



GEORGIAN NOBLEMAN'S HOUSE IN TIFLIS.

TRANSCAUCASIA.

SKETCHES

OF

THE NATIONS AND RACES

BETWEEN

THE BLACK SEA AND THE CASPIAN.

BY

A.

BARON VON HAXTHAUSEN,

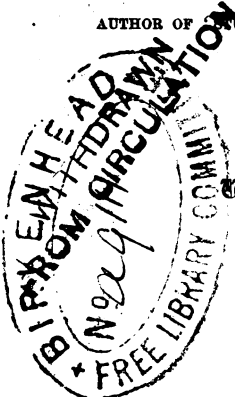
AUTHOR OF 'STUDIEN ÜBER DIE INNEREN ZUSTÄNDE RUSSLANDS.'

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

BARON August von Haxthausen is already known to Europe as author of a valuable Work on the internal and economical state of Russia, of which no English translation has yet appeared. The following volume of Travels in the countries confining on, and in part subject to, Russia, which first sees the light in an English dress, being translated from the original manuscript, may be regarded as a sequel to Baron von Haxthausen's Russian travels; from which however it is perfectly distinct.

The time and opportunity of its appearance may lead to the idea that it has been written or translated with a view to events now passing. This would be a complete mistake. Not only was the book written, but the manuscript was in the hands of the translator, long

before the war which now gives a peculiar interest to the scenes described in it was anticipated. The translation has not been revised by the Author, and nothing whatever has been done to adapt it to the present crisis. Whatever leaning the Author may be supposed to have toward Russia is, therefore, wholly uninfluenced by political causes, or, I am persuaded, by any others except such as arise from his own convictions. These, nurtured by the peculiar direction of his researches, are not likely to fall in with the opinions prevalent amongst us; but they are those of a perfectly independent and honourable man.

Baron von Haxthausen is a Westphalian noble of ancient race, and of course a subject of Prussia. He first attracted the notice of the public and government of Prussia by some very curious and interesting inquiries on the tenure of land in that kingdom, more especially in those provinces in which serfdom had been recently abolished. The whole turn of his mind and pursuits are, and have always been, in this direction. It is necessary to understand that the nature of the relations of man to the soil (*agrarische Verhältnisse*) is the guiding clue to the condition of a people, which he has followed in all his researches.

In the winter of 1842-43 some articles in the 'All-

gemeine Zeitung,' signed A. v. H., displayed so much ability and economical knowledge, that these initials were by many supposed to represent the great name of Alexander von Humboldt.

Shortly afterwards Baron von Haxthausen was invited by the Emperor Nicholas to pursue, in his dominions, the important inquiries he had begun in the Prussian provinces. He undertook this journey with the ardour and earnestness of a man devoted to the investigation of questions of the utmost importance to mankind. It was at that time his intention to push on as far as he could into the East, where he expected to find traces of the primeval relations of man to the soil, and to get some insight into many unexplained social phenomena. This project he was afterwards obliged to abandon.

He was accompanied in his journey by Prince Paul Lieven (nephew of the former Ambassador in this country), a young man of great talents, and distinguished for attainments which especially fitted him for such an expedition. Even before he left the University of Dorpat, Prince Paul Lieven published a pamphlet on the Division of Landed Property*, which

* Ueber Vertheilung des Grundbesitzes. Von Paul Fürst Lieven. Dorpat, 1844.

showed an acquaintance with such subjects very remarkable in so young a man.

The first volume of Baron von Haxthausen's travels in Russia was published in 1845 or 1846, the second in 1847. The title is 'Studien über die innern Zustände, das Volksleben und insbesondere die ländlichen Einrichtungen Russlands,'—'Studies on the internal condition, the popular life, and especially the rural institutions of Russia,'—a title rather diffuse, according to English notions, but perfectly descriptive of the contents. It is a Work full of curious and authentic details on the subjects indicated in the title, and is esteemed by competent judges the most authentic source of information concerning Russia,—a country of which scarcely anything is really known.

Baron von Haxthausen has been spoken of as Russianized. It is not to be supposed that he escaped the spell which the notice of a sovereign so puissant as the Emperor Nicholas, invariably exercises. He evidently inclines to view things on their favourable side. But he is by no means to be confounded with the herd of idle travellers whom a few courtly phrases throw into ecstasies. He travelled with a serious object, and was naturally grateful to the Sovereign who granted him facilities for attaining it.

The illustrations are from drawings by Herr Graeb, of Berlin, from the sketches of Baron Haxthausen and his travelling companion, Prince Paul Lieven: they are printed in colours by Messrs. Leighton.

J. E. T.

London, May, 1854.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

WITH the exception of Judea, the central point of interest in the world's history, no region is more important in the records of mankind than that which lies between the Caspian and the Black Sea, south of the Caucasian Steppes, and extends to the country around Mount Ararat. The naturalist here discovers traces of a wide deluge, in which pre-existing forms of animal and vegetable life were destroyed; and the traditions of all civilized nations record the story of the Flood, in which the whole of mankind perished, with the exception of a few human beings, who survived to propagate a new race.

Accepting the Mosaic narrative as fundamentally true, the question whether Ararat, or some other mountain in Mesopotamia, were the point whence the new family of man went forth to replenish the earth, cannot be ascertained with any absolute cer-

tainty ; but I think that any one who has *seen* Ararat, "the holy mountain," the most imposing which it is possible for the imagination to conceive, must have shared the feeling which forced itself upon my own mind on beholding it, that this alone could have been the summit upon which the Ark, the cradle of the new race of man, grounded and remained. The greatest geographer of recent times, Ritter, adopts this opinion ; and Görres observes, that Ararat is situated exactly on the central point where the diametric lines in the Old continent intersect.

This region is situated in the southern part of the Temperate Zone : the climate is genial ; the land presents the most picturesque scenery ; and the vegetable world comprizes all the productions of Europe, from its extreme north to the southernmost parts of Spain and Italy. Its inhabitants are the finest race of men upon the earth ; and indeed the European nations justly pride themselves on their affinity to the Caucasian stem.

The popular mythes and legends of various nations, especially of the Germanic race, are intimately connected with those we meet with in the Caucasus. The northern tradition of the advance of the Asæ from the south to Scandinavia, relates to the emigration of the Germanic race from the Caucasus, and has been preserved by the tribes of the Caucasus.

The races inhabiting this country may boast a wealth in legendary lore, mythes, and traditions, quite unparalleled. Here unquestionably exist the original elements of the most ancient mythes and sagas of all the nations of Europe; and the deep signification of these latter will never be thoroughly understood, until their sources are investigated and studied. We even meet with evident allusions to, and points of coincidence with, the legend of Prometheus!

In another view this country is interesting, as the central point of passage in most of the great national migrations of ancient times. According to the legend, Nimrod, after conquering the world, was killed by the Caucasian tribes on the shores of a lake at the foot of Mount Ararat. Crossing the Caucasus, the Scythians penetrated into Asia, which they ruled for twenty-eight years. Hither the Argonauts directed their expedition. The Persian monarch Cyrus conquered this country, and gave his name to the river Koor; and Alexander the Great appears in all the legends of the Caucasus. Here too was the stronghold of Mithridates, and Pompeius advanced as far as the Steppes on the Araxes. The Romans ruled this country for centuries: St. Gregory the Illuminator introduced into it Christianity. The tide of national emigration poured over the northern foot of the Caucasus, and the Huns pressed the

inhabitants (probably the remains of the Goths) far into these mountains. In after-times here arose the flourishing kingdoms of Armenia and Georgia, which were partially dependent on Byzantium. The towers and ruins seen upon all the hills point to the heroic period of the Middle Ages. But the Mongols and Tartars, under Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, inundated the country and stifled the advance of civilization.

Many centuries before the Christian era, the shores of the Black Sea were covered with flourishing Greek colonies, which formed the channel of commerce with Asia. In the Middle Ages they were occupied by the Genoese, who maintained their sway here, founded colonies, carried their trade deep into the interior of Asia, and introduced Christianity into the countries they visited. To the present day the Circassians speak of the "Igenois," and extol the splendid warlike arms they received from that people, and which they still wear. They dismount before every ruin of a Genoese church or chapel, fall on their knees and offer up a prayer.

The Turks expelled the Genoese, and both princes and people were subjected to Mohammedan rule; Islamism extirpated or suppressed Christianity, and a state of perfect barbarism succeeded. This land again was the battle-field on which for centuries

the Persians and Turks struggled for mastery, until finally Russia supplanted both these powers, gave free scope again to the spread of Christianity, and admittance to European civilization. But the Caucasus is the high wall, which, according to Mohammed's prophecy, Gog and Magog are to pass, to destroy the kingdom of the Believers, and put an end to the dominion of Islamism upon earth. There, at the present day, stands upon his lofty Eastern watch-tower, the last prophet and hero of Islamism, Schamyl, with his Murides, prepared to combat the Unbelievers to the last day, which God from all eternity has preordained, although well knowing that he must eventually yield. Here Islamism is seen flickering to extinction; its mission ended, the power which arose out of it will fall to pieces, and give place to a new order of things in the world's history.

This country is inhabited by innumerable races, among whom it is said there exist more than seventy original tongues: frequently a language is spoken only in a district composed of a few villages. All the races who have passed through this country have left memorials behind them: in fact, there exist here monuments of every period of the world's history. We find the dwellings of Troglodytes, entire cities cut out of the rock,—the colossal ruins of aqueducts and canals dating from the times of the great Babylonish,

Assyrian, and Persian monarchies,—with Greek and Roman edifices, and rock-castles of the Middle Ages, the noblest and most ancient churches alone being still preserved.

The country, under the dominion of Russia, is open to scientific investigation; but unhappily the spirit of research is sluggish, and quite incommensurate with the rich materials here offered to it; although in recent times naturalists, as Koch and Wagner, have carefully prosecuted here their scientific studies. The vegetable and mineral worlds remain ever the same, but the monuments of history perish and disappear: national manners, customs, and modes of life undergo change, and even languages in the lapse of time are gradually altered or effaced. Ethnography offers the most important subjects for scientific investigation: to seize and depict the condition and national life of a people, in all its aspects and relations, is one of the highest and most valuable tasks in science.

To this object my attention has been especially devoted; studying the state and characteristics of the races which I visited with a feeling of personal sympathy and interest, free from the supercilious pride of modern civilization, which sees in races wanting its own polish, mere rudeness and barbarism. My hope is to have discerned these features of national

character and life correctly, and to have delineated them faithfully.

The works of Chardin, Gülderstedt, Klaproth, Gamba, Dubois, Brosset, the linguists Syorn and Rosen, have unquestionably high scientific value in an antiquarian and philological point of view; but they have done little towards depicting national life in its social and family relations, manners, and customs, or collecting the popular traditions, songs, and legends, of the countries they describe; and yet in this field of research there is a rich store of materials, the examination of which would throw no little light on many countries in Europe.

Two subjects treated of in this Work merit attention and investigation: first, the affinity and, as it appears, national connection, between the customs, habits, and views of life of the race of the Ossetes, and those of the ancient Germans; and secondly, the important position which the Armenian nation occupies in the world, destined as it may possibly be by Providence to take a leading part at some future time in diffusing Christianity and civilization in the East. Providence has surely not, without a wise purpose, ordained the wide dissemination of the Armenian people,—a Christian race bound nevertheless by the strictest social, political, and religious ties,—from China to Morocco.

The present Work was completed in 1849; but the unfavourable state of the publishing trade prevented its appearing at that time in Germany: it is now first offered to the English reader, but it is the Author's intention subsequently to publish the work also in Germany and France.

Berlin, May, 1854.

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PLEASE DO NOT SOIL, MARK, OR
OTHERWISE INJURE THIS BOOK

TRAVELS

IN THE

CAUCASIAN PROVINCES.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE FROM KERTSCH.—FORTRESS OF ANAPA.—EQUESTRIAN EXERCISES OF THE CIRCASSIANS.—SOOJOUK-KALE.—HARBOURS OF KABARDINSK AND GELINTSCHIK.—PITZUNDA: ITS CHURCH.—BAMBOE.—CIRCASSIAN PRISONERS.—FEMALE SLAVES.—SALE OF WOMEN.—CONDUCT OF RUSSIA.—INTERCOURSE BETWEEN CIRCASSIA AND RUSSIA.—FORTS ON THE BLACK SEA.—GERMANS.

ON the morning of the 1st of August, 1843, accompanied by my fellow-travellers, Prince Paul Lieven, Herr von Aderkass, and Herr von Schwartz, I took a boat in the harbour of Kertsch on the Black Sea, and was carried to the Russian war steamer, which lay in sight, rocking upon the waves. The Russian General von Budberg, who commanded the line of forts along the east coast of the Black Sea, and had once a month to inspect the small Russian forts and

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harbours in that district, had given us a friendly invitation to accompany him on a journey of inspection he was about to make, offering to land us on the Mingrelian coast.

The view of the town of Kertsch and the surrounding country, from the steamer, seen in the bright morning light, was extremely beautiful. The town rose before us in an amphitheatre; and upon a steep projecting hill to the extreme left, the newly-erected Museum, for the reception of Taurian antiquities, built in the form of a Greek temple, terminated the masses of elegant buildings. Behind these heights arose loftier mountains, everywhere studded with small conical hillocks, the mysterious and ancient sepulchral Kurgani. The houses in the town are built in the Russian fashion, with rows of pillars, balconies, and low roofs. The Greek churches, with their endless green cupolas and colossal gilded crosses, had an extremely picturesque appearance in the distance; while the whole scene wore quite a southern aspect, and presented to the imagination a rich store of reminiscences of the ancient Pantikapeon, upon the site and out of the ruins of which Kertsch is built,—of the empire of the Bosphorus,—of Mithridates and his tragical end, which took place upon this spot.

We gradually left behind us the beautiful bay; the lower portion of the harbour first sank from view in its waters, then the masses of buildings, and finally the higher points disappeared below the horizon, whilst

on the left the promontories of the Caucasus rose to sight from out the clouds and mists. At about three o'clock we reached the harbour of the fortress of Anapa*, an important military post, the possession of which was long contested by the Russians and Turks. From this place the Circassians were formerly supplied by the Turks with arms and ammunition; selling them in return their youths and maidens, and their Russian prisoners. Anapa is poor and wretchedly built, the only traces of European comfort being the newly-erected houses of the Russian civil and military officers. The Commandant, Colonel von Roth, has laid out a pretty garden, whence the Caucasian range is seen, stretching out as it were in terraces.

Amongst the troops of this garrison was a body of about a hundred Circassians, whom the Commandant had disciplined after his own fashion; this corps was composed partly of volunteers and deserters, and partly of prisoners who had taken service. They were fine-looking men, rarely exceeding the ordinary stature, and of a slender build, but full of nerve; their nobility of blood was indicated in the beautiful aristocratic hands and feet; the countenances of these men were handsome and full of expression; but we saw Tatar, Mongol, European, and Asiatic features in great

* After the capture of Taman by the Russians, the Turks in 1784 founded Anapa, as a mart of commerce with the Circassians. From this place, the commercial and political intercourse with Constantinople are said to have passed to Bokhara across the Caucasus. In the Sumitic Bokhara, the Padishah at Constantinople is recognized as the religious head, as Kaliph, and a tribute is paid to him every three years.

mixture and variety—more blue than black eyes. It is clear that the Circassians are a mixed race.

Colonel von Roth ordered some cavalry exercises. The admirable beauty and lightness of the horses, together with the extraordinary dexterity of the horsemen, equipped in their equestrian dress, presented a strange but noble spectacle. Some sheets of paper were laid upon the ground; and the horsemen, dashing along at full gallop, fired their pistols in passing, and almost every time hit the paper.

We left Anapa as evening closed in, and early the following morning reached the harbour of Soojouk-Kalé, the Turkish name of the place, from the Kalé, or small fortress, erected here (and elsewhere along the whole coast) by the Turks: all these forts were afterwards successively captured by the Russians. The Circassian name of the place is Temess; the Russians call it Novorussiask.

The first view of the harbour is extremely beautiful; it lies very advantageously, the sea forming a small and deep bay, surrounded by lofty mountains, the narrow entrance being formed by two projecting headlands. As a harbour it possesses little value, the bottom of the sea within it being so rocky, that anchors have difficulty in holding. The Bora, or north-east wind*, frequently sets in with unexpected fury, and strands the vessels with a fearful shock.

* The Circassians likewise call this wind Bora. I have been told that it bears this name on most of the coasts of the Mediterranean. Is this an echo of the old Greek Boreas?

Whilst the General and his officers were engaged in their inspecting duties, I rambled along the shore. Among the gravel and boulders thrown up by the sea, I found a great variety of stones and pebbles, granite and marble of different kinds predominating, rounded and very pretty. It is remarkable that among these stones the spherical shape is scarcely ever found ; the granite and quartz were occasionally of an oval form*, but the less hard stones had invariably the flattened oval, and only the very small ones, from the size of a pea to that of sand, exhibited the spherical form. Even in this apparently simple mechanical action of the waves, we observe the operation of laws which it is not easy either to detect or to define.

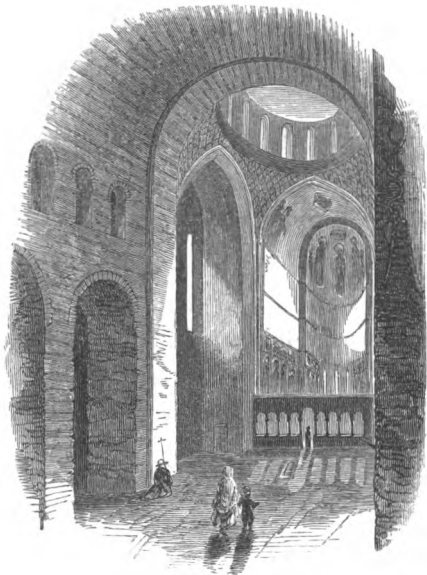
About noon we proceeded, and passed the next little harbour of Kabardinsk without landing. The shores along the whole east coast of the Black Sea are uncommonly beautiful, the mountains presenting the finest forms and outline, while here and there in the far distance appear on the horizon the snowy glaciers. Luxuriant vegetation and noble forests stretch down to the sea-shore.

The harbour of Gelintchik presented a scene of extraordinary beauty, but it is said to suffer the same disadvantages as that of Soojouk-Kalé. M. Seassi, a Genoese, presented in 1813 to the Governor-General

* The large boulders of granite, which are found in all parts, up to 50° north lat., have, on the contrary, usually a round instead of oval form.

of Southern Russia, a project of organizing here an active traffic, with a view to introduce European civilization among the Circassians: he founded in Gelintshik a mercantile establishment, which has since failed.

The following morning we reached Pitzunda,—probably the ancient Pythus. This is said to have been in the Middle Ages an important Genoese colony,—the extreme frontier of the Eastern Empire. To this place St. Chrysostom was exiled, but he died on the way. We visited the ruins of a church in the Byzantine style of architecture, of extraordinary beauty,



which merited a closer examination than I could devote to them: the groined roof is partly preserved, but covered with vines. On the ceiling and walls are frescos, and in a side chapel an 'Entombment.'

We were informed that not far from this spot, in the mountains to the north, are situated an Armenian church and a small convent, to which the Abkhasians make frequent pilgrimages: the latter is said to contain a library.

In the harbour of Bambor lay a small Turkish vessel, which had been seized by the armed boats of a Russian man-of-war steamer, manned by Cossacks. On board this vessel, beside the Turkish proprietor and some sailors, was a Circassian Prince, as a guest, from the neighbourhood of the fortress, accompanied by two of his noble vassals and some servants, a young woman and six Circassian girls, from twelve to fifteen years of age. The master of the vessel was probably a smuggler, conveying food and ammunition to the Circassians, and taking as return freight Circassian girls for the slave-market at Constantinople. This Circassian Prince might have wished to make a voyage to Constantinople from political motives. The charge of smuggling ammunition, which the Turk denied, could not be proved; but the forbidden traffic in girls was palpable, and by the Russian laws the vessel was confiscated. I inquired of the General how he intended to dispose of the Circassians; he replied, that they belonged to a race with whom Russia was at peace, and he should therefore set

them free, after interposing some trifling difficulties and exhortations.

Meanwhile the son of the Prince had arrived, to beg the liberation of his father. I accompanied the Circassian within the *rayon* of the fortress, where an interesting scene followed. In announcing to the girls their liberation, the General ordered them to be informed, that the choice was open to them, to be sent back to their homes with the Prince of their own race, or to marry Russians and Cossacks of their free choice, to return with me to Germany, where all the women are free, or lastly to accompany the Turkish Captain, who would sell them in the slave-market at Constantinople. The reader will hardly credit that, unani- mously and without a moment's consideration, they ex- claimed, "To Constantinople—to be sold!" There is scarcely any people more proud and jealous of their liberty, and yet this was the voluntary answer of these women!

If however we investigate a little deeper the views, thoughts, and habits of this Eastern people, the answer will appear not unnatural, but in fact accordant with their notions. The purchase and sale of women is deeply rooted in the customs of the nation: every man buys his wife from the father or from the family*. On the part of the women no feeling of shame is attached to the transaction, but rather a sense of honour; and

* The Circassian buys his wife, but at the same time he is obliged *pro formâ* to steal her and carry her off furtively: this is the only respectable manner of obtaining possession of his bargain.

indeed, before we can pronounce on the subject, we must be intimately acquainted with the circumstances, and must be able to place ourselves exactly in the position of the Circassians. In her own country, a Circassian girl lives in a state of slavish dependence on her father and brothers ; her position is therefore raised when a man demands her in marriage, and stakes his fortune to obtain her, at the same time that he liberates her from the servile constraint of her family. Among Europeans, a rich man who marries a poor girl, generally appears actuated by compassion ; she is congratulated on her good fortune, which is somewhat offensive to a woman's pride. If, on the contrary, a rich girl marries a poor man, she purchases her husband, and this is humiliating to him. When two marry who are equally well off, the match has, more or less, the air of a mercantile transaction ; so that it might almost appear as if genuine and disinterested affection could only be found in a marriage between two poor persons. But here again the motive is often either one of mere passion, a need of mutual assistance and attendance, or a wish to establish a separate household. The Eastern girl sees in her purchase-price the test of her own value,—the higher the offer, the greater her worth. The purchase of women being the common practice among the Circassian tribes, slave-dealers to whom they are sold are to be regarded simply as agents, who dispose of them in marriage in Turkey. Their parents know that a better lot awaits them there than at home, and

the girls willingly go to Turkey, where, as this traffic has existed for centuries, they constantly meet their kindred. In their own homes, moreover, the Circassian men are rough and imperious, and the women are slaves to all kinds of drudgery and menial labour; whereas the Turk is a patient and kind husband and a tender father*.

The efforts of Russia to prevent this traffic in women have proved wholly ineffectual: prohibition tends only to augment the evil. The trade is carried on throughout the winter months, when the Russian men-of-war are not at sea; and it is calculated that every sixth or seventh ship, with its whole freight of girls, is lost. It is said that twenty-five to thirty-five voyages are made annually, in which from five to six hundred girls are transported. The vessels generally sail from Sinope or Risch.

Outside all the small forts and harbours, public market-places have begun to be established, whither the Circassians resort with perfect freedom and security, nay, even on the invitation of the Russians, and are at full liberty to carry on their trade. It might perhaps be desirable to encourage such a degree of intercourse between them and the Russians, especially

* Gibbon says that, whatever may be alleged respecting traffic in human beings, it has unquestionably produced one result, that the Western Asiatics have become a handsome race. He adds that the Turks, descendants of the Huns, who were originally repulsive in their appearance, are now a handsome people, from their intermixture with the Caucasians. The fact Gibbon mentions is true, the example erroneous—the Turks are no descendants of the Huns.

the Cossacks, as would lead to intermarriages,—an idea which the Circassians have heretofore rejected with abhorrence. Nor indeed would the noble Circassian blood disgrace a Russian alliance. The physical and mental superiority of the Cossacks on the Caucasian line is in part ascribed to the mixture of race with the Circassians: from time immemorial, the Cossacks have sought opportunities of carrying off and marrying Circassian girls. Nor is it improbable that a great number of the Circassian girls thus purchased, marrying in the interior of Russia, would embrace Christianity. The smuggling of arms and ammunition into Circassia by the Turkish sailors, in the winter voyages which they make to fetch the Circassian girls, would be rendered both difficult and expensive. The trade in boys, formerly carried on, has almost entirely ceased, since the fall of the Mamelukes.

I landed at the fortress of Sookhum-Kalé, said to be the ancient Dioscurias. The fortress, now in ruins, was built by the Turks, and contains a so-called palace of a Pasha—a miserable wooden building.

On the morning of the 4th of August, we reached the roadstead of Redout-Kalé. The most beautiful weather had favoured our voyage; the sea was calm, and dolphins continually sported around the vessel. The shores, which we coasted frequently within three to five hundred yards, presented the most charming views. On the roads skirting the coast, or along the hills, we frequently saw Circassians riding singly or several together, in their picturesque costume. The

two last evenings we continually heard the howling of jackals, echoing far and wide, and sounding exactly like the cry of children. Here and there we noticed Abkhasians,—a race settled to the south-west of the Circassians. These people are small in stature, thin, with black hair and blue eyes, a finely-shaped nose, and sallow complexion. Their princes and nobles, on the contrary, appear to be of another race, of a large, powerful, and noble figure.

Russia possesses along the whole extent of this coast, from Kertsch to the frontier of Asia Minor, seventeen fortified places (*kreposti*). The fortifications are for the most part weak, consisting only of palisades, and surrounded by trenches, not deep, and generally dry. The garrison numbers from five hundred to a thousand men*. This military force of 10,000 to 25,000 men is a heavy burden,—a temporary sacrifice which Russia makes to her future policy, since there is no present advantage to be derived from its maintenance†. Should European civilization gradually be introduced among the Circassians, these places might

* In all these fortified places I found a great number of dogs of a strong and powerful breed,—well trained, and uncommonly watchful: they have all their appointed watch-posts. They know the Circassians perfectly, and I was told that regular battles take place between them and the Circassian dogs, which belong to another breed, and often band together in great numbers, presenting themselves before the fortresses in a warlike attitude.

† The Transcaucasian province, separated from Russia by the high range of the Caucasus, inhabited by free military mountaineers, and only connected with it by the military road, is at present merely a heavy burden. Any advantages derivable from this noble district are more than counterbalanced by the cost which it entails. Be-

become small flourishing towns and marts of commerce, such as have already existed here at two different epochs,—first when Greek colonies were planted here, and again in the Middle Ages, when Genoa had the command of the Black Sea. Under the dominion of Turkey, they sank into complete insignificance; but the Turks obstinately maintained possession, and defended them against the Russians; as from hence their harems and the corps of the Mamelukes were replenished.

In one of the small forts where I landed, it happened that a market was being held on the public square before the gate*. A great number of Circassians were sauntering about, but the wares were too few to tempt them to purchase, whilst the only things they brought for sale were hides. The Russian Government would do well to take this trade into their own hands, to expose for sale such goods as might be acceptable and useful to the Circassians, and put on them a low fixed price; at the same time, taking in return all the products which the Circassians might bring, even in the first instance at a high price. If

side the army, which is required constantly to keep the mountaineers in check, another Russian army of twenty-five to thirty thousand men is required, for the secure maintenance of the province. It is asserted that the army loses from fatigue and sickness yearly one-sixth of its forces. In garrisoning, maintaining, and cultivating this district, Russia is preparing the way for the civilization and future amelioration of the whole of Western Asia.

* I was told that in all these places a market is held outside the fortress every morning. On Sunday, the Circassians were allowed to enter the fortress, and carry on their traffic, but unarmed.

not an advantageous commercial speculation to the Government, this would assuredly be a measure of sound policy, tending to diffuse European civilization and manners, nay even luxury, among the Circassians. They would learn the value of money, and its important use as a medium of exchange in small dealings, and would thus become gradually accustomed to a retail system of trade, and perhaps in time allow Russian traders to introduce it into their country. Were modern civilization, with all its accompanying advantages and evils, once to make its way among them, they would soon become, if not subjects, at least quiet neighbours, of Russia. After a few years, when trade had once been established, it might gradually be left to private enterprize and commerce, which would speedily spring up with Kertsch and Odessa. Of what importance then would it be, balanced against such considerations, if the Russian Government were for a time to lose annually a hundred thousand roubles?*

But a question would arise, to whom this trade, and the execution of such a scheme, should be entrusted. The common Russian dealers, the soldiers and Cossacks, are too great rogues; they would cheat both their own Government and the Circassians: they would think it far too irksome to adhere to fixed and just prices, and would continually watch to take unfair advantage in their dealings. It might be more politic to employ some honest Germans, such as those from

* The Russian *silver* rouble and kopeck are referred to throughout this Work.—TRANSL.

the German colony in the neighbourhood of Tiflis, who have already continual dealings with the Circassians, especially in horses. These men however ought only to act as paid agents of the Government, and some confidential person might be appointed to regulate the whole system.

CHAPTER II.

ARRIVAL AT REDOUT-KALE.—ANAKLIA.—BEECH-FORESTS.—FARMS.—SUGDIDE.—RESIDENCE OF THE DADIAN.—GOVERNMENT OF MINGRELIA.—VASSALS AND PEASANTS.—SERFDOM.—REVENUE OF THE DADIAN.—ANCIENT CHURCHES.—COSSACK STATIONS.—TOWN OF KHONI.—KOOTAIS.—CHIEF OF THE DISTRICT.—CULTIVATION.—THE COMMUNE AND ITS NATZVAL.—PEASANTRY.—TAXES.—NOBILITY.—IMMIRETIA.—INLAND CONVEYANCE.—GEORGIA.—MINGRELIANS AND IMMIRETIANS.—TOWN OF KHORI.—TRADITION.—SANTAVARVISI.—AGRICULTURE.—MZKETHA.—RESIDENCE OF THE CZARS.—CATHEDRAL.—TIFLIS.—PETER NEU, THE SHOEMAKER.—DR. WAGENER.

WE landed at Redout-Kalé, which has a tolerably good harbour. The aspect of this place is very singular, lying on the river Khopi, which is here navigable for ships at its mouth. A row of houses stand supported behind on piles in the water, and the vessels sail directly up to the wooden balconies which run along this side. Trees and bushes are scattered among the buildings, and the external aspect of the place is quite that of a Dutch village, except that the neatness and elegance of the latter must not be looked for in the interior of these dwellings.

After we had breakfasted with an American merchant, and the General had returned with his suite to

the steamer, my companions and I made preparations for starting on our journey into the interior of the country. We were furnished with horses, and some Cossacks as an escort. We rode northward along the sea-shore to Anaklia, a small fortress erected by the Turks, and now a Cossack post, close to which lies a wretched Mingrelian village, where we procured a fresh escort of Cossacks. During the whole day our road lay through forests, and what noble forests! In the southern acclivities of the Caucasus the tree-vegetation of the north is found together with that of the south; and I have rarely seen finer beeches, oaks, elms, fir-trees, interspersed with planes, chestnuts, walnuts, olives, laurels, and cherry-trees, the native *habitat* of which last is said to be Mingrelia. The magnificent beech-trees, even surpassing in beauty those of Holstein and Seeland, excited my especial admiration. The country in which the beech—the most beautiful of all forest-trees—flourishes, stretches northward to Sweden and Denmark: in these countries, as for instance in Schonen and Seeland, it is most picturesque, being less lofty, but more spreading and branching than in Holstein and Hanover, where in thick clumps it sometimes rises eighty feet to the crown. Further eastward, the country of the beech does not extend so far to the north. Even in Prussia beech-woods are comparatively rare, and in their place we meet with the lime-tree, which predominates in the immense forests of Lithuania, whilst it is nowhere found growing as a forest-tree in Germany. In Poland likewise

beech-woods are rare, but in the spurs of the Carpathians they are frequently seen. During all my travels in Russia, I nowhere observed any beech-woods, or indeed any of these trees growing singly. In fact I first met with the beech again in the mountains of the Crimea, growing in beautiful forests, now partially devastated. It gave me a real feeling of joy, after an interval of nine months, to see once more the tree of my own country reappearing in such luxuriance and in such noble company.

Where these forests are not too dense to allow underwood to grow, especially when composed of elms, vines have twined around the trees, festooning them from branch to branch. It is impossible to conceive a more luxuriant and charming sight: for miles all the trees were hung to their very tops with red bunches of grapes,—for I nowhere observed any white grapes. This fruit is said to be very sour, and scarcely eatable. The vines appear to grow perfectly wild, no one caring to cultivate them, or laying claim to their possession.

For some distance our road followed the course of the river Ingur, the navigation of which is obstructed by dangerous eddies, and the rocks and trees overthrown into its current. During our journey this day we came to no regular village,—merely here and there single and lonely farms. Every Mingrelian is free to settle where he pleases in these primeval forests; he cuts or burns down a clearing in the woods, builds himself a log-house of the trunks of trees, hedges in the farmstead, together with a few acres for

cultivation, and establishes his household. The soil is fruitful, and bears excellent crops of maize and millet: tobacco also thrives in Mingrelia, but its cultivation is ill understood. Oats are not grown here at all, and barley is used as fodder instead. The inhabitants pay their lord—here the reigning Prince of Mingrelia—a tribute from the produce of the soil, maize, millet, or cattle, according to agreement. The forests have everywhere been thinned by clearings for these isolated farms, which are generally situated upon some small eminence. The dwellings are log-houses, thatched with maize straw: they have two opposite doors, generally in the gable-end, but no window or chimney. The interior is occupied by a single apartment, with the hearth in the centre. There is no furniture, although in the houses of the wealthier class may be seen Persian or Tatar carpets*.

We occasionally met natives of the country, always on horseback: their appearance was very remarkable, and in their long brown girded dress, with a hood drawn over the head, they bore a striking resemblance to Capuchin friars. May not S. Francesco d'Assisi have borrowed from the Mingrelians the dress prescribed to his Order?—a supposition by no means impossible, since at that period the Genoese had their

* The women go barefoot, but wear kerchiefs of gold brocade; and the same inconsistency is seen in their houses, which are carpeted, although destitute of tables and chairs! All the Asiatics, living under Slaavic domination, have a prevailing taste for luxury. The Circassians, whose passion is liberty, like the ancient Germans, covet luxury only in their weapons and armour.

factories along all this line of coast. Here and there we also observed the dark brown *burka*, a thick and close cloak, which serves for protection against cold and wet, as well as against heat, when the external temperature is higher than that of the blood: it is said to be the *chlamys* of the ancients. The hooded cap worn by the Circassians is called *bashlik*, and by the Abkhasians *ghetaph*.

During our ride this day we only traversed lowlands, broken occasionally by slight acclivities; and at about five o'clock in the afternoon reached Sugdide, the residence of the Prince of Mingrelia, who is always called the Dadian—probably the family name: he is the reigning prince, and recognizes only the suzerainty of the Emperor of Russia. In the sixteenth century the Georgian Eristan, or Governor of Mingrelia, threw off the yoke of Georgia, and assumed the title of Kheselpé, or king; his successors have maintained their independence to the present time. I was informed that a few years ago the Russian Government offered him two million and a half silver roubles, to abdicate his sovereignty, but he had never been induced to consent to this step. At the beginning of the present century, the Georgians and Immiretians, after the abdication of their Czars, fell under the immediate dominion of Russia: Russian legislation and administration were generally introduced. Mingrelia, Abkhasia, the county of the Suane-tians, Mohammedan Avaria, and Tarku, only acknowledged the supremacy of Russia, at the same time re-

taining their own princes together with their legislation and administration, excepting that of criminal justice, which for the protection of the inhabitants was subjected to the jurisdiction of Russia.

The residence of the Prince of Mingrelia stands on a plateau upon a hill, one side of which is covered, down to the little valley whence we ascended, with about two hundred houses and small farms, inhabited by the attendants of the Court and civil officers of the Prince. Upon the other side of this eminence lies an open plain, with a number of fine old trees in detached groups; and in the midst of it stands the palace of the Prince. But let not the reader be led, by this high-sounding name, to form an exaggerated idea of a residence which is quite an ordinary dwelling,—not at all superior to a common European country-house—a square box, seventy feet long and thirty-five feet deep, with two stories, ten windows in front and five on each side: the house is tiled, and the walls are whitewashed. The only peculiarity is, that a wide wooden gallery runs along the front of the second story, the access to which is by a staircase on the outside of the building; and from this gallery several doors open into the apartments on the second story, which has no communication with the lower one. The space usually occupied by a staircase and landing-place withinside the house is thus saved, and the whole of the interior devoted to apartments. The lower story is inhabited by the Court servants, and contains also the kitchen, storerooms, etc. The

upper story is the residence of the Prince and his family.

The family were at this time absent from home. During the hot season, when fevers are prevalent, all persons who can afford the expense remove from these lowlands to the mountains, and the Prince's family had not yet returned from their summer residence*. We were nevertheless received with the most cordial hospitality by a kind of major-domo, or finance minister of the Prince, who, to our surprise, was a Frenchman. We afterwards heard, that in 1812, on the retreat from Moscow, this man was taken prisoner, and remained behind: he had been cook in the service of a French general, and, while prisoner, was engaged in that capacity by a Russian general, whom he accompanied to Tiflis, but he finally entered the service of the Prince of Mingrelia. In his present post, he appears to be a factotum or minister of affairs in general, and has adopted the tournure and manners of a French marquis of the *ancien régime*. With his powdered head and neat little pigtail, his silk stock-

* These districts are extremely fertile, the soil being incredibly rich and prolific. It is not exactly marshy, although fevers prevail greatly in the hottest season, from July 15th to October 15th. This is explained by the circumstance, that, owing to the scanty population and scarcity of cattle, the grass and vegetation is neither mown, ploughed in, nor grazed off; in consequence—especially in the shades of the forest—the herbage rots, and in the open fields dries and withers. The exhalation arising from the decaying vegetation is said to be the true cause of these fevers. Foreigners and the husbandmen suffer most from them. The Russian soldiers, in particular, fall frequent victims: their dress, food, long fasts, etc., are unsuited to this climate.

ings and buckled shoes, he looked charming, in the midst of this picturesque scene. But one thing I could not pardon, which I ascribed to his influence,—the disappearance here of that peculiar air and character which surrounds an Eastern Prince.

This officer conducted us through the apartments of the Prince's family. The walls were covered with very inferior Moscow paper-hangings; and the furniture consisted of tables, chairs, and couches clumsily made, and of a fashion nearly half a century old, together with a musical clock such as is seen in every public-house in Russia. Upon the wall hung two flags, and a few books were lying on a table, one a folio manuscript volume in the Georgian language beautifully written, apparently in verse, and probably some heroic poem. Our worthy guide was unable to read Georgian,—all he knew was, that the Prince set a high value upon this book. We partook of some excellent tea, and later in the evening a supper was served up *à la Française*, at which champagne was of course not omitted. Our party was joined by a Mingrelian nobleman, a vassal of the Prince's; as he understood only his native language, we had no conversation; he sat for several hours with his back to the wall, sedate and silent.

The old Frenchman told us, that there are several princely families, and a great number of nobles, in this country, who all acknowledge the Dadian as their feudal lord and sovereign. They are obliged to render

him assistance in war, and in certain cases he has the power to declare their fiefs forfeited, but this requires the assent of a Court of Vassals*. The Dadian, in common with his vassals, has peasants under him, who are divided into two classes, one, consisting of those settled immediately around the Court or residence of their lord and master, cultivate his land, and perform other services, in return for which the lord is bound to support them and their families: the second class consists of the regular husbandmen, who till their own fields, and pay their lord a tribute of the produce,—maize, millet, and cattle. I could not correctly ascertain, whether this tribute is fixed by ancient custom, or whether the lord determines it arbitrarily and according to the circumstances of the time; nor could I learn whether bond-service prevails. It is said not to have existed originally, but the Russian laws are at present in force, and the lords appeal to these occasionally to maintain the existence of serfdom. The Mingrelians and Immiretians formerly went in troops to Georgia, to take service as farm-labourers, for they are stronger and more industrious than the Georgians; but of late a check has been put to this, to prevent the country, which is thinly inhabited, from being entirely depopulated. In loading corn, and in all work requiring a sudden exertion

* We were told that, in imitation of the Europeans and especially the Russians, the Dadian had established an Order of his own, with which he delighted his vassals, and the star of which he himself wears. The Russians do not recognize this decoration.

of strength, such as lifting a beam or rolling a tree, they utter a sharp and inspiring cry.

The revenue of the Dadian consists almost entirely of natural produce, and as there is no good market for this, its pecuniary value is small, compared with the extent of a hundred square miles of fertile territory. For months together the Prince has frequently not twenty-five roubles, to meet the petty expenses of his household. His sole money-revenue is derived from the forest-lands, which is collected in the most wasteful manner: for example, this year the Dadian had accepted from a Turkish speculator two hundred silver roubles, for as much wood as he chose to cut down and carry away for ship-building. It is strange that the Russian Government does not purchase from the Prince, at a fixed rent, the produce of these forests, for the service of their fleet at Odessa.

All that I heard at Tiflis of the Dadian, and particularly of the late Prince, reminded me strongly of the life of a German prince and feudal lord of the fifteenth century. The old Dadian spent his time in hunting, and in contests with the northern, warlike, and predatory tribes: he was constantly engaged in hostile excursions, with his suite of young nobles and princes, and during peace passed his time in the chase*, accompanied by his hundred princes—the number of adult male members of the princely families. On these occasions the herdsmen used to give informa-

* We saw falcons, which were admirably trained, particularly to catch pheasants.

tion one to another of the direction which the Prince was taking, in order to conceal their cattle ; for if the party came upon a herd, some of the beasts would without ceremony be slain on the spot, roasted and eaten. Whenever any stranger or traveller visited the Dadian, or met him on these hunting excursions, the latter instantly presented him with the finest horse that chanced to be at hand, without asking the owner's leave ; but it not unfrequently happened, that the owner watched for the stranger's departure, and took back from him the Dadian's present.

At six o'clock, the following morning, we remounted our horses. The weather was glorious, and our road lay through forests the whole way, a succession of hill and dale. At every instant new prospects opened, increasing in beauty, and on the high grounds we had frequent views to the north over the lofty range of the Caucasus, whilst to the south stretched the mountains of Asia Minor—Natolia. We had to ford several small rivers, most of the bridges having been carried away in the preceding spring. In the heart of these forests, on every side, and especially upon eminences, are erected wooden churches, four of which stood within a short distance of our road. We ascended to several, and found them to consist of a chapel about twenty or twenty-five feet square, built with upright timbers jointed into one another, from fifteen to twenty feet high. Upon these was laid the roof, projecting ten feet on every side, resting upon pillars, and forming a gallery all round the building.

The chapel had no windows, merely a few long narrow apertures, and a door ornamented with arabesque carving. There was neither tower nor cupola, but at ten yards distant stood a clumsy kind of belfry, in which hung two bells. These chapels are evidently still in use, although no dwelling was to be seen for a great distance around—not even a house for a priest or sacristan: but there stood the humble little church, buried in the solitude and silence of the forest!

There were no regular posts on our road, but only Cossack stations, ten or twelve miles apart*, where six to ten Cossacks are generally stationed, and remain for three years. These men are remarkably useful and teachable, and readily become naturalized in a foreign country. We everywhere found them perfectly settled and at home; they live with the greatest frugality; bread, eggs, and milk were the only food we could obtain, and these but occasionally. Along the whole journey to Tiflis, the bread was mostly wheaten, but leavened, and had a very bad taste; but the Cossacks had invariably a *samovar*, and we could always prepare a dish of tea.

Evening was approaching, when we had to make a somewhat dangerous passage of the river Tschenikal (the Hyppus of the ancients), and we reached the little market-town of Khoni at dark. The busiest day here, as in all the towns in this district, is always

* Throughout this work, the miles are reduced to the English standard.—TRANSL.

Friday, the day before the Sabbath: in fact the Jewish customs and usages have influenced the whole of the East, as Chardin remarks. We found here a regular post-station, and were enabled to rest after our fatiguing journey.

From hence to Tiflis runs a high-road, along which are regular post-stations, protected by detachments of Cossacks. We were now able to procure once more a carriage; and although the motion on a Russian *teleeja*, especially on rough roads, is not the most agreeable, I preferred it to riding on horseback, which was still more fatiguing.

We started early from Khoni, and at about nine o'clock, in a pouring rain, reached Kootais, where we met with tolerable accommodation, in an inn somewhat resembling a European one, kept by a French cook, who had married a Dutchwoman. The Chief of the Circle called on us, and gave me an account of the environs.

Kootais, situated on the left bank of the river Rion (the Phasis of the ancients), is the chief town of Immiretia, which now forms an independent Circle of the Georgian Government under the dominion of Russia. It is said to have been the native place of Medea, and the chief-town of the gold district of Colchis. The old town occupied a height on the right bank of the Rion, where now stand the ruins of a convent and church. There are no remains of any great antiquity.

The land here is commonly cultivated in detached

farms, but villages have sprung up around the modern churches, whilst the ancient ones remain solitary and forsaken; the isolated farms are invariably attached to the latter. A number of these farms, varying from thirty to a hundred, has from time immemorial constituted a commune, at the head of which is the Natzval, or tithingman. Several of these communes again form a church community, or parish, which has the Mavraf at its head; he is chosen by the villages within the parish or ecclesiastical Circle, and the Russian Chief of the Circle ratifies the election. The Mavraf has the command of the local police, and jurisdiction in all cases to the amount of five roubles. Each farm has its land assigned, which is enclosed; and the heaths, forests, etc., lying between these lands, are the common property of the farms or of the commune. The children of the proprietors of the farms are allowed to build on these tracts, and to establish new farms, but never strangers.

The cultivators are not a class of independent landed proprietors, but hold either under the Crown, the Monasteries, or the Nobles. The latter class have probably been regarded as serfs only since the Russian occupation of the country; the two first classes are still free. About one-sixth of the whole are Crown tenants. Every peasant's farm, supporting three or four males, pays eighty kopecks (according to another statement, one rouble) to the Crown; if there are fewer males, then several farms pay rent together. In addition to this, a tithe is claimed upon all Crown-

land ; the majority of the tenants have land of their own. The tithe is not raised in kind, but the Mavraf and two of the proprietors assess it upon each piece of land. The Conventual peasants pay the same money rent, together with one of wax and wine, and the Government may probably have adopted this mode from the clergy.

The peasants who hold under the nobles have scarcely any protection from the law, and are obliged to give what the lord demands. The Government levies a tax upon the nobles, of one silver rouble for each of their peasant-farms. The nobles are divided into the lower class and the princes ; but in some parts the latter are so numerous and impoverished, that a village was pointed out to us, in which one hundred and twenty princes possessed together only thirty small farms. Some princes, however, have a number of noble vassals, who pay them fixed taxes on their fiefs : and these vassals, or rather their feudal rights and tributes, they can sell or exchange.

Whether there formerly existed distinct endowed benefices, I could not ascertain ; in recent times the Russian Government has everywhere endowed the Church livings with land ; and the clergy in addition derive from the exercise of their functions,—marriages, baptisms, with various fees or presents,—what we term in Europe “*jura stolæ*.”

From Kootais our road led into the mountains of Immiretia, for the greater part following the course of small rivers. The country is romantically wild. High

up on a rock we observed another small church, and beside it a belfry. In every part of the forests the branches are festooned with vines, which are said to have been in remote times planted and cultivated here; in some parts they yield a very tolerable wine, called in Immiretia *gwino*. We found excellent honey, white and hard: it is the produce of wild bees, and the wax and honey form one mass. A green honey, also made by wild bees, is said to have a strongly intoxicating quality.

We now approached Georgia. From the Querela station our road continued for sixty versts through deep mountain glens, and along the course of several small rivers. On the summit of two hills were seen the ruins of mountain castles. We crossed a considerable mountain, at a point where the lofty range opens, and the road leads down into a wide valley, through which meanders the river Koor, the ancient Cyrus. Occasionally we passed one of the carts of this country, of the rudest construction: the wheels are generally a circular piece of wood, with a hole in the centre. I observed only a few wagons laden with hay, built in the German fashion, probably belonging to some colonists. Large trunks of trees were dragged along the road, unassisted by any wheels, and only fastened round with ropes and chains,—one of them drawn by seventeen pair of oxen! In Germany this tree would have been drawn on a wagon by a pair of horses along a macadamized road, and by four horses on a bad one.

Descending to the valley, at about four versts from the station, we came to Surama, a fine ruined castle, standing on a steep hill which rises isolated from the plain: this has evidently been the principal key of a general system of fortification. In front was erected a line of towers, at about a thousand paces from one another: I counted five in a semicircle before the castle, at the back of which rose fortified heights. Similar towers are seen in nearly every Georgian village, and on the farms of the nobles these served, until within a few years, as a shelter for the villagers, especially the women and children, and a protection to the property of the settlers against the predatory attacks of the Lesghis, Circassians, Ossetes, etc.

I made the acquaintance of the Russian civil and military officers in every place through which we passed. They all agreed in describing the people of this country, especially the Immiretians, as thoroughly depraved and immoral, thievish, mendacious, and quarrelsome. Some years ago the Russian Government ordered a valuation of the property to be made, and these people are accused of having forged numerous documents and given false evidence, which led to the commission of great wrong and injustice. Property however has subsequently become more secure, and the prevalent litigious disposition has been checked. Nevertheless this people is one of the finest in appearance upon the face of the globe, with noble, expressive, and intelligent features. I can scarcely credit the full truth of the character given them; nor

indeed were the people originally so bad, but have unquestionably become corrupted by degrees, the fault of which may be attributed to the higher classes and the degraded state of the Church.

After resting for a few hours at night, we started again, and early on the 9th of August reached the little town of Khori*; the Russian post-house stands withoutside it. Here is a panoramic view of wonderful beauty: to the north, the majestic range of glaciers of the Caucasus, tinged with the rosy morning hues, the summits of the Elbrouz and Kasbek†

* In the language of the country Khori signifies *mountain*. In Russian it is called Gora (Topa), also *mountain*. Khori is said to be the Gorsenna of Strabo.

† The Elbrouz is the highest mountain of the Caucasian range, and indeed of all Western Asia, exceeding 18,500 feet. It has many names: by the Tatars it is called Yaldus, and also Elbrouz; by the Armenians, Yalbus; by the Circassians, Uashhamako, or Oshga-Makhna (the Holy, or Fortunate Mountain); by the Karatchai, Mingi-tau; by the Abkhassians, Orfi-Ifgab or Itub; by the Suane-tians, Passa. The Cossacks call it Shat-gorá.

The Kasbek received its name from the Russians, in honour of the chief, who lives at the foot of the mountain, in the village of Stephan-Tzminde, and is very much devoted to the Russians: his name is Kasibeg, and the mountain is therefore properly called Kasibeg's Kaja-Gora (Kasibeg's Mount). The Georgians call this mountain Mquinvari (Ice Mountain); the Ossetes, Zeristi-Zub (Christ's Mount); the Circassians, Urs-khokh (the White Road).

From the earliest dawn of history we meet with a form, the Demiurgus of the Eastern mythe, who created the world and the human race; but, against the will of the Supreme Deity, imparted to them a spark of light (the fruit of the tree of knowledge), and was consequently banished by the Deity, and chained in the abyss. The Greek mythe names this form Prometheus (the conciliating god), a Titan of the elder race of gods. When he had stolen the fire from heaven, and brought it to the human race created before him, Zeus ordered him to be chained for ever to a rock on the Cau-

overtopping the lofty mountain-range of Akhalzik on the south. The spurs of the mountains are everywhere covered with picturesque ruins of castles: in

casus. This rock is said by a legend to have been the Kasbek (Mquinvari). Among the Abkhasians, who dwell near the Elbrouz, there exist traces of the mythe still. It is asserted that, out of the deep clefts and caverns of the mountain, groans and the clanking of chains are often heard. The legend says, that one of these people once went down into the deepest chasm of the mountain, where he found a powerful giant, who said to him, "Child of man of the upper world, who hast dared to come down here, tell me how the race of man lives in the world above. Is woman still true to man? Is the daughter still obedient to the mother, and the son to the father?" The Abkhasian answered in the affirmative; whereat the giant gnashed his teeth, groaned, and said, "Then must I still live on here with sighs and lamentation." (See 'Marigny, Three Voyages to the Coast of Circassia,' p. 188.) The Scythians to the north of the Caucasus are said to have paid particular worship to a divinity, who was called in their language From-theut, i.e. beneficent deity, a remarkable similarity of name with Prometheus. (Pelloutier, *Histoire des Celtes*.)

There is a remarkable connection between these two chief mountains of the Caucasus and a variety of Eastern legends and mythes. On the highest summit of the Elbrouz Noah's Ark is said first to have rested, and afterwards to have been carried away to Mount Ararat; no human foot can therefore tread on its top without the especial command of the Deity. Zoroaster describes the Elbrouz as the seat of Ahriman, the antagonistic principle to Ormuzd. On the top of the Kasbek is said to stand a splendid crystal castle, and near it a temple, in the middle of which hovers a golden dove. Cut in the lofty rocks, in the region of eternal snow, are seen innumerable caves, the dwellings of Troglodytes, and afterwards of pious anchorites. There is a pendent iron chain, which is only visible to especially pious and favoured people; this offers a means of ascending to the tent of Abraham, and the cradle of Christ, which are there found. The Caucasus, and especially these two mountains, are the abode of the Deevs, the powerful race who peopled the earth before Adam, and who, likewise fallen into sin, were banished here by the Deity, when he gave power to Adam to rule them and the whole world. These Deevs, according to a Persian Saga, were attacked by Haschenk on his twelve-footed horse. They hurled

the foreground, upon a lofty steep hill rising isolated from the plain, stood the extensive ruins of the castle of Chori, which the town adjoins in a kind of amphi-

rocks upon him, and killed him, and he lies buried here in the Caucasus.

The most ancient mythes of mankind, all the Western Asiatic legends (the Iranian and Turanian), have their centre of interest in the Caucasus. As Mohammedanism extended, Biblical legends and interpretations were superadded to the original mythes. Beyond the great wall which crosses the Caucasus diagonally, between the Black Sea and the Caspian, dwell Gog and Magog, who, it is believed, will one day get over this wall and destroy the kingdom of the faithful. This tradition is believed to be a direct prophecy of Mohammed's. What a remarkable psychological fact it is—apparently contradictory in principle—that a religion which in the strictest manner insists on Monotheism, not only permits every kind of mythe, which we Europeans call superstitious, the belief in a whole realm of spirits and of intermediary creatures between the Deity and man, between heaven and hell, but has interwoven these into its own religious system! The Mohammedans call the Caucasus *Kâf*, and believe that it girds the globe, the kingdom of the faithful, like a rampart. Upon it, and in the highest clefts, is situated the kingdom of the Jinn or Genii, who were created out of fire before Adam. They have the wants of men, eat, drink, and contract marriage, even with men. A portion of them are followers of Islamism, but the majority unbelievers.

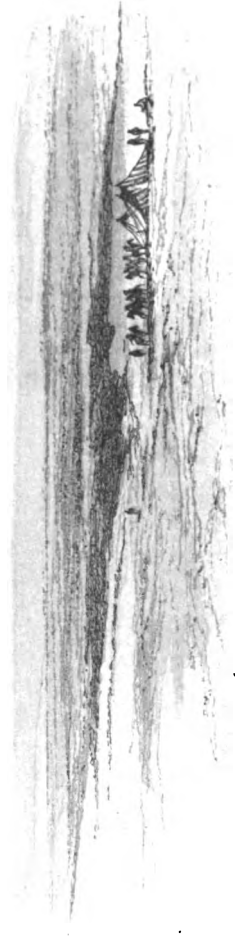
There is a remarkable parallel between this mythe and the German legend of the Mountain Spirits of the *Fichtelgebirge*, who are said to perform frequently by stealth their devotions in the Christian churches: they ride about on the whirlwind, and often watch over dilapidated and forsaken houses, baths, and stoves in the interior of the country. As *Efreets*, or ghosts, they are found in the Pyramids and sepulchral monuments, and have the power of assuming the forms of men and animals. The Mohammedans believe the Pyramids to have been built by *Jan-Ibn-Jan*, the last king of the Jinn. The believing Jinn are beneficent, though very irritable; but the unbelieving ones are malicious and hostile to mortals. People find protection against them by magical incantations, talismans, etc. The unbelieving Jinn, for their malice, are frequently hurled down from the clouds by the Angels: these are the falling stars. The Jinn generally appear in the first ten days and nights of the

theatre. At the foot of the castle hill runs a wild mountain stream. The immediate environs of this place are fertile, and boast the richest vegetation; whilst around, small hamlets, scattered in the midst of trees and underwood, with strongly-fortified towers, exhibit a favourable specimen of the agriculture of the country.

The accompanying illustrations of the Elbrouz and the Kasbek (the latter is taken from a village at its foot) are from the pencil of my travelling companion Prince Lieven. The following account of this view of the Elbrouz I borrow from the artist:—"I proceeded from Vladikarkas to Kertsch, travelling all night, and found myself in the morning in the midst of the South Russian Steppes, with only the sky overhead, and a monotonous view over boundless plains all around, lying in deep and silent stillness. On the left I beheld the summit of the Elbrouz, capped with the rosy hue of morning, and rising like a monarch of Spirits from the Steppes. Overtopping all his neighbours by about 8000 to 9000 feet, the Elbrouz is seen

first month, Moharrem, in the same manner as the German world of Spirits in the twelve nights between Christmas, New-year's Day, and the Epiphany. Similar to the Caucasus, the Untersberg in the German Alps, between Salzburg and Berchtesgaden, is the abode of a world of Spirits. The Circassians maintain that the Elbrouz is the dwelling of the Jinn-Padishah, or King of the Spirits.

I have just met with a passage in Q. Curtius (i. 6. cap. 3) which also refers to this Saga of Prometheus and the Caucasus: "*Agmen processit ad Caucasum montem et septem-decim dierum spatio Caucasum superavit exercitus. Rupes in eo decem in circuitu stadia complectitur, quatuor in altitudinem excedit, in qua vincitum Promethea fuisse antiquitas tradit.*"



MOUNT ELBROUZ, SEEN FROM THE STEPPES.

from a distance of thirty miles, standing quite alone, all the other mountains lying below the horizon.”

There are two ascents to the old ruined castle,—one from the town side, which I followed, and the other by a road from the water, protected by walls with towers and battlements, intended for making sallies. The two circular walls and towers on the summit are preserved, but all the rest is in ruins: the remains of vaults, cellars, springs, and a dungeon, are still visible. In times of danger the inhabitants of Khorî secured their property here, and many had even small houses on this height, where ground fetched a high price. The following pretty tradition was related to me by an Armenian, settled in Khorî, who conducted me about the place.

A thousand years ago this entire plain was an immense lake, out of which rose the present castle hill, like an uninhabitable island. The Czarevna (princess) Tamara was once hunting in this part of the country, carrying on her wrist a favourite falcon. She let him fly, and the falcon mounted and made a swoop at a dove; but missing her, he flew away, without heeding the call of the Princess, far over the lake, and alighted on the nearest island, the present castle hill. Then the Princess promised to give half her kingdom to any one who should bring her back the falcon. A brave young knight sprang upon his steed, dashed into the lake, and swimming safely to the island, caught the falcon; but on his return, horse, knight, and falcon sank into the lake, and were buried in its waves. The

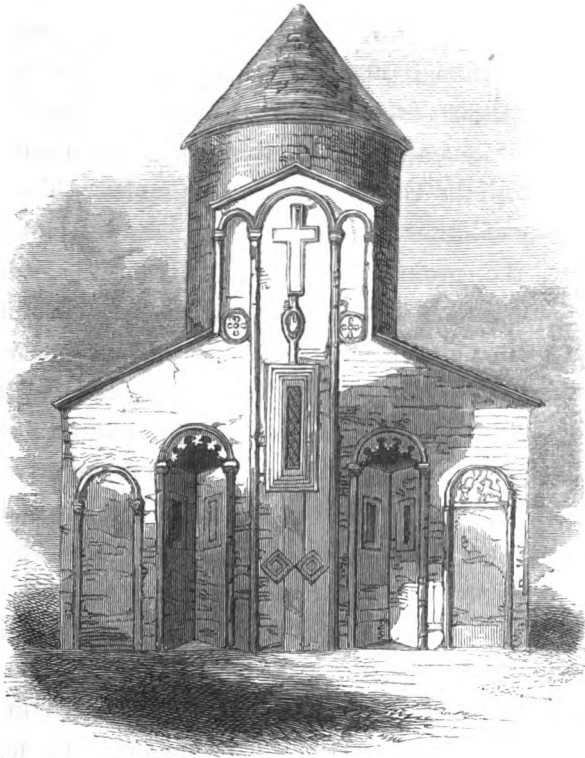
Princess ordered the lake to be drained, and its waters led into the Koor; then she built a castle upon the hill, and there mourned away the remainder of her life in solitude.

In some points this legend has a near resemblance to several of the German stories collected by the Brothers Grimm and others. Popular traditions and legends are mostly of a date far anterior to the existence of any living race; their principal outlines form a kind of heritage, transmitted from the most ancient times, and common to mankind at large; and as the various nations have branched off from the main stock, they have preserved and handed down the treasures of popular imagination for thousands of years. These legends readily attach and adapt themselves to new persons and places; they borrow more or less their colouring from the country in which a people have settled; but the groundwork of the picture remains invariable, as well as the clearly defined circle of ideas within which all legends are restricted.

At about nine versts from the next station, of Tschali, I again observed, not far from the road, the ruins of a strong tower. Near to a village was a large space of ground, of several acres, surrounded with high walls, in a tolerable state of preservation*.

* All the larger mansions of the nobles, castles of princes, and all monasteries, in this country, were fortified in the Middle Ages, and even down to modern times. The building is generally square, with high walls and towers at the four corners; a single, massive tower standing in the centre. The style of architecture and the con-

On the north stands a gate, surmounted by a tower. Within this area lie the ruins of a large building, and other smaller ones: we were informed that the the whole was once a considerable monastery, named Santavarvisi.



In the middle of the square was a church, in tolerable preservation, excepting partial dilapidation of struction appear to be derived from the Genoese, who may possibly have established many of these fortified places for the protection of their trade.

the roof and some other parts. This church may be considered one of the most beautiful and interesting specimens of architecture in Russia, which is not rich in monuments of art. The general form of the edifice, as well as the style of the interior, is Byzantine; four large columns support the lofty cupola over the nave, which latter forms an exact square, one end of it being partitioned off by the altar-screen, the Iconostasis. The execution however of many of the details, and the ornaments, are not Byzantine, but a mixture of that with the Gothic and Moorish styles. The four principal columns are pure Gothic, slender clustered pillars; the groined arches are Byzantine, and the windows Moorish, with many extremely elegant specimens of sculpture and arabesques. But notwithstanding this mixture of styles, a noble and beautiful air of unity reigns throughout. The church, which is built of freestone, with great care and stability, has three entrances, and on the west side has been added what appears to be a family sepulchre. The walls in the choir where the altar stands are covered with frescoes, in several rows, one above another; and on the cupola is a representation of the Saviour in the act of benediction, which is frequently seen in the Greek churches. The paintings are evidently not of older date than the end of the seventeenth century, and were perhaps executed by some inferior Italian artist, whom chance may have led to Georgia. The church itself however is unquestionably much more ancient, and belongs to quite another period, when there ex-

isted a close connection between the East and West, probably with Rome herself. I may hazard a conjecture, that this, as well as many other churches in the country between the Black Sea and the Caspian, date from the latter part of the Middle Ages, and from the connection with Genoa, which at that time ruled the coasts of the Black Sea.

In Khorī I saw an Armenian church of a similar style and character, but far less beautiful, and of a later date. The paintings are evidently of Western origin,—a Stoning of St. Stephen,—the Virgin, with a fair complexion, not dark, as in all the Greek Madonnas, etc. There were several modern frescoes, painted by a Pole. This church is devoid of sculpture and arabesques, and, like many other buildings in Georgia, is constructed of shingle, alternating with bricks, and cemented with a solid grey lime mixed with gravel.

Along the whole road to Tiflis, and indeed in every part of this country, ruined castles and fortified places are seen on all the heights,—indications of a warlike period of the Middle Ages rich in historical interest. The banks of the Koor resemble in this respect those of the Rhine, but here history is silent.

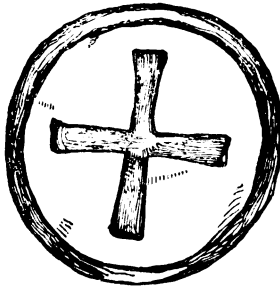
In Immiretia we met some clumsy four-wheeled waggons, but in Georgia only two-wheeled carts, generally drawn by buffalos, are used. On every side, on the roads and hills, we observed square stone chests, imbedded in the ground, eight feet long, three wide, and two deep: these were used in ancient times

as wine-presses, and the present aspect of the country shows the change which has taken place: vineyards are no longer to be seen, and only here and there a garden with vines. This circumstance, as well as the numerous desolate spots on which villages formerly stood, with their ruins, and the ridges seen in the forests, partially overgrown with thorns and brush-wood, clearly indicate a period when this country must have been far better cultivated and peopled, and have boasted a much higher degree of importance.

In Mingrelia and Immiretia I saw scarcely any corn grown but maize, and a remarkable species of millet, *khomi*, which does not grow further north, even in Kherson. In Georgia I first noticed barley grown to any extent, in the valley of the Koor, and further on towards Tiflis were large fields of wheat. Maize is here little cultivated, rye and oats not at all. The wheat is threshed out upon a floor made of fir-planks, in the open air, by a curious instrument of a triangular form, constructed of boards fastened together, and armed with small stones and blunt iron pins: a horse or buffalo is harnessed to one corner of this triangle, upon which some persons stand, to assist by their weight the operation of threshing.

On the morning of the 10th of August we reached Mzketha, anciently the residence of the Czars of Georgia, but now a wretched, mean-looking place: ruins, and one or two churches are the sole remaining traces of its former importance. Tradition says that the town was built by Mzkhitos, son of Kharth-

los, great-grandson of Noah. This place is situated on the confluence of the Koor and the Aragui. In the year 469 the kings of Georgia removed their residence from hence to Tiflis. This place has been repeatedly described by travellers, and I need not therefore repeat what is so well known. I first visited a church, in good preservation, standing in a walled churchyard. Twelve nuns have established themselves here, although it is no regular convent: in fact, there are no proper convents of nuns within the jurisdiction either of the Georgian or Armenian churches. In one corner I found a picture, painted on a gold ground, and evidently an old German work of art: what accident can have brought it here? Built into the wall of this church was a round stone, about three feet in diameter, upon which was roughly chiselled in relief a circle with a cross, similar to those I have frequently seen in the ancient churches and other buildings of the Templars. The cross of the Eastern churches has always a different form.



We next went to the principal church, formerly the cathedral of the Exarchate of Georgia, which was in progress of restoration. In this building the ancient kings of Georgia were crowned, and many of them lie buried here : to the present day likewise the Catholicos of Georgia is here consecrated*. This edifice also stands in a large walled churchyard, in which are several poor and dilapidated dwellings of the officiating priests. This church is said to have been erected in the tenth century ; it was afterwards destroyed by Timur, and restored between the years 1414 and 1424 : it is built of a greenish stone, in the same style as the church of Santavarvisi : the walls are covered with frescos, of very inferior merit, and apparently of a late date of European art. The first Russian saint's picture was brought to Georgia in 1750.

Mzketha lies at the head of two connected valleys, and upon a mountain opposite to Armoz are the ruins of a strong fortress, with numerous towers and battlements : all the surrounding hills are crowned with high watch-towers. The road to Tiflis crosses a bridge, the erection of which is ascribed to Pompey, and then follows the course of the Koor, which is in some parts shut in by high walls of rock. In the latter are artificial caves, many of them from twenty to above forty

* In this church is preserved, as a relic of peculiar sanctity, a piece of the garment which Christ is said to have worn. In the Uspenski Cathedral at Moscow, and in the Imperial Church at St. Petersburg, are also deposited portions of this sacred relic : Shah Abbas sent them to the Czar Michel Feodorovitch, after the conquest of Georgia.



VIEW OF TIFLIS.



feet,—at a remote period the dwellings of Troglodytes, and in more recent times an asylum of the inhabitants in their civil wars.

We reached Tiflis at eleven o'clock. This town has a peculiar aspect: on the side from which we entered, the quarter inhabited by Russians, it has a perfectly European look: straight streets, rows of modern houses, elegant shops, milliners, apothecaries, even a bookseller, with cafés, public buildings, a Government palace, churches with cupolas and towers*, the various Russian military uniforms with French paletots and frock-coats, quite transported us back to Europe. But where this European town ends, one of a perfectly Asiatic character begins, with bazaars, caravansaries, and long streets, in which the various trades are carried on in open shops. In one part is seen a row of smithies, the men all hammering away on their anvils, heedless of the crowds of passers-by. Then follows another row of houses, where tailors are seated at work, in precisely the same fashion, and with the same gesticulations and agility, as with us. After these succeed shoemakers, furriers, etc.

The population is no less varied and interesting: here Tatars, in the costume from which the so-called Polish dress is evidently derived; in another part thin, sunburnt Persians, with loose flowing dresses;

* There are said to be in Tiflis twenty-two Russo-Georgian churches, fifteen Armenian churches, one Catholic church; also a Persian Medjet, a Tatar Medjet, and a Jewish synagogue. The German colonists have a Protestant church in their village outside Tiflis.



Koords, with a bold and enterprising look ; Lesghis and Circassians, engaged in their traffic of horses ; lastly, the beautiful Georgian women, with long flowing veils and high-heeled slippers ; nearly all the population displaying a beauty of varied character, which no other country can exhibit,—an effect heightened by the parti-coloured, picturesque, and beautiful costumes. In no place are both the contrasts and the connecting links between Europe and Asia found in the same immediate juxtaposition as in Tiflis.

I met with an excellent lodging in the house of a colonist from Suabia, Herr Salzmann, who had established an inn on the banks of the Koor, and here I once more enjoyed German fare and comfort. My host showed himself to be a man of acute and practical understanding, united with considerable power of observation ; no one is better acquainted with the people of the Caucasian district and their social and political relations ; he has travelled over the whole country, and mixed with all classes of its inhabitants ; in fact I have gathered more information on these subjects from no person than from Herr Salzmann.

During our stay in Tiflis I made many interesting acquaintances, amongst others that of Herr von Kotzebue, a well-informed man, but not very communicative, maintaining the diplomatic reserve common to most Germans in the Russian service. The Civil Governor, Herr von Hourka, to whom I had a letter of introduction, rendered me all the attention and assistance in his power. But the most important ac-

quaintance I made was a guide and interpreter, in the person of a shoemaker named Peter Neu. This man was a perfect original. Peter when a lad had emigrated with his kinsfolk and countrymen from Würtemberg, and with them had settled first at Odessa, and afterwards in a newly-established village colony near Tiflis. But Peter Neu was of a restless disposition ; he wandered about through various parts of the country, went afterwards to Asia Minor, then to Persia, was appointed interpreter to the Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza, travelled with him for eight years, and after the death of the Prince returned to his countrymen. Peter was an invaluable treasure to me ; he had a remarkable genius for languages, and knew a dozen European and Asiatic tongues,—German, French, Russian, Circassian, Tatar, Turkish, Armenian, Georgian, Persian, Koordish, etc. Peter had an astonishing memory, and in six weeks would, without any effort, acquire a power of expressing himself fluently in a language perfectly new to him. United with this talent he possessed a rich gift of poetical imagination, and had an inexhaustible treasury of *märchen*, legends, and popular songs, gleaned from all the countries he had visited ; and as we lay in our tarantas, day or night, he used to relate these stories with untiring energy, until I fell asleep*. At first he was somewhat reserved, fancying that such popular stories were too trifling an amusement for a learned traveller ; but

* The legends and tales which I have occasionally introduced were mostly communicated to me by Peter.

after a few days we became bosom friends, having food, lodging, and everything in common. And now the floodgates of Peter's knowledge were opened! whenever, as we drove along, I observed any ruin, a strangely-shaped hill, a cavern, etc., I exclaimed, "Come, Peter, now for another story,—some legend or a fairy tale!" And before an hour had passed, he would return from the nearest village, Tatar or Georgian, whatever place it happened to be, with a whole load of stories. At the same time, however, Peter was an adept in buffoonery, and was never satisfied without receiving every day or two a downright scolding for some act of stupidity. As soon as this was administered and over, he embraced and kissed me again in the tenderest manner. Good, honest Suabian, I will at least record your name and virtues in these pages, that if my name should ever go down to posterity, yours may accompany it.

After settling down in my lodging, then sauntering for an hour or two about this oriental town, which was of high interest to me, and paying a few visits, I went at noon with Herr Salzmann to the German colony, outside the town. At the hotel here I met the well-known German naturalist, Dr. Wagener, from Munich, who was busily engaged in packing the treasures of natural history he had collected, in order to have them shipped. Dr. Wagener had just ended his travels, and was now returning to Europe, to arrange the rich acquisitions he had made, and give the public the results of his researches.

CHAPTER III.

GERMAN COLONISTS.—CAUSES OF THEIR EMIGRATION.—RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.—THE NEW PROPHECESS.—MODE OF THRESHING.—IRRIGATION.—VILLAGE CORPORATIONS.—AQUEDUCT NEAR TIFLIS.—CANALS IN PERSIA.—INFLUENCE OF GERMAN COLONISTS.—AGRICULTURE IN GEORGIA.—FOOD AND LABOUR.—COMMUNAL AND FAMILY LIFE.—ETHNOGRAPHICAL ARCHIVES IN TIFLIS.—RUSSIAN BEAUROCRACY.—ATTEMPTS AT REORGANIZATION.—FARMS AND VILLAGES.—THE NATZVAL.—SEIGNORIAL TITHES.—STATE TAXES.—CROWN PEASANTS.

THE German Colonies in the Transcaucasian provinces consist, I was told, entirely of Suabians, principally from Würtemberg, who emigrated about the year 1818, deeming their religious opinions and rights injuriously invaded in their own country. Among other innovations and grievances of which they complained, a new hymn-book had been introduced, which the country-people considered unorthodox, and too lax in its sentiments; they could not consent to part with their old church hymns, sound in doctrine and vigorous in tone, which had afforded them spiritual comfort for so many generations, and they resolved to emigrate. The Russian Government assigned them

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plots of ground in the neighbourhood of Odessa ; but the colony did not flourish, and at their request the majority were transplanted to the Transcaucasian provinces. Here likewise they had for some years to struggle with many difficulties, sickness, mortality of cattle, and bad harvests, resulting from their ignorance of the country. This impeded their success for a time in various ways ; but they have now overcome all these obstacles, and the majority of the colonists are well off, whilst many have grown rich.

The Russian Government has not interfered with their religious belief and observances. The colonies are in general under the direction of the Protestant Consistory, but are left undisturbed in their faith and worship : they have retained their favourite old hymn-book, and choose their own ministers, after subjecting them to a strict examination, into the character and measure of their religious views. But where the spirit of dissidence has once taken root, its tendency is constantly to spread : the traditional feeling of religious oppression, which these colonists originally brought with them from their native country, has given rise to a belief that true religion will be everywhere suppressed by the enemy of the human race, and indeed that this has already taken place. According to this notion, we are entered on the period when only a small number of true believers remain, and when, likewise in accordance with the ancient prophecies, the advent of the Messiah and the Millennium are at hand. These people hold therefore that it is the

duty of the true believers to prepare for this event, by exhibiting even in the external observances of life the purity and simplicity of the primitive Christians, surrendering all private property and gains, working only to obtain the bare necessities of life, spending all the rest of their time in prayer and fasting, and abstaining from every kind of luxury. A work by Michel Hahn, of Würtemberg, and the writings of Jung Stilling, contributed much to the spread of these tenets. Two sects arose, the stricter one of which prophesied that the end of the world would arrive that very autumn, and insisted upon an entire abstinence from marriage; the other party did not conceive that the end of the world was so near, and allowed marriages to be contracted for the present. Both sects however agreed in abandoning all their possessions in this country, and emigrating to Jerusalem, there to await the issue of events. At the head of all these sectaries, but especially of the stricter party, was a woman, fifty years of age, who, according to all that I heard related of her, must have been a very remarkable person. For many years past she had submitted to the greatest voluntary privations, and no word was ever heard from her lips but some passage or expression from the Bible: this she would ingeniously weave into every form of speech, and apply to every situation and circumstance of life. It was said that she knew the whole Bible by heart, from beginning to end. She exercised a kind of magical influence on all around her: this I was told by an un-

questionable witness, Herr von Kotzebue, who took an active interest in these matters, as the plenipotentiary of Government, and from whom I heard the following particulars. He confessed that this woman, whom his reason could only regard as a fanatic, had made an almost imposing impression upon him. I may add, that Herr von Kotzebue appeared a man more addicted to reasoning than to feeling, and professed no religious belief.

The sectaries began by selling their houses and ground to other colonists, for the most part at a mere nominal price, giving away all except simple necessaries, and establishing among themselves a community of goods. The woman, at their head, announced her intention of emigrating with her followers, on a certain day, in the direction of Jerusalem, whither she would lead them in a straight line. The Government now interfered, and explained to these people, by the proper authority, that no obstacle would be offered to their emigration, in which they would even be assisted if they desired; but that, as their intention was to pass through Turkey, it was first necessary to request permission of the Turkish authorities; moreover that they could not be permitted to start upon such an expedition almost destitute of the necessaries of life to support them on their journey; and consequently that the sale of their landed property could not be sanctioned. In the worst event however, supposing they were obliged to return, their farms should be restored to them, upon their giving back the money

they had received. The Government proposed that they should send a deputation to Constantinople, to lay their petition before the Sultan, offering that the expenses of this mission should be defrayed, and their request supported as far as possible. A part of them concurred in this view, and selected three deputies, who proceeded to Constantinople; they had not returned when I left the country. The rest, comprising nearly the entire population of a village of about fifty families, under the guidance of this singular woman, declared that they would not trust to human wisdom and foresight, but to the voice of God which spoke to their hearts. All attempts to influence them by persuasion being vain, Herr von Kotzebue at last received instructions to detain them if necessary by force, until an answer should be received from Constantinople.

Herr von Kotzebue was informed that on a certain day, at four o'clock in the morning, these people had determined to start. At midnight therefore he placed guards of Cossacks on all the roads leading out of the village, and repaired himself to the spot where the emigrants were expected to set out. After posting sentinels, he retired to take a short rest. At three o'clock a sentinel aroused him, reporting that a bright flame was visible in the village. Herr von Kotzebue jumped up, but could see nothing: either the imagination of the sentinel had misled him, or the light was that of some meteor. Half an hour after the village was astir, and at daybreak the singing

of a hymn was heard, the sound gradually drawing nearer, and soon the pilgrims were seen approaching, two and two in procession, the woman walking alone at the head. Herr von Kotzebue advanced to meet the troop, and addressed them ; but without heeding him, they continued their way, singing. He kept receding, in vain endeavouring to obtain a hearing : at last, with a sudden resolution, he seized the woman by both arms, and held her tight. At once there was a stop ; the singing ceased, the woman knelt down, and all followed her example : a breathless silence ensued,—every one, with clasped hands, was engaged in prayer. After a few minutes the woman stood up, and addressed Herr von Kotzebue in several passages from the Bible, declaring that the Lord had commanded them to yield to violence, and submit to the authority placed over them ; she added that they would quietly return home, and await with resignation the issue of events. This scene took place shortly before I left the country, and I never heard the issue of the affair ; but the truth of the particulars here related was confirmed by all the colonists with whom I spoke.

The German colony at Tiflis, as I have observed, is in a very flourishing state ; to the European inhabitants, the Russian civil and military officers, it is almost indispensable. The supply of the products of the field and garden,—vegetables, fruit, and poultry,—is in their hands. The Georgians are an idle race : fond as they are, for example, of potatoes, they buy,

beg, or steal them from the German colonists, but it has never occurred to them to cultivate these vegetables themselves.

The colonists have adopted many things which they found suited to this country; for instance, to my surprise, I observed the Georgian mode of threshing, before mentioned, in use among them. Herr Salzmann explained to me its advantages: the instrument is constructed of planks, to the under side of which are fastened small stones in several rows; a man then stands upon it, and it is dragged by a horse over the corn, which it thus threshes out quickly and cleanly, at the same time completely crushing the straw. This straw, with a portion of the corn, is afterwards mixed with grass, and yields good and cheap fodder for the horses, whereas in Germany the straw is eaten usually uncut, and gives little nutriment. After threshing, the straw is tossed up into the air, and separated from the corn, which falls down. This method prevails throughout a great part of Asia.

The heat, and the equal temperature (it rains only at certain seasons, and some years not at all) render the irrigation, not only of the meadow, but still more of the arable land, absolutely necessary. In Armenia nothing will grow without watering, and in Georgia this is also indispensable*.

In all parts of the country still under cultivation

* Below Kakhétia, the Persians in their last invasion, in 1797, destroyed all the canals, sluices, etc. There was no power to restore them. The population left the country; it is now only a Steppe.

are found canals and corresponding systems of irrigation, every little brook being turned to account. These are kept up by the villages, several frequently uniting to maintain a small system of canals, which serves them in common. The inhabitants form a kind of corporate body, every one being called upon to bear a certain part of the burden, according to the extent of his landed property, and sharing proportionably in the advantages of the irrigation, the water being turned on to his fields for so many hours in the day. The corporation is under a water-bailiff (Merue), chosen by the inhabitants, who regulates the works and the use of the water, decides all disputes, etc. If any man resists the authority of the Merue, or offends him, the community distrain one of his cattle, kill and eat it. The Merue receives small dues from the gardens and land. It is evident that the country was formerly under much better cultivation: in extensive tracts of Steppes and forests may be observed frequent traces of cultivation, with innumerable ditches, dams, and even ruins of masonry, all clearly indicating the former existence of canals and sluices*. The Shura Steppe is traversed

* The present population of the districts subject to Russia is reckoned at about one million and a half, and that of the independent districts at two millions and a half. When Batukhan (in 1224) subjected all the country, he forced a levy of every tenth male, and 800,000 men were raised; accordingly the population consisted of sixteen millions, or fourfold its amount at this day. At the present time the land is incapable of supporting such a number of men; this could only have been possible when an immense system of irrigation existed.

in every direction by ancient canals, which, if mapped down on paper, would show the former existence of a scientific, regular, and well-organized system of irrigation; the whole tract is now waste, although the soil is excellent. Madder grows here luxuriantly, and capers are also found wild. Noble cedars are occasionally met with, and at the junction of the Alasan with the Yora are naphtha springs, which remain wholly unused. In the delta formed by the confluence of the Koor and the Araxes, I was informed, there once existed a large network of canals. Above this confluence, the Koor has been connected with the Araxes, east of the mountain-chain of Karabach, by a large canal, twenty to thirty leagues in length, which is still visible. The tract of country stretching from this canal, which was fed by these streams, in a kind of amphitheatre up to the head of the Drook, has been cultivated for an extent of perhaps a hundred German square miles, watered by smaller canals, which receive their supplies from the parent one. The construction of such a system, in plan and execution, must have been a truly gigantic work.

There is no doubt that in former times Asiatic Turkey and Persia had a much larger population, and were more cultivated, than at the present day. The countries under the sway of the powerful monarchies of Assyria and Babylon, reckoning anciently many millions of inhabitants, are now almost entirely desert Steppes. Such a flourishing state in those early times necessarily implied the existence of extensive

systems of irrigation, a fact confirmed by what we observe in China and India, where the dense population renders such a system indispensable. Who, we may ask, established these systems of irrigation in Western Asia? and why, when once destroyed, have they never been restored?—a task which would evidently be much less arduous than that of their first construction, since the ruins and remains of the past which still exist, actually trace out the lines and plans of these works.

The systems of irrigation in the Caucasian countries especially are of more ancient date than the present inhabitants of the soil, or there must have been a period when they were all subject to one despotic rule. These systems extend beyond the limits of any one of the present nations; and yet it is very improbable that *different* peoples co-operated of their free will to construct a common system of irrigation: this would have implied a higher political state than ever existed here. It is therefore more than probable that the works belong to a period when these countries were under a single despotic dominion, to the time of the most ancient sovereigns of Asia—the Assyrian, Median, and Persian. On the fall of these governments, and their dissolution into small states, according to their respective nationalities, and in consequence of the wars that resulted, these colossal works were destroyed, the land became a desert, and the population dwindled away. At the present day there exist no internal elements of resuscitation, to re-esta-

blish the former flourishing cultivation by restoring the great systems of irrigation.

After this digression we return to the German colonists at Tiflis. The good cultivation of the estates is attributable to their irrigation ; but, not having sufficient works themselves, they hire the use of those belonging to a foreigner at a high price. These works have been constructed by a Persian, at his own cost, and he derives from them a considerable revenue. We shall give a short sketch of this remarkable man.

At the head of the Mohammedan clergy in Persia stands the chief Moollah or Mushtahid, who is always a descendant of the sacred family of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed. Before the last Persian war, Aga Mir Fatah was invested with this hereditary dignity, and resided in Tabreez. When Paskewitsch appeared before Tabreez, the Mushtahid entered into negotiation for the surrender of the place ; having thus incurred the hostility of the Shah, he subsequently went to Tiflis ; but a few years after he returned to Persia, a new Mushtahid having usurped his authority. In Ispahan he was poisoned, from the effects of which however he recovered ; his two eldest sons, who were also poisoned, died. He drove away his enemy, and now resides in Tabreez, the Shah not daring to oppose him. His eldest son, Hajji Aga, lives on his father's estate near Tiflis ; he has also two younger sons there, with five of his wives. He often visits his family at Tiflis, and receives a pension of 20,000 roubles from the Russian Government.

This Mushtahid has constructed an aqueduct at Abjalah, sixteen versts from Tiflis; he has also, by the aid of Persian, Armenian, and Nestorian workmen, whom he brought with him, established a system of irrigation, from which he derives a large income, as all the neighbouring population are obliged to purchase their supply of water from him. Thus, for example, the German Colony at Tiflis pays him annually the sum of five hundred silver roubles for the use of his aqueduct, which affords the principal supply of water for their gardens.

I gathered some particulars from Peter Neu respecting the Persian system of irrigation. Persia consists in great part of extensive plains, which especially require irrigation; and its decline is greatly attributable to the neglect of the construction and maintenance of the canals, under successive feeble Governments. Everything is left to private enterprize, and it is considered one of the most religious and patriotic works to open springs and construct canals. In Persia there are two kinds of canals,—one subterranean, for conveying fresh water to the towns; salt or brackish springs being more common than fresh ones. These canals are mostly cut in a stiff stratum of clay, which runs through a great part of Persia, beneath the surface soil. The canal is simply excavated, and at every twenty to thirty paces a small shaft is sunk down to it, and around these openings are little mounds of earth, looking like so many molehills, to indicate their site. In some parts the formation of these canals is

attended with great difficulty and expense : thus, for instance, the grandfather of the present Mushtahid in Tabreez, in fulfilment of a vow he had made, constructed a canal two feet deep, for the benefit of that town, carrying it over high mountains and plains, a distance of twenty-four fersach (about four miles). Innumerable wells are met with, which have been dug to obtain fresh water, in fulfilment of vows. The surface water of the upper strata is almost invariably salt. A copper, or sometimes a silver, cup, or a cocoa-nut shell, is attached by a small chain to the brink of the well, "for the thirsty traveller," who, in compliance with custom, offers up in return a pious "Allah rach-net illesson !" for the soul of the constructor of the well, —a charming custom !

The German colonists frequently go on business to Persia, where they are very well received, especially among the grandees, on account of their honesty and fidelity. In the last Persian war a body of Persians attacked and began to plunder the German colony of Helenendorf; but no sooner was the Persian commander informed that it was a German village, than he ordered everything to be restored to the inhabitants. He then made them the offer of settling in Persia, promising that they should be well off, have as much ground as they desired, and receive all possible assistance; adding that, if eventually they grew tired of the country, they would be at liberty to leave it, upon the sole condition that they should not go to Russia; at the same time, however, a pretty daughter

of one of the colonists was sent to the harem of the Shah!

The German colonists have hitherto exercised little influence on the civilization of the surrounding Georgians and Tatars. The Georgians are indolent, and the Tatars, who are Mohammedan, are too far removed in a social point of view. The case would have been widely different had the colonies been founded in Armenia, the inhabitants of which country are much more active, susceptible, and intelligent; I am convinced that among this people the influence of such colonists would have been incalculable, and European civilization would have found a ready admittance.

The Georgians, Tatars, and Armenians are alike ignorant of hay as food for cattle: the climate indeed is such, that the cattle can usually remain out at grass the whole year through. If frost and snow continue for an unusual duration, boughs are cut from the trees, which serve as fodder. The Georgians were quite astonished at seeing the colonists make and stack their hay, but they have not imitated their example.

These Georgians do not manure their fields. In May or June the ground is broken up, and in autumn, the wheat is sown, without any previous ploughing, and consequently often in grass a foot high*; the seed is then bush-harrowed into the soil. For two or three

* At first the German colonists ploughed the land again before sowing, in spite of the warning of the Georgians; but a total failure of the crops ensued, the sharp winds destroying the tender unprotected seed.

years wheat is sown, once perhaps barley, and then the field lies fallow for several years; the manure upon it becomes dried, and serves as fuel, which is superior to turf. The meadow-land along the Koor is extremely fertile, the ears of wheat and barley yielding from twenty-five to thirty-five grains.

Farming-stock is a favourite source of wealth with the Georgians; they usually plough with oxen, and a very clumsy plough, to which they yoke eight or ten pair of oxen; and, as some of the peasants have not so many beasts, they form associations for ploughing. They trench nearly a foot deep, with a furrow two feet and a quarter in width. The colonists plough only with horses, six or eight to the light plough, and not more than half a foot deep, but they raise better crops than the Georgians.

The live stock of the Georgians consists chiefly of sheep and swine, and their ordinary diet is pork and mutton. Only the poorer classes among these people and the Armenians eat beef, which is of a bad quality; in fact scarcely any part of the ox is eatable, and only the cow's flesh is tolerable. The Persians eat no beef. It has been a matter of wonder that the Georgians have never lapsed into Mohammedanism, although several of their Czars renounced Christianity, to maintain their crowns against the Persians, and the Christian churches in Georgia fell into disuse and decay; one writer attributes the fact to their invincible reluctance to abandon the two staple products of their country, wine and pork. The German colonists of

Marienfeld keep no sheep, as in summer they would be obliged to drive them up to the mountains ; and having no superfluous herdsmen among themselves, they would have to hire Georgians, in whom they place little confidence.

The country-people in Georgia eat, morning and noon, usually a cold meal, of bread, greens, celery, leeks, cress, and, except in fast-time, milk, sour-milk, and cheese ; in the evening they have something warm, usually mutton dressed with celery, and are delighted when they can obtain potatoes from the colonists.

I gathered the following information respecting the wages of farm servants in the German colony near Tiflis. The ordinary labourer receives forty to fifty kopecks a day, but the artisan—carpenter or brick-layer—one rouble and twenty kopecks (about three shillings and tenpence). The wages of an able farm-servant, beside his board, are eight to ten roubles a month : a maid-servant has four to eight. A coachman in the service of a Russian gentleman here receives his board (at noon, consisting of two or three different dishes, meat and wine), a hat, caftan, and scarf, and 120 roubles annual wages. Generally speaking, all food is rather dearer at Tiflis than at Moscow.

In the colony of Marienfeld, a short day's journey from Tiflis, the rate of wages was somewhat different. Here a German farm-servant, besides his food and drink, with a pair of boots, receives in wages only from thirty-five to forty roubles a year. The Geor-

gians are not considered uscful men-servants, especially in the stable. A labourer receives from seventeen to twenty kopecks a day in winter, and in the haymaking-time from forty to fifty.

The Georgians dwelling to the west of Tiflis require help, especially at certain seasons of the year: the Immiretians then come down from the mountains and take service with them, by the year or month: if the engagement is only by the day, the ordinary pay is twenty-five kopecks, but in harvest-time forty.

In order to comprehend the political and social position which a people occupy, or to which they may at a future period attain, in the great family of nations, —to discern the rudiments of that capacity for civilization which time may develope, and which will mark their history,—it is necessary in the first place to learn their views of religion, and the external forms in which these are clothed; but above all to become acquainted with their domestic relations and communal constitution.

I pass over the ancient world; its social condition, as well as its views of religion and civilization, were on the eve of extinction when Christ appeared. Since that era the Christian nations* alone have manifested

* Mohammedanism was essentially an offset from Christianity, of a semi-religious semi-political character; it presents the pure monotheistic direction which the Eastern Church, especially in its sects,

a tendency toward a higher state of civilization, and a capacity for solving the great problems of humanity.

The western portion of Christendom, imbued with the Germano-Romanic views of life and religion, had been a centre of unity in faith and the fosterer of civilization; whilst the Eastern Church, with all its subdivisions, appeared buried in a deep sleep; and although in point of civilization it occupied a much higher position than any of the heathen nations, or even than Mohammedanism, yet it remained on the same footing as during the Middle Ages. This was undoubtedly attributable to its separation from Rome, which checked all free movement, and induced a fixedness even in mere immaterial forms, which was maintained with an iron tenacity. But that which theology failed to accomplish, was achieved by the offspring of Christianity in the West,—modern Civilization: penetrating by slow but sure degrees into the East, diffusing itself throughout and transforming social life, and exercising an influence on the political institutions and views prevailing in the Mohammedan countries, Egypt, Persia, Turkey, and India. In this new epoch of the world's history, Russia appears to be peculiarly fitted and called upon to interpose her mediation,—a country which traces her national stem to the West, while she derives her religious views from the East.

had already indicated and followed—one-sided and dogmatical. During a brief period of the highest civilization, it appears only in the light of a sect of Christianity, as is clearly indicated in Mohammedan tradition, its tales and legends. See Weil, *Sagen der Morgenländer*.

Hence the facility with which western civilization found its way into the political and public affairs of Russia. There is no doubt that, from the same causes, the theology of the West will in time penetrate the Eastern Church, with all its divisions—Greek, Armenian, Nestorian, and Coptic. I incline however to the opinion, that if a reconciliation and union were to be effected between the Eastern and Western Churches, on a basis of equal rights and the establishment of a centre of unity, political civilization, and with it the dominion of the world, would eventually pass over from the west to the east.

My travels and observation, during more than twenty years, have convinced me that an acquaintance with the manners of a people, their moral and material interests, domestic relations, corporate associations, and especially the communal relations of the lower classes, is indispensable to a real knowledge of the history and constitution of peoples and of states. In the course of my travels in the Caucasian Provinces these objects constantly engaged my attention. Here perhaps may be found the solution of many problems in the history of the European family of nations, which unquestionably emigrated from hence; and it is not improbable that future investigations may trace all the European and Western Asiatic nations to this source.

These brief and general remarks can do no more than suggest subjects for future investigation, the requisites for which are an attentive and impartial sur-

vey of the everyday life of a people, together with diligent observation and study. For the latter, a rich store of materials, hitherto wholly unused, is extant, especially in the archives of Tiflis.

The tendency which prevails everywhere, among the large class of the bureaucracy,—and perhaps in Russia in an especial degree,—is toward centralization, and the reduction of all relations of society to a certain uniformity. Life in its individual forms is radically distasteful to this class. Nor is this by any means peculiar to the officials in monarchical states; the Governments of the school of the French Republic understand this principle more completely, and carry it out with more energy, than any others. Now this essentially anti-Germanic spirit acts as a solvent on the elements of popular life in the German and Romanic nations. Popular life in England, which is completely embodied in the system of the government, forms a single and noble exception in Europe, and, in part, in North America, the offspring of England. It cannot however be denied, that centralization and the generalization of all forms of social and state polity—that Procrustean bed of popular character and life—greatly facilitates government, and admits of much more efficient means of developing the external power of the State. This is the great secret in France. The French people do not at all want freedom,—in fact they cannot tolerate true freedom; they want only internally *equality*, and externally *power*. For this reason centralization will always prevail in Paris,

whatever clamour may be raised against it in the Departments.

In Russia the system of government is derived singly and simply from the theory and practice of modern bureaucracy. It is undeniable that centralization and generalized forms of government in the higher departments of administration, perfectly correspond with the character of the Slavonic race, and are peculiarly adapted to Russia. But as there is a deep-seated contrast between the native character of the Germanic and Slavonic races, a system which is quite adapted and even necessary to Russia, and is felt to be so by the mass of the people themselves, is wholly unsuited, and perhaps fatal, on the shores of the Baltic and in the provinces of the Caucasus.

It is, as I have before observed, probable that serfdom did not formerly exist among the peasantry in Georgia and Mingrelia, and was not introduced until the occupation of these countries by Russia;—not by law, which would never have been sanctioned by the Emperors Paul, Alexander, and Nicholas, but in the ordinary course of administration. The Russian officials were accustomed to regard the peasants in their own country as serfs, and naturally looked upon those living under the nobles and princes in Georgia in the same light. The Crown peasants in Russia have been emancipated since the time of Alexander, and the same class in Georgia are consequently free likewise*.

* Attempts have in recent times been made, originating at St. Petersburg, to check the spread of serfdom. A *ukase* was issued,

The existence in all these countries of a certain system and constitution in family and communal life, arising out of manners and customs, and even sanctioned by law, however defective (in Georgia indeed by the Vakhtang code of laws), was entirely disregarded by the Russian officials. They were far too indolent to study the existing social condition of the people, and followed only the laws and principles of administration to which they were accustomed and which they brought from Russia; whilst their rule was not a little marked by arbitrary conduct, with occasional extortion and spoliation; the superintendence and control being naturally much feebler and more ineffectual in the Caucasian provinces than elsewhere. The entire administration was at the same time of a military character; and all complaints, even those of a merely civil nature, were referred to the General in command.

As a natural result of this state of things, a bitter animosity to the Russians and the Russian Government grew up amongst all these Caucasian tribes. On occasion of a journey which the Emperor Nicholas made, in October, 1837, through these provinces, it is said that the tschinowniks, or officials, issued an order that no petitions should be presented to him.

which declares that in Georgia the presumption is against serfdom; it must in each case be proved. But every person who was registered a serf previous to the 7th of August, 1809, was to remain so. Moreover, whoever was recognized as a serf, by a judicial decree before the year 1836, on the ground of thirty years' service, is incapable of establishing any claim against it.

At Akhalzik, the inhabitants of an entire village were seen kneeling on the road in silence as the Emperor drove past, and this circumstance recurred several times. The Emperor inquired of the people what it meant; they replied, that they were forbidden to approach him with petitions: he told them it was not true, and that they might fearlessly present any petitions. Thereupon the people poured forth to meet the Emperor in such numbers, that during his journey only as far as Erivan, about fourteen hundred petitions and complaints were preferred to him.

The Emperor conceived the idea of effecting an important separation between the civil and the military administration; although the former could not be wholly withdrawn from the control of the commander-in-chief, as Governor-General of the whole Province. To this end, the laws of the earlier princes, especially those of Georgia, the code of the Czar Vakhtang, the Armenian laws, nay even the customary rights of the Tatars, were collected and translated into Russian; and the officials were ordered to conform to these in the administration of the government.

In April, 1837, Baron Paul von Hahn was instructed to ascertain the condition of all these districts, with reference to national peculiarities, communal institutions, and customary rights; he was at the same time commanded to lay down a comprehensive plan, founded upon these inquiries, for the future administration of the country. Four Commissioners were associated with him in these labours, from the

Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Finance, and War. Baron von Hahn belonged to what is called in Germany the historical school: in his opinion it was a matter of primary importance to maintain the peculiar and historical features of nationality in a people, upon which alone could be effectually founded a healthy state of social life in the lower classes,—in the domestic and communal, the agricultural and commercial relations,—which might be acceptable to the people at large, and productive of an increased attachment to the Russian Government. Such a social organization, modified according to their own political views, might be the best adapted to the inhabitants of the Caucasian Provinces; consisting as they do of isolated tribes, sixty or seventy in number, each having its historical traditions, its own language and usages, and in many cases its peculiar religious rites: for although in the same village Armenians, Georgians, and Tatars are found living together, they scarcely ever intermix; each people preserving its own religion, customs, dress, manners, tribunals, and police. A project was formed by Baron von Hahn for organizing the entire administration of this country, which was countersigned by the Governor-General Golovnin, and received the Imperial sanction; and Baron Hahn went a second time to Tiflis, in 1840, to bring this project into operation.

Such views could not be acceptable to the heads of the army or the class of Russian officials (tschinovniks); and immediately after the departure of Baron

Hahn, intrigues are said to have been set on foot to defeat the execution of his scheme ; eventually it fell to the ground, and the old system was re-established in full force.

I communicated the above brief account to a well-informed man, acquainted both with the persons and localities in question ; and he gave me full information on the matter, with permission to make any use of it I might think proper. The particulars with which he furnished me I shall give unabridged, as they present a clear picture of the social and political condition of these countries.

The present limits of Russia in the Transcaucasian provinces were defined in the last treaties of peace with Persia and Turkey. These provinces are divided into Christian and Mohammedan ; the former comprising the ancient czardoms of Georgia, Immiretia, Gooria, with the vassal countries, Mingrelia, Abkhasia, and Suanetia, in which the Greek faith prevails, together with the Armenian provinces. Among the latter are classed the khanats of Karabagh, Chamaka, Noukha, Derbend, Baku, Leukoran, inhabited by Mohammedans of the Sheeah sect (anciently under the dominion of Persia), and the former Turkish pashaliks of Akhalzik and Alkaltalati, inhabited by Sunnite Mohammedans.

Russia found, especially in the Christian provinces, a perfect feudal system, including all classes of the population ; whilst the nobles left no means untried to convert the service of their vassals into serfdom.

Beside the customary laws in force in the different countries, Georgia has a code known by the name of the Laws of King Vakhtang. In the seventeenth century this monarch compiled a manuscript collection of Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Armenian laws, arranged with the local customary rights, intended to serve as a source of revenue to the weak and needy Czars, who as feudal lords held the office of judges, and also as a weapon against their rebellious vassals. This code of laws however, which was printed and published by order of the Russian Government, is now almost entirely superseded, since its provisions no longer answer to the condition and wants of the people, and are moreover contradictory in questions relating to inheritance.

In Transcaucasia, as indeed throughout the East, courts of arbitration have been generally used for the settlement of private affairs; whilst the decrees of the spiritual tribunal of the Mohammedans, the Shariot, were received as law in matters of marriage and inheritance among their brethren of the faith: this however did not deter the despotic khans, sardars, and pashas, from bringing at pleasure every offence and dispute before their summary, rapacious, and frequently sanguinary tribunals.

The taxes were paid in personal service and natural produce, by charges on every branch of industry and commerce, and in customs levied not only on the frontier of each district, but also in the towns and their hamlets. The Muravs in Georgia and Immi-

retia, the Beks and Agalars in the Mohammedan and Armenian countries, had the charge of raising these taxes ; as well as of the internal administration and police, assisted by the elders of the communes and superintendents. These Beks and Agalars, like true bloodsuckers of the people, carried on their corrupt practices, as long as by a division of their spoil they could purchase the collusion of their equally wicked superiors, or until they fell a sacrifice to popular vengeance.

Under such a race of feeble, rapacious, and incapable princes, Transcaucasia was for centuries exposed to the incursions and devastation of its predatory neighbours. Crops and cattle, women and children, and property of every kind were carried off. The natural consequences of these fatal calamities were poverty, demoralization, and depopulation, as these countries, so richly favoured with the gifts of soil and climate, gradually fell under the dominion of Russia.

The brief sketch here given will suffice to show the obstacles and difficulties of every kind which the Russian Government had to encounter and surmount, before it could succeed in reducing to order and tranquillity these Transcaucasian peoples, composed as they were of hostile nations and religious sects. The officers selected to carry out and achieve these objects, were Governor-General Prince Zizianoff and Prince Paskevitch : the former was cut off in his heroic career by Persian treachery, before he had perfected his great enterprize ; the latter, after vanquishing the Persians

and Turks, was called away by the outbreak of the Polish Revolution, just as he was entering on the task of subjugating the mountain population, and commencing comprehensive operations for the settlement of the Transcaucasian provinces.

The Emperor however soon turned his attention seriously to this important object ; and the measures which were in consequence taken exhibited his penetration, his determined will, and at the same time his power to carry out and accomplish the work he had commenced, in spite of all difficulties. Predatory tribes were subdued, fortresses erected, the frontiers guarded and quarantine established, to secure the country against the incursion of these half-civilized neighbours, and the no less dangerous attacks of contagious diseases. Military roads were opened, from the Elbrouz to Mount Ararat, from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and in short in all directions where they appeared necessary ; many thousand families, who had been forcibly carried off in former incursions of the Persians and Turks, were now enabled to return home, and settle once more upon the waste districts and devastated lands of their fathers.

In the year 1837, the Commission above mentioned was sent to Transcaucasia, under the direction of Baron von Hahn : it comprized men of ability, peculiarly distinguished by their travels in the East, and by their works upon those countries. Furnished with all the information that could be obtained, and the results of previous experience, together with all

the aid which the munificent foresight of the Emperor alone could provide, the Commission was instructed thoroughly to examine the country, and the condition of its inhabitants, and to draw up a project for the organization of its government, with a view to the good of the people at large. At the same time, in order to examine personally the condition of affairs, the Emperor, in spite of the distance and the perils of a sea voyage at that advanced season, determined to undertake an expedition. In the autumn of 1837 he landed on the eastern shores of the Black Sea, inspected its fortresses, travelled through Imiretia, Mingrelia, the former pashaliks of Akhazik and Alkaltalati, Armenia, the Tatar provinces, Georgia, and Ossetia, gave audience to every one, listened to grievances, complaints, and petitions, expended large sums of money in charity, and redressed great evils and abuses. The Commission hastened their labours, and on the 1st of January, 1841, the new civil administration, which had been repeatedly examined and sanctioned by the Emperor, was introduced amidst the rejoicings of the population.

The new system removed the influence of the military power from the civil department; their mutual relation was assimilated to that existing in Russia, and the political administration was strictly separated from that of Justice and Finance. The country, divided into governments, circles, and districts, was placed under the direction of the Governor-General, who was entrusted in extraordinary cases with ex-

tensive powers, and managed the public affairs with the aid of an administrative Council. Before the introduction however of any reform or new measure, the Governor was obliged to submit it in the first instance to the Transcaucasian Committee, consisting of the Ministers, and afterwards to the Emperor for his ratification. In order to assimilate as much as possible the political condition of Transcaucasia with that of the rest of Russia, the laws and institutions in force in the latter country, the names of the magistrates, their functions and routine of business, were extended to Transcaucasia, with only such modifications as the condition of the country and its inhabitants required.

For this organization to accomplish its purpose, it was necessary to secure to the country an administration of justice as expeditious, simple, and inexpensive as possible, a fixed system of property taxation, free from the arbitrary interference of tax-gatherers, and also a restricted but immediate control of the Government officers in urgent cases. All this was to be carried out, as far as possible, in the following manner.

First, life and efficiency were to be imparted to the communal system, which existed here as throughout the whole of the East, by extending and determining the powers and authority of the common council elected by each town and district, and of the communal administration. These councils, free from any interference of the Crown officials, were in the first place to admi-

nister their own local affairs ; to apportion the taxes paid by the community, according to the property of each person ; and to raise these taxes, and pay them to the proper authorities, taking a receipt for the money. In addition to these duties, the councils were to ensure the execution of the magisterial decrees, the maintenance of peace and security, and the settlement of minor disputes.

The control exercised over these councils by the chiefs of the district and circle, and in the larger towns by the heads of the police, under the respective civil governors and governments, was limited to complaints of any excess or abuse in the exercise of the powers entrusted to the councils ; neglect of the magisterial duties, or of the payment of the taxes collected, or interference in criminal cases, which were reserved to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Imperial laws and officials.

In the second place, the courts of arbitration already in existence, and the Mohammedan tribunal of the Shariot, were consolidated and extended. The decisions of these courts are received as valid, as soon as the recognition of the court of arbitration, or the reference of the dispute to the Shariot, shall have been notified to the respective communal councils.

At the same time, every man retains a right, independent of the communal authorities, to seek redress from the ordinary tribunals, and lay his complaint before the civil authorities of the first instance, established in every circle ; he has also the right of appeal

to the civil authorities at the seat of Government, and thence to the Senate at St. Petersburg.

Thirdly, a new system of taxation was introduced, annulling all the former classes of dues, and the innumerable imposts on the products of town and country, pressing upon the soil and stifling industry, trade and commerce. For these were substituted the following :—

1. In the rural communes, a tithe on the previous valuation of the aggregate landed property of the community. Where any great difficulties arise, however, respecting the amount of this tithe, either from the failure or insufficiency of the irrigation, the inequality of income from the products of the soil, or the circumstance of rearing cattle being the chief trade of the commune, the latter is charged with a tax on the number of chimneys, of from three to five roubles. Both these assessments are valid for fifteen years, and, as above stated, are levied by the elective communal authorities on the property of each tax-payer; the money is paid into the treasury of each Circle, and a receipt given.

2. In the town communes, a fixed tax is laid upon every trade, which is prescribed by ancient usage, its amount being dependent on the number of workmen employed by the master. A tax is also laid on commerce, in proportion to the class of business,—wholesale, middle-class, or retail. These taxes, as well as the minor ones on each workman in the towns, are paid into the exchequer by the tax-payers: the re-

ceipt serves the workman at the same time for a passport. This system, which is carried out uniformly and equally, relieves the country of the cost and intrigue attending the collection of the taxes, apportions the burden to the means of each individual, and secures him for a certain number of years from any increase of payment.

Transcaucasia is rich in corn and salt, and any serious fluctuation in the price of these articles is prevented by free communication and the purchase of salt at a fixed price from the Crown stores. The hills and valleys, which were formerly passable only on mules or horses, and in a few parts in waggons drawn by oxen, are now everywhere traversed by tolerable roads; the post service is under the best regulation for travelling, and intercourse is facilitated by a regular postal communication, which has been carried to the most distant communes.

The Emperor's care is extended likewise to the religious and spiritual wants of the inhabitants. The neglected state of the dominant Greek church, of the Armenian, the Lutheran (consisting of the colonists from Würtemberg), and the Roman Catholic churches, as well as the two Mohammedan sects, was exchanged for discipline and order, with the aid and co-operation of the respective clergy of these religious bodies. Churches and chapels were restored or rebuilt, whilst education and a provision for the clergy of every faith were secured.

In Tiflis, Noukha, and Chamaka, institutions have

been established to promote the cultivation of corn, silk, and wine ; and in the Government departments artisans and labourers are trained for this wide field of agricultural enterprize. Free instruction is provided, in the excellent military schools, for the sons of the numerous and poor nobles. Every chief town of the Circle contains a school, amply endowed, for the education of the sons of nobles, merchants, and the upper class of citizens. The gymnasium, and the institute for daughters of men of rank, are supported in a manner corresponding to the education required. The pupils who distinguish themselves at these institutions have free admission to the Imperial universities and the Polytechnic schools of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The sons of meritorious native inhabitants are received into these schools, and entire corps have been formed, principally of the sons of Mohammedans of rank, who never before passed the limits of their own country. Many of these Asiatics have made remarkable progress in science and civilization, in the schools opened expressly for them at St. Petersburg ; whilst almost all return to their homes with feelings of affectionate attachment to the Emperor, and gratitude for the advantages of European civilization.

Nor have literary acquirements been neglected : a catalogue of the books and manuscripts in the library at Echmiadzin has been prepared and printed ; rare documents have been either purchased or transcribed, and correct impressions of all the inscriptions dis-

persed in various public buildings in Transcaucasia have been collected.

Well knowing, however, that the success of the best efforts and arrangements in such institutions mainly depends on the zeal with which they are carried out, the Emperor has encouraged the choice of able assistants, by assigning them nearly three times the ordinary amount of salary, together with considerable sums of money to defray the expenses of travelling and establishing themselves. Every five years these salaries are increased, and provision for old-age and pensions to the surviving relatives of these officials are the rewards of steady, zealous, and upright conduct in the service of the State in Caucasia.

The local inquiries which Baron von Hahn made in every part of the Caucasian Provinces, into questions of nationality, domestic relations, and the communal and corporate institutions, furnished the rich materials to which I have before adverted, as lying unemployed and useless in the archives at Tiflis. I had permission to inspect them, but of this I could not avail myself, not being acquainted with the Russian language, and no one offering himself able or willing to give me information and extracts from them.

In addition to the remarks which the reader will find scattered over these pages, I shall here give some general observations, collected in the various places I visited.

In the mountains of Immiretia, part of Mingrelia, and in Georgia, the land is mostly cultivated in detached farms; in other districts there are villages, generally small, but occasionally of considerable size. Martkophi for instance contains 361 of these farms, which lie scattered over the country, without any intercommunication by regular roads.

I have already given some account of the communes and peasant-life in Mingrelia. In Georgia, likewise, each commune has a Natzval at its head, who is called in the Georgian language the "Mamasaglisi," in Immiretia "Muchelli," and in the Tatar villages "Köwcha" (guardian). This officer is elected by the heads of families, by a majority of votes, and the Russian manorial court ratifies the election, upon his nomination by the chief of the circle; the landed proprietors of the village have no direct share or influence in this proceeding. The communes possess great freedom, and their affairs are little interfered with by the Government officials. The Natzval retains his office for life, unless he resigns it, or is dismissed in consequence of any legal complaints being brought against him and substantiated by the commune or the magistracy: he is free of personal service and the payment of taxes, and receives a small salary from the commune: the control of the police is in his hands, but all disputes are referred to the chief of the circle. His powers are thus considerable, and, in conjunction with the "White-beards," he has the allotment of the State taxes, which are levied by the Government according

to the census ; the burden is distributed in proportion to the property each family possesses, and the commune is responsible for the payment. The Natzval also collects the seignorial tithes. The Georgians ordinarily live together in large families, comprizing several generations, on the same farms.

In those communes which appertain solely to the Crown, without any seignorial peasantry, the Government levies the taxes proportionately to the number of individuals or families ; thus recognizing the principle adopted in Russia, which gives to every member of a parish an equal share and right in the soil. Practically however, in the parishes in Georgia, (at least in those which fell under my observation,) the soil is always attached to certain farms ; indeed I found some parishes,—Sartschali, for instance, near the German colony of Marienfeld,—in which there exists a distinct classification, similar to that in the north of Germany, —peasants, half-peasants, and two classes of cotters. The first class here possess seventy dessatinas of land (about 188 acres), the second class has one-half this allotment, the third only a small plot of ground, and the fourth merely a house. To the last class are added a number of lodgers, who commonly pay four or five roubles a year. In this part of the country, I was told, the Crown receives annually three kod of wheat and barley from each hearth, the Natzval apportioning the gross amount according to the classes.

In the village of Imaget the land belongs, one fourth to the Crown, one fourth to Prince Baratoff, and one

half to a noble, Georgi Kurganoff. The property is said to lie confusedly, so that this distribution is merely ideal, and the Crown in consequence desired to have its portion measured out. Herr von Kotzebue, to whom I related this statement, said that it was either erroneous, or a singular exception to the general rule, according to which each farm comprizes a fixed portion of land.

In former times Georgia was very thinly peopled, and there are still large tracts around many villages uncultivated. The farms have consequently no strict allotments; if, for example, a man dies, leaving a son in his minority, the nearest neighbour takes the seignorial land, with the taxes to which it is liable, (in some instances at the instigation of the proprietor himself,) and the heir, on coming of age, takes his share from the waste land.

This insecurity of tenure appears to have increased of late years. Many of the princes and nobles are said to have usurped in this manner extensive possession of the soil; to effect which the Armenians, who are extremely regardless of an oath, are frequently employed: twelve of them, without having any previous knowledge of the matter, are brought together, and take an oath that the land belongs to this or that person, to whom it is then adjudicated.

The land-tax is usually a tenth of the produce, but only in a few places is it paid in kind; that portion which falls on the corn districts is commuted for a fixed payment, but I believe unequally. In some

places I found that the Crown peasants, on each day's work (*cididres-machnoli*), pay one kod of wheat or barley, whichever is on the ground. In a bad year the taxes are remitted, and this of course opens the door to the arbitrary intervention of officials. In other places I was told that the Crown demands two kod from every family, levied according to the census; for this the parish is responsible, and the allotment rests with the Natzval.

In some parts the Church and Conventual peasants pay the tithe in kind, but on a fixed and moderate scale. In the village of Martkophi there are 200 Crown and 120 Church peasants. The former pay a tax in wheat and barley, in proportion to the property held; the latter pay no tithes on the land, but a fixed tribute in wax and wine. Forty-one peasants, belonging to some princes or nobles, are said to be heavily burdened and oppressed; instead of a tenth (*galla*), they have to pay a sixth, and even a fifth, part of the crops. On New Year's day and at Easter they give small offerings, and every two or three years, according to their means, sums amounting to from one to two hundred roubles are extorted from them. One-fifth of the produce of the gardens is paid here; but in many places the gardens, as well as the houses, are the exclusive property of the peasants, for which they pay nothing. Prince Kurganoff granted all his land to his peasants, receiving in lieu of each day's work one kod of corn.

In other places, as at Khori, the peasant pays his

landlord a moderate ground-rent of seven to eight kopecks per dessatina ; but in the time of sowing, harvest, and threshing, the lord can demand two or three days' service in the week ; he also claims a share in the produce of the poultry-yard. The peasant must moreover offer presents on the birth of an heir, and on the death of the lord. The landed property falls to the sons, and collateral relatives have no proper claim to any portion of the inheritance ; the farmstead is however generally given them, in consideration of certain offerings. The peasant cannot therefore sell any land.

According to Russian law, a peasant cannot contract debts to a greater amount than five silver roubles : a creditor has no power to recover a larger sum.

The State taxes here are frequently paid in corn, each house contributing two kod ; in Martkophi two roubles are charged. The landlords are obliged to pay these taxes for their peasants, usually at the rate of one or two kod for every house, in the kinds of corn cultivated on the soil.

The limits of the parishes, as well as of single fields, are indicated by ancient boundary-stones : the paths and roads (*Quantwege*, as the Würtemberg colonists call them) everywhere lead to these marks. The fields, which are separated by unploughed ridges and furrows, are all attached to their respective farms, and protected by a land-guard ; in short, it is evident that from a remote period a regular system of land administration has existed here, which has for

upwards of a century fallen into decay. Large tracts of country lie waste, and are overgrown with brush-wood or forests; the old vineyards have disappeared, the wine-cellars lie in ruins, haunted only by wild beasts, and the divisions of the land are everywhere broken down.

Traditional rights and customs connected with agriculture are found in all parts of this country; for example, eight or ten yoke of oxen must be put to each plough; farming associations are formed, by the regulations of which, one farm has to furnish the plough, another a yoke of oxen, and so on: the fields of all the farms are then ploughed regularly in turn.

Air, water, pasture, and wood, are all public property, according to traditional law among the Georgians, and the rights of the chase are free to every one. The forests are indeed nominally divided, and belong to the respective parishes, the nobles, and the Crown, but the unrestricted use of them is open to all. The natural result of this is, that in many parts the forests are devastated,—an evil which must necessarily increase. A ukase was in consequence issued, ordering all the Crown forests to be separated from the rest, and placed under a special administration, steps being taken for their preservation. This decree however caused such a ferment among the entire population, that in 1842 it was withdrawn. In my view such a measure appears politically unjustifiable; it would have been sufficient to establish securely the *property* of the Crown forests, at the same time reserving the

forest rights of parishes and individuals. A general regulation might have been laid down, determining the limits and degree within which these rights should be exercised, and applicable not only to the Crown forests, but to all. The first ukase aroused and irritated the popular prejudices respecting property and forest boundaries; and since that time the nobles also have sought to withdraw their forests from the common use of the people,—an attempt which frequently gives rise to lawsuits, and sometimes even to serious disturbances.

Notwithstanding the annoyance and oppression of the tschinowniks, or officials, the condition of the Crown peasants is in many districts visibly improving. They not unfrequently accumulate large fortunes, which they eagerly seek to invest in land; in this they find little difficulty, as the nobles, impoverished and frivolous, are glad to sell their possessions, especially in parishes where the property is mixed, and the Crown and nobles have peasants and land in common. It has already been mentioned, that the house and farmstead everywhere belong to the peasants; on the death of a father, one son receives the estate held under the Crown, whilst the landed property is divided equally among all the sons, and, in default of these, among the daughters. In the former case the daughters receive only a dowry. It is however considered a point of honour by the Georgians for fathers and brothers to settle in marriage and portion off their daughters and sisters. The most

oppressive burden on the peasants is considered to be the obligation to furnish extra horses for the post and military service; in a country entirely subjected to military rule, this is calculated to give rise to endless abuse and annoyance.

CHAPTER IV.

ABOVIAN.—THE HOUSES IN TIFLIS.—CHARACTER OF THE INHABITANTS.—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.—VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.—PERSIAN AMBASSADOR.—STATE OF THE ARMY.—ABUSES.—ASSOCIATIONS OF WORKMEN.—REGIMENT-COLONIES.—JERMALOW.—INSECURITY OF ROADS.—ARSEN, THE ROBBER.—GEORGIAN NOBLES.—LEGEND OF ST. GREGORY.—JOURNEY TO MARTKOPHI.—CONVENT AND CHURCHES.—DIVINE SERVICE.—VISIT TO PRINCE GURAMOFF.—WARM-BATHS AT TIFLIS.—GUILDS IN PERSIA AND GEORGIA.—JEWS IN CAUCASIA.

IN Tiflis I made the acquaintance of an Armenian, named Abovian, of whom I shall frequently have occasion to speak, being especially indebted to him for my knowledge of the Armenian people. Abovian is descended from the family of an hereditary village chief. In Georgia and Immiretia the Russian Government has recognized these families as of princely rank,—in Armenia not even as noble! Early abuses on the one side have led to injustice on the other.

Abovian wished to be a monk, and passed his novitiate in the celebrated convent of Echmiadzin, at the time when the traveller Parrot* was preparing

* This excellent man is since dead: he went out one day and never returned; all search for him proved vain.

to ascend Mount Ararat. Parrot wanted to engage a native, suitable for his expedition, and proposed to the young monk to accompany him. He soon discovered in Abovian evidence of remarkable talent, and encouraged him to enter on a course of study at a German university. Abovian went to Dorpat, and in four years had attained a complete German university education, at the same time speaking and writing German so correctly that no one would have imagined him to be a foreigner : he married a German, and has established a complete German household.

At my request the Governor allowed a young Georgian Prince, Zacharie Palavandischwili, to accompany me about the town, and show me every object of interest.

The population of Tiflis comprizes, beside the Russians and Germans (artisans, artists, and merchants), representatives of three nations, Georgians, Tatars, and Armenians. The Georgians consist partly of a numerous class of nobles, partly of gardeners, but the large majority are needy and live by begging. The Tatars are artisans, smiths, saddlers, etc., and the Armenians almost all merchants.

Tiflis is a central point of transit between Europe and Asia, but for the last twenty or thirty years it has declined in importance ; the communication between England and France and India, which formerly passed through Tiflis to the Persian Gulf, being now carried on by way of Alexandria, and the steamers in the Red Sea. Nevertheless there are few towns

in which are seen persons of so many nations,—Russians, English, French, Germans, Persians, Turks, Tatars, Armenians, Koords, Usbeks, and natives of all parts of the Caucasus. In like manner we here find all the various forms of religion,—Christians of the Romish, Greek, Armenian, and Protestant churches; Mohammedans, Jews of various sects, and even heathens.

We visited the dwellings of these different peoples. The Tatars refused to admit us to the interior of their houses; the Armenians showed us little more than their shops, or occasionally a kind of sitting-room. It was with difficulty also that we could induce the Georgians of the poorer classes to let us see their *sakli*, or house*. These rooms have a miserable appearance; in the middle is a small hearth, with a hole directly over it in the roof, through which the smoke passes; on one side is a kind of closet, in which the beds are piled up (*zalo*), and on the opposite side another closet, or pantry, where the food is kept (*kidobani*). A few door-posts only (*bodsi*) were ornamented with some carving; a serviceable cradle (*aquani*) was suspended on an elastic rod. The Georgians, especially the women, pass the morning and evening, and frequently a portion of the night, on the flat roof, or the balconies (*schardach*); and there is nothing more charming than, in walking through the streets on a fine summer evening, to see these hand-

* *Sakli* signifies a room, as well as a house; among the very poor class the house consists of only one room.

some women drest in their pretty national costume, sauntering on the balconies, playing, singing, and coquetting with the passers-by.

I was received with great hospitality in the house of a Georgian nobleman of high rank, named Lorismerikow; his family formerly possessed the estate of Loris, a kind of sovereignty, on the road to Erivan. The house is a specimen of a fine old Georgian mansion, or palace, and was formerly used by the Czars of Georgia for holding solemn audiences, the celebration of marriages, etc. It forms a large quadrangle, in the middle of which is a spacious hall, with a vaulted ceiling, resting on two pillars, and having in the centre a round opening, through which the light is admitted. From this hall, and from a gallery on the second story which runs round the building, a number of doors open into various small apartments, with windows on this side, and others looking out upon the street. There are few houses of this description now in Tiflis, the modern dwellings of the Georgian nobles being all built in the European style. The house I have described was more peculiar than grand or imposing, as indeed is generally the case with modern Asiatic buildings.

The masonry of the modern houses in Tiflis is remarkably good, better than is usually seen in Russian buildings. I was informed that Persian masons, who are said to be the best in Asia, are employed: they may perhaps have inherited the manual skill and the secret of manufacturing mortar, which are evinced in

the indestructible edifices of antiquity. Their pay is a silver rouble and a half a day.

I was cleverly cheated by an Armenian, whose shop I entered to purchase a few trifles. The Armenians constitute above one-third (exceeding ten thousand) of the population of Tiflis; they are active, industrious, and enterprising, and gradually acquire possession of the property of the idle and inactive Georgians: they make purchases, rent land, lend money, and are on this account greatly disliked; they are moreover thorough cheats. The Georgians* have a reputation for honesty, with one exception,—the common people are said to be addicted to stealing honey and bees. A regular thief is however seldom met with among either the Georgians or Armenians; whereas the Tatars have quite a passion for stealing, especially cattle and horses; they dislike any regular occupation, and follow agriculture only to procure necessaries, preferring the breeding of cattle and a nomadic life.

* I cannot give a better description of the outward appearance and character of the Georgians than the following, sketched by a former traveller, the Chevalier Gamba (vol. 2, p. 186):—"The Georgian is of tall stature, and strong, with handsome black eyes, and an aquiline nose, but more of the Jewish than the Roman cut; he is born a warrior and a horseman, but is more practised in guerilla warfare than in regular fighting. In the Persian armies they formerly constituted the reserve-guard, who usually decided the fate of the battle. They are brave, but often cruel; hospitable, but reserved in talking; clever, but ignorant. If ever Russia should make any serious attack upon the Mohammedan kingdoms of Asia, she would easily collect an army in Georgia more serviceable for such a war than a European one. The population is agricultural, and engaged in trade, but it despises commerce and speculation. The beauty of the Georgian women is famed all over the world."

When they have no flocks of their own, they willingly take service as herdsmen, although greatly preferring that of coachmen. They are frugal in their habits,—only beware of showing them horseflesh!

Herr Salzmann told me that thirty years ago there were only three Government buildings in the European style, all of a single story,—the Governor's residence, the police-office, and the Commandant's house. Scarcely any other buildings had at that time glass windows: in the winter, the holes which served as windows in the summer were pasted over with oiled paper. The bazaar consisted of booths of only one story.

At the period I refer to, the Georgian dress was still worn by all classes. The first trifling changes in it were introduced by the women. A certain class began by wearing white stockings and European shoes; the Georgian costume being simply embroidered leathern half-boots, without stockings, and, in the streets, high-heeled slippers. At first the innovators were pointed at and ridiculed, but the European *chaussure* is now commonly adopted by the higher and middle classes. The picturesque Georgian head-dress however, with the long flowing *tshadra*, or white gauze veil, is still worn by all ranks. It is remarkable that a change of costume begins here with the feet,—in Germany, with the head. The German peasant-girls and women first discard the ancient national cap, and go bare-headed; after that, the cotton gown supplants the home-made stuff dress, and so on.

But in Tiflis there already exists a large school for young ladies, in which the Georgian misses chatter in French and read Balzac's novels !

Marriages, I was told, take place very early, girls becoming wives at ten years of age. This custom dates from the time when girls were regularly sold for the Mohammedan harems. The Georgian kings raised a revenue by kidnapping and selling the daughters of their subjects ; but as the Mohammedans never purchase married women, esteeming them unworthy to enter their harems, the parents married off their daughters as early as possible, to secure them from being stolen. The Russian law and the Metropolitan have recently forbidden marriages before the completion of the twelfth year ; but it is scarcely possible to check forcibly and on a sudden a bad custom so rooted in a country. The consequence is said to be a prevalent mortality in the female sex, especially among the young.

On the 12th of August I paid a visit to the Governor-General of Caucasia, the commander-in-chief of the army, General von Neithart. He had received the command this year, and resided during the hot months in the mountains on the heights of Priut, where a villa with numerous offices has been built and furnished for the Governor. The road thither was romantically beautiful, abounding in the grandest mountain scenery, with noble forests, and occasional views of ruined castles : we passed a German colony, lying in a peaceful valley. Half way we came to a kind

of caravansary, or inn, where we rested for a short time; six powerful dogs, of the race of the Steppes-hound, watched and protected the house. As we were preparing to resume our journey, a Georgian noble or prince, in his national costume, galloped up, with a beautiful Georgian girl and a servant. The young lady checked her steed, and leaped down with remarkable grace and agility; a saddle-girth was broken, which she repaired herself, without assistance; with equal agility she then sprang again on her horse, and in an instant they all vanished! It was like a living picture of the Middle Ages passing before our eyes.

General Neithart took part in the war of 1813–1815, in Germany and France; he has the appearance of a man of genius, energy, and frankness, and enjoys the reputation of being an able general. He invited me to be present the following day at a remarkable ceremony in Tiflis, the reception of a Persian ambassador.

The Russian Governor-General of Caucasia occupies the position of a viceroy, and is consequently treated by his Asiatic neighbours, the Turks and Persians, as a reigning sovereign. On assuming office, he despatches a small embassy, consisting of officers, to Teheran, to notify to the Shah of Persia his elevation to office. The Shah thereupon immediately sends a regular ambassador to Tiflis, to congratulate and welcome the new Governor-General, never omitting at the same time to invest him with the Persian Order of the Sun.

At noon on the same day we all assembled in the large hall of the Governor-General's palace. In the open space outside the building, the troops were drawn up with their bands of music. On the arrival of the Ambassador, the Governor-General received him at the door of the hall, which was filled with general officers and an assemblage of Georgian grantees. The Persian was tall and thin, but muscular, with sharply chiselled features; his dark brown face, and tall black cap, contrasted strongly with his long, flowing, snow-white dress: he spoke French fluently, and maintained a dignified and easy demeanour. On this occasion I made the acquaintance of a number of Russian officers, who communicated to me many interesting particulars*.

The Russian army in Transcaucasia, independent of that division opposed to the mountaineers, has a dif-

* I may insert here, as the most convenient place, an anecdote of the war with the Turks in 1828, with a few remarks on Akhalzik, by a person who took part in the campaign. The advanced guard of the Russian army reached the little Turkish fortress of Akalkalaki; the fortifications were bad and untenable: the garrison consisted of a thousand men, with fourteen cannon. As the Russians advanced there was a deathlike silence. Two staff-officers, with two Russian trumpeters, rode forward, and an interpreter summoned the Turks to open the gates. On a sudden two red standards were displayed on the walls: the Turkish commander appeared, and called aloud to the Russians, "We are not soldiers like those of Erivan and Kars: we are warriors of Akhalzik. Here are neither women nor children; we will die on the ramparts of our fortress, but we will not surrender it without a struggle. An old proverb says, one soldier of Akhalzik is equal to two of Kars and three from Erivan: we will not belie the proverb!" The Russians commenced the assault: the mournful death-songs of the Turks were distinctly audible, whilst they made the responses to the prayers of the Moollah. After a mur-

ferent position from that in Russia Proper. For many years past it has been merely an army occupying a conquered country. The entire administration, as I have observed, is upon a military footing; the country groans under this system, but the army, and especially the officers, adhere to it resolutely, their interest being too much implicated in its maintenance. I have already said that, opposed to this interest, Baron von Hahn's project must of necessity fail*. In addition

derous defence, the Russians forced an entrance into the place. Not one Turk accepted his life—every man remained dead upon the spot.

Akhalzik was a point of the greatest importance to the Turks: established here, they ruled and plundered all the districts south of the western Caucasus, and issuing from hence their emissaries sustained the warlike spirit of the Circassians and Lesghis. Rallying under the standard of the Pasha of Akhalzik, the Lesghis robbed and devastated the rich country of Georgia. The Ossetians, Didos and Djares, overran unchecked the beautiful banks and valleys of the Koor and Allasan. Kidnapped boys and girls were at that time a sort of merchandize in request, and were brought to Akhalzik, where the great fair for this traffic was held. From this place the boys and girls were transported to Erzeroum, Trebizond, Teheran, and Constantinople. The Armenians had an especial privilege for this trade, and Akhalzik was of equal importance to the Russians, who, after a sanguinary defence, took the fortress. The Turks had held possession of this important place for two centuries and a half. They all emigrated to Asia Minor. The town is said to contain sixteen thousand inhabitants, eight churches, a synagogue of the Jews, and a Mohammedan mosque.

* The brave and noble General Zizianow, who I believe fell in the war with the Persians, was the first who expressed an energetic opinion that the civil administration ought to be separated from the military, in order to prevent the rankest abuses. For instance, if a military man of inferior rank were to be appointed head of a civil office, he could not resist the orders of his superior military officer. The latter arrogated the powers of the Khans in the Mohammedan districts, and this has infinitely increased the oppression of the people. The Khans were hereditary; they looked to the future, and conse-

to all this, many political causes, arising out of the state of things we have noticed, tend to maintain the permanence of the present system. Whether Prince Woronzow, by his personal influence, proud independence, and energy, united to high European cultivation, will succeed in effecting an entirely new organization, or even a partial reform, by eradicating the most glaring abuses, time alone will show.

The position and life of the Russian army here resembles that of the Roman legions, stationed in the frontier countries and exposed to the incursive attacks of their enemies. The soldiers are early trained to every kind of labour, especially of a rural description, and mostly for the benefit of the officers. The Emperor, on being informed of the abuses which had arisen from this system, has in many instances in person abolished and punished them with inflexible severity. An anecdote is told, that on one occasion in Tiflis, in face of the troops, he degraded General Dadien for some

quently, for their own interest, their rule was not oppressive ; whereas the military officers thought only of the moment. Even Field-Marshal Paskiewitsch reported his opinion to the same effect. Two senators were sent from St. Petersburg to investigate the matter, and found the greatest abuses prevailing. Baron von Hahn was then sent, and it has been already seen how all his efforts failed, and matters went on as before. It was too agreeable to the military officers to have the disposal of millions without rendering any account. The consequences are however truly melancholy : notwithstanding a state of peace, the fertile lands of Georgia make no progress in cultivation : the peasant only tills just as much corn as suffices for his food,—if he grow more it will be taken from him ! nay, he is even obliged to carry it himself to his oppressors ; and hence, in spite of the richness of the soil, the army is provisioned by importations from Russia.

such cause ; the General, overwhelmed and humbled, merely said, " Czar, thou art just ! "

It was with considerable reluctance that the Emperor allowed the soldiers to be employed on public works, such as the construction of high-roads and building of bridges, an object of primary importance in this country : up to the present day there is actually no carriage-road from Tiflis to the Black Sea ! And yet the labour such works require would in no degree be demoralizing, but rather beneficial, to the soldiers, who would doubtless receive wages for their labour. This is the more strange, as no other day-labourers are to be obtained, even at high wages.

I found here, as well as in the military colonies, companies of workmen in the regiments. In consequence of the great dearth of artisans, the soldiers are instructed and employed in all kinds of handicraft. To the great advantage of the public, every description of furniture and implement is solidly made, and complete manufactories of carriages and musical instruments exist here. The proceeds of all sales are paid into the regimental chest, which is under the immediate control of the soldiers. The chief portion of each man's earnings is given to himself, and the rest goes to the support of his comrades. Soldiers, after having served their time, have thus returned to their homes with as much as a thousand roubles. Nowhere are the Russian soldiers less harassed with drill than here. Marriage is not only allowed, but even encouraged among them, and the married men

are the best off, their wives being able to earn much by washing, sewing, etc., which all goes into the regimental chest. The married soldiers seldom return to their homes, but generally settle in these colonies, which are praised as models of order and prosperity : each regiment has its own, in which the men belonging to it, on receiving their discharge, have the option of settling. The soldier who settles here may claim, if he has a wife and children in his own country, to have them brought hither at the public expense ; his brothers and sisters are also allowed the same privilege*.

Of all the early Governor-Generals who ruled here, no one lives so strongly in the recollection of the soldiers, and of the people at large, as General Jermalow. Anecdotes and traits of his character are on the lips of every one, but his memory is most cherished by the independent mountaineers, from a feeling that they received at his hands impartial justice. Every one who had any cause of complaint repaired directly to the General, who assisted him whenever he was able. Nevertheless his discipline was inflexibly strict : if any village, or any inhabitant of one, did a wrong or committed a robbery, the General

* The Chevalier Gamba, who visited the Caucasus in 1820-1824, and whose travels appeared in Paris in 1826, speaks as follows of these military colonies of workmen : " By such an organization Russia would be able to facilitate the future conquest of Asia, these colonies forming everywhere the nucleus of new towns. Alexander the Great did this, and hence we see why, two years after the invasion of Asia, he founded more than forty towns, to which he gave his name.

immediately ordered a space to be cleared near the church or sanctuary, a gallows to be erected upon it, and the guilty persons were without more ado hanged. Even in the enemy's country, among the Circassians, similar spots are still seen. Whenever any considerable robbery took place, and the thief could not be discovered, the Governor instantly ordered the village, or the whole district upon which the suspicion rested of being the home of the guilty person, to be summoned, and to make good the loss. This system worked so well, that reports of robbery or theft became very rare.

Until the time of Jermalow there were not the slightest traces of attachment to the Russian Government. Russia prohibited the traffic in slaves; she introduced at least the basis of a legal status, and restricted in some degree the licentiousness of the princes and nobles. All this was little pleasing to the Georgians; hatred and animosity were excited against the Russians, although all sensible men must have clearly seen that the latter alone had the power of affording protection against the hostile incursions of the Turks, Persians, and Lesghis. Jermalow aroused the warlike spirit of the people, who, accustomed to an adventurous life by early and continual wars, had been compelled, during the first period of the Russian dominion, to remain quiet. He directed this martial spirit against the mountain population, and introduced a military organization among the Georgians. At the same time he was actively engaged in reforming the

internal affairs of the country, and the ukase issued October 8th, 1721, sufficiently attests his efforts to raise the state of its commerce.

General Arnep, who commanded the south Lesghian frontier in 1840, enjoyed a similar reputation, and as long as he was in this country scarcely a drop of blood was shed. His character for justice stood so high that the tribes all around, and even the mountain robbers, flocked to him on all occasions for his judgment.

I heard in society an anecdote of an officer, Herr von Turnau, who shortly before had been liberated from imprisonment among the Circassians. His sufferings had been very severe: the Circassians put him in heavy irons, and upon his complaining of this treatment, said to him, "If you were a woman, we should give you to our wives to guard; but you are a man, and a brave man, and what man will endure slavery except in chains?" What grand words and what a lofty spirit,—worthy of antiquity! But no people meet with good treatment from the Circassians; even the Poles, who went over to join them, were received as slaves. Mr. Bell, the Englishman, who resided a long time in Circassia, was at first held in high honour; but when the Circassians saw that the promises of assistance from England which he held out were not likely to be fulfilled, he was regarded almost as a traitor, or spy, and congratulated himself at last on escaping alive.

My coachman, a German colonist, told me that he

had frequently been on trading visits to the Circassians, who were particularly friendly to honest Germans, and had never done him any harm. They often told him that they knew well enough the Czar at St. Petersburg had personally good intentions toward them; but that the Russian officers and soldiers did them all the injury in their power, and such offences they could endure still less than robbery and oppression. They would gladly and frequently visit the Russian dominions, especially for purposes of trade; but that on reaching the Russian frontier they would assuredly be stripped of their weapons, not being allowed to pass the line with arms in their hands; and frequently, on their return, instead of receiving back their own weapons, which they perhaps inherited and prized above everything, worthless ones would be given them as in mockery, and if they complained they most likely received a flogging, which, they said, no man could bear!

In Mingrelia, Georgia, and Immiretia travelling is tolerably secure, and little is heard of robbery; but as soon as the Tatar population commences, robberies are numerous: it is not safe to venture far from Tiflis without being armed to the teeth. In the absence of historical tradition the people delight in recounting tales of robbery which sound like the last echoes of the heroic age*, and often breathe a proud

* The old castles, towers, and fortifications which are met with in all parts of this country give ample proof of this heroic age. They go down to the eighteenth century, when the struggles with the Turks and Persians everywhere called forth and exercised an heroic spirit. The people have kept in remembrance many individual traits; but

and chivalrous spirit, testifying to the ancient nobility of character of this people. The following story of the robber Arsen may serve as an example.

there are few accounts of it in writing. It would be interesting to collect all these traditions before they pass into oblivion and are lost. I shall here relate one of these stories, taken from the lips of the common people, which my friend Count S—— related to me.

The Turkish pashalik of Akhazik, before its capture by the Russians in 1828, had been for a long period hereditary in a family originally derived from Georgia. The Pasha was a powerful feudal prince, almost independent of the Sultan. The orders from Constantinople were so little respected, that the Taman, for instance, respecting the dissolution of the Janissaries was never published there, and consequently the latter still subsisted. The family, as I have said, came from Georgia. As early as the twelfth century the family of Botzo-Djakheli was renowned under the Georgian sovereignty, with the title of an Atabegh; they ruled the district of Zemo-Kartli, where they resided in their old rock castle of Djwari-Tsekle. They had continual feuds and petty warfare with the neighbouring Turks. In the beginning of the sixteenth century lived the Atabegh Konar-kuaré, a dreaded hero. In his town of Samlokhé was a merchant, who traded with the Turkish town of Shaki. It happened that he fell out with a merchant of that place, who, with his people, waylaid him on his return home, threw him down, and robbed him, in spite of the Christian threatening him with the vengeance of his lord the Atabegh. "If your mighty lord is not a coward," was the reply, "let him come, and, if he can, nail me by the ear to a shop in the bazaar!" The Georgian merchant laid his complaint before the Atabegh, but the latter stroked his moustaches, suppressed for the moment his rising rage, stopped the complainant short, and dismissed him. The same night however he mustered five hundred of his boldest horsemen, dashed across the Koor at Gandja, and fell upon Shaki so suddenly as to render resistance impossible. He injured no one, but merely ordered that merchant to be seized, and to be nailed by his ear to his own shop in the bazaar. He then departed peaceably, amidst the exclamations of his followers, "Let not the people of Shaki ever forget the justice of the Atabegh Konarkuaré!"

In 1579 this family fell off from Georgia, having been offended, and submitted to the power of Turkey, although without renouncing Christianity. They were however too powerful, and were dreaded by the Turks, especially the Atabegh Manutsher, a chi-

Arsen was a *duchantschik*, or shopkeeper, in Tiflis, and had the reputation of being a quiet, well-behaved man. He fell in love with the daughter of a bondman of Prince Baratow*, who however would

valorous prince. The Turks sought to put him out of the way, but his gigantic strength and wild bravery protected him against the open attacks which were attempted upon him, among other occasions, at the chase. At length however he believed that his fall was inevitable,—probably by poison: he left his residence and retired to the forest of Akhaldaba, where no man dared venture to attack him. His followers were Mohammedans, and went to Constantinople, and the Sultan granted them the Pashalik of Akhalzik in perpetuity: this they retained, as we have observed, until the capture of the place by the Russians in 1828.

At a much earlier period the district of Zemo-Kartli possessed greater historical importance: in the sixteenth century it was governed by Prince David Kurapalate, or David-Dido (the Great). He subjugated Georgia and Akhalzik, and was highly honoured by the Emperor at Constantinople: his territory was in a state of prosperity during his rule. He divided the kingdom into provinces, over which he appointed an *Eristacos*, or chief magistrate. He had however no children, and when he was old these governors endeavoured to make themselves independent, and sought to take away his life. Various attempts failed; at length they resolved, at Easter, A.D. 999, to poison him with the sacramental wafer. David was informed of everything, but he was weary of life: he made a will, in which he bequeathed his kingdom to the Emperor Basilius, and then prepared himself for death. He received the Communion at the altar in the church, and died there, on the spot where he lies buried.

Another anecdote, of recent times, was also related to me of a famous robber and leader of the *Koords*, Solanam Aga, who was taken by the Turks, but released, at Erivan, in 1827: the evening of that very day he, together with his father, an old man eighty years of age, and a few hundred *Koords*, fell upon and plundered a caravan.

* Branches of this family, I was informed by Herr von Hahn, are at present settled in Russia, with the name of Baratieff-Dolgorouki. The family claims to be descended from the Persian king Artaxerxes Longimanus, with which supposition their name, Dolgorouki (Long-hand), agrees: it is however not to be confounded with the family of Dolgorouki in Russia, descended from the War-rager, Prince Burik.

not consent to the marriage ; he therefore resolved to purchase the freedom of the girl. Arsen worked hard for another year, and earned the sum demanded : but the Prince made fresh objections and conditions, whereupon Arsen mounted the best steed in the Prince's stable, by night, and rode off with the girl to the mountains. He was however betrayed, arrested, and thrown into prison. On his release at the expiration of his imprisonment, he found that his beloved had been married by the Prince to another person. Arsen left the town, went to the mountains, and turned robber ; although alone, the whole neighbourhood of Tiflis was rendered unsafe by his daring exploits. Many are the tales related of his proud but generous character : his audacity, obstinate bravery, and gigantic strength were sufficient to disarm any resistance ; his name was a terror to the country around. On one occasion he attacked and disarmed a merchant who was travelling with a considerable sum of money : the latter begged for his life,—Arsen merely desired him to go to a certain place, and pay for him four roubles which he owed there. A price was set upon his head, but for a long time no one dared to attempt the capture. At last one of his kinsmen was tempted by the reward : he enticed the robber to his house, under pretext of talking over some family matters. Arsen's sharska (sword) was hung up on the wall : the host plied him with drink. " Who is that sneaking outside your house ? " said Arsen. The host grew pale. " Treachery ! " exclaimed

Arsen, and rushing out unarmed, he flung himself upon his horse, which stood fastened at the door, and rode off at a furious pace. The balls whistled around him, he and his steed were wounded, but he escaped. From that day his kinsman lived in concealment, in fear of his life, and only ventured to sleep when protected by the presence of others.

Soon after this adventure came the day of the famous pilgrimage to Martkophi. Arsen suddenly appeared in the midst of the assembled thousands; to at least half the multitude he was personally known, but no one appeared to notice him. Prince Orbellian was there with his family; Arsen went up to him and asked for a draught of wine. The Prince handed it to him. "Do you know me?" said Arsen. "Yes, to be sure,—you are Arsen," was the reply. "Tell that man," said Arsen, pointing to an officer, "to give me his sword." "Tell him yourself," answered the Prince. The officer indignantly refused to comply with the demand, but the Prince stepping up to him, whispered a word in his ear, upon which he instantly handed his sword to Arsen.

Shortly after Arsen, half intoxicated, again went up to Prince Orbellian and said, "I have taken a fancy to your pistols,—give them to me." The Prince cocked a pistol and presented it at Arsen, saying, "Take them!" Arsen advanced; the young Princess, throwing herself into the Prince's arms, exclaimed, "Do not shed blood on so holy a day as this!" Thereupon Arsen went up to the Princess, and said: "You

have saved my life, permit me to kiss the hem of your garment and your hand!" In an instant after he disappeared in the crowd. The following day Arsen returned the sword, with this line, "On so holy a day man ought to commit no injustice."

On occasion of his meeting any officers riding to Priut, Arsen never molested them, but, on the contrary, usually gave them an invitation to breakfast, which they frequently accepted.

At length Arsen fell, in single combat. He was sitting one day with some comrades by the roadside, in the neighbourhood of Tiflis, when an Immiretian nobleman with an attendant rode up to him. Arsen invited him to breakfast, but the latter declined, alleging that he had business to transact in haste with the authorities, which rendered it impossible for him to stop. As he rode off, Arsen's friends said, "Do you believe his excuse? depend on it, he is ashamed of your company, and therefore will not drink with you." In an instant Arsen flung himself on his horse, and riding after the nobleman, pressed him to return and breakfast with him. "Nay," replied the nobleman, "since you speak in such an authoritative tone, nothing shall induce me to go." Arsen drew his sword, his antagonist did the same, and a furious combat ensued. The attendant meanwhile looked quietly on. The nobleman, who was already bleeding from two wounds, while Arsen was uninjured, called out to his servant, "Fellow, do you look on and see your lord murdered?" whereupon the man

took deliberate aim behind Arsen's back, and shot him through the head.

The Georgians are the Christian, the Circassians the Mohammedan, cavaliers of the Caucasian countries; they stand in the same relative position as the Goths and Moors in Spain. The two other principal peoples of this country are the Armenians, the mercantile class, and the Tatars, the artisans, coachmen, wagoners, and traders of the interior.

The Armenians had originally no class of nobles; at the present time there are a few princely families, —probably descended from the ancient governors, whose office gradually became hereditary; they are recognized by Russia as of noble descent. Among the Tatars are numerous families of Beks, or Beys*, who are regarded by the people with high veneration, as an indigenous class of nobles: their origin however is lost in obscurity.

The basis and principles of the organization and general condition of the Georgian people bore great resemblance to those of the Germanic race, comprizing a feudal constitution, perfectly analogous to the Romano-Germanic. Under this constitution, the nobles, who surrounded their king, occupied the first station in the realm. The Georgian nobleman had a purely feudal character; he regarded the sovereign as his lord and chief, whilst the inferior nobles looked up to the higher class as their lords in turn. In the same

* In Daghestan the title is called Bek,—on the Black Sea, Bey, or prince.

manner the peasants, though not subjected to bondage under the nobles, were liable to military and seignorial service, tribute, etc.

The Georgian nobles are divided into three classes,—the Dedebuli, the Tavadi, and the Aznauri. The Dedebuli occupy the highest rank, and may be called the sovereign nobles; according to a legend, they are descended from Karthlos*, the first king, who led his family and people into this country, of which he took possession. Karthlos was one of the eight Caucasian patriarchs, the sons of Togarmah, who, according to the Bible, was the great-grandson of Japheth, the son of Noah. Those of the Dedebuli who possessed some stronghold, castle, or small province, assumed the title of Mthawar (afterwards Tavadi, or chief of the land): they were the hereditary grandees of the royal court. This bore a striking resemblance to the courts which existed at an early period in Western Europe,—more so than to that of Byzantium, with which nevertheless it had manifold relations, and upon which it was at one time dependent. Many of these grandees filled offices of high importance, as the Spasalar, or chancellor of the realm, who presided over the royal council; the Abramad, or chamberlain of the exchequer; the head of the Msakhurs (life-guards),—who was the master of

* See the History of Georgia, by Vakhtang V., to the beginning of the eighteenth century, in Klaproth's Travels, vol. ii. p. 62. There are many highly interesting historical legends, the critical examination and comparison of which with the Persian and Western Asiatic traditions would be a worthy task for the historian.

the ordnance and had the superintendence of the arms and ammunition ; and under him were the governors of the fortresses, the general-in-chief of the mercenary troops, the lord marshal, lord high steward, lord chief justice, the Amelakhor (master of the horse), the head falconer, and the Edjib (lord chamberlain), who superintended all persons in attendance at the palace, and who, at the royal banquets, answered for the king, no one being allowed to address the sovereign personally. Lower in rank, were the lord steward, master of the table, the cup-bearer, treasurer, hospitaller, and the cross-bearer, who had the office of inviting the Catholics and the bishops, and occasionally also of publishing the sentences passed upon criminals*.

The second class of the nobility are the Tavadi, or princes, probably descended from the governors of the numerous small provinces. These offices and dignities, like those of the ancient German counts and dukes, became in course of time hereditary. When, for instance, a governor (Eristav) died, his sword, his war-horse, and his eldest son were presented to the king, who conferred the appointment upon the son, if he considered him able and worthy to fill the post, in which case he was girt with his father's sword by the head of the Msakhurs (master of the ordnance), in the king's presence. But if the sovereign deemed the son incapable of holding the office, he bestowed

* Compare the "Description Géographique de la Géorgie, par le Czarevitch Wakhout, publié d'après l'original autographe, par M. Brosset. Pétersbourg, 1842."

upon him one for which he was more competent, and the charger was led into the royal stable.

Many of these princes at the present day style themselves shortly Eristav, or Governor: thus we meet with a number of Princes Eristav, descended from distinct Tavadi families, of which, in Kartli and Kakhetia, Prince Wakhout enumerates sixty-two.

The third order of Georgian nobles are the Aznauri*. Whilst the first two classes were vassals of the king, this was composed of attendants partly of the king, partly of the higher vassals, and partly of the Catholicos and patriarch. No one however could bear this title who did not possess a castle or a village, and who could not take the field with horsemen, horses, and tents.

Each of these three classes of nobles had their own servants, esquires, or horsemen,—military followers, who had a higher standing than the peasants, and whose rank varied according to that of the chiefs whom they served: they were called Mskhuri. The peasants are called Gleks,—prisoners of war, or their descendants. The legal position of the nobles in Imiretia, Mingrelia, Georgia, and Suanetia, is the same. Not only do they intermarry exclusively among themselves, but even the several classes of them are kept distinct. The price of blood paid by them in expia-

* Vakhtang V., in his History, states that the first independent historical king of Georgia, Pharnavas, who lived in the time of the first Antiochus, rewarded the Rmni (Roman) knights that went over to him in the battle with Ason, by giving them a settlement, and creating from among them the nobles named Aznauri.

tion of murder is generally double that paid by the lower classes.

The proud and warlike Georgians have an aversion to trade and commerce. With a view to elevate trade, the ancient kings constituted the merchants a separate class*, and bestowed on them nearly the same honour as on the lower nobles, the Aznauri. This especially favoured the Armenians, who have been established in the towns of Georgia from time immemorial. There are preserved among them royal diplomas and documents, which date back six centuries.

The vassals and followers, composing the military force in Georgia Proper (Kartli and Kakhetia), were ranged under four banners, in the centre of which was the royal banner of Kartalis. The nation was thoroughly martial, and the kings deemed it of primary importance to keep a considerable army in pay.

In this warlike country the Christian hierarchy† was constituted in a perfectly analogous manner to the temporal feudal state, with which it was closely connected; the ecclesiastical dignitaries having similar

* Vakhtang states that King Pharnavas divided the Georgian people into six classes:—1. the Eristavs (Mthawar): 2. the Princes: 3. the Nobles: 4. the Merchants: 5. the Horsemen, or common feudal servants of the King and nobles: 6. the Peasants.

† Little is known of the paganism and mythology of the ancient Georgians. Sacrifices were made on the mountains and on sacred heights—human sacrifices—and even parents offered up their children as victims! On holidays there were dancing and sports. King Rew prohibited human sacrifices. St. Nina threw down the altars of paganism, and on the sacred heights were erected Christian churches and crosses. Christian holidays superseded the pagan ones, but the dancing and pastimes remained.

gradations of rank to those of the temporal grandees. The Catholicos or patriarch enjoyed royal honours; next to him was the Archbishop of Dehgondid, who had the care and protection of, and the jurisdiction over, widows and orphans, the unfortunate, and the oppressed, for whom he interceded with the king. In war he bore the sacred Cross at the head of the army. He, and the prelates of the thirteen convents founded by St. Gregory and his twelve apostolic followers, had the rank and honours of the Mthavars; the bishops were equal in rank with the Tavadi and Eristavs, and the priests with the Aznauri. The Mthavars and Tavadi had likewise the right of interment in the cathedrals and abbeys, while the Aznauri were buried in the other churches. The bishops constantly followed to the wars, and administered the Communion to the army previous to battle.

On New Year's-day morning the Archbishop presented to the king and queen, before their orisons, a small cross of wood or silver, the picture of a saint, a robe, and a few pieces of sugar. After the celebration of Mass, the temporal lords, princes, Eristavs, and courtiers offered their presents, generally of a character appertaining to their position or office; the master of the chase, for instance, presented trained falcons, the master of the horse a richly ornamented saddle, the Eristavs chargers. All these persons appeared armed with bow and arrows*. As soon as

* When the Emperor Nicholas was at Tiflis, in 1827, the Georgian and Tatar princes, the vassal princes of Mingrelia and Suanetia,

the royal pair appeared among them, they exclaimed, "God grant thee to rule for many years, and that this arrow may strike the heart of thy enemy!" Then began the banquet and amusements. The steeds which had been presented were led into the royal park, where during the night the wolves, jackals, foxes, etc. collected, and in the morning the king came forth with his grandees to hunt them.

On Easter-eve, after the celebration of Mass, the great banquet took place, which terminated the fast; all then repaired to the race-course, where a golden or silver drinking-cup, fixed on the top of a high pole, served as a target for the young men. Then began the races and other sports. At the banquet, as long as the Catholicos and bishops were present, there was only singing; but as soon as they had retired, the instrumental music and dancing struck up.

Georgia, according to her own chronicles, is one of the most ancient monarchies in the world. She has maintained her internal state and constitution through successive ages, notwithstanding that externally she has been compelled to submit to the sovereignty of the great monarchies of the world, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, Byzantines, and lastly of the Persians and Turks. According to the chroniclers, the line of her kings commences with many others, all accoutred in their national costume and arms, and attended by their numerous followers, mounted on splendid chargers, came to present their homage to the sovereign. They brought their tents with them, and encamped before Tiflis, each family or clan by itself.

Karthlos, the contemporary of Abraham. The number and dates of this dynasty are lost in obscurity; to them succeeded the Nebrotides; then the Arsacides, numbering twenty-eight kings, who ruled for 566 years; and afterwards the dynasty of the twenty Khosroïdes, who governed for 454 years. In the year 575 of our æra* the first of the Bagratide family ascended the throne, and his successors retained the government until 1800, when they ceded it to Russia. But independent of the period of the Karthlo-sides, we have historical evidence that the Georgian monarchy had in 1800 existed uninterruptedly for 2245 years. No other princely family can trace back its genealogy to the ninth century of our æra; the Bagratides occupied the Georgian throne in one unbroken line from the sixth century.

The Bagratides built the famous city of Ani, in Armenia. In 885 they ascended the throne of that country, and the khalif Mohammed of Baghdad crowned Arshod II. In the year 1097 they lost the throne, whereupon one of them, named Rhupen, betook himself with his Armenian followers to the Cilician mountains; his descendants conquered Cilicia, and united with the Crusaders of the West. The Emperor Heinrich VI. bestowed on them the royal title; and Conrad, archbishop of Mainz, crowned the ruling member of this family in 1198. The kingdom was in 1375 subjected to the Egyptian Mamelukes.

* See Wakhout's Geography, p. 20. Other historians assign to it a later date.

The last of the Rhupenian rulers, Leo VI., died in 1391, at Paris. There are said to be legitimate descendants of this race yet living in France; and in Asia Minor several are still found, princes over small districts, and vassals of the Turks.

In the fifteenth century the family of the Bagratides separated, and divided their territory into three independent kingdoms, Kartli, Kakhetia, and Immiretia: the first two were at a later period re-united. At the beginning of this century they resigned the throne in favour of Russia, and now reside chiefly at Moscow or St. Petersburg, where they retain the semblance of royal honours.

The kings of Georgia asserted their descent from the stem of David in their public documents, which began in these terms:—"We, King of Kings, consecrated by the grace of God, absolute monarch and independent sovereign, son of Jesse, David, Solomon, and Bayrout, Lord of Seven Kingdoms, Heraclius," etc.

One of the most remarkable families of the Caucasian countries is that of the Princes Orbellian, who came from China in the time of the Persian king Kai-Khosru. Branches of this family went afterwards to Armenia, and are intimately connected with the history of that country. They were the Crown generals of Georgia, and next in rank to the royal family, with whom they frequently intermarried; the last Czarina of Immiretia was an Orbellian. Stephen Orbellian, Archbishop of Sianik, wrote a family history in the thirteenth century.



The Mamigonians, in Armenia, had a similar origin. In the time of Ardsheer, the founder of the dynasty of the Sassanides, B.C. 240, Puh-toch and Mam-kon, being calumniated to their uncle the emperor Arpag-Pagor, fled to Persia. The emperor demanded their surrender. Ardsheer however would not consent, but despatched them with their followers to his vassal princes in Armenia. The Mamigonians soon acquired influence and territory, and became the main support of the Armenian kings; they were the generals of the Crown, or military dukes of Armenia, even so late as the ninth century: their sepulchre was in the church of the convent of Klagdaran.

A large number of families in the Caucasus are said to be of Italian origin, and to have migrated and settled there during the dominion of the Genoese.

In the afternoon of the 4th of August I went, with my travelling-companions and Herr von Kotzebue, to visit the celebrated pilgrim-shrine of Martkophi, a few miles distant from Tiflis. On our way Herr von Kotzebue related to us the legend of St. Gregory, but I forget whether the shrine we visited was in honour of that saint.

As early as the fourth century Christianity had penetrated into the Caucasian countries, but it did not spread much, being scorned and persecuted by the surrounding heathen population. At the commencement of the sixth century thirteen missionaries, with St. Gregory at their head, were sent from Constantinople as apostles of Christianity into these coun-

tries. The pagan Prince of Kakhetia was at that time at war with Georgia, and besieging Gremi; the Christians underwent the severest oppression, and St. Gregory himself was obliged to fly and take shelter in the forests of Martkophi. One day when the Prince was out hunting, his favourite falcon flew away in pursuit of a dove. The huntsmen who rode after it soon returned, and related that, in the depths of the forest, they had found a man on whose breast were peacefully resting the dove on the left and the falcon on the right. Thereupon the Prince rode into the forest, to convince himself of the miracle, and found it exactly as related to him. Perceiving the power of the Saint over nature, he entreated him to heal his son, who had been lame from childhood; promising that, on witnessing such a miracle, he would worship God and become a Christian. The Saint agreed to comply with his request, beseeching him at the same time to desist from his attack on Gremi, which, he added, would prove disastrous to him. The Prince however persisted in his enterprize, and was defeated; but on his return home, his son came out to meet him, perfectly cured and full of joy. Then the Prince repaired, with all his followers, to the Saint, and requested to receive baptism and admission into the Christian Church. After all the people were baptized, the Saint held out the drinking-horn to the Prince, saying, "Ala-verdi!" (God grant his blessing!) Then all the people cried aloud, "Jakschyal!" (Prosperity to thee!) This was the first time that the heathens

drank wine. To the present day, in Georgia, the usual expression, on presenting wine to any one, is still "Alaverdi!" and, as a memorial of the event above related, a convent which was erecting at that time in Kakhetia received the name of Alaverdi. The legend has several pretty symbolical features; for instance, the influence of Christianity in reconciling the hostile powers and propensities in nature,—the falcon with the dove; and again, the circumstance of wine being first consecrated and introduced through Christianity.

The Georgian Church, in consequence of the mission of the thirteen saints, belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople; it was afterwards attached to that of Antioch, but eventually became independent, the Metropolitan being installed as patriarchal head, under the title of Catholicos. At the Council of Florence, when the Latin and Greek Churches were temporarily reconciled and united, the Catholicos of Georgia was present.

It was a fine day; our road lay over fertile plains, bounded by high mountains and forests. Soon we came upon troops of pilgrims: mingled with the pedestrians were two-wheeled carts drawn by buffalos, with a tent-like linen covering, ornamented with parti-coloured kerchiefs and ribands; in each of these carts were seated six or eight women and children, dressed in the handsome national costume. Equestrians dashed past us, mounted on light and graceful horses, and dressed in brilliant military attire. Several recognized and saluted Herr von Kotzebue, who re-

quested one of them, Prince Zuzevatskoff, to order quarters to be assigned us: this proved a fortunate circumstance, as we should otherwise have had difficulty in procuring any.

On reaching the skirts of a valley, in which lay the village of Martkophi, we found very good accommodation in a peasant's house, with a long arcade, and situated on an eminence, commanding a view over the whole village. After making our arrangements for the night, we sauntered about for an hour or two through the gay and animated streets of the village, returning to our arcade at dark. The evening was wonderfully fine; the mild air of a summer night, the clear light of the moon and stars, the lights twinkling in the village below, the illuminated tents, the song and sounds of merriment around us, and the strange music of the Georgian pipes* and small drums, sounding from a distance like wild magic tones, all produced an indefinable impression upon us. We stretched ourselves out in the open air, beneath the arcade: toward midnight the sounds gradually ceased, the lights were one by one extinguished, and soon our

* This is a kind of wooden trumpet, or clarionet, which produces only three notes, yielding no melody, but merely marking time and rhythm with inharmonious sounds—a dreadful noise to European ears. The art of the musician consists in continuing to blow without intermission, at the same time breathing freely through the nose. This music has a magical power over the Georgians, even in the higher classes of society. At balls, where European music is introduced, no sooner are the well-known pipes heard (as is often the case at the conclusion) than it is as if all present were stung by the tarantula, instantly commencing the national dance.

eyelids closed, and sleep brought us dreams of varied form, life, and colour.

At six o'clock the following morning we started on our ascent up the mountain, in company with thousands of pilgrims. On emerging from the forests we soon reached an elevated point, from which the road to the village presented the most brilliant and varied aspect. The Georgian princes, in their national costume and splendid military attire, mounted on noble steeds, each preceded by two pipers, and with their wives and daughters on horseback at their side, formed a perfect picture of a festal mediæval procession. The forests were intersected by steep footpaths, diverging right and left, and then reuniting; and it was quite charming to watch the disappearing and emerging again of these figures, which presented as motley an appearance as the masks on the Corso at Rome, mingling with the green foliage. Many of these people, particularly the women and girls, had made a vow to mount the hill barefoot.

After ascending for half an hour, we reached the summit, where a wild, romantic view presented itself over the surrounding forests, which stretched far away over hill and valley. Upon an eminence to our right stood an imposing ruin, the object of our excursion, which we reached in a quarter of an hour. Standing upon the acclivity, a wide ridge of hill extended in front of us, dotted with noble beeches, growing singly. Thousands of people were already assembled on this spot, and crowds dressed in every variety of colour

were thronging towards it from all sides: single groups had in various parts encamped around the fires, which blazed on the hill-side all around; others were sauntering among the numerous tradesmen's booths. A straight narrow path led between two high walls up to an old ruined mountain castle, which served formerly to protect the convent, its church and sacred relics. This convent, founded by St. Anthony, one of the thirteen Georgian fathers or apostles, is said to have been destroyed by the Lesghis between 1740 and 1750*.

We next proceeded to the church, which is in ruins, the arched roof of the choir alone remaining. At the altar, on which were numerous lighted tapers, several priests, in their official vestments, were performing divine service. Never had I witnessed a more curious, yet imposing scene,—the lofty open arched roof of the choir, the number of lights, the priests with their deep-toned unmelodious singing, the motley crowd, the number of beautiful women, with gold frontlets and long flowing veils, all absorbed in the glowing devotion of the South, and in groups extending down the hill-side,—kneeling, and in various parts half-concealed among the underwood,—and the effect of all this, heightened by a glorious

* The Lesghis of that time plundered the village of Martkophi, together with the convent; but, according to the account given by the Georgians, they met with a direct punishment from Heaven for this sacrilege; they were collected at the foot of a hill, when on a sudden the ground sank under them, the hill fell, and buried them all, about five hundred in number.

view over a wooded mountain not far distant, lighted up with the bright rays of the morning sun.

Upon the walls of the church were traces of ancient frescos, nearly effaced. Interspersed with the various Caucasian costumes (Georgian, Mingrelian, Ossetian, Circassian, Tatar) I observed many Russian uniforms and European dresses. The more distinguished Georgian ladies had almost all adopted European fashions of dress, but retaining the gold headband and long flowing veil of their own country.

As we approached any of these groups, they immediately came forward to meet us in a hospitable manner, begging us to eat and drink with them. We accepted the invitation to breakfast of a Prince Guramoff*, the chief of this district. In a short time the most distinguished persons of the country had collected around us. Upon some bright-coloured carpets, spread on the grass, was placed the breakfast, around which we formed a circle. The meal consisted of bread, goat's-milk cheese, and small slices of mutton spitted upon large wooden skewers, and roasted over a coal fire (*shislik*) †. A cup-bearer, a

* The Prince had been robbed the previous night; in his absence from home, the house had been entirely sacked, and he had suffered a very heavy loss. The robbers were probably Tatar or Russian soldiers, for the Georgians are scarcely ever known to steal. His manner was marked by equability and cheerfulness, showing no trace of his having met with such a misfortune. Fortitude under calamity is said to be peculiarly characteristic of the Georgians.

† Mutton is almost the only meat eaten, except occasionally pork by the Christian part of the population; beef and buffalo-flesh are never eaten, and veal only in cases of emergency.

most picturesque figure, was continually going about with a large wine-can, eagerly pouring out libations and pressing the guests to drink. This was chiefly accomplished out of silver spoons or ladles, called *hazarpeches*, and occasionally out of silver drinking-horns. Some Georgians of the common class came up and began singing; the tune consisted of only three or four long-drawn notes, not keeping to the intervals of our gamut, and sounding at times perfectly false and out of time, merely preserving a certain rhythm. First one sang alone, then another and another joined in, often with quite a different tone; the rest then chimed in, and restored a unisonous melody. Occasionally they sang in thirds, forming a brief harmony. The Prince and the other distinguished Georgians at times joined, with enthusiasm. The song was a kind of heroic ballad; at its conclusion an improvisatore made his appearance, with a bagpipe, and rehearsed the praises of the Emperor and Empress, of the heir-apparent, the princes who were present, and lastly of ourselves. I did not observe that these people received any presents.

On quitting this group we visited others, in one of which we found two young girls, in the national costume, performing a pantomimic dance upon a carpet; they did not spring from the ground, but merely glided along, exercising their arms in various ways. There was no music but a drum, accompanied by a clapping of hands, which gave the time to the movements. I made some inquiry in German of one of

my attendants respecting this dance ; he could not answer my question, but a man standing near, dressed in the national costume, instantly replied to me in excellent German ; he was an Armenian, who had studied medicine four years in Leipzig : we became great friends, and he afterwards travelled with me to visit the Ossetes.

In another group we found men dancing, the performance having a kind of martial air ; at the close several lads, from thirteen to sixteen years of age, jumped upon the shoulders of some powerful men, who carried them in this manner through the dance, moving round easily and without staggering, toward one another ; whilst the boys balanced themselves so skilfully that none of them fell or needed to jump down. In these martial dances and games, which are not unfrequently attended with wounds and sometimes death, the bold and reckless character of the Georgian is displayed. The girls dance in a slow and solemn manner, with the most graceful movements and attitudes, but never springing from the ground. By degrees the noise increased, and the wine mounted into the people's heads ; the better class of the ladies went away, and we set out on our return home.

On the 16th of August I spent nearly the whole day in walking about Tiflis, accompanied by Herr Salzmann and Peter Neu. We visited the hot baths, where the bather is rubbed by attendants in so skilful but gentle a manner that he comes out perfectly

renovated. We afterwards visited various shops and the bazaar, where I was extremely interested by the manner in which the artisans live together. I received a full and curious account of this from my two companions, Peter Neu being perfectly conversant with the state of handicraft in Persia, and Herr Salzmann with that in Tiflis and Georgia.

There exists here an institution of Guilds, fully organized, and exactly similar to that which has prevailed in Germany from the time of the Middle Ages; this institution however was derived from Persia, having been introduced and organized by the Eristav (governor), at the period of the subjugation of Georgia by the Persians. It is difficult to account for such a remarkable historical coincidence as the contemporaneous existence, in the earliest times, of these same institutions in Persia and Germany. Is it probable that the Crusaders may have introduced them? or are we to look back still further for their origin, to the period when the ancient Germans first separated from the Persians?

It may be interesting to give here some account of the present constitution of the Guilds in Tiflis. Every craft, down to the very sack-bearers, journeymen, and poulterers, has its guild. The tradespeople, with their manufactured goods (Tatar, *Soldagar*,—Russian, *Kupetz*), form separate guilds; such, for instance, as the ironmongers (Armenian, *Ergoltzacho*), the grocers (Persian, *Attar*), the fruiterers (Persian, *Bachál*), the wine-merchants (Tatar and Persian, *Duchantshik*), the

hawkers, and others. The trades have all their own guilds, which are also in a certain degree distributed according to nationality; the Georgian, Russian, and Armenian artisans live together in the same guilds, but the Tatar workmen continually form guilds of their own, owing probably to the contrariety of Christianity and Mohammedanism. The Russian tradespeople here have no such corporations, but are attached to their own guilds in Russia. This in fact is the case with the German workmen, although the shoemakers (my friend Peter Neu at their head) are received into the Georgio-Armenian guild. The other classes of workmen were not at this time members of any of these guilds, but I was informed that they were to be compelled to join them. A guild is called by the Georgians, Armenians, and Tatars, *Handkerre*, a Persian word signifying "similar trade."

The masters alone constitute the Guild, and they represent the journeymen and apprentices. Every guild has its head-master, with two assistants, who are elected. If any person, without being admitted a member of a guild, sets up publicly in trade, the guild take from him his sign and tools; but upon his petitioning the head-master, the latter grants him permission to work, but without journeymen or apprentices.

A specimen of work, as the regular test of ability, is not required. A journeyman desiring to obtain the freedom of a trade, presents to the assembly of the guild the certificate he has received from his master;

and upon paying ten silver roubles (a *tumán*) into the treasury of the guild* he receives the freedom of the Company. His name is entered in a register; and kneeling before a priest, who is called in for the ceremony, he receives a blessing: on rising, the head-master bestows on him the accolade, and he then gives his hand to each of the masters present.

The youth or apprentice, on being admitted a journeyman, pays three silver roubles to the funds of the guild, and his master then grants him his release by a special certificate. Since the German shoemakers of the colony have joined the Georgian guild, they have introduced many of their own usages.

The guilds here have no houses of call or meeting, like the German *Herberge*; they assemble at the head-master's house, or near some church, frequently on indifferent occasions at the corner of a street. The head-master and his two assistants constitute the tribunal or court of the guild. Whenever they intend to hold a court, they must summon the guild, and during the sitting of the court at least six masters must be present. The head-master and assistants alone pronounce sentence; if however their decision does not please the other masters, these can annul it, but only by a unanimous decree. This court decides in all disputes between masters, masters and journeymen, charges respecting debt, complaints of bad work, or of a master's taking money and not delivering his work, in short in all causes of public com-

* This payment is said to have been recently reduced to ten roubles banco.

plaint*. Criminal cases however are referred to the police and criminal court. If the case is complicated, and at the same time important, it is referred to the Golova (chief magistrate), with whom the appeal rests. Each guild has its own code of laws, drawn up in writing, into which modifications are from time to time introduced; that of the shoemakers dates from the period of the Czar Heraclius I. When I visited Tiflis, it was in contemplation to abolish all these laws and regulations, and introduce those of the Russian guilds.

Complaints may be laid before the head-master on any day, and if the matter appears to him of importance, he summons the guild the same day, by the last-admitted freeman (*Igetbashi* in Tatar, literally 'hero-chief'). If the matter is not of immediate consequence, it is decided on the following Monday. In the first instance, however, the party against whom the cause is decided has, in addition to the penalty, also to pay the masters for their loss of time. In the second case no costs are incurred, the proceedings being merely oral. Penalties may be inflicted to the amount of ten ducats, beside the award of compensation. At the prayer of the losing party, however, the head-master can remit the payment; and in case he refuses this, the other masters have the power to intercede, and then he is obliged to remit a part of the costs, but only as much as he thinks proper.

These courts take no cognizance of cases of assault

* The guild of the merchants fixes, under a penalty, the lowest prices at which goods can be sold; at the same time its members are allowed to sell at as high a price as they like and can get. Thus in their very abuses the Asiatic guilds resemble those of Germany.

and violence, which come under the jurisdiction of the police ; but the head-master punishes trifling offences summarily, with a few boxes on the ear. The amount of the fines is paid into the funds of the guild ; formerly this money was generally spent in drinking, but it is now collected and applied to the relief and support of impoverished members of the fraternity, the establishment of hospitals, etc. The last Georgian Czar decreed that every guild should support its own poor. For these objects the head-master, in addition to the fines, levies an equal rate on all freemen. The Armenians and Georgians hold the court-day of the guild on a Monday ; among the Tatars it is held on a Saturday, the Mohammedan day of rest being Friday.

The taxes which affect these associations are, in the first place, a poll-tax to the Crown, and a variety of imposts for the maintenance of bridges, roads, and post-service, and excise dues on wine and spirits. Every *duchantshik*, for instance, has to pay eighty-three roubles for a license to sell wine and spirits retail ; but outside the limits of the town there is no excise tax.

Every master is called upon to attend the funeral of the members of his guild. The Georgian and Armenian women scarcely ever follow a corpse to the grave. The office of bearing the body is deemed an honour, and the mourner afterwards gives a sum as drink-money for the masters. A funeral feast is not customary, but the poor are fed for a week. In public processions, as for example the funeral of a

Golova (chief magistrate), all the guilds assemble, some of them bearing flags and emblems.

In the streets of Tiflis we several times met Jewish tradesmen, one of whom, dressed like a European, I accosted in German. He was a Jew from Austria, who had travelled through Galicia and Podolia, to Odessa, and thence to Tiflis; he had seen much, was intelligent, and told me many particulars respecting the Jews in the Caucasian countries. I subsequently became acquainted in Erivan with a Karaim Jew, and obtained some further particulars, which I will give here, notwithstanding their incompleteness, hoping that other travellers may be led to make further and more satisfactory researches.

The travelling German Jew, like this good fellow whose acquaintance I made, is seldom to be met with here; but Polish Jews, from Podolia, Kieff, and other parts, are numerous, and easily distinguished by their dress. They usually remain only for a time, although occasionally they learn the language, and settle here permanently; they ordinarily speak among themselves a corrupt German dialect. The native Jews form several sects, of whom I shall relate some particulars.

The Talmudist Jews are met with in all the countries south of the Caucasus, dispersed among the rest of the population; but I did not learn whether they are also found among the mountaineers, the Circassians and Lesghis. Their occupation is trade, and I heard that in South Georgia there are entire villages

of them. They are regarded with great contempt, and neither the Christians nor Mohammedans, who live everywhere in peace and harmony, and sharing one another's hospitality, extend such intercourse to the Jews of this sect.

The Karaim Jews, who do not reject the ancient traditions and interpretations, but only the Talmud, live principally in the provinces of Erivan and Akhalzik. They assert their descent, pure and unmixed, from the tribe of Judah, which was led to Babylon. It is well known, they say, that in the reign of Cyrus a part returned to Judea, but another part remained after the destruction of Babylon, penetrated further north, settled in Armenia, and spread gradually to the Caucasus; passing then to the Crimea, they settled there, from whence finally colonies penetrated into Poland. They also assert that their ancestors possessed great power and authority in Armenia; and that when Christianity made its way into that country, a number of them became Christians. The most powerful family among them, the Bagratides—descended from Sarbad (of the race of David), who was sent to Armenia by Nebuchadnezzar—at first exercised a feudal sway over the province of Iberia, and had the privilege of crowning the Armenian kings; but at a subsequent period they obtained possession of the throne, and eventually of the three Georgian thrones*.

* Ritter (Geography, vol. x. p. 260) says that the Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela sought and found, in 1170, in Chaldea, the Rabbi Daniel

The Jews of the Karaim sect are regarded as eminently honest and trustworthy, and, in contrast with the Talmudists, inspire general esteem. They have adopted the Tatar dress, and are only distinguished by their shaven faces, with narrow whiskers reaching to the chin. The language they usually speak among themselves is the Tatar. They keep aloof from the Talmudists, and regard the Mohammedans as an offset from themselves. Mohammed's instructor is said to have been a Karaim Jew, and tradition states that the prophet gave the Karaim a passport, which is recognized by all his followers, whom it commands to hold this sect in honour, and forbids ever to persecute them. They live in harmony with Christians, and regard Christ as a prophet who proceeded from their race, and whose disciples founded a new sect. Not having been in Judea in the time of Christ, they do not share the animosity usually entertained by Jews against Christians.

There is a small community of the Karaim Jews at Jerusalem, who maintain a connection with all the rest of their brethren, the latter regarding them as the parent community. On certain Fridays (four times a year, I was informed,) the Karaim assemble on the west side of Mount Moriah, on the spot where the strains of exultation of their fathers once resounded, there to pour forth their songs of lamentation for the destruction of the Temple of the Holy City, and the

Ben Chisdai, the Prince of the Captivity, the Lord of the Stem of David; he enjoyed the honours, and almost the power, of the Khalif.

dispersion of the chosen people of Jehovah. I subjoin a specimen of these chants, which in point of noble simplicity and depth of feeling remind us of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. It is a Liturgy of the most ancient form, that of the Litany. The Rabbi intones the prayer, and the people chant the responses.

FIRST CHORUS.

Liturgy.—For the Palace that lieth in ruins,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

Liturgy.—For the Temple that is destroyed,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

Liturgy.—For the walls which are broken down,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

Liturgy.—For our majesty, which is departed,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

Liturgy.—For the costly jewels consumed by fire,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

Liturgy.—For our Priests, who have sinned,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

Liturgy.—For our Kings, whom Jehovah hath contemned,

Resp.—We sit here alone and weep !

SECOND CHORUS.

Liturgy.—We beseech Thee to have compassion upon Zion !

Resp.—Gather together the children of Jerusalem !

Liturgy.—Hasten, and tarry not, O Saviour of Zion !

Resp.—Oh speak to the heart of Jerusalem !

Liturgy.—Oh that beauty and majesty may once more
encompass Zion !

Resp.—Turn Thou thy face graciously toward
Jerusalem !

Liturgy.—May the royal sceptre soon re-appear over Zion !

Resp.—Comfort the mourners of Jerusalem !

Liturgy.—May peace and joy once more abide in Zion !

Resp.—And the branch sprout forth at Jerusalem !

In the district of Derbend there is said to be a sect of Jews named Uriani, who embraced Christianity, but without relinquishing their observance of the Jewish law in its full extent. They keep holy only the Sabbath-day, and adhere strictly to all the injunctions and usages of the Law, following the example of Christ, whom they acknowledge as the Messiah, and who likewise enjoined obedience to the Law. It is said that they claim to be a remnant of the Tribe of Benjamin, who during or after the Captivity moved northwards from Assyria. At the period of the birth of Christ, they assert, their scribes announced that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, and in consequence they sent thither two of their number, named Longinus and Elias, who were received among the seventy Disciples of Christ. After the Crucifixion and Resurrection the latter returned to their brethren, taking with them the under-garment of Christ (not the seamless coat), which is still preserved and worshiped in the cathedral of Mzcheta, near Tiflis. Longinus is said to have committed to writing the teachings of the Saviour, in a book which they assert is still in existence, or at least a transcript of it, but is preserved with great secrecy. They have no knowledge of the New Testament. It would be of the highest interest to institute a research respecting this sect, although very difficult to arrive at the truth; but how important the discovery of a book, which might in any degree form a corollary to the Gospel!

The fate of the Israelitish tribes in Assyria, it is

known, still remains a matter of historical doubt; they were unquestionably dispersed throughout Asia, and a large portion penetrated to the Caucasian countries*, although they are not found there in any considerable numbers at the present day. In the fifth century the king of Persia transplanted 71,000 Jewish families from the towns of Armenia to Persia.

* According to Vakhtang's History (see Klaproth, vol. ii. p. 87) a number of Jews called Uriani fled from the Babylonish Captivity to Georgia, about the year 3360 after Adam, and were established by the Mamaszakli of Mzcheta (the chief of the country) at Arakvi, on the river Snavi; they paid a land-tax.

CHAPTER V.

JOURNEY TO KAKHETIA.—MARIENFELD.—LEGEND OF THE SERPENT MOUNTAIN.—TROGLODYTE CAVES.—WINE MANUFACTORY AND STORES.—TELAV.—PRINCE ANDRONIKOFF.—STATISTICS OF KAKHETIA.—COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION.—AGRICULTURE, TAXES, IRRIGATION.—CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.—REMARKABLE DOCUMENTS.—VILLAGE OF KURTSHAN.—HOT SPRINGS.—POPULAR LEGENDS.—CHURCH OF ANAGASS.—MILLS.—CULTIVATION OF THE SUGAR-CANE, INDIGO, COTTON.—CONVENT OF ST. NINA.—THE CLERGY.—HOUSES IN GEORGIA.

THE small district of Kakhetia was described to me as the Eldorado of the ancient Caucasian countries, —a land flowing with milk, honey, and wine, and abounding with all the fruits of the earth: I resolved to visit it.

In the evening of the 16th of August, accompanied by Prince Lieven and my faithful Peter Neu, I took a seat in a vehicle belonging to a German colonist, an ordinary little farmer's cart, upon which we sat packed in straw, under shelter of a linen awning. We soon fell asleep, and did not awake until three o'clock in the morning, on arriving at the German settlement of Marienfeld. This lies on the river Jora,

the ancient Cambyses, a name given it by Cyrus in honour of his father*. Here we rested for a few hours, baited our horses, and breakfasted with one of the colonists. To each settler are allotted thirty dessatins of land. A system of alternate cropping is followed, one field being under cultivation and the next lying fallow; the corn grown is wheat, barley, and oats. The colonists pay a ground-rent of twenty silver kopecks per dessatina. The Government has advanced the sum of 125 silver roubles toward building the farm-premises, which the colonists are required to repay within ten years. They appear to be well off and contented, enjoying a secure position, and protected from want by the equable produce of the soil. The climate is healthy, and the sky almost invariably serene, seldom forty days of rain occurring throughout the year. In summer the thermometer stands at 30° to 33° (Réaumur) in the shade, and in the winter, which begins in the middle of December, seldom much below zero. The natural aridity of the soil renders artificial irrigation absolutely necessary.

We started again at seven o'clock, and pursued our way in the direction of the mountains, over hill and valley, at times along very bad roads, but for the greater part of the way through noble forests. We passed several Cossack stations, and at about half-way reached

* The river Koor is the ancient Cyrus, named in honour of the Persian monarch. In Chardin's time the Georgians called it the Shah Bahman,—the name which the old Persian chroniclers give to Cyrus.

the Russian artillery station of Tambor. The scenery around was occasionally very beautiful, and near our road I observed the remains of a fine old ruined castle. A hill in the vicinity bears the name of the Serpent Mountain, which led Peter Neu to relate to us the following legend connected with another hill of the same name.

THE SERPENT MOUNTAIN ON THE ARAXES.

On the Araxes, south of Nakhtchewan, is a mountain called by the Tatars *Ilanetag*, and by the Armenians *Otzezar*, both names signifying Serpent Mountain. At certain times of the year serpents collect on this mountain in such numbers, that neither man nor beast dares to approach the spot. But beside the ordinary kinds of serpents, a great many belong to a higher order of creatures. If one of these latter attain the age of twenty-five without having been seen by mortal eye, it is gifted with the power of self-transformation, and becomes a dragon, which is able to change its head into that of any other creature, man or beast, in order to beguile and destroy its victims. If a serpent of this kind reaches the age of sixty years, without having been looked on or disturbed by any man, it is called in Persian *Yukha* ('Outstretching'), and then acquires the power of transforming itself as often and for as long as it pleases into the shape of any man or beast. Now there was once a young herdsman of a nomadic tribe out hunting, who remained behind his companions in the

neighbourhood of this mountain. As he was wandering about, lost in thought, he on a sudden descried in the copsewood a beautiful and fascinating maiden, weeping bitterly, and lamenting that she had lost her way, and been parted from her friends. The huntsman took her upon his horse, and rode off in the direction she pointed out. But soon love sprang up between them, and she confessed that she had neither home nor kindred, but had feigned this only to win him, having at first sight conceived an ardent passion for him. Then he took her home with him and married her.

One day a Hindoo fakir came to visit them, who, by the virtue of an onyx-ring upon his finger, at once perceived that the woman was a serpent metamorphosed into this shape, for the onyx loses its colour in the presence of a transformed object. The fakir revealed the circumstance to the husband, and added, "Follow my advice, and you may convince yourself of the truth; desire your wife to cook a dish of which she is particularly fond, and do you secretly put into it a quantity of salt; then shut up the house, to prevent her escape: conceal all trace of water, and feign to fall asleep, but be careful to keep strict watch." The man did as the fakir desired: in the night he saw his wife get up, and search everywhere for water; but finding none, her neck became on a sudden lengthened to such a degree that she was presently able to stretch her head out of the chimney-top, and he soon perceived that it must have reached a neighbouring

river, for he distinctly heard the gurgling noise as she swallowed the water. The poor man, now convinced of the truth of what the fakir had told him, vented his grief at having a serpent for a wife, and begged the fakir to advise him how to get rid of her. The fakir told him to desire his wife to bake some bread, and when she stooped down to put it into the oven, suddenly to push her into the fire, and close the oven with a stone; he warned him at the same time not to be moved by her laments or entreaties to set her free, or she would certainly kill him. The man followed the fakir's advice: in vain the woman implored to be set free, and appealed to his love for her as his faithful wife. At last, finding him immovable, she exclaimed, "Aha! the fakir has betrayed my secret to you,—he wants to have my ashes; true it is you would have been lost had I ever perceived your knowledge of the secret!" When she was dead, however, despair seized upon the man, for he loved his wife passionately; he wandered about the world, and has never been heard of since. But the fakir carefully collected the ashes, which still retained the power of transmutation, and by their means he acquired the secret of changing all metals into gold.

I subsequently heard other stories connected with this mountain. The Armenians say that the serpents in their country could never encounter the eye of a European. Iskander (Alexander the Great) brought his wives hither, and conjured up the serpents on the spot to watch them.

Early in the afternoon we reached the opposite side of the mountains, and entered a valley, through which ran a torrent, beside a lofty precipice. In this, at the height of about eighty or a hundred feet, were innumerable caverns in rows, evidently of artificial formation, penetrating deep into the rock, and with numerous inter-communications. I afterwards learned from Prince Abkhasoff and others, that similar caverns occur in endless numbers in every wall of rock throughout the Caucasian countries, and that in the Mukranian Steppe there is a great extent of rock perforated with caves, much larger and deeper than those I saw, and in long rows one above another : in most of them are found rafters of various sizes. Of the origin or purpose of these caves there exists no account ; some are of opinion that they served as places of refuge in times of war and pillage ; others consider them to have been the caves of anchorites or of robbers ; but surely their extraordinary number points rather to their having been the dwellings of an unknown præ-historical race of Troglodytes.

Towards evening we reached the foot of the mountains, where, at the head of the valley of Ruispire, which lay before us, are situated the extensive wine-making establishment and stores of Messrs. Lenz and Co. The various processes of pressing the grapes, etc., are conducted on the most skilful system adopted in the manufacture of the Kakhétian wines, the best in this country. We were politely received by Herr Lenz, who conducted us through his extensive stores,

and invited us to taste his wines. The table-wine was of a pure quality, strong and sweetish, but left a slightly earthy taste in the mouth. The sparkling wine was very like champagne of a medium quality.

The inhabitants of the interior of Caucasia have a very rude method of manufacturing wine: all the different kinds of grapes,—white, black, round, oval, ripe and unripe,—are thrown together into square bricked holes, in the open fields, and trodden underfoot to extract the juice. The latter flows through a wooden trough into an earthen vessel, which is buried in the ground, its edge being about a foot below the surface. These vessels vary in size, the smaller ones containing about five to ten kilderkins, but I was told that some will hold several hundred. When this vessel is filled, its mouth (in the larger ones above a foot in diameter) is closed with a stone, or a stout wooden lid, upon which is heaped half a foot or a foot of earth. After two or three months the wine is removed to another vessel, buried in a similar manner, but open at the top, and thus left uncovered until the autumn. Here it stands exposed to the rain, dirt, and vermin, which fall into it, and the purifying process it subsequently undergoes is very insufficient to remove the effect of these nuisances. The wine is poured into skins for use, casks and bottles being unknown: for this purpose the skin of a buffalo or ox, a pig or a goat, is dressed whole and sewed into a bag, with the hair inside, and usually first dipped in naphtha, which imparts a strong flavour to the wine,

and is said to assist in preserving it. These huge skins, upon carts which we passed, presented the disgusting appearance of dead animals.

The German colonists, with Herr Lenz at their head, manufacture wine in the European manner; the grapes are carefully sorted, and the juice when expressed is run into vats, where it remains until the first fermentation has taken place, when it is drawn off into casks. A spirit is afterwards distilled from the lees. Barrels, vats, troughs, etc., which are rarely seen in this country, are made by the colonists themselves; old champagne-bottles are the only ones in use, which are collected here, or brought from Russia: they cost fifteen roubles a hundred, and are consequently much dearer than the wine itself, good Kakhethian wine costing on the spot only three kopecks a quart.

The Georgians, who do not understand the cultivation of the vine, obtain on a bad soil 200 kilderkins of wine per dessatina, and on a good soil from 300 to 350; but the colonists, by their careful management, get as much as 600 kilderkins. Vines here attain the age of above a hundred years; in old neglected gardens some are found with stems measuring a foot in diameter, and bearing grapes as good as those on ten-year-old plants. The better class of wines in Kakhethia resemble those of Spain and Burgundy, but have little aroma. If foreign vines were to be transplanted hither,—which has been attempted,—the result would be remarkable. The wines of this

district are not exported to Russia, or any foreign countries; the only persons engaged in the trade are the Georgians, and recently the German colonists: the Armenians never take part in it, and the Tatars are restrained by religious principles.

We reached Telav* late in the evening, and the following morning I visited Prince Andronikoff, the assistant of the chief of the circle, a man of cultivated mind, and who evinced a desire to afford information on every subject that interested us.

The circles of Telav and Syknak, in Kakhetia, contain, beside the two chief towns, 115 villages, with 14,253 dwellings or farms; viz. in Telav 472, Syknak 623, and in the villages 13,158. Of the rateable farms, 7122 belong to the Crown peasants, 3230 to the Church peasants, and 3901 to the peasants of the nobles. There are likewise 1556 nobles, of both sexes. The orthodox Georgian Church has 170 places of worship, and the Armenio-Gregorian Church twelve. The villages vary in size, some of the small ones containing twenty houses, and others four hundred. In those parts where the vine is cultivated, the farms generally lie scattered among the vineyards. Each village forms an independent parish or commune, which has its forest, or more usually one shared in common by several communes †. Every inhabitant is at liberty

* In Telav died the last king of Georgia but one, Heraclius, the last hero of the Bagratides. For fifty years he fought with the Persians and Turks for the independence of his people, and frequently with success.

† Prince Abkhasoff stated that in Syknak the communes pos-

to cut and carry away as much wood as he pleases, but he can sell nothing, the consent of the community at large being required previous to any sale. To each farm are generally attached from fifteen to twenty dessatinas of land, and to the villages in the vine districts from five to forty dessatinas of vineyard. The land is attached inseparably to the farms, and is not divided among the heirs. Great family union prevails; the eldest male member, whether grandfather, father, or brother, has an uncontrolled power over the rest, and takes care of all. A family frequently comprizes members of several generations, and as many as thirty individuals; if any dispute arises, the property is divided and allotted by chosen umpires. A system of two-course farming prevails here: maize is the chief produce, then wheat and barley. Improvements in agriculture are occasionally attempted by the nobles. Every farm pays a tax to the Crown in wheat and barley; and there are old colonists on garden-ground or vineyards (*zaara*) who pay a money (*kaluki*) on wine. It is evident that irrigation was formerly conducted on a system of careful supervision, but at the present day every noble uses the canals as he pleases. The peasants however are still subject to the control of water-bailiffs (*Merue*), every one having the use of the water in proportion to the amount of taxes he pays to the Natzval. The peasants of the nobles and princes pay a weekly tribute or soccage to their lord,

possessed no forests of their own, but the Crown villages had the use of the Crown forests, the manorial villages that of the manorial forests.

of a seventh part of the produce of the land they hold under him ; frequently however this is restricted to the seventh sheaf. Labourers here receive board and clothing, with thirty roubles a year as wages.

Prince Andronikoff said, that the Kakhétians are extremely litigious ; the communes frequently carry on the keenest lawsuits among themselves or with other neighbours. These occasions bring to light a great number and variety of documents, in which the country is remarkably rich. The Prince showed us many of them, and I cannot resist describing one of remarkable beauty, which might have graced any royal archives. This record had been laid before the synodal court of the Eparch of Georgia, by one of the parties in a lawsuit ; it is written upon stout and smooth yellow paper, resembling parchment, and consists of a roll, eighteen to twenty feet long, and one foot wide. At the head is a blank space of about a foot ; then come four miniatures, one under another, the first two much better executed than the others, and of a later age. The first is a portrait of the Czar Alexander, in 1593. The Czar is seated, with his legs drawn under him, upon a broad chair ; the face and beard are well drawn and painted ; he wears a gold turban and a gold-flowered kaftan, trimmed with fur ; a vest with gold flowers, a gold scarf, and violet trowsers complete the dress. In one hand he holds a dagger obliquely before him, resting with the other upon a crutch. Under this portrait is a golden, crowned double eagle, with red beak and claws, hold-

ing in the right claw a sword, and in the left a feather or palm-branch. This picture was surrounded by a wide ornamented frame.

Under this is a second painting, representing four Czars, seated on chairs,—David, Heraclius, Constantine, and the Czarevitch Temuras. Then follows a third picture of two Czars in a standing posture; one of them, Czar Temuras, with white hair and beard, crown and sceptre; he is dressed in a kind of ecclesiastical vestment, a long brown under-garment, with gold flowers, and a red imperial mantle edged with gold. The other figure is the Czarevitch David, with a kind of Polish fur cap, black hair and beard, short kaftan, gold striped vest, red under-garment ornamented with gold flowers, blue stockings, and red shoes. A fourth picture represents the Czars Alexander and Leon, and the Czarevitch David, two of them in similar regal attire to the above.

Under these pictures the inscription begins with a prayer, in the old Georgian church-text, with golden characters, containing a long anathema upon all persons who plunder the church, or who may at any time seek to rob her of the gift conveyed by this document. Then follows the document itself, in fair black Georgian handwriting; it declares that the Czarina Tamara founded and endowed the Kakhetian church, that a Persian invasion had afterwards led to its destruction, together with its documents, but that a time of peace had now succeeded, and the Czar was therefore petitioned to confirm the ancient donations and

privileges. The various ratifications date from the year 1595 down to 1708. The names of the Czars are in each instance attached, with the signet-ring under them. The roll of paper is joined at every two feet and a half, and upon the back of each join is an impression of the signet-ring.

A collection of these documents, and drawings of the seals, portraits, stone monuments, etc., would be of high interest, and throw much light on the history of these countries.

The weather was very bad in the morning, but about eleven o'clock it cleared up, and we travelled the rest of the day in a bright sunshine along the side of a range of mountains, commanding a fine view over the rich and well-cultivated country. This part of Kakhétia forms a wide valley, lying between the mountains we had just crossed, and the eastern range of the Caucasus, watered by the river Allasan. The villages lie close together on the mountain-side, with two lines of vineyards directly in front of them, succeeded by cornfields and meadows down to the river.

On approaching the village of Kurtshan we drove past a small pond, lying between two hills, the water of which was in continual agitation, from a great boiling up in the centre. The water is said to be very warm,—probably a hot mineral spring, which has hitherto remained unused, except that the cattle when sick are driven into it, and are said in many cases to be cured. Peter Neu, whom we sent in search of information, soon returned with the following legend.

There once stood upon the spot now covered by this pond the house of a priest, who was avaricious and irreligious. He set the people a bad example, desecrating the Sunday and saints' days, and compelling his servants to labour likewise. It happened once that he had ordered his corn to be threshed and ground on the day of the Transfiguration of our Lord; when Christ, in passing by, stopped before the priest's house, and asked him, "What day in the year is this?" The priest, who did not recognize the Saviour, returned a hasty answer. "What matters the day of the year to you? it is the day of the Transfiguration; but my daughters, you see, are threshing out the corn as usual." Then Christ turned away, and in an instant the house sank into the earth, with all it contained, and nothing was ever seen or heard of the priest or his household afterwards; but on the spot where the house had stood, this pond arose, with its hot springs, which are the penitential tears of the wicked priest and his family*.

It would be interesting to collect the legends of this country, and to compare them with those of Europe; they are of higher value than the ordinary popular stories, which have all a certain resemblance to the Arabian Nights. The following tradition I heard related on another occasion.

In the south of Georgia lies Suram, which has a very old castle, said to have been built by Pharnadjan,

* A similar legend is told of the warm springs at Carlsbad;—that they are the scalding tears of the poor sinners in Purgatory.

two centuries before the birth of Christ. It was formerly in the possession of a Thaval, a feudal prince, who gave the early kings much trouble. On the south-west side of this castle is seen a wall, standing boldly over a deep abyss, and so strong that it appears to form a part of the rock on which it is built. A certain Thaval once made great efforts to erect this wall, considering it necessary for the defence of the castle. But his labour was in vain, for during the night all that he had built up in the daytime was thrown down, and the people imagined that the work was under a curse or magical spell. A Persian priest being consulted on the matter, declared that the wall would never be completed, until the only son of a widow should be buried alive under the foundation. The boy was found, and the wall was completed; but the wall has never dried, its surface remains covered with moisture—the tears of the unhappy mother. A popular song is preserved, which recites the conversation of the mother with her son Zoorab. “How is it—art thou still alive, my dear son?” “Alas, mother, I am now built up to my knees!” The woman repeats her question. “Alas, mother, the wall now rises up to my waist!” Again, “Up to my breast!” Again, “Up to my neck!” And then for the last time he cries, *Waïme didcovgavdavdi!* “Alas, mother, it is ended*!”

I have nowhere met with a greater variety of field

* A similar legend occurs in Servia and Denmark.—See Keightley's ‘Fairy Mythology.’—TRANSL.

and garden fences than in Kakhétia, from those of the roughest description, to the most neatly and skilfully twisted hedges, with occasionally boarded palings and stone walls. A curious but very common fence is formed of the roots of trees, stubble, and crooked branches, interlaced with great skill, and presenting the strangest figures, frequently resembling a tangled knot of serpents and other monstrous forms.

We stopped for a short time in the village of Anagass, and I sketched the church, which is of a different construction from any I had seen in this part of the country. Its form is more European, although the ornaments are the same as are usually met with here.

In the centre of the village stands a strong stone tower, partly in ruins, similar to those seen in nearly all the large villages in this district; these are said to have been built by the nobles, as a defence against hostile attacks, principally those of the Lesghis, who still from time to time render the country insecure*. In ancient times, when Georgia was powerful, even the mountains of Lesghistan and Daghestan were subject to that country; but since the conquest by

*. The Lesghis are the predatory part of the population: they frequently carry off persons, for the sake of obtaining ransom, and in many instances detain their prisoners as slaves: if the latter are Mohammedans, they are allowed to live as peasants, and are exempted from any heavy burden or servitude. The Lesghis have neither the inclination nor ability for any great undertakings: they are disunited, and seldom act in concert: I have heard it said that there never was an association of more than ten! There are no princes or nobles among them: they are a handsome race, well-built, with black eyes and hair, but are smaller in stature than the Georgians.

Tamerlane, Georgia has never regained her position or power, but on the contrary has become enfeebled by repeated partitions. The brave Lesghis, being thus freed and independent, in their turn made continual attacks on their neighbours, especially the rich Kakhetians. At a later period Shah Abbas fearfully devastated the country; the tract on one side of the Allasan became converted into an immense forest, and the land between the Koor, the Allasan, and the Jora, into a desert steppe, where tigers and leopards are frequently met with at the present day.

We remained this night at the post-station, and reached Syknak early the next morning. For the last six versts the road wound through a narrow and romantic valley among the mountains, along which ran a torrent; this is afterwards closed in, and conducted in canals on either side of the valley under a wall of rock, watering in its course the narrow fields and meadows. In the valley I observed at least twenty mills, but instead of the mill-wheels being driven perpendicularly, they are generally horizontal. I could not ascertain the reason of this apparently useless arrangement: in Tiflis the mills are of the usual construction.

The chief of the Circle of Syknak, Prince Abkhasoff, had sent his nephew to meet us. The mansion of the Prince stands on an eminence just outside the town, and from a near view looked like the residence of the Dadian, which I have before described.

Prince Abkhasoff is a man of considerable mental

cultivation, and was communicative on any subject which interested him. His wife was the daughter of a Suanetian prince. In his opinion no part of the Caucasus is more interesting than Suanetia to travellers engaged in archæological or historical researches; and he mentioned the remarkable and colossal architectural remains, many of which probably date back to times beyond the reach of history*. The Prince informed us that there exist in this country numerous churches of the Middle Ages, lying half in ruins†,

* The modern architecture in Asia is as insignificant and miserable, as that of antiquity was grand and astonishing; in fact the further back we go, the more colossal are the monuments of past ages. Ritter, in his Geography, has brought together with great critical acumen all that has been found in each locality. It is strange that the daguerreotype has been hitherto so little used, to obtain views of the architectural works and inscriptions scattered about the country. Russia would be peculiarly able to avail herself of this means of enlarging her knowledge, as the Caucasus belongs to her, and her influence in Persia and Asiatic Turkey would facilitate such researches. Ritter says, that while the Hindoo architectural monuments have no inscriptions, those of the Egyptians and Persians, and still more of the Armenians, abound in them. The Arabian monuments have only recent inscriptions, and those limited to sentences from the Koran.

† All the architectural remains in the Caucasian countries bear traces of a period remarkable for activity, wealth, and power; when art and knowledge, together with a certain degree of refinement, prevailed. The history of this time is wrapped in great obscurity. All the buildings of the last century or two are destitute of character and perfectly insignificant: there has never existed either the power or the skill to repair the ravages of time and war in the ancient structures. The Russians, it is true, bring with them new germs of civilization, but of an entirely foreign character. The Government should endeavour to revive the elements of cultivation which lie in the spirit of the nation itself: in the first place the Church schools should be founded anew or improved, and the clergy educated,—an indispensable condition to the mental and moral elevation of a people.

which, according to the tradition of both the Suanetians and Abkhasians, were built by the "Dgenovés,"—a name clearly referring to the Genoese, who in the Middle Ages either possessed, or had power over, the whole eastern coast of the Black Sea.

The Genoese appear to have made attempts to extend the Roman Catholic religion here among the heathens*, as their churches show, and the Franciscans settled in every part of the Caucasus, under their protection. In the year 1333 they founded an archbishopric in Taman, and two bishoprics, Lukuka and Schiba. They also made attempts to reconcile the Georgian with the Romish Church; in this however they appear to have failed, as also in a later attempt of the Georgian Patriarch Antonius I., under the Czar Heraclius: the Patriarch was expelled, and lived afterwards in great retirement, devoting himself to scientific studies. There is said to exist still, in the possession of Prince David Zizianoff, of Kareli, a manuscript historical work by the Patriarch on Georgia.

In all probability there are buried in the archives of Genoa, important documents respecting the history

To diffuse secular knowledge, young natives should be educated in good European schools and universities.

* In the churches among the Suanetians are found splendid pictures, painted (I was assured) on gold, and a great number of books and documents, which no one has now the power of reading, but which are yet held in high veneration. The churches are still asylums for criminals, the fasts are observed, and the pictures revered. In other respects Christianity is entirely forgotten among these people; in recent times however it has begun to spread here again.

and ethnography of the Caucasian countries and the north of Asia Minor, but no search has been made for these treasures. In every part of this country innumerable buildings are seen, which popular tradition ascribes to the "Dgenovés." They had their fortresses and depôts on all the coasts of the Crimea, Caucasia, Asia Minor, from Pera to Trebizond, and even into Persia; all the fortifications, bridges, and caravansaries are ascribed to them. The famous bridge of Tschoban Kopri however, on the Araxes, with its seven beautiful arches, is ascribed to Darius Hystaspes.

The following story respecting Suanetia is current among the Georgians. Jason, when he stole the Golden Fleece, drove king Pharnabas from Georgia, who, rendered circumspect by experience, sought a country in the mountains secure against attack and impregnable. He chose Suanetia, whose small population was already subject to him, and there built numerous castles, the ruins of which are still visible, and planted there Georgian nobles. The latter however by degrees became amalgamated with the natives, and acquired the language of the country, which in structure and sound differs from all the other Caucasian tongues. It is evident that the influence of the Georgian people prevailed in every part of this country.

The Suanetians, who were converted to Christianity by Queen Tamara, have retained scarcely more than the name; they have at the present day no regular ordained clergy, and properly speaking no public wor-

ship. They assemble in the churches—some of these in ruins—for prayer, which they usually offer up before the pictures of the Saints. There is however a caste of priests, named Dekonosos, who exercise a kind of supervision over the churches, lead certain Litanies in the public prayers, pronounce the benediction at marriages in the name of the Trinity, and offer up prayers at burials; oaths are also administered in their presence, before the picture of a Saint.

This country is said to be almost inexpugnable; it contains rich mines of gold and silver, which are little known or worked, and the valleys are extremely fertile.

The Suanetians have generally blue eyes and blond hair, and are a handsome and brave people. Personal injuries and quarrels are settled by duel: the practice of blood-revenge prevails everywhere. Polygamy is not discountenanced by custom, but divorce is prohibited; wives are purchased, and as the price is high (often as much as sixty to eighty cows) woman-stealing is not unusual. The traffic in boys and girls also is common, especially with the mountaineers in Circassia, and through them frequently with Constantinople. The price of a boy amounts to three or four hundred roubles, and that of a girl to half or two-thirds of that sum.

Prince Abkhasoff mentioned his having seen a small church, of beautiful structure and in good preservation, in the neighbourhood of Akhalzik, which has an inscription stating that it was erected by Queen Ta-

mara, A.D. 1183. The Georgian king Pharnabas is said to have invented, or introduced, the handwriting at present in use, 170 years before the time of Alexander the Great; and it was not until this period that the Georgian language became predominant in these countries, where innumerable dialects had previously existed. Is this an historical fact, or a tradition?

Prince Abkhasoff has endeavoured to introduce improvements in husbandry; and, to assist in making experiments upon the land, the Crown has granted him for this object five hundred dessatinas. He informed us that he had made very successful attempts to grow the sugar-cane, and had brought a person over from the West Indies expressly to give instruction in its cultivation: this man had died, but not before he had sufficiently taught his servants the art: the refining process was the only one in which he had not quite succeeded. The Prince had also made favourable trials with the cultivation of indigo and cotton, but has not as yet grown the latter in sufficient quantity to supply material for the manufactures of the country, which are not inconsiderable. He grows large quantities of potatoes, and we ate some at his table excellently dressed.

The town of Syknak is beautifully situated, covering a round hill on three sides, from the foot to the summit; the upper portion is encompassed with a wall, now partly in ruins, capped with numerous strong towers. This town is said to have been built by the Czar Heraclius, and was considered very strong;

the Persians however took and destroyed it. Syknak at present contains only a few thousand inhabitants, who are esteemed the bravest of the Georgians; but they are restless and rebellious, and have several times been severely chastised in consequence by the Government.

In the afternoon the Prince took us to visit the Convent of St. Nina, distant about half a league from Syknak. We had a charming ride over hill and dale.

According to the legend, St. Nina*, in the time

* The Georgian Church celebrates the memory of St. Nina on the 14th of January. In the funereal hymns sung on this occasion, it is related of St. Nina that she went from Rome to Jerusalem, and thence to Georgia, to preach Christianity. She was nearly related to the valiant St. George. She bore a cross, made of a vine-stock and bound together with her own hair, with which she performed many miracles. This cross was preserved in the family of the Georgian kings as a sacred relic, and regarded as the palladium of the country. In 1720, when Georgia was invaded by the Turks, Persians, and Lesghis, this cross was carried away into the mountains, and deposited in a village church: from thence it was brought by the Georgian Metropolitan to the son of the Czar Vakhtang at Moscow. The Czar Heraclius repeatedly claimed it, but in vain: at length the great-grandson of Vakhtang, Prince George, sent this relic in 1801 to the Emperor Alexander, who restored it to Georgia, where it is now preserved in the ancient cathedral of Mzketha. According to another legend, this cross was bound with the hair of the Virgin, and sent by her to St. Nina. In Klaproth's Travels is given a translation of the chronicles of Georgia by the Czar Vakhtang V., containing the legend of St. Nina. It has several pretty poetical features, as for instance, when the Patriarch imparts to her instruction in Christianity, he says, "I see in spirit, my daughter, your power, as the strength of a lion, whose race is more powerful than that of all beasts, or of an eagle, who soars higher into the air than all other birds, and looks here from earth only like a little pearl; and yet he watches his prey with an eye of fire, and suddenly pounces down upon it with fierceness." St. Nina, persecuted by King Tiridates, hid herself in a copse of rose-trees, which were

of Constantine the Great (314–318), first introduced Christianity into this country, founded the convent here, and built the church. She was esteemed so holy that she never touched the ground with her feet, but always floated in the air a yard above it. A celebrated queen named Tamara is said to have been her disciple. Not far from Syknak stand the ruins of a castle, in which the latter resided: she was a great heroine, and waged war successfully with the Persians and Lesghis, obliging the latter in winter to transport ice from the Lesghian mountains to Tiflis. This queen Tamara of the legend is not to be confounded with the famous empress of the same name who lived in the twelfth century.

We first visited the church of St. Nina, in which the saint is buried, and which, according to tradition, dates back to the fourth century. This edifice differs in external appearance and structure from other Oriental churches: it has not the usual cupola, but a long nave, and two side aisles, with a vaulted roof.

The Convent appears to be in decay, and destined to extinction. We found only the Archimandrite and not yet in bloom. There she saw in her mind's eye a priest, with a censer in his hand; and amid the incense she perceived the souls of her companions, who were persecuted with her, taken prisoners, and at that time murdered by Tiridates: she saw them leaving their bodies and ascending to Heaven. Then St. Nina cried, "O Lord God! wherefore dost Thou leave me among the serpents and vipers?" But a voice from above said to her, "And thou, too, wilt one day be lifted up to Heaven, and come to thy God! The day will come when the thorns which now surround thee will also bear sweet-smelling roses. But stand up, and go northward, where many harvests are ripe, but few reapers be there."

three secular priests, to perform the church-service. The former received us very politely at his residence, which offered a charming picture of repose and retirement, such as I have seldom witnessed. The wing of the Convent which the Archimandrite inhabits is ancient, and comprizes a saloon, two apartments, and a low *boudoir*, built out and supported upon rafters, with tall narrow windows, closed with trellis-work of the finest wood-carving; the sides and roof of the building are thickly covered with vines; the apartments are adorned with pictures of Saints, tables and chairs in the rococo style, and pretty carvings.

The Convent was once very wealthy, and number'd about twelve hundred peasants, who are now under the synodal jurisdiction. The taxes, tithes, etc. were formerly fixed by the Archimandrite, upon a certain valuation, but are now levied by the Synodal Court: they are divided among four classes of property, the highest of which pays eight roubles, the second six, the third four, and the fourth two.

The revenues of the married priests in this country are derived from landed property; in addition to which they receive from every farm twenty-seven pounds of bread, and a certain money payment, together with the fees for baptisms, marriages, and burials, (for the last, from two to ten roubles,) in raising which a demoralizing haggling prevails. At funerals, two or three meals are given, in a fortnight's time another, and after a month the last, of which the Pope (Greek priest) partakes: any priests from distant parts of the

country, who happen to be present, receive a small present in money.

On the following morning we drove back to Tiflis, crossing the mountains, and keeping along their southern acclivity. Our amiable host accompanied us for a league on horseback, and, as is customary here, with a brilliant retinue of vassals and attendants. On ascending the mountain, two buffalos were put to, before our pair of horses: they were fastened under one yoke, on to the middle of which the driver swung himself, with his face turned toward us: before the buffalos were yoked two oxen, the driver walking at their side. To a European eye the whole equipage had a strange aspect. After crossing the mountain we came to a post-station, where our host took leave of us. Prince Lieven and I also parted company here, —he starting on an excursion into the eastern districts, and I returning with my friend Peter Neu to Tiflis.

During the first part of our journey the land was well cultivated, and the fields were fenced in very regularly. We passed the ruins of a Tatar village, which had been destroyed by the Lesghis some years before, and burnt to the ground. Late in the afternoon we reached again the colony of Marienfeld, near which, in the midst of gardens, lies the Georgian village of Sartischale. The effects of the proximity to these German settlers were evident: the newly erected houses were an imitation, although a poor one, of the German style of building; but the windows had no glass, and the walls were constructed in

the Georgian fashion, of alternate layers of pebbles and limestone.

In our journey today we passed many flocks of sheep returning from the mountains. The shepherds were all on horseback, dressed in the motley Georgian costume, and armed to the teeth. Every flock was accompanied by five or six dogs, of the fine race of the Steppe-hound, a mixed breed between the wolf and greyhound, which have a deadly hostility to wolves. These dogs are only employed to protect the sheep, being far too proud and chivalrous to engage in the humbler duties of driving the flock, like our sheep-dogs. This office is performed by the goats, which attend every flock, and form a ring around it in the fields; within this they compel the sheep to remain, butting them whenever they stray, and driving them back to the flock. On their return home, a stately buck-goat marches proudly at their head, the flock following him, with the other goats on either side. If the leader is detained behind from any cause, the next goat in age and rank instantly takes his place and leads the flock. In the plains of the Caucasus the fat-tailed sheep are met with in great numbers, but they gradually disappear in the mountains, where the wool is of a finer quality.

We reached Tiflis late in the evening. I had now visited the most interesting parts of Georgia, and determined therefore to direct my course south, to Armenia.

During my travels, in various countries, I have always carefully observed the dwellings of the people. The houses, farm-buildings, domestic furniture and utensils, agricultural implements, costumes, etc., afford so many indications of the national character, civilization, customs, and manners. Throughout Europe, the upper classes have, more or less, a similar stamp of cultivation, similar fashions and modes of living, similar customs, ideas, and views of life. The educated classes in Germany, England, France, Russia, etc. are, correctly speaking, segregated from the great body of the people, and stand in every respect in much closer mutual relationship to one another, than to the lower classes of their countrymen. Language indeed forms a certain link between the two classes, but even the effect of this is beginning to diminish, as French becomes more universally the colloquial language of the higher classes. The general style of dwellings, furniture, and the like, are nearly the same throughout Europe, with the same forms and character; occasional variations only being found, resulting from ancient popular usage, and the accidents of climate.

The case is however different with the lower classes, among whom there are still in every country distinct grades,—the peasant, the artisan, and the labourer, each retaining his own position. Hence these classes preserve more marked individual character; and among them are still found national usages and modes of life, although the effects of modern civilization, penetrating gradually but surely into the remotest

corners of Europe, and affecting all classes, have contributed much to efface the characteristic features of nationality.

I will here relate a few particulars relative to the dwellings, buildings, and arrangement of the farms in the Caucasian countries, with observations I made in different parts of Georgia.

The dwelling of the Georgian peasant* stands almost always on rising ground, the back of the house being formed by the excavation of the earth from the hill-side. From this wall project rafters, which rest upon two upright posts, united by a cross-beam. A square is thus formed, and the space between these posts is built up with masonry, the house-door being in the front wall. This square space is roofed with rafters, which project five or six feet from the building, supported upon pillars, thus forming an open arcade, under which the people spend most of their time in fine weather. The rafters are covered with a flat roof of turf and earth, on which the inhabitants pass the evening, and sometimes the night likewise. In the middle of the roof is a square hole, through which the smoke escapes; this chimney and the door are the only openings to admit light into the house, which usually consists of a single apartment. I have already described the internal arrangements, in speaking of Tiflis. The walls are built of small round stones and

* The Georgian house, half built into the earth, is called *sakli* (in Russian, *semlianka*). The Circassians call the house *unch*,—the Abkhasians, *twia*.

clay. In the better class of houses, a double layer of horizontal bricks is first laid, then one of stones a foot deep, with another row of bricks, and again stones up to the top. The entire house is generally only ten to fifteen feet high. Very simple stalls are constructed for the cattle, and arranged for each kind of animal. The farmyard is seldom enclosed.

The houses and farms in Mingrelia and Immiretia differ little from these I have described: the dwellings are generally log-houses, constructed of cross-beams laid one upon another. There is a door at each gable-end of the building, and sometimes the gable projects five or six feet, resting upon pillars. Separate sheds are set apart for the cattle. The buildings are all surrounded by a fenced enclosure, and I generally noticed gourds climbing up the walls, and trailing gracefully upon the roof.

The peasant's house in Kakhétia has usually a thatched roof of straw or rushes: the sides are either built up with masonry, or planked between wooden posts: they occasionally consist of interwoven bushes plastered with clay. The dwelling generally contains only one large apartment, in the middle of which is the fire, and on one side all the beds piled up in order; there is sometimes an arcade running all round the building, or along three sides. I was admitted to one of the principal houses in the village of Anagass, and was not a little surprized to find all kinds of utensils, crockery ware, plates, a wine decanter, with cups and saucers. The whole building consisted of one large

apartment, separated from the open arcade by a low partition of wicker-work, and a large curtain. In the middle was the fireplace, but no raised hearth. The beds were all arranged in order against one of the walls, and there were no tables or chairs.

The dwellings of the noble and the peasant are not so distinct as in Europe; in fact, the two classes still constitute one and the same people, in language, mode of life, and character; their respective occupations alone distinguish them.

Gooria (or Gouriel) is the most fertile country in all Caucasia: the land, although never manured, yields annually two harvests. In the autumn the soil is lightly turned, with a double-pointed plough, drawn by two oxen; wheat is then sown, and is harvested in April. After this the land is again ploughed, and bush-harrowed, previous to sowing maize or millet, which is cut in September. Tobacco is also cultivated. The country is hilly; the farms lie isolated, and generally on a gentle slope. The farmsteads occupy a large space of ground, usually enclosed by a hedge or boarded fence, and the buildings stand under the shade of magnificent walnut-trees, chestnuts, and planes. Gardens and vineyards surround the home, and beyond these are fields of maize and millet, all carefully hedged in. The entire extent of ground occupied by buildings and fields in each farm amounts to from four to eight dessatinas. But a number of farms have frequently also fields in common, regularly surveyed, and shared among them; each having on

an average from eight to twelve dessatinas of land. A certain aggregate of these farms (not less than twenty, but often two to three hundred) form a village commune, and two to four constitute a church commune*.

I shall give here, from my own inspection, a description of one of these farmsteads, lying near Moran, on the river Rion. It formed a square, about 200 paces long and 150 wide, surrounded by well-fenced kitchen-gardens and vineyards. Near one corner was the entrance to the enclosure planted with the finest chestnut-trees. The buildings were ten in number†; the dwelling-house (*sakel*) stood alone at the upper end, thirty-six paces long and eighteen wide, and bricked to a height of a foot and half: the walls were constructed of beams laid one upon another, and covered externally with thick planks of walnut: the roof had a good straw thatch. The house consisted of two divisions: in front was a porch or vestibule, open on three sides, the roof resting on five pillars. This vestibule, which was entered by a small railed door up a few steps, was enclosed with a carved ba-

* I could almost imagine myself transported back to Westphalia, with its peasant life and *kerspeln*. What I here relate of Gooria, applies also to the greater part of Mingrelia.

† These buildings consisted of,—1. The *Sakel*, or dwelling-house:—2. The *Chalun*, or storehouse for corn:—3. *Sastuno*, or lodging-house for guests:—4. *Sarimdi*, or building for the manufacture of tobacco:—5. *Samedskimbo*, or stable for horses:—6. *Berell*, the storehouse for millet:—7. *Maran*, or building for the wine-presses:—8. The *Otache*, or armoury:—9. The spot where the wine is deposited in the earth, in large earthen vessels:—10. The *Tschai*, or wells:—11. *Samoaklo*, or servants' house.

lustrade about three feet high. From this open entrance-room, in which the family spend most of their time, a door led into the interior of the house, which consisted of a single large apartment, lighted by latticed windows without glass. In the centre of this room was the hearth, upon the ground, the smoke escaping at the roof. On one side stood a long sleeping-bench, easily capable of being moved to the fire; and on the other was a fixed couch, upon which all the beds were piled up with great order. There were no tables or chairs, and a few low stools or benches formed the only furniture. I was much interested in observing the external similarity in the peasant's house in Gooria, with those in retired parts of Westphalia,—the same primitive form and appearance in both.

I shall have occasion hereafter to describe the farms in Armenia. The Eastern or Caspian districts I have not visited, but am told that the Tatars in that country have pretty dwellings, ornamented with a variety of wood-carving in the roofs, gables, and windows, in the same fashion as prevails throughout Russia Proper: indeed, this style is of Tatar origin, having been introduced by that people into Russia: it is not found among the other Slaavic races, of Little Russia, Red Russia, White Russia, nor among the Finnish races, except those which, like the Mordva, have become perfectly Russianized.

CHAPTER VI.

DEPARTURE FOR ARMENIA.—TATAES.—STORY OF THE BLIND MAN AND HIS SON.—EXTRAORDINARY MOUNTAIN, AND ITS LEGENDS.—CARAVANSARY.—ARMENIAN COLONY.—CIRCLE OF ELIZABETPOL. AGRICULTURE.—VILLAGES.—FARM-HOUSES.—LAW OF INHERITANCE.—THE BEGS.—TATAB VILLAGES.—ARMENIANS.—THE EAGLE MOUNTAIN.—THE GOKTSCHAI LAKE.—STORY OF TAMERLANE.—CONVENT OF KIEGANTAVANG.—MOUNT ABARAT.—LEGEND OF MOUNT ULTMISCH-ALTOTEM.—ABOVIAN.—ERIVAN.—THE BAZAAR.—GUILDS.—IRRIGATION.—TAXES.—PERSIAN DOMINION.—DECLINE OF TRADE.

I STAID this time in Tiflis only long enough to make the necessary preparations for my journey to Armenia. After procuring from the Governor the requisite papers, I hired a Russian tarantas, a convenient carriage, suitable for bad roads. But on this occasion I was prettily taken in by a German saddler, who gave me such a rickety vehicle, though externally polished up, that we broke down more than half-a-dozen times on the journey, and lost not only money, but what was worse, time. The German workmen have in general throughout the Russian provinces a reputation for great skill and honesty.

In the afternoon of the 22nd of August, I took the

road to Erivan, with Peter Neu and a Russian postilion*, escorted by two Cossacks. The road led at first along the rapid Koor, with a lofty rocky mountain range on the right, and afterwards through fertile fields : as it grew dark we reached the forest.

“Peter Neu, my faithful Shehrazadée, it is night, and we cannot discern anything abroad ; come then, tell me one of those pretty stories of which you know so many.” Peter began as follows.

BLIND OBEID AND HIS SON KUROGLI.

Once upon a time a king of Persia had a groom whose name was Obeid, in whom he placed the greatest confidence : he always let him choose the foals which he wanted for his own use, finding by experience that these invariably turned out well. Now it came to pass that once, when the man had driven his troop of horses to the sea-shore, on a sudden a seahorse jumped out of the waves and covered one of the mares, which afterwards gave birth to a foal : this the groom reared carefully, though it was an unsightly animal ; and one day, when the King directed him to select eight of the best colts in the troop, he brought this one among the rest ; but the King fell into a rage with the man, for daring to

* The Russian postilion is not the driver, as with us, but a kind of inferior officer of the post-service, who is sent with the traveller to procure horses, pay everything, and transact all the business on the road. With a good postilion, a traveller will escape the chicanery and imposition so generally complained of in Russia.

bring him such an ugly animal, and exclaimed to his attendants, "Since the fellow has such bad eyes for discerning beauty, put them out!" So the keeper was blinded, and the King, in mockery, made him a present of the horse. When Obeid returned home, he ordered his son K urogli to put the horse into a dark stable: the son did so, and after forty days the blind man asked to be led into the stable, felt the horse, and finding a cavity on one of its legs, said to his son, "A sunbeam has fallen upon this spot; look for the crevice in the door, stop it up close, and then leave the horse forty days longer in the dark." When this time had passed, the blind man said to K urogli, "Mount the horse,—I will get up behind you and ride through the world; but watch if we are pursued; for the King will send people after us, on the other seven horses which I brought him; but I know what they can do." So they both mounted the horse, and on they rode, the son looking continually behind him; and soon he exclaimed, "There is a person following us on a steed as white as a swan." "Keep on the stony ground," replied his father. They did so, and the pursuer soon gave up the chase, and remained far behind. Some time after the son said, "Now there are two in pursuit of us, on bay horses;" and the old man said, "Keep to the ploughed land;" and soon these were left behind. Again the son said, "Now there are two men following us on two brown horses." "Keep on the boggy land," was the answer; and again these men

were soon left behind. But the son, looking back once more, said, "Two of the King's servants are now pursuing us on two black steeds;" and the father replied, "Only keep on the good road, and they will never overtake us." So the blind man and his son escaped the pursuit; and soon they came to a farm-house, and the son went in to ask for something to eat and drink: but as he was contending with the house-dogs and speaking to the host, a man came by on horseback, who murdered the blind man, jumped upon the horse, and rode away. But Kürogli pursued him, and called out to the horse, who turned round in spite of his rider, whom Kürogli killed, and thus got his horse again.

Sometime afterwards Kürogli rode into the mountains and turned robber, and he became so famous that he was chosen captain of all the robbers of the country round about. Then the Turkish Sultan offered a great reward to whoever would bring him Kürogli's horse; and an Armenian obtained the prize by stratagem. By insulting and challenging Kürogli, he induced him to jump off his horse. The man then took refuge in a mill, which he knew had a secret entrance; and while Kürogli was searching for him, he sprang upon the horse and rode off. Kürogli got on the brown horse left behind by the Armenian, but was unable to overtake him; and when he returned to his comrades, the stoutest fellow among them mocked at him: "You have made a pretty bargain, forsooth! —exchanged your grey for a brown! I wish you joy,

—*Verdün küre aldentore bazarea müburkola,*” added the learned Peter, who always gave, in the dialogue part of his story, both Tatar and German.

Now Kurogli had never been on good terms with this fellow; for whenever they attacked and seized a caravan, Kurogli would take only half the goods, always measuring them with his lance, and leaving the rest to the owner; but Dalle Hassan grumbled at this division, and wanted to take two-thirds. Kurogli then quitted his companions for a time, dressed himself as a dervish, slung a guitar about his neck, and went to the court of the Sultan, who, after making trial of his skill, agreed to take him into his service. And Kurogli surpassed all the dervishes in learning and eloquence, and all the poets and musicians in singing and playing on the guitar. Then he said to the Sultan, “My chief skill lies in the knowledge and management of horses.” “If so,” said the Sultan, “find out the nature of this grey steed, and tell me his pedigree, his qualities, and his future fate.” “Willingly,” replied Kurogli; “but permit me first to mount and make trial of him.” The Sultan replied, “Do so, if you can; but ever since he has been here, he has let no one get upon his back.” Then Kurogli went up to the horse, which neighed loudly, and put its head upon its master’s shoulder. And the Sultan cried out, “The dervish is a sorcerer!” But in a trice Kurogli jumped upon the horse, made him gallop a few rounds, and pulled up before the Sultan. “These,” said he, “are the pedigree, the qua-

lities, and the destiny of the steed: he is descended only on the dam's side from the race of horses; his sire is a spirit: he excels all the horses on earth, for although others may equal him in some points, this steed has every noble quality in the highest degree. His destiny is, that he belongs to Kùroglì, and is his once more!" Then the Sultan cried out, "Seize him! it is Kùroglì himself!" But no one was able to take Kùroglì, who returned to his comrades; and going up to Dalle Hassan, said, "Another time laugh not until you see the end." But the end of Kùroglì was this: a descendant of Palaràn Roostem* once engaged in a duel with him; they fought for three whole days, and both died of the wounds which they gave and received.

This story,—no studied fiction of a poet,—narrated by my friend Peter, produced on me the effect of the clappers of a mill: I fell asleep before it was ended; and when I penned it down the next morning, Peter was obliged to refresh my memory, and relate the conclusion over again. The mythical features and allusions of these legends may interest inquirers into Oriental history and modes of thought.

The following morning we passed close to a Tatar village, in face of which rose a mountain of a remarkable form. "Away with you, Peter! be off to the village,—there must be some story connected with yonder mountain." And in half an hour Peter returned with a legend, telling how formerly a castle

* The mythic hero, the Hercules of the Persians.

had stood upon this mountain, inhabited by a king, the ruins of which may be seen at the present day. Around the mountain lay a large city, called like the castle Kevisan, which was totally destroyed in a bloody war; but the last king concealed all the treasures belonging to himself and the citizens in the interior of the mountain. When the sun shines on it, an open door may be seen, and within, upon a table, a quantity of glittering writings; but nobody has hitherto ventured to enter, for as soon as any one approaches the spot, the letters turn into huge hissing snakes; but it is said, that if ever the true heir of the King shall come, and discover the true heirs of the citizens, the mountain will open and yield up its treasures.

This legend is similar to many German tales, and has some resemblance to those of the well-known Kiffhauser. The mountain, castle, and city, are all called Kevisan, and the village Pibis.

I was detained at a station for two hours by an accident to my carriage. An Armenian village lay close by our road, which was founded only thirty-two years ago; the inhabitants had emigrated from Persian Armenia, and settled here, during the governorship of Prince Zizianoff: they are very poor, and cultivate only wheat and barley, turning up the soil in May with a large plough (*kötan*), and again before sowing in September with a small one (*tchütt*), drawn by two oxen, which merely scratches the ground.

I here met an officer from Elizabethpol, who gave

me some information respecting the state of that Circle. The district of Shamsadinsk is inhabited by Armenians and Tatars, the former dwelling in the mountains, and the Tatars, who are the majority, in the fertile plains. The Armenians are principally engaged in agriculture, gardening, and the culture of the vine: they grow wheat, barley, millet, maize, and occasionally a little flax. The Tatars are more occupied with breeding cattle, horses, and sheep, than with agriculture: they are for the most part well off, but lazy, whereas the Armenians are extremely industrious. The Tatars inhabit large villages, of one to three hundred houses: the villages of the Armenians are in general small, never comprising more than a hundred dwellings. The Tatar houses resemble those of the Georgians, which I have before described; and it seems not improbable that the one people imitated this style of building from the other. These dwellings might be called subterranean caverns; they lie open to the road, and are unenclosed. In the Crown villages the land is the property of the Sovereign; but the buildings, trees, vines, etc. belong to the peasants. To each house there is properly attached a certain portion of land; the peasants however frequently dispose of this, by exchange, sale, and purchase, but only among members of the same commune.

Among the Tatars, upon the death of a father, his sons inherit the property in common, and frequently continue to live together: they are however at liberty

to divide the property, under the direction of the Sherrah, or spiritual court,—among the Sunnite Mohammedans by the Gazee, and among the Sheeah sect by the Akhunt: there is here only one Akhunt over fifty villages. The Sherrah makes the division equitably; the most industrious of the brothers receiving the house, and the others land, money, or cattle: the daughters receive nothing but some of the furniture and carpets. Should there be no sons, the daughters have the inheritance; if the father has during life shared the property with his brothers, his daughter or daughters receive all; but if he has held the house and property in common with his brothers until the time of his death, the daughter gets no portion of the land, but receives from the Sherrah her share of the other property.

The Tatars have an hereditary nobility, entitled Beks, of whom almost every village has a family. The Beks had formerly jurisdiction in civil cases, together with the collection of the Crown taxes: every farmhouse had to give the Bek one day's ploughing, one day's harvesting, and one day's threshing, together with horses when travelling; but these dues have been commuted for a sum of money. The common people have a great veneration for the *old* Bek families, but this feeling does not at all extend to the *new* Beks, who have probably received their title from a commission in the Russian service. The Crown claims the landed property of the Beks, although this claim apparently amounts merely to a kind of suzerainty: the

Begs dispose of their land without restriction, and pay no taxes.

Since the year 1841 there have been established in the Tatar villages, as in Russia, Starsheenas (a Persian word signifying 'Village-gods'); and beside these, from two to five elders of the commune (Kampa or Akhsakal, literally 'Grey-heads'): these retain their office for life, unless they resign or are deposed for misconduct. The Starsheenas and elders are elected by the commune, the choice of the former being confirmed by the manorial chamber. At the present day the Starsheena levies the Crown taxes, for which the whole district is answerable. The share of each village is also fixed, subject to the same condition: a certain tax is laid upon every hearth, and the value of the tithe of corn is taken in money. The rates for the maintenance of the prisons, hospitals, roads, and bridges, together with the supply of horses for the post and military service also create an oppressive burden.

Among the Armenians questions of inheritance are settled by arbitration, regulated by the same laws and customs as prevail in Georgia; they have here likewise a class of nobles called Meliks, or Begs, who have no privileges, receive nothing from the commune or the Crown, and possess no serfs; they are however tax-free, like the Tatar Begs. The Crown lays claim to the lands which they hold, but here too the claim is merely nominal: their title alone distinguishes them from the Tarkhans, or families of freemen. In

all other respects the political state of the Armenians here is similar to that of the Tatars.

The Tatars and Armenians manufacture carpets and shawls, and are fond of trade: a man's daily wages in summer are half a rouble, and in winter twenty kopecks, beside his food: a farm-servant's annual wages amount to about thirty roubles. There are no female day-labourers, nor hired maid-servants, and the women never work in the fields.

Before us we saw another remarkable mountain, with a sharply pointed summit, which Peter soon learned in the adjacent village was called the Eagle Mountain. Tradition says that it was once the abode of a large eagle, which freed the country around from vermin, in return for which benefit the people were obliged to provide him with two fowls a day. Once however, during a war, they neglected this tribute; the eagle flew away, and they have ever since been pestered with wolves, foxes, and jackals.

In this district are likewise the Mountain and Pass of Alaverdi, a name which reminds us of the legend I have before related of St. Gregory.

We journeyed the whole of this day through beautiful and romantic valleys, watered by wild mountain torrents; but a break-down detained us at a station, and we passed the night in the carriage. At day-break, and in a bright moonlight, we reached the magnificent Goktschai ('Blue Sea'), and proceeded for nearly an hour along its shore. This expanse of water, which is about the size of the Lake of Con-

stance, presented an enchanting aspect. Peter, who was quite at home here, related the following legend.

LEGEND OF LANG TAMAR, OR LAME TAMAR*.

Tamar was a shepherd-lad, whose father set him to keep lambs: and one day a hare ran among them, which the boy took for a lamb; every time the hare tried to run away, he stopped it and drove it back into the flock. In the evening he brought the hare into the pen with the rest, and complained to his father of the lamb that was continually running away. His father, when he saw that the creature was a hare, and remarked the amazing swiftness of the boy, looked sharply at him and said, "One day or other you will assuredly be a conqueror, and a great destroyer of the monks; but to prevent your destroying everything, and conquering the whole world, I will deprive you of your swiftness." So saying, he cut the sinews of one of his feet, and ever after the boy was called Lang Tamar, or Lame Tamar. The boy grew apace, and became a bold and powerful man, and he was soon the leader of his tribe. Tamar was seized with an insatiable thirst for conquest, and he induced his people to undertake an expedition against China. At that time the Emperor of China dwelt in a castle in the sea, and his food was brought to him every day in golden dishes, and the dish from which he ate was always thrown into the sea. When

* In the old Georgian chronicles, Tamerlane is always named Lang Tamar.

the Emperor heard of Tamerlane's approach, he sent into every part of his kingdom, and collected twelve thousand lame men; and setting them on twelve thousand horses, all exactly alike, he ordered them to ride forth and meet Tamerlane, to let him see his immense power: at the same time he sent him a gold-covered dish. When Tamerlane uncovered the dish, he found it filled with costly precious stones. Then Tamerlane said to the messenger, "Tell the Emperor I am hungry, and he sends me gold and stones." But the Emperor replied to Tamerlane, "Wherefore art thou come hither? thou hadst enough to eat at home: dost thou want gold and precious stones, my treasury stands open, take what thou wilt: but thou art a fool—go home!"

Tamerlane then turned round, and went through Persia to Armenia. Now he was a great enemy to Christianity, and destroyed the churches and monasteries with fierce rage. One time he set out, intending to destroy the celebrated monastery of Kiegantavang; and when he came to the river which ran through the valley, he saw encamped on the other side an innumerable army of horsemen, arrayed in red and blue. "There is surely no king, no great nation, in this country," he exclaimed,—“whence then such a host?” But Tamerlane alone saw the army; his followers saw nothing; then he perceived that a miracle had been wrought, and he cried out, "Gjor-getsch!" (*Behold and depart*); and ever since, this monastery has borne the Tatar name of Gjorgetsch.

Tamerlane spared the monastery, and soon afterwards came to Lake Goktschai, on the shore of which stood a small monastery, where he saw a monk cast his cloak upon the water, place himself upon it, and sail along the lake. On beholding this miracle, Tamerlane called the monk to him and said, "Pronounce a blessing on my army, and demand any favour, it shall be granted thee." Then the monk asked him to set free as many prisoners as the church of the monastery would hold. Lang Tamar assented, and all the host which his army had taken prisoners went one after another into the little church, and thus obtained their liberty. But the monk, instead of a blessing, gave Tamerlane a curse in writing: "Henceforth no ten men of thine army shall obey one and the same leader!" From that hour the army of Tamerlane was scattered abroad, and never collected again. From a part of this army the Lesghis are descended, and never to this day have ten of them continued to obey the same leader.

Peter also told me the following legend of the Monastery of Kiegantavang, alluded to in the preceding story.

A brother and sister of the blood-royal once made a vow to build a monastery: they came to a valley, where the brother with his hammer broke stones from the rock, and his sister standing above drew them up with her long hair. When the sister had finished the upper story, the brother built the lower one, and finally prepared to make the entrance.

Then he struck the wall, and immediately fell asleep, and on awaking he missed his hammer, and found it in another place; whereupon he struck the wall there, and easily found the right entrance. A relic of the holy lance was brought to this monastery, which thence derived its name.

On another occasion I heard this story from Abovian, but with some variation; it is interesting to see how these legendary tales take their colouring and form according to the conception of different peoples.

Shah Abbas the Great, of Persia, was once at the head of a large army in Armenia, where he heard of the miracle of the holy lance, with which our Saviour's side was pierced; this relic, which is now at Echmiadzin, was at that time preserved in the monastery of Gjorgetsch. The Shah, urged by his fanatical moollahs, went to the monastery to see the lance and test its miraculous power: he derided it, and impiously thrust his spear against it; when suddenly the valley all around was filled with warriors, arrayed in blue, who put him and his whole army to flight; nay, even twisted their faces round to their backs, in which condition they remained, until the Shah humbled himself, and cried out, "Gjorgetsch," ("Behold and depart!") Then, after bestowing rich gifts on the monastery, he retired from Armenia. Ever since, even the Mohammedan Tatars bring offerings of sheep, and make pilgrimages to this monastery, like the Christians. It is situated in the mountains, forty versts from Erivan, in a valley watered by the river Garai.

Near the monastery lie the extensive ruins of the city of Bashgarni, where the Armenian king Tiridates the Parthian erected a magnificent castle for his sister. The church of the monastery is hewn out of the rock, and there are three other small churches, similarly excavated, with innumerable caverns, which, according to tradition, were in Christian times the abodes of monks and hermits. The legend respecting the brother and sister, who retired to this valley, is similar to the one related above.

Our road now turned away from the lake and ascended a hill, on reaching the top of which Mount Ararat appeared before us, in all its sublimity and in the loveliest morning light.

Ararat rises in solitary grandeur from the plain to an elevation of more than sixteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, terminated by a conical summit*. The Elbrouz is a few thousand feet higher ;

* The great Armenian chronicler, Moses of Khorene, calls Ararat the centre of the world, as it is also the central point of Armenia. Ritter (vol. ix.) quotes Raumer and Hoff, who maintain that Ararat occupies in reality a central position in the Old World ; in other words, that it is the central point of the great terrestrial line drawn from the Cape of Good Hope to Behring's Straits ; secondly, that it is the central point of the great Asiatic-African range of deserts, the ancient bottom of the sea ; thirdly, that it has the same position with respect to the series of inland waters which run from Gibraltar to Lake Baikal ; and fourthly, that it also stands in the centre of the surrounding seas and lakes, which is the case with no other mountain of the old continent. The most ancient traditional interpretations of the sacred histories of the Hebrews and Persians have continually reference to Armenia and Ararat. From Ararat came Bileam, who foretold the appearance of the star. According to an Oriental tradition it was on this or one of the adjacent mountains, possibly the Little Ararat, that the pillar stood bearing the figure

but as it rises from the lofty range of the Caucasus, the impression of its height is lessened. Ararat is more than half covered with eternal snow, and now under the bright morning sun it was lighted up with various colours,—crimson, orange, and violet. Tradition, as is well known, has placed the resting of Noah's Ark on its summit*.

On our right rose the glaciers of Allagäs, and at two miles from Erivan commenced the mountains of Ultmish Altötem, stretching to a distance of forty or fifty versts. They are said to have 366 valleys, respecting which Peter related the following Armenian legend.

There once dwelt in a cavern in this country a vampyre, called Dakhanavar, who could not endure

of the star, on which the Chaldeans had stationed twelve of their wise men to watch its appearance in the heavens, three of whom, on seeing it rise, followed it, until they reached the birthplace of the Child in Judea. Ararat was the central point of the Chaldean worship of the stars. The Medes and Persians also regarded Armenia as the great metropolis of nations, the original seat of the whole human race; and the foundation of the House of Madai (the Medes) was laid upon this central mountain, Riphates or Ararat; but after the expulsion from Eden, when Ahriman the serpent had inflicted upon Eden ten months of cold (after which Ararat was first enveloped in snow), then the House of Madai was compelled to migrate from its original seat, and to seek the warmer light-land of the South.

* Ritter, *Erdkunde*, part x. book iii. p. 273. The Armenians call Ararat, Agherhdagh, Dagherdagh, and Arghidagh. According to Von Hammer, the most correct orthography is Arghidagh ('Mountain of the Ark'), connected perhaps with the word *Arka* of the Septuagint, and *Ark*, adopted in the English Bible. In the languages of India *Arghi* is ship; possibly *Argo* and *Argonauts* may be connected with this word.

any one to penetrate into these mountains or count their valleys. Every one who attempted this, had in the night his blood sucked by the monster, from the soles of his feet, until he died. The vampyre was however at last outwitted by two cunning fellows: they began to count the valleys, and when night came on they lay down to sleep, taking care to place themselves with the feet of the one under the head of the other. In the night the monster came, felt as usual, and found a head: then he felt at the other end, and found a head there also. "Well," cried he, "I have gone through the whole 366 valleys of these mountains, and have sucked the blood of people without end, but never yet did I find any one with two heads and no feet!" So saying he ran away, and was never more seen in that country; but ever after the people have known that the mountain has 366 valleys.

In a few hours we reached Erivan. On the side by which we approached, the country is so mountainous that the town was scarcely discernible until within less than a thousand paces, on reaching the heights which command it. On the south side the town lies on a rocky eminence, with the plain stretching before it as far as Mount Ararat. In Tiflis, Europe and Asia may be said to meet, and the town has a divided aspect; but Erivan is a purely Asiatic city: everything is Oriental, except a few new-built Russian houses, and occasionally Russian uniforms in the streets.

The name Erivan, or Eravan, signifies in the Armenian language 'Visible.' Tradition says that when

Noah, after the Flood, looked for the first time from Ararat, and beheld on this spot the dry ground, he exclaimed, "It is visible!" and hence this region received its name*. According to another tradition, an Armenian king named Erivar built the city, which appears under several other names; it is likewise said that Hannibal visited Tigranes on this spot.

Herr Abovian, whom I have previously mentioned, is at the head of a newly-established school here, and resides in a building belonging to the Crown, in which I lodged. The first day of my visit, I was satisfied with strolling about the streets with Abovian, and examining the system of canals in this place. The

* In every part of this country we meet with legends of Noah: the Persians call Ararat Koh-i-noo, *i. e.* Noah's Mountain; the Armenians call it Masees, *i. e.* Mother of the World; the region round the eastern foot of the mountain is called Archnoisda, or Foot of Noah, because it was here that he alighted; the village of Agorhee, Akhoree, Argharee, *i. e.* *arg* (he planted) *uari* (vine), was his dwelling-place; here he planted the vine which he had brought out of Paradise, and which is still shown; it however no longer bears grapes yielding wine, owing to the sins of mankind. The church is erected on the spot where Noah's altar stood. The town of Nakhichevan signifies the first spot where Noah alighted; Flavius Josephus calls the place Apobateriam. The village of Manard signifies, "The Mother lies here," Noah's wife having been buried on that spot. So far back as 1253, Ruisbrok relates, in the account of his travels, that Mount Masees (Mother of the World) could never be ascended, and that an Armenian monk had, by fervent prayer, obtained a piece of the Ark, which was preserved as a relic; the same legend was related to myself. The pious Armenians regard the ascent of the mountain by the traveller Parrot as a silly fable; some, with a show of great cleverness, admit that he may possibly have reached the summit, but that he was standing high up, upon ice and snow, far from the Ark and the mountain.

most interesting object is the great bazaar, an extensive building, in which shops of every description of trade and manufacture are ranged in rows, each trade being separate,—here a row of tailors, there one of shoemakers; artisans of different callings were all busily at work. The various classes of merchants have also their shops, and almost every one had a tame falcon on his wrist, with which he was continually playing.

The workmen are united in Guilds, which have existed since the time of the Persian dominion, and are still regulated by Persian laws. These guilds however are not so exclusive as those in Georgia. The admission to the rank of Master is accompanied with the same kind of ceremonies. On occasion of certain solemnities and public processions, each trade is called on to act in its corporate capacity. Each has likewise to bear its share of the public burdens; thus, for instance, the Guild of Shoemakers has to provide the beds for the public hospital, the Guild of Tailors the seats, and so forth. The Armenian and Tatar artisans constitute separate guilds: a Tatar shoemaker told me that his trade was presided over by an old Master, who was elected; he exercised jurisdiction, discharged the journeymen, and initiated them into the rank of Mastership, an honour which they received kneeling.

Whilst engaged in examining the canal-system and irrigation of the gardens of Erivan, accompanied by Abovian and the head of the police, I obtained con-

siderable information, which I will endeavour to communicate to the reader.

The extensive valley stretching between Ararat and the mountains to the north, everywhere exhibits traces of volcanic origin, in its lava and basaltic rocks, etc., with fragments of which the ground is covered; this has a great influence on the formation and nature of the stratum of *humus*, which is hot and dry, but extremely fertile when sufficiently watered, without which not a blade of grass will grow. This southern climate is not subject to the sudden changes of weather we so frequently experience; for months together not a drop of rain falls, and the heat and drought are excessive.

This country would be an uninhabitable steppe, but for the network of canals which extends over every part, irrigating the cornfields and gardens, as well as meadows. If all these canals were laid down on a map, it would exhibit an extensive and regular system, complex in structure, but planned with great skill and knowledge. History is silent respecting the period at which the system was first planned and carried out; but when we remember that this country, with the exception of a few spots, could never have supported any inhabitants without artificial irrigation, and further, that two or three thousand years ago we find it mentioned in history as rich in natural produce and population,—far more so indeed than at the present day,—it is evident that a system of irrigation must have existed in very early times;

and we may perhaps conjecture the construction of these canals, here and in other parts, to have been the work of the great monarchs of Western Asia*, evincing as they do the persevering will and energy of an absolute power.

The canal-system which irrigates the whole of this district, including the city of Erivan, with its gardens, meadows, and cornfields, derives its supplies from Lake Goktschai, ten leagues distant. At that place the river Seng issues from the lake; it runs past Erivan, and falls into the Araxes. Canals branch off in all directions from the lake and river, conveying water to the surrounding villages. At Kanakir these branches all unite, and here commence the waterworks of Erivan, which comprize four principal canals; the first supplies the land and houses to the left, and is nearly all consumed by the time it reaches the city, whence it is

* The traveller Schulz met with a similar canal, constructed of colossal blocks of stone, without cement, in Turkish Armenia, which conveyed the water from a great distance to the city of Van. Popular tradition ascribed it to Shameeran (Semiramis): it is partly cut through rocks, on which are found arrow-headed characters. Ritter (*Geogr.* page 855) states that in the plain of the Euphrates lies the district of Malatia, which is watered by a system of irrigation planned and executed with great skill. The country to a distance of eight leagues is extremely well cultivated, supporting twenty thousand inhabitants, who dwell in numerous villages; but the general fertility is entirely attributable to this system of canals, for at only the distance of a few paces beyond the canals all is barren. The canals lie two hundred feet above the level of the valley: Ritter ascribes them to Semiramis. The Pasha of Arka said to the traveller Ainsworth, when speaking of the inhabitants, "They have little money, and less care; they lie and smoke their pipes beside the cool springs, in gardens of water-melons."

called in Persian the "Feeding Water." Abahajath, the second canal, runs a distance of nine and a half versts; it was for a long time suffered to go to ruin, but was subsequently repaired, and thence is called the "Repaired Canal." Mamuri, the third canal, branches off to the right, and runs at about eight versts from the city; it is carried for a length of twelve hundred yards through a cutting in the rock, and affords the chief supply of water to the gardens of the city; it is called the "Subterranean Canal." Dalmee, the fourth canal, turns to the right at a distance of about four versts, and is called the "New Village Canal." Nuragig, which it previously watered, was a village that was destroyed in the war; this land has been converted into gardens, belonging to the inhabitants of Erivan. From the city itself another large canal branched off to the right, encompassing a hill; it was destroyed during a former war. The last Persian governor of Erivan ordered it to be restored; thousands of workmen were required to effect this, and the work was not completed for many years. What time and means must the original construction have cost! A great many new gardens were formed, and the Sirdar himself laid out here a magnificent pleasure-garden, the Persian grandees following his example. Two other canals branch off in the vicinity of the city; these are not used for irrigation, but for driving mills, nineteen of which are worked by each canal.

The canal-system of Erivan, the property of the City, is admirably laid out, and easily kept in order; the annual repairs amounting to about three hundred roubles. All the citizens who use the water are called upon to contribute money and labour, in proportion to the quantity they consume. At the head of all affairs connected with these water-works are eleven Juvari (water-inspectors), who are chosen by the citizens. A written contract is formed with them, and they receive a remuneration according to the extent of their district, in some cases amounting to thirty roubles. There are also three inspectors chosen by the citizens, Mülksabi, or landowners, who have the supervision of the canals, the direction of the repairs, etc.

Every proprietor is supplied with water for irrigation according to the extent of his land, and for as long a time as is required to irrigate it. The sluices for letting the water on to each tract are built of stone, and are of the same size.

The gardens are divided into unions, consisting of from twelve to fifteen, according to the quantity of water in the canal; these unions are supplied with the water at the same time, and in turn. Every Juvar has, for his district, a board with a stamp upon it, to be impressed on the clay with which the outlets for the water are closed. As long as this stamp is seen on the clay, no person is allowed to let the water run; but upon the Juvar's effacing the stamp, the

owner of the ground may turn on the water. Any complaint brought against the Juvar, for injustice or neglect, is laid before the police, who investigate the matter on the spot, and on some occasions depose the Juvar from his office.

In the spring, it is necessary to irrigate the land every ten days or fortnight; in the summer, every five or ten days.

At Erivan I only saw the irrigation of the gardens; in another part of the country I witnessed that of the cornfields. These all slope down from the canal, and are divided into beds four or five feet wide, by channels of water formed by a peculiar machine with great regularity and at a proper level, from which the water is diffused equally over the whole field.

I spent the greater part of the day in examining the canal-system of Erivan; and the head of the police, who accompanied me, summoned several persons best acquainted with these matters, to answer my inquiries. Abovian acted as interpreter, which led the people to imagine that I had probably some secret mission to examine into the state of the town, and report upon various complaints which they had recently forwarded. It was useless to protest that I was a mere traveller, seeking to obtain information upon these subjects: the people were evidently assured of the secret cause of my visit,—a mission perhaps from the Emperor himself! I believe the credentials thus thrust upon me procured me an insight

into many things of which I might otherwise have remained ignorant. In the evening a solemn deputation waited upon me from the City, praying to be allowed to lay before me its miserable condition; adding, that they had frequently represented the matter to the Government, but had never obtained a hearing. They related to me the following particulars.

In ancient times the princes and chiefs bestowed a large extent of fields on the citizens of Erivan, who possessed a deed confirming the grant by a former king of Armenia; this, I was informed, had been transmitted to the Government, as the ground of a petition. The Persian Government, in its usual tyrannical manner, had unceremoniously seized upon these town-fields, the Sirdars appropriating the income arising from them. Under the Russian dominion also the fields have remained in the possession of the Government which lets them out, fixing the rent according to the annual produce. The City is heavily burdened and taxed, and the loss of this source of revenue is a serious calamity to its inhabitants.

At present the Crown taxes on each house amount to three roubles, and the City is accountable for the payment. A Commission of the inhabitants, at the head of which is the chief magistrate, allots this sum according to the means of each person. The merchants, as a body, have to contribute five hundred roubles, and the artisans an equal sum, which amounts are assessed by the Commission. The City is also

called upon to raise large sums for public buildings, bridges, and roads, for the police, the chief magistrate and his clerks, public servants, the town physician, etc. For this object a tax is laid on the shops of the bazaar; the gardens are valued anew every three years, and a tax of five per cent. levied on the net produce.

The inhabitants complain that their condition at present is more oppressed than it was under the Persians, notwithstanding that the Persian officials exercised an extremely arbitrary and despotic power over them. The imposts under their former masters were low, the citizens being only taxed to the amount of five thousand roubles, including the tribute to the Shah, the salaries of the Sirdar and other officials, and the expenses of the City itself. At present, the inhabitants are obliged to pay fifteen thousand roubles, besides being called upon to furnish horses for the post service, and to maintain watch and ward, etc.

Trade and commerce are heavily burdened; the resident merchant had formerly to pay two abbas for every horse-load of goods on passing from Turkey into Persia; whereas at the present day goods from Persia are charged with an export duty of ten per cent., and an import duty here of the same amount. The native Persian merchant has only to pay this import duty, and is consequently able to sell his goods considerably under those of the Erivan merchant. Poverty is daily on the increase, and the poor classes, in order to pay their taxes, are often

compelled to sell all their furniture, and even their very beds ; whilst persons in good circumstances, seeing ruin staring them in the face, emigrate, for the most part to Persia, where they find every facility for settling.

CHAPTER VII.

ABOVIAN.—EXCURSION TO KANAKIE.—THE VILLAGE AND CHURCH.—CANALS.—AGRICULTURE.—PRICES.—FARMS.—COMMUNAL SYSTEM IN ARMENIA.—HEADS OF THE VILLAGE.—THE ARMENIAN MELIK AND TATAR KHAN IN ERIVAN.—PERSIAN OPPRESSION.—TAXES.—THE SARKAR.—PEASANT-RIGHT.—PATRIARCHAL LIFE.—POSITION OF WOMEN.—ABOVIAN'S YOUTH.—HIS GRANDFATHER.—FAMILY LIFE.—PILGRIMAGE TO ECHMIADZIN.—THE PATRIARCH.—GIFTS FOR THE CONVENT.—STORY OF A DEEVISH.—ABOVIAN IN THE CONVENT.—EVENING VISIT.

EARLY on the 25th of August, accompanied by Abovian, I visited the church and adjacent convent, situated on the highest spot in Erivan, and commanding a wonderfully fine view, in which Mount Ararat formed the central point. I remained in conversation with Abovian until evening; and on this occasion and the following days I obtained much information respecting the mode of life, customs, and condition of the Armenians, from which I derived a clearer insight into the life of the people, than if I had perhaps lived for months among them.

Abovian was one of those noble-minded, true, and intelligent men whom we too rarely meet with in life.

Perceiving my strong interest in everything relating to national life and character, he not only imparted to me fully and freely information on these subjects, but awakened my attention to many things which I should otherwise have passed unobserved. Having himself lived four years among Germans at Dorpat, he had studied the points of coincidence, as well as those of contrast, in the two nations; and a simple question or hint on my part was sufficient to awaken these recollections in his mind, and induce him to impart them. Abovian had, at the same time, an ardent feeling of patriotism. I am indebted to him for the greater part of the following information, and my own observations were also in many instances called forth by his suggestions.

In the afternoon we rode to the village of Kanakir, distant about two leagues from Erivan. This was Abovian's birthplace, where his mother and family resided. At a little distance it has more the appearance of a thick forest than a village, the houses and farm-buildings being almost concealed among tall trees and underwood. Kanakir lies like an oasis in the desert, surrounded by high barren plains; the hills have an aspect wild and waste, not a blade of grass is to be seen as far as the eye can reach, but only naked rocks upon the mountains, and plains covered with stones and boulders of lava, while the whole scene is wrapt in a mantle of dark and gloomy grey. The streets in the village are narrow, and run between two walls, as in Erivan. The houses

stand generally in walled-in farmyards, the doors and windows never opening on to the streets.

We rode up to Abovian's parental estate, a detached farm, like the rest, comprizing a large garden, with the finest fruit-trees, shrubs, and trellised vines. The Armenians are very fond of floriculture, of which the Georgians are wholly ignorant,—another proof of the greater refinement of the former people. At the corner of the garden we alighted, and Abovian conducted us into it. The vegetation had a freshness and luxuriance which only a southern sun, irrigation, and the most fertile soil could yield. In front of the house we were received by Abovian's uncle and brothers, who conducted us to another farm belonging to a relative, where we rested; and after partaking some refreshment, we took a stroll through the village.

Kanakir at the present day exhibits only the remains of former prosperity: it once contained thirteen hundred farms, but has now only seventy-two. An idea of its early wealth and population may be formed from the following fact. According to an old Armenian custom, all the men who have been married in the course of the year repair on Good Friday to the church. In early times more than thirty of these married men used to assemble, dressed in splendid military attire, and each man with high silver heels to his shoes,—an indication of the extent and luxury of the population.

All historical documents, grants, and family papers

were destroyed in the last Persian war, in 1825; but there exists a village tradition respecting the origin of Kanakir. It is said that an ancestor of Abovian, who lived six generations ago, came from a northern country, with his family and followers, driven by their enemy, to the Khan of Erivan, and requested permission to settle upon the spot where Kanakir now stands. Their leader, named Abov, was of an ancient and noble family: the documents relating to their origin and privileges, mostly written in the Tatar language, were however lost in 1825. In Tiflis, Garabey, and Lory, there likewise still exist families of the same name and extraction. Their origin has conferred on this family the hereditary village magistracy of Kanakir; they are not however lords of the soil, nor have any feudal rights, but merely the control over the police.

Kanakir was originally a small place, but the surviving inhabitants of many of the surrounding villages, destroyed in war or by depredation, repaired hither, and Kanakir thus increased in wealth and importance. The pleasantness of the situation, and its vicinity to Erivan, attracted the wealthy classes of that city, who by degrees settled here, purchased land, built, and pursued horticulture. Many persons also chose it as a place of concealment. Devastating wars however ensued, especially during the present century; in the last Persian war everything was destroyed, and the place has ever since remained in a state of dilapidation.

In the lower part of the village stands a church, built of freestone, in good preservation, which is used for divine service. The ordinary Armenian churches are strikingly distinguished from the Russian in the character of their architecture: they have not the Byzantine square, with the cupola, but are more similar in structure to the Western churches, forming an oblong, with a gable roof surmounted by a small spire. The arrangement of the interior differs from that of the Greek churches; the altar stands alone, and generally against the wall, as in the Romish churches. Higher up in the village is another church of similar structure, but in partial ruin, standing in a cemetery, and surrounded by numerous tombstones and monuments.

In this walk we reached the central point of the network of canals, situated above the village, whence the water is distributed over Kanakir. On the acclivity of a hill, a large brook takes its rise from forty springs, and branches out into small channels, conveying the water in all directions. One of these streams even supplies the fortress of Erivan, which lies too high to be included in the canal-system of that city. These waterworks, the property of the Commune, are exempt from all taxes. The same regulations are in force here, with regard to the use of the water, the control of the works, etc., as at Erivan. Horticulture is an object of especial attention, the gardens in Kanakir are carefully irrigated and yield an extremely rich produce: agriculture is comparatively neglected. Wheat, barley, flax, and a peculiar

kind of rye (*atschar*) are grown here. The stiff land is turned in May with the heavy plough, and again in September with the small one, after which the seed is sown and harrowed into the ground. Only buffalos and oxen are put to the plough; the horses are never harnessed, and are used merely for riding and carrying things to and from market. The value of a good horse is three hundred roubles; but there are also Daghestan, Turcoman and Arabian horses for which the Russian officers give from three to four hundred ducats; while inferior ones are often sold for ten roubles. The buffalo cow ordinarily yields nearly a fourth more milk than the common milch cow. The price of a good ox varies in different years from ten to twenty-four roubles, and that of a buffalo ox from ten to fifty; a cow will fetch between five and ten, and a buffalo cow between ten and twenty, roubles. A sheep costs from one to three roubles. The Armenians have few sheep and no swine, the latter having been prohibited under the Persian dominion.

I visited different farms, and examined the arrangements, in which there is great variety. An Armenian farm usually comprizes numerous small buildings, each devoted to some special purpose,—just the reverse of the system prevailing in the north of Germany, which comprizes as much as possible under one roof. At the entrance of Abovian's house was an open hall, called *evan*, which served in summer as the dwelling-room of the whole family. To the left of this was the winter apartment, or *ottag*. In cold weather a fire is

lighted on the ground, there being no raised hearth, and the smoke escapes at a small aperture in the roof. High up, in one corner, were two small windows. The walls and partitions were all strongly built, and contained numerous niches, which served as receptacles for various things. On the walls hung two Persian pictures, representing the heroic deeds of Roostem, the Persian Hercules, and a small mirror,—signs of the gradual introduction of European luxury. In the upper part of the house were the women's apartments. To the right of the dwelling-house stood the wine-house, and close by, the bread-house; then the bakehouse, the hay-house, and lastly the cowhouse, in which there was a raised partition, surrounded by a gallery. A shed, or fold, is generally provided in the fields for the sheep.

Abovian took me to visit the farm of his brother-in-law*. The farmyard was enclosed by a high wall, and had only one small door. A stranger is struck with the great architectural resemblance of these buildings to those of an ancient Roman villa. The front of the house forms a vestibule, resting upon six pillars and approached by a flight of steps at the side. At the back of this vestibule, on the right, is a door, opening into an anteroom; both have windows looking on to the gallery, but not framed or glazed. In every part of the walls are niches, and the sides of

* Among the Armenians, cousins are always regarded as brothers and sisters. The husband of a man's cousin is therefore his brother-in-law, just as much as the husband of his sister.

the gallery are adorned with pretty arabesque ornaments. There are no tables or chairs, nor indeed in any Armenian house. This is not properly the dwelling, but a house of entertainment for the most honoured guests, which the family inhabit only in the summer. In the yard before this house stands a peculiar airy structure, or rather tall wooden framework, consisting of two galleries, one above another, reached by steps. The building is open on all sides, a light boarded roof affording the only shelter from the rain. In these galleries all the inhabitants of the house sleep during the summer.

The most interesting place is the fine spacious shed for cattle, with a raised platform at the further end, shut in on three sides, and open toward the stable; a flight of six stairs leads up to it. The family usually inhabit this apartment in the winter; and in an evening collect around the fire, under a kind of chimney; hither also resort the neighbours and village elders, and the conversation turns upon topics of personal interest and the affairs of the village. Here too is almost always to be seen the wandering storyteller and ballad-singer, who is usually blind. This person is held in great veneration, and treated quite as the master of the place; he boards and sleeps free of charge, and is served by every one in turn; the rest of the company are his guests and companions, whom he fascinates with his songs and stories.

The farm-buildings and dwellings exhibit a great variety in plan and construction; the one above de-

scribed belonged to the middle class in point of size and arrangement, and interested me as presenting a fair type of Armenian architecture.

From time immemorial, the Communes in Armenia have been under the superintendence of an Elder, who is elected, and two or three assessors. These officers maintain order, and decide all disputes respecting boundaries, rights of property, and minor offences: these used formerly to be settled orally, but since the Russian dominion, all the decisions, especially those regarding territory, have been committed to writing. Kanakir however, as I have before mentioned, had an hereditary village head, in the person of the oldest member of the Abovian family, who nominated an elder of the place to act for him, assisted by two assessors. If the parties in any cause were dissatisfied with the decision of this tribunal, Abovian himself pronounced sentence. Matters of greater importance were referred to the Melik at Erivan.

There is a marked distinction between the Armenians and Georgians: whilst the constitution of the latter people is strictly feudal in its character, the political state of Armenia is essentially democratic. In the latter country there is no perceptible distinction or opposition of classes and conditions, no antagonism of town and country; the inhabitants of the two are distinguished solely by their place of residence. The majority of the townspeople are engaged in trade and handicraft, whilst in the villages it is the reverse. There are a small number of ancient

families of distinction, named Tarschan (literally 'free-man'), who are exempt from taxation: a few of these, like the Abovians, are hereditary heads of their respective villages, which may not improbably have been originally founded by their ancestors. They possess no seignorial rights, and receive no dues or service from the other villagers. In Armenia there is no trace of serfage, which is seldom found in countries under the Mohammedan rule*: in these states personal slavery prevails, being sanctioned by the Koran, which enjoins however that slaves should be regarded and treated as members of the family,—“Children of the Tent.”

The class of Armenian nobles to which I have alluded, enjoyed high distinction and honour, accorded to them by national custom, but were in no other way raised above the rest of the people; in contracting marriages, for instance, none of the ordinary prejudices of rank prevailed.

When Armenia passed under the dominion of Russia, the Government demanded the documents connected with the privileges of the village chiefs, etc., at the same time refusing to recognize any except the grants made by the Shahs of Persia; all others it

* The Transcaucasian villages are almost everywhere large and populous, except in Georgia, where serfage exists, and there is a numerous class of nobles, who usually possess the best fields of the village, which are cultivated by their serfs. The villages in Armenia contain occasionally from two to three hundred houses; in the mountains only, where but little good land is found on one spot, small villages of twenty to thirty farms are met with.

abrogated, in direct contrast to its treatment of the village chiefs in Georgia, whom it even recognized as hereditary princes. The only advantage however which the Georgian village chiefs enjoyed was the exercise of an arbitrary and oppressive power, the inhabitants being their serfs; whereas the rule of the village chiefs in Armenia was mild and beneficent,—it was exercised over a free people.

The country at large, (formerly Persian, now Russian Armenia,) had likewise a national chief, in the hereditary Melik of Erivan, the oldest member of the family of Agamaljan*. Whether this chief is a descendant of some ancient princely or regal Armenian family is doubtful, but the supposition is strengthened by the parallel to this Melik, in an hereditary popular chief of the Tatars in Armenia, the Khan at Erivan, who occupies precisely the same position with regard to the Tatar population, as the Melik does with the Armenians. It appears that, upon the conquest of Armenia by the Mongols and Tatars, the people were left to govern their internal affairs, and had a national magistracy of their own: whilst the Tatars, who came to settle in the country, had likewise their own magistrates and princes. When the Persians conquered these countries, they found everywhere native princes. In Karabagh was an Armenian princely race, named Shamirkhan Betzlajan, which retained its independence down to the seventeenth century. Nadir Shah deposed

* Most of the Armenian proper names terminate in *jan*, which the Russians change into *off*: this family is now called Agamaloff.

all these princes, and established in their place temporary governors, or Sirdars; but under his feeble successors, most of the princes regained their power, and held then the position of vassals of Persia. In Armenia Proper alone, neither the Melik nor the Tatar Khan appears to have attained his full sway and authority, always remaining subject to the Persian Sirdar. The Melik retained his dignity and influence down to the time of the Russian conquest. The last Tatar Khan was deposed about fifty years ago by the Persians: a brother of his is still living at Erivan.

During his residence at Dorpat, my friend Abovian had compiled a volume of reminiscences of his youth, which contained many highly interesting particulars respecting his native country; this volume he placed at my disposal, and I will here select from it a passage, describing the person of Sahak Agamaljan, the last Melik of Erivan. Abovian was related to this Melik, and when young had frequently lived with him for many months together.

Sahak was a man of a strikingly handsome and noble figure: his face wore an expression of intelligence and gentleness, and all his movements were marked with dignity and grace. When he appeared in the dress of a Persian of rank (which he was the only Armenian privileged to wear), in the purple robe, with narrow sleeves, and rows of gold-laced buttons on his breast, mounted upon a beautiful Daghestan charger, and surrounded by his attendants, the Arme-

nians all looked up to him as their prince. Sahak had rendered important services to the Persians, and the Shah regarded him as one of his most faithful subjects: his influence was consequently considerable, and in Erivan he was only second in importance to the Sirdar: even Persians of rank frequently requested his intercession and assistance. From the extent of his jurisdiction, he had opportunities of benefiting in various ways a great number of persons, which he did without regard to person or creed; and even the Mohammedans and the poor uncivilized mountaineers loved and esteemed him highly. For his own nation he felt the most devoted attachment, and his fellow-believers clung to him with the strongest fidelity. His residence was beautifully situated in a garden by the river Sange, built and arranged like that of a grand Tatar Khan. A hall, enclosed on three sides and open to the river, was covered with the most costly oriental carpets; and here, at daybreak, people of every class and creed assembled. Soon the Melik made his appearance, usually in a plain dress, but always with a numerous suite of attendants; and as he passed up the saloon, the throng fell back respectfully on either side, and showered upon him a flood of Oriental complimentary ejaculations:—"Thou art our sun!" exclaimed the Armenians: "O powerful lord and master, we are dust before thee! Thy command we prize above the light of our eyes!" Whilst the Mohammedans would exclaim, "Allah guard thy path!"

At the further end of the hall was a raised dais, upon which Sahak reclined on cushions. The Khans and Beks, his visitors, together with some of the citizens and merchants of distinction, seated themselves around him, their legs crossed under them; while the mountaineers and others remained standing respectfully at the lower end of the hall, mingling with the attendants. The *galjon* (pipe) and sherbet were now handed about, and the most important affairs of the city and country were discussed, the opinion of the Melik invariably deciding every question. The sitting of the court then opened; plaintiffs and defendants appeared, and Sahak in all cases pronounced judgement with firmness and decision: he was intimately acquainted with every person, and punished the guilty severely. His influence was so great, that when Abbas Mirza entered Erivan, his first inquiry was for Sahak; the Sirdar introduced the Melik to the Prince, who, laying his hand upon his shoulder, rode thus into the fortress, conversing familiarly with him, extolling his merits, and mentioning the favourable opinion of him entertained by his father the Shah. Such condescension excited the amazement of the Persian grandees, as this was a mark of favour only shown to persons of the highest station, and, in the provinces, only to the Governor. When Erivan was taken by the Russians, all Persians of rank placed themselves under his protection, which he readily and successfully granted.

The Armenian Melik possessed great power and

authority with the Persians, as well as among his own countrymen. Not only did persons who were dissatisfied with the decision of the village elder appeal to him, but all important affairs, especially of a criminal nature, were laid immediately before him. He had power to arrest, imprison, and punish, except in cases of capital offences, upon which the Persian Sirdar could alone decide. All proceedings in court were oral. Toward the close of the Persian dominion the Melik's jurisdiction was limited: the Khans appointed by the Sirdar arrogated to themselves many of his privileges, and especially the appeal from the decision of the village elder. Since the Russian dominion, the district judges have superseded the Khans, and the Government has appointed natives exclusively to the post of these judges and their assessors. All the villages had to pay taxes to the Melik of Erivan; Kanakir, for instance, raised annually thirty roubles.

The Persian Government is in principle the worst and most oppressive that can be imagined; the Armenians in consequence regarded the Russians as their liberators from an insufferable yoke, and, in spite of many just grounds of complaint, they are much attached to Russia; in fact the organization of the Persian Government was so corrupt, that even such a just and excellent man as the last Sirdar of Erivan, who possessed unlimited authority, was unable to prevent the most iniquitous acts of oppression and plunder committed by the civil officers.

The Sirdars, or governors of the provinces, were

appointed by the Shah; their power was despotic, but they were required to furnish a certain military force, varying in times of peace and war, and to raise a fixed amount of tribute: how this was levied, or how cruelly the people were taxed, was a matter of perfect indifference*. These governors were appointed for a limited time, and consequently made the best use of it to amass wealth by any means in their power. Chosen from among the courtiers and favourites of the Shah, the Sirdars were transplanted to a country of the condition and resources of which they were entirely ignorant; they therefore selected from the natives, persons, principally military men, whom they considered the most apt tools for carrying out their system of extortion, and to whom they gave the title and rank of a Khan or Beg. These men however were generally too lazy and self-indulgent, themselves to conduct the administration of affairs, and the collection of the taxes,—in short, the business of *extortion*. They therefore in turn appointed sub-officials, called Sarkars, who in reality carried on the business. Among the Khans and Beks it was considered a mark of disgrace to be able to read and write,—an acquirement reserved for needy persons alone, as a means

* In Persia a very ancient principle has been adopted, which, strangely enough, is found among almost all nations as one of the rights conferred by conquest; namely, that a third part belongs to the conqueror, whilst a tenth is the tribute to the Deity, and to his servants the priests; and this principle was carried out in Persia so far, that the authorities could claim one-third of a person's income, or of his property, as tribute. Nor did they even stop here, but took as much as they could possibly wring from the people.

of earning their bread. There were consequently no books or accounts, to check and control matters of income and expenditure; all money passed simply from hand to hand. These Sarkars vied with one another in acts of plunder and oppression, taxation, and wringing contributions from the people, in order thereby to curry favour with those placed immediately over them, and still more to fill their own pockets. All these civil officers, with the exception of the Sirdar, were appointed for only a short period, seldom longer than two or three years.

I shall here extract a few particulars on these subjects from Abovian's volume of 'Reminiscences,' mentioned above.

One of these Sarkars came every summer to the village of Kanakir, to collect the corn-tribute for the Government*. To transact this simple business, he usually remained in the village three or four months: the chief residence was given up to him, and he was waited upon with servile attention; the choicest food, poultry, eggs, meat, butter, and sometimes wine, were brought to him daily, and his attendants and horses well provided for. The "Village Servant"†

* The poll-tax and the smaller Government taxes on produce were raised by the village elder, who was also obliged to receive and entertain in his house the messengers sent by the Government, as well as to order and despatch to Erivan the workmen required by the Governor; during his time of office, he was exempt from taxation, received a trifling salary, and was held in high consideration.

† In every Armenian village there is a person of this description, elected: he is always in waiting on the village elder, to receive and execute his orders; in larger places there are often two. These

went daily from house to house, collecting the tribute, by begging or extortion; and an attendant of the Sarkar usually accompanied this fellow, carrying a heavy whip, to stimulate and chastise him when he failed to raise quickly the required amount; belabouring and driving the man before him, with a volley of abuse such as the Tatar language alone can boast. If the master of the house refused to give what was required, and the collector felt strong enough to enforce his demand, he broke into the house with brutal violence, destroyed everything, and whipped and ill-treated every person he met with, regardless of age or sex,—and this fellow was only the *servant!* the reader may form an idea of the *master*. Whenever the Sarkar appeared abroad, the people were obliged to follow him like satellites, to watch his looks, and prevent any cause of displeasure to him. The villagers collected in throngs on the roofs of the houses, or sat watching before their doors, generally upon large stones,—tables and chairs being unknown in Armenia; or they would lie in groups in their gardens, chewing wheat and taking counsel together. No sooner was the Sarkar seen approaching, than a general signal was made with the hand or cap, and the people fled in all directions. They were always

servants are free of taxes, and receive a portion of the products of the soil; but their office is the most unenviable possible: they are the scarecrows of the village; every one at the sight of them runs away and hides himself, well knowing that whenever they make their appearance, it is for the purpose of extortion and cruelty. Only the meanest and poorest persons can be induced to undertake this office.

obliged to address him with the most fulsome compliments, and bowing abjectly:—"Lord of my heart! My lord and master! Light of my soul! We are all thy servants!" But woe if his anger was kindled: whip, sabre, dagger, whatever weapon came to hand, was then applied remorselessly. Nor did this servility end here: the very menial who accompanied the Village Servant, a mere "washer"* or pipe-bearer, claimed the same homage.

It may appear strange that, in spite of this despotic administration, prosperity, nay even affluence and luxury, should be found among the Armenians; but these people maintained, to a certain degree, a defensive position, and not unfrequently put to death a bad and obnoxious Khan or Sarkar, whilst their national union strengthened them under a foreign yoke.

After the conquest, the taxes fixed by the Shah were not burdensome. Toward the close of the Per-

* The Persians and Tatars of rank never wash *themselves*, nor ever clean and fill their pipe: to each of these important duties a special servant is assigned. During the process of ablution one man holds the towel ready, and woe to him if, after the operation, he fails to throw it dexterously and flat upon his master's hands,—punishment would instantly follow. The "washer" must also assume a particular posture in the execution of his office: he kneels before his master, with the left leg flat under him and the right leg perpendicular, with the foot planted flat on the ground,—an extremely difficult position. The poorer classes of Persians and Tatars observe inviolably certain customs in washing, which even Armenians of distinction have imitated, especially the clergy at Echmiadzin, who carefully impress their pupils with the notion that such customs originate in refined civilization. Abovian was in the greatest astonishment when for the first time he saw the traveller Parrot wash *himself*.

sian dominion, Kanakir contained fifty or sixty families, who paid altogether only twenty-five *tomaun* (seventy-five roubles) upon the houses, gardens and wine. A tithe was taken of the corn, in collecting which the Sarkar ordered all the grain to be brought into one place and threshed out; he then took his tribute; but whenever he felt secure against any serious resistance, not content with a tithe, he took a fifth, a fourth, and sometimes even a third! The last Sirdar at first demanded a hundred *tomaun* for the gardens and wine, and eighty as house- and poll-tax, together with one-third of the corn, as in Persia; he was however in the end satisfied with receiving in all eighty *tomaun* and a third of the corn: thus the bow, after being stretched to the utmost, was subsequently relaxed according to circumstances.

Under the Russian Government the taxes are fixed. Kanakir, in lieu of all previous tribute, now pays 504 roubles, in addition to which each family has to contribute one rouble and seventy-five kopecks for the post-service. The service for repairing the roads and bridges, as well as the supply of horses for the civil officers, have to be rendered *in naturá*.

The farms in the village of Kanakir are compact and independent estates. As long as the family continue to live together in one household, the fields cannot be either sold or exchanged, although the gardens may; but this regulation, which is frequently maintained for two or three generations, is dependent on circumstances: if a family becomes too numerous,

or serious quarrels arise, they either themselves divide the property, or have this done by the priests or village elders. The sons all receive an equal share, and each daughter half that of a son. If the daughters marry during the lifetime of their parents, they forfeit their claim to any portion of the inheritance, and receive only a dowry; on marrying after the decease of their parents, they generally relinquish their share of the inheritance in favour of their brothers.

The family constitution and domestic life of the Armenians are quite of a patriarchal character; but in one respect they differ fundamentally from the other Asiatic nations,—the social position which woman occupies, the recognition of her independence, and her claims to an equality of respect and dignity. This, in my opinion, opens a prospect for the attainment of a higher grade of civilization, especially as the Armenians are peculiarly endowed with intellectual advantages, which constitute them a connecting link between Europe and Asia. Among the Mohammedan peoples, woman is regarded only in the light of a semi-human creature; she is the born slave of man. Now my belief is, that the best hopes for the advance of civilization in Europe rest mainly upon a recognition of the just claims of woman to respect and honour. It was principally the influence of this sentiment which raised the Moors in Spain to such a grade of civilization,—the only Mohammedan nation which has ever exhibited a chivalrous feeling toward the female sex.

A remarkably strong national bond exists among the Armenians: although the majority of this people are scattered over three quarters of the globe, in no country has their nationality been effaced, nowhere has it become absorbed in that of the peoples among whom they dwell. In this respect they resemble the Jews,—the greatest wonder in the world's history,—a people whose nationality, notwithstanding their dispersion, no human power can destroy: the identity of their civil and religious constitution exerts a moral power sufficiently strong, without any centre or head, to maintain unbroken the bond which has united the scattered members of their race for nearly two thousand years. Amongst the Armenians, in like manner, the religious constitution forms the strongest element of their nationality; and here too religion has a national character*. But the Armenians have one source of internal strength which the Jews do not possess; they still retain their own country,—the home toward which their thoughts can always turn, and the Patriarchate of Echmiadzin, the centre and head of their religion.

The patriarchal character of the Armenian nation is reflected in the microcosm of their family life. I have never met with a people among whom the domestic tie is stronger or more intimate. During the lifetime of the father or mother, the whole family dwell to-

* This is so strongly the case, that Armenians in Tiflis and elsewhere, who have joined the Church of Rome, proudly renounce the name of Armenians, and call themselves Catholics.

gether, in strict obedience to their head ; the property remains undivided, until the succession of the grandchildren, and no member can possess anything apart from the rest,—all is common property. Not unfrequently a patriarch of eighty years will be living in the same household with three generations,—perhaps four or five married sons of fifty or sixty, grandchildren of twenty or thirty, and again their children. In this manner upon some farms will be found families of forty or fifty members : even the brothers separate with great reluctance. Upon the death of the parents, the eldest son usually succeeds as the head of the house, and inherits the paternal privileges.

In a family, all the members of the same generation regard and address each other as brothers and sisters. Abovian's "brother-in-law," whose farm we visited, was only the husband of his cousin. The greatest intimacy and fraternal affection reigns among these relatives, but guarded by the utmost purity of manners ; whilst the moral feeling of the nation in these matters is confirmed by the injunctions of religion. The Armenian Church forbids marriage within seven degrees of blood-relationship. Marriages between great-grandchildren are entirely prohibited ; but beyond this it is possible, although difficult, to obtain dispensation at Echmiadzin. The indulgence of unlawful passion, where marriage is forbidden, is unknown.

But although obedience to the head of the family is a strong bond of union, experience would not lead

us to expect any permanent harmony among five or six young married women in the same household. If however it is ever possible, it would be so among the Armenians, from the peculiar education of their women, which is unique, and indeed rigorous, although neither slavish nor oppressive.

The young unmarried people, of both sexes, enjoy perfect liberty, within the recognized limits of manners and propriety. Custom is here precisely the reverse of what prevails in the surrounding countries: whilst in the latter the purchase of a wife is the only usual form of contracting a marriage, until which time the girl remains in perfect seclusion,—among the Armenians, on the contrary, the young people of both sexes enjoy free social intercourse. The girls go where they like, unveiled and bareheaded; the young men carry on their love-suits freely and openly, and marriages of affection are of common occurrence. But with marriage the scene changes: the word which the young woman pronounces at the altar, in accepting her husband, is the *last* that is for a long time heard from her lips. From that moment she never appears, even in her own house, unveiled. She is never seen abroad in the public streets, except when she goes to church, which is only twice in the year, and then closely veiled. If a stranger enters the house or garden, she instantly conceals herself. With no person, not even her father or brother, is she allowed to exchange a single word; and she speaks to her husband only when they are alone. With the rest of the

household she can only communicate by gestures, and by talking on her fingers. This silent reserve, which custom imperatively prescribes, the young wife maintains until she has borne her first child, from which period she becomes gradually emancipated from her constraint: she speaks to her new-born infant; then her mother-in-law is the first person she may address; after awhile she is allowed to converse with her own mother, then with her sisters-in-law, and afterwards her own sisters. Now she begins to talk with the young girls in the house, but always in a gentle whisper, that none of the male part of the family may hear what is said. The wife however is not fully emancipated, her education is not completed, until after the lapse of six years! and even then she can never speak with any strangers of the other sex, nor appear before them unveiled. If we examine closely into these social customs, in connection with the other phases of national life in Armenia, we cannot but recognize in them a great knowledge of human nature and of the heart.

I have before observed that these usages are not of an oppressive nature*, but merely an education of the female sex; for after the completion of her term of probation, the woman becomes free, enters on the full rights of the married state, and is the independent mistress of the house. If her husband is the head of

* The Armenian women are never required to do hard labour: they merely perform the light work in the house and garden. Even the peasant is much too considerate to his wife, to allow her to work in the fields, or to be exposed to the scorching heat of the sun.

the family, and she survives him, she succeeds to his place and privileges, and is obeyed with the same veneration as the father, the patriarch of the family. She then occupies a social rank higher than any woman in the East, and indeed one commanding more respect than even amongst Europeans. Abovian's mother was in this position.

From these customs moreover arises an intimate, an absorbing, and exclusive relation in the married state: the wife's very existence becomes part of her husband's; she lives in him, and has intercourse with the world only through him. This seclusion lasts for years,—it grows into a habit; the close intimacy of married life has time to be matured and confirmed, and the wife's character is unfolded and strengthened: in her early years she has been screened from the temptation and opportunity for indulging in scandal and intrigue, and it is unlikely that she should gain a taste for this in after life; and when, after her probation, she acquires the liberty of speech, she learns to use this privilege with discretion. In short, marriages among the Armenians, I was assured, are generally patterns of conjugal happiness.

This subject may be regarded also in a somewhat amusing light. Imagining five or six young married women (be it said with all due respect) living together in the same house, should we not anticipate continual quarrels and disturbance, and the loss of all authority in the head of the family? No such thing: this danger is removed. Women's quarrels generally arise

from the use of women's tongues; and it is not easy to quarrel for any length of time in pantomime, whilst the amusement of the spectators tends to allay any angry feelings. Even afterwards, when freedom of speech is restored, this being carried on in a whisper is unfavourable to quarrelling. In short, to any one who has to manage a large household, containing several young women, I could give no better advice than to introduce this Armenian custom.

I shall here give a few particulars of Abovian's family life, and the reminiscences of his youth, as he communicated them to me, partly in writing and partly in conversation. These will throw some light on the general characteristics of national life in Armenia.

The oldest inhabitants of Kanakir still remember with pride and veneration a man of remarkable character who lived among them,—Abovian's grandfather: tall and handsome, he united a dignified bearing with an affable and friendly manner. He was always forward in acts of benevolence, a friend to the needy, a good husband and head of the family; his wealth rendered him open-handed and hospitable, and he enjoyed the highest esteem among Armenians, Tatars, and even Persians of rank. He possessed several manufactories, and had shops in Erivan, which he let out, beside a considerable landed property and noble gardens. One of these, on the road from Erivan to Tiflis, had a circuit of nearly an hour's ride, planted with hundreds of walnut, apple, pear,

cherry, peach, mulberry, and pschat trees*, and splendid trellised vines. This garden he gave solely to the use and enjoyment of strangers. Three or four men were employed in cultivating it, and every passing traveller had free entrance, and was at liberty to eat and take away as much fruit as he pleased. All the fruit that fell, or was blown down at night, was collected in the morning in baskets, and exposed before the garden-gate, in order that every stranger ignorant of the privilege attached to the garden might share in its enjoyment†. Whatever fruit was not thus consumed, was fetched away by the Armenians and Tatars from the mountain villages, who grow hardly any in their own districts. The winter fruits, and the wine produced by these gardens, were kept in a store-house, which stood open for the use of every one.

“This free enjoyment of the garden,” writes Abovian, “the same open hospitality, still exists; but my parents complain, with tears in their eyes, that they are no longer rich enough to maintain the persons to cultivate and tend the garden.”

In the old man’s time the house was never free of guests, and rarely any one passed without stopping and meeting with a friendly welcome: the Patriarch

* The Pschat-tree (*Elæagnus orientalis*) bears a fruit resembling a date, with a pleasant taste; the blossom spreads a perfume far around: in appearance it is like a willow. The Tatars call it Igda.

† I remember in my youth a pious usage which prevailed in Münster: all the fruit that fell from the trees was every morning gathered in baskets and given to the poor, as their share allotted them by God.

of Echmiadzin, bishops, clergy, and laymen passed in and out, a motley throng. What so refreshing to the traveller, in the oppressive heat of summer, as fruit and wine! it is easy to imagine the grateful feelings with which the stranger would leave the garden. Moreover fruit and wine are in this country considered the best remedy against illness of any kind.

Every year Abovian's grandfather made a pilgrimage to Echmiadzin, accompanied by his wife and sons. A custom prevails among the Armenians, of celebrating the memory of their departed friends on the Monday after each of the five great festivals, which are chiefly devoted to prayers for the dead. On these occasions people carry meat, bread, wine, and fruit to the graves of the departed, and, after the priests have blessed the food, distribute it among the poor. Rich gifts are made to the churches on these days, and every one regards it an especial privilege to make his offerings to the cathedral of Echmiadzin, which receives annually innumerable presents from Turkey, Persia, India, Egypt, and Russia. The pilgrims who bring their offerings to Echmiadzin in person, relate with deep emotion, on their return home, all the circumstances of their visit,—how they had seen the holy place, how the Patriarch had laid his hands upon and blessed them, how they had kissed his knees, and had partaken of the wine blessed by him, together with the consecrated Nschchar*.

* Nschchar is the name of the small loaf which is eaten at the Lord's Supper: it is formed of round slices of fine bread, pressed

The following account I shall relate in Abovian's own words. "The preparations for the pilgrimage were made in my grandfather's house long before the time. My father was seven, and my uncle nine years of age, when they were first allowed to accompany their parents to Echmiadzin. On this occasion they were newly clothed, in the finest cloth and silk dresses, —one year of a brilliant scarlet, the next in bright green, then blue, then yellow, in short every year of a different colour. Their shoes were of fine green leather, made of horse-hide, which is too expensive for any but the wealthy. The blooming boys had an angelic beauty, mounted on two brisk nags, with a dirk stuck in their belt and a little sabre hung at their side. The grandfather, mounted on a magnificently caparisoned steed, rode in front with his wife, followed by a numerous cavalcade, and two or three beasts of burden laden with presents for the Convent. In every village the people all collected to see them pass, and one said to another, 'Here comes again the pious man upon his pilgrimage! there is no one like him for goodness.'

together in a wooden mould, in which is carved a representation of the Crucifixion, and the implements of the Passion, surrounded by a wreath of flowers. This mould is kept in every Armenian church. The little loaves are used at the Mass and the Communion; and the unconsecrated bread is also distributed by the priests at Easter and Christmas, when they go round to the houses to offer their congratulations and blessing. Every one receives it with veneration, and gives the priest a present in return. In Echmiadzin there is a very beautiful mould of this kind; whoever has received the Nschchar at the church there, treasures it up till his death, when it is laid upon his breast and buried with him.

“ As the pilgrims approach the Convent, some of the inferior clergy come out to receive them, with servants to take charge of the horses. In the court-yard they are met by bishops and archimandrites, some of them sent by the Patriarch, while others come to welcome them as old friends. Every one is anxious to conduct them to *his* apartments; but the Patriarch, full of impatience, has already given orders for the guests to be introduced to himself. They are conducted upstairs: at the entrance of the reception-chamber all, except a few bishops, remain behind; the latter usher them into the hall. Upon a throne, with soft cushions and a costly gold-embroidered silk covering, is seated the Patriarch, clad in ample black silk vestments, reaching from his neck down to his feet. The venerable old man wears a high pyramidal black cap, in the centre of which sparkles a diamond cross, and a black silk veil falls down to the middle of his back. In his hands, covered with diamond rings, he holds a Bible, a prayer-book, or a rosary, and a silver-white beard covers his whole breast. Every one, on approaching him, kneels, and kisses his hands and knees. The Patriarch utters only a few words, generally of benediction: the bishops alone take their seats on his right and left, but not until he invites them; and no person can accost the Patriarch without being addressed by him, and then with submissive and flattering expressions. All this etiquette is observed strictly in the presence of strangers and on solemn occasions. A few of the higher clergy alone

have admission to the Patriarch: by the inferior priests and the people he is seen only on Saturdays and Sundays in church.

“It was different with my grandfather,” continues Abovian: “the Patriarch welcomed him as a dear old friend. When he entered, all ceremony was at an end. ‘Dear, dear grandfather!’ exclaim the little boys; and breaking away from the hold of their parents, who try to restrain them, they run up to the Patriarch and throw their arms about his neck. The old man rises from his seat, and with outspread arms advances to meet his guests. ‘Welcome, my dear son!’ he says: ‘thou light of my Church, and tower of strength to our Convent! And thou too, our dear mother, welcome, faithful daughter of my Church! You have had us sinners in remembrance; may the springs of Eden richly water your dwellings! May the holy St. Gregory protect you, children of my heart! Ye innocent flowers of the spring, come to my heart! Long have I waited anxiously to see you, and now my eyes have received their light again! Come, seat yourselves near me, and let us be happy.’

“The Patriarch then sits down, with his guests close around him, and caressing the children upon his knees: and whilst he converses thus with the parents, on matters concerning their family, the commune, the nation, or the church, the little boys run about the room, jump on his knees, play with his beard and hands, draw the rings from his fingers and slip them on their own. Then the parents try to stop the fun;

but the old man intercedes for his little friends, who, emboldened by his kindness, run out of the room, and race through the palace of the Convent, and round the garden, continually stopped and caressed by the bishops and priests. The boys want to play with the fishes in the pond, and run to complain to the Patriarch that the fishes will not let themselves be caught, and that one of the black men tries to stop their running about. 'Never mind, little boys,' replies the Patriarch; 'I will teach the naughty man better than to offend my children; and the disobedient fishes shall come of themselves to my table, as they would not let you catch them.' It may readily be imagined, that this annual visit to Echmiadzin was an occasion of the greatest delight to the children, and of the highest honour to their parents: my father always spoke of it as the dearest recollection of his youth.

"The second day was the jubilee for the clergy, when the presents were distributed; every one in the Convent, from the Patriarch to the lowest servant of the Church, received something. This presentation of gifts is only customary with wealthy pilgrims, who regard it a mark of honour, and vie with one another in the richness of their presents, in order to obtain peculiar praise and honour at Echmiadzin. During the morning prayers, when all the clergy are assembled in church, the present of money (*Daschtametz*) is distributed. The gifts are wrapt in paper, and laid on a large dish in heaps, according to their size. One of the clergy officiates in the distribution, which is

continued during the performance of the service. At the edge of the dish is stuck a candle, as it is night. The priest goes to each person in turn, from the Patriarch to the lowest deacon, slipping the present into his hand. The higher clergy and bishops will usually turn away their heads, as if ignorant of what is dropping into their hands, which however soon unconsciously finds its way into their pockets. But the younger ecclesiastics cannot repress their delight, and nodding thanks to the donor, they instantly fall to counting their treasure, which is usually in Turkish paras, in parcels of a hundred. What joy then if by chance a few more are found, and what chagrin if the number falls short! The Patriarch's share is between one and ten ducats, and the Bishops' one rouble; the Archimandrites and Monks receive two roubles banco, the Archdeacons one rouble and a half, and the Deacons one rouble. There are generally in all from eighty to a hundred ecclesiastics in the Convent, and these presents (with the Patriarch's) may amount to fifty or sixty silver roubles. Beside the gifts of wealthy individuals, others are brought by deputations from the Armenian convents scattered in various parts of Europe and Asia, which pay a yearly tribute to the Patriarch. All bishops likewise, on coming to Echmiadzin to receive consecration from the Patriarch, bring their offerings, and the laity give presents, to testify their devotion to the head of the Church, and to obtain intercession and prayers for themselves and their departed friends. The Patriarch generally re-

ceives the largest presents from the clergy, and the monks from the laity; ecclesiastics who bring gifts receive a mantle in return, but laymen receive nothing.

“My grandparents,” says Abovian, “had arranged a large feast, to take place after the distribution of the presents, at which the children went about offering fruit to all the clergy. These banquets are given by all the pilgrims, even by those who cannot afford to distribute presents in money. After dinner, when the wine is handed round, an ecclesiastic (usually the Geamorhnog*) rises from his seat, and addressing the donor of the banquet, speaks eloquently in praise of his piety and offerings, descants upon his extraction and rank, the object of his journey, and similar topics: the orator selects a passage from the Bible as his text, which he expounds with a reference to this banquet and its donor; after which he resumes his seat, looking round on his audience with a self-satisfied air. The art of his eloquence consists in first starting some strange questions, meeting these with sophistical objections, and then solving them by his own arguments. Occasionally he introduces obsolete words and expressions, from the ancient Armenian language, unintelligible to nine-tenths of his auditors, and intended to

* Literally, the ‘Church-singer,’ who in the Cathedral service begins and intones the prayers and hymns, and also repeats certain prayers which the other clergy are not permitted to offer. This office, which only bishops can fill, is a very troublesome one, as the priest is required in every service to remain in the church from the beginning to the end.

give him an air of profound learning. The oration is pronounced in a loud and shrill tone, and after its conclusion wine is again handed round in large drinking-vessels, and the honoured visitor returns thanks."

After remaining at the Convent two or three days, the party returned home, delighted with their visit, many of the clergy accompanying them several versts on their journey. Abovian's parents continued to make a pilgrimage every year to Echmiadzin, but, not being rich enough to offer such presents, they contented themselves with giving a feast.

My friend Abovian was destined by his parents for the clerical profession: when his father took him, in his tenth year, to Echmiadzin for his education, and presented him to the Patriarch Lucas, the venerable old man addressed the father in these words: "Your father was a virtuous man; I and my Convent owe much to his benevolence; he was indeed a pattern of all Christian feelings and conduct, and his bounty was extended to the lowest of our clergy. It affords us joy therefore to render now a little service to your family, in receiving this boy." Then giving the lad his benediction, he said, "Be comforted, my son; although your father leaves you, and your mother will not see you again, I shall in future be your father. Come and embrace me, and kiss my hand."

Abovian's grandfather still lives in the memory of all the older inhabitants of the country. My friend related several little traits, which showed the good old man's character in a pleasing light. "I recollect,

in my boyhood," said Abovian, "a visit which several persons of rank once paid my parents; and while sitting under the trees in the garden, in cheerful conversation, on a sudden a cloud of sadness came over the party; and pointing to a spot where they had often sat in a similar manner with my grandfather, one of them said, after a short silence, 'I fancy I see our dear old friend seated yonder, as he was wont,—his tall and noble figure clad in a coat of the finest cloth, with his cap of Persian sheepskin stuck on one side, and scarlet silk trowsers, girded with a costly shawl, in which was stuck a dirk; and as he sat thus, surrounded by us all, stroking his silvery beard with both hands, ever cheerful and merry, he looked in our eyes a very king. 'All the blessings,' he would say, 'that God can bestow on sinful man, are granted me,—children, wealth, and love of all my fellow-men; and I have in gratitude devoted this garden to Him, and given it to the poor, that all may derive from it benefit and pleasure.' Then we used to put the *kjabek* (meat) on the wooden spits, roast it before the open fire, and feast merrily together. Ah! his wealth was like an ocean, but the goodness of his heart was more inexhaustible still. He is taken from us, my friend; but as long as your family exists, while the fire on your hearth is still unextinguished, we shall love and honour you!"

Abovian related a pretty story of his youth, which is characteristic of social life here. "One day in autumn," he said, "we were all busy gathering the

fruit, and my father had climbed up into a pear-tree. While thus engaged, a Dervish* entered the garden : my father greeted him kindly, and desired us to fill his dish with the finest pears, saying to the stranger that they were the gifts of the season sent by God. The Dervish spoke not a word ; and while we were busy filling his dish, he only fixed his eyes upon the ground, looking almost as if possessed. We timidly offered him the dish, which he took, and after staring at it for awhile without moving, all at once flung the pears furiously away, and gave vent to a torrent of insults and imprecations, making the most frightful grimaces and foaming at the mouth. After this explosion of temper, he demanded a present ' suitable to his rank.' My father, who had meanwhile remained up in the tree, told the Dervish that he should not only receive nothing, but should not leave the garden until he had picked up every one of the pears he had flung away, and returned thanks for the gift, as it was sinful to despise what came from God. The Dervish was now beside himself with rage, and began to stone us, exclaiming, ' Dog of a Christian, how darest thou utter such words to a follower of the Prophet!' In vain

* These Mohammedan monks are found roving about everywhere in Armenia, carrying with them a large dish and horn. They are extremely impudent : if they are dissatisfied with the presents made them, they frequently remain for days together sitting before a house, blowing a frightful blast on their horn from time to time, and cursing and insulting their benefactors. We children, said Abovian, were in such dread of them, that, when naughty, our parents had only to use their name as a threat, and we instantly became good.

my father tried again to reason with him : at length, in despair, he ordered the gardener to seize the venerable Dervish without more ado, and tie him to a tree. And now the floodgates of abuse burst open with a full torrent : the Dervish vowed to despatch our whole family to the realms of woe, as soon as he regained his liberty. Thus he stood, stamping, pulling, and screaming, whilst my father plied him with moral exhortations, and asked him once more whether he would pick up the pears and express his thanks. The man answered not, but foamed with rage ; whereupon my father ordered him to be severely whipped,—a lesson the Dervish had never received before ; he was mad with fury. Presently my father ordered a pause, and called on him to express his penitence, but in vain. The chastisement was now redoubled, and the blows fell thick and fast, until at last the fellow could bear it no longer ; his spirit was tamed, and in the most abject way he whimpered out, ‘ O great man, have pity on me ! I will do all you require.’ He had not before been aware of my father’s *greatness*,—he now comprehended it. Then he was untied : and after picking up his cap and cloak, he silently gathered up the pears, which being ended he sat quietly down under the tree, and began to ruminate half audibly to himself : ‘ Rightly have I deserved all this suffering and disgrace, for being ungrateful for the gifts of God !’ after which soliloquy he arose, and took off his cap ; and if he had before exhibited eloquence in abuse, he now displayed it in an equally remark-

able degree in laudation, and in the benedictions he lavished upon all our family: he saluted each of us, and on taking leave said, 'Never shall I forget you, noble Sir; may God bless you! Will you grant me only permission to cross again your hospitable threshold?' My father readily assented, and the Dervish soon returned, repeating his visits frequently, and sometimes staying with us a whole week; in fact we became in time the best of friends. We children regarded him at first, as birds do a scarecrow, with timidity and shyness; but as soon as a familiarity was established, his visits were our greatest treat; he played with us, and was full of pranks and fun. At the bottom he was a good-natured honest fellow, only sometimes a little crazy."

I will give here a touching passage out of Abovian's life. As I have before said, he was taken to the Convent of Echmiadzin in his tenth year, to be educated for the ecclesiastical profession. When a youth, he was always near the person of the Patriarch, who is regarded by all the Armenians as a person of the highest sanctity, and above any temporal prince in rank. Abovian's position was naturally an enviable one; but an object of higher longing was dormant in his mind, and on his making the acquaintance of the traveller Parrot, a thought kindled suddenly within him, and European civilization appeared now in the light of a necessary of life to him. He formed the resolution to accompany Parrot to Europe, but various obstacles opposed his wishes: his family

objected to his travelling so far from home, while the clergy feared he might become an apostate to his faith. At last these difficulties were removed, and even the Patriarch Ephraim yielded his consent. On presenting himself to take leave of the Patriarch, as he knelt before him, weeping and hiding his face, the venerable old man addressed him in these words: "My son, my spiritual son, if ever you are led astray, to renounce your faith, to abandon your Mother Church, your spiritual father, who now I am, your earthly parents, and your native land, rest assured that God will withdraw from you his blessing and protection. If now you desire this separation from any offended feeling, tell me, and I will remove the cause. I have treated you with paternal kindness and affection, for you have been to me a son like Tobias. But you desire to leave us, and you plead a love of your native country: be it then as you wish! If your sojourn in a foreign land bring you pain or suffering, you must bear it with resignation. Be not unmindful of your fatherland and your religion; return to us, as you promise, and you will be received by us with all our present affection and regard. You may perhaps return to find me dead; you will then visit my grave, and in Heaven I shall hear your prayers and bless you!"

Abovian never forgot this exhortation: he acquired European civilization, in a higher degree than most Asiatics have ever done, but he remained attached to the faith of his fathers, and true to the teachings of his Church.

After this long digression, I return to my visit to Kanakir. The evening was closing in, as I returned with Abovian from our long ramble in and around the village. I have described the intimate family union which exists among the Armenians; but this is not at first sight apparent in the presence of strangers; it discloses itself by degrees, and in little traits. Abovian's family scarcely greeted him: there was no embracing, no vociferous expression of joy at his return, even no shaking hands: at the same time his younger brothers showed him the greatest outward respect; they remained cap in hand and uncovered in his presence, and declined to sit down even when he invited them. His sisters-in-law waited on him like servants, and studiously watched to read his wishes in his looks.

Preparations were soon made for supper. On the platform at the upper end of the hall, which afterwards served as my sleeping-bench, was spread a mat of rushes, on which was laid a carpet, and over this a table-cloth. The dishes of food were laid out, but without any plates or knives and forks. We seated ourselves around this supper in Oriental fashion, with our legs crossed under us. Before and after the meal Grace was said, and the Lord's Prayer repeated, by Abovian's uncle, every one crossing himself at its conclusion. The meal consisted of salt-meat, pilau*,

* I have seen it remarked, that the chief meal among all the Caucasian nations, including Turks and Persians, as well as the Slaavish races, from Illyria to Siberia, consists of the same description

leeks and other vegetables, and large wheaten cakes called *tschoreki**, baked so thin that they could be folded together like a cloth; these in some measure serve the purpose of a napkin, when taking the food out of the dishes, an operation which we had to perform with our fingers.

After supper, as a European, I was informed of the custom of this country, for the youngest married woman of the family, assisted by a young girl, before retiring to rest, to wash the head and feet of the guests. I consented to the first part of this ablution, which was performed with the utmost gentleness and skill. The young married women were the last in bed; nevertheless at five o'clock in the morning they were already up, and watching until we awaked, to attend upon us. Abovian and I slept on the platform in the hall; whilst our host and the rest of the family slept, as is usual here in summer, upon carpets spread under the trees in the garden before the house.

of food,—a porridge, prepared of the grain which grows in each country in the greatest abundance. In Central and Western Asia, Armenia, and Georgia, rice-porridge is eaten, baked as pilau; among the Mingrelians and Goorians, the *gomri* or millet-porridge is common; the Circassians have a different sort of millet. All the Cossacks and Poles eat their *kaschat* or mess of buckwheat, the Lithuanians and Letts theirs of oat-grits. (See an essay on the Shores of the Black Sea, in the 'Minerva' journal, for February, 1839.)

* This kind of cake is found in most of the Caucasian countries, and the agricultural portions of Western Asia. A hole is dug in the earth, five or six feet wide and deep, and bricked; in this a fire is made; and when it is burned out, the ashes are removed, and the dough is thrown with a trowel against the heated sides of the oven. The hole is then covered up, and opened again in half an hour, when the bread is baked.



It was a brilliant moonlight night; the moon appeared to me smaller than in northern latitudes, but much clearer and brighter. I could not fall asleep until a late hour: the scene all around was truly enchanting,—the open hall, the noble trees, the glorious sky, the rippling brook flowing through the garden, and the groups sleeping in the open air,—I seemed to breathe a purely Asiatic atmosphere.

A small work was published in Russia, in 1828, by the Russian Councillor of State Von Hagemeister,—perhaps one of the best-informed writers on the Caucasian provinces,—from which I shall give here a few particulars.

In the Caspian territory, the Armenians and Udians are the only aborigines; all the other peoples have immigrated from other countries, whilst many tribes, who originally dwelt here, in the course of time either emigrated or were destroyed. The Armenians are most numerous in the province of Karabagh, after Armenia Proper. They were gradually driven from the low country into the mountains, where they were governed by five hereditary Meliks, who held their office immediately under the Shah of Persia. The Tatar princes in Karabagh however succeeded in expelling the Meliks, at the end of the eighteenth century, but the latter returned after the conquest of Karabagh by Russia. In 1828 there were only two Melik families. Armenian colonies and villages are

found among the mountains in various parts of the country; and in the province of Sheki are seen ruins of Christian churches, which have belonged to extinct Armenian colonies. In almost all the towns throughout the Caucasian provinces there exist small communities of Armenians, merchants or artisans; for all the Georgian races despise trade. There are also Armenians in the Circle of Elizabethpol, Shamshadil, and Kasach, and a large number in the Circle of Akhalzik. In Kakhétia they settled under the Czar Heraclius. After the last peace between Persia and Turkey (1829), the Turks of Akhalzik, and the Persians of those districts which fell to Russia, emigrated in great numbers; whilst above 110,000 Armenians from those parts immigrated here.

Ancient Armenian writers assert, that the Georgians and Armenians were derived from a common source; but their languages, and their national and social constitution, are sufficient to show their perfectly distinct origin. In all the Georgian countries the political state was of a feudal character; kings, princes, nobles, peasants, all formed a connected chain of dependence, from the highest to the lowest. Among the Armenians, on the contrary, the social and political structure arose from the basis of family life; a patriarchal constitution, with heads of families, elected village-chiefs, etc. All important matters were decided in assemblies of the Communes, which awed even the princes. Of any class of nobles, properly speaking, there existed no trace: no feudal service was rendered

by the peasant, and the military force of the country was always weak. The great lawgiver of Armenia, Vagarshak, divided the country (B. C. 150) into twenty-four provinces, in which were hereditary governors, who strove for independence. With a view to weaken them, their number was increased, and in the fifth century there were about four hundred of these Satrap families*.

Armenia occupied an honourable position between the Roman and the Partho-Persian empires, but the struggles of the governors for independence weakened the kingdom, and after the Christian æra it retained only a defensive position. With the introduction of Christianity came the power of the Church; royalty was three times subverted, but the Church maintained the unity of the nation. Patience and resolution are predominant characteristics of the Armenians: they have undergone every description of trial, and have always risen above calamity. The Immiretians and Mingrelians fled before war and devastation into the solitude of the forests, and remained indigent and uncivilized. The Georgians quitted the plains, and built themselves castles upon the mountain-tops: their towns were destroyed, the people lapsed into barbarism, the government became enfeebled, and the kingdom fell into decay. The Armenians, on the contrary, undefended by castles or towers, maintained their position unchanged on the plains of the Araxes,

* This may perhaps have been the origin of the Melik families and the hereditary village chiefs.

—the country through which passed all the armies of the East, and in which more battles were fought and more blood flowed than in any other. Here nevertheless were always opulent towns,—destroyed perhaps one day, but rebuilt the next; whilst the whole country uniformly wore a flourishing aspect. The cause of this was the remarkably strong spirit of nationality, a constant and universal regard to the common weal, and the power of family union. The nature of the country likewise contributed to its internal strength: isolated farms are almost impossible; the system of irrigation necessary to render the soil fertile requires co-operation, and this naturally gave rise to large villages. At the same time the social fabric in family and communal life, handed down from the remotest times, was favourable to civilization, commerce, and a desire for knowledge.

In Armenia the products of the country—copper, silk, flax, cotton, and cochineal—were at a very early period manufactured and introduced into the commerce of the world. The Khalifat, which governed at the same time Armenia, India, Egypt, and even Spain, encouraged Armenian commerce; and from that period, even if not earlier, we find Armenian merchants scattered throughout the world, penetrating at one time as far as China, and acting as the medium of the land traffic between Eastern Asia and Europe. The Persians several times devastated Armenia, carried off a great portion of the inhabitants, and forced them to colonize in countries as far remote as Hindostan.

One of these colonies, named New Dschulfa, in Ispahan, whither Shah Abbas transplanted forty thousand Armenians, became a principal station for the commerce between Europe and Asia. Their travellers and traders introduced everywhere civilization, wealth, and luxury, as is testified by the literature and the ruins of temples, palaces, and towns of the fourth and fifth centuries. The Greek language became so diffused throughout Armenia, that the Persian sovereigns several times enacted laws expressly to prohibit its use. The Armenians recognized the importance of the art of printing earlier than any other Asiatic people, and there exist Armenian books printed in the sixteenth century. Travellers and authors, in all ages, speak of the size, populousness, and wealth of the Armenian towns on the plains of the Araxes; but there are no castles on the mountains nor towers of defence in the villages, as in Georgia. In 1605, Shah Abbas carried away from Dschulfa alone forty thousand inhabitants. The town of Artaschad, at the time of its destruction by the Persians (A. D. 370), is said to have contained forty thousand Armenian and nine thousand Jewish houses; and in the eighth century we again find it a flourishing place. When the Arabs took Tovin (A. D. 639) they put to death twelve thousand of the inhabitants, and led away thirty-five thousand captive. Historians mention that, in the eleventh century, Ani had a thousand churches, and a hundred thousand houses; this assertion may be exaggerated, but the colossal ruins still in existence bespeak the

extraordinary size of the place in early times. Armenia has suffered innumerable devastations by Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Mongols, and Turks. Under Tamerlane it lost six hundred thousand families, one-tenth of whom were led away captive, no one knows whither. Shah Ismael devastated the country fearfully in 1573, and Shah Abbas again in 1605*.

The present Armenian population in the Transcaucasian provinces is said to be nearly three hundred thousand, of whom from one-third to half have only immigrated into that country from Persian and Turkish Armenia within the last thirty years. The large tracts of destroyed vineyards, rising for instance to a height of above four thousand feet in the vicinity of the ruins of the Talgüs, still exhibit traces of a population in former times perhaps above ten times as large as at the present day. In this part the forests have been entirely destroyed, and the loss of the supplies of water has laid the land waste. The village of Eschnak for instance, which in ancient times had 120,000 inhabitants, has not at the present day so many hundred; and yet the supply of water scarcely suffices for their wants. It is difficult to form an idea of the vast number of aqueducts and reservoirs, the traces and ruins of which are found here; these suffice to show the former extent of the population; canals have never been constructed as a mere luxury! The

* Ritter (x. 594) has collected all necessary information respecting the transportation and emigration of the Armenians into other countries.

amount of taxation again affords a certain standard of the population: the traveller Chardin states, that the Khanate (the present Circle) of Erivan paid in 1672 a yearly sum of 32,000 tomaun (384,000 roubles), beside a gift to the Khan of 150,000 roubles. At present the whole taxes amount only to 142,000 roubles. The traveller Olearius asserts, in 1637, that the Khanate of Erivan yielded to the Shah a revenue of a million ducats,—wrung from the people, it is true, by excessive extortion. Since the eighteenth century this fine country has lain in a state of decay,—a circumstance in part attributable perhaps to the present mixed state of the inhabitants who have succeeded the Armenians that were carried away prisoners. The Tatars and Koords, who have been brought hither and settled, now form half the population. In other respects, there is a certain degree of improvement in the country, and European ideas, habits, and modes of life are by degrees introduced. Formerly all the Caucasian peoples, like the Asiatics generally, observed extreme moderation in their mode of life: the Circassian can subsist for a week on a pound of millet. All their wealth was expended on articles of luxury,—handsome weapons, magnificent dresses, church ornaments, etc.; but this taste is gradually subsiding, and the people begin to adopt a higher standard of living.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIT TO THE YEZIDIS.—MYSTERIOUS HEAPS OF STONES.—NADIE SHAH.—HOSPITALITY OF THE YEZIDIS.—THEIR NUMBERS, AND CONSTITUTION.—THEIR RELIGION.—WORSHIP OF SATAN.—RETURN TO EBIVAN.—STORY OF ABAL.—TATAR FORTUNE-TELLER.—PALACE OF THE SIRDARS.—A TALE OF TRUE LOVE.—THE WEAVER OF BAYAZID.—VISIT TO THE MOSQUE.—A TATAR SCHOOL.—MOHAMMEDAN SERMON.—DRAMATIC REPRESENTATIONS.—MOOLLAHS.—DEBVISHERS.—TATAR CUSTOMS.—LAW OF INHERITANCE.—PERSIAN VILLAGES.—ARMENIAN EMIGRATION INTO CAUCASIA.

AT six in the morning, accompanied by Abovian, his uncle, and Peter Neu, I set out on a visit to the Yezidis, the so-called Devil-worshipers. After riding for about an hour in a north-westerly direction, we came to a ruined chapel, near which was a heap of stones, said to cover the remains of some Armenian nuns, stoned to death by the Mohammedans for their adherence to the Christian faith. Every Tatar, on passing, casts a stone upon the heap: an Armenian, on the contrary, takes one off. We dismounted in order to comply with the latter custom, carrying off four, and conveying them to the nearest brook. Our path then descended into a deep and rocky glen; at

the bottom flowed a rapid stream, which we crossed by a pretty bridge of one bold arch. This was erected by a wealthy Armenian lady, and, like many other works of public utility in these countries, was built in discharge of a vow.

On ascending the opposite bank, a vast plain extended before us, the horizon being bounded by lofty mountains. In the middle of the plain rose a single steep and pointed hill; and in all directions, as far as the eye could reach, were scattered, at intervals of three or four hundred paces, large heaps of stones. Some were in the form of a hollow square, others resembled rough low walls or mounds, two or three feet in height. The centre of the whole arrangement was evidently the conical hill, which was crowned with heaps in the form of rude walls: these were divided at the top into squares, twelve to sixteen feet in diameter. At the foot of the hill was a large square basin, surrounded by a wall of stones; from this issued a trench, which ran toward the valley, probably to the stream we had crossed. The whole was on a colossal scale; there were hundreds of heaps, and the stones must in part have been brought from a great distance, for they appeared by no means naturally abundant on the spot.

The purpose of this gigantic undertaking remains a mystery. Abovian's uncle related to us the following popular tradition. Nadir Shah, on his march hither from Erivan, arrived at the bridge which we had crossed, when some one told him that it had been

built by a lady. He immediately commanded that his army, instead of passing over the bridge, should march through the river. He then pitched his tent on the pointed hill, and the heaps of stones were collected by his men. Horses and camels carried water every night or morning from the stream to the excavated basin, and thence during the day it flowed along the trench for the use of the soldiers. Another army, from the West, is said to have encamped subsequently on this spot, and a bloody battle to have taken place.

The popular traditions of the Caucasian tribes always group around celebrated historical personages, — Abraham, David, Solomon, Alexander, Semiramis, Tamerlane, etc., the last in the series being Nadir Shah. These heaps of stones appeared to me of far greater antiquity than the period of the last-named warrior; they may indeed, with some probability, be ascribed to the age of Cyclopean walls and Hünen circles; Nadir Shah may however have turned them to account in some way.

We passed an encampment of nomad Tatars, and shortly after the tents of the Yezidis became visible. The elder Abovian rode forward, to ascertain whether our visit would be well received: he soon beckoned to us, and, as we drew near, the women and children came out to meet us, and held our horses. The chief of the little tribe then conducted us to his tent, which was soon filled with company. A carpet was spread, upon which a cushion was placed, and we

were pressed to take a seat. Preparations were immediately made for our entertainment : a sheep was about to be killed, but this we prevented, as we could not wait until it was dressed. Buttermilk and delicious ewe's milk, in clean wooden vessels, with wheaten cakes similar to those made by the Armenians, were placed before us on the ground, upon a small wooden tray. Our host expressed the pleasure he felt in entertaining us, by saying, " My friend, I will lay my head under the hoof of thy horse."

The whole tribe were remarkably friendly, especially when they heard that I came from Berlin ; for one of their young men, who had been amongst the Koordish horsemen in the Russian cavalry manœuvres at Kalisch, had been afterwards invited to Berlin, and kindly received there. The extraordinary feats of horsemanship performed by this young man at Warsaw and Kalisch attracted general attention. He afforded us an opportunity of witnessing his skill. Collecting about twenty caps, he placed them on the ground, at intervals of forty or fifty paces, in a double row ; then galloping at full speed between them, he caught them up as he passed, first one on the right, then one on the left, tossing each into the air as he seized it. The agility with which he threw himself from side to side, without falling from his horse or ever missing his aim, was truly wonderful.

I requested permission, through Abovian, to put a few questions relating to the social condition and religious views of the Yezidis. They declared themselves

very willing to give me information. Our host said that, within the Russian territories, there were about 1400 tents, or families*, and perhaps an equal number in the Turkish and Persian dominions. They pay to the Russian Government, for protection and the use of the mountain pastures, a poll-tax of four roubles for each family. During the summer they wander amongst the mountains of Ararat and in the winter resort to the Armenian villages, where they rent small houses, and live on friendly terms with the inhabitants. Those who have no cattle, obtain work during the winter months as labourers. Their language is said to be a Koordish dialect; most of them however speak Armenian, and they maintain that the Armenians most nearly resemble them in religion; the Tatars, on the contrary, they regard with hatred, and never enter their villages.

The Yezidis in the Russian territory are divided into two tribes, under hereditary chiefs. Our friends belonged to the tribe of Hassenzi; their chief was called Taman Aga. There are also subordinate chiefs, called Usbashi (centurions) who are elective: our host, Alo, was one of these. Certain families enjoy privileges of rank, and are subject only to the head of their tribe. The clergy is hereditary, but its members are not permitted to exercise the priestly function, until they have made a pilgrimage to a certain village in

* Herr von Kotzebue thought this number exaggerated; he said that scarcely a hundred families paid the poll-tax to the Russian collectors: although many kept among the mountains to avoid enrolment, these could not raise the number to that mentioned above.

the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Alo intimated that they there receive consecration ; but he would neither reveal the nature of the ceremony, nor the name of the village where it took place.

The religious opinions and practices of the Yezidis were previously quite unknown to me. I only remembered to have heard obscure accounts of the existence of devil-worshippers in the mountains of Asia Minor and Persia. The following particulars are simply what I heard directly from themselves, which I give without comment. I found them very communicative on the subject of my inquiries, but, owing to the shortness of our stay, my information is necessarily incomplete ; it may however help to elucidate this obscure religious phænomenon. The term "Devil-worshippers" is by no means correctly applied to the Yezidis*. They asserted explicitly their belief in one God, the same who is worshiped by the Armenians ; and added, that they regarded Jesus as the Son of God, and venerated Mary the mother of Jesus, with certain holy men,—amongst the rest, Surb Kework (evidently St. George, whom the Armenians also honour under the name of St. Mogni), sometimes going on pilgrimage to the monastery of that saint in Armenia†.

* The rise, in the midst of the monotheistic religions, of sects professing to adore the Evil Principle, forms a highly interesting subject of investigation. In Pomerania, in the fifteenth century, there was a sect accused of devil-worship. In the East, the sect of the Astartidi worshiped both God and the Devil ; the latter they believed to reside in the West.

† The Armenian saints are revered by all the Koordish tribes. When any of these are about to commence war, they sacrifice a ram

Abovian's uncle, who frequently met with the Yezidis during their winter residence in Kanakir, furnished me with some additional particulars. They pray with their faces toward the east. In passing an Armenian church they offer up a short prayer, but never enter. Their children receive a kind of baptism with water, but our host either did not know the forms used on the occasion, or would not reveal them. The priests have traditional, unwritten forms of prayer; many of them can write, but the common people can neither write nor read. They do not practise circumcision*. The dead are buried with their arms crossed, whilst the Mohammedans extend them beside the body. Wine they regard as the blood of Christ, and therefore sacred: they always hold the cup with both hands, to avoid spilling; if but a drop fall on the ground, they immediately suck it up with the mouth, swallowing the dust with which it has mingled. They marry but one wife; a mutual public declaration and a blessing from the priest form part of the marriage ceremony, which is conducted with solemnity. Oaths and vows are universally regarded by them as sacred. A singular custom however is observed: at a certain part of the marriage ceremony the bridegroom walks into running water, the bride remaining on dry ground. My informant

at the grave of Surb Sarkis (St. Sergius), at Topra Kaleh, and place a lighted wax taper on the tomb.

* It has been asserted that this rite is observed by them: to me they firmly denied it, saying that they despised the practice, because it is that of their enemies the Mohammedans and Jews.

said that he long endeavoured in vain to discover the meaning of this practice ; at length a Yezidi with whom he was intimate told him jocosely, that if, while vowing fidelity to their wives, they stood in running water, it in some measure washed away the binding nature of the oath, and transgression would not be so severely punished.

Abovian's uncle further stated, that the Yezidis practise a kind of confession and penance. A society is formed, consisting of ten adult men, who select one of their number to be a scapegoat. If one of them believes himself to have committed a grave sin, he confesses it to the substitute, who must expiate it by prayers, fasting, and mortification ; in return for this service, they work for him, pasture his cattle, and entirely maintain him*.

The Yezidis are monotheists, and are ignorant of the doctrine of the Trinity. Of the Holy Spirit they know nothing ; they designate Christ as the Son of God, but do not recognize his divinity. They believe that Satan (Sheitan) was the first-created, greatest, and most exalted of the archangels ; that the world was made by him at God's command, and that to him was entrusted its government ; but that, for esteeming himself equal with God, he was banished from the Divine presence. Nevertheless he will be again received into favour†, and his kingdom (this world)

* This was confirmed by my friend Baron von H * *, who visited the Yezidis during an official journey in Armenia.

† Baron von H * *, on questioning them concerning this doctrine,

restored to him. They suffer no one to speak ill of Satan: if the Tatar Mohammedan curse, "*Nalat Sheitanna!*" (Accursed be Satan!) be uttered in their presence, they are bound to slay either the speaker or themselves. On a certain day they offer to Satan thirty sheep: at Easter they sacrifice to Christ, but only a single sheep; Christ, they say, is merciful, and his favour easily procured, but Satan is not so readily propitiated. The sacrifices take place usually in the open country, but sometimes near the Armenian churches; they are offered chiefly to Satan, sometimes to Christ and the Saints, rarely or never directly to the Supreme Being. Satan is called *Melik Taous* (King Peacock). The Yezidis have no special forms of prayer, but observe certain fasts. Peter Neu assured me that they are extremely superstitious: if a circle is drawn around one of them with a stick, he dares not step out of it; he will utter loud cries, but will remain on the spot for a week, unless the circle is erased by the person who drew it, and with the same stick. Great purity of morals is required in the priests. They are not permitted to wear linen or cotton, only hair-cloth, next the skin.

was asked by a white-bearded Yezidi, "Dost thou believe that God is righteous and all-merciful?" "Yes," replied the Baron. "Was not Satan the best-loved of all the archangels?" resumed the questioner; "and will not God take pity on him who has been exiled so many thousands of years, and restore to him the dominion over the world he created? Will not Satan then reward the poor Yezidis, who alone have never spoken ill of him, and have suffered so much for him?" Martyrdom for the rights of Satan!—strange confusion of ideas, with something nevertheless touching!

The Yezidis whom we saw were well-formed, large, and muscular; finely-arched eyebrows, black eyes, aquiline nose, and a rather broad countenance were noticeable in all. They are said to be generally very poor; these however possessed considerable wealth. Their costume is picturesque, and somewhat resembles that of the Turks. We entered several tents, and found the women weaving carpets,—an art which they well understand. An inextinguishable national as well as religious enmity exists between the Yezidis and the Persians: the latter assert that the two grandsons of Mohammed, Hussein and Hassan, with his seventy great-grandsons, had been killed by the Yezidis. Should a Yezidi venture alone into a Persian village, he would immediately be killed. The brave Yezidis however despise the cowardly and effeminate Persians: my Berlin friend said he should not fear encountering five-and-twenty of them in the open field.

The following are the conclusions I came to respecting this singular people. They are not a Mohammedan sect, for they despise Mohammed and his doctrines; neither do they exhibit any trace of polytheism. Their religion is not of Parsee origin, for with them Satan is not, like Ahriman, a personification of the Evil Principle; nor does it appear that any vestiges of the Jewish law or rites exist amongst them; though it has been asserted that they hold in reverence the First Book of Moses. Still they are a religious sect, and not a distinct race. They are probably of Koordish

descent, and their religion is an obscured, disfigured Christianity. They were, I imagine, originally a Gnostic sect, which in an early age separated or was expelled from the Christian Church. Their doctrine of Satan is evidently the Gnostic doctrine of the Demiurgus; the position they assign to Christ reminds us of Arianism*.

Bidding farewell to the hospitable Yezidis, we set out on our return to Kanakir by a different route. We passed the deserted site of a village called Arseni, a corruption of *Arai seni* (Arai is sacrificed); the plain is called *Arai Jarat* (Defeat of Arai). Abovian's uncle related a curious legend concerning this place. Prince Arai, the eighth Patriarch of Armenia, was celebrated throughout Asia for his beauty. Semiramis, the Queen of Babylon, sent an ambassador, offering him the choice of her hand or war. Arai declined the former, on the ground that he and his people served the true God, according to the tradition handed down by Noah, and he could not take a wife who worshiped many gods. Thereupon Semiramis invaded his country, and a battle took place on this spot. Arai was slain, although the Queen had given orders that he should be taken alive. When his

* Accounts of the Yezidis will be found in Prichard's 'Natural History of Man,' Ainsworth's *Travels in Asia Minor and Kurdistan*, and Ritter's 'Erdkunde von Asien.' They have been more recently described by Layard, who visited a branch of this sect in Assyria. In some minor details his statements do not accord with my experience; but whether this arises from differences in their customs, or from one of us having received erroneous information, must be determined by future investigations.

corpse was laid at her feet, she gave way to the wildest despair. She commanded that the body should be carefully embalmed, and placed in a golden coffin in her chamber; ever after maintaining that he was not dead, but lived, and was her beloved husband.

On reaching Erivan in the evening, I found an old Tatar woman telling the fortune of my postillion Thimaphé. I requested her to render me the same service. She directed a vessel of water to be placed on the ground, and looked fixedly into it, at the same time muttering unintelligibly; she then uttered her prognostication, but in very ambiguous terms. On being asked how she obtained the power of soothsaying, she replied that, in her youth, while gazing in some water, she suddenly perceived a person behind her, and on looking round was seized with violent convulsions; from that time she had possessed the power of seeing the future in water, especially on Wednesdays at a particular hour.

On the 27th of August I visited with Abovian the fortress of Erivan, once the seat of the Persian Sirdars. Their palace is almost in ruins; one wing however, formerly the harem, is now used as an hospital; there were also two mosques, one of which has been converted into a church, and the other into an arsenal. Russian officials seldom show much regard for the monuments of past times. The remains of the palace are of little architectural interest; the courts, gardens, and fountains are trivial, although some of the ornaments, windows, doors, and arcades are pretty; the



Gravel, del.

BRIDGE AND PORTRESS AT ERIVAN.

audience-chamber alone exhibits traces of an imposing character. This has one end open to a court, being separated from the latter only by some carved lattice-work, which may be removed at pleasure; the whole then forms a spacious hall. At the opposite end is a large stained window, occupying two-thirds of the width of the room, and extending from the ceiling to the floor; on each side of this, in a projecting recess, is a marble basin, with a small fountain. On the walls and ceiling are placed alternately mirrors and paintings; the latter, contrary to Mohammedan custom, being chiefly portraits, representing the last Shah but one, his son Abbas Mirza, the last Sirdar, and his still surviving brother. There are also scenes from the heroic age of Persia, and a picture in which an Armenian Patriarch is satirically represented as caressing a girl, who is offering him a cup of wine. All these paintings are of the modern Persian school, in which the influence of European art may be recognized in colouring and *chiaroscuro*, but which preserves the same type as is seen in the ancient illuminated manuscripts of Firdousi's 'Shah Nameh.' The inner court is pretty, containing a basin with three fountains and some trees, and surrounded by the buildings formerly appropriated to the harem.

The Persian Sirdars were generally extortionary tyrants; the last of the series however was a man of noble and upright character, and accessible to all who had cause for complaint: he laboured assiduously to promote the welfare of his province, and his me-

mory is still cherished by both Tatars and Armenians. He restored and greatly improved a canal which had fallen into decay, rendering productive a large extent of garden-ground in the neighbourhood of Erivan, which he divided among the inhabitants. Increase of population he regarded as a proof of national prosperity, and he adopted a singular method of bringing about this desirable end. The preceding Sirdars, if they heard of an Armenian maiden of unusual beauty, would have her seized and conveyed to their harem; he did not follow their example, but took advantage of the fear inspired by such violent proceedings, in order to hasten marriages. From time to time he caused a report to be spread, that the Sirdar and all the Persian nobles were about to sell their Persian female slaves, and fill their harems exclusively with Armenians. To avoid being seized for such a purpose, all the marriageable girls got married or betrothed as speedily as possible, their capture being thereby rendered illegal.

The following romantic incident is said to have occurred a few years before the Russian conquest. The Sirdar fell violently in love with a beautiful Armenian maiden, and demanded her from her parents. Their supplications, and those of the girl herself, were unavailing; for although she had a lover, she was not formally betrothed; she was consequently carried off to the harem. During the night her lover entered the palace-gardens, and in a low voice commenced singing beneath the windows of the harem, in the hope that

she would hear him. Soon a window was opened, and some one leaped out. Fearing that his singing had betrayed him, he fled; but as he heard nothing more, he crept back, and found his beloved caught in the branches of a tree, which had broken her descent to the ground. He helped her down, and they prepared for flight, but being overheard, they were pursued and caught, and in the morning they were brought before the Sirdar; when the latter had heard the circumstances of the case, he exclaimed, "I see that in the sight of God you were already betrothed. Lovers so true shall never be parted: live happily together, and God be with you!"

As we were walking about the town, Aruthian Abovian related a story, which might form a fitting conclusion to a modern sentimental romance. "Once, in my youth," said he, "I went to Bayazid, in Asia Minor. While sauntering about the bazaar, my attention was arrested by a man of a wretched and melancholy appearance, restlessly wandering about and trembling incessantly. On inquiring the cause of his miserable condition, the following story was told me. He had once been a linen-weaver, and resided at a village at the foot of Mount Ararat. Falling in love with his master's wife, he induced her to fly with him: they betook themselves to the mountains, and in the evening reached a cave, where the woman staid to rest, while he went to seek provisions. After a short absence he returned; but great was his horror at beholding the woman in the jaws of a monstrous snake,

which had already swallowed half her person, and was only prevented from completing its repast by her outstretched arms. 'Cut the snake open with your sabre,' cried she to the man, 'or slit its jaws on each side!' But the man was petrified with fear. 'At least,' she entreated, 'hand me the sabre, and let me rescue myself.' Her cries were in vain, for he had lost all power of exertion. 'Ah!' she then exclaimed in despair, 'I see you are a coward, I will live no longer;' and closing her arms above her head, she instantly sank into the monster's belly. Then the man saw the snake coil itself round a pillar of basalt, to crush the bones of its victim, and he heard the smothered shrieks of the woman within it. Half insane with terror and remorse, he rushed from the cave, and ever after wandered about, the wretched being whom I saw."

The mosque, with its colossal doorway and graceful minaret, was the only imposing building I had yet seen in Erivan, and I resolved to visit it on the first favourable opportunity. This occurred on the following Friday, the Mohammedan Sabbath, as well as the day on which the followers of the Prophet commemorate the death of his grandsons Hassan and Hussein, and his seventy great-grandchildren, who are said to have been murdered by the Yezidis. We reached the mosque a little before noon. In front of the building is a court-yard, with an arcade running round it, and in the centre a pool of water, shaded by four noble trees. The arcade is divided into a series



Guelt, del.

THE GREAT MOSQUE AT BRIVAN.

of open halls, which are used as schoolrooms and apartments for the moollahs and other officials. Instruction was going on when we entered. In one of the halls, to the left of the mosque, we found a school assembled, consisting of about thirty boys, who sat in a row against the walls, all with their legs crossed under them; two teachers, in the same posture, sat facing them, one on each side; in the centre stood water-jugs, inkstands, etc. The boys were summoned two at a time to repeat their lessons; they seated themselves opposite the teachers, and rocked to and fro continually while repeating them. Although they are all Tatar children, the only language taught is Persian: in no case do they learn to read or write their own language. They have only manuscript books; the teachers read to them, until they become accustomed to the characters; the book generally used for this purpose is a Persian history of Nadir Shah. The process of teaching them to read and write in a language quite foreign to them is very tedious, sometimes occupying several years.

In another hall an aged moollah was giving instruction to two young men of his own order: the old man was reading to them from the Old Testament, and explaining with much earnestness as he proceeded. This mutual instruction is common amongst the moollahs, who are universally zealous teachers; their method is doubtless defective, but their zeal might serve as an example to the lazy Georgian and Armenian ecclesiastics.

Exactly at noon the Muezzin appeared on the minaret, and, in a singularly plaintive chant, summoned the faithful to prayer: the melody, which consisted of but a few notes, reminded me of some Catholic litanies. We seated ourselves on the stone margin of the pool, beneath the shade of the trees, and in a short time large numbers of people began to arrive. The women were all closely veiled: I am informed that only the old women attend the mosques. Some moollahs approached us, and, at our invitation, took a seat by our side: of these I inquired, through Abovian, whether I should be permitted to attend the service. They replied at once in the affirmative, and desired us to enter the mosque, and station ourselves where we pleased. As strangers however, we modestly remained at the entrance, from whence we could witness the whole of the proceedings; we were treated with great civility, and in a short time chairs were brought for our accommodation*. The doorway of the mosque is so large as to occupy nearly the whole of the front; the interior is quite devoid of ornament; the bare, white walls are inscribed with sentences from

* In these countries no hostile feelings appear to exist between Mohammedans and Christians, nor between the various tribes. The Mohammedan Tatars, Circassians, and Persians, and the Christian Georgians and Armenians, inhabit the same villages, maintain friendly intercourse, and sometimes even eat together on the same carpet; each however strictly complying with the requirements of his own faith, and adhering to their respective national manners, customs, and dress. Only between sects of the same religion,—as between the Shiite and Sunnite Mohammedans, and those Armenians belonging to the National and to the Romish Church—is there enmity. All however avoid social intercourse with the Jews.

the Koran. In the centre is a small pulpit of wood, approached by a staircase of ten or twelve steps. The women were all standing on the right, the men on the left.

The religious services commenced with a silent prayer. An aged moollah then ascended the pulpit-stairs as far as the fifth step, and read aloud a chapter from the Koran in a kind of recitative, intoned like the Epistle and Collects in the celebration of Mass. After this, another moollah—a young man—entered the pulpit, and preached a long sermon, abounding with argument and good advice, and showing the necessity of abstaining from pride, avarice, and sensuality, in order to secure salvation. His language was mostly figurative: “Keep thy foot clean, and see that it tread not the unrighteous paths that lead to deception and dishonesty; keep thine eye clear from evil lust; and not only abstain from sin, but do good; have compassion on the needy and the sick.” His exhortations were enforced by numerous quotations from the Koran and from the “prophet Christ,”—amongst others the saying, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Once, leaning over the pulpit, he vehemently reprovèd the female portion of the assembly for whispering. At the close of the sermon the whole congregation responded “Amen!” Then followed a chant, by a number of moollahs and young persons standing round the pulpit, who sang in a nasal voice and without harmony. This

being concluded, a young moollah mounted again to the fifth step, and, from a written paper, read in a kind of recitative a dirge on the death of the Prophet ; to this succeeded another chant.

An old moollah of venerable aspect now entered the pulpit. His hearers, he said, would doubtless wish to know the events which succeeded the Prophet's death. He had little strength to relate them, but he implored that God would grant him aid, and he hoped that through his words their piety might be increased. After this introduction, he commenced an oration of remarkable eloquence and solemnity, which was interpreted to me by Abovian during the pauses. In tones at first gentle and subdued, but becoming gradually more impressive,—his voice rising or falling, and his utterance rapid or slow and interrupted, as the subject prompted,—the preacher related the story of the murder of the Prophets. He described the capture of Ali and his sons by the Yezidis, and the visit of an angel to the former as he lay in chains ; he next told how, after the death of Ali, his sister wandered about the world seeking him ; then he depicted her bitter grief when assured of his death, and related how she was informed, by a vision of the Prophet in the night, that Ali and his children were in Paradise. All this was narrated with vividness of style, an energetic delivery, and apparently a firm conviction of its truth. He made his hearers, as it were, eye-witnesses of the scene. As he described the lamenting sister, and the bystanders bewailing, he

himself lamented and wept in sympathy, and called for vengeance on the murderers. No actor could equal gestures so expressive, emotion so intense, and a force of conviction so overwhelming. The excitement of the preacher soon communicated itself to his hearers, who wept aloud, sobbed, smote their breast, and tore their hair. Never had I witnessed such an exhibition of the power of oratory over a multitude; never before had I perceived so clearly how, by the contagious influence of fanaticism, a false doctrine may obtain unlimited sway over the minds of men.

This scene caused me in some measure to doubt whether the stirring religious spirit of Mohammedanism, which once subjugated a fourth of the human race, is so near extinction as the decrepitude of its civil institutions might lead us to suppose. As a political bond its influence is undoubtedly feeble. The Tatars have completely, and apparently without reluctance, conformed to the Russian institutions, and are for the most part faithful subjects of the Christian Czar; they serve in his army, and I have even met with officers wearing the civil uniform who are strict adherents of Mohammed. In Turkey and Persia the political system is lifeless, and regeneration from within, while the Koran forms the basis of legislation, appears impossible: attempts at improvement invariably end in the introduction of European customs, as has been the case in Egypt. Mohammedanism is retreating into the hearts of its believers, producing a mystic piety in individuals, but no longer exten-

sively awakening the fanaticism of the multitude. In the Eastern Caucasus indeed it has given rise to the remarkable phenomenon of Muredism; but there it is comparatively in its youth, having been introduced scarcely a century, and has moreover been embraced by an energetic and warlike race, comprizing men of a truly heroic stamp like Schamyl*.

Abovian informed me, that under the Persians the commemoration of the death of the prophets lasted three days, and that the subject was represented dramatically in the open air. The part of the Yezidi murderers was performed by Koordish horsemen, and that of the prophets by moollahs. One of the latter, standing upon an elevated stage, recited the story. When he was about to describe the particulars of the murder, the Koords, in Yezidi costume, sprang forward with drawn sabres, cutting their way through the crowd, who struggled violently and heaped curses on the assailants; the horsemen had set phrases to shout in reply. The children of the prophets, represented by boys, then set up a heart-rending wail,

* The external culture of Europe is penetrating, as an advanced guard, into Mohammedan countries,—whether as the forerunner of Christianity, who can tell? The latter is the only faith which has the power to sustain and develop the whole culture of modern life: Mohammedanism cannot do this, if only for the reason that it is the oppressor of woman. In the harems are to be found innumerable Christian women, who secretly baptize their children. If means could be devised of uniting the Christian elements scattered throughout Asia, and imbuing them with the higher European culture, they would soon overpower the Mohammedanism by which they are surrounded. The accomplishment of this object I believe to be the mission of the Armenian Church.

smote themselves, tore their hair, and clung to the feet of the young men who stood round to defend them. The latter, seeing their inability to resist, cried in despair, "*Hassan! Hussein! gagam wey!*" (Hassan! Hussein! woe to us all!) The moollahs, who personated the prophets, in still louder tones bewailed their helplessness, and the bystanders joined in their lamentations. Then the assailants seemed to be driven away by some invisible hand, but after awhile they appeared again; and the same scene was repeated thrice. Finally the Prophet himself sent assistance: a glittering host of horsemen streamed over the plain; the Yezidis disappeared in an instant, and the loud lamentations gave place to universal joy and exultation. In Erivan these performances have been discontinued since the Russian conquest; but in Persia they are still annually repeated, and serve to keep alive in the minds of the people a hostile feeling against the poor Yezidis*. We perceive in such representations a surviving trace of those ancient tragedies, which entered into the service of religion.

The religious service at the mosque lasted nearly three hours, and we returned home in a state of excitement almost equalling that of the true believers. At the close, the moollah who preached the first ser-

* It is probably a confusion of names which has caused the Yezidis to be regarded as descendants of those who murdered the prophets. The ringleader of the murderers was named Yezid, the son of Moawiyah; but there is no reason to believe that he was an ancestor of the Yezidis; their origin probably dates from a period much earlier than the rise of Mohammedanism.

mon offered up a prayer for the Czar, for the faithful in Erivan, the pilgrims to Mecca, and the welfare of Islam: "May the intercession of the patriarchs and prophets,—of Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and the other holy men of old,—of Christ, Mohammed, Ali, and his children, preserve the Emperor, the communion of the faithful," etc. To each petition the people responded a loud and solemn "Amen!" He then, in conclusion, made an appeal to those living in the country to attend Divine service regularly every Friday, and not to allow bad weather or any other impediment to interfere with this duty. The moollahs here are by no means deficient in zeal, and are well spoken of for the purity of their lives and their active benevolence.

The Mohammedan ecclesiastics, among the Persians and Tatars, are maintained by their respective communities. The Saids, or descendants of Mohammed, are supported by the dervishes, who collect alms for them: the proceeds are delivered to the Mushtahid at Tabreez, who shares them among the recipients in proportion to the directness of their descent from the Prophet.

The dervishes, like the mendicant friars of Europe, live by begging, and generally find their wants amply supplied. Any one may become a dervish; but in order to be successful it is necessary to possess considerable shrewdness, and also to be familiarly acquainted with all the popular legends. None dare refuse alms to these mendicants: a Mussulman would consider it a sin, and the Christians do not venture

to disregard the general custom: it is often thought necessary to give them the exact amount which they demand. Even the Shah of Persia is obliged to give something to all the dervishes who approach him; but as he seldom appears in public, they have contrived the following means of extorting alms. A dervish posts himself opposite that portion of the palace which forms the residence of the Shah. At first no notice is taken of him; then, with a knife, he digs up a very small piece of ground, often only a yard square, in which he sows wheat, watering it well, so that it soon springs up. When the little field looks green he gains his point, for it would be thought an indelible disgrace to the Shah, if the wheat were allowed to come to ear*. The Shah thereupon orders something to be given; but it often happens that the dervish is not satisfied, in which case he seats himself again beside his little field, as a preliminary to further negotiations. The Shah must get rid of him by some means, and at last a bargain is struck, the dervish agreeing to leave, on condition perhaps of receiving some wretched jade or a new dress: he then destroys his cornfield and departs. No sooner is he gone however than another appears, and the same little farce is repeated. At least once a month some member of the fraternity in this way obtains a present from the Shah.

* In German proverbs and national songs, this expression often occurs, "Who knows where my wheat blossoms for me?"—in other words, "where good luck awaits me." May this ancient traditional expression be symbolic?

The Tatar and Persian villages have each their own moollah, who is maintained by voluntary gifts; there is no permanence however in the arrangements. A community often applies to the Sheik al Islam at Erivan, the head of the Mohammedan clergy in Armenia, engaging to pay eighty or a hundred roubles annually if a moollah be sent: his functions consist only of public prayer, teaching, and the performance of the burial-service. The Sheik al Islam also appoints a superior moollah over districts comprizing fifteen or twenty villages, usually at the request of the inhabitants. The superior moollahs alone can celebrate marriages; they also exercise magisterial functions, deciding all disputes, and, until lately, their sentences were final; an appeal may now be made to the Russian courts. The court of the superior moollah is called the Sherrah; contending parties are not restricted to any particular court, but may bring their suits before any moollah in whom they have most confidence. Disputes between moollahs, and charges against them, are laid before the Sheik al Islam.

Among the Tatars there is no hereditary ecclesiastical order: any one who has pursued the requisite course of study may become a moollah; but, as a general rule, the sons of moollahs adopt their fathers' profession. The highest ecclesiastical dignity however, that of the Sheik al Islam at Erivan, is hereditary in an ancient Tatar family of rank. The Mush-tahid at Tabreez is properly not an ecclesiastical dignitary; but he possesses, both in spiritual and temporal

affairs, an extensive though undefined authority, arising from the reverence with which he is regarded, as the head of the families descended from Mohammed through his son-in-law Ali: the people look upon him as the true political and religious chief of the faithful, the Shah of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey being considered usurpers. In Persia, especially in provinces where the government is feeble, the power of the Mushtahid is often equal to that of the Shah. If a condemned criminal, or his relatives on his behalf, request permission of the Mushtahid to ask for a pardon from the Shah, the execution must be delayed: if the Mushtahid himself request a pardon, it must be granted*.

The Tatars are free, but among those of high rank domestic slaves may occasionally be found, obtained usually on pilgrimages to Mecca. Since the Russian conquest the buying or selling of slaves is forbidden. The hereditary nobles, the Begs, are held in high esteem in these southern parts. According to the custom of inheritance among the Tatars, on the death of a father the daughters receive half as much as the sons. Previous to the division, the eldest son receives

* If antiquity of descent be regarded as the criterion of rank, nowhere could there be assembled such an aristocratic galaxy as in the Russian empire. 1. Prince Bagratian, Czar of Georgia, descended in a direct line from David, and therefore the nearest known kinsman of Christ. 2. The Mushtahid at Tiflis, the direct descendant of Mohammed. 3. Prince Ghirei, Khan of Tatory, lineally descended from Genghis Khan. 4. Two descendants of Rurik, whose immediate ancestors were Odin and the Asen deities. 5. The Princes Dolgorouki and Odijefsky.

a sabre, a horse, and a copy of the Koran ; all the sons then share equally ; generally however the brothers remain together in the same house, under the rule of the eldest.

The following information concerning Persia I give on the authority of Peter Neu. Every village, whether Tatar or Persian, is governed by a Kjatchata (literally, 'village-god'), an officer appointed by the farmer of the taxes. In conjunction with the village elders (the Akhsakal or 'White-beards'), he administers the police regulations and decides minor disputes ; an appeal however may be made to the Sherrah, the court of the Moollah. The criminal jurisdiction is in the hands of the Beglerbegs, who in some cases have the power of condemning to death. With the Persian Armenians also the first resort is to the local court ; they may appeal to the Beglerbegs, but they rarely do so, preferring either to submit to the first decision, or to choose arbitrators from among their co-religionists.

In Persia the soil is considered the property of the Shah. There is a kind of feudal nobility to whom he grants land, on condition of receiving military service ; they hold it free of impost, except that when wheat is sown the Shah claims one-third of the harvest, and they are at liberty to dispose of their grants to others of their own class. On the land held by the townspeople and peasants, the Shah should receive, according to law, a third of the harvest and a tax in money on the live-stock,—on every horse or ox, one tanabat

(about 6*d.*); on every sheep or goat, one abbas ($2\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*); and a tenth of the poultry, ducks and geese excepted. The taxes however are not levied by collectors responsible to the Shah: but in each district the Sirdar, or governor, is required to transmit a certain proportion of the taxes raised in his province, according to the means of the inhabitants. The Sirdar again appoints no collectors, but farms each village to a receiver of taxes,—an office eagerly sought by all classes, as it is very lucrative, and affords scope for the most unrestrained rapacity. Thus the free Persian peasant is infinitely more oppressed and wretched than if he were a serf. In or near each village there is a large threshing-floor, where all the inhabitants are required to thresh their corn; every peasant has a place assigned to him by the Sarkar, who is the servant of the receiver of taxes. When all the corn is threshed, the Sarkar measures off a third part, as the Shah's due.

In some provinces the governors are called Sirdars; in the Tatar provinces, Khans; in others, Beglerbegs (noble of nobles). A definite proportion of the taxes is assigned for their maintenance, but they generally extort all they can from the people.

The Armenians in Persia were required, until recently, to pay a tax of one-half the produce of their harvests. Hence those who had settled in the neighbourhood of Tabreez welcomed the Russians as deliverers; and when, at the conclusion of peace, the latter gave up the district, the Armenians forsook their houses and lands, and emigrated with their live-stock

and moveables to the Caucasian provinces. The Persians have since had the wisdom to remove this oppressive distinction, and to place the Armenians in all respects on the same footing as the Tatars.

The houses and farmsteads belonging to the Persian peasants resemble those of the Armenians, but show greater poverty. Wood being very scarce, the houses are almost all built of sun-dried bricks or hardened clay; burnt bricks are too costly for ordinary use. The gardens only yield a small quantity of wood for daily use, from the nut-trees, almond, and pear-trees; and the timber indispensable in the construction of the dwellings is supplied by the Lombardy poplar. Irrigation is indispensable to the fertility of the plains: districts where the canals have fallen out of repair become in a few years desolate steppes. Around the towns the canals are usually the property of persons who have constructed or purchased them, and who receive a rent for the use of the water; in the villages they belong to the community, certain regulations being adopted with regard to their maintenance and the use of the water by the inhabitants.



VILLAGE OF ECHMIADZIN, WITH MOUNT ARARAT.

CHAPTER IX.

ECHMIADZIN.—THE PERSIANS AND THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.—THE CATHEDRAL.—THE PATRIARCH'S RESIDENCE.—CONVERSATION WITH THE PATRIARCH NARSES.—ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.—ELECTION OF THE PATRIARCH.—CONSTITUTION OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH.—ITS RELATION TO THE GREEK AND LATIN CHURCHES.—THE HIERARCHY.—REVENUES OF THE PATRIARCH AND ARCHBISHOPS.—SYSTEM OF PARISHES.—POSITION AND OFFICE OF THE PRIESTS.—SPIRITUAL COURTS.—ARMENIANS UNITED WITH ROME.

LATE in the afternoon of the 27th of August, I proceeded with Abovian and Peter Neu to the celebrated Convent of Echmiadzin, the residence of the Patriarch, and consequently the head-quarters of the Armenian Church. It is situated about seventeen versts from Erivan, in a broad plain between Mount Ararat and the range of Alagös. The Armenians say that this was the site of Paradise, and that the fire-vomiting Ararat was the flaming sword of the Angel who guarded the entrance against Adam and his posterity. The Flood destroyed the garden of Eden, and quenched the fire, but likewise obliged Noah to land upon the mountain; so that the human race was distributed a second time from this spot. Here Noah saw the rain-

bow of reconciliation ; and here he found the vine, the last remnant of the delicious fruits of Paradise.

Our road lay through a richly cultivated plain, and we reached the Convent towards evening. The Russian Procurator* received us very inhospitably, not granting us a lodging in the Convent, as is customary for strangers who bring letters of introduction : we had to find accommodation for ourselves,—an easy matter however among the hospitable Armenian villagers. As it was already too late to see over the building, I passed the evening in collecting information respecting the district.

The village consists of 360 farms, which, with the gardens attached to them, are the property of the inhabitants, who pay a fixed tax to the Convent. On each farm, with its gardens, they pay from two to seven roubles ; collectively 1320 roubles ; an amount for which the whole community is responsible. This payment seems to be made in return for the system of irrigation ; the Convent having constructed the canals, and given them for the use of the village : they are kept in repair by the inhabitants, who appoint water-bailiffs, as at Erivan†. The fields belong to the Convent, and are rented by the villagers, who pay

* The property of the Convent has been placed by the Russian Government under the control of a special officer, who is called the Procurator. It consists of five villages, containing 3459 inhabitants, and some scattered estates in Georgia.

† In the vicinity of Erivan are several hundred canals : the Karsak, a stream of some magnitude, is entirely absorbed by them. In 1703 they were renewed and enlarged, by order of the Patriarch.

one-fifth of the produce, consisting of wheat, barley, rice, and cotton. The inhabitants have hitherto paid no taxes to the Crown : when under the Persians, they were, as farm-peasants of the Convent, free of all taxes, and, contrary to the Russian custom, they have remained so to the present time.

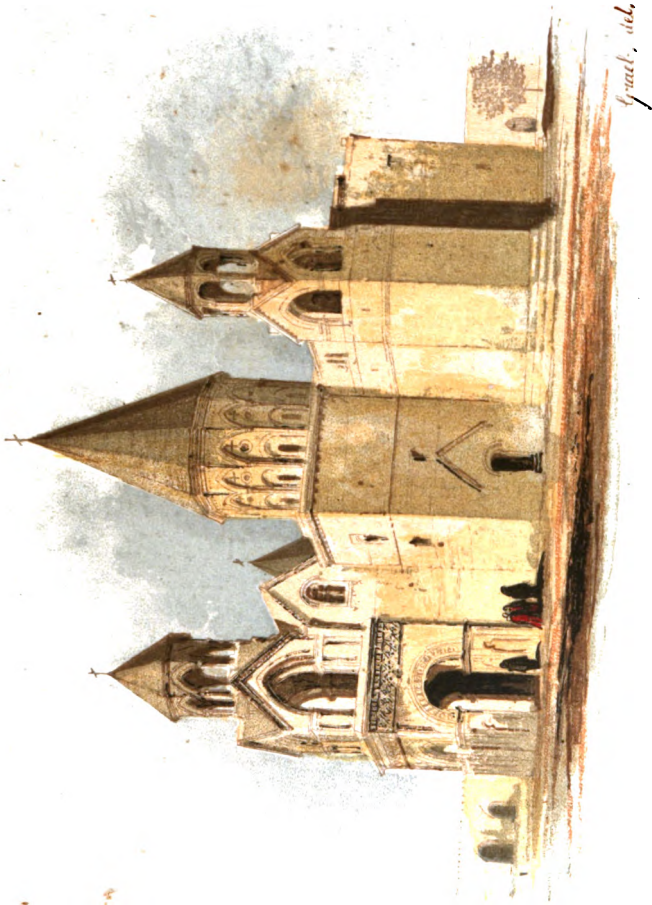
The Persians have always respected the property of the Armenian Church, especially that of the monasteries*. This was the case even during the last war, although the Armenians and their clergy openly displayed their sympathy with Russia.

The Convent possesses four other villages, in which the same arrangements exist ; they are however small and poor, the clear income from each amounting only to between two and three hundred roubles. The principal revenues are derived from the liberal gifts of the Armenians scattered over Asia, and parts of Europe and Africa. From this source the expenses of the priesthood, monastic buildings, churches, church services, and servants, are defrayed ; the remainder is placed at the disposal of the Patriarch, who expends

* The Persians show great veneration for the higher orders of the Christian, especially the Armenian, priesthood. When Abbas Mirza, at the time of the war with Turkey, came to Echmiadzin, he entreated the Patriarch to consecrate his sword. Had this happened in a war with Russia, it might have been attributed to political motives : but in a war with other Mohammedans, religious or superstitious feelings alone can have actuated him. The Turks and Koords also venerate the Armenian sanctuaries. The relic of the Holy Lance, preserved at Echmiadzin, is believed by the Mohammedans of Bayazid to be the only remedy for the plague, which is said to return every seven years ; it is carried thither in solemn procession, and is asserted to have invariably arrested the disease.

not only these funds, but incalculable revenues from the monasteries in Persia, India, and Turkey, for the benefit of the Church.

The next morning I visited the Convent. It is surrounded by high walls, with eight towers, and was formerly regarded as a strongly fortified place. A deep arched gateway leads into the outer court, in which are a great number of booths, kept by shopkeepers and mechanics of every description; there is also a wax-manufactory. A second gateway leads into the inner court, in the centre of which stands the celebrated cathedral. Portions of this structure have evidently been erected at very different periods, and there are contributions from various schools of architecture,—Byzantine, Gothic, Moorish, and modern Italian; one part is of quite modern origin. Near the principal entrance, and built into the wall, stands a stone monument to an English ambassador at the Persian Court, Mr. Macdonald, bearing an inscription in English, Greek, and Persian. It shows a tolerant and kindly feeling in the Patriarch and clergy, that they have permitted not merely the burial of a heretic at the entrance of their cathedral, but the erection of such a monument to his memory. A mysterious twilight pervades the interior of the church, even on the brightest days, enhancing the solemn effect of the building, which is by no means of colossal dimensions: its length is about fifty yards, its breadth forty-eight, and its height thirty-five. The Byzantine style and its symbolic forms predominate



CATHEDRAL OF KCHMIADZIN.

in the interior, and inscriptions abound on all parts of the edifice; there is also a Tibetan bell, with the mystical invocation inscribed upon it, "*Om mani,*" etc.

The position and style of the altar, and the general arrangements of the interior, are not Greek, but bear a greater resemblance to those of the Latin Church. The chief altar stands, as tradition asserts, on the very spot where in heathen times stood an altar and statue of Artemis. St. Gregory, surnamed the Illuminator (A. D. 302), beheld a vision here: he saw the Redeemer descend in a sunbeam, whereupon the statue of the false deity sank into the earth: hence perhaps the name Echmiadzin, "Descent of the Redeemer." The cathedral is splendidly adorned with gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones, and still greater wealth is said to be kept under lock and key. Near the high altar was a beautiful chair, carved with great skill, evidently of European workmanship, in the *rococo*, or rather *renaissance* style; it was said to be a present from a former Pope to the Patriarch of that day; my informants did not remember exactly the time or the occasion, but thought it was in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. There are no pictures of value; the walls are painted in the variegated flower-style of the Persians, executed by an Armenian artist in 1736. I found here, and in other Armenian churches, a likeness of Christ on a handkerchief. The legend connected with this differs in its form in the Western and Eastern Churches: the former relates that, on the way to the Crucifixion, Christ hav-

ing sunk down exhausted, a Jewish woman wiped his face with a handkerchief, on which his likeness was left imprinted. On this account the picture is called the image of St. Veronica, (from *vera icon*, true image). According to the Armenian legend, there lived, at the time of Christ, an Armenian king named Abgar, who was a leper. He had heard the fame of the Redeemer, believed in him, and sent to beg that he would heal him; promising that, if Christ would leave the persecuting Jews and come to Armenia, himself and his people would become his disciples. If this could not be, he entreated that at least Christ would send a likeness of himself by the messenger. The Saviour, in reply, said that his calling was to die in Judea; but he took a handkerchief, held it to his face, and immediately the image was traced upon the handkerchief, which he then gave to the ambassador. The passage in which Christ says, "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed," is applied by the Armenians to their king Abgar.

We ascended to the flat roof of the church, which affords a good survey of the whole structure; the other buildings are worthless in point of architecture. We then visited the apartments of the Patriarch, the exterior of which is not very striking: the ante-room, serving also for an audience-chamber, led into a large summer apartment next the garden; this side of the building is entirely covered with finely-carved trellis-work, on the removal of which the whole forms an open hall. Close to this is the winter apartment,

which, to my surprise, I found fitted up in European style: there were two large mirrors, a sofa, with chairs and tables, not however displaying much taste; they were probably of Moscow manufacture. It seems that even the venerable Patriarchs of Armenia are obliged to make concessions to the spirit of the age, and to adopt the fashions of modern Europe. The Pope however has not yielded so far: in the apartments which he inhabits are found the simplicity and entire absence of ornament which befit the cell of a monk.

We received but little attention, and no one accompanied us; indeed, it was with reluctance that the rooms were opened for our inspection. Such was the effect of the Procurator's rudeness, that the poor monks were afraid to be civil. I wanted to see the library, but they said the key was mislaid. In 1836 a catalogue was edited, in French, by the learned Brosset; it comprizes five hundred Armenian works, of which ninety-one are on historical subjects.

The Patriarchate at Echmiadzin is of incalculable importance to the unity and nationality of the Armenian people. It is the central point where pilgrims, from the Ganges and the Indus, the Euphrates and the Nile, the Volga, the Neva, and the Bosphorus, first meet and become acquainted, and form ties of fraternal union. From all these countries the priests come to fetch the holy oil, which the Patriarch alone can consecrate; thus the unity of the national Church is constantly recognized and cemented afresh.

On this spot, B.C. 600, stood the strong city of

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Ardimet-Kaghak (city of Artemis), under the Armenian king Vardsche. The convent is built upon the site of a heathen temple, dedicated to a mixed worship of Persian and Greek divinities, whose temples and altars were scattered over the country. The former were afterwards converted into Christian churches,—a policy similar to that of the Western Church in Europe. The founder of the Arsacide dynasty, Varsaces, made the town a royal residence. In the second century king Vagharsh rebuilt the walls, and called it Narkhak ; but in 354 it was destroyed by one of the Sassanides, at which period, according to Faustus Byzantinus, it numbered nineteen thousand houses ; it was never rebuilt, but the village is called to this day Vagharshabad. Tiridates the Great and St. Gregory, (A. D. 309,) built the first Christian church here, and named it Echmiadzin. From A. D. 529 to 618 it lay in ruins, but was rebuilt by the Patriarch Gomidas, and the stone cupola added. A considerable portion was again destroyed by Shah Abbas, but in 1629 it was restored to its present state. Since 1446, Echmiadzin has been the constant residence of the Patriarch.

In the Armenian Church, monastic institutions have fallen into decay : men of enlarged minds, thirsting for knowledge, like Narses and Abovian, rarely enter these establishments. Some are impelled to this mode of life by a mystic and ascetic nature, aversion to the world and its allurements, and a pious longing for communion with God ; these lead a quiet and contemplative

life, in poor and secluded convents, and are greatly revered by the people. A far larger class are actuated by ambitious motives, coveting the high places of the Church, which can only be filled by monks. Avarice, envy, hypocrisy, and even gross sensuality, are common amongst them; they constitute the majority in the more wealthy monasteries, such as Echmiadzin. Monks of this class, with few exceptions, are despised by the people, who are quick to distinguish them from the others.

A short time ago Archbishop Narses was elected Patriarch; when I was at Echmiadzin, he had gone to St. Petersburg, at the invitation of the Emperor, who was desirous of knowing him personally previous to confirming his election. The Emperor, who had once regarded him with suspicion, soon convinced himself of the loyalty and energy of this remarkable man; he formally recognized him as Patriarch, and dismissed him with honours.

In the winter of 1843 I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with Narses at St. Petersburg. He was residing in the palace of Prince Lazareff, who, being of Armenian descent, claimed the honour of entertaining the ecclesiastical head of his people. Here I was one evening introduced to him by General W * * *, who had rendered him (then an archbishop) some service in the war between Russia and Persia. A little spare old man, seventy years of age, with a long snow-white beard, a sharply cut intellectual countenance, of kindly and gentle expression, came forward

to meet us. He was dressed in the black robe of a monk ; but a cross of brilliants, fastened to his black skull-cap, glittered with imposing effect over his forehead. General W * * * kindly acted as interpreter ; and, after the usual forms of introduction*, a conversation ensued, in which I had an opportunity of making numerous inquiries relating to Armenia. The Patriarch, finding that I had visited his country, and felt interested in the welfare of his people, expressed his pleasure, and at once became communicative. I give his observations in their original disconnected form, which I committed to writing the same evening, omitting the questions which drew them forth.

“The convent of Echmiadzin was founded in the year 305. Diocletian was then emperor of Rome, and Tiridates the Great, king of Armenia. The outer wall of the church is of that period, as well as the subterranean fishpond, which lies in part beneath it. The first church had a roof like an inverted boat : this was never restored, but replaced by the present Byzantine cupola, probably by architects from Constantinople a thousand years ago. The Patriarchal chair, on the left of the altar, was presented by one of the Popes, between 1697 and 1699. The Patriarch and his clergy had been grossly calumniated to the Pope by Latin monks ; he therefore wrote to the latter, disclosing their intrigues, and requesting him to send an impartial and trustworthy agent to in-

* In Russia all the functionaries, even the ministers of state, address the Patriarch of Armenia by the title “Your Holiness.”

quire into the state of things at Echmiadzin. The Pope sent Father Christopher (a Capuchin), with presents ; he found everything as the Patriarch had asserted, and the friendly relation between the Pope and the Patriarch was restored. Among the presents sent on this occasion was this chair, which has been highly prized ever since, as a testimony of reconciliation and honour.”

I ventured to ask the Patriarch to explain to me his position with regard to the Pope : he did so without reserve or embarrassment. “The Pope,” he said, “is the first Patriarch of Christendom, and takes the first place in Councils : but all patriarchs, properly so called, are his equals. The only true patriarchs are those at Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, and the Catholicos at Echmiadzin. The so-called Armenian Patriarchs at Jerusalem and Constantinople have no better claim to patriarchal rights and authority, than those of Lisbon and Venice ; they may be deposed by the Catholicos, or even by the people ; but the Catholicos, being anointed, cannot be deposed* . On the whole we are in harmony with Rome : the Armenian Patriarch usually sends a notice to the Pope of his elevation to the

* History proves however that the supremacy of the Catholicos has not been equally at all times recognized by the Armenians. The Patriarchs of Jerusalem (1655-1680) and Constantinople have occasionally asserted their independence. At Sis in Cilicia there is at the present time a Patriarch, who also styles himself the Catholicos of Armenia: he establishes the fact that, until the year 1441, a Catholicos always resided at Sis. The Patriarch of Akhtamar is likewise independent ; but both are regarded at schismatics.

Patriarchate ; we are not however always in harmony with the Roman Catholic missionaries ; there is also a special quarrel between the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople and the Roman Catholics, but the Catholicos of Echmiadzin seldom takes part in it. There is no essential difference in doctrine between the Armenian and Latin churches ; indeed perfect agreement has been repeatedly attained. Jealousies and disputes have been much more frequent with the Greek Church. The Armenian is the most tolerant Church, recognizing all baptized persons as Christians, and bestowing on them her blessings and sacraments, without requiring that they should be actual members. I once administered the Sacrament of the dying to two Roman Catholic Poles at Erivan.

“ Armenia has been for many centuries the theatre of cruel and destructive wars ; and the poor inhabitants and their Church have always been subject to fierce persecution from the Turks and Persians. For two hundred years we have been looking to Russia, and hoping for salvation from her. Before the Persian war, when I was the vicar and confidant of the Patriarch Ephraim, some English missionaries from India proposed to me that we should unite with them, and they would found Armenian schools, which might be placed under the protection of England and North America,—a measure which would gain the protection of those countries for the whole Armenian people. I would not consent, fearing internal strife ; I could see safety nowhere but in alliance with Russia.

“My people are deficient in culture ; but they have excellent natural abilities. I have long been convinced that what they most need is knowledge. Once I proposed to establish a school at Tiflis, for eight hundred pupils ; the plan received hearty support from the people ; the school was set on foot, and soon numbered about four hundred. At Echmiadzin, the centre of my Church, I conceived the idea of founding a great academy, for all the Armenians scattered throughout the world, with a college for the higher kind of spiritual and secular education : this institution I hoped would prove a bond of union. The number of students was to have been two thousand. All preliminaries were ready : the locality was determined, and the architectural plans were designed.”

I could not refrain from asking the Patriarch whence the pecuniary means for such a colossal undertaking would have been obtained. He replied : “The Armenians are animated by an intense desire to advance their national culture, and are ready for any sacrifice to attain this end. Although but a poor monk, I am the head of that national Church which the Armenians prize above everything, and hence am richer than many kings. It only required a summons from me, for millions to be collected for such an object : I had even then received offers to an enormous amount, especially from India. I was able to assure the Russian Government that I sought nothing more than its sanction ; the funds I could myself provide, and the institution of the school at Tiflis would show

how readily I could obtain pecuniary means for larger enterprizes. But intrigues and suspicion arose: the permission was refused, and I was sent into a kind of exile, as Archbishop of Kischenau, in Bessarabia.

“The efforts of my whole life had been devoted to the liberation of my people from the bodily and spiritual slavery under which they everywhere groan. The head-quarters of our Church appeared to me the most natural starting-point, where, owing to the conquests and protection of Russia, the chains of slavery had been already broken. If, when I was compelled to leave Tiflis, I could have gone to St. Petersburg, vindicated my conduct, and proved the purity of my intentions, I should certainly have succeeded, as I have done now; but I did not choose to abnegate my position as a bishop and a monk.

“An inactive life was extremely burdensome. I might have gone to Constantinople, to Persia, or to India, where I could have promoted the object I had in view, and should have been received by my people everywhere with open arms: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions.’ But I trusted the calling of God, and went into banishment, waiting patiently for fifteen years. At length I was elected Patriarch. The Emperor sent for me to St. Petersburg, where I arrived in ill health, and soon death appeared to be at hand. Then, as by a miracle, my life was saved*;

* I heard afterwards that the Patriarch had been at the point of death, and given up by the physicians, when M. Paschkoff suddenly restored him to health by means of magnetism.

hence I believe that God has called me to serve Him still, in the same manner as from the first. The Armenian Church is a structure with a dome; the Patriarch is the keystone of that dome, on which stands the Cross, the symbol of Christ. My reception at Court was gracious beyond expectation. God influenced the Emperor's heart: he sees now what we need, and is satisfied that my purpose is honest, and that I am his faithful subject.

“When General Diebitsch was in Georgia, I said to him, ‘The Russians have been here now for thirty years, but we are still waiting for the appearance of that truly patriotic Russian, who may be able to discern the importance of this favoured land and its inhabitants, especially the Armenians, to his own country.’ How undignified is the position of the Patriarch,—of him who is the centre of union to the whole Armenian people, scattered over Persia, Turkey, and India! He has not even the privilege of corresponding immediately with the Emperor, the Synod, or the Minister. Every letter must pass through the hands of the Governor-General of Caucasia, and is opened in his office, where every clerk may read it; how can a communication of importance be made through such a channel? We are all the true children of the Emperor, and have all sworn fealty to him; why then is the oath of the Governor more trustworthy than mine? Surely, if we were trusted, our hands would not be thus tied*.

* This conversation took place in 1844: many changes may have

“The Armenian nation is wide-spread and numerous as the waves of the sea: it is said to number fifteen million souls. This may be an exaggeration; but the existence of more than eight millions I can assert with confidence. Of the Armenians who have submitted to the Roman See, there may perhaps be thirty thousand in the Caucasian provinces; how many there are in Turkey, Poland, Austria, and Italy, can only be ascertained at Rome.”

In reply to a question relative to the library at Echmiadzin, the Patriarch stated that in former times it was very rich, both in the number and value of its contents; but in consequence of frequent spoliations, and the decay of learning among the monks, the greater part of the library had perished; it still however contains thirty historical manuscripts of great importance, which have never been published. There are also some interesting works, on tradition and the spurious Gospels. When the Persians plundered the monastery in 1803, they carried off every book that was handsomely bound.

On taking leave of this venerable man, I requested a few lines of his handwriting as a remembrance: this he promised to send me the next morning. I received from him a packet, containing a print of the cathedral of Echmiadzin, a correct and well-engraved likeness of himself, and a letter in Arme-

been made since that time. A man of the fine tact, independence of mind and position, the power and influence, of Prince Woronzoff has doubtless redressed these grievances.

nian, in the usual form and style of his official communications ; the superscription was printed in red ; the letter itself however was written and signed by the Patriarch. A German translation by the younger Lazareff accompanied it. I give it in full, as an interesting contribution to the study of the character of this remarkable man.

“ Narses, servant of Jesus Christ, and by the grace of God Catholicos of all the Armenians, and Patriarch of the holy Convent of Echmiadzin, to the kind-hearted and learned Baron von Haxthausen.

“ Inasmuch as I am bound to follow the command of our Saviour, who has enjoined, that on our first meeting with a stranger, we should salute him with peace as a token of love, I tender you first peace and goodwill, and next my hearty thanks for the trustworthy information you have brought me concerning the Russo-Caucasian provinces and their inhabitants, and concerning the Armenian nation. I am a native of that country, and have seen and heard much ; and often have I wondered at the accounts given by Europeans who have travelled there,—who, without any complete knowledge, touch upon everything, and by their fictions astound some, while to others they convey a totally false impression. You however, Baron, in all your researches have made truth your object. You have been desirous to ascertain the state of things circumstantially and thoroughly, and have shown so strong and truly Christian a love toward these nations, in all you have said, that I regard it a sacred duty

to thank you in these few lines, for your philanthropy, justice, and readiness to be of use to my fellow-countrymen, so far as you have the opportunity.

“ (Signed)

“ Catholicos and Patriarch of all the Armenians,
“ NARSES.

“ *St. Petersburg, 27th January, 1844.*”

The present Patriarch of Armenia, Narses Schahasisianz, was born, in 1770, at Aschtarak, a market-town, once of some note, at the foot of Mount Ararat, and not far from the sources of the Euphrates. He belongs to the ancient and noble family of Schahasisise. At the age of eighteen he went to Echmiadzin, and was educated by his godfather, Archbishop Kalust, who afterwards sent him to the Patriarch Gregory at Constantinople, that the unusual talent he had shown might receive better cultivation. On his return to Echmiadzin, the Patriarch Lucas employed him about his own person. By the succeeding Patriarch, Daniel, he was made an Archimandrite, or doctor of theology, and soon after consecrated Bishop. Hitherto occupied with the studies and business of a monastery, he was now to be placed in a sphere of more active exertion, when, during the war between Russia and Persia, in 1802, he was sent by the Patriarch to Georgia, where he displayed extraordinary energy, courage, and self-sacrifice in the service of his people. When peace was concluded he returned to Echmiadzin, and assisted the Catholicos in

reducing to order the affairs of the Patriarchate, in which great abuses prevailed. Narses was next sent on an important mission to Constantinople, in which he was completely successful, and returned with a firman from the Sultan, establishing the Patriarch in his holy office. At the time of the war between Russia and Turkey, in 1809, the Catholicos being at Erivan, Narses conducted the affairs of the Patriarchate in his absence, and acted with zeal, self-denial, and heroic decision.

In 1811 Narses received from the Patriarch Ephraim the appointment of Eparchial Archbishop of Georgia: he introduced order and discipline into his diocese, and saved from its revenues a fund for establishing schools. In 1823 he opened an elementary school at Tiflis, and made great efforts to obtain efficient teachers; in five years it numbered four hundred scholars. He then provided for the education of the clergy, by establishing a higher school for instruction in theology and church history; and also formed the design of founding a college on a large scale, for the study of all the higher branches of knowledge. Near the school he established a printing-office. The traveller Gamba, who visited Tiflis in 1824, found the Archbishop engaged in vast operations, and forming schemes still more extensive, in which he anticipated the dawn of a bright future for all the Caucasian countries. In addition to his labours for the religious, moral, and intellectual elevation of his people, the indefatigable priest, keeping in view all the social

relations of man, was especially desirous of giving scope to the strong predilection of the Armenians for commerce. In 1819 he built at Tiflis an extensive depôt or caravansary.

“Among the originators of great works,” says Gamba*, “none are more worthy of praise than Narses, the Armenian Archbishop at Tiflis. This illustrious prelate has erected in the new town an immense caravansary, which seems to prophesy the commercial importance of this place. He has also founded a school, in which he proposes to have professors of the principal languages of Asia and Europe, in order to insure to his fellow-countrymen a culture from which they have been hitherto debarred. He regards his nation, formerly powerful and honoured, but now dependent, dispersed, and humiliated, not merely as their archbishop but their chief, and therefore feels it his duty to provide for their civil as well as religious education. Perhaps, too, he penetrates the future with the keen eye of genius; and cherishing the hope that God has not abandoned the descendants of the ancient Patriarchs, he is desirous to prepare the way for their becoming in time virtuous and enlightened, and worthy to be counted among the best subjects of the Czar.”

This active Patriarch, amongst the manifold objects of his philanthropy, also established in the neighbourhood of Tiflis a glass-manufactory: the sand of the river Koor yielded a violet-coloured glass.

The Catholicos Ephraim, being compelled by per-

* Voyage dans la Russie Méridionale, vol. ii. p. 157. (Paris, 1820.)

secution from the Persians to quit Echmiadzin, committed the affairs of the Patriarchate to Narses, by whom they were conducted with great wisdom and energy. Narses remained at his post during the continuance of the war between Russia and Turkey, and was then chosen a member of the provisional administration, for organizing the affairs of the newly conquered Armenian territory. But the Russian officials (Tschinowniks), in fear of the increasing power of one who saw through their intrigues, soon began to plot against him; their representations caused him to be regarded with suspicion at St. Petersburg; and in 1828, under pretence of promoting him, he was created Archbishop of Bessarabia. Here he lived many years in close seclusion, attending only to the affairs of his diocese. But his people had not forgotten him. On the death of the Patriarch, every Armenian looked to him as the successor; the name of Narses was in every mouth, from the Ganges to the Neva, from the Carpathians to the Himalaya. All cried, as with one voice, that so long as Narses lived, none but he should mount the patriarchal throne of St. Gregory.

I will give here some particulars respecting the mode of electing the Armenian Primate, his position, and the history of the Patriarchate*. The Armenian legend of king Abgar, who wrote to our Saviour, relates that, shortly after the Ascension, Thaddæus, one

* My information on this subject, and the particulars I have given of the life of Narses, are for the most part taken from a memoir printed in the journal of the Russian Minister of the Interior, for September, 1843.

of the seventy disciples, came to Edessa, where he baptized Abgar and many of his subjects. Abgar's successors however apostatized, and Christianity retained its footing in Armenia with difficulty, until the arrival of St. Gregory "the Illuminator," descended from the royal line of the Arsacides. After preaching the Gospel to the people, and enduring severe persecution, he succeeded in converting the king, Tiridates the Great. St. Gregory has from that time been held in honour by the Armenians, as their apostle and the real founder of their Church*. At the commencement of the fourth century he was consecrated by Pope Sylvester independent Patriarch of Armenia; and the Patriarchs of Echmiadzin maintain that they derive from him their dignity and right, transmitted in unbroken succession. They are therefore always consecrated by the incorruptible hand of the Saint, which is preserved as a relic in the cathedral of Echmiadzin.

The Catholicos alone, as head of the Church, has the right to appoint bishops, and prepare the holy oil used for anointing in baptism. He sends legates into the various dioceses, to carry out ecclesiastical decrees and regulations, and to report upon their religious and moral condition. In all public prayers his name must be mentioned: he alone can confer dispensations; and books in the Armenian language, which

* St. Gregory is also revered by the Georgians as their apostle; but they have a different tradition concerning his descent. Between Georgia and Armenia there are many ties. For example, different lines of the same royal family (that of the Bagratides) ruled over both countries.

touch on religious subjects, may not be printed without his permission. On the other hand, the Patriarch recognizes the authority of the œcumenical councils in all things; even the decisions of the council of the separate Armenian Church he regards as binding. As it is however almost impossible now to assemble such a council, a synod is constituted at Echmiadzin, which, under the presidency of the Patriarch, decides all ecclesiastical regulations and controversies. The number of members has varied from time to time*.

The Patriarch can attain his office and dignity only by election. When Armenia was an independent kingdom, all classes, spiritual and secular, were summoned by the king to the election of a new Patriarch; frequently he was chosen by acclamation. The participation of the laity subsequently diminished, and the appointment remained chiefly in the hands of the clergy, often entirely with the monks. Still the laity have never been excluded, and recently they have again taken a decisive part. The secular government has always claimed the right of confirming or sanctioning the choice. Formerly this was natural and just, when Armenia had her own kings: when all took part in the election, the king could not be excluded; and, as it was his duty to protect the Patriarch, it was right that the election should await his sanction. But when Armenia fell under Mohammedan rulers, this

* In 1783 the Patriarch Lucas decreed that the Synod should not consist of fewer than seven members: in 1802 there were nine.

right of confirmation became both unnatural and unjust, and gave rise to grievous abuses. The Primacy was put up for sale by the Persians, and conferred upon the highest bidder; and simony penetrated from the centre of the Armenian Church down to her lowest offices. The Catholicos, in order to pay the enormous sum for which he had purchased his See, was obliged to sell the archbishoprics; the archbishops, in their turn, sold the rite of consecration to the priests, and the priests sold the sacraments to the laity. The degradation of the Patriarchs at length reached such a point, that they came to attach greater importance to a firman of confirmation from the Sultan at Constantinople, than to the canonical election; thus for instance they asserted their superiority over the Patriarchs of Sis, on the ground that the latter were confirmed only by the Pasha of Adana*.

This degradation of the Patriarchal See lasted till late in the eighteenth century. In 1737, by means of simony, the monster Lazarus obtained the Patriarchate, and maintained himself in it, committing the

* The Monastery of Echmiadzin is very ancient, and ranks above all others, in right of its possessing the remains of St. Gregory; but it was not until the year 1441 that it became the permanent abode of the Patriarchs. They resided first at Tokoin in northern Armenia, then at Vagharshabad, afterwards at Ani. In the eleventh century they removed to Runkala in the south, on the Euphrates, and from thence to Sis in Cilicia. But whilst the Patriarch was still residing at Sis, the clergy of northern Armenia elected a second Catholicos, Giragnos, and resolved to make Echmiadzin the seat of the Patriarchate: this change was never sanctioned by the Patriarch at Sis, who has ever since maintained the patriarchal dignity in his little diocese.

greatest outrages. Gradually however Russian influence began to be felt, both in the election of the Patriarchs and the conduct of their affairs; and from that time the Armenian Church unquestionably regained in some measure her independence, by making the protection of Christian Russia a counterpoise to the power of the Mohammedan rulers of Persia and Turkey. In 1768, the Patriarch Lucas, on his elevation to the Primacy, sought and obtained the sanction of Russia; and from that time Russian influence became so great, that an Armenian bishop living in Russia, Prince Joseph Dolgorouki, was elected to the Primacy, and confirmed by the Emperor Paul in 1800. The sanction of Persia and Turkey was not applied for until after that of Russia had been obtained; but subsequently, the Patriarchs Daniel (1802–1809) and Ephraim (1809–1831) were chosen entirely under Russian influence.

The ascendancy of Russia being thus invited, and eagerly desired, by the Armenians, the Russian occupation of their country was regarded by them, not as a conquest, but a deliverance. They are the only people in the countries south of the Caucasus who are really faithful to the Czar,—a fact too little regarded by Russian officials.

Russia has earned the gratitude of the Armenian Church, by taking the Patriarchate under her protection; as on this ground she interferes in behalf of any Armenian, who suffers persecution in the Mohammedan states; she has also removed most of those abuses

in the mode of electing the Patriarchs which had for so many centuries corrupted the clergy. In 1836 the Emperor issued a decree, regulating the affairs of the Armenian Church in Russia; in which all the ancient customs, as far as they could be collected, as well as everything essential in the ecclesiastical law, were scrupulously retained; order was restored, some new regulations were introduced, and the ancient and almost forgotten laws relating to the election of the Catholicos were re-enacted. This law came into force for the first time at the election of Narses V., which was conducted in accordance with its provisions.

At the death of the Catholicos John VIII., in 1842, the Synod consisted of four Archbishops and four Archimandrites, or doctors of ecclesiastical law; these took under their care the archives, the administration of the Patriarchate and the church revenues, reported the vacancy in the Primacy to the Government at St. Petersburg, and requested a writ for a new election, which was immediately granted. The Synod then sent a notice of the death of the Catholicos to all the dioceses of the Armenian Church in Russia, Turkey, India, and Persia, requiring deputies to be appointed, to assist in the election of a successor. Each diocese has the right to send two deputies, one ecclesiastic and one layman. The Archbishop, or the head of the diocese for the time being, is *ipso jure* the ecclesiastical deputy, but he may send any priest as his representative. The lay deputy is elected by

all the Meliks, and other distinguished laymen, who possess this right by ancient custom. The election must take place within twelve months after the death of the preceding Catholicos, and must always, when possible, be held at Echmiadzin; deputies, who cannot appear in person, are allowed to deliver their votes in writing to the Synod. The deputies, members of the Synod, and the seven eldest Bishops at Echmiadzin take part in the election.

The memoir in the journal of the Russian Minister, to which I have referred, contains *in extenso* the letters of the Synod to the various dioceses, and to the secular communities privileged to take part in the election; these documents, although very interesting in point of style and contents, are too long for insertion here. The missive to the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople opened with the following address:—
“Peace be to the most reverend Armenian Patriarch of the mighty and Heaven-protected city of Constantinople, the most holy Archbishop Ostvazatur, the true son of the holy Church of Armenia and of the Patriarchal throne of Echmiadzin.” After the notice of the Patriarch’s death, and the coming election, he was required to order Mass for the deceased to be performed in all churches on the following morning. Secondly, he was directed to call upon all his dioceses to choose representatives, including the most distinguished ecclesiastical and lay members of the Armenio-Gregorian Church, who select a deputy, to repair, in company with the Bishop or his representative, to the election

at Echmiadzin. A similar missive was sent to the Patriarch at Jerusalem, and to the dioceses of Persia and India. The lay community of Constantinople receives a special notice.

The Patriarch of Constantinople immediately called a meeting of ecclesiastics and laymen, and laid the message of the Synod before them. All declared themselves willing to prepare for the election, and to acknowledge whoever should be chosen at Echmiadzin as Patriarch and Catholicos of all the Armenians. This resolution the Patriarch of Constantinople communicated to the Synod; and similar ones were sent from every diocese.

The election took place in April, 1843, and lasted three days. Twenty-six electors were present in person,—six archbishops, eight bishops, seven archimandrites, and five laymen. They assembled in the apartments of the Patriarch, and at half-past nine o'clock went in procession to the church, where the liturgy was read, with a prayer for the Emperor. The president of the Synod, Archbishop Vasily, delivered an address of welcome; he then summoned the ecclesiastical members to the discharge of their duty, and administered an oath to the laymen.

On the next day they assembled again in the cathedral, at half-past nine, to proceed with the election. Before the high altar stood a table, on which was placed a cross and a copy of the Gospels. The ecclesiastics seated themselves on the right hand, the laymen on the left. Archbishop Vasily again addressed

them, calling upon them, according to their oath and their conscience, to consider earnestly the welfare of the Church and nation, and to vote for the most worthy. The Procurator of the Synod, who sat at a separate table, then set forth the object for which they were convened. Archbishop Vasily thereupon read a list of all the Armenian bishops living, and required the electors to vote for any four whom they esteemed the most worthy. From these four, by a second election, two are chosen, from whom the Emperor nominates in writing the future Catholicos. The following were the four candidates selected. 1. Narses Schahasisianz, Archbishop of Nakhichevan and Bessarabia; he had not only all the votes of the electors present, but all the proxies. 2. Zacharias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, seventeen votes. 3. Pagas, Archbishop of Smyrna, eleven votes. 4. Karapal, formerly Patriarch of Constantinople, three votes.

On the third day the two final candidates were selected. The result was, that Narses (who was not present) again had all the votes; Zacharias had only seventeen. The writ certifying the election was subscribed by all present, and a duplicate prepared. A deputation was then chosen, to lay it before the Governor-general, and request him to forward it, through the Minister of the Interior, to the Emperor, for his decision. The Emperor chose Narses, and confirmed him as Patriarch and Catholicos of the Armenian Church.

The Armenians were the first, beyond the limits of

the Roman empire, to accept Christianity as a nation, with their king at their head. The constitution of the Armenian Church is, in all essentials, identical with that of the Latin and Greek Churches; but in non-essential points it occupies an intermediate position. It owed its origin to the Greek Church, but afterwards uniformly connected itself rather with Rome than with Constantinople, its independence appearing to be more threatened by the latter*. No absolute heresy separates it from Rome; nor did it ever represent Rome as having apostatized from the faith of the universal Church, as did the Greeks. The doctrine of Eutyches, who denied the twofold nature of Christ, certainly found its way into the Armenian Church, and was received by individual monks, and even by archbishops†, but never by the clergy at large, nor the Catholicos; indeed the latter has more than once explicitly condemned this doctrine.

The Armenian Church not merely acknowledges that its founder, St. Gregory the Illuminator, received

* The Greeks fiercely persecuted the Armenians and their Church in the ninth and twelfth centuries.

† The Patriarch of Constantinople and some of the archbishops in Turkey are the only Armenians who have ever really separated from Rome. Ephraim, Archbishop of Adrianople, at the end of the seventeenth century, maintained himself for some time by illegitimate means in the patriarchal chair of Constantinople, and cruelly persecuted those who would not admit the single nature of Christ. The Catholicos of Echmiadzin, and most of the Armenian ecclesiastics in Asia, kept clear of this heresy. The Latin missionaries are not without blame for the variance with Rome: they did their best, contrary to the orders of the Pope, to introduce the Latin form of worship amongst the Armenians, instead of using the national one, which had received the Papal sanction.

the Armenian Patriarchate from Rome, but it has several times submitted to the Pope, as the centre of unity and the supreme Patriarch. His supremacy was recognized in the eleventh century by the Catholicos, Gregory Veghajaser, and has been declared on numerous occasions since, both by the Patriarchs and the Council of Sis. These declarations have never been retracted, so that at least no official schism with Rome can be said to exist; the union has however sometimes been interrupted, or fallen into oblivion. It is not indeed admitted that the Pope has a right to any actual control over the Armenian Church: according to the judgement of Armenian theologians, his dominion extends only over his own Patriarchate, the West; nevertheless they do not altogether deny that the Pope is the *centrum unitatis**.

* The Armenian Church bears a marked testimony to the antiquity of the doctrines of the Catholic (including the Greek) Church. All the dogmas attacked at and since the Reformation are held by it,—Original Sin, Justification, Penance, the Saints, the seven Sacraments, Transubstantiation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and Purgatory; while the doctrines it has defined less clearly,—the procession of the Holy Spirit and the twofold nature of Christ,—are just those which most of the Reformed Churches have retained in the form in which they are held by Rome. The dogmas which the Armenians hold in common with the Catholic Church must be of high antiquity, for as early as the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, the Armenian Church possessed an organization of its own, and jealously guarded itself from foreign influence.

Ritter tells us (x. 483), that in the Armenian monastery of St. James, near Mount Ararat, there is the following inscription:—“By God’s grace, I Mechitar and my wife Tamar, vow to devote to the Monastery of St. James all our money, in return for the promise to us and our posterity, to make mention of us in the Mass four times in the year. Anno 1288.” Do we not feel ourselves in a Catholic country on reading words like these?

The clergy of the Armenian Church constitute a well-defined hierarchy, essentially distinct from the laity. They are arranged in nine orders, in accordance with the mystical visions of the nine choirs of angels before the throne of God. The highest place is occupied by the patriarchs, the Catholicos at their head; to the next grade belong the archbishops, amongst whom there is only a titular difference of rank; then follow the priests. These three grades constitute the principal class,—the priesthood. The second class consists of archdeacons, deacons, and torch-bearers. Lastly come the three lowest grades, exorcists, readers, and door-keepers, likewise constituting a separate class.

I have already described the office and privileges of the Catholicos of Echmiadzin; the other Patriarchs, of Jerusalem and Constantinople, are, properly speaking, only his representatives. As a rule, archbishops alone have dioceses. The bishops are employed in the service of the church, like the Catholic suffragan bishops. In administering the affairs of their dioceses, the archbishops are assisted by a number of learned monks, termed Vartabads, or doctors of theology and ecclesiastical law, answering to the Catholic vicars-general. Patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, are selected from the monks, and always reside in the monasteries. The priests are mostly chosen by the communities, and ordained by the bishops; they must be married before they are consecrated, but are not allowed to marry a second time.

The revenue of the Catholicos is derived from the offerings of pilgrims, the sums collected for him by all the Armenian monasteries, contributions levied every three years in all Armenian churches by his vicars, the property of deceased archbishops, the vast sums he receives for the holy oil (which he alone can consecrate), and fees paid by the patriarchs and archbishops on entering upon their office; he also receives the revenues of several villages belonging to the patriarchal See, of which Vagharshabad is the largest.

The archbishops have the revenues, often considerable, of the monasteries in which they reside. On their annual visitations, a collection is made for them in every church. They receive considerable sums for the ordination of priests, and on the transfer of ecclesiastical appointments, an arrangement which formerly often degenerated into simony. To them also accrues property left by childless priests, as well as by all persons dying without heirs. To the Armenians in the Russian empire seven dioceses are assigned.

Clearly defined parishes are not always to be found in Armenia; but every village has at least one, often three or four, ecclesiastics; in the latter case, certain farmsteads* are assigned to each. One of the priests is always of superior rank to the others, and holds a kind of supremacy. In each parish are dwellings for as many priests as the community has been accustomed to maintain: to each is attached an endow-

* The Armenian word signifies "smoke;" when a family dies out, they express it by saying, "A smoke has vanished."

ment of land, usually of the same extent as that belonging to the other farmsteads. The principal source of income however is the tithes. The church-revenues of the whole village are thrown together, and divided among the priests, the head priest receiving considerably more than the others.

For all ecclesiastical services, baptisms, marriages, burials, and special prayers, payment is demanded; there are no settled fees, but the offices of the church are frequently subjected to the most disgraceful traffic. When any one dies, a full suit of the deceased person's clothing must be given to the church. The secular priests are, almost without exception, uneducated; in their earlier years they have generally been artisans or shopkeepers. On being presented by the community to the archbishop, they are examined so far as to ascertain whether they understand and can perform all the ceremonies likely to be required of them; they then receive ordination, and, after passing forty days in fasting and spiritual exercises, they enter upon the sacred office. In Armenia Proper the archbishop instals the priests, but they are confirmed by the Synod: the Synod alone can afterwards deprive them of the priestly rank.

Divine service is performed in every church twice a day, morning and evening; the prayers and chants (a kind of litany) are appointed for every day in the year. On Sundays and feast-days Mass is celebrated, but not on ordinary week-days, unless specially required and paid for. The rules of the church require, that a ser-

mon should be preached on every Sunday and feast-day; but this is never done, for the simple reason that these priests are generally quite incompetent. The teaching of Christian doctrine, and catechizing, are likewise enjoined, but not practised. Many even of the bishops are not accurately acquainted with doctrinal theology. A kind of catechism, following the Russian, has been printed at Erivan; but it is reputed to be not quite orthodox, and is therefore little used: many priests would scarcely be able to read it. On Maundy Thursday the priests wash the feet of those who belong to their congregation. Auricular confession is practised, and if no priest can be found, confession may be made to a layman. In case of necessity,—for instance, if a person is at the point of death, and there is no human being near,—confession may be made to a tree or stone, and, in place of the consecrated elements, the dying man may take earth into his mouth. Strange views of religion! which appear again, in a similar form, amongst the Starovertzi (adherents of the old faith) in Russia. The secular priest is addressed as “Ter, Ter,” (Sir, Sir). He is greeted thus, “Thy blessing, Sir!” to which he replies, “May God bless you!” A monk is addressed thus, “May God bless and help us!” he replies, “God protect us!” The Easter greeting resembles that in the Russian church: “Christ is risen.” Answer: “Blessed is the resurrection of Christ.” In conversation a monk is addressed as “Holy father,” and a secular priest as “Father.”

In each Armenian diocese there is a spiritual court, or consistory, constituted by the archbishop, and usually consisting of two superior and two inferior priests. Appeal lies to the Patriarch, or his synod. The matters dealt with by this court are, 1. disputes between ecclesiastics; 2. complaints of the laity against the priests; 3. complaints of the priests against the laity (the consistory representing the priests before the secular tribunal); 4. disputes concerning marriage*. The consistory has the superintendence of all the church property, and represents the church in legal proceedings.

The prolix forms of Russian bureaucracy have been introduced into the Armenian church. The priests are continually required to report to the archbishops on a great number of subjects, and the archbishops to the Synod. In matters of importance, the Synod of Echmiadzin reports to the Synod of St. Petersburg. The former is the ecclesiastical council of the Patriarch; that of St. Petersburg represents the temporal power of the Emperor.

A considerable number of Armenians are in connection with the Roman See; they are termed the United Armenians. As I have already observed, the Armenian church and its Patriarch have never separated from Rome by any public act, but have repeatedly and in express terms acknowledged, if not its supremacy, at least that the Papacy is that centre of unity to which, as Irenæus says, "all Christians must

* Divorces are very rare, being extremely difficult to obtain.

turn their eyes from afar, and with which they must live in harmony." This union however has always been feeble ; in spite of frequent attempts,—emanating sometimes from the Armenian church, sometimes from Latin missionaries,—to bring about a closer connection with Rome. By the Popes themselves nothing more was contended for than a theoretical union,—viz. dogmatic agreement, and the recognition of Rome as the centre of unity ; in return for which, they were willing to leave the privileges of the Catholicos undisturbed, and to recognize the independence of the Armenian church in matters of internal administration.

Attempts to effect a complete coalition have been made in two directions. One party wished for an entire dissolution of the national Armenian church, the introduction of the Latin language in the Liturgy, the substitution of the Roman Mass for the Armenian, the dissolution of the Patriarchate, and such a change in the functions and title of the Catholicos as would convert him into a mere titular patriarch or archbishop. The other party desired to preserve the nationality and ancient customs of the church, and to retain the Armenian language in the liturgies ; in short, to make no change beyond the subjection of the church, in its entirety, to the Pope. With respect to the Patriarchate and its privileges, various opinions have prevailed. The views of the first party date from an early period. In 1317 the Latin bishop, Bartholomew, and his disciple John of Herna, found many followers in the south Caucasian provinces, at Tiflis,

Nakhichevan, and in the Crimea. A special Armenian Order, called the Unitors, was formed for the purpose of effecting this change; they have died out, but some of the churches founded by them are probably still in existence. Jesuits and other missionaries have prosecuted the same object, although the Popes have forbidden these efforts, as striking at those distinguishing characteristics of the Armenian church which they had always sanctioned as being of equal authority with their own.

The second and more moderate party is that which now chiefly finds favour at Rome. The Armenians of Poland, together with their patriarch, submitted to the Holy See, on the conditions advocated by this party, as early as the year 1616. But a more important fact in connection with these views was the foundation of the Order of Mechitarists, first in the Morea, and afterwards in the island of San Lazaro, near Venice. Mechitar, an Armenian monk, was born at Sebaste in Asia Minor, in 1676; thirsting after knowledge, and filled with ardent love for his people, he endeavoured, by spiritual and moral influences, and the dissemination of European culture, to elevate his unfortunate and oppressed nation, and to this purpose he dedicated his life. He submitted to the Pope, and founded, with his consent, an Order and a monastery, into which only native Armenians were received. He also established an Armenian printing-press. He and his companions and successors have done much in translating from other languages into Armenian: he

himself translated Thomas à Kempis. These Armenian books are sent by caravans into Persia and India, and prepare the way for the education of the people. Mechitar appears to have been a man of very similar character to Narses.

In Georgia there are many Roman Catholic Armenians ; they have a great dislike to their non-united countrymen, and do not call themselves Armenians, but Catholics, as if that were the name of a nation. Their connection with Rome has been mainly kept up by Italian monks. For many years one of these lived at Tiflis, a Father Joseph, honoured and loved by all : he died thirty years ago, and the Georgians number him among their Saints.

Many attempts have also been made to unite the Armenians with the Greek Church. Six Armenian villages, on the west bank of the Euphrates, have adopted the Greek faith, the largest of which is called Aga, or Aguntsi. The Protestants too have endeavoured to make converts. The Basle missionaries founded an Armenian school at Shusha, which was however removed, at the request of the Patriarch, who regarded it as dangerous. In Calcutta the English have established an Armenian college and printing-press, probably to counteract the Russian influence over the Armenians ; Russia however has always kept aloof from proselytism.

CHAPTER X.

ARMENIA.—ITS HISTORICAL POSITION.—DISPERSION OF ITS INHABITANTS.—COMPARISON WITH THE JEWS.—ITS POSITION WITH REGARD TO RUSSIA.—INSTITUTE OF LAZAREFF AT MOSCOW.—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARMENIANS.—THEIR LANGUAGE.—INVENTION OF WRITING.—INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.—THE HIERARCHY.—MONASTIC JURISDICTION.—EARLY LITERATURE.—STATE OF CIVILIZATION.—SCHOOLS.—RELIGIOUS AND POPULAR EPIC POETRY.—ANCIENT CHURCH POETRY.—MASTERSINGERS.

THE indigenous names of Armenia and its inhabitants were Haigh and Hajastan ; occasionally, but rarely, we find mention of Askanozan. The origin of both names is anterior to any historical records, and tradition only says that Haigh was the great-grandson of Japhet, and that the name of Armenia was given by the surrounding peoples from a celebrated king or hero, Aram : the Greeks derived the word from Armenos, one of the Argonauts. The old Armenian chronicler, Moses of Chorene, relates the legend of Haigh as follows.

When Bal-Nimrod founded his dominion in Babel, Haigh, refusing to submit to him, went, accompanied by his son Armenach, his children, grandchildren,

and others who joined them, into the kingdom of Ararat, and took up their abode at the foot of that mountain. Nimrod demanded their submission to him, as the sovereign of the world; and on Haigh's refusal, the former marched his armies to attack him. A battle was fought on the shore of the lake, on a plain between lofty mountains. Haigh's arrow pierced the breastplate of Bal-Nimrod, and slew him. The hill upon which he fell is still called Gerezmanah, or 'the Graves'; but Nimrod's body was buried at Harkh. Such is the legendary account of the first immigration into Armenia, which at a later period was followed by many others*.

Armenia, from its connection with the primæval history of man, is one of the most interesting countries in the world. The legends of many nations, and especially the Biblical accounts, point to Armenia as the land from which the various European nations originally emigrated. The tradition that the 'holy mountain,' as the surrounding peoples call the majestic Ararat †, was the point whence the human race

* Ritter (x. 584) has collected the accounts of the immigrations into Armenia from the earliest times.

† The Armenians call Ararat, Masees, from Haigh's uncle, Amasis, who emigrated with him; the Tatars call it Agri-dagh (the Heavy Mountain); the Persians, Koh-i-Noo (Mountain of Noah); the Turks, Agri-dagh, and Parmak-dagh (Finger-Mountain); the Ancients, Abus. None of the surrounding nations know it by the name of Ararat. Moses of Chorene related that this mountain had a circuit of three days' journey, and rose gradually in a conical form to a bright pointed summit, like the monarch of the surrounding mountains.

after the Deluge issued to seek a home, has unquestionably a deep historical foundation, and the researches on this subject are far from being exhausted. At various periods of history this country was the high-road for the transmission of the world's wealth. Bel, Nimrod, Ninus, Semiramis, and Sesostris, here penetrated northward, or attempted to do so. Here was the battle-field for the dominion of Asia, between the Assyrians and Medes, the Medes and Persians. Darius and Xerxes proceeded hence westward, and Alexander traversed this district on his way to conquer the East and the North. Here too was the field of battle between the Romans and Parthians; at Nehavend, the Arabs gained the dominion of the East; and through this country at a later period penetrated the nations who overthrew the Khalifat. Thus far the power of Europe advanced in the Crusades; through this gate poured the hordes of Mongols and Tatars, Gengis Khan and Tamerlane. Here was the scene of struggle for centuries between the two Mohammedan sects, the Sheeah and the Sunnite; and in modern times between Christianity and Mohammedanism,—Russia, Persia, and Turkey.

It is interesting to consider the present position of the native inhabitants of this great stage of the world's history. Notwithstanding its ancient descent, its noble lineage, and its rich physical as well as intellectual endowments, this nation has never been powerful enough to usurp any supremacy in the dominion of the world; on the contrary, few nations have been

compelled to endure for thousands of years so tragical a fate, such fearful and sanguinary oppression, as the Armenians, and principally from nations far inferior to them in physical and mental powers*.

Armenia, nevertheless, appears to have reached a crisis in its fate; slavery is expelled from its homes, the country once more breathes the air of freedom, and there are already manifested indications of a movement, guided and actuated by great mental energy; in short, a national emulation is aroused for the acquirement of the highest European civilization, and a brighter æra appears to be opening upon the country.

A comparatively small portion of this people inhabit their native land; the majority are dispersed over Asia, Europe, and Africa; nevertheless, wherever scattered, the Armenians all maintain an intimate connection with their country, to which they fondly look, as the centre of their nationality and religion. The Patriarchate has throughout all ages exercised a magical power over them, notwithstanding that the dispersion of the people dates back more than a thousand years. Armenia has during this period frequently

* At one period of its history, Armenia must have been a powerful country, proofs of which are seen in the ruins of its metropolis Ani, royal palaces covering an immense area, the circuit of which more resembles that of cities; and the ruins of churches, with a cathedral in the form of a Latin cross still in partial preservation. A Georgian king captured and laid waste the city, and gave it to the Orpelian family, who were afterwards murdered by command of Gregory III. king of Georgia, a few of them only escaping into Persia.

changed masters ; the Patriarchate has repeatedly been oppressed and humbled, and has often, for a long period, sunk morally and intellectually. And yet this nation has never been dissolved : the Armenians have preserved inviolate their attachment to their native country, their language and customs ; they have adhered with fidelity to their religion, and the ritual observances of their national Church.

In a similar manner the Jews, although scattered over the face of the earth, yet maintain a secret and indissoluble bond of union and common interest. In every country they are as it were the servants,—but the time may come when they will virtually be the masters in their turn. Even at the present day, are they not to a great extent the arbiters of the fate of Europe ? maintaining, on the one hand, the bond between the different States, by the mysterious power of wealth which they possess ; and, on the other, loosening the ties of social life, and introducing or fostering ideas of change and revolution among the various peoples ? In the Jewish nation stirs the Nemesis of the destiny of Europe. But, unlike the Armenians, the Jews have no central point of country and religion, no home of their faith and their affections ; they have consequently no fulcrum on which to place the lever of their power, and are guided only by their instincts and spirit of union, in acting their part in the world's history.

The Armenians appear to have a somewhat analogous destination, especially in Asia ; they may be re-

garded as the leaven, which may work in the East, and resuscitate the well-nigh extinct spark of intellectual life; whilst they possess one great advantage over the Jews, in having this centre of life and action, political as well as religious.

If Russia comprehends her position aright, she will extend to Armenia the boon for which that nation has so long yearned, of intellectual cultivation; but she must at the same time refrain from unnecessary interference in the government of the country. It is not Russian culture, still less any such as forms the drilling of the Russian bureaucracy, that the Armenians require; but a culture originating internally, from a basis of nationality. First and foremost they require the education of their clergy, moral, religious, and theological, combined with an acquirement of knowledge in temporal affairs, such as was cultivated by Mechitar, and at the present day by Narses. Armenian youths might be sent to Germany, instructed there for a few years, and then taken back to their own country, and placed as teachers in schools and colleges. In carrying out such a plan, Russia would have simply to leave to the institutions of the country their free action; the interference of the State is not required in Armenia, where everything must originate with the Patriarch, who gives the general impulse to the whole nation.

When in Moscow, I visited a school which was established there in 1815 by an Armenian family named Lazareff, under the sanction of the Government, for

the moral and intellectual education of the youth of their nation, and, as a secondary object, the training of interpreters. Languages are principally taught,—Russian, French, German, Latin, Arabic, Turkish, and Persian. The Armenians acquire foreign languages with remarkable facility. The general routine of instruction in this school, especially the historical branch, appeared to me defective; the history of Armenia was entirely neglected. The yearly payment of the pupils was 220 roubles, and the poorer class only paid 175. Boys were received between the ages of ten and fourteen years.

Russia may the more safely leave the management of their internal affairs, especially those of education, to the Armenians, as she can rely upon their fidelity. The Tatars, being Mohammedans, are less to be trusted; and the Georgians, although unable to maintain their independence against the Persians, are yet disaffected to Russia, who exercises not merely a protectorate over their country, but has reduced it to subjection. The Armenians, on the other hand, are with reason grateful to Russia, for having freed them from an intolerable and degrading state of slavery, into which they would immediately relapse were Russia to withdraw her protection.

The Armenians are one of the handsomest races in the world; they are not so tall or muscular as the Georgians, but their body is remarkably well proportioned, and more inclined to corpulency, united generally with a degree of gracefulness. They are of

a dark complexion ; indeed I never saw a fair-haired person in the country. Their outward demeanour is quiet, gentle, modest, and remarkably courteous. There is a great distinction to be drawn, in point of character, between the ordinary inhabitants, who live in their own country and homes, and the traders, a large proportion of whom live in foreign countries. This latter class are notoriously untrustworthy and cheats ; nevertheless a plea must be admitted in their excuse : dispersed, as they are, among foreign nations, exposed to hostility and contempt, and unprotected against arbitrary and tyrannical treatment, they naturally become close and suspicious ; a sour look, an indiscreet word, nay even gratitude shown by them to a benefactor fallen into disgrace with a despot under whom they live, might cost them their property, if not their life. Moreover, excluded from rank, honour, and office, the acquisition of property and wealth becomes the sole object of their ambition.

Nevertheless this class of the Armenian people appear in a different light, and entitled to respect, when living in their own homes, in Turkey and Persia, amidst their ancient patriarchal purity of manners : here they exhibit all the domestic virtues, are benevolent and hospitable, adhere strictly to their national customs, and above all to their religion. Indeed, with the exception of the Jews, there is no nation which has suffered so much for its religion, or has had so many martyrs, as the Armenians ; yet they have never wavered in their adherence to their faith. We must

therefore regard the faults which I have mentioned, not as appertaining to the original character of the people, but only as the growth of peculiar circumstances; and the more so, as the natives of Armenia, in their own homes, are thoroughly honest and trusty: the old traveller Tournefort, who was well acquainted with them, praises them as "the best and most honest nation in the world." The Armenian country-people living under the Turkish dominion, around Bayazid, Erzeroum, and Van, are said to be more grave, honest, and strict in morals than those around Erivan*.

Having myself no knowledge of the Armenian language, I shall give the account of it which I received from Abovian, the Patriarch Narses, and others: it is the more interesting to hear these particulars from natives of the country, as hitherto all our knowledge on this subject has been derived from foreign scholars.

"I know no modern language," writes Abovian, "which deviates so widely from its mother-tongue as the modern from the ancient Armenian; the Rus-

* What strange contrasts are found among this people! Dispersed as merchants in foreign countries, there are no men more restless and fonder of travelling about than the Armenians: whilst in their native country this disposition entirely disappears: the merchants of Erivan, for instance, go little from home, and at most are acquainted with the trading towns in the immediate neighbourhood, scarcely ever extending their visits beyond Tiflis, Tabreez, or Erzeroum. The country-people never leave their homes, except to go on some pilgrimage. It is a very extraordinary occurrence for the father of a household to be absent from home for a few days. It is quite contrary to custom for young people to remain out of the village over night.

sian differs not so much from the old Slavonic, nor the Italian from the Latin. The Armenian student of the ancient language of his country meets with greater difficulties than even Europeans in learning the Classics. From my tenth year I have studied it assiduously, have nearly committed to memory entire works, together with the grammar, and have written much; nevertheless I am still unable to converse in it freely: no language has cost me so much labour to acquire as this: [Abovian spoke fluently half-a-dozen languages:] especially as the current ideas, construction, as well as single words, do not at all correspond with the forms of thought and expression of the present day. The old Armenian language is pure, remarkably perfect in its structure, and flexible: the most difficult foreign works are capable of translation into it with the greatest facility*. Nevertheless this is of no advantage to the people, since the majority even of our clergy are unable to read it at all fluently, still less to understand it. Yet every Armenian feels a pride in his ancient mother-tongue; the clergy consider it beneath them to write even on any ordinary subject in the modern language, and are unpopular if they preach in it. Although ig-

* This fact was also stated to me in Moscow, by an ecclesiastic named Dietrich, who had lived many years in Armenia, and who has written a very instructive little work on the state of the Armenian church: he asserts that the translations of the Greek classics, for instance Plato and Aristotle, correspond so perfectly with the original works, that, if these were lost, they might be restored in the Greek from the Armenian translations.

norant of the old language, a priest in his sermon will continually quote sentences in it, generally passages from the Bible, which he has merely committed to memory."

"The old Armenian is the language of the Church," said the Patriarch Narses; "the modern language bears the same relation to it, as the Romanic dialects to the Latin. The roots are old Armenian, and the construction mostly corresponds with the Tatar. The ancient language has verbal inflexions, whilst the modern inserts particles: the latter, too, has adopted so many foreign words,—Turkish, Persian, and Tatar,—as to induce the supposition of a close affinity with these languages, which is wholly erroneous."

Two German scholars have, in recent times, paid especial attention to the study of the Armenian language,—Professor Petermann of Berlin, and Dr. Neumann of Munich. The former has published perhaps the best grammar we possess. La Croze considered the Armenian language to be akin to the Median; in later times the learned, especially Petermann and Neumann, have asserted its affinity to the Indo-Germanic stem, perhaps to the western Sanscrit family, which however the celebrated linguist Pott considers very doubtful. The Armenian abounds in contrasts, as well as analogies, with the Semitic languages; like all the Indo-Germanic tongues, it has only monosyllabic roots, whereas the Semitic have bi-syllabic. No Semitic word begins with a vowel, and one vowel cannot follow another, differing in this from the Ar-

menian. The cardinal numbers are in the latter all akin to the Indo-Germanic.

Learned Armenians, even in recent times, assert that the old language of their country was the original one of mankind,—the language which Noah spoke! They refer to the Septuagint and Josephus, in proof that Armenia was the home of the human race after the Flood, arguing that the primitive language must consequently have been preserved there.

The modern Armenians have many dialects, varying little in structure; but they have borrowed words from the languages of those nations among whom they live dispersed. The dialects in the provinces near Ararat and in Astrakhan are considered the purest, and approaching the nearest to the old Armenian.

In the heathen times of antiquity the Armenians had no written characters of their own, and it is uncertain whether they adopted the Greek or Persian writing. The ancient rulers of Armenia, as the Arsacides, are said to have had their annals committed to writing by Greeks and Syrians, but no manuscripts of that period have been preserved; nor am I aware whether there exist any inscriptions upon monuments. In the first century of Christianity the Syrian language and the Greek writing were used in the Christian Liturgy in Armenia. St. Mesrop, one of the greatest men whom that country has produced, invented, about A.D. 406, the Armenian alphabet*, which, from

* St. Martin, in his *Mémoire Historique et Géographique sur l'Arménie*, (Paris, 1819,) says, "The Armenian nation owe to this

the numerous guttural and sibilant sounds in the language, consists of thirty-eight characters. The first Armenian book is said to have been printed in 1563.

At the period of the introduction of Christianity, Armenia lay beyond the pale of the Roman empire, and of the civilized nations of Europe, whose centre was Rome. Under Tiridates the Great it maintained indeed political relations with Rome, being placed in an independent position between the Romans and Persians. The Armenians were the first people who, as an entire nation, embraced Christianity: at that time the religion of the heathen world was no longer based upon faith, but merely upon custom and habit, ceremonial observances, and gross superstitions regarding nature: there was consequently an open field for a new religion. The establishment of Christianity in Armenia was however not the result of teaching and conversion, although the lives and example of individual Christians may have operated favourably in predisposing the people generally to adopt their tenets. But another event led more immediately to the spread of the new religion: King Tiridates was baptized (A.D. 302) in the Euphrates by St. Gregory,

invention the preservation of their language and literature. Without it, these would probably have long since perished, like those of so many Asiatic nations in the conquests of the Persians, Turks, etc. This has proved the sole stay of the Armenian Church, and of the nationality of a people, for more than a thousand years under subjection. St. Mesrop also invented the Georgian alphabet, which is in use at the present day, and the alphabet used by the Albanians of the Caucasus, of which only a few remains exist.

and summoned the people to follow his example ; this they did, partly from dictates of obedience, and partly perhaps from the effect of a sudden impulse of enthusiasm : they were baptized,—the teaching had to follow. This event offers an historical parallel to the adoption of Christianity by the Franks and king Clovis. The teachers and apostles of the new faith, St. Gregory and his companions, displayed remarkable zeal in spreading its doctrines, and inciting the people to a Christian life ; instituting, for these objects, a numerous body of clergy,—a monastic order, to preach the doctrine, and serve as examples of a spiritual life ; and another class, who mingled with the world, to administer the Sacraments, and attend to the temporal offices of religion. St. Gregory founded numerous convents*, and on one occasion consecrated four hundred bishops.

In the times of Paganism Armenia was a well-organized state, divided into provinces, under the rule of governors. The latter however by degrees made themselves hereditary and independent, and assumed more the position of vassal princes. Ararat was almost the only province which was immediately under the king. The province of Hashtian on the Tigris formed the appanage of the royal princes. The most powerful vassal princes were the Mamigonians and the Bagratides, beside whom there were numerous dynas-

* See Ritter's Geogr. vol. x. page 626. No work contains so correct and instructive an account of the Caucasus as that of Ritter, although he never visited the country. The descriptions of other travellers are feeble in comparison.

ties, varying in extent. Pliny speaks of 120 strateges in Armenia; in the fifth century, Moses of Chorene mentions 240 provinces. The Patriarch Narses I., in the tenth century, enumerates 170 dynastic families, who, whilst they recognized the sovereignty of the king, possessed a great share of independence, and took part in the government; at the same time they lived in a state of perpetual feud with one another.

On the introduction of Christianity a new element of power was associated with, and in part superseded, these temporal dynasties,—that of the church and the monasteries. In the seclusion of thinly peopled valleys monastic life was reared and spread, and became gradually infused as it were into the spirit of the nation, as its chief element. The Armenian kings erected towns and castles,—works of ambition, pomp, and despotism, which had frequently as brief an existence as their regal founders. On the other hand, the churches, convents, and hermitages, throughout the country, became centres of population; princes and people vied in being at their head, whilst they acquired a secure duration, by the veneration paid to them as the places of interment of their saints, and containing the schools founded by their clergy. Monastic life became so infused into the nation, that the Patriarch Narses (the fifth successor of St. Gregory) is famed for having founded two thousand convents, including asylums for widows and orphans, hospices for strangers, hospitals and alms-houses. The predominance of this conventual life imparted a completely

ecclesiastical impress to the general development of the nation ; and this was the more striking, as its political life was meanwhile enfeebled by continual subjection. All its greatest men, combining energy with knowledge, were during the brightest period, in the fourth and fifth centuries, monks, priests, bishops, and patriarchs. Three-fourths of the literature of that time is theological ; their historical researches exhibit invariably a theological background and application. Their poetry consisted almost entirely of sacred songs, and their philosophy of dogmatic disquisitions. The main object even of their labours in astronomy and chronology was to regulate the almanack and church festivals. The field of learning remained thus restricted for a long period, and the intelligence of the nation was narrowed ; and even when the Armenian literature revived, from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, this was limited in fact to the Greek convents. At a later period, under the Mohammedan rule, monastic life was at its lowest ebb : the monks were so ignorant, that even the manuscript treasures of their own libraries had become useless, and remained so, until foreigners and the art of printing gave them again to the world*.

All intellectual energy in the mother-country, Armenia Proper, appeared torpid and dead ; and it is only in recent times, since the sixteenth century, and in the distant colonies scattered over the globe, that symptoms of a revival have been manifested. At

* See Ritter, x. 626.

Lemberg, an Armenian printing-office was established in the year 1616, and a high-school in 1662. In 1624 a printing-office was established at Milan, and in 1640 others at Paris and Leghorn; in 1660, one at Amsterdam; in 1670, at Marseilles; in 1680, at Leipzig; in 1690, at Padua; in 1640, at Dschulfa, in Persia; and one at Constantinople in 1677.

A high-school was founded in 1629 at Erivan, and in 1631 was transferred to Echmiadzin, where it still exists, but in a lamentable state of decay: there is also a wretched printing-office in the former city, which, I was told, is only used to print almanacks and prayer-books.

The dawn of a new æra in literature, and consequently of national development and civilization, was opened to the Armenians, in the eighteenth century, by the Mechitarist Order, as I have before observed*. The Armenian literature commenced with St. Mesrop, and his invention of the alphabet at the beginning of the fifth century. All remains of anterior pagan times were probably destroyed, together with the temples and statues of the gods. All at once literature made a great advance, and an ardent zeal for its cultivation arose, similar, though on a smaller scale, to the revival of learning in Europe in the fifteenth century, after the invention of printing.

* In order to counteract the Romish tendency of the Mechitarists, the non-united Armenians established on Mount Lebanon two convents, with colleges, one of which was called the Patriarchal Convent, from the circumstance of the Patriarch Abraham having, in 1753, transferred thither his seat from Jerusalem.

The first great work that appeared in Armenia, a translation of the Bible, was completed in the year 410. All the most distinguished men of that age were engaged upon it: the Gospels were translated by St. Mesrop, the rest by Moses of Chorene and others. In the judgement of the Mechitarists and many scholars, this is the finest of all translations of the Bible, and remains to the present day a model of the pure Armenian language.

The fifth and sixth centuries were the brightest period of the Armenian literature, during which a vigorous intellectual intercourse was carried on with the West: the classical works of Europe were translated, with a profound comprehension, instances of which I have before mentioned in the works of Plato and Aristotle; nor indeed can any people boast so rich and early a literature in translated works, especially of a theological and philosophical character.

The schism which ensued, and widened gradually after the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), relaxed the intercourse of Armenia with the West; and in the seventh century the literature of that country, which became almost exclusively devoted to theological disputes, gradually declined. In the thirteenth century it experienced a brief revival, but this was only the precursor of the night into which it soon relapsed, and which continued until the eighteenth century, when it received a new and vigorous impulse from the Mechitarists. Mechitar conceived the great idea of reviving the literature of his country, as in its most

brilliant period ; and, with his disciples and successors, aimed, by means of translations, at introducing the civilization of the West. The Mechitarists have printed translations from all the languages of Europe, and in every department of literature.

From these observations it will be inferred, that the Armenian literature took the character of translation from foreign countries, rather than of originality. Thus indeed it continued, and any free development of national character in the world of letters was effectually checked and suppressed by political subjection and slavery. The only original works of the Armenians are theological and historical ; and the writings of their historians, from the fourth to the thirteenth century, possess a value which is still by no means appreciated : even their great chronicler, Moses of Chorenne, is scarcely known.

The poetry of the Armenians* also partakes chiefly of a religious character, akin to that of the Hebrews. From the seventh century Arabian influence is perceptible. In the old canticles, devoid of both rhyme and measure, regard was alone paid to the modulation of the voice and musical intonation, which, to the present time, are indicated in the Church songs of the Armenians by fixed signs. The singing in the

* Wahl's assertion, that the Armenians had no poetry, is refuted by Neumann, in his essay on Armenian literature (Leipzig, 1836), in which he refers to the book of sacred poetry, *Sharagnos*, containing specimens of this class full of sublimity : they are unfettered by quantity or rhyme, are similar in structure to the Hebrew poetry, and are mostly imitations of the Psalms. Many of them are extremely ancient.

churches bears a similarity to that in the Turkish mosques. At an after period metre and rhyme were introduced from the Arabians.

In the fourteenth century the use of the modern Armenian language was first introduced, Johannes Erzinga being the last who wrote a work in the ancient tongue,—a translation of St. Thomas Aquinas on the Sacraments. Armenian literature has sustained incalculable losses from various causes: Moskor speaks of a great destruction of manuscripts, the result of persecutions, A. D. 381 and 439. At the destruction of Ani, in 1064, all the treasures contained in the libraries of that town perished. Most of the works deposited in the convents have been lost in successive devastations, unvalued probably by the monks amid the prevailing ignorance of the age, and consequently unprotected. The celebrated library at Echmiadzin itself was partly destroyed and plundered, and partly suffered to perish from neglect. There was not even a catalogue of it, until one was published by M. Brosset in 1840, illustrated with critical notes. He found in the library only 635 works, of which 462 were in the Armenian language, comprizing eight of poetry, and eighty-six of history and geography; the rest were theological. Brosset also mentions 160 Armenian manuscripts preserved in the Royal Library at Paris. In the Vatican, and the library of the Propaganda at Rome, there is a large number; but the richest collection is said to be in the possession of the Mechitarists at Venice.

Among a people so highly gifted in intellect, we might naturally expect to find a rich store of national poetry, handed down from a remote period, and gradually perfected. Unfortunately no remains of this description have as yet been collected, and we possess very imperfect information on the subject: for the particulars given here I am indebted to Abovian, his uncle, and Peter Neu. It is very desirable that the attention of enlightened and patriotic Armenians should be directed to this interesting subject, which might throw considerable light on the character, natural abilities and tastes of this people*.

Moses of Chorene says, that in his time there existed national heroic songs, which he used in his writings; amongst others, he quotes a fragment of a mythological epic, derived from heathen times, reciting the birth of Vahaga, which begins thus: "In throes of labour lay the heavens; in throes of labour lay the earth; in throes of labour lay the purple ocean; in throes of labour lay the red reed in the ocean! From out the reed issued smoke; from out the reed issued a flame; and from out the flame arose suddenly the fair-haired youth. Fire he had in his hair, flame he had in his beard, and his eyes and his ears were suns!" The historian says, that he heard these songs sung to the accompaniment of a kind of castanets, and

* Since my visit to this country, my excellent friend Abovian has died: it is to be regretted that a man of his attainments, and favourable position for such researches, should not have pursued this branch of study.

to various melodies, which unfortunately he has not preserved.

Ritter says, that in the vicinity of Mount Ararat national songs are still sung, which have been handed down from the fifth and sixth centuries. The Mechitarists also assert, that there exist in manuscript ancient heroic songs, which are to the present day sung in certain mountainous districts. These are said to celebrate the same heroes, and their exploits, as we find in the Shah Nameh of Firdousi,—a fact which, if true, would appear to indicate a very ancient connection between the Armenians and Persians.

I have above observed, that the poetry of the Armenians is chiefly of a religious character: the poets were probably only of the ecclesiastical order. The compositions still in existence are mostly very old, nor should we expect, in the present low state of intellectual culture among the clergy, to find any poets, to write either for the service of the church or songs for the people. Whether any have arisen among those Armenians attached to Rome, as the Mechitarists, I know not.

The sacred poems or songs of the Armenian Church are composed in a severe style, in form as well as conception resembling the Hebrew poetry of the Bible. The most ancient have a degree of sublimity, but the majority are monotonous in the ideas and images they present. Although those Armenians unconnected with Rome observe the invocation of the Saints, they are ignorant of the worship of the Virgin,—one source

of the most inspiring elements of modern religious poetry*.

Secular poetry appears to have attained a high position at an early period among the Armenians; few

* In all the nations of Catholic Christendom, of the Western as well as the Eastern Church, it is a popular belief that the worship of the Virgin, the invocation of the intercession of the Mother of God, confers a peculiar blessing, especially earthly happiness to the individual, and in families brings harmony and love. As the tutelary Power over communities and nations, her invocation brings prosperity and glory; from which belief the Spaniards placed her at the head of their armies! The service of the Virgin has become the strongest basis of nationality in its higher forms, as well as of political life, among the nations of Europe,—the foundation of the Germanic, Romanic and Slaavic poetry, of romance and chivalry. Those countries in which this worship principally prevailed in the Middle Ages, acquired a remarkably martial spirit, as for instance the Spaniards, French, Poles, and Russians. The worship of the Virgin has unquestionably given rise to a high degree of refinement, especially in the position to which it has raised the female sex; it is indeed the basis of that romantic veneration of women, which has contributed so much to give Europe a preponderance over the other continents. It is worthy of remark, that among the Slavonic nations of the Eastern Church, the Russians, among whom the most fervent adoration of the Virgin prevails, are those people who have become the most powerful, by their capacity for civilization, warlike disposition, and political success: whilst, on the contrary, we see the Greeks, among whom the service of the Virgin is spiritless and neglected, have fallen into a state of semi-barbarism, oppression, and political feebleness, notwithstanding their remarkable natural abilities. Among the latter people, domestic and family life is in general upon a low grade, because woman has not her true position and respect, but is treated with more or less Oriental oppression; and, whilst the free play of romantic passion, and the conquest of woman by love, are true elements of national life, *here* the forms and attachment of marriage are more or less deadened by calculations of purchase: perhaps the political weakness of the Byzantine empire may be mainly attributable to these considerations. How was it that the Romano-Germanic nations were so far superior to the Greeks in the Middle Ages, not only physically

remains of it however have been preserved, little having probably been committed to writing, and none printed; indeed, with the exception of the ancient heroic songs, I have nowhere found any mention of

but morally, notwithstanding that the latter were so highly gifted by nature, the inheritors of classical refinement, and, individually, intellectual, brave, and warlike? If it be said, that the Germano-Scandinavian nations, among whom the worship of the Virgin is no longer found, as the Swedes and English, nevertheless enjoy high political culture and prosperity, this is no valid argument; it must be remembered, that these peoples *have had* this worship, have been educated in and by it, and that they did not relinquish it until their political training was completed, and the whole structure of their national and family life was formed and settled. Among the Armenians unattached to Rome, the worship of the Virgin is neglected: and this has had an injurious effect on the position of the female sex and on family life. The worship of the Saints, on the other hand, especially the national Saints, Gregory, Serb, Mesrop, and Hripsina, is much more cultivated; pilgrimages to their tombs, and prayers for their intercession, form a part of their religion which they zealously practise. I have before observed, that the treatment of the young married women, although rigorous, is not oppressive, but merely a strict system of education: but among those Armenians who live in Mohammedan countries, I was informed, a seclusion of the women, like that of the harem, prevails. On the contrary, among those who are attached to the Church of Rome, the worship of the Virgin appears to have raised the position of the female sex to a greater freedom and independence, and humanized the domestic usages. Until this humanizing influence, this recognition of the dignity of woman, shall become diffused generally among the Armenian nation, they cannot hope to attain a full measure of civilization, nor to accomplish the mission for which they appear destined, of introducing European civilization into Asia. If ever Christianity spreads widely in the East, accompanied by a worship of the Virgin (and without this it will never spread there), the female sex will be emancipated from their present degraded position. But, we may observe, in such an event the preponderance of Europe will cease. The very trifling success which has attended the Protestant missions in that part of the world, notwithstanding the amplest means, may be in a great measure explained by the above remarks.

such secular poetry, either in manuscript or print. Abovian sent me, after my return to Germany, a few specimens of the modern heroic songs, one of which, a patriotic effusion on the deliverance of Armenia from the Mohammedan yoke, in 1828, had a certain degree of poetical fervour.

But whilst there exist few poems in manuscript, there are numerous poets in Armenia, who form a kind of guild, like the Mastersingers*. These persons are usually wandering blind musicians; and it is remarkable, that almost every blind person seems to regard it as his peculiar vocation to follow this trade of a public minstrel or story-teller. If he possesses little natural talent, or his professional reputation is not yet established, he remains in his own village, or the immediate neighbourhood, where he is honoured and beloved by all. In each farmstead a room, or at least a division of one, is set apart for the village minstrel; and every one feels honoured by a visit from him. In an evening the family and neighbours gather round him, and his songs and stories spread general hilarity and mirth.

When a singer has higher poetical talents, and his reputation has spread through wider circles, he becomes a regular wandering Mastersinger: he travels

* The tones of these singers are by no means euphonious to European ears: they are long-drawn, nasal, and monotonous, and on a sudden these lead to the most rapid roulades, which conclude with a wild, high and deafening scream. The singer accompanies himself on an instrument, between the Russian *balalicka* and the guitar.

about to the palaces of the nobles, and the courts of princes and khans, far into Persia and Turkey, everywhere welcomed with joy. If one of these singers hears by chance of a brother of his craft travelling in the same district, his emulation is excited, he challenges him to a trial of skill, and cannot rest until he has this satisfaction, even if he has to wander a hundred miles to obtain it. When the rival minstrels meet, the event is a jubilee for the whole country: they are together presented to the prince of the district, who receives them with great honours and hospitality, and the day for a trial of skill is fixed. At the time appointed, thousands of people collect, many coming from a great distance to be present. The two blind men are then led into the open fields, generally under some large tree; and here they take their seats opposite to one another, surrounded by the audience in a close circle. And now the trial begins: alternately they propose riddles to one another, which each in turn answers instantly, amidst the acclamations of the auditors. Then one of them will repeat and versify with poetical skill some passage from the Bible or the Koran; whereupon his antagonist has immediately to recite the following passage, or a corresponding one, in the same extemporized verse. Sharp and witty questions elicit witty repartees. If however one of the rivals hesitates, or gives a faulty or unmeaning answer, he is declared vanquished, by the acclamation of the multitude. Then the victor is led up to him, takes his lyre from him, and breaks it: his glory has departed

for ever, and he retires into his village obscurity again. If, on the other hand, the antagonists exhibit equal skill, and stand their ground so well that the auditors cannot decide the victory, then the challenger at last begins to sing the praises of his adversary, extolling him above all living men, and comparing him with Hafiz and Firdousi. The other answers him in a similar laudatory strain. Then the joyous shouts and exclamations of the people hail and respond to the praises of the bards, and the banquets commence, given by the princes and nobles in their honour*.

These wandering singers are, throughout Western Asia, chiefly Armenians, rarely Tatars, and scarcely ever Persians or Turks. The Armenians never poetize in their own, but in the Tatar language, which is the ordinary medium of intercourse and conversation among all the nations south of the Caucasus, like the French language in Europe. The Tatar is especially the language of poetry, and this is perhaps one rea-

* The Armenians have also a popular Jester, a droll witty character, somewhat resembling the German Eulenspiegel, whom they call Dale Kischis ('the foolish priest'), and who is said to have lived in Turkish Armenia. Innumerable stories are told of him, mostly relating to religious disputations between him and the Mohammedans, in which he always vanquished them with the weapons of coarse raillery. He was a great favourite with the Turks of rank, especially the Pasha, who, although himself often the object of the coarsest and most sarcastic witticisms, was only amused by them. Many of these jests show the extreme good-nature of the Turks and the audacity of the Armenians. The stories related of Dale Kischis have not the coarse, awkward, phlegmatic character of those told of the German Eulenspiegel, but are much more pointed and witty, though often also far more malicious: the character of the people is reflected in them in a remarkable manner.

son that so few poems are found written in Armenian, as their authors would naturally desire to make them known as widely as possible. The facility with which the Armenians acquire foreign languages, and become assimilated to any nationality, is remarkable; and this enables them to make their way so well in foreign countries: with the Turks, Persians, and Georgians, they speak their respective languages, and indeed the best Georgian poems are composed by Armenians. But, wherever dispersed, the Armenians never lose their own nationality, nor relax the bond which unites them with their country.

As the Armenians in ancient times had the epic characters of Roostem, Sal, etc., in common with the Persians, so those of the present day have the same forms of poetry as the latter people. All the Persian songs, whether amatory, bucolic, or sporting songs, nay even jesting and witty poems, are precluded by an introduction of simple sounds, occasionally interrupted by sentences, and poetic passages from Hafiz and other celebrated poets, but always of a serious and religious turn. Then follows the poem itself: the measures vary, but the syllables are always counted, no regard being paid to whether they are long or short. The poems are always in rhyme, and occasionally alliteration is used: the author is fond of introducing his own name at the end of the poem, or as an acrostic, commencing each line in succession with the letters which spell his name.

The Armenian poems and national songs have all

the same form : these, like the Persian, have an introduction of simple sounds, interrupted by phrases and poetic passages. The stanzas always consist of four lines, the rhymes being either alternate, or all four having the same, or the first, second, and fourth rhyming. Each line consists of at least four, and never more than fifteen, syllables ; joyous songs have generally only four to eight syllables, and ten to fifteen in the first line.

The following outline of a legendary romance, probably founded on some true story, may serve as a specimen of Armenian poetry. It was undoubtedly composed originally in verse ; the sketch I give here is no proper translation, but a mere epitome of the poem.

An Armenian priest had an only daughter, named Assly, and to his charge was entrusted, as pupil, a young Tatar prince named Kyarem. The two received their instruction together ; and as they grew up from childhood a passionate attachment was formed between them. The father perceived this with grief and alarm ; and foreboding misfortune to himself and his child, in his fear lest she should become alienated from her family, her country and religion, he fled with her secretly into the mountains. The young prince, overcome with grief and attachment, disguises himself as an Aschig*, and wanders over mountain and valley, in quest of his beloved Assly : he asks of the trees and flowers, the lakes and rivers, the moon and

* A kind of Oriental Minnesinger, still existing.

the stars, and entreats them in pity to tell him of Assly*. Years pass over in this vain search, until at last Kyarem discovers his beloved,—but in what a condition! From head to foot she is wrapped in an impenetrable magic dress, which her father, a powerful magician, foreseeing her fate, had himself woven and prepared for her before his death, in order to secure her thus from seductions of every kind. When the lovers recognize one another, the fire of love, fanned by long separation, bursts out anew in both with resistless power. Day and night, without closing their eyes, they sing of their mutual love, their fidelity, their misfortunes. The fire of passion glows within them more and more intensely, until at last it bursts out simultaneously into real flames, and the two lovers are consumed and perish: their ashes are collected by some friendly hand, and deposited in one grave, where at length they are united in death. But lo! there spring up and blossom two rose-bushes upon their grave: these incline toward one another, seeking to unite, but a thorny branch, growing up between them†, separates them for ever.

I have never heard Armenians sing, except in the churches, where the musical sounds are extremely unmelodious, nor have I made any collection of their songs. Abovian, his uncle Aruthian, and Peter Neu,

* These verses, Abovian told me, are full of the most touching expression of deep and passionate love: I regret that he did not send me either the original, or a translation of them, with the copy of this *novellette*.

† Intimating their difference of creed.

related to me many legends and traditions, some of which I shall give here, as I heard them, without the slightest change or addition. It is in their national songs, and tales of this class, that a people's history and character are reflected in the clearest manner.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENCHANTED SERPENTS.—THE QUEEN OF THE SERPENTS.—A FEAT OF MAGIC.—LEGEND OF THE PLAGUE.—STORY OF THE WERE-WOLVES.—THE QUICKSILVER LAKE.—THE MINE OF GEMS.—SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.—SOLOMON'S RING.—SOLOMON'S GARDEN AND ITS MYSTERIES.—LEGENDS OF ALEXANDER'S BIRTH AND THE CAVE OF TREASURES NEAR ERIVAN.—SHAH ISMAEL AND THE DISCOVERY OF RICE.—THE INGRATITUDE OF MAN.—THE GRATEFUL SPIRIT.—STORY OF THE KING WHO BECAME FORTUNATE IN HIS OLD-AGE.—THE SOULS OF MEN.—CHINESE PARABLES ON HOSPITALITY.

THE ENCHANTED SERPENTS.

At one time all the serpents on Mount Ararat were venomous, but now only those on the north side are so ; those on the south side being harmless, although they were formerly more dangerous than the others. Once on a time a prince (pasha) wished to found a new town (Bayazid) on the south side of the mountain, and he summoned the wise men of all countries to advise him as to the best means of getting rid of the serpents. Among the rest he invited a Greek monk, who was famed for his skill in witchcraft. Then the monk pronounced his benediction on

the country, and laid a spell upon the serpents, which all immediately disappeared; and whenever afterwards a few were occasionally seen, they were found to be harmless. As the monk was about to return home, and taking leave of the prince, he said, "The spell will last only so long as my teeth are sound." When he was gone, an evil thought came by night into the mind of the prince: he ordered the monk to be pursued and seized, and his head cut off. Then he had the head, with the teeth in it, set in gold, in order to preserve them from decay. The monk was decapitated on a hill in Turkish Armenia, which, in commemoration of the base deed committed there, is called to this day Chalschi Jaduk (the Mount of Tribulation).

THE QUEEN OF THE SERPENTS.

Among the serpents of Mount Ararat there is a royal race, from which they select a Queen to rule over them. Large armies of foreign serpents often attack them, and try to take possession of their kingdom; but the invaders always fall in battle, so long as the serpents of Ararat bear their Queen upon their backs. The Queen bewitches and fascinates the strange serpents with her eye, and paralyzes them, so that they are slain without being able to defend themselves. She carries in her mouth the wonderful stone, the Hul, or stone of light, which upon certain nights she tosses aloft in the air, when it shines brilliant as

the sun. Happy the man who shall catch the stone ere it falls*!

* The legend of the Queen of the Serpents exists also among the Germans and Slaavs. Büsching relates a legend, which I have myself heard on the very spot, that the queen was a white serpent, who wore an ivory crown, and dwelt in the Spree forest in Lusatia, near Lübbenau. On one occasion an inhabitant of Lübbenau, having concealed himself in a thicket, observed a long procession of serpents, bearing their queen in state. She removed her crown from her head, and having deposited it upon a piece of red cloth which the man had spread upon the ground, betook herself with her suite to a neighbouring hill, to gambol and bask in the sun. The man took up the crown and cloth, and hastened to the town. He soon heard the hissing of the serpents in full pursuit; but on reaching the town he was saved, by a statue of the Virgin placed in a niche above the gate. From that day the man succeeded in all his undertakings. After his death the crown passed into the hands of strangers, and subsequently came into the possession of a rich old man at Hildesheim; at the sale of his effects the crown was purchased by a Jew, from whom I obtained it. It reposes in a small antique chest of gold, upon which the words "Corona serpentis albi" are engraved, with a design of the crown itself.

Compare the *Mythology* of Jacob Grimm:—Freidank, edited by Wilhelm Grimm, p. 346. Pliny also mentions the legend.

Battista de la Porta, in his celebrated work on *Magic*, relates the following legend respecting the Queen of the Serpents.

A beautiful mountain-alp on the Silberberg, in Styria, was so full of serpents, that neither man nor beast could abide in the neighbourhood. The people to whom the meadow belonged sent in every direction, far and near, in search of some one who might succeed, by some means or art, in freeing them from the serpents. At length a person was found, who promised to do this, provided they could assure him that the White Serpent was not amongst them nor in the neighbourhood. The folks all assured him that no white serpent had ever been seen in any part of the country. Again he put this question seriously to them, adding, that if a white serpent were anywhere near, he would be inevitably lost. However, upon their all assuring him solemnly that his fears were groundless, he undertook the task; and selecting a convenient spot, under a large tree, he drew a circle round it, upon which he piled a heap of wood, set fire to it, and climbed up into the tree. Then he took a whistle, and

A FEAT OF MAGIC.

The Khan of Elizabethpol had a ring of extraordinary value, which contained a talisman. Once he lost this out of the ring, and all his efforts to find it were unavailing. A Tatar woman, celebrated for her sorcery, was summoned; she desired that a virgin should be called in, and ordered her to sit down in the middle of the room, with a dish of water placed before her; then with a large white cloth she covered both the maiden and the vessel, and commanded the former to look into the water without turning round; she next seated herself behind the girl, and from a book she brought with her read various incantations. After awhile she asked the maiden what she saw: "I see horsemen in long red garments." "Let them pass on." Then she muttered her incantations again, and inquired, "What do you see now?" "I see women on horseback in green dresses," was the reply. "Let them pass." After a pause she repeated her question. "I see boys in blue raiment." "Let them pass." Once

gave a whistle long and shrill; whereupon an innumerable host of serpents came from every side, and darted into the fire; but none were able to get through the circle, and they were all burnt to death. But at last the great White Serpent made her appearance, sprang through the circle and up to the tree, and cried out to the serpent conjuror, "What has made you so bold as to invade my kingdom? you are now in my power." Thereupon she dragged the man down from the tree, and flung him into the fire. This was the Queen of the Serpents, who has the power of human speech. The folks to whom the mountain-alp belonged saw and heard from afar what passed, and fled in terror.

more there was a muttering of spells. "What do you now behold?" "Maidens in white flowing garments." "Ask them where the lost stone is to be found." "They answer, in the garden of the Khan." Then the witch went into the garden, divided it into seven parts, sat down, and began her incantations afresh; after awhile she fixed upon one of the seven parts, and divided it into three, repeating the division until only one tree remained; this she also divided into three, till only one branch was left, at last only one leaf, and under this the talisman was found.

LEGEND OF THE PLAGUE.

I was told by Aruthian that the Plague is a punishment inflicted on a country when the people have sinned greatly. It returns every seven years, and its approach is announced by two knights, named *Zasmanazog*, or forerunners of the Plague; one is dressed in red, and carries a red staff in his hand; the other is dressed from head to foot in black, and carries a black staff. When they ride into a village, they compel the first man they meet to accompany them, and give them information about every house: this man alone sees them, to all others they are invisible. They enter the houses, and mark the men and animals with their staves, writing unknown characters upon their bodies. If the black knight writes, death will follow; if the red knight, the life will be saved. "My grandmother," said Aruthian, "who never uttered a

falsehood, told me that once an old friend of the family came suddenly into the house, and, without a word of greeting, seated himself gloomy and silent in a corner of the room; food was placed before him, which speedily disappeared, but no one saw him eat; all at once he got up, and without uttering a word left the house. When he came again, he was asked, what had occasioned his strange behaviour: he replied, "You have escaped a great danger; I was compelled that day to accompany the Zasmanazogs; but when they perceived your piety and hospitality, they would not permit evil to befall you, and not a living creature in your house was marked by either of them; but, to show their friendship for you, they ate the food you placed before me, and departed quietly from the village without inflicting sickness*."

* The Russians, Poles and Servians (probably the Slaavs in general) personify the Plague as a virgin. The Cholera has also been personified, as I have mentioned in my work on Russia. "What is the Cholera, have you ever seen her?" asked an inhabitant of Little Russia of a countryman lately returned from the Don. "I have," answered the other. "What is she like?" "She is a woman who wears red boots, walks upon the water, and is incessantly sighing." A Polish tradition describes the Plague Virgin as riding in a two-wheeled chariot; upon entering a village, if she sees an open window or door, she thrusts in her hand with a red cloth on it, and in that house the inhabitants die. As soon as the Plague approaches a neighbourhood, the inhabitants shut themselves in their houses, and do not open their doors until compelled by a scarcity of food. Once a nobleman in a village, who was well supplied with provisions, determined nevertheless to sacrifice himself for the community; he opened a window, and when the Plague Virgin thrust in her hand, he hewed it off with a sabre upon which the names of Jesus and Mary were engraved. He died, but the Plague disappeared from the neighbourhood.

STORY OF THE WEREWOLVES.

There have been instances in which women, for great sins they have committed, have been transformed into wolves for a space of seven years. One night a Spirit came to such a woman and brought the skin of a wolf, commanding her to put it on. As soon as she had done so, horrible wolfish passions rose up within her. At first her human nature strove against them, but soon the animal nature gained the upperhand. She first devoured her own children, then those of her relatives, according to their degree of kindred, and at last the children of strangers. Every door, every lock sprang open as soon as the monster appeared. It was only during the night that the wolfish passions predominated; when morning came, she regained her womanly nature, threw off the wolf-skin, and hid it carefully. A man once observed a wolf, which had just seized a child, running away; he pursued, but failed to overtake it. At last, toward morning, he discovered the hands and feet of a child and traces of blood; close by he found a cave, and in it the skin of a wolf. Then he kindled a fire, and threw the skin into it, when suddenly a woman appeared, moaning and howling horribly; she ran round and round the fire, endeavouring to drag out the burning skin; but the man prevented her, and scarcely had the fire consumed the skin, when the woman vanished in smoke.

THE QUICKSILVER LAKE.

Deep in the mountains of Anatolia, in a rocky basin, lies the Quicksilver Lake. It is of incalculable value, but no one can bring away any of the metal without risk of his life; for as soon as a man approaches, it rises in one tremendous wave, draws him like a loadstone, and swallows him up. An Armenian however, who was versed in magic, once got possession of a large quantity of this valuable metal. He rolled before him a great block of lead toward the Quicksilver Lake. (The lead quiets the quicksilver, and takes from it its power of attraction.) Then he dug a deep hole in the ground, and lined it with dogskins sewn together; he made a channel from the hole to the lump of lead, and under it bored a pipe to the quicksilver, which being thus tapped flowed into the skins, in which alone it can be held and preserved.

THE MINE OF GEMS.

In Hindostan there is a deep and rocky valley, in which all kinds of precious stones, of incalculable value, lie scattered upon the ground; when the sun shines upon them, they glisten like a sea of glowing, many-coloured fire. The people see this from the summits of the surrounding hills, but no one can enter the valley, partly because there is no path to it and

they could only be let down the steep rocks, and partly because the heat is so great that no one could endure it for a minute. Merchants come hither from foreign countries ; they take an ox and hew it in pieces, which they fix upon long poles, and cast into the valley of gems. Then huge birds of prey hover around, descend into the valley, and carry off the pieces of flesh. But the merchants observe closely the direction in which the birds fly, and the places where they alight to feed, and there they frequently find the most valuable gems.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

When the Temple of Solomon was completed, architects and artists came from all the corners of the earth, to view it and value its wealth. But Solomon came amongst them and said, " No mortal is able to calculate the value of the Temple of the Most High : this is alone known to the drops of rain in the month of May." He knew well however what he was saying. In May the muscle rises from the depths of ocean to the surface, and opens its shell longingly toward heaven ; and wherever a rain-drop falls into it, there a pearl is produced. To get possession of the pearl, the diver descends to the bottom of the sea ; he carries with him a flask of oil, and when he has filled his apron with shells, he lets the bottle of oil rise to the surface, as a sign to those above to drag him quickly up.

SOLOMON'S RING.

Solomon had a wife whom he loved dearly: she complained to him, that often in the night she received visits from an invisible Spirit. He desired her to endeavour, by coaxing, to discover who he was and where he dwelt. She succeeded, and the Spirit confessed to her that he was the chief of the Devils, and dwelt in a small stone, in a heap of rubbish between the house and the mountain. Early the next morning she ordered the heap to be turned over and sifted, and by good fortune she found the stone. This she took to Solomon, who had it set in a ring, which he wore on his forefinger, and thus became the ruler and master of all creatures. Then he caused all living beings to pass in review before him, and dismissed them all, until the devils (Dowler) came, whom he imprisoned in two iron casks, sealed them up, and sank them in the sea. Now it happened one day that some fishermen cast their nets in this spot, and had the greatest difficulty in drawing them out, for they found that they had brought up an iron cask. Full of joy at their supposed treasure, they broke the seal and forced it open, when a thick smoke rose from it; but the cask was empty. It was nevertheless the cask in which the female devils had been confined; and from that time men have been worried by bad dreams from their machinations*. But wo-

* Compare the tale of the 'Spirit in the Glass' in Grimm's 'Kinder- und Hausmärchen.'

men remain free, since the cask containing the male devils has not yet been found. These devils are, properly speaking, not spirits, but physical beings with ethereal bodies, endowed with natures and passions like men: they dwelt on the earth before man was created, and continue upon it still; they are now banished to the highest mountains, especially those of the Caucasus. Satan and his angels, who were cast into hell, are real bodiless spirits, and quite different from these.

SOLOMON'S GARDEN AND ITS MYSTERIES*.

A Persian king had a daughter, who was sought in marriage on all sides; but she declared she would only wed the man who could solve a riddle which she would propose. He who did not answer it within three days was to lose his life. So many were the unsuccessful suitors, that she built a tower of their skulls, and erected a high pole beside it. At length a poor youth came and wooed her. He climbed the mast (a feat which every suitor had to accomplish), that the Princess might behold him from her tower of skulls. Then she commanded him to enter, and told him her riddle, which was as follows: "What has Senober done to Gül, and what has Gül done to Se-

* The poetical value of this fairy-tale, which was related by Peter Neu, is insignificant. I have introduced it on account of its analogy with some features in the tales of other countries, and its mythological references. It is originally a Persian tale.

nobler?" The youth betook himself to an old woman, who was his friend, and asked her advice. She answered: "Nobody can explain the riddle but the Divs, who live among the mountains; unless you go to them, you are lost." Thereupon he immediately started for the mountains, and met first the eldest brother of the Divs, who rushed forward to swallow him up; but the youth threw a ball of mastic into his throat, which the Divs are very fond of, and the Div in return granted him his life, but was unable to solve the riddle. The same thing happened with the second brother; but when he came to the sister, and had won her over with his mastic, she said to him, "You must go along a certain road, out of which a lane leads to the right; you will then come to the garden of Solomon, and there you will find what you seek."

The youth found the way to the garden of Solomon, and concealed himself in the palace. There he beheld a man, beautiful and shining as the full moon, walking into the saloon with a little dog beside him; he saw him go up to a birdcage, in which a woman of wonderful beauty sat imprisoned. He saw him eat, give half the food to his dog, and what remained to the woman. Then the youth stepped from his hiding-place, and was invited by the man to be his guest; but the youth refused, saying, "How can I be your guest, when I see you treating an animal and a woman in such an unnatural way?" The other replied, "If I should explain to you the reason of my conduct, you

must die, like all the rest, for to no one may the mystery be revealed. I am the servant of Solomon, and am called Gül, and that woman is the handmaid of Solomon, and is named Senober. I possess two wonderful steeds,—the ‘horse of the wind,’ and ‘the horse of the clouds,’ which Solomon bequeathed to me.” As soon as the youth heard these names, he perceived that he was near the solution of the riddle; then he thought within himself, “I must die there, if I do not solve it; and I must die here, if it is explained to me. I will choose the latter: perhaps I may still escape.” So he requested Gül to explain the riddle to him, and he thus began:—“The woman whom you see in this cage loved me inexpressibly, and I her. But all at once she grew cold toward me, and, becoming suspicious of her, I laid myself down apparently to sleep. With half-closed eyes, I watched my wife quietly and cautiously get up, dress herself, and go into the stable. I stole after her. She saddled the wind-horse, sprang upon him, and rode forth. Then I saddled the cloud-horse, and pursued her: he is not so fleet, but he follows always in the track of the wind-horse. At last we came to a rocky mountain, where a door opened into a cave, out of which a passage led to magnificent apartments*. I hid myself behind a huge wine-jar, and beheld my wife waiting in the most humble and attentive manner upon four-and-twenty ugly monsters. The leader, the ugliest of the

* A remarkable mention of the so-called Rock-towns, and of the palace hewn out of the rocks, of which I shall speak hereafter.



set, treated her with great severity: she had to dance before them, and when she made the slightest mistake, he beat her. Nevertheless she caressed him in the tenