in name only. Unless the Government procures land enough to plant a numerous Christian and civilized population among the present uncivilized Mahomedan popu-

lation, Syr-Daria will belong to us only in the sense in which India belongs to England—i.e. we must make up our minds that sooner or later the natives will rise and turn us out. Our position in Turkestan is like that of the French in Algeria; the only way to prevent the people from constantly rising against us is to colonize the country.

III.

Here I leave the town of Tashkend, and plunge into the interior of the country, which in general is well cultivated where there is water, and parched, desolate, and desert wherever water is lacking.

Tchinas is a little place which for some unknown reason is called a town. It lies on the raised bank of the old bed of the river Tchirtchik, which is now almost dried up, leaving only marshy ground covered here and there with reeds. We left the fortress on our left, and after passing a small bazaar in which very little business was going on, reached the inn which had been mentioned to us, and which seems to be the only one in the place, belonging to a certain Mollah Fasil, a native merchant.

In former times Tchinas was a busier place

than it is now ; for a large part of the inhabitants, especially of those engaged in trade, have lately removed to New Tchinas, which was founded by the Russians when they connected the Tchirtchik and the Syr-Daria, with a new fort to protect it. The old fort, now deserted, was in its day taken by the Russians without a struggle, the garrison judging it expedient to retire in good time. It seemed to me that in other hands it might yet do good service ; the walls are still tolerably sound, and stand on a high rampart surrounded by a deep ditch ; they are indented and loopholed in the ordinary way. The inside was but a heap of ruins. Quite a swarm of boys were roaming about searching for anything they could find, and scattered in all directions as we approached. The bricks and other serviceable material had been removed and used in the building of the fort and the dwelling-houses of New Tchinas.

A violent hurricane which visited us on this day—the 26th of March, according to my journal—compelled us to stay in this uninteresting little place till the next morning. About 3 p.m. came a whirlwind so violent that the clouds of dust completely hid for a time objects that were but a few paces distant ; this was followed by very heavy rain, which lasted all night.

I here learned the process of extracting oil from cotton-seed, which oil seems to be very abundant at Tchinas. The apparatus used in the process is extremely primitive.

The road was so heavy the next day that our horses had hard work to get on, and when we had to pass through the reeds the ground was swampy and not very safe. The water that collected on the road drained off towards the Tchirtchik in considerable streams.

The fields by the roadside, refreshed by the rain, were bright with juicy grass. The Kirghiz were ploughing and harrowing. They still use a very primitive plough, and break up the heavier clods with the spade before harrowing. The harrow consists of a board, two archin in length and one and a half in breadth, set with iron spikes, and fastened by a chain to the wooden pole which passes to the yoke; the driver sits on the board to make it heavier.

New Tchinas is a dismal-looking place; a small fort, mean little buildings, and hardly a single tree, though there are two rivers close by. No doubt, as the ground lies somewhat above the level of the river, the making of canals and the laying out of gardens would be a work of some difficulty, but various kinds of willows might be planted easily

and quickly. The indigenous willow strikes root near any water even quicker than ours, and is therefore called 'the unconscionable,' but in a climate such as this even an 'unconscionable' tree is not to be despised.

The settlement of Tchinas lies on the bank of the Syr-Daria, and has a bazaar of considerable size, whose traders, chiefly natives, are extremely greedy for the smallest gain, and therefore always flock to the spot inhabited by the Russians.

The Syr-Daria produces sturgeon, shad, and other fish, only there are no fishermen.

In Tchinas I found an acquaintance from Tashkend, who was staying here in order to settle a very complicated matter. He complained to me of the great difficulty he found in getting information and arriving at the rights of the case.

I may give, as bearing upon this point, a story told me by G., the commandant of the place. The affair is trifling, but characteristic. A Kirghiz came to him with a complaint that a man had bitten him in the hand; the accused, when questioned, declared that the charge was false. What was to be done? 'Show us the wound.' The wound was a long one, such as a knife would make, and the doctor who was called in declared that it was not made by a bite but by a cut with a knife.

The explanation was as follows. The complainant, who worked with the man whom he now accused, had been convicted by the latter of a theft, for which he was punished, and ever after nourished such a hatred against his comrade that, as the latter said, he was ready not only to wound his hand, but even to cut off a finger, nay, two or three fingers, if he could thereby calumniate his enemy and take vengeance upon him.

Early in the morning we were ferried in a little iron boat across the Tchirtchik, which at this point is of no great breadth. In the steep bank I noticed holes, which one of the Cossacks who were escorting me told me formed their winter quarters. 'You must be rather uncomfortable in those holes, I should think,' said I. 'Very.' 'And where do you live in summer—in tents, I suppose?' 'No, in the open air.' 'How can that be? The rain must wet you through.' 'The rain wets us, but the sun dries us again,' was the answer.

We passed through a rather low-lying district. Here and there we saw tilled fields. There was hardly any grass, but plenty of reeds, though we saw little of these for the grass which generally surrounds them; of the reeds themselves only the charred remnants of last year's stalks were visible, for the custom of the natives is to cut the reeds

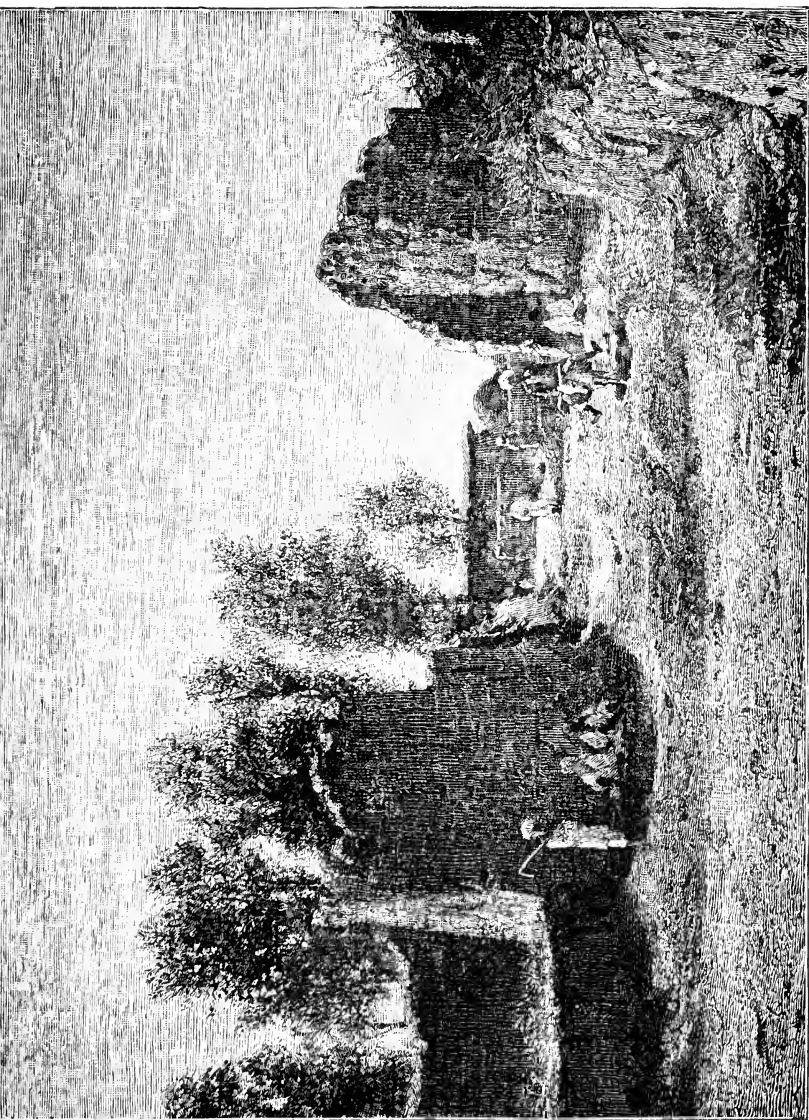
every year, for their own use or for sale, and to burn what is left to help the next year's growth.

Clover grows remarkably well in this district, and may be made to yield as much as five crops a year; even a lazy farmer will get three crops.

We put up some quails, and B. told me that they abound here, and that the Sarts and Kirghiz catch them and feed them up for fighting matches, on which of course wagers are laid. A man who keeps quails is not a little proud when he can say that his bird has beaten so many opponents. The natives are passionately fond of this amusement, and spend whole days in it. A well-trained bird fetches a high price. B. knew some quail-keepers who would not sell a bird for less than fifty *tilla*: a *tilla* is equal to four roubles.

The mountain partridge is also caught and used for the same purpose.

The crops they sow here are wheat, barley, millet, peas, and flax. They extract oil from the linseed, but in their barbarous ignorance use the fibrous stalks to light their fires. Rice also is grown here, but not to any great extent, because it requires frequent and copious watering; in the Angrena valley, on the contrary, and further on towards Tian and Chodshent, you find great quantities of it. The seed of the poppy they use for



VILLAGE OF CHODSHAGENT.

food and make a sort of soup of it, using the seed-vessel (as I have already mentioned) for the preparation of kuknar, a drink which, being a powerful intoxicant, is certainly hateful to the God of the Mussulman, but which, since it is not forbidden by the Koran, makes glad the heart of the believer without oppressing his conscience. Indeed, the natives do not despise wine when they can get it, and only the more scrupulous among them pacify their consciences by diluting their wine with *busa*, or rather adding *busa* to their wine; thus the believer takes his pleasure, and the rules of the Koran remain unbroken. One of the Cossacks who accompanied me, who had been at the taking of Fort Tchusak, told me that they found there quantities of wine and brandy.

We made a halt in a large village called Chodshagent. The men were mostly at their work, but the women came running out in swarms to see the *Urrus*. Some cast anxious glances at us from a place of concealment; others showed themselves bolder in the absence of their husbands, smiled and nodded, and even called out 'Aman!' (i.e. 'Greeting.')

As soon as we had settled ourselves in the little house that had been pointed out to us, there appeared a crowd of people, old and young, who

wanted to know who I was, and with what object I was travelling:

To attempt to explain to the natives that one is not travelling on business, but with some scientific or artistic purpose, is labour thrown away; they cannot understand you. In spite of all the pains I took to explain that my object was simply to learn something about a district which was still almost unknown to us Russians, and its inhabitants and their way of life, and then in turn to impart what I had learned to other people living at a distance, the natives could not see it, and seemed to be still convinced that something was wrong, and that I was travelling in order to make investigations.

I inquired about the neighbourhood, and the roads to Chodsent and Dschusak, and in the course of my inquiries I drew out a map, in order to make out the villages of which they told me. This roused their curiosity, and when I proceeded actually to give the names of the places round about, and assured them that I could name all the towns, villages, rivers, mountains, and steppes not only of Turkestan but also of Khokand and Bokhara, their astonishment knew no bounds.

In a conversation upon a variety of topics I learned that the disease which most troubles the

people is ague, which is specially prevalent in the autumn. The natives know no remedy for it and are seldom completely cured; the disease generally returns after two or three years, or even sooner, less violently than before and without paroxysms, but causing great exhaustion and prolonged weakness.

‘Here is another patient,’ said the master of the house; ‘we do not know what to do for him.’

‘Who is he?’

‘My son here,’ he replied, pointing to a rosy-cheeked lad of fifteen, who looked healthy enough.

A few questions made it clear to me that it was a well-known form of disease, for which I chanced to have an excellent remedy in my medicine-chest. ‘Good,’ I said; ‘I will give you some medicine, and in two or three days you will be quite well.’ They thanked me for my promise, but seemed not quite to trust me, as the illness had been very persistent for more than three months, and had refused to yield to the native remedies. I gave full directions for diet and treatment, and on the second day my patient felt better; on the third the disease had completely vanished. The fame of the cure spread at once all through the village and beyond it to the villages around, and from all quarters the people thronged to ask my advice.

and assistance. Unfortunately for me my second patient also, though he was not completely cured, felt some relief. This was a boy of the same village, whom it was impossible to see without compassion; he was a very pleasant-looking lad of eighteen, but for the last three years he had not grown at all, his whole body had become bent and twisted, his chest contracted, and he suffered besides from a violent disorder of the stomach, which recurred at frequent intervals. I was wholly unable to recognise the disease or to relieve it with my small stock of knowledge, and told the father so quite openly, though I prescribed some innocent drops for the stomachic disorder. How great was my astonishment when the lad declared after a few days that his stomach was in good order, and that the difficulty in breathing had quite vanished! Of course the effect was entirely due to the patient's imagination, for I had really contributed nothing to his cure; but nevertheless my reputation as a healer was established, and a crowd of sick persons flocked to me daily, to my great vexation. I say 'to my great vexation,' for my position was in fact very uncomfortable; I could not refuse my advice, as the people would not go to the Russian doctor, partly because they had no confidence in him, but

chiefly because he was at a distance, and his help could not be had for nothing. Moreover, it must be remembered that the natives for some reason or other are very shy of science in the person of its representative in the nearest Russian settlement, and therefore are forced to have recourse to some charlatan, who has seldom any conscience, and generally takes their money and their presents and does them no good in return. If I recommended a sick person to go to the doctor at Tchinas, as I could not help him, he would go away with the idea that nothing more need be done. But the saddest thing was that they refused to believe my assurance that I did not know what their illness was, had no medicine for it, and could not help them. 'We have heard,' they would say, 'that your medicine has done good to a great many.'

So there was no course open for me but to give what advice I could. The means I generally adopted involved the copious use of water, rubbing, and wrapping in damp sheets, &c. ; and for rheumatic complaints, from which a great part of my patients were suffering, these measures seemed really to have some good effect.

Every day, early in the morning, A. M. would call out to me, 'Come outside, if you please. A whole host of patients are coming to see the *Usta*'

(doctor or master). Some were brought to me on litters ; others came to ask me to visit those who were too ill to move. There were also some, mostly women, who did not like to consult me directly, but sent a third person to say that they had pains in this or that part, and wanted a medicine that would put them right at once.

In a neighbouring village a boy of twelve or thirteen was shown to me whom I shall never forget. His parents carried him to me in their arms, swathed in wadding and wrapped in rags. His face was terribly swollen and disfigured and white as wax ; in place of eyes were small open festering wounds, the nose had fallen in, the mouth was a mere opening that could no longer be closed, through which shone the little white teeth. The boy, who was suffering in his whole body from some terrible kind of mortification, was of course unable to walk, ate scarcely anything, and could hardly speak. ‘Many doctors have doctored him already, but could do him no good.’ ‘What did they give him?’ ‘Mercury mostly.’ ‘Did they give him much of it?’ ‘Who can tell? We do not know, but it seemed *kop*.’ (*Kop* means ‘much.’) ‘Why do you let foolish people treat your children so?’ I asked the father. He answered, ‘We are ignorant folk ; what we are advised to do, we do.

We know indeed that people deceive us just to get a *seljau* (present) out of us. But what can one do? It is sad to see the child thus, and so we take any advice that is given.' A few days after, the poor child died.

Very many, almost half, of the inhabitants are disfigured with the smallpox; their faces and heads often show traces of ringworm and other skin diseases. To prevent the ringworm from spreading, they smear the affected part with soot, and the children sometimes present a very ludicrous appearance, with their faces half white and half black.

A ridiculous old woman from a neighbouring village once came to tell me, in a hoarse voice, that worms had eaten her tongue and were now attacking her liver—so at least the Usta had told her. She could not scream, nor speak above a whisper, and felt a pressure on the chest and a pain in the throat. I wanted to see this tongue, but she implored me not to do so. 'Don't touch it; for God's sake, don't touch it.' 'Why not? I only want to see what is the matter.' 'No, no! Wait till I fetch my son; then you may do it. If I die then, he will be at hand, and will know what to do with me.'

The village of Chodshagent is close to the river Syr-Daria—perhaps a hundred paces from

it. The house in which I stayed lies on a broad canal (*aryk*) with high banks, which takes the water from the fields to the mills and so into the river. The bank of this canal is planted here and there with trees, and is the best street in the place; it contains one of the two shops of the village, and is the place where all the people assemble in the evening after their work; one sits still, another chatters, a third asks the news, for all news finds its way to this place. Others again play a game which resembles our chess. The board is marked out on the ground with a stick, and the pieces are little red and white stones. Occasionally I joined in the game, and of course lost every time, to the great delight of the spectators.

On days when the bazaar is open at Tschinas the crowd about the shop is more numerous and more animated. The traders on their way to the bazaar bring news and gossip with them, and, as the supply of these articles is far greater at every bazaar than the supply of commodities, the people of Chodshagent in their gathering at the shop have plenty of topics for conversation of the most varied kind, from important political events down to the most trifling incidents of the day. An *Aksakal* ('eldest,' literally *white-beard*) told me with the greatest solemnity that a sorrel colt had

been sold at the bazaar, but with beating of drums instead of in the ordinary manner. As the bazaar was probably crowded, there is little doubt but that far and wide people talked of this sale of a sorrel colt to the beating of drums, of the price, of the age of the animal, his good and bad points, &c.

The villages as well as the towns have bazaars, which are held on stated days. On Monday there will be a bazaar in this village, on Tuesday in another, on Wednesday in a third, and so on; so that the country people can buy what they want and gossip as much as they like every day, without going all the way to the town. Chodshagent, being so near Tchinas, has no bazaar.

There are but few gardens here. The streets, except the one main street already mentioned, are narrow, dirty, and in the rainy season simply impassable. The houses, with some few exceptions, look very wretched; they are all built of earth and mud. Near my house was the mosque, a small building, without any ornament either inside or out, which was filled with peasants morning and evening. I remarked, however, that it was frequented not by all the population alike, but principally by the elder folk; most of the beards were grey.

The government of the village lies in the hands

of the 'eldest' and the *Kasi* (a clerical person, who is a judge). These officials are not elected, but nominated, and their powers generally pass from father to son. Thus in the case of my friend Tash, the 'eldest' of Chodshagent, the office had descended from father to son for several generations. Under these circumstances, of course, the government is purely patriarchal, in the widest sense of the word. The Aksakal and the Kasi plunder the people and share the spoil. As far as I could see there are absolutely no honest people among these governors, in our sense of the word 'honest'—i.e. people who will govern and do justice without bribery and corruption. The new arrangement introduced by the Russians, according to which nearly all the offices are filled by election, will not be to the taste of these village aristocrats, but it enables the *baiguschi* (the poor people) to breathe more freely.

The peasant here does his work in an antediluvian method with antediluvian tools. For instance, on the canal near my lodging is a little mill for dressing rice. The apparatus consists of two stout pieces of wood, bound with iron and furnished with teeth, which rise and fall and beat the rice which lies in a hole in the ground. They are set in motion by something in the nature of a

waterwheel, which revolves rapidly with much grating and groaning.

The rice is cleaned and sifted three times, and so wasteful is this process that four *batman* (= twenty-four pood) of uncleaned rice yield only half that quantity of clean grain. The inadequate irrigation of the crops has also something to do with it. In places where they get a better supply of water the grains are larger and yield a larger proportion of clean rice in the dressing. It takes a whole day's labour to clean about two *batman* of rice; but there are very few mills in the neighbourhood, and so rice is brought from a considerable distance to this mill at Chodshagent. The charge for dressing is one-sixteenth of the rice.

I had an opportunity of seeing how they get their wheel-tires into shape. The carts which the natives use (called *arba*) certainly have large wheels, and so the wooden tires have to be tolerably stout; still it is strange to see a dozen men toiling all day in the sweat of their brows to get one tire into shape.

Continuing my journey, I came to the settlements of the Kirghiz of the Tamin race. It is said that their ancestors came hither from the West long ago in time of war, and that afterwards a part returned, while the rest, lacking the means to do so, stayed here. At present these Tamin-Kirghiz live

between Tashkend, Tchinas, and Chodshent, and are occupied in agriculture, most of them living the whole year round in the same spot. Their features do not correspond to the Kirghiz type, and if these Tainin-Kirghiz with their fixed settlements cannot properly be called Sarts, they certainly cannot on the other hand be counted as pure Kirghiz.

According to usage a crowd of people came to offer us their good wishes as soon as we arrived. As I unpacked my things and took off my travelling dress, the curiosity of my visitors rose. They would have me show them and tell them about everything, which I could not refuse to do; whereupon they expressed their astonishment by a variety of signs. One clicked for a long time with his tongue, first quickly, then more and more slowly till the sound could scarcely be heard; another opened his eyes wide and uttered a long-drawn 'pa! pa! pa! pa! pa!'; a third swayed his whole body to and fro; and finally a fourth was quite dumb with wonder, and only shook himself from time to time as if there was something uncanny in what he saw. And in truth their surprise was but natural. They are quite astonished by such things as a pocket-knife with several springs, a folding umbrella, or a camp-stool; but a pocket-revolver

(a *kitsckine-miltyk*, or little gun) strikes them as marvellous and gives them a topic for several hours of talk.

* * *

The Angren flows close by the village, and the next morning they wished to ferry us across it on a *sal*, a raft made of reeds. The Angren is a small river, a tributary of the Syr-Daria. These mountain streams are so low in the dry season that a hen might ford them, as the saying is; but in autumn when the rains come, and still more in spring when the snow melts, they rise so high that it becomes, if not impossible, yet very dangerous to cross them.

‘Our raft is good,’ they said; ‘we will soon take you across.’ But when I went next morning to look at the vaunted raft, I found that it was a very cranky affair—nothing in fact but a few bundles of reeds carelessly tied together, the whole measuring not more than two square arshin. I gave the people money to buy reeds, and all the cord from my baggage, and told them to put together something more secure. In an hour the machine was ready—the old raft grown wider and thicker.

The stream was extraordinarily rapid, and our

crossing, which the whole village gathered to see, was not quite without risk. First two horses were sent into the water on a trial trip, mounted by two Kirghiz, with nothing on but short trousers. The stream at once carried the horses off their legs, but the Kirghiz dismounted, and holding each his horse's mane with one hand and the bridle with the other, led the animals safely through the water. They reached the bank some sixty yards lower down, and at once remounted and came back. The poor horses trembled all over, neighed and looked with terror at the water; but without a moment's pause the loaded raft was tied to their tails and they were driven into the water again. Two men swam with the horses, and five or six beside the raft. With anxious eyes we all followed the raft; not a sound was to be heard except the panting and neighing of the horses, for whom the effort was tremendous.

‘My poor boxes!’ said I to myself as I watched the raft dancing like a chip on the waters. A little more and it would have been carried past the only place where the bank sloped so as to make a landing possible, and then most certainly my traps and the horses would never have been seen again. But the men just managed to reach the bank, drew the raft some way up stream, and then came back to our

side and took us and the rest of the baggage across with fresh horses.

The poor Kirghiz shivered terribly when they came out of the water, and asked us for *arak* (brandy), but as we had none at hand we gave them some tea instead, and then proceeded on our journey to the village of Buka, which lies two *tash* (about sixteen versts) further on.

I may here remark that the *tash* came into use here as the measure of distance after the last conquest of Khokand by Bokhara. Before that distances were measured by the days and hours required to traverse them; and now the Russian verst, which the natives call *tshachrym*, is beginning to come into use.

Our route lay through fields and meadows; there was no road, nor even a track. On the horizon many *kurgans* were visible, which B. named to me. This one is Ak-tube (*ak* means 'white'; *tube* 'mountain' or 'hill'), that yonder is Kok-tube (*kok* means 'blue' or 'green'), and that other, the highest of all, is Chanka.

Chanka, of which I had already heard, rose in strongly-marked outline against the sky. Without hesitation I turned my course towards it.

We came to a settlement of Kirghiz, where we rested a little and refreshed ourselves with *gatych*

(sour milk). The settlement, which belongs to the Tamin-Kirghiz, had a very poverty-stricken appearance.

I wandered through the tents, and in some of them made bold to open and explore the contents of all the little bags, bundles, and rags that lay in the corners or hung on the walls of the *kibitka* or tent. One contained millet, or a little rice, or hemp; another contained wool, or elderberries, or some other of the simple articles used by the unsophisticated Kirghiz. In one place I found a distaff, with the wool rolled round it ready for spinning. I pretended that the instrument was quite strange to me, and thereupon the old woman to whom it belonged good-naturedly set to work and finished the skein that was begun. I smilingly expressed my astonishment, and the Kirghiz smiled too—at my simplicity, I suppose.

When we left, I presented the woman, in return for her delicious *gatyeh*, with a dazzling red handkerchief, which had, I suspect, taken the fancy of her daughter, who, I may observe, kept herself hidden under a blanket and a pile of furs as long as I was there, and only betrayed her presence by her embarrassed and irregular breathing.

The mother meanwhile looked like a hen defending her chickens. As soon as I approached her

daughter's hiding-place, the old woman gave me to understand that something was concealed there which could not be looked at so carelessly as the bags of millet and hemp.

Round about the high kurgan called Chanka, which we saw from a distance, are a number of small hills covered with grass, but showing no traces of buildings of any kind, except that on one of them is the grave of some saint (*aulie*), with a small wall round it, of quite recent date, and over it a flagstaff from which flutters a tattered bit of cloth.

In earlier times we may conjecture that there was a town here, and a large town. The high kurgan forms the north-eastern corner of the hill, and here probably the fortress was situated. The hill here is almost square, and its regular and precipitous sides served, we may suppose, as the rampart on which the walls stood. At another spot I thought I could recognise the traces of a deep tank. On the kurgans lay many potsherds, the remains of vessels of various sizes; but these probably were left here by the Kirghiz, who used to winter here not long ago. Small bones were also to be seen, but not the smallest trace of any ancient building.

* * *

The village of Buka is surrounded by ricefields, which at the time of my visit were under water. Here and there people were going about, almost up to the waist in water, and breaking up the large clods with spades. In order that every corner of the rough and sloping ground may be equally irrigated, the whole of the ricefield is divided into little squares of ten yards or more, each enclosed by a small bank, in one corner of which is a little opening, which can be closed with a clod of earth, so as to retain the water that has been let in. The water is taken from the river Angren by means of large canals, which contain a considerable quantity of fish—perch of large size, bream, and other kinds.

Once I was called to see the fishing. A few grown men were at work, assisted by a number of children as volunteers. A very simple net is used, fastened to a stick. The elder fishermen, whose only garment was a pair of very short trousers, entered the water at various points, one holding the net while the others from above drove the fish down into it. It is something like our manner of fishing with the bow-net, only more artful, in that the fish are not netted till they are seen. 'Heigh! this way, this way!' they shout, as soon as they see an unfortunate perch. 'There he is—there he

is, by those weeds ! Now he is off again !' and the whole crowd dash after the fish as he bolts towards the net, searching all the holes with their hands and feet. In any other country the fish, disturbed by all this noise and shouting, would quietly slip through the wide opening left between the net and the bank ; but the fish in these parts are either very stupid or extremely good-natured, and often run into the outspread net.

As we went along the canal we came upon a dam which banked up the water for the supply of the higher ground, whence it flowed down to the lower parts of the village. The owners of the neighbouring ricefields had made the dam with the innocent purpose of improving the irrigation of their own land, but the result was that their neighbours at Buka suffered. 'This is the reason why we have so little water. Down with the dam !' And away they went, great and small, with loud hurrahs, to pluck up the stakes and throw down the lumps of clay and turf that had been rammed down between them, and the dammed-up water rushed roaring away.

On a beautiful bright day there was a bazaar held at Buka, to which all the members of the family with whom I was staying went off at a very early hour. I followed by myself, not intending to

buy anything, but just to stroll about and see what was going on.

I have already mentioned that a bazaar was held every day of the week in one or other of the neighbouring villages. In Buka it was on Monday, in Ak-kurgan on Friday, in Pechent on Wednesday, and so on.

About the booths in the market-place, where generally there was not a soul to be seen, there now swarmed a throng of people on horseback or afoot, who had come in from the whole country round, not so much to make purchases as to see their friends and kinsfolk and to hear the news. A man will come from a distance of twenty versts, hurrying along for fear of being too late, and all for what?—to see the crowd, to gossip all day among the merry throng, to poke his nose into every man's business, to interest himself in any quarrels that may chance to be going on, to be entertained by his friends, and to return home crammed with news and perfectly contented.

Here sit the spindle-makers in several rows, some under a shelter of mats, others exposed to the full blaze of the sun. Ceaselessly they work away at their simple benches, and can hardly keep pace with the demands of the native women who throng about them.

The Jews do a little business in tea, and generally in anything that is to be had, specially in raw silk, though they also deal in articles of dress. They occupy the best position in the bazaar, and display their dazzling wares on both sides of the row of booths.

On the ground, in this part of the bazaar, are laid out *bia i* (cotton stuffs), cloths of various colours, robes, and everything that has to do with dress. Here also are booths with mirrors, knives, flint and steel, leather bags, and many other miscellaneous trifles. Hard by are little booths where they make very tasty cakes (called *samasa*), and boiled dumplings filled with minced meat.

Butchers, dealers in linseed oil and other coarser articles, keep more to the outskirts of the bazaar, where also horses, sheep, camels, cows, &c., stand for sale. In these quarters nearly all, buyers and sellers, men and women alike, are on horseback.

I roamed about and bought a few trifles, though I chiefly occupied myself in asking the prices and looking at the goods and the dealers. The natives on their side looked at me in my European overcoat with no little attention and astonishment. They kept asking me, 'Who are you? A *Nogai* (Tartar)? Where do you come from? Are you a merchant?' I said I was. 'What do you deal

in?' 'Everything.' 'You deal in all sorts of things then?' 'Just so.' 'Where is your booth?



JEW OF BUKA.

Have you one in Tashkend?' 'Yes.' 'And in Tchinas too?' 'No, not in Tchinas.' 'Why did

you buy that turban? What do you want those spindles for?’

From the bazaar I went to the kalendarkhan, a small dirty building that stands on a pleasant spot in a little grove on the bank of a broad conduit. I found only a few persons there, and these not regular inhabitants of the place, but pleasure-loving visitors. Some were smoking strong nasha, others were lying asleep, probably intoxicated with kuknar. The divanas, the regular inhabitants of the kalendarkhan, were away at the bazaar, where their pointed hats and carefully assorted rags were constantly to be seen among the crowd.

One of these fellows was dragging by a string a vessel that looked like an old helmet, in which some fragrant weed was burning. With a serious and busy air, as if he were engaged in some important function, he went through the crowd and offered his vessel up to each in turn. Whether because of the fragrance of the weed or because it came from some holy place, no one failed to thrust his hands into the smoke and waft it to his face and beard; but the customary *tcecha* (a very small copper coin) was not always forthcoming.

The divana stopped before a fat man, who took no notice and gave nothing, and fumigated him unmercifully in hopes of extracting an alms. I

wanted to see which of the two would hold out longest, but my patience was exhausted at the end of ten minutes, and I left them, the fat man still refusing to part with his money and pretending not to see the beggar, the beggar still fumigating the fat man and clinging to his hope of a copper.

Among the news which was circulating in the bazaar, one item was important. It was reported that the Emir of Bokhara was at Samarkand, and preparing for war with Russia. At the time I laughed at this report, which seemed to me absurd ; but soon after it turned out to be true.

IV.

While I was thus rambling through the country, observing, chatting, sketching, a serious war had broken out with the Khan of Bokhara. I remarked that the faces of the people about me were somewhat changed, that they were sulky and distrustful, and sometimes did not answer my greeting ; but it was not till I received a notice from the commandant of the district that I decided to pack up my things and join the detachment which was operating against Samarkand, as I had long wished to see a war. I will not at present describe this town and the engagements at which I was present. After

these struggles I went to Europe to recruit my strength for a little, and then returned to Turkestan, visiting now that part of the country which borders on China, and which was still devastated by the great rising of the Mussulmans or Dunghans.

* * *

After a long and tedious journey through Siberia I reached Sergiopol, the nearest town in the district of Semiretchensk. This wretched little place is only a town in name, consisting of a dozen poor mud cabins and a little church.

I found the superintendent of the district not at home; he had gone to Urdshar, on the Chinese frontier, and, as this was also my destination, I continued my journey without delay.

Sergiopol, which used to be called Aiagus, lies on the bank of the river Aiagus, which we crossed by a ford. The road is desolate; to right and left are small hills, behind which runs the snow-capped chain of the Tarbagatai Mountains. We met some mounted Kirghiz. In the autumn, when their farm-work in the valleys is done, the Kirghiz move into this district, and at this season their *kibitkas* may often be seen moving slowly along the road. 'Good-for-nothing people are these Kirghiz,' said an old Cossack woman at

the station; 'when they are about, you must be on your guard.' And the old woman complained of her place and of the inhospitable nature of the station, which brings in nothing, and has nothing to recommend it. In fact, I could get nothing here but a hunch of stale bread, and was compelled for the first time on this journey to have recourse to Liebig's essence.

At the third outpost I found Major M., the superintendent of the district, who was on his way back from Tchugutchak, where he had been receiving the submission of the Kirghiz of the Baidshigite race, who had lately come over, or rather fled over, from Urumtsa into Russian territory. These Kirghiz were formerly Russian subjects, but when the Mussulmans revolted in China, they moved thither in large bodies, and joined with the Dunghans in murdering and plundering the Chinese. But their alliance with the Dunghans did not last long. When the Chinamen were stripped and made an end of, the restless Dunghans asserted the rights of the stronger against the Kirghiz, and treated their late allies so ill that there was nothing left for them but to return to Russian territory.

* * *

Major R. told me a great deal about some Chinese emigrants who had fled from these bloody scenes into Russian territory. Some five or six thousand of them, with the little that they could save from the hands of the robbers, had made their way to the frontier, and were now leading a nomad life in the neighbourhood of the station (*staniza*) of Urdshar, for which I was shaping my course. R. returned to his unpretentious residence at Sergiopol, and I went on from the outpost up the pass. When I got to the top of the pass I was astonished by the unusual beauty of the valley; all round, as far as the eye could reach, the ground was covered with roses, which filled the air with their fragrance.

* * *

Distances are very carelessly measured here—merely by the eye, I expect; for instead of 150 or 170 versts, which I was told is the distance from Sergiopol to Urdshar, the last Cossack settlement on the border, I traversed some 200, or even 250, versts. The *staniza* is a wretched-looking place. Round it for a considerable space are to be seen large openings in the ground, marking the places where the hapless Chinese emigrants passed the winter. In the middle of the *staniza*

is an open space, with a wonderful little wooden church, and heaps of stones for the new church which is to be built. The peasants' houses are all falling into decay; the fences in a neglected and ruinous condition. The reason of this is, that the Cossack settlers have felled the few trees in the neighbouring mountains, so that now there is not a stick to be found for many versts round.

It was a fortunate thing for the Cossacks that these Chinese emigrants chanced to come here, and were willing to work for the smallest wage—indeed for nothing more than their daily bread. Thanks to this swarm of busy ants, mud walls have now risen round the houses of the Cossacks, and new houses have been built of brick. The Chinese work extremely well, with great diligence and endurance, and also at an extraordinarily cheap rate. For instance, they built a shed for the Cossack with whom I lodged, and added two rooms to his house, making the bricks themselves—and all for three roubles.

* * *

Immediately after my arrival I made the acquaintance of our late consul at Tchugutchak, who had removed to Urdshar as soon as the revolt of the Dunghans broke out. The insurgents did him no harm; on the contrary, they were very

friendly and conciliatory, and begged him not to be disturbed by the sanguinary measures they were taking against the Chinese. But, naturally, he preferred to leave the place, as the authorities to whom he was accredited no longer existed. In the opinion of the consul (Vardugin was his name), this revolt was a combination of the various sections of the Mahomedans, who hate us, against the Buddhists, who are peaceful, order-loving, and not at all fanatical. He told me a great deal about the insurrection, that he had seen with his own eyes, or heard from other eye-witnesses, before those silly legends arose which could not fail to attach themselves to so tremendous an event as the slaughter of some millions of Chinese and Kalmucks on the borders of Russia. We went together to visit the Chinese settlement and see how they lived. Behind the staniza stretched a huge tabor; columns of bluish smoke rising straight upwards marked the place of each habitation. First we came upon an eating-house—a group of ragged tents, in the middle of which meat was cooking in holes in the ground. Close by, meat was hanging up for sale, and onions, and some other kind of vegetable. An old Kalmuck woman haggled for a long time over a piece of meat, asked the price of this piece, then

of another, and at last chose a piece for two kopecks, and sat herself down with her grandson to eat it. With no other instrument than her little bone chopsticks, she quickly tore the meat into small pieces, which she dexterously conveyed into her mouth, and with no less dexterity lapped up the broth. Not a few people, who for lack of



L.C.

CHINESE GIRL.

money had to content themselves with the smell of the cooked meats, strolled about and wrangled with one another to make the time pass.

The tents, which are somewhat like Chinese houses, were opened on the shaded side. The men were either not visible or lying asleep; women, old and young, were busy washing. Some of the young women were really handsome; all were tidy

in their persons. Some were busy with their toilette, combing their thick pitch-black hair, plaiting it and piling it up on the top of the head in masses, which they secured with hairpins, combs, and metal rings.

Mr. Vardugin damped my enthusiasm for their splendid heads of hair by assuring me that three-quarters of them were false, and that their brilliancy was due to the lard with which they were plentifully anointed. For all that, some of these dark heads, with the hair coquettishly arranged and decked with flowers, were not at all ill-looking. I was struck by the expression of the faces of these women, which is halfway between anxiety and melancholy, especially in the case of the younger ones. This may be in part due to the tobacco and opium, which they take in large quantities. Opium, being so costly, is out of the reach of some of them; but tobacco is smoked by all alike, great and small, men and women: the young coquette has her pipe in her mouth as she does her hair; the mistress of the house has her pipe in her mouth as she goes about her domestic duties—sewing, cooking, gossiping, and what not; and the old grandmother, as she sits with great spectacles on her nose and her little grandson on her lap, has a pipe in her mouth.

The Chinese spectacles, which are always of huge size, are made of rock crystal, and so well made that they are not one whit inferior to ours either in polish or in magnifying power. Here they are often used merely to protect the eyes



KALMUCK OFFICER.

against the sun's rays, though it is not easy to understand how plain glasses can serve this purpose.

* * *

Two better-looking tents were pointed out to us—one occupied by the *amban* (general), the other by his wife. The *amban*, a sickly, decrepit,

though not very old man, showing the effects of opium in his yellow puffy face, lay stretched on a low couch ; and at his feet sat his wife, a very young and pretty girl of perhaps fourteen years. She wore a loose blue dress, and on her breast hung a number of little silver instruments—tooth-picks, &c. In her ears and round her neck hung strings of coral and various precious stones, and on her arms were bracelets. Her little feet were thrust into large slippers, such as are worn by women of the race of Solon, and were thus hidden from too curious eyes.

The head of the house himself was clad in a faded and very dirty dress, and had been engaged, just before we came, in smoking opium. The whole place was dreadfully dirty and untidy.

Some people who were sitting in respectful attitudes round the walls of the tent went out to make room for us. I must confess that, when I was asked to sit down, it was not without a shudder that I seated myself on the little carpet. The amban apologized for the state of his health, and proceeded to question the consul about me, and to ask whither I was going and what was my object.

One of his first questions was as to my rank. His interest in this point showed itself again at a later point in our conversation, when I happened

to mention that the governor of the country, General K——, whom I had seen in St. Petersburg, was soon coming back. The amban at once asked with great curiosity whether he had got a higher tchin (rank).

The Chinese Government had instructed the amban to conduct all the emigrants to the frontier and there await further orders; in any case they were to hold themselves in readiness to go back into Chinese territory. Money was also promised them, and everything else that they needed. The amban accordingly conducted the Chinese to the frontier, but slowly and in detachments, as beasts of burden were scarce.

The amban assured us that troops were advancing from the interior of China who had already taken the town of Hami from the insurgents, and would bring the whole of them to account. We did not go further into politics, especially as our worthy host—who, as I said, had been smoking opium—was not very coherent in his speech and began to show signs of sleepiness, so that we thought it best to break off our conversation and bring our visit to a close.

The Chinese general spoke Kirghiz with the consul, and often used the word *kumysh* (silver). 'What was he talking about?' I asked the

consul as we went away. 'He asked me to take care of a chest of silver—i.e. bars of silver. The old fellow is afraid that in the event of his death his relatives will appropriate his treasure: probably his wife has prompted him.' 'Has he then really a chest full of silver—this fellow who lives like a beggar?' 'He certainly has money, but he is avaricious.' 'And what is the source of his wealth?' 'Part he brought with him perhaps, but the greater part he has probably accumulated here by robbery.' 'You do not mean to say that he can have squeezed anything out of these wretches, who are beggars already?' 'Not out of them, of course; but money has been sent for them from time to time, of which, I suspect, but a very small fraction found its way to those for whom it was intended, while the rest stuck to the fingers of the amban and the other officials. But the poor people don't dare to grumble.'

A swarm of naked little urchins, black-haired, greasy, sleepy, and round-bellied, ran up to stare at us; the dogs were even more curious, and the calves of our legs would assuredly have suffered had not their advances been repelled with sticks and stones.

The people look you frankly in the face, readily speak when spoken to, and never run away or hide

themselves as Mahomedans do. So I hoped it would not be hard to chat with them and paint them.

Here I saw for the first time a *lama*—i.e. a Buddhist priest—in his yellow gown, with a red cape round his shoulders; with his puffy, smooth-shaven face he looked like a eunuch. He held a service, in the course of which some of his assistants, with equally unmanly faces, sang some prayers, rang a bell, and blew a long horn of copper. After this, another service was held for a deceased person, in whose honour no small quantity of busa and tea was consumed, which had been brought by the relatives.

They drink here brick-tea with butter, salt, and milk. They offered us some of it, but it was not at all to my taste. The tea which we drink is comparatively little used in China, the greater part of it being sent to Europe. Only the wealthy Chinamen and the aristocrats (*mandshurs*) drink it; the rest of the people, who are either Kalmucks or belong to the races of Solon or Sibo, drink the above-mentioned decoction of roots, which has a bright colour but no aroma. As for food, these people are omnivorous; the Chinese will even dig up carrion which the Cossacks have buried, and think it a delicacy.

The adjutant to the governor told me that, when he was going to Kuldsha on a mission from the general, he and his Cossacks were so well fed that they seldom asked what the dishes were made of; but at last one of his people saw the Chinese cook, who was preparing dinner for the Russians, taste the soup and, finding it too weak, cut a large piece from a dead camel which lay in the courtyard and throw it into the pot.

* * *

I stayed several days in Urdshar, and roamed about the neighbouring country, which, as I have already said, is bare and treeless. The Cossacks complain of the want of timber, and bitterly repent of their folly; for when they were sent here fifteen years ago as volunteers from the border of the Siberian settlements, there were forests on the Tarbagatai Mountains, and if they had used these with forethought they would still have plenty of timber; but they felled the trees unsparingly, and did not see the consequences of what they were doing till too late. The authorities do, indeed, order the Cossacks to plant trees; but the order is ill carried out. Round the houses there are still some willows (of the round-leaved free-rooting kind) that have been saved from destruction, and here and there a

poplar or two ; but the attempt to lay out a garden failed through idleness or ignorance. Some hundreds of bent and withered stems show that the order of the Government was duly delivered here, and carried out after a fashion.

Corn grows fairly well here, though not nearly so well as in many other Cossack settlements along the Chinese frontier. There are no industries here, unless the hunting of the goats and foxes in the steppes, and of the deer and bears in the mountains, is to be counted as one. The number of the hunters is so small that the game they kill is not enough to make anything that can properly be called a trade.

Considerable profit, however, is made by the trade in the horns of the young stags in spring. At this season the animals have not yet got their new coats, and the horns are full of a sap which is much prized in China, where it is used in the preparation of a very powerful kind of liquor, which is in great demand and fetches a high price. A pair of such horns used to cost from seventy to one hundred roubles ; but now that the insurrection has made it difficult to send them to China, a pair can be bought for thirty or forty roubles.

* * *

With a guide and an interpreter whom I procured in Urdshar, I went to the post where our frontier-guard is stationed, intending to proceed thence to the Chinese town of Tchugutchak, lately destroyed. My interpreter was Achmed, a *Bii*,—i.e. an official of the local Kirghiz community,—the son of a Kirghiz mother and a Tartar father. He speaks Russian well, knows the people and the country, and has often been in Tchugutchak in the time of its prosperity and after its destruction.

My guide was a Cossack from the staniza; not too clever, but a handy willing fellow, and an ardent sportsman. He could not resist the temptation to chase the goats and antelopes, which appeared in great numbers on both sides of our road; though the only result was to knock up his horse. He assured me, however, that if he were well mounted he could easily ride down an antelope, especially a young one.

‘When a goat is playful you will never get him; but when you see him scratch himself, have your rifle ready.’

We proceeded along the ridge of the Tarbagatai Mountains. On our right lay the steppe, and before us in the far distance we saw the summits of the Altai range, though they were not less than one hundred and fifty versts off. Several

roads led to the frontier station. In choosing between them we were guided by our desire to be nearer to the mountains, and to have an opportunity of exchanging horses in one of the camps of the nomad tribes who, as the hot season approaches, retire farther and farther into the mountains. Presently we passed an encampment of Kalmucks and Solons, who were making their first halt on their way from Urdshar. The old anban whose acquaintance we had made was with this first party. I found him again under the influence of opium, and had to hear over again his complaints of his pitiable condition and his manifold infirmities. This time the old man certainly looked so ill that he seemed to be on the point of being gathered to his fathers. He complained especially of his feet, which, as he expressed it, had entirely deserted him. I suggested that he should try water-cure, and rubbing and wrapping in wet sheets, warning him that he must not expect to be cured at once, but might hope for some relief after one or two months. The old man thanked me warmly, and promised to try the cure, nay, actually pledged himself, in accordance with my advice, to smoke less opium. His graceful little wife wore a more friendly countenance this time, and hospitably entertained us with tea.

The amban took a great deal of trouble to find out why I was travelling to Tchugutchak, and tried to persuade me to abandon my purpose. The place, he said, was completely destroyed; there was nothing to see there. Evidently he was afraid that the Russians were hankering after the place, and that I was sent to look at the country.

* * *

I spent the night in Achmed's kibitka, which he had spread with carpets in my honour. His two wives also (the younger of whom, a lively, pretty woman, he had simply taken away from his own younger brother) were dressed out in their best. After the inevitable tea, I chatted with this sprightly young woman. I told her that by Russian law a man must not have more than one wife, so I should take her away from Achmed and carry her far, far away. She laughed like a child, and answered that she would not allow that; but if her husband should take it into his head to marry a third wife, then she would run away from him and come and ask me to carry her far, far away.

'No,' said Achmed, quite seriously, 'we cannot live with one wife: the consciousness that she is the only one makes a wife capricious and dis-

obedient; but as soon as there are two of them they become much more obedient.' 'What do you mean by more obedient?' 'Why, I mean that they are peaceable; each knows that I shall love her less than the other if she does anything to displease me.' I tried to explain to my host that a different relation between man and wife was possible; but he interrupted me with the question, 'Well, but tell me, can I, according to your views, live with my wife when she becomes, say, blind of one eye?' 'Why not?' 'What a law!' cried Achmed in disgust, and added, with a deprecatory wave of the hand, 'If that be the case, it is no good saying anything more about it.'

On the following day, when we had got a little distance on our way, two Kirghiz rode up to us with an invitation from an official named Tchanbatan, which we accepted. Our stout host has been a great robber in his day, and has been rewarded for his heroism with the rank of an officer. He made me drink several cups of koumiss (which was certainly refreshing and of pleasant flavour), and would not let me go till I promised to pay him a visit on my return—a promise which I did not intend to keep, as keeping it would have compelled me to overload my stomach with mutton and fat.

We came to the settlement of the Baidshigite Kirghiz. By the roadside they were ploughing—some with oxen, some with camels; or, to speak more correctly, they were scratching the earth with the instrument which in this country passes for a plough. For a harrow they use simply a piece of wood, though Heaven only knows how they can harrow with it. They sow principally millet, the greater part of it for their own consumption; a little wheat; but no buckwheat at all, though all kinds of grain do well here.

We rode to the kibitka of the headman of the volost, or community, of Korastan, but did not find him at home; and after a good day's journey obtained shelter just when the rain, which began to fall at sundown, made it really needful, in a small encampment of Baidshigites, who had lately come over the Chinese frontier into our territory. They were very poor, and evidently glad to have escaped from the Dunghans, of whom they told many horrible stories. All the Kirghiz, they told us, are oppressed and plundered mercilessly by the Dunghans, who rob them not only of their cattle, but even of their tents. 'These tents (*yurts*) here we got together afterwards as best we could; the Dunghans took those we had before.' 'Why did you not try to defend yourselves? At least you might have

gathered yourselves together in order to cross the frontier, and who would have dared to touch you then?' 'We did what we could. People assemble with fifteen or twenty kubitkas, and make their escape without telling the other Kirghiz; that is the only way.' 'What makes the Dunghans so much stronger than you? Have they good weapons or regular troops?' 'No, they have not troops like the Russians; every Dunghan is a fighter on occasion—one with a pike, another with a sabre. They have no piquets and no regular division of their forces as you have; only in the towns they have guards to keep order in the streets at night, and no one is allowed to roam about after beat of drum. There is great disorder in the government, and they are always quarrelling with one another as well as with us. Their chief magistrate is the *Chasret* (the holy one), and next to him are the *Dshianshai* (ministers, or chiefs of divisions), and these are assisted, of course, by other officials. They are all corrupt, and each is ready to deceive the other.'

During this narration I looked with interest at a large and beautiful golden eagle that sat on the narrator's hand, his eyes covered with a leathern hood.

* * *

The Kirghiz are passionately fond of hawking, and are masters in the art. When they are training a golden eagle for fox-hunting, they lay a fox's tail in the grass, and, as soon as the bird has learnt to make straight for it when let slip from the hawker's hand, they take him out hunting. The eagle seizes the fox with his claws—the head with one claw, and the back with the other—but sometimes suffers severely in doing so. The bird of which I am speaking had had one talon torn off and his beak injured. His beak and claws were so large that his owner may not have been merely bragging when he assured me that his bird would even attack a wolf.

It often happens that a golden eagle, after killing several foxes, becomes useless—i.e. simply refuses to work, even though he may not have been much hurt. To bring such a bird into training again is harder than to train a new one. A good bird is valued at a hundred roubles or more, and seldom changes hands.

Hawks, which they use in fowling, are likewise much prized, and are very numerous. They feed both their eagles and their hawks with raw meat, but do not spoil them. On the way we saw a great number of birds, which my Cossack called 'Polish hens.' He told me that in the



KIRGHIZ FALCONER.

autumn they attain a weight of thirty pounds; and that last year, having killed three of them some two versts from the staniza, he found them so heavy that he had to rest several times on his way home.

* * *

Presently we saw below us a group of tents, and descended to the valley of the little river Bachtı, in which the frontier-detachment which is named after the river was now posted. In official documents, however, this detachment is called the 'South Tarbagatai Detachment,' since its post is the southern spurs of the Tarbagatai range.

The detachment consists of a company of infantry, 130 Cossacks, and a battery of two guns—450 men in all. The Cossacks belong to the Siberian forces, and are, even at this date (I am speaking of 1869-70), armed with flintlock muskets thirty years old; some of their muskets, indeed, showed by the stamp that they were made in the first or second decade of this century, and some actually in the last century. Only three men had rifles. Each Cossack, at the beginning of his two years' service, is supplied with one of these old muskets, and sometimes, if he is a crack shot, he will buy a new weapon on his own account; this

explains the antiquated fashion of these pieces. As they are also very carelessly treated, it is no wonder that the Siberian Cossack always expects that his musket will miss fire, and that two shots out of five will produce nothing but a flash in the pan. The men are better armed now; but even this can only be said of the detachments, not of the whole force.

The dress of the Cossacks, especially on the march, is extremely varied: tunics and caps of every possible make and colour are to be found among them.

The detachment passed the winter in damp mud-huts, and had to bear fifteen or sixteen degrees¹ of frost. As it is now at last decided that this district is to be permanently occupied, the building of barracks has been put in hand. The detachment was originally quartered in Urdshar, whence it has moved gradually forward till it has reached its present station, and has thus extended the Russian frontier by about 100 versts. Between 1850 and 1860 many districts in the neighbourhood of Urdshar still belonged to the Chinese; now they have not a single acre of land within a radius of 100 versts. Thus Russia grows from day to day; nay, from hour to hour. But if it

¹ Réaumur.

goes on growing like this, the consequences will be serious.

* * *

The soil in this valley is good, and is a compound of clay and black earth. When the country belonged to the Chinese, a great deal of corn was grown here. In our district vegetables grow extraordinarily well; but it is a remarkable fact that the patches which had been manured produced nothing at all. The snow does not generally lie deep; but the thermometer goes down to thirteen degrees below freezing, and even more. There is a great deal of wind, which is sometimes violent, chiefly from the south, south-east, and east. Shortly before my arrival, there was a hurricane which overthrew and destroyed all the tents. Behind a lake called Ala-Kul there is a cleft in the mountains through which comes a terrible wind, which, I suppose, penetrates even to this district, though the distance is a hundred versts. The valley has no forests, though round-leaved willows, poplars, and aspens grow by the streams in the Tarbagatai Mountains; in Alatau, however, and in the small mountain chain of Barlik, there are very extensive and beautiful forests. In the Barlik Mountains, I was told, earthquakes occur, which are not per-

ceptible in the country round. One of the officers of the detachment, when he was staying in these mountains to superintend the felling of timber, felt the subterranean shocks so plainly that he was able to follow their direction.

I may here remark that all this country is extremely interesting to the geologist. In the lake Ala-Kul above mentioned there is a small island which has been the subject of a controversy among the learned. On the strength of reports that earthquakes were of frequent occurrence and that the island was composed of coal, &c., Alexander von Humboldt called this island, which he had never seen, the centre of the volcanic system of Eastern Turkestan; but another geologist visited the island, examined the coal of which it is composed, and overthrew Humboldt's theory. It is said that the great *savant* could not for a long time get over this defeat.

In the absence of the commandant of the detachment, a young officer of artillery named B. received me most hospitably, and provided me with a warm lodging and food. The warmth was most acceptable, as the weather was damp and cold. He carried his kindness so far as to offer to accompany me to Tchugutchak and to act as my guide when we got there.

We started, accordingly, early in the morning, and soon passed what used to be the Chinese outpost of Kok-tuma and a spring of the same name. A Russian outpost is now stationed where the Chinese outpost used to be, and a Cossack is perched, like a huge bird, on a solitary tree which stands there, and keeps a sharp look-out all round. From this point our journey lay through territory which is officially recognized as belonging to China.

It is said that, for some years after the insurrection, travelling here was made dangerous by the number of ownerless dogs; after the butchery of the Chinese and Kalmucks, to whom they belonged, the dogs were driven by hunger to attack travellers. At that time also great numbers of swine took up their abode here. The Chinese take large numbers of swine with them, but the Dughans and the Tarantshes, who are Mahomedans, look upon them with repugnance. The masterless animals now roam in herds about the lower parts of the steppe.

Presently clumps of trees were visible in the distance on both sides of the road, marking the farms, of which there are many round Tchugutchak. About two versts outside the town we saw several ruined houses and chapels; the paint-

ings on the walls were still uninjured. Some splendid old trees were still standing, but quite dead, for the irrigation-canals (*aryks*) are silted up and the soil is quite dry. In the town similar sights meet the eye. Wonderful groves and avenues, the work of years, are sometimes completely destroyed or going rapidly to decay. As you approach the town, it is hard to believe that it is empty: you cannot help hoping to meet some human being, if it be only a robber. But not a soul is to be seen anywhere. The houses are for the most part uninjured, and also the paintings on the walls and on the wooden lattice-work of the windows. Potsherds and fragments of articles of every conceivable kind were lying all about—vessels of iron and clay of all sizes, a quantity of copper coins strung on a string, dresses, caps, plaits of hair, shoes of all sizes—the clumsy shoes of Dughans and Kalmucks side by side with the miniature slippers of Chinese women. I put a pair of extraordinarily small slippers in my pocket as a memento. But above all, skulls are to be seen lying about everywhere. The town is like a vast tomb, and the whole impression it produces is terrible. I wandered about for a whole day in B.'s company, and then for several days alone, without being able to accustom myself to this stillness as of

the grave, and to the sight of all these streets, chapels, theatres, and squares standing for ever empty.

The gate of the fortress, which the besiegers had blown in, is still tolerably strong. Near the gate is to be seen the entrance into the subterranean gallery by which the besiegers, after a long and tedious siege, made their way into the fortress. Then began a merciless butchery, in which no one was spared. Skulls and bones lie literally in heaps against the walls here and all around the fortress; at many points—e.g. by several of the gates—the skulls were piled up to a great height. In the fields round the town, too, lie skulls; as far as the eye can reach, skulls and skulls and again skulls. The wolves and the jackals have already done their work; the ravens are still engaged in picking the bones clean for the rain and the sun to bleach. One in particular of the farms which lie nearest to the town abounds in bones. A body of the Kalmucks, about fifteen thousand strong, came this way to help the besieged; but a force of only a few hundred Dughans fell upon them, drove them back, and killed them to the very last man. What wonderful energy on the part of the insurgent Mahomedans! what cowardice on the part of the Chinamen!

I had enough to occupy me: from the governor's palace to the simple little houses of the common people, all the dwellings were habitable, all were painted, all decorated with paintings, sculptures, bas-reliefs, flowers, dragons, &c. Theatres of an original construction, Buddhist temples in which some colossal idols were still intact (though the Mahomedans evidently showed great zeal in overthrowing these and breaking them in pieces), seemed almost to be waiting for the people to throng in to their prayers and their amusements.

For three whole weeks I lived with one Cossack and one Tartar in a wretched cabin outside the walls of the fortress, and every day from morning till evening I roamed about, looking at everything, drawing and painting. Occasionally a wild goat would stray into the courtyard where I was painting, stand transfixed with astonishment, and then rush off at full speed into the steppe.

* * *

At the end of the year 1870 I quitted Central Asia and settled in Munich in order to put my impressions together. The result of three years of work was a considerable collection of pictures of Turkestan and its wars, which is now in a public

gallery at Moscow. So soon as these pictures were finished, I started once more on my travels. This time I visited India, and was accompanied by my wife, who made notes while I painted. As India has already been often described, we will content ourselves with giving some of our impressions of the Himalayas, beginning with Sikkim, the higher mountains of which we were the first after Hooker to visit in the month of January.

Here I hand over the pen to my wife.

INDIA

BY

MADAME VERESTCHAGIN



INDIA.

PART I.—THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS.

CHAPTER I.

IN accordance with an invitation from the English Resident, Mr. Girdleston, we set out from Agra for Kathmandou, the capital of Nepaul. We wished to see Nepaul, and to climb about a little on the sides of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world.

* * *

To-day it is fine but overcast, and unfortunately we are seated in a railway-carriage. It would have been so pleasant to have been travelling on horseback in such weather! We arrive in the evening at Allahabad, a holy town. Wherefore holy? For this reason—that here the river Jumna pours itself into the Ganges!

We remark on our way that there is here no

lack of springs and of canals for the irrigation of the fields.

We had sent on in front, to Patna, with the luggage, our Parsee dragoman, a fire-worshipper ; but as he had been unable to find any bungalow in this neighbourhood, he had continued his route to Bankipoor, where we were to leave the railway. In our train there was a prince on his way from Allahabad, where the corpse of his father had been deposited in the Ganges. He was returning to Calcutta. Although he was only ten or twelve years old he was already married. Before him, round him, and behind him walked his attendants.

* * *

Nothing is to be seen all round but swamps, and as the place is not much above the level of the sea great heat prevails. The bazaar of Bankipoor is poor and dirty ; it is not without difficulty that the most necessary provisions can be found. They weigh the wood like sugar. The fodder for the horses, collected in the wayside ditches, is very bad.

All round the town stretch fields of narcotic poppies ; Bankipoor is renowned for this product. Every year a great quantity of opium is exported to China.

We made the acquaintance of Dr. Simpson,

the director of the prison hospital, and at the same time an artist and a photographer. He took a cordial interest in our journey, and advised us not to go to Nepal, the inhabitants of which are distrustful and savage. 'Girdleston lives there more like a prisoner than an ambassador. They will certainly not let you go into the mountains,' said he to us; 'so far from penetrating to Mount Everest, you will not get ten miles beyond Kathmandou.'

This information alarmed us. In view of the impossibility of continuing our journey in this direction, we decided, by the advice of the doctor, to change our plan and to go to the snow-mountains of Sikkim.

When our servants learnt that we intended to ascend these mountains, a veritable revolution broke out among them. Our fire-worshipper declared at once that his wife was ill, and that his presence was necessary at home. As his accounts were never in order, it was almost with joy that we left him to the adoration of the sacred fire. But the wretch demoralized also our bearer and the cook, an old Portuguese—a thief and liar of the first class—who pretended that he could not see well at night in the mountains, and demanded his dismissal.

Dr. Simpson consoled us ; he declared that, as it happened, it was so much the better for us, for the wages of our servants were really too high. It was painful for us to be separated from our horses, especially one named Punch, for whom a young lady paid us five hundred rupees. It was painful to me also to be separated from my old Arab, who passed, for fifty rupees, into the hands of the keeper of a livery-stable.

It was impossible, in consequence of the bad food and the stony roads, to take anything but mountain ponies on such a journey.

* * *

Dr. Simpson sent on in advance a telegram to Sahibgandj, so that the steamboat might wait for us ; and another to the postmaster at Karagol. He certainly was the most amiable of doctors. He explained to us down to the minutest detail how we ought to travel, where we ought to stop, what we ought to do, what it was necessary to see, &c. He advised us to call in passing on one of his friends, who had his tea-plantations just at the foot of the Himalayas. On the evening of this same day we took leave of him and quitted Bankipoor. The following day, early in the morning, we arrived at Sahibgandj, where, as arranged. the steamboat awaited us. We



FIRE-WORSHIPPER.

sailed thence along the Ganges, which is here a wide and beautiful river. On the shores and on the islands were to be seen black masses of crocodiles warming themselves in the sun. They satiate themselves with feasting on the innumerable corpses which are daily flung into the Ganges. It is by this means that the Hindoos imagine the souls of the dead conveyed to heaven. Here and there along the shore we fancied we descried human forms; but they turn out to be a kind of tall bird with a long beak. On each side of the river stretch veritable deserts, without trees or grass—sand and nothing but sand.

On the islands wild-geese assemble in flocks. The river becomes visibly narrower and narrower, less and less deep. Once even our steamboat stuck in the sand.

* * *

The post awaited us at Karagol. We take tea in the bungalow, and we set out for the mountains, taking with us our *kitmoudgare*, or steward, Houdafbox, and our most indispensable effects. The other servants, bringing the bulk of the luggage, follow us with the post-wagon, drawn by oxen. At first the horses behaved in such a way that we feared for our lives; now they are

tired, lie down quietly on the ground, and no urging will make them move from the place. It is the oxen after all that draw us across the sand.

I was asleep when Verestchagin woke me by these words : ' There are the mountains ! ' I look, and I can hardly believe my eyes. High up in the firmament rise cloud-like masses of white and rose-coloured snow—to the right Kantchinga, to the left Mount Everest.

The road climbs higher and ever higher.

The houses and the inhabitants differ in appearance from those we have seen before. The houses are not so low as those in the plain, and are thatched with thick straw.

The people are of the most pronounced Mongolian type. The men wear the garb of Adam, the women only a piece of cloth.

Clumps of bananas rise in front of every house. Thick forests come into view. We arrive in the evening at Siligori just as the sun is setting, and all around is illuminated with a rosy light. Soon darkness rapidly creeps over the mountains, while the summits of Kantchinga and of some of its highest neighbours still catch the fading rays.

* * *

Preparations for the morrow must now be made—three saddle-horses procured for ourselves, and two ponies for the luggage.

Of Siligori there is little to say ; it is an ordinary post-station. Food and rest can be got there.

The following day, as we are preparing to start, we feel ourselves to be in the vicinity of high mountains. It is very cold.

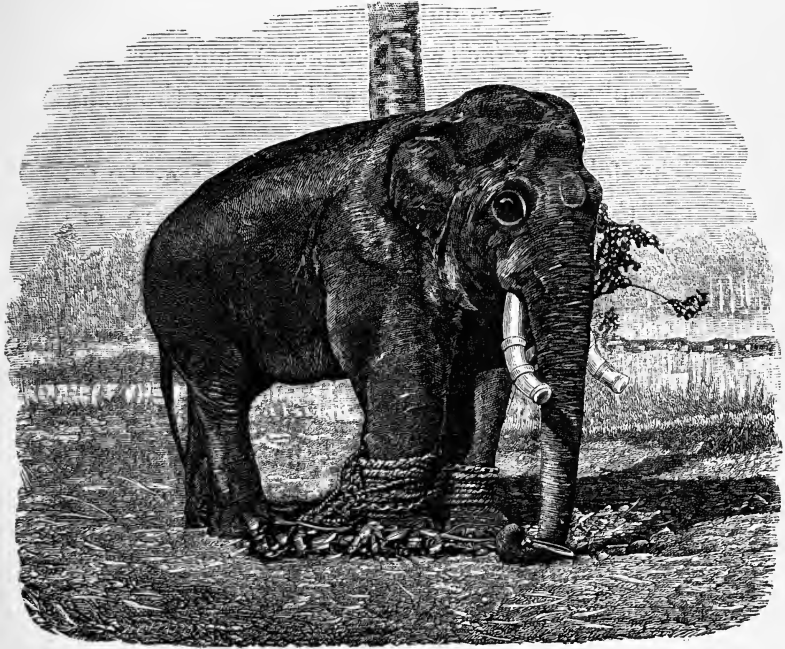
The forest of Teraï, which we must pass through, is inhabited by wild elephants and tigers. The forests nearer to Nepaul are yet larger and denser. These forests are to this day the best places for hunting the larger wild animals. The whole country round at the foot of the mountain is covered with tea-plantations, and one can see where the trees have been burnt in order that tea may be planted on the ground which they occupied. The tea-plant is of a rounded form, the leaves resembling those of the rose, but luckily without thorns.

The tea-planter who had been recommended to us by Dr. Simpson lived at some distance from our route. We thought it better not to stop at his house, but to profit by the fine weather, which was so necessary for our journey into the mountain.

We stopped at Pankbari, breakfasted there, drank some bad wine, and gave our animals a

rest; then we journeyed on until evening, and arrived at the station of Karsiong, where we changed horses.

After a ride across a sandy and burning plain



CAPTIVE ELEPHANT AT TERAÏ.

it is very pleasant to repose here. One can breathe again; one can hardly draw one's breath often enough.

What vegetation everywhere!

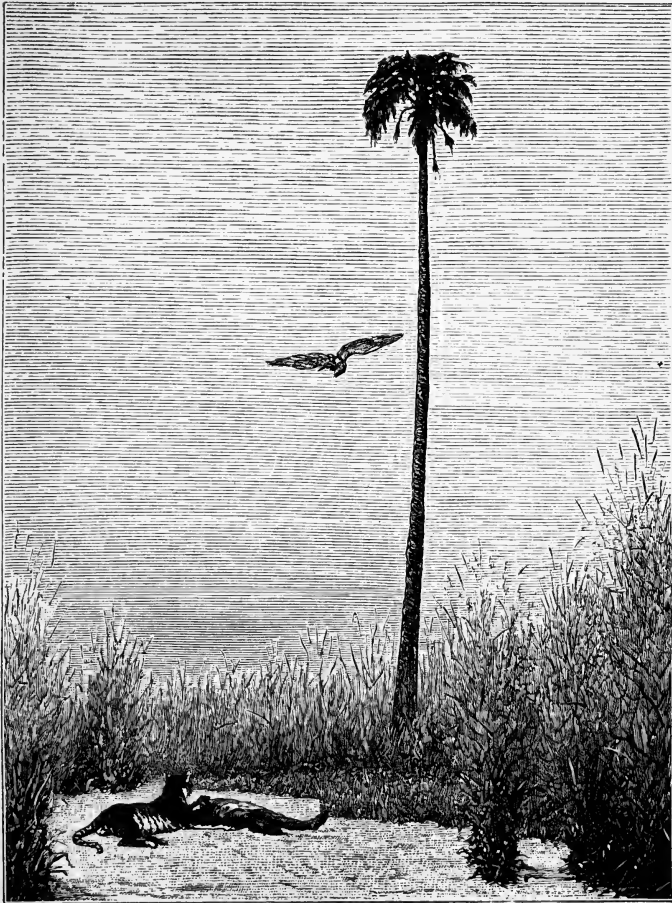
What a mighty tree rose in front of our bungalow! though, unfortunately, it was dead. Rarely is such a giant to be seen in our country. Not far from the bungalow there is an hotel for travellers. Nevertheless we got out our things for an encampment; we lighted a huge fire; we cooked some soup *à la reine* (with chickens); and we slept as one only can sleep at a height of seven thousand feet.

The following day we again pass tea-plantations; then through a large village, where are several Buddhist temples, and which hides from us again the little town of Darjeeling and the snowy peaks of the Himalayas. But after a last detour there was nothing to hide the view.

Life offers few opportunities for the enjoyment of so marvellous a picture. What immeasurable masses of snow! Far off as we still were, yet it seemed close to us, as if it lay just behind the rows of houses in Darjeeling.

We go down to the Doyle Hotel, where we find a very obliging host, who is short, fat, and affable, but has the bad taste to charge very unreasonably. We seek, first of all, in the neighbourhood for a good place to sketch, and find an excellent one on a little hill, near to a leafy bower, the customary spot for the sports of English men and women.

From there the peaks of the Himalayas can be seen admirably. It is perhaps the finest view of its kind



A MAN-EATER.

in the whole world. On the inhabited slope, on a little plateau of the mountain, stands a Buddhist temple, an original building, decked with little banners. These little banners have prayers written all over them. The wind agitates them, and by this means, according to the belief of the people, the prayers are wafted straight to God. Machines for praying perform also the same function: a cylinder round which a vast number of prayers are rolled is turned either by hand or by water. It is dark in the temple, and the idols gaze down upon us—some with angry, some with smiling looks. The lama, a pleasant-looking old man, was occupied with his domestic duties, keeping in his hand all the time his little wheel of prayers. When my husband had finished his sketch of the temple, he said to the old lama: ‘Wait a moment: I am going to draw you.’ ‘Good, I will sit; but give me a rupee immediately.’ Verestchagin said to him, ‘Sit first, and I will give it you afterwards.’ ‘Give it me at once, or I will not sit,’ replied the old man shortly, and, having received his rupee, he posed until the sketch was finished.

The houses of the natives are generally dirty, miserable, and, wherever the hilly nature of the ground permits it, joined together. The people are small in stature, and evidently of the Mongolian

type. The women are not, in our opinion, pretty. The married ones wear their hair, like the Chinese women, coiled in beautiful tresses round their heads; those who are unmarried let it fall over their shoulders. All of them like to stick a bright-coloured flower into their sleek black locks. If they wish to appear particularly beautiful they



A YOUTH OF SIKKIM.

paint thickly their noses and cheeks with red colour. They use lard very freely for their hair.

* * *

It is difficult to describe the effects of the sun here to people who have never been in similar places.

One day Verestchagin went out to do a sketch of the sunset. He prepared his palette ; but the sight was so beautiful that he waited in order to examine it better. Several thousand feet below us all was wrapt in a pure blue shadow ; the summits of the peaks were resplendent in purple flames. Verestchagin waited and waited and would not begin his sketch. ‘By-and-by, by-and-by,’ said he ; ‘I want to look at it still ; it is so splendid!’ He continued to wait ; he waited until the end of the evening—until the sun was set and the mountains were enveloped in dark shadows. Then he shut up his paint-box and returned home.

* * *

We did not expect that it would be cold and wet here, and so we did not bring any of our warm clothes. We had to buy everything new in order to be able to continue our journey.

* * *

The Buddhists are a peaceable people ; good also, and very hospitable, and without a shadow of that pride which strikes one so in the Brahmins. We were able to go about everywhere freely. My husband drew the interior and the exterior of the

temple, which he would never have been able to do with a Hindoo temple.

Usually, while Verestchagin worked at his sketch of the temple, the women sat near and wove their carpets, and the men turned their praying-wheels. Among them they certainly made enough noise.

The costume of the natives is simple and conve-



A WOMAN OF SIKKIM.

nient,—for the men a kind of long dressing-gown of woven material which the women themselves weave at home; the women wear a dressing-gown of the same kind. They carry various trifles at their girdles. To shade themselves from the sun they wear on their heads a white handkerchief, in the Italian fashion, and round their necks chains of

rupees, the most coquettish of them having also a handkerchief of some very bright colour.

It is only fair to say that the females of this country are not so devoted to glittering ornaments as to wear, like those of the plain, glass beads and all kinds of valueless trinkets. They have ornaments only of gold, silver, turquoise, malachite, and especially of yellow amber. We were able to buy some, but at a decidedly high price, for each seller wished to be paid not only the intrinsic value of his wares, but also that which they acquired as heirlooms from his ancestors. For instance, they all wear, sewn into their garments or enclosed in cases of a peculiarly original workmanship, talismans held in very high esteem as sacred remembrances of their forefathers. It may be imagined how great must be the increase in the price offered to induce a superstitious Boutthia or Leptcha to part with such relics.

* * *

Our hotel, although the best in Darjeeling, is not comfortable. The food is bad. One's only consolation is the conviction that Mr. Doyle is an excellent man.

It would not be agreeable to remain here long.

* * *

As we proposed to travel into the interior of the country, Verestchagin paid a visit to the ambassador of the King of Sikkim.

‘Is it long since you quitted England?’ asked the stout Resident.

‘A year,’ replied Verestchagin.

‘How is the Queen?’

‘Quite well.’

‘And her ministers?’

‘Quite well.’

‘When is Yung Bahadour going to England?’

‘Yung Bahadour is ill.’

He had been minister to the King of Nepaul.

The governors of Sikkim were afraid, not without reason perhaps, that Nepaul was seeking occasion to seize their little kingdom, and that Yung Bahadour was gone to England expressly in order to solicit the consent of the British Government. We obtain from the Resident a promise that he will write to the places which we propose to visit.

* * *

Mr. Edgar, the deputy commissioner (the principal functionary) of Darjeeling, was a man of most amiable appearance; he took a great interest in our projects.

He promised in particular to procure us an

interpreter who was in the service of the missionary of the district, and who had been converted to Christianity.

We ordered a tent to be made of coarse warm stuff for a hundred rupees. It was desirable to have it small—firstly, for warmth; secondly, that it might always be possible to put it up, even on the slope of the mountain. But we could not get it as we wished. The man whose business it was to collect the coolies who were to carry the baggage of our little caravan up the mountain took the money for the tent and departed. He returned so frightfully drunk that we took the money back and dismissed him. He declared that it was a mistake—that he never drank anything but tea. The tea must have been very strong!

* * *

The bazaar at Darjeeling resembles those of the plain. The merchants are for the most part, there as everywhere, Banians—members of a religious sect which forbid the putting to death of any animal, from an elephant to a flea. But they are considered usurers, and not to be trusted in business.

* * *

At last we found a good *sirdar*,—that is to say, chief of coolies,—by the name of Tinli, an oldish



BANIAN MERCHANT.

man who knew the mountain thoroughly. He is a Bouthhia, with half-shut eyes, a flat nose, prominent cheek-bones, long hair—in fact a regular Mongolian. He supplied us with twenty-five coolies, at thirteen rupees a head. He asked thirty-five for himself. Usually they are not paid so much, but one has to board them. We thought it preferable to pay them more, and to let them eat what and how they liked.

At last, on December 28, at two o'clock, the bearers shouldered our luggage, and set forward on their journey with us. On the same day we met a kind of procession, with music and dancing.

Our first march, of three miles, led us downhill. The tent was erected beside a rushing stream. At this first halt everything was in fearful disorder. To increase the wretchedness, an inexperienced coolie wounded himself in the foot. The long knives which the natives always carry about them are of great use during a halt. If a fire is wanted, or pegs for the tent, or even, in case of necessity, an entire roof for shelter from rain and storm, it is quickly made.

CHAPTER II.

WE were joined during this halt by the Leptcha of whom we have before spoken, who had been recommended to us by Mr. Edgar, the deputy commissioner, and who, we had been afraid, would not come after all.

He was a young man, dressed like a European and European in some of his ways, but Mongolian in complexion and features.

‘In whose service were you previously?’ asked Verestchagin.

‘In the service of the Rev. Mr. Page, the missionary of the district, sir.’

‘How much have you had a month?’

‘Twenty rupees, sir.’

‘What work did you do for him?’

‘I preached the Gospel, sir.’

‘Why did you leave your situation?’

‘I did not like the work, sir.’

‘Is it very hard work then?’

‘No, sir, it is not hard; but I did not like it.’

Whereupon he made a timid confession of his former grievances.

The worthy missionary only preached in Buddhist monasteries; he often had interviews with the monks during the night. They always received the orders of the English sahib (master) respectfully, met at the appointed hours, listened patiently to the preacher expounding the proofs and principles of the Christian faith; but as to exchanging their own for it, they obstinately refused to do so.

During fifteen years five or six children were converted, including our interpreter. It was this want of success, much more than the tiring nature of the work, which had completely discouraged the young man. It had happened to him more than once that when, in the absence of the clergyman, he had held interviews of this kind with his fellow-countrymen, they had reproached him for being a renegade from the religion of his fathers. However that may be, Lodi engaged to enter our service for thirty rupees a month. Verestchagin promised him that he would leave his compatriots free to believe anything they chose, only reserving to himself the right to talk with them and to make sketches of them.

In his haste to join us, Lodi had not brought

any of his things. We sent him back to the town, first, to fetch his luggage, secondly, to purchase in the bazaar a stock of provisions, and some sheep, which he was to bring with him, for meat was not to be obtained anywhere in the country we were going to.

* * *

The sun had already risen on the morrow when we continued our journey. This road, which had been described to us as a good one, was more suited for goats to travel than for horses. It became worse and worse, till at last we lost sight of it altogether; and it was only after much searching that we arrived at a little village, consisting of a few houses, where we pitched our tent. In doing so we disturbed, to our great misfortune, an ancient log of rotten wood, under which a lot of long-legged spiders had taken up their quarters.

Furious at our intrusion, they tormented us in their turn all night.

Around us we saw a great deal of the red wood of which tea-caddies are made, and which is used in Europe for various purposes. We saw very few forests.

The inhabitants of this place were Boutthias,

not Leptchas. I excited much curiosity among them, for until then not a single European woman had passed through this country. After great trouble we succeeded in buying a fowl; and with it, and some preserves (made by those benefactors of the human race, Crosse and Blackwell) which we had bought at Darjeeling, we made a tolerable supper. We had bought some trout of a fisherman by the road. Verestchagin had hoped to find game on the way; however, there was none.

* * *

Along the sides of the road ran walls of rough stones, containing slabs covered with pious inscriptions—such as, ‘Om mani padmi hum!’ (Hail! O gem in the lotus! Amen.) The pictures of gods on these stones strikingly resemble those of early Christian art.

The bridges are astonishing: two bamboo canes are placed one beside the other, and the bridge is made. When one crosses over such a bridge, it springs up and down under the feet. Happy are those who have not forgotten their gymnastics!

The following day we found ourselves already approaching the monastery of Pemiontsi. We passed by some enormous trees. At our last halt



A BOUTTHIA.

we were obliged to kill a fowl, to the great alarm of the worthy owner, in order not to suffer hunger. Here, a pair of scissors, offered as a present to the mistress of the house close by, afforded us the possibility of obtaining what we required without violence.

As we again continued our ascent, the whole mass of snow-mountains rose before us. On the left lay the monastery of Pemiontsi. It seemed to be quite close under our eyes, but in reality we were a good distance from it, and still farther from the snow.

The ascent up to Pemiontsi is very gentle. At one turning, however, I nearly rolled with my pony down the precipice. My animal had stumbled against a stone, and the clumsy saïs pulled so violently at the bridle that he frightened the pony, and it backed more and more. I screamed, and prepared to let go the reins; but luckily the others came up, and saved me from certain death. After this accident I hesitated at climbing the sharp rocks. When we got a little higher up, we decided to leave our saddles and to continue the ascent on foot. We had been advised to do so for some time, for it is almost impossible to ride through the brushwood. We walked all the way to the halting-place, close to the monastery

of Pemiontsi. Our bearers were capricious—they stopped half-way.

* * *

The monastery of Pemiontsi was recently burnt down, and has been rebuilt, but not so well as it was before, apparently, and not at all tastefully, especially as regards the pictures with which the new edifice is ornamented.

The monks did not receive us very cordially. They did not actually refuse to let us see anything, but they looked at us all the time with distrust; only one of them saluted us. The interior of the temple differs in no respect from those of other Buddhist temples, except that it is larger. As it is an ancient monastery, the most important in Sikkim, many monks and lay brethren pass their lives there. They laughed at us openly during our visit.

We had the greatest trouble in the world to make them sell us a chicken. It was in vain that we waited for our bearers—evidently they did not intend to complete the day's march. We were compelled to pass this cold night in the open air before the fire, with our saddles for pillows. In consequence of this single night passed beside the fire, our faces were swollen. However, we

found a compassionate lama, who brought us some tea, or rather a soup of tea and murwan. It is made by taking Tartary tea and mixing it with milk, butter, and salt.

On the following afternoon, the bearers arrived in a good humour. We sent the most feeble ones back to the house, for we had left a part of our baggage there, and it had to be taken care of till our return.

Round us, as on the slopes of the mountain, there was nothing to shoot. As the natives demanded an enormous price for all that they brought us, we only bought of them those things which were absolutely indispensable, and eked them out with our own preserves. These exorbitant prices we owed in great measure to our coolies, who, in order to obtain their own provisions more cheaply, had advised the vendors to ask us a very high price for ours—probably in the belief that we had plenty of money with us.

* * *

From Pemiontsi to the river we travelled again on our ponies. We left them with a saïs in a little village which happened to be there, and continued our route on foot.

This was at first difficult enough, for there is

no valley ; each rocky height is succeeded by a deep abyss.

We made another halt before arriving at the village of Jaksun, where the difficult path which leads to Mount Kantchinjunga begins. To the right of the village rises the monastery of Dobdi, which we proposed to visit on our return. As the road ascends, especially after leaving the waterfall, it gets constantly worse and worse.

There are no more houses, for Jaksun is the last regular settlement. The shepherds alone pass the summer here with their flocks. During the hottest season they move towards Djongri, a cool place, fifteen thousand feet high, where they have had a little hut built. This was the goal of our journey at present.

People had warned us at Darjeeling of the difficulties of an ascent to Djongri at this season of the year (January)—we had been told there that sometimes the snow covered this hut in a single night to the depth of twenty feet.

Thirty years ago, at the same time of year, the celebrated English *savant* Hooker had ascended it. Our friends at Darjeeling doubted our ability to do the same.

On the evening of our departure from Darjeeling several good-natured Englishmen—the tea-planter

(Dr. Simpson's friend), Mr. Judge, the engineer, &c. —had assembled together in the dining-room of the Doyle Hotel, and had requested Verestchagin to join them. 'We have heard,' said they, 'that you are going to Djongri. We consider it our duty to warn you that it is an impossibility at this season of the year.' 'But Hooker went to Djongri precisely at this season,' replied my husband. 'That is true, but Hooker very nearly met his death; a few hours later, and he would have been entombed in the snow. Our well-considered opinion is that you ought to renounce your project.' Verestchagin thanked them for their good intentions, but declared that his mind was made up. 'In that case, at any rate, do not take your wife with you.' 'She will not stay behind: she insists on coming with me.'

As Verestchagin persisted in making studies from nature of the very highest summits of the chain of snow-mountains, we ventured the ascent without troubling ourselves about our coolies, who were already getting rather gloomy, and to whom the march was visibly painful.

Near the cascade already mentioned the road became so bad that those who went first dragged up with ropes those who followed after.

It is wonderful that single travellers can ever

cross the mountain; for the shrubs, which in summer indicate the road to Nepal, are completely covered with snow.

We made a halt, this time at a height of eleven thousand feet, under large trees whose dry leaves strewed the ground. Here there were a number of gnats, and still more troublesome insects. A



DJONGRI.

great deal of snow fell during the night. Nothing extraordinary happened except a quarrel between two of our servants, for the following reason—one of them of an inferior caste had trodden on the foot of another of a superior caste.

I had a slight adventure during the fatiguing march after the last halt.

Verestchagin was trying to shoot a wild-fowl which was cackling at a little distance from the road; I was waiting for him. When we resumed our road I found that I had lost my purse, which must have been left at our resting-place. We went back for it, but it was nowhere to be seen. We made the whole troop of bearers halt, and declared to them that there must be a thief amongst them.

It was in vain that we asked if any one had been seen to pick up the purse. No one confessed to have seen anything. By-and-by Tinli told us that he would undertake to recover the money, but on one condition, which was that he alone should be entrusted with the business, and that if he found the money he should not be asked the name of the thief. We consented, and so the affair ended for the time. However, we did suspect a coolie who had been on in front of all the others, and whom we had come across ourselves exactly at the entrance to the forest. However, in order to keep our promise we said nothing about it.

The snow fell in such great quantities that we put on our high boots. The farther we advanced, the rockier became the road, and the deeper lay the snow. In some places it even came up to our knees. We only had with us the hunter, and the coolie who carried the paint-box—all the others

were left far behind. We stumbled and slipped so often that our alpenstocks were of no use whatever, and I gave my hand to the huntsman, who dragged me along. In the forest we came across the tracks of wild oxen (*yaks*), who had evidently passed by not long ago—we could see the traces of their long hairy tails.

* * *

We climbed Mount Leptcha till we came to an open space. It is a very uncomfortable halting-place. We are tormented by hunger and thirst. A little sherry still remains in our travelling-flask, and, mixed with snow, revives somewhat our exhausted strength. We call aloud very often, and for some time keep firing off our guns and pistols, in order to summon the bearers who are lagging behind. No one answers, no one appears, no one is to be seen or heard. All we can do is either to turn back or to go forward. Naturally, we take the latter course. I once more give my hand to the huntsman, and climb as best I may over the thick snow.

Verestchagin has soon exhausted his remaining strength, and now declares that he can go no farther. We have already attained an altitude of fourteen thousand feet. Our matches have got

damp and will not strike. However, we must make a fire somehow or other. The huntsman fires off his gun close to a piece of dry rag. It catches fire; we all blow it until the sparks fly; and soon we have a good blazing fire. Warmed and rested, we determine to press forward to the hut, from which we are now not very far. We resume our journey, but after a few steps I sink fainting on the snow. Verestchagin has since told me that he thought I was dead. We return to the fire and send back the huntsman to search for the coolies and order them to bring the cushions, the wrappers for the night, the chest of tea, and the provisions. He promises to punctually fulfil his commission, but we neither see him nor hear of him again. Our position is critical. While our clothes are covered on the one side with a crust of ice two inches thick, on the other they are scorching. The guide has given us a piece of cloth—a kind of mantle worn by the natives, but, unfortunately, made of light summer material. The paint-box is lying beside us. The cold is really terrible—we crouch over the fire, doubling ourselves up, and, as I have said, almost roasted on one side, while the other is covered with a coating of ice. We beseech the last remaining bearer to go off and look for the others. He refuses absolutely. The promise of a large gratuity

can alone persuade him to go back and send us some of his comrades, or the whole party, with the most necessary requisites for an encampment, and some food.

He then departs like the other, and we see no more of him. We now find ourselves suddenly alone, and in the midst of a most profound silence. The cold becomes more and more intense every moment. I am amazed that in this terrible situation Verestchagin is still able to observe the changes in the light, and the clouds which float above us. 'Another time,' he remarks, 'I shall come here in a completely vigorous condition, and I shall study these changing shadows and these effects of light which are only visible at such a height as this.

This night, whose horrors I shall remember to the last day of my life, ended at length. During the whole morning no one comes up to us. We again set ourselves to shout and fire shots. There is no answer. It seems almost as though our coolies must be dead, or have run away, in the belief, no doubt, that we have been frozen. Had that really happened, our history would be ended and we should be classed as madmen.

* * *

It was already past midday ; we were still sitting in the snow waiting for our servants. Hunger and cold were making themselves more keenly felt. Verestchagin determined at last to go himself in search of our men. He put on his frozen boots, and set out bravely to walk. But he had over-rated his strength, for he had not made ten steps before he was obliged to stop to take breath. And now I am left absolutely alone in the world. I turn myself over on the other side and cover myself up as well as I can. The snow continues to fall, and extinguishes the little fire that we have kept alight with such difficulty. It will be impossible for me to keep from freezing much longer. I raise myself up ; I endeavour to pull on my stiffened boots, but I cannot possibly get in my feet further than the heels. Thus I can only move very slowly. By good luck a coolie just then comes to my assistance with a little food. He tells me that the *sahib* (master) is coming soon himself.

And in fact my husband soon shows himself —not on his own feet, but carried on the back of another coolie. He tells me that he could go no farther than a single mile, and even in that distance was forced to stop frequently to collect his strength. He then met two bearers sent on by the troop. He made one hurry on to me, while he

literally seated himself on the neck of the other, for he was utterly unable to make a single step more by himself. The fire is now re-lighted. We cook some soup, and we revive our energies so effectually that we should have gone on, I cannot say where, if Verestchagin had not begun to complain of a violent pain in the head. As for me, I can scarcely use my eyes, the snow has had such an effect upon them.

Towards evening the sirdar Tinli arrived, and with him the other bearers, whose ears Verestchagin would have been glad to box. He decides to push on at once to the shepherd's hut, which accordingly we did.

The whole road is so smoothly covered with ice, that not only we ourselves, with our European boots, but the coolies also, are obliged to slide the whole way.

* * *

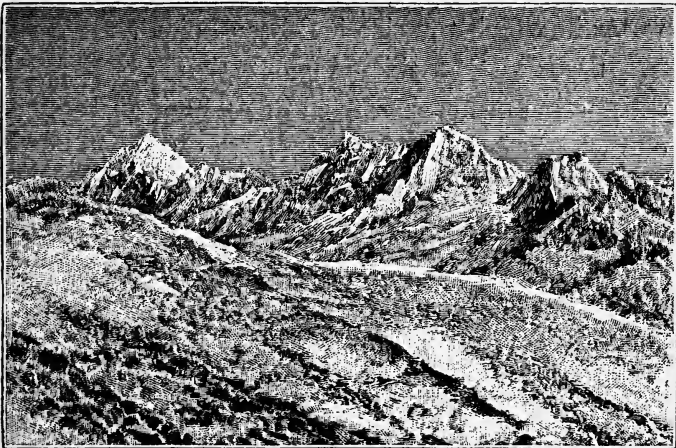
At last we reach the long-talked-of and long-wished-for hut, which is really only intended for a summer refuge. On all sides of it, in the roof, and in the floor, are great cracks ; but after all it is possible to rest there.

Verestchagin begins to paint several studies of snow, supported by two coolies, who hold him

under the arms. The sun scorches his head and his back, while his hand can scarcely hold the palette and brush, it is so cold. His face is so frightfully swollen that his eyes look merely like two wrinkles, and his head aches so violently that he can hardly turn it. To all appearance he has had a sunstroke. He is compelled to put a speedy end to his work, in order to return as soon as possible. The two coolies who have no shoes remain below minding the baggage; but we intimated to the other servants that if they would not climb up they should have no wages. And see the effect! Our fine Indians come trooping up one after the other, and behold for the first time in their lives a great mass of snow. We think of Lodi, and regret that he is not with us. If only he had been, all that had taken place would never have occurred. We had sent him away at the first halt at Darjeeling to buy sheep, and he had not yet come back.

Verestchagin finishes his sketches as well as he can, and three days later, after noon, we commence our descent. It was quite time we did. My husband's inflammation increased considerably, and he suffered so severely from headache that if he had remained at that height much longer he would probably have died. According to certain

signs, it was likely there would be bad weather,—that is to say, more snow. If it had come upon us while we were up there it would certainly have buried us. It is only from the descriptions of my husband that I know anything about the magnificent snow-fields, ice-glaciers, and ice-covered peaks which lay all around us, apparently close at hand.



MOUNT PANDIM.

I found it quite impossible myself to let my eyes rest on the dazzling snow. Our attendants protected their eyes with the folds of their turbans. The bearers had spectacles made of metal wire with glasses of blue or green glass. I cannot imagine how Verestchagin could make his studies.

The descent having commenced in the afternoon, we arrived towards evening at the halting-place, Bakim, where the bearers were waiting for us. We had walked the whole time across a thick carpet of snow which had fallen during the night.

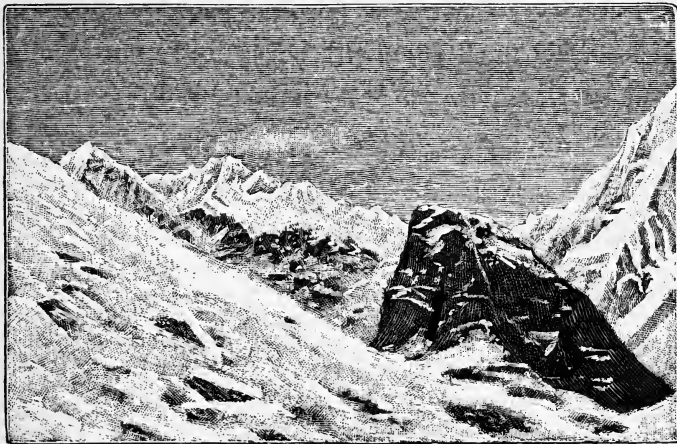
Our bearers were joyfully preparing to cook some stinking little fish with a great deal of rice ; and in order to lose nothing they drank also the water in which the rice had been boiled.

It was just at this moment that we had the satisfaction of hearing, from our tent, a coolie—the one who had been with us on the top when we were nearly frozen—describe laughingly to his companions how chilled we had been. He imitated the plaintive voice of Verestchagin begging him to put something on the fire to keep it from going out and to wrap up his feet and mine, &c. Of course they all listened with much interest, and laughed heartily.

* * *

A few words here about our bearers. Tinli, their chief, was an old wolf ; but he knew his business well, and was not devoid of cunning. After him came his nephew, a handsome young fellow, a future sirdar, the one who carried the paint-box, and who, as I have said, made fun of our distress.

Our huntsman, although he was a drunkard, must have been a worthy man. Very likely he was not capable of shooting even for fun at any living creature. As he very seldom had occasion to kill anything, he was very attentive in helping me across the snow and over the sharp rocks. One of the coolies was rather like a woman. In his zeal to be



MOUNT KANTCHINJUNGA FROM DJONGRI.

of service he took every occasion to spread his nets in the river ; but either he caught nothing, or if he did he robbed us of it in the night.

Bearers are as a rule agile, rough, and not perfectly honest. The Boutthias are the bravest and most active, the Leptchas the quietest and best-

tempered ; they are afraid of their sirdar, and are in complete submission to him. Our sirdar, for instance, in the affair of the lost purse, arranged everything as he had promised. When we arrived at the place where it had been lost, Tinli requested permission to look for it ; and soon, sure enough, he returned from the forest with the purse in his hand. It must have lain for several days buried in the earth, for here and there it was stained. Of course, as we had given our word not to try and convict him who had dared to lay hands on our property, the matter was at an end.

* * *

Until it reaches the village of Jaksun the road is extremely bad. Without making the usual halt we arrive in the afternoon at this pretty little village, thus named in memory of three lamas who once preached the Buddhist religion in this locality.

Just as we were asking anxiously what could have become of our interpreter, whom we could so ill do without, we behold appearing, on the road over the neighbouring mountain, first the heads of sheep, and then the black head of Lodi, under a great hat which gives him the aspect of a pilgrim. He brought five sheep, and was carrying two baskets full of chickens, letters, and newspapers.

This unexpected pleasure made us forget our past distresses. During all the last part of the time we had not eaten much meat, for from Djongri to where we were now, we had hardly seen any game. Now and then only we had heard at the sides of the road the clucking of a wild-fowl, which is a very shy bird. Verestchagin had killed one of them, and two ducks.

It rains all day and all night without interruption—so heavily that our thick tent gets soaked and in the night we feel drops of rain on our heads.

* * *

The village of Jaksun consists of a dozen or fifteen houses. Although the roads which lead to it are bad, it is nevertheless the principal depôt in the salt-trade with Thibet; for on the more convenient route—that is to say, across Nepaul—the customs are much higher.

Near the village, on a mountain, rises the ancient monastery of Dobdi, surrounded by weeping willows. The lama of the monastery gives us milk and butter, for which I pay generously as usual.

My husband takes the opportunity to draw the lama, and more especially his monastery, which is very interesting on account of its ornamentation.

The lama informed us that the office of principal lama to this establishment descends by right in his family from father to son. He was, like most of his fellows, a rough common man, but worthy ; he was married and had children.

The lamas have not the right of marrying—they are obliged to have special permission, and that cannot be obtained without the good-will of the ecclesiastical authorities. The consequences of marrying without permission were well known to our lama. His father, who had tried to do so, had passed the last years of his life in the prison of the monastery, which is situated close to the temple. Curiously enough, his old widow wears his lama's dress from the time of her husband's death. We could not make out whether she actually has the right to do so, or whether she simply makes use of the clothes.

Our lama is probably of considerable rank and dignity, for whenever he issues from the convent, the event is announced to all the inhabitants of the district by a flourish of trumpets. They all bow to him with great respect, kiss his hand and the hem of his garment. It is noticeable that in this part of the country the clergy enjoy great consideration.

Jaksun was the residence of the first kings of Sikkim. The modest village, therefore, occupies a place of honour in the history of the little kingdom. The inhabitants, like the geese in the fable, think with pride of the ancient importance of their birth-place. There remain to this day the ruins of a building, palace or fortress, into which a large tree has succeeded in forcing its roots. At one side of it is an open space, called the King's Place, because the former sovereigns used to sit there. There was also a little lake, now dried up, which, according to a legend, was actually stolen by the Devil, and carried away to a larger lake in the neighbourhood.

The legend told of the departure of the inhabitants of Jaksun from their kingdom at the foot of Mount Kantchinjunga proves that the village was once the cradle of the kingdom of Sikkim. The lamas who spread the Buddhist faith succeeded so well that they gained general confidence. As there were troubles and disorder in the country, they elected a king, chosen from one of the best native families. This king resided for a long time at Jaksun; but finally he removed to Tomlong in consequence of the innumerable wars with the adjacent country of Nepaul.

One cannot but believe that our tchaprassi indulged frequently in reflections on the vicissitudes of fortune. One day, when he was cooking his food, chance willed it that a cow which happened to be passing should be seized with the idea of ascertaining for herself what there was in the pot. She probably burnt her nose, or else the contents did not please her, for she quickly drew back her head; but it did not go alone, for the pot stuck firmly to it, and the cow galloped off with the vessel on her head. In order to properly imagine this comic incident, it is necessary to know that our tchaprassi, although he was a fool, belonged to the highest caste—that of the Takours. To prepare his food he went away and hid himself as far off as possible from the infidel and defiling observation not only of us but of our people. He retired every mealtime under a rock or a bush, lighted his fire, and prepared his scup. Time after time I asked him why he went so far off, telling him that it made it impossible to call him if he was wanted. Nothing would persuade him to alter until the adventure with the cow took place. This proves at least that it is better not to have too high an opinion of oneself when one wishes to make soup. Unfortunately, moreover, the cow is a sacred animal and must not be touched; so that

our poor tchaprassi was obliged to have recourse to fair words.

We received a great many presents from the natives, such as butter, rice, &c. ; but we soon remarked that the principal cause of this prodigality of presents was none other than our readiness in giving money. We left off sowing rupees, and immediately ceased to reap presents.

* * *

In front of us were the ruins of an old monastery, possessing—so the natives say—the interesting peculiarity of having cymbals (the instruments usually employed in the worship of the Buddhist divinities), kept under the ground, which when taken in the hands clash one against the other. If any one is bold enough to steal them, they bring misfortune on the whole household. We took care to show faith in these wonders. However, we did not make a pilgrimage to another miraculous spot about three hours' journey from here. There is a grotto in which usually there is no water to be seen ; but by means of prayers and charms some warm water, which cures all diseases, can be made to appear.

* * *

The inhabitants of this country pay to the king a part of their tribute in money, and the other portion in kind. The lama of Dobdi must have been behindhand with his contribution, for while we were there he received a severe letter from the king commanding him at once to pay what was due. How frightened the poor man was! and he hastened to obey.

* * *

Our good acquaintance Edgar, the deputy-commissioner of Darjeeling, must have kept his promise and sent a letter to the lamas of Pemiontsi, for we received both meat and murwar from them. They also invited us to visit their monastery. However, we went first to the old monastery of Tchangatchelling, which is nearer to us. Snow fell on the exact day on which a feast is always held every year at Dobdi in honour of the snow-mountains. The lama proves himself an artist. He models in rice a number of little figures representing the different gods of the snow. A crowd of visitors arrive from all the country round to the fête. They go in procession round the monastery to the sound of trumpets, &c.

Before our departure the lama comes down to see us with his son, and has tea with us, which he finds very good. His little boy, less diplomatic,

refuses our beverage. The lama sells us his silk overcoat, accepts a small glass of sherry, and departs, half clothed, but evidently well pleased.

It is not without regret that we leave Jaksun. The nights especially in these gorges surrounded by lofty mountains are extremely beautiful. Through the transparent depths of the air the stars look as if hanging over our heads. Usually the fire alone flames up clearly in front of our tent in the midst of profound darkness. On the other side the snowy peak of Mount Pandim appears, bathed in the moonlight, above the dense forests and solid rocks. But, unhappily, in this paradise some of our servants fall ill of fever.

As we quitted this country the ground under our feet was completely soaked. At last we again took possession of our ponies, but found them quite tired out. Evidently our young groom during our absence had been riding with all the beauties in the village where we had left our animals, and we heard as a fact that a young black-eyed girl had produced a great impression on our saïs. He talked of his approaching marriage; however, that did not prevent our giving him his dismissal on account of the thinness of our ponies.

* * *

I arrive before all the others at Tchangatchelling, and Verestchagin finds me there already seated in the midst of the lamas. The oldest among them, the abbé, receives us in a very friendly manner. As it rains very hard, and our bearers are long in coming, he decides to put us up for the night in the temple; not the upper one, in which we are chatting, and where, as the master of the house says, the evil gods who live in it would not tolerate us, but in the lower temple. The religious tolerance of the Buddhists is astonishing, especially in comparison with the Brahmins, who curse as a profanation not only the entrance of an unbeliever into a temple, but even his approach to their divinities, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.

We examine the elegant frescoes of the temple, and make acquaintance with all their gods, good and bad, as the monk who accompanies us remarks. Inside, according to the invariable custom, are benches for the laity; nearer the altar, a comfortable armchair for the abbé. The colouring is old, and agreeable enough to the eye. The columns, painted and decorated with red, are particularly graceful. The door of the lower temple is pretty, and on each side of it is a large praying-machine, which the abbé or some visitor turns all day long. At the end are three colossal statues of the three



DOOR OF THE TEMPLE OF TCHANGATCHEILING.

persons of the Buddhist Trinity. In the middle is the Creator of the world ; to the left the chief apostle of the Buddhist faith in these regions, elevated to the rank of a saint ; on the right Buddha. They are all seated, their feet hidden with the holy flowers of the lotus, and a perpetual and immovable smile on their lips. The apostle is represented as quite black, thus indicating his tropical origin. The ears of the Buddha are pierced, but without earrings, as a symbol of the aversion in which this celebrated prince held all worldly ornament.

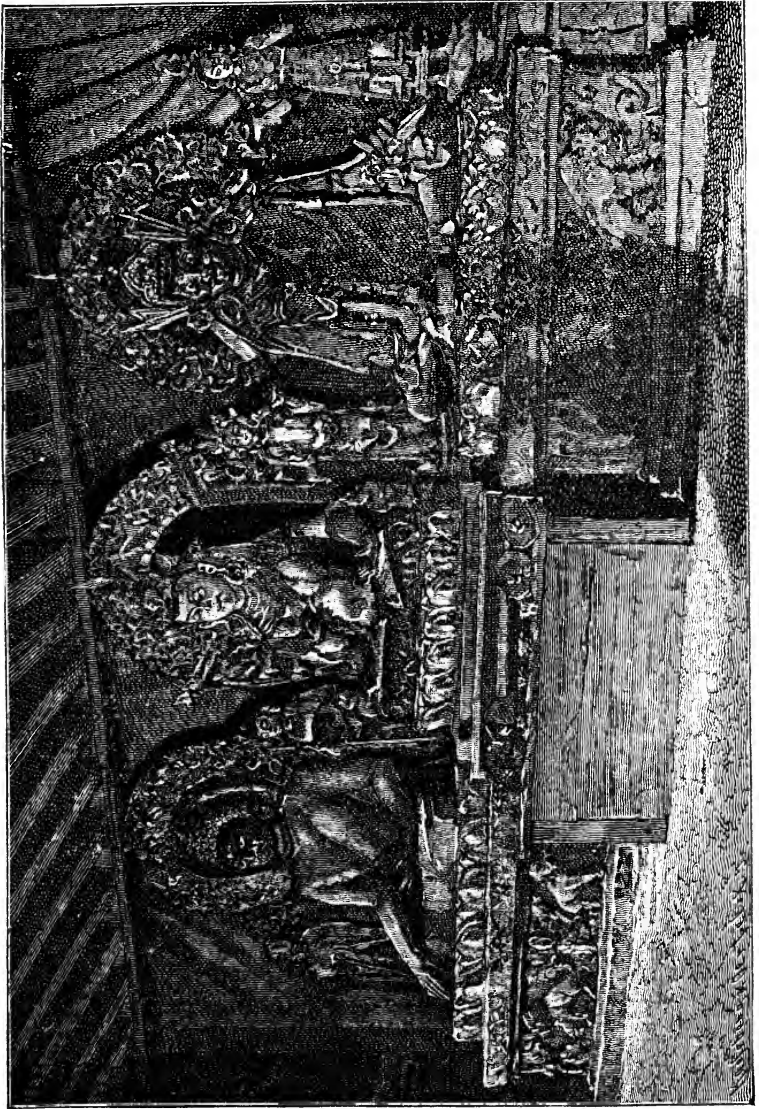
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We pitch our tent in the courtyard of the monastery, and consequently have constant ocular demonstration of the nature of a convent life.

Very early in the morning are heard the blasts of a trumpet, and, on great feast days, of an enormously thick trumpet of copper.

During the whole day can be heard without cessation, accompanied by cymbals, &c., the recitation of prayers, which every one who enters the convent can have made for his own benefit. The religious services are often accompanied by a solid meal of mutton, brought as an offering.

The master of the house, the chief of the lamas,



BUDDHIST TRINITY.

was very old, and twice already he had prepared himself for death.

Just lately before our arrival he felt very ill. He recovered, however, as he told us with grateful acknowledgments, thanks to a bottle of port wine of which we had made him a present. But he had ceased to hope for a permanent cure, for he had disposed of all his property, and sold to us his last priest's vestment.

* * *

The site of Tchangatchelling is magnificent. The ground on which the monastery is built lies at a height of nine thousand feet. In front of it on one side stretches the whole snowy line of the principal chain of the Himalayas; on the other lie Darjeeling and its adjacent mountains, as far as the commencement of the great Indian plain. Often when the clouds were low we were enveloped for whole days in fog. From time to time, however, the veil would break, when the view would extend to an immense distance over the mountains, lighted up by the sun, until again all would disappear. There was probably more animation here formerly; the monks were more numerous. Opposite was a convent for women.

In the evening the lama would seat himself by



LAMA DISGUISED AS A DEITY.

our fire and chat merrily with us, as often as his age permitted. One day he informed us that he had dreamed that the divinity of the temple was irritated against us. Wherefore? Because we roasted our meat raw, instead of giving it a preliminary cooking!

This lama, like all the others, had been educated at the monastery of Pemiontsi, the most important nursery of the *savants* in the country.

* * *

We received an invitation from Pemiontsi to attend the fête in honour of the snow-mountains, which is celebrated there with special solemnity, as that is the centre of the Buddhist religion in Sikkim. The lamas made it known to us that we should be received with great pomp by them—to the sound of the trumpet, &c.—which, naturally, we refused.

On the day of the fête we found a great number of guests assembled from all the neighbouring places. The lamas were all in festal clothing. The place for dancing was in the courtyard of the monastery. On one side were the banners representing the gods of the snow-mountains; on the other, a canopy for the principal lamas.

In their desire to celebrate the fête with great

solemnity, they have repainted the whole convent, and the elegant frescoes on the entrance door are now covered with a fresh and abominable coat of paint. When we arrive at the temple all the lamas are occupied—some with their prayers, others with receiving a mass of presents and offerings. Part of these—the smallest, certainly—are offered to the Devil ; the other to God. These offerings are placed before the idols in a great number of little cups. Those who offer the sacrifices to the gods close the apertures of their noses and mouths with a veil, so that their breath may not contaminate the offering. The sound of the trumpet reverberates ; the chief lamas go out of the temple and take up their position in the canopy specially erected for them in the courtyard of the monastery. The canopy of the most exalted lamas, by the bye, is hung with rich silk embroidered with dragons ; that of the lamas of inferior rank is made of a common but interesting material woven in Nepaul, with flowers and Buddhist divinities worked on it.

First of all two old clowns with masks present themselves—a man and a woman (they are evidently professionals) ; the lamas also wear masks to amuse the spectators. Their jokes and attitudes, as well as some points in the play, are somewhat indecent ; but this evidently suits the public taste. One

after another, dancers come upon the stage disguised as deities. The costumes worn in these disguises by the lamas are very rich—of thick Chinese silk embroidered with dragons' heads. (It is the custom when a rich person dies for him to leave his handsomest garments in his will to a monastery, to be used on these occasions.) The lamas wear, as I have already said, ample dresses of silk, with sashes to match rolled round their chests and their waists. They wear on their feet their ordinary soft heavy shoes. Their faces are covered with masks representing various animals, such as stags, pigs, and even human faces. But what faces! Eyes staring most frightfully, enormous teeth, &c. The deities, according to popular belief, must have a very severe aspect. However, to judge from the masks, which are supposed to resemble them, they must be more hideous than terrible looking; and that is what the natives like. The dances in these pantomimes consist of gestures which are rude enough, and in which combats between good and evil spirits are the principal feature. A puppet representing the Devil comes on to the stage. By-and-by appear ambassadors from all countries, and then they begin to chase the Devil, who continually escapes them by hiding himself, until at last he makes off towards the sea. However, he

is caught and killed, and portions of his body are distributed among his captors. As the puppet is made of rice, the audience can satisfy at the same



LAMA WEARING MASK.

time their hunger and their anger against the Devil. His head is thrown to the gods as an offering, and no one attempts to pick it up, although, being made of rice, it is good to eat. This, however, does not end the spectacle: the Devil comes to life again and recommences his tricks with the human beings. It is rather difficult for us to follow the play, for every time we interrogate the interpreter he answers, 'The good spirits are complaining that there is war so often, and that there is so much disease and death among mortals.' We again inquired of Lodi, 'What does this pantomime mean?' He politely applied to some one else for an explanation, and then answered us with alacrity: 'He is complaining that kings and people die in such great numbers.'

'Lodi, Lodi, what does the dance mean?'

'Madame, it represents complaints on the subject of the numerous maladies, and the death of kings and common people.'

The music consisted of a monotonous noise of plates, struck by the lamas who were seated under the canopy. At five o'clock the ceremony was ended for that day, but the fête would not be over till the following day.

We had the honour of being the first Europeans who were ever present at this fête, which, indeed,

we found of slight interest and very fatiguing. Luckily, we were seated in the shade, and not in front of the lamas on the carpets spread expressly for us in the sun, where we should certainly have got sunstroke, besides a charming collection of various insects.

We came back the same evening to Tchangatchelling. Verestchagin returned the next morning on horseback to Pemiontsi for the conclusion of the fête. He told me that evening that the performance of the day before had been repeated, with this difference, that a war-dance had been introduced.

In this an old man with one eye, of whom we were in the habit of buying eggs, greatly distinguished himself. The actors jumped like cats, and chanted warlike hymns, of which the following is a specimen:—‘I am the son of a great giant: no animal can struggle with me—the Devil himself dare not. I speed like the noise of firearms, like a ray of light. My sword belonged to a valiant king of old, and is so large that there is no place that will contain it. My sabre has been for three years in fire and three years in the sea,’ &c.

* * *

At this same time the lama of Tchangatchelling caused a great number of little rice devils to be

burnt ; but it seemed to have no salutary effect, for he fell ill again, and in the course of conversation asked us for another bottle of port wine. We remained with him a few days longer, and our days passed very agreeably at the monastery.

* * *

The coolie whom we had sent to Darjeeling returns with money and provisions. The temptation of bringing the money has been too much for him, for he has stolen five rupees.

As goître is a very common malady here, we ordered a pot of pomade for it from Darjeeling. We tried it first on the lama's wife, who has a great swelling under the chin. But Lodi, who was entrusted to make the trial, rubbed the poor woman's neck with such vigour that the skin is all inflamed and covered with sores. In spite of this she declares that she finds herself much better, and begs us earnestly to leave her a pot of this pomade before we go.

* * *

The tchaprassi has again amused us very much with his pig-headed belief in the superiority of his caste. One of my fowls hid itself I know not where. In looking for it I came to the precise spot where our takour was preparing his repast.

If there had been no one present, perhaps he would have pocketed his pride, and there would have been an end of it. But as Lodi and several other coolies were present, he felt obliged to show his zeal in maintaining the purity of his caste, and he fiercely threw away all his food, which had been polluted by our presence, and extinguished his fire. But he is well punished. My husband flies into a passion at his impudence, and, to his great alarm, not only seizes his caldron in his hand, but throws it over the wall of the monastery, telling him that he will follow it himself if he attempts to show his pride again so insolently.

* * *

We receive a letter from the King of Sikkim. His little Majesty says that he has long intended to write to us, but that till now business has prevented him. This letter, written on delicate paper, is, according to the usage of the country, wrapped in a piece of silk, and begins with these words: 'Cheri, cheri, cheri' (Honour, honour, honour). With the letter are presents, consisting of meat, nuts, and other dainties.

* * *

Verestchagin has finished his work at Tchangtchelling. We accordingly bid adieu to the

monastery and its good lama. He could not resist asking my husband for his winter overcoat. 'It is warm, is it not?' said he. 'Yes,' replies my husband, 'it is certainly a very warm coat: I should have long ago been frozen without it.'

In order to go to Tomlong we took the road which passes Pemiontsi, where we proposed to stay for some time. But there is too much bustle with so many pupils there, and we decide to push on.

We make presents to the two lamas who come to see us—to one we give a mirror, to the other a purse of money. The road from Pemiontsi to Tassiding passes through very beautiful scenery. From the side of the mountain, across the fissures, project large blocks of pure marble. The inhabitants are not very numerous, because the mountains are too steep, and there are no valleys, as there are at Cashmere, for instance. To each sharp declivity succeeds at once the slope of the adjoining mountain. There is no convenient place for a settlement. The houses are constructed on fairly tall pillars, under which live the domestic animals.

Tassiding is situated lower down than the other monasteries,—that is to say, only at a height of six thousand feet. We pitched our tent among monuments (*tchitens*), which are not erected over

the tombs, but simply built in memory of a king or of some lama of high rank. In front of us rose the great tchiten erected in honour of the saint, originally Lama of Thibet, who built Tassiding, and who after his death returned to the earth as son of the king of Sikkim. He ought doubtless to have remained at Tassiding, since he was its principal lama, but his father made him come and live near him, and requested permission from the Dalaï-lama of Thibet to have him married, which naturally was granted to him.

After he died, he soon came to life again in Bhotan, which event the king of Bhotan immediately announced in a letter to the king of Sikkim. The rule is, that when a lama in easy circumstances has just died, his belongings are collected and preserved until the lamas have discovered in whom the defunct has been resuscitated, and to him they return his possessions after a delay of eight years.

The Buddhist clergy are divided, so to speak, into two sects, the red and the yellow, according to the colour of their vestments. Perpetual discord reigns between these two sects. In some provinces the red predominate, and in others the yellow. In the kingdom of Sikkim the red are the most numerous.

* * *

We had just had time to make the acquaintance of the lamas of Tassiding when they suddenly avoided our society. We soon learnt that our Lodi was the principal cause of this ; he had been here once with his missionary to preach Christianity. The lamas had then received him in a most friendly way, had testified to him their good-will, and had granted the reasonableness of the Christian religion, but like their subalterns had refused to be converted. When they again saw Lodi they probably thought that he had with him another missionary, who would also try his chance, and they could think of no better way of escaping than to hide themselves. However, we had not said a single word about religion.

* * *

We soon received a fresh missive from the king, with the same words carefully written at the top, ' Honour, honour, honour ; ' but this time it contained a complaint against some of our bearers, who had been sent to Darjeeling and had bought a pound of fish of a fisherman, and had afterwards ill-treated him and left him half dead. They had certainly been very careful on their return not to breathe a word of this occurrence. The king wished the whole affair cleared up, but what

could we do? Lodi was a Leptcha, and could only write in his own language. He did not know enough of the Boutthian tongue to employ it in writing a letter. We were therefore obliged to beg the lama to come to our assistance at this critical juncture, and to consider the king's letter and reply to it. I do not think I ever laughed so much in my life as during the time that Lodi and the lama between them spelt out our expressions. At last the letter is composed, sealed with our seal of state, and folded according to the usual custom in a white silk handkerchief, for which Verestchagin furnished his own of Lyons silk. To this were added presents, such as an opera-glass, a pocket-knife, and several other trifles.

* * *

The monastery of Tassiding is remarkable for its age and for its position. It is built over subterranean waters, of which the sound can be distinguished.

Many pilgrims come there every year. There is going to be a fête soon in honour of the annual opening of the miraculous water. We also have a little miracle of our own. Our tchaprassi, who, as I have several times said, will never touch anything which has been used by us, decides to drink

some water drawn by our *bisti* (water-carrier). It must not be imagined, however, that it is the water which has worked this miracle ; it is simply that the distance of the spring is too great for the laziness of our takour.

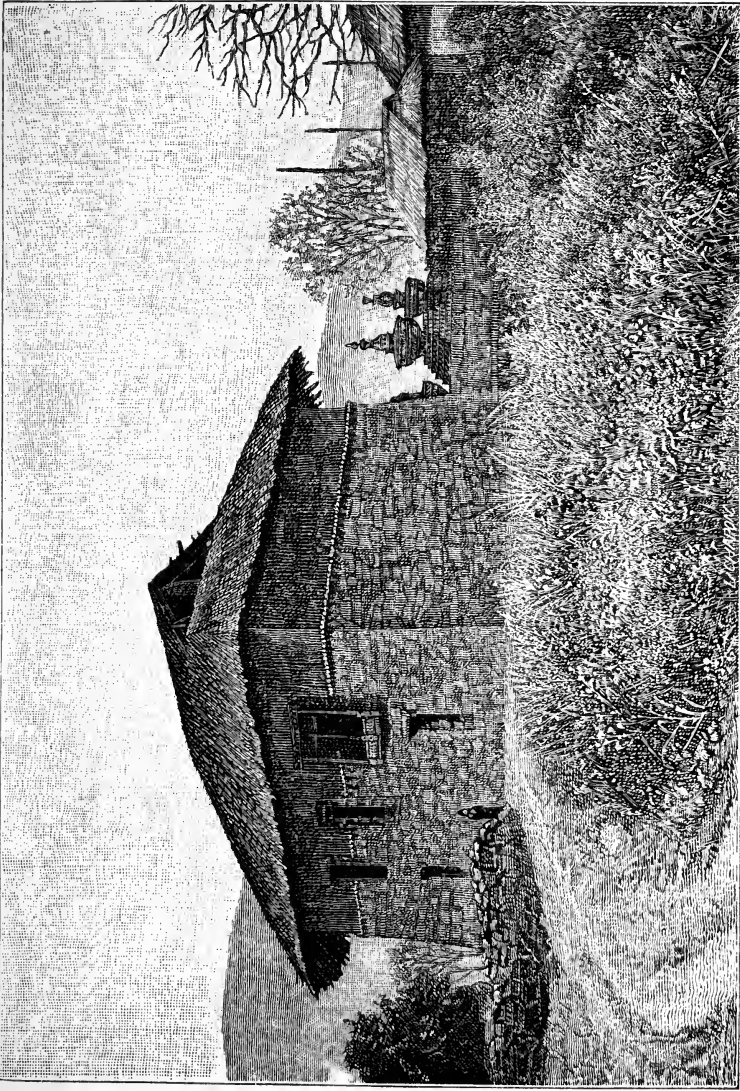
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From time to time we buy objects of interest in the country : medallions of silver, different strings of beads made from human skulls, whole skeletons of snakes, trumpets made of human tibias, which are in use among the lamas for worship, and long Thibetan earrings made of turquoises. The 'dead' turquoise, as the natives call it, can be recognised by its opaque colour.

* * *

The temples are built in an original manner ; the lines of the exterior walls are oblique. One of the three temples of Tassiding, the middle one, dedicated to the god of war, is coloured with red, and all round the pediment are paintings of death's-heads. As no one has been at war with Sikkim for a long time this temple has fallen into the greatest neglect. The third temple belongs to the monastery of Pemiontsi.

Verestchagin made a drawing of the lama of

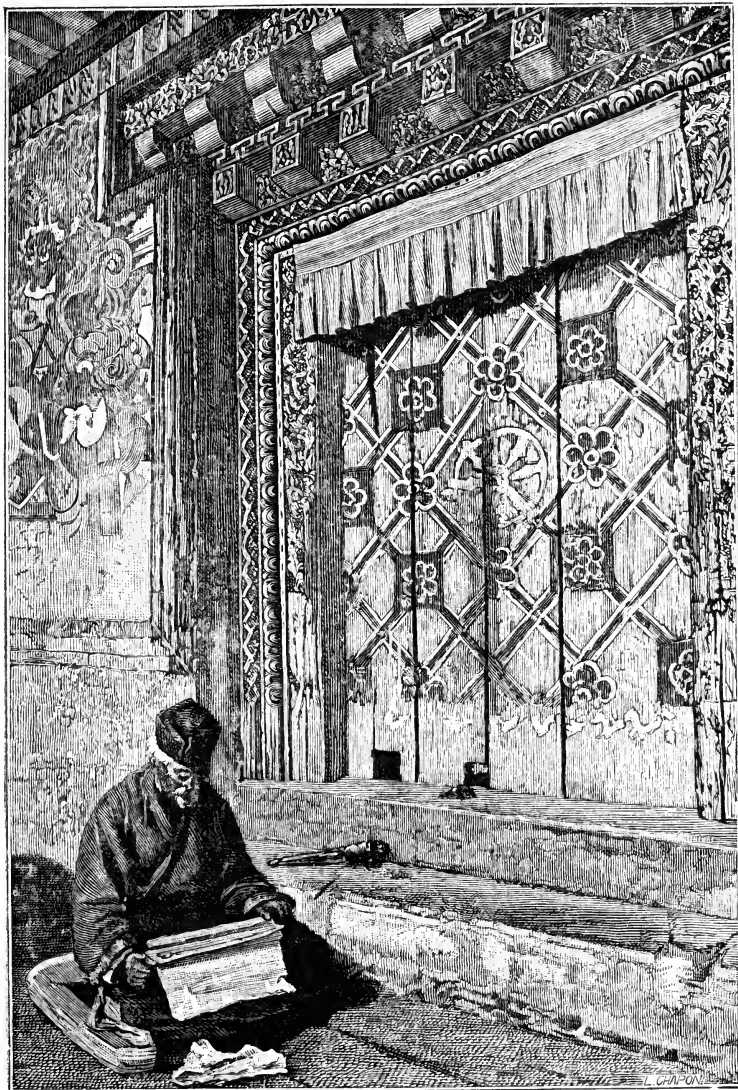


MONASTERY OF TASSIDING.

this temple, seated in front of its painted doorway.

* * *

A great many people have already arrived for the commencement of the consecration of the water, and are continually muttering their prayers at the foot of the tchitens. On the day of the fête the lamas and the pilgrims say their prayers afresh before the tchitens; and then begins a ceremony which Europeans think very odd, but which is considered quite natural here. Men and women stretch themselves near together on the ground; they then get up and place their feet where their heads were, again stretching themselves out to the whole length of their bodies. They repeat this operation again and again, so as to travel several times round the monastery and the monuments. This procession always begins solemnly, but it finishes less devoutly with jokes and laughter. In the evening numbers of peasants assemble in front of the monuments, and with hands piously joined sing like children, not very harmoniously. They are probably somewhat under the influence of murwar. The lama sprinkles them with holy water, and most of them disperse, though some of them seemed to us to be unwilling to take any



DOOR OF A TEMPLE AT TASSIDING.

repose that night ; and we begged them to adjourn their song till to-morrow.

We do not intend to wait for the principal day of the fête, when the sacred vessel of water is opened. Every year a certain quantity of water is put into it and sealed up. The following year it is opened. If the water has increased it is a sign that the year will be a prosperous one, if it has diminished that the harvests will be bad, there will be illness, &c. Each of the pilgrims cuts himself a little bit from a sacred cypress which grows not far off, and whose trunk is all cut about in the middle. We follow the example of the others and take as a souvenir a few bits of this fragrant tree. There is nothing to be said of the inside of the temple, for it differs in no respect from the others.

We take leave of the chief lama and set off for the neighbouring monastery of Ratlam, in the direction of Tomlong.

CHAPTER III.

It is difficult to give any idea in words of the beauty of the vegetation and of the richness of its colouring. There are no longer any rocks or stones to be seen, they are all covered with verdure. And what verdure it is! The rhododendrons are no longer bushes but trees. It is a pity that we are not learned in botany, and that we do not know the vegetable kingdom ourselves, but only from Hooker's book. I must say a few words about this *savant*. He is the first European who has made the ascent of Djongri at the same time of year as ourselves—that is to say, in the month of January. He travelled twenty-five years ago, and it may be asserted that there are few books so interesting, in so simple a style, as that of Hooker. The simplicity and the clearness of style are in harmony with the scientific contents of the book. At the same time it gives evidence of his great hardihood and spirit of enterprise as a traveller. But we must return to our narrative.

In descending towards the river we got a little confused, and went into a hut on the road to ask our way. The interior, with its hearth in the middle of the floor and its vegetables hung up to dry, presented a rather gloomy appearance. As the owner was a hunter, horns of goats and claws of large animals such as bears were suspended from the walls. The claws of bears are used as talismans, and the mistress of the house had quite a quarrel with her husband for selling us some.

We could already smell sulphur a good way off.

Quite close to the water, on whose banks we at last arrived, there are sulphurous springs, at a high temperature; the thermometer plunged into these springs showed 50° Réaumur. They are not celebrated beyond this little kingdom. Nothing has been done for them by the hand of man beyond the digging of a ditch, which a Boutthia family, who were using them as baths before our arrival, had covered with a hut made of branches of bamboo. We went there with the idea of taking some medicinal baths.

* * *

In a thick forest hard by a great number of monkeys were gambolling about. They made such

a hubbub that Verestchagin determined to drive them away, and if possible kill one. But he returned empty-handed from his expedition, and told me that he thought himself lucky to have escaped from them with so little trouble. After the first shot a quantity of enormous monkeys rushed upon him from all sides, uttering savage cries and leaping from branch to branch. He did not attempt to fire a second time ; clutching his weapon in his hand, he ran away as fast as he could. On their part the monkeys took the thing seriously. The next day they did not show themselves at all, and made no noise whatever.

The waters are so hot that one can hardly bear them ; however, we managed our bath as well as we could. Our coolies quickly made a dam in the river, and made a network with branches interlaced. It was magnificent weather. All would have been perfection if a cloud of mosquitoes had not worried us without intermission day and night. These insects leave a red spot under the skin after their sting. If it is not pricked so as to let out the blood the itching is incessant. It is impossible to prevent oneself scratching away the irritated skin, especially if one is not accustomed to the stinging.

After several sleepless nights my husband threw aside the studies which he had begun of the river and the rocks, and we began to climb up to the monastery of Ratlam, in whose vicinity we pitched our tent. The coolies, as they usually do, sheltered themselves under a hut made of branches, which it takes them about a quarter of an hour to construct with their long knives. The monastery is large and fairly well decorated. The church of Ratlam has two stories. In the higher of these are deposited a quantity of manuscripts and papers, to the great content no doubt of the rats of the monastery, who can roam in absolute freedom among all this literary treasure. There are also kept there weapons of a nature particularly dangerous to any one who should make use of them. The praying-machines are of enormous size. A hundred thousand prayers revolve on a cylinder of twenty-five centimetres in diameter, and over them a sheepskin is stretched, and the whole painted in crude colours. Those who arrive turn these machines for as long a time as their zeal or their patience permits them, while they sing in different keys their invariable sacred formula, '*Om mani padmi hum.*'

Before our departure we were surprised by a frightful storm. It was with great trouble that we

prevented the tent from being blown down. Verestchagin made several sketches of the lamas' vestments, and then we started for Tomlong, carrying with us a plentiful supply of poultry.

* * *

It was our ill-luck to take the shortest road, which proved in our case to be indeed the worst. I walked the whole way on foot. Verestchagin was on horseback, but he several times fell with his animal on the stones. It was a wonder that he escaped breaking his head on the rocks or rolling down the precipice. One of our coolies fell down it with his burden, and it was with the greatest trouble that they got him up again.

We met a quite young lama with grey hair. In the course of a conversation with him we learnt that it is hereditary in his family ; his father had grey hair at twenty years old, he himself at fifteen. We met also a lama from Pemiontsi, who was at first very churlish and uncommunicative, but after having accepted some brandy which we offered him he chattered so long and with such energy that we could hardly get rid of him.

* * *

A great many people are employed in the transport of salt, tea, and other things of the kind to Tomlong.

Where we halted for the evening there halted at the same time an officer of the king, who has sixty-four houses under his supervision. He informed us of the amount of the king's revenues and from whence he draws them. First of all he receives a thousand pounds sterling from the English Government as a subsidy. In the second place every family, estimated at five persons each, is obliged to give him in money ten rupees, in kind two baskets of butter, five baskets of rice, five baskets of murwar, a cow, an ox, and a pig. Those who have a profession must contribute the best products of their labour. Besides this, when the king comes to Thibet for the summer, each family has to send a man to carry his luggage.

* * *

We arrived at the Tista, over which a long bridge of bamboo is thrown. This is certainly a most primitive structure, tottering under the feet of the passenger, who supports himself by holding on to the hand rail. I dared not venture on this shaky bridge, underneath which boiled the torrent. My eyes were bandaged and a coolie

carried me over to the other side on his back. With the horses it was a still more difficult business. The men had to lead them along the bank till they found an easier place to cross. A rope was thrown



YOUNG LAMA.

across from the other side, to which the horses were successively attached, and they were thus pulled across one after the other to the opposite shore, care being taken to hold their heads as high as possible above the water. The Boutthia who was

with us at the halt assured us that the business would end badly if we did nothing to propitiate the water-god. In order not to refuse him this satisfaction, my husband broke a branch from a tree and threw it into the water. No doubt this pleased the water-god, for the horses passed over quite safely.

From thence continuing our journey, we arrived very late at the nearest halting-place for the night. A stupid passer-by had told us that this place was not far off, and trusting to his word we hardly arrived before nightfall. The king sent two of his servants to receive us, to see that we were comfortably settled for the night, and to inquire when we wished to continue our road. From our halting-place we already saw the mountains, and the two dozen little houses which compose the town of Tomlong, the capital of Sikkim. The coolies, whom we had sent as usual to cut bamboos for the tent and the fire, suddenly demanded some money, saying that so near to the capital nothing might be cut without being paid for. We found this to be untrue. Verestchagin dismissed on the spot the inventor of this falsehood, the other coolies continuing their task as usual.

The next day we descend towards the river, where we are saluted by two messengers from the

king, who at the same time offer us some cold mur-war, which we find mild and agreeable, and some oranges. (I may remark that the little oranges called 'mandarins' in Europe are very delicious, and very cheap in Sikkim.) These messengers wear the usual dress of the country. They hold the bridles of our horses, and lead them through the river. Soon after a third messenger arrives, in a red coat, whose earrings hang down on to his shoulders. He brings with him three ponies, saddled and covered with carpet. But as we have enough of our own, the three messengers themselves mount on these horses, and we all climb the mountain in a long procession. In order that we may be able to rest under our tent immediately on our arrival, we stop for a few minutes to give our coolies time to come up with us. We let our coolies go on in front. When they arrive at the top, and we ourselves have again started on our way, a crowd of natives hurry up, curious to see the first European woman arrive at Tomlong.

We found our tent set up, and opposite to it that of the First Minister, Changsed, which is of a Chinese shape.

He himself is waiting near his tent, at the entrance of which are stationed several soldiers, with a kind of helmet-shaped basket on their heads.

We first went into our own tent, and soon after we went to pay Changsed a visit. He is the brother-in-law of the king, and about fifty or sixty years of age. His face and head are shaved, and he wears a dressing-gown of blue silk and a Chinese hat. I must remark that all the small peoples in the neighbourhood of Thibet follow the Chinese customs; for this reason Changsed is much flattered when Verestchagin assures him that everything he sees reminds him of China, and that the minister himself is exactly like a Chinese mandarin. His way of receiving us is that of a man of education. He asks whether we are not very much fatigued by our journey along this bad road. 'Not in the least,' we reply, without a blush. 'The road is not so bad as all that.' He tells us that the king is desirous of seeing us, and the next day is fixed for this solemn audience.

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The palace is rather larger than the other buildings, and with the summit of the roof gilded; in its interior and exterior decoration it resembles a temple. From early morning a crowd of people take up their position all along the road from our tent to the palace. Besides the population of 'Tomlong there are probably people from all round to see the novel spectacle of a European lady

presented to the King of Sikkim. We pass arm in arm through the crowd of curious spectators, and enter the palace between two little hedges of soldiers, wearing on their heads those inevitable baskets, in which they look much more like shepherds than warriors. The long knives alone,



CHANGED.

which they wear hung at their sides, remind one that on occasion they would be ready to shed their blood in their country's cause.

The first part of the hall is occupied by statues of the gods. Further on, and as if he were one of them, the king is seated in a corner, like an idol, on a throne covered with rich silk drapery. We fancy that the comedy of sitting on this little

throne is being played expressly for our benefit, and that the cushions as well as the silk hangings only cover up some old box. We do not know for certain, but such is our supposition. The king is a young man of sixteen or seventeen years old, of an ordinary appearance. His lip is split right up to the nose, probably by a blow from a horse's hoof. In short, he does not look like a sage. The fact is that, his brother dying suddenly without children two years before, it had been a question whether he should not be excluded from the throne. He makes no response to our salute; perhaps etiquette forbids him, or perchance the young man is shy. However, we take our seats.

Before us on a table are placed murwar, cracknels, and sweet potatoes. With his hands uplifted as to a god, Changed conveys to us the king's questions and to him our answers, which Lodi murmurs hurriedly with blushes. They are the ordinary questions about the health of the Queen of England and of her ministers, to which we reply that they are quite well; about the roads, &c. When these important questions are finished Changed makes a sign to the servants, who disappear; a second after they return and literally throw at our feet a perfect mountain of presents.

As Verestchagin knew well that something

would be expected in return, he had prepared beforehand two lots of presents. The first consisted of various trifles, and was designed to be given in case the presents we received were small and insignificant. The second consisted of a new gun recently purchased at Calcutta; it was only intended in case a really good present was given us. When, as we have said, the fifteen men one after another had filled the room in front of us with gifts from the king, Changed said modestly, 'Accept what we offer you; we are not rich. What we have given you is very small, but we can give no more.' We felt quite embarrassed at his generosity. Before us lay a heap of packages well tied up, tea-trays, &c.

'That is indeed too much,' replied my husband, and he desired Lodi to bring out present number two—that is to say, the case containing the weapon. Our present pleased them very much. Verestchagin showed them how to make the cartridges, and how to load the gun, and promised to send them a small quantity of powder. The king, the minister, and every one round displayed inexpressible satisfaction, and thanked us with uplifted hands. When we got to our own tent and examined the royal presents which we had received, we found a basketful of oranges, some packets of bad rice, and butter, the latter for the most part already

rotten to greenness. How often are appearances deceptive! They send us, besides, some sheep, chickens, and a horse—a very bad Thibet pony. Our gun was a present of much more value than all these put together!

* * *

As we wish to stay some time at Tomlong our tent has been brought to a spot higher up on the mountain, where formerly the dead were burnt. Opposite to us is the monastery inhabited by the Koupgenlama, the greatest lama in the kingdom of Sikkim. He is immortal, for each time that he dies he is born again, like the Dalaï-lama. Of the three lamas who founded the kingdom of Sikkim, the first stayed at Jaksun as Dodbilama, the second established himself at Pemiontsi, and the third at Tchangatchelling. The Lama of Tassiding also always comes back to life, and occupies the position of chief lama at Pemiontsi. Lately he has been born again as the king's son. The king did not wish to be separated from him, and asked permission of the Dalaï-lama to build a monastery near his own palace for him; this is the monastery which we find opposite to us. Besides this, permission to marry was asked for him of the Dalaï-lama. When the king died, as he had no other

heirs, this chief lama mounted the throne. This was not done without some difficulty, as it was the first time that the temporal government had been in the hands of a priest. This king was the predecessor of the present king. He had no children, and at his death the government passed to his younger brother, now reigning, or rather now governed by Changsed. The late king has come to life again in a poor family, and lives perfectly happily near by, in the quality of Koupgenlama, or superior lama. In winter he lives here; in summer, when the king goes to Thibet, he establishes himself at Pemiontsi. This personage enjoys the highest consideration. Except the highest lamas and his own servants, no one has the honour of seeing him. Those to whom is permitted the happiness of appearing before him fall on their knees as before a god. Those who chance to meet him when travelling throw themselves upon the ground, that their curiosity may not tempt them to raise their eyes to his Holiness. Verestchagin makes the acquaintance of this man who represents God upon earth. He often paints in the monastery, and the Koupgenlama frequently comes in to chat with him. He is a young man of nineteen years of age, with brown hair and a wide and rather stupid face. He usually remains seated in his large old armchair,

which is like the Pope's throne. He talks quietly, often interrupting himself; and when he wishes to call his servants he claps his hands.

* * *

After Verestchagin had become intimate in the monastery the confidential servant of the lama asked him for a remedy for an illness of his master's—indeed, many persons applied to us for cures for all imaginable maladies. One lama was constantly asking us for a medicine against worms, which he said troubled him internally. We gave him some drops of liqueur of mint, and according to his own account they did him good. In any case our medicine could not do him less good than the charms—that is to say, the prayers which the priests here make use of against all diseases. We are asked for an ointment to cure goître. An old man is so greatly afflicted with this malady that he breathes with difficulty, and is no longer able to speak. His wife and another woman suffer from the same complaint. Several of the inhabitants of Tomlong come also to sell us articles of their clothing and other objects. The lamas often come at night and try to make some money on holy cups, boxes, and other things of that nature; they dare not do this in open daylight. Amongst the more

interesting things which we have bought are strings of beads made out of human skulls. For a chaplet of this kind a whole skull is required. Teacups also made of human skulls are not less interesting. One of the lamas sells us a magic seal with a god made of clay in the middle, blessed by the Dalaï-lama himself. This lama was a great traveller, and after the custom of travellers used to exaggerate a good deal in his stories. He told us among other things that a mother in Nepaul was having a tchiten built in honour of her son, who had been of peculiar sanctity. One day this tchiten attempted to fly up to heaven. It had to be securely chained in its place. The mother having died before the edifice was finished, it remains incomplete until this day.

* * *

As Verestchagin wished to make a drawing of a yak, the king ordered one to be brought from his herds, which graze not far from here on the frontiers of Thibet. On this occasion the king cannot resist his desire to ask us whether we have not got another knife of the same kind as one which we had sent him from Tassiding. Yaks are exactly like cows, only smaller, with long black hair, a longer-shaped head, and a bigger tuft to

the tail. They are very cautious and circumspect in walking across the mountains, and more trustworthy than horses or any other animals in excursions over the sharp rocks. In the Eastern Himalayas, where the snow-line is as high as twenty thousand feet, they cannot live lower down than eleven thousand feet. As we are now only nine thousand feet above the sea, a height at which they always get fever, my husband hastens to draw the specimen which has been sent him, in order to send it back to the herd as soon as possible. But the next day the yak looks very sadly, and the following day we find that it is already sick, and that it is impossible to let it mix with the rest of the herd, for fear of its giving the fever with which it is attacked to the others; so when Verestchagin has finished his drawing the coolies kill and eat it.

* * *

The functionaries of the kingdom wear very long earrings, especially on one side; some of the highest in rank—like those of Thibet—wear on their heads a soft smooth hat. They all have hanging at their waists a knife and two little sticks to eat with, a short sabre, and a snuff-box. They all speak passionately of Thibet as of an

earthly paradise, although we know perfectly well that it is a rude country with few attractions.

* * *

Changsed's servants are continually coming to us to sell us various objects, probably belonging to their master, and which the minister is ashamed to offer us himself. They always exact much more for these things than they are worth, and do not hesitate to ask us for anything of ours they come across. One of our little oil-flasks which was empty fell into some one's hands as a snuffbox; the bottles of wine which we drank disappeared suddenly without leaving a trace; while as for our tin biscuit-boxes, prosperous men of grave aspect quarrelled for them before our eyes.

It has rained every day since we halted here. The aspect of the mountainous country which stretches away in front of our tent is very interesting when a violent storm gathers. The picture is often striking. The mountains, covered with dark blue clouds, are now and then crossed by a flash of lightning or a ray of sunlight. Then the clouds gather afresh, and the storm resolves itself into showers, with claps of thunder, like a scene on the stage.

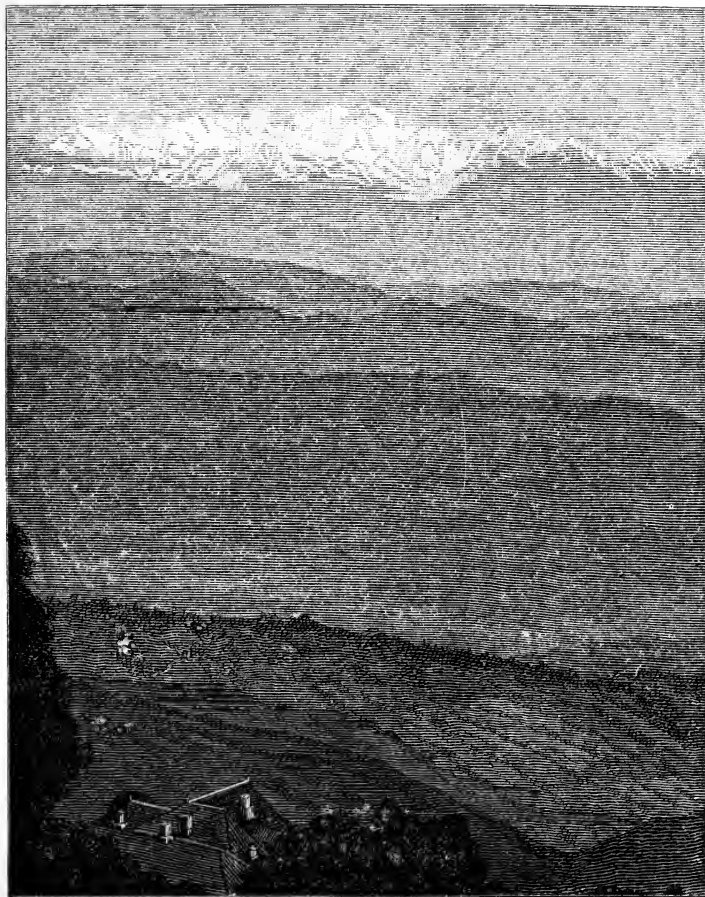
* * *

We are soon sufficiently rich in studies, in costumes, and in all that characterises the inhabitants of this country. To all these is added also the portrait of a functionary from Thibet, who comes up to Verestchagin and asks him for a little powder. He is given the powder, but he is drawn with his wide face, his flat nose, and his long earring. Before our departure Verestchagin sent a large looking-glass as a present to the Kouppgenlama. The holy man probably expected more, for he asked our messenger if that was all, or whether he was coming again with something else. Verestchagin took leave also of Changedsed, who was waiting like a child for the present which he expected would be given him. The silver watch which we gave him was tried and inspected many times over, as was also a small revolver. As to the weapon of which we had before made them a present, it evidently was considered beautiful, but too alarming; for until we went away only one among them had ventured to fire it off.

* * *

After leaving Tomlong we stopped at the same place at which we had halted on the way up. When we have again resumed our road we are overtaken by a messenger from Changedsed, who

brings us terrible news—his master has lost the key of his watch, and sends us the watch itself in order that we may help him out of his difficulty.



VIEW OF THE HIMALAYAS FROM DARJEELING. (From a photograph.)

Verestchagin sends him word that to prove his esteem for him he offers him his own watch-key.

The whole way along the road we have great difficulties with the money: the natives take the new money with a very bad grace; the old is heavier, they say. We have to buy provisions every day, for no game is to be seen. From time to time we find jungle-fowl, and little birds with black skin which taste like domestic fowl. The pheasants of the mountain, as Hooker calls them, are rare; they are not large, have green plumage, and taste like chicken.

We again crossed the river Tista without any particular incident, but with this difference, that on this second occasion the king's officer gave himself a good deal of trouble in view of the gratuity he felt certain of getting.

The rain has ceased, and we continue slowly and tranquilly on our journey to Darjeeling. On leaving the river we climb to a height of eight thousand feet, and then begin to descend again. Each of our coolies regards it as a law to throw a stone on a tomb which there is in this place, and then to pass it on the left, as they do to all sacred monuments. God forbid they should pass on the right! At the nearest village our post-coolie brings us newspapers, and letters from Darjeeling, where we

expect to arrive very soon. After an excursion of three months in snow and dirt, suffering from hunger and from wet, we find it agreeable to think that in a day or two we shall be resting under a roof. All the time, though the road is very pleasant, we feel that the hot season is coming on. Our bare-footed coolies are tormented by creatures which come out of the ground in great numbers—a kind of leech. They do not bite me, but one of them fastens on to Verestchagin's foot. Our poor horses are covered with blood, as well as our coolies, who are obliged every minute to detach these uninvited guests from their skin. In summer, when it is very hot and has rained a great deal, it is actually difficult to stop here at all on account of this scourge. These leeches fasten themselves on everything and at all times, and in enormous numbers.

We descend towards the village of Nemptchi, where there is a very old monastery; the lama is having a new one built. Close to the ruins, fastened to a tall pole, is a box containing some rice, some water, the tail of a yak, and some sabres—offerings to the gods to insure the happy termination of the building without any bloodshed. From here after a short walk we arrive at the river Rangit, over which is thrown a still more dangerous

bridge than that which crosses the river Tista. As the river can also be crossed on a raft, we choose the latter means. Twenty years ago this river belonged to the King of Sikkim, but, as a punishment for the imprisonment of Hooker, it was cut off from the kingdom of Sikkim by the English Government. On the other shore is a village composed of several dirty houses inhabited by subjects of Nepaul. We set out from there straight to Darjeeling, across the tea-plantations which we have seen already, and on which whole families of Nepaul people are employed in gathering the tea, and in collecting it in large baskets fastened on to their backs. The women of Nepaul are rather pretty, and somewhat like the Japanese; they wear heavy earrings and a large ring hung to their noses.

We reach the Doyle hotel by a road which we know already. We rest there a day, pay our bearers, send our baggage on in front, and soon start ourselves on horseback, following the road over the plain which we know already. We take the steamboat on the Ganges, then the railway to Delhi. Thus finish our travels in the highest mountains of the Eastern Himalayas. We shall relate, in the following part, our excursion to the western portion of these mountains.

PART II.—CASHMERE—LADAK.

CHAPTER I.

WE left Delhi in order to proceed to Umritsar and Lahore. We passed Umritsar without making a halt. The natives thronged in crowds to the entrance of the station, without the least minding the blows of the policemen's bâtons.

At Lahore, which we reached in the night, we stayed no longer than was necessary to complete the number of our followers. We engaged a *bisti* (water-carrier)—a lean Mussulman with vivacious eyes and a wedge-shaped beard. He looked broken-down, but proved to be less lazy than the workpeople here are wont to be. Our new *dobi* (washerman) was a small, and extremely restless person, who, though himself not very clean, washed well. Finally, our pavartchi, or Mussulman cook, was distinguished by a brigand-like visage and large rolling eyes with a singular glare, whose meaning we did not understand

till afterwards. The rest of the servants were natives of Agra. I need not describe Lahore, for the few public buildings that it has—the fort, the mosque, the marble pavilion, &c.—are of little interest; even the burial-place of the last king, Runjeet Sing, is not worth mentioning. The buildings, and especially their decorations, belong to the period of the decline. The bazaar in the town is large and not bad, but with an odour to which the pits into which all the refuse is thrown contribute not a little.

I will not enlarge upon the manners, customs, and history of the Sikhs, for the proper subject of my narrative is our tour in the mountains.

From Lahore to Guserabad we still travelled by the railway, which had just been finished up to that point; but at Guserabad the coach-road begins. We looked with interest at the handsome large bridge which is being built over the river Jumna. In the meantime we were drawn across the river by oxen in a most miserable way, and we almost sank in the mud. It happened that on this very day (it was April 16) there was an Indian festival going on at Guserabad; but we had not time to see anything of it, for we were busy putting into order our baggage, which had got

very wet, and which we dragged along with great trouble. Here we ordered a small double tent for the mountains; for in the prison they made tents, like those at Jubbulpoor, of all kinds and sizes, and at very reasonable prices. They promised to send us one according to our order, addressed to the Resident of Cashmere.

We started on our way with post-horses. There was nothing remarkable on the way till we got to the village of Wimbar, the first station, except a peasant with a camel, who not only did not ride on the animal, but carried it on his own shoulders. I must, however, add, for truth's sake, that the camel was very small and apparently only lately born. At Wimbar, which is subject to the Maharajah of Cashmere, we found nothing but an empty dirty little station-house.

We bought ourselves beds at the bazaar, and passed the night in the courtyard. By the time we wished to start on the next day several other travellers had arrived whose destination also was Cashmere, and there were not horses and bearers enough. My husband wrote his complaint in the visitors' book, which was thus adorned with an original and eloquent but probably ungrammatical specimen of English prose. It was some time before the requisite number of bearers was pro-

cured. They were brought in by one door and went out again through the other. There was nothing for it but to keep an eye upon them ourselves, and forcibly detain them as they tried to run off, if we were to get away at all from this ill-fated station.

We reached the next station after dark, so that we were obliged to have lights on the way to the station-buildings.

This time our road was in the highest degree interesting, for it led us along the famous old Imperial road along which merchants, travellers, and troops had gone for a thousand years from Cashmere to India, and from India to Cashmere, Ladak, and even further. It was by this road that India was invaded; on it the Indians advanced to the overthrow of the sons of the mountains in Cashmere, Ladak, and other parts of the Himalayas. This road saw almost every year the great Moguls on their journey to their summer residences on the Lakes of Cashmere. In one place the road ran over the bare rock, in which the traffic of a thousand years had worn deep ruts. We contemplated with interest this record of past centuries. What stories these stones could tell us if they could speak! What sights must they have seen!

The ascent of these historic rocks is indeed

so difficult that another road is being built beside it, which is now nearly finished. Probably we are among the last people who passed along the imposing Imperial road.

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The neighbourhood abounds in jackals. In the night it seems sometimes as if they came quite close to one's bed. However, I soon got accustomed to their howling, and actually slept the better for this strange kind of music. In one of our later halting-places, where the station is in a well-tended garden protected by a wall, we received mules instead of horses, and found them stronger and surer-footed.

It is difficult to conceive anything more beautiful and picturesque than this neighbourhood. The chains of mountains are separated by charming valleys which distinguish these mountains from the neighbourhood of the Eastern Himalayas—Sikkim, for instance, where there are no valleys at all, and one mountain rises immediately from the foot of another. Here in Cashmere, from one high mountain you may see a whole series of ranges, each separated from the next by a layer of atmosphere that remains constantly moist as in France. The colours become fainter and fainter, until at last

the outlines are scarcely distinguishable to the naked eye. In the Eastern Himalayas this delicacy is wanting; there the air is clearer, and the outlines consequently sharper.

We soon saw the snow-mountains rising in the distance.

At some ruins on the way a huntsman from Cashmere offered us his services; he assured us that he had great experience, but proved himself to be more of a rogue than anything, for the testimonials as to his abilities which he showed us turned out to have been given to his brother and not to himself. At night we saw the light of fires on every side; for the natives are constantly burning their forests, either for the preparation of tar or for the purpose of clearing the ground.

As I did not feel quite well, my husband fitted up for me a little palanquin, and four men carried me, while two others walked beside it to relieve them when they got tired. The bearers, indeed, demanded a complete relay; but this my husband would not agree to, because I am of no great stature and not heavy; and in the end they declared themselves quite contented.

They carried me at a walking pace, but very quickly and quietly, singing gently and harmoniously the while. The palanquin moved forward

so quickly that my husband, on horseback, could scarcely keep up with us. He galloped ahead of



MOUNTAIN STREAM IN CASHMERE.

us now and then, but directly he began to walk again we quickly caught him up.

* * *

We had before seen grander landscapes, but none so charming as these. It was almost impossible to take one's eyes off them. On our right was a river and a wonderful vegetation, the freshly-opened leaves being of that tender green which can only be seen in the spring—it was towards the end of April. The vegetation here is like that of Europe; for Cashmere is tolerably high, lying nearly five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Even apples grow here, and very good ones they are. The forests also remind one of our European woods. On both sides of the road we heard the simple song of our old friend the cuckoo. Once the cry of 'A panther! a panther!' put me into a great fright. My bearers had nearly put down my palanquin and left me in the lurch, for a great noise was heard in the forest; which, however, turned out to be only an ape jumping from branch to branch. In trying to spring across the road from one branch to another it made too short a jump and fell down on to the road, and in its fall was killed, with the young one which it carried in its arms.

Presently we reached another bungalow, or station-house, at a height of 8,000 feet, close to the ruins of an ancient fortress, a remnant of the Mongolian dominion. It must be remarked that it is very cool here, both at morning and evening, especially in the passes. On one of these, which is at a height of 11,000 feet, snow was still lying when we crossed, as it was early in the season. Our coolies wrapped their feet in straw in order not to slip and fall. Horses and bearers are provided for all travellers through Cashmere by the local authorities in the villages, in accordance with an arrangement between the Government of Cashmere and the Anglo-Indian Government. In spring a great many people usually cross the pass into Cashmere; they are mostly English officials and officers, who, having got three months' furlough, renounce a visit to England because of the waste of time involved in the long journey there and back. A few ladies also are to be met, but more men, especially hunters, for the forests of Cashmere are still rich in large game—bears, stags, &c. This throng of travellers, all wishing to get forward at once and as speedily as possible, makes it extremely difficult to procure horses, and, still more, bearers for the palanquins. The requisite number are collected

with cries and abuse, and they must be well watched, for they vanish one after another under every possible pretext. Finally they have to be caught like hares. To tell the truth, they have some excuse for trying to run away, for the English gentlemen are very rough in their treatment of the natives.

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As we were climbing up the pass the bearers uttered a great many 'Allahs,' and prayed, apparently to the god of the mountain. Evidently Islam has not yet been able in these parts to suppress the heathen superstitious customs of the idol-worshippers. There appears to be no want of water here, for a multitude of little mountain streams are to be seen running in all directions. Almost the whole way we were accompanied by two English sportsmen, sometimes a little way in front, sometimes behind us. We often pitched our tents side by side, and accommodated each other with mutton.

We engaged a huntsman who produced many recommendations from Englishmen with whom he had hunted. My husband explained to him, however, that he was more of a painter than a sportsman.

We had been told much of the beauty of the women of Cashmere, but we did not see any really

fine type of face till we got to this place, where a whole family were sitting by the wayside weeping round a buffalo which had broken its leg. It was not easy to help them.

Again we crossed a pass deep in snow, where we saw a wolf with a very bushy tail comfortably walking up and down. We descended into a charming valley, where we pitched our tent on the bank of a little stream which came down from the snow-mountains. In front of us rose a mighty snow-covered mountain ridge which separates Cashmere from Ladak, whither our road went. As evening came on it was a marvellously beautiful sight, the valley sunk into deep blue shadow, while over the mountains there still lay a clear red glow. I need hardly say the air here is excellent, and we are in as good a physical condition as we could wish for. We killed a sheep, and celebrated our arrival in the famous valley of Cashmere with a good supper.

* * *

We came upon a rather interesting tomb of some saint or other. The outer doors and arches are of beautifully carved wood, and the little pillars are completely Indian in form. Round it is a garden ; water is plentiful, and the air fresh.

The last station before Srinagur has a beautiful little station-house; from thence to the town the distance is nine *kos*—that is to say, thirteen and a half miles.

* * *

We are staying now at Srinagur, the capital town of Cashmere. We walk through a broad street planted with magnificent trees, under which the wayfarer can find shelter both from rain and sunshine.

There is no station-building here, but the people who arrive lodge in their own tents, and have places assigned to them for these by the clerks of the Maharajah. As soon as we had set up our tent in a fruit-garden not far from the river, we were surrounded by a whole crowd of merchants with shawls, carpets, vessels, and other similar useful and useless articles, which they offered for sale with great persistence. We could not get rid of them without assistance from the policemen.

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The bazaar at Cashmere is large, but there are hardly any vegetables to be got, and everything that is not of home growth is only to be had at the highest prices. On the other hand, the

work of the natives of Cashmere is remarkable both for excellence of design and for masterly execution; without mentioning the famous shawls, the vases also, of copper, silver, and gold, are so fine that one cannot take one's eyes off them. The carpets are not so good, whereas the articles made of papier-maché in the Persian style are not at all bad. On the whole, there are many interesting things of more or less originality to be seen. However, it must be observed that originality and peculiarity are beginning to disappear, chiefly under the influence of English taste; for English ladies take as their standard of excellence the old forms with which they are familiar in their furniture and in their stuffs adorned with European flowers, birds, and other realistic objects.

* * *

The Maharajah built not long ago for the Prince of Wales on this side of the river a palace, which, both inside and out, is a specimen of bad taste, such as is rarely to be found even in the modern buildings of Indian grandees. In order to visit the old palace we made an expedition by boat. The pagoda of the palace is executed in grey stone, and crowned by a well-gilt cupola. The outside of the palace is not very imposing;

it has been lately re-decorated. The inside looks still uglier ; the hall of audience, for instance, is painted with shawl-patterns, but so badly, and in such poor taste, that we thanked the astonished guide, who was assuring us that there were other quite as beautiful rooms close by, and hurried away.

We went to the old bazaar by boat. Going about in these boats reminds one of Venice. There are more Mussulmans here than in India, and several highly original mosques. In these, as well as in the houses, there are often windows of coloured glass, in the Persian fashion. The materials of which the houses are built are chiefly wood and mud ; they frequently have balconies and lattice-work. The well-to-do women veil their faces ; but the unveiled faces of the women of the lower classes allow one to infer that the women are pretty ; the men are likewise handsome. The women as well as the girls wear a warm garment in the form of a dressing-gown with very wide sleeves. A long piece of cloth is fastened to the head by a smaller piece of cloth, which composes the head-dress.

We lingered long in the bazaar, and visited several booths, whose owners seemed used to traffic with foreigners. Tea and dainties were handed to us, and the merchant alternately ministered to

our wants and recommended his wares, which he poured at our feet one after another in perfect heaps. Here one must tighten one's purse-strings. We bought many carpets, and more embroidered table-cloths, and warm coverings for the horses. We did a terrible quantity of bargaining, but apparently not enough, for the amount of haggling expected in this country is incredible.

* * *

On the morning of the following day my husband hired a large boat, and, accompanied by Lodi and some of the bearers, went to the Lake of Wular, which is about thirty miles from Srinagur. In case the country should be interesting, he intended to send back the boat for me on the following day.

On the same evening the boat came back, and I got on board. It is rather like an ark, and is very comfortable. In the fore part beds and seats are placed; close by, behind a partition, is the kitchen; and further off towards the stern, the living-place of the family to whom the boat belongs and the rowers. The voyage was very quiet and agreeable down the river San, which flows into Lake Wular, and I soon met my husband. The lake is not deep, being choked up with sand

and weeds. On a little island are the remains of a house built by the Emperor Akbar. The inner walls are covered with coloured varnish, and on the wall turned towards Mecca there still remains a slab of grey granite with an Arabian inscription. The columns stand in deep water, evidently because the island has sunk. All round are shady trees and tall grass. The plants with which the lake is covered yield a fruit, resembling apples in taste, of which the natives make a kind of bread. There are many ducks on the lake. We set off in two little boats to hunt them, but only succeeded in killing a few. The ducks were perhaps well satisfied with this result, though we ourselves went back rather vexed. Not far from here lies another lake, of which the scenery is less beautiful and the surrounding mountains lower.

* * *

My husband brought down an eagle, which we took into the boat. It was not killed, but had one of its wings injured. It was curious to see what a fierce and threatening position it took up, and how angrily it ruffled its feathers whenever anyone approached it. We bound up its wing, and resolved to try our hands at taming the bird,

* * *

We had a fisherman with us, and once made a fairly good haul. Before the fisherman threw his nets, he always threw a stone into the water; because the fish, as he assured us, are very inquisitive, and always like to see what falls into the water. This gives him an opportunity of catching them in the net.

Fish are also speared here with lances. The fisherman moistens the iron point so that it may not slip, and then selects his victim; for the water is so clear that one can see down to a very great depth. He throws the spear with a sure aim, and a fish is hit. Of course this needs a very practised eye. We saw not a single fish, though we often looked.

* * *

Going back by the old route, we arrived, after passing through a canal, at the third lake, which is very small but extraordinarily beautiful. On the left of the entrance to the lake are seen the ruins of the palace of Akbar, of which there is hardly anything left, for the stones are made use of for building. What a splendid position this palace has! All around it are lofty mountains, which are reflected as in a looking-glass in the clear pellucid waters of the lake. Akbar knew how to choose a site.

At the opposite end of the lake stands a little Indian chapel of excellent workmanship. It belongs either to the Buddhists or the Djains. The details of this little building, which with the bank has apparently sunk a good deal, are magnificent.

* * *

Our eagle eats and drinks meantime in a satisfactory manner. We attempted to cure his injured wing, and bound it up with bast. While my husband was performing this operation three persons were obliged to use all their strength in holding the bird, which resisted with beak and claws. I made a bandage, which was fastened over his eyes, and then he became quite quiet. Now he squats down, sulky as an old pedant. We feed him with small fish and raw meat.

* * *

As soon as my husband had finished his sketches we left the lake, and crossed a bridge on which stones are to be seen with remarkably good bas-reliefs, probably stolen by Mussulmans from some Indian temple. On our return to Srinagur, as we passed by a palace we came in sight of the white marble seat of the Maharajah. It stands on

a height like a throne. Seated upon it the Maharajah holds his 'durbar,' or receptions. His highness possesses a very large handsome boat, manned by a hundred rowers.

* * *

Opposite the place where our tent is pitched we can see the mountain called 'the Throne of Solomon.' But such thrones are so numerous that one more or less is of no importance. A little further off lies another mountain on which is the 'mosque of Mahomet's hair,'—that is to say, that a hair from the beard of the Prophet is kept there, to which a whole legend has attached itself. The story tells how the hair came there, and no Musulman doubts the genuineness of the relic. The huntsman who accompanied us told us long tales about the wonderful properties of the hair. 'It is alive,' said he. 'What do you say?' 'Yes, it is quite alive: it moves of itself. I saw it with my own eyes.' The hair is fastened into the neck of a bottle, and naturally waves about in the empty space. For that matter, Mahomet had so many hairs in his beard that one more or less makes no difference. In any case the hair is the object of particular veneration, and on stated days pilgrims flock hither by ten or fifteen thousand at a time.

The natives appear to have a peculiar propensity to quarrelling, though we did not hear of any fighting. While we were on our journey in the boat we saw two old people entering into a dispute, and becoming so irritated that we expected them to come to blows every moment. We even made a halt in order to see how the affair would end. One of them lifted his stretched-out hand to the nose of the other, who raised his fist, while both screamed without intermission. The neighbours, however, separated them; and this appears to be the usual termination of such scenes.

* * *

Our eagle began to tear his bandages and to suck the blood from his wound. When we took away the bast we found worms had got into it. He tore away the new bandage during the following night, and his hood also, and began to be so furious that it was dangerous to go near him. We set him at liberty. He hopped on to the wall, but was immediately surrounded by ravens, who, perceiving the helpless condition of the king of birds, prepared to make a determined attack upon him. Probably the eagle would not have been able to defend himself long, but Verestchagin ordered him to be shot. As soon as this was done the ravens

pounced upon the body. Thus ended our attempt to cure and to tame an eagle.

* * *

On our arrival the Resident, Mr. Henderson, was away. He was not expected to leave Simla for two days. At two o'clock in the afternoon, however, a salute of ten guns was heard, and the English representative, in a large boat manned by a great number of oarsmen, entered in great state his good city of Srinagur. But as, on account of the heat of the sun, he was reposing under an awning, nothing of him was visible but his legs and his boots.

My husband sent in our letters of recommendation, and presently received a friendly invitation. He took the road along the river-bank, but the Resident thought he would come by water; accordingly, as my husband approached the house he found the Resident violently abusing the boatmen, and even pushing them about. Evidently he was expecting his guest to arrive from the river. He was very friendly, promised his assistance in the buying of horses and the hiring of bearers, and declared his willingness to give directions that we should receive every assistance on our way.

The coolies, or bearers, were hired by the month, and accordingly received their wages be-

fore we started, in spite of their having done nothing for them, and behaved as if they were our devoted servants. But when it came to making a start, they declared that they would not go with us; then again they consented, but only to waver again the next minute. At last my husband lost patience and sent to the babu, who established the fact that they had consented to go with us, took note of their names, and promised us that if they behaved badly on the way he would punish them as an example. My husband, on his side, promised them 'baksheesh' if they did their work well. This promise appeared to affect even the clerk, who explained how poor he was with a sorrowful air, and said that he would be contented even with a little carpet as a reward. We preferred, however, to give him money.

On the day of our departure there was great affliction. As our destination was Ladak, which is a considerable distance off, the wives and children of the bearers came to take leave of them.

* * *

Our road took us past some old buildings, and a mosque with windows and balconies adorned in an original style. The fortress is quite wanting in the qualities its name implies, and looks as though

it would fall to pieces. The road is bordered with large nut trees, full of nuts, which, naturally at this time of the year, were still unripe.

As we had not started very early we were late in coming to the place where we were to rest for the night. We had to put up with a great deal of noise and disquiet at this first resting-place.

At the following station there is a breeding-place for silkworms belonging to the Maharajah. It is a long building filled with shelves, on which the worms spin their cocoons. It is known that the butterflies come out in the summer, when the cocoons are boiled down and the threads are drawn out. The worms live on mulberry-leaves.

We continued our journey along the river San, which flows into Lake Wular. The road is not bad ; though, like ourselves, it became soaked with rain. We carried a stock of fowls and sheep with us, for provisions could not be bought until we reached Ladak.

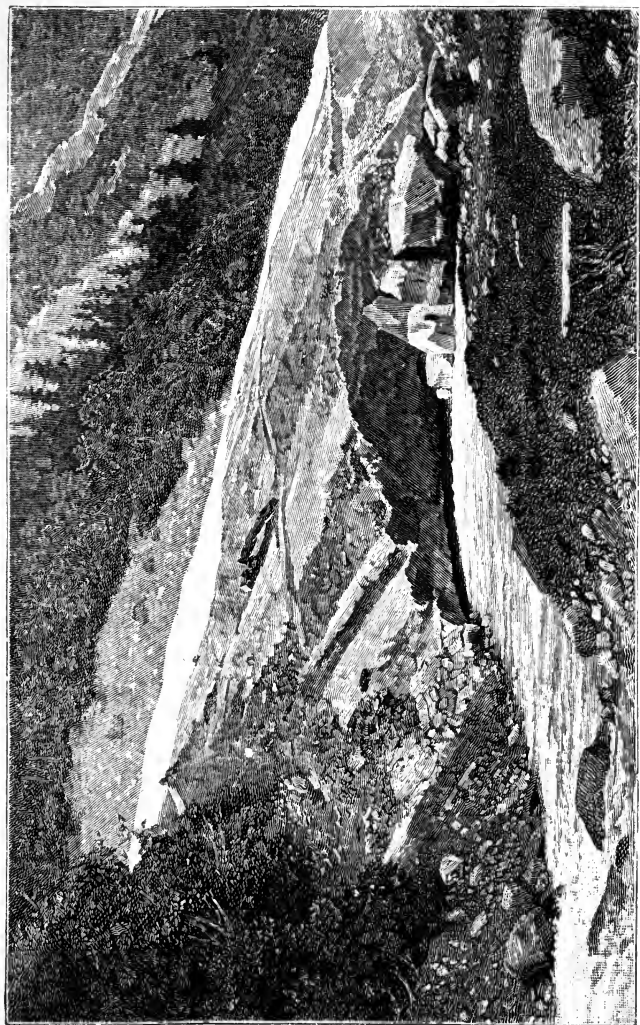
During the night some one consumed the meal of the coolies. The huntsman asked my husband if he might shoot the thief if he could find him. My husband gave him permission. The thief was found in the shape of a dog, who was killed, but not with such dispatch but that we could hear much howling and whining.

The road becomes more and more difficult not far off. Near the river I saw a large black bear. I ordered the coolies to fetch my husband quickly ; but when he came Bruin was out of range. Soon after, we caught sight of another bear, who was walking on a heap of snow on the other side of the river. However, as it was impossible to reach him so far off, we left him in peace. At last we came in sight of a third bear. Although he also was on the other side of the river, our huntsman could not resist taking a shot at him. I do not know whether the ball hit him, or whether he was only frightened ; he fell, but sprang up again at once and ran away into the wood.

* * *

My husband began to make some sketches of the snow-field, which reaches down to the river, while I went on. It soon began to rain, and I was obliged to take shelter in one of the few huts to be found in the valley.

The domestic life of the natives is certainly not remarkable for cleanliness. The plaits of hair of the mother reached nearly to her feet, but were dirty, and were furnished with feathers and other dirty ornaments, and at the end with a thick tuft of wool. As far as I could see, the



ICE-GROTTO.

family lived in plenty, if not in abundance. While I was waiting there they were grinding rye in a wooden mortar, and doing their washing in a trough, treading it with their feet.

We pitched our tent opposite the glacier, and found it very cold there in the night. In the evening there was continued bad weather. Where we were it was raining, but above on the mountains it was snowing. On the following day everything around was so completely wrapped in snow that when I put my head out of the tent I was quite blinded by the glitter, and quickly drew it back. Over the whole glacier lay a thick covering of white snow.

* * *

My husband rode back to the snow-field to finish his sketches. On his return—he did not take the usual road, but went over the slope—he nearly had a fatal accident: his horse fell down head-over-heels, and turned over and over in the air. Verestchagin, who had got hold of a bush, laughed loudly at the misfortune of the poor pony. No harm, however, was done beyond the spoiling of the saddle.

One of our sayces, the groom, began to give himself airs; probably because he fancied himself

indispensable. But he was mistaken, for we sent him back to Srinagur.

* * *

Among our bearers were two absolute idiots, who simply did not know on which side they ought to turn their heads. The youngest carried his head high, and kept his mouth always open; the eldest looked angry and stared, and it was only when he smiled that the wrinkles in his discontented face smoothed themselves. He always hung down his head.

* * *

We halted not far from the place where the glacier meets the river and has obstructed its course, so that the torrent has made a tunnel for itself.

My husband made here also a hasty sketch. During the day I remarked that our servants were continually looking at the top of the mountain. Our interpreter, Lodi, surveyed the spot with a field-glass, and then reported that there was a pony there, but it was hard to tell where it had come from. Soon, however, I saw that it was a bear, and sent to tell my husband, who was at work hard by. He roused himself immediately, put on a pair of Cashmere sandals with straps, and

began, with the assistance of the huntsman and a coolie, to climb up the cliff.

The huntsman begged him not to take the interpreter with them ; but Verestchagin did not listen to him, and allowed Lodi to follow them. Luckily they arrived at the place where three bears (a great she-bear and two full-grown young ones) were eating roots, and crept towards the mother bear. Suddenly a shot sounded, and Lodi ran away pale and frightened. He had remained behind, had climbed the mountain in another direction, stumbled upon one of the young bears, fired, of course without hitting, and ran away. He was told to lie down and not to stir, because the female bear, startled by the shot, was passing by. My husband fired without delay, and hit certainly, to judge by a stone covered with blood. However, the bear retreated so quickly that my husband could not fire another shot. The huntsman had been right when he predicted that Lodi would spoil the whole business. The poor creature had frightened himself so much that one could scarcely reproach him. On the way back he related to me and the rest, introducing many variations, how he had shot at the bear and almost lost his life. My husband told me that he had already looked upon the she-bear as his booty ; for, being occupied with

eating, grunting and snorting like a pig the while, she did not suspect that any one was near, and was coming straight towards him. A few minutes more and he might have fired at twenty or thirty paces. Lucky bear! poor hunter! I confess the result had appeared to me so certain that when I heard the shot I had sent the bearers up the mountain to help to drag the animal down.

The mother bear was dark brown; the cubs still darker.

The huntsman and the bearer who accompanied my husband kept snatching up handfuls of earth and throwing them about, praying for grace from the evil spirit, as a bribe to induce it not to drive away the bear. The bribe was apparently not sufficient.

On the following day my husband again went on a hunting expedition, and climbed up the mountain with great trouble, but brought no spoil home with him. Below him on the mountain side he saw a nearly white bear pass rapidly by.

* * *

An English merchant named Russell, coming from Yarkand, passed by our halting-place with a numerous retinue of native servants. Mr. Forsyth,

who was sent on an embassy by the English Government for some time to Jacob-Beg in Cashgar, has almost discovered a new America. That is to say, he found that in the province of Djety-shah (or Seven-towns) there would be an extensive market for English wares. As the English are very greedy for new markets for their wares, this caused great excitement in England : speeches were made, much champagne was drunk, and great profits expected.

A trading company was at once formed of which the aforesaid Russell was chosen director. So long as Jacob-Beg—or Emir-Yacob—had possession of Cashgar he did everything he could to further his commercial relations with England, because he trusted to find in them a support against Russia in case of need.

The trade was very slight, but the company managed to come out of it without much loss. The English wares were not paid for with money, which was not at all easily obtained, but with articles which had been stolen during the Chinese revolt, and with all kinds of raw material, of which the most important was raw silk, coarse, but of good quality.

As soon as Jacob-Beg died, the Chinese began to subdue afresh the revolted province, and the

commercial relations ended in a most melancholy way with the bankruptcy of the company. Certainly India can provide Turkestan with many things; but the transport over the mountains is so difficult, and therefore so expensive, that only costly wares, which find but little sale in Central Asia on account of the poverty of the population, can be brought thither with any advantage. Cheap goods are brought by more convenient roads from Russia.

It was not for some time afterwards, however, that the real catastrophe fell upon the company. When we saw Russell he was, as already mentioned, on his way back to India from Yarkand (where he had resided for a year), travelling in some state, with a numerous retinue of Usbeks. They wore wide garments—some parti-coloured, some striped—and caps bordered with fur, and carried small knives in their girdles. Some had firearms. They had broad faces, which were quite contracted by the cold of the snowy passes; and they had long beards. The horses are small, but seem strongly built and have long hair. As this company passed by they informed our people of the extremely bad condition of the road, of the scarcity of water, and added that what there was was only fit to make tea of.

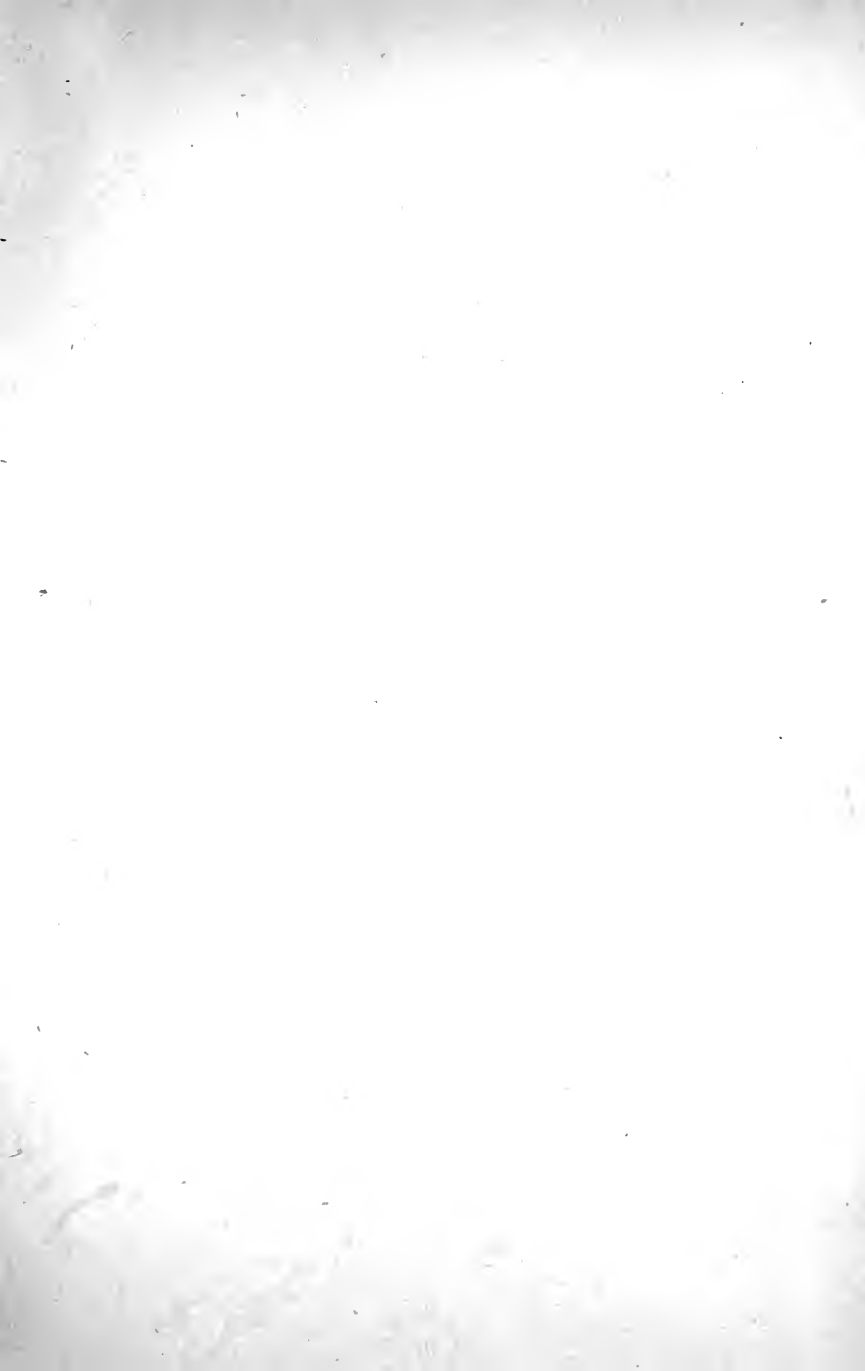
My husband regretted not having seen these people himself, for he knows Turkestan and its inhabitants very well, and understands a few phrases of the Usbek language. Far above on the mountain, where he was watching the bear, he could see figures moving about below, and could even distinguish a little dog that was running behind Russell.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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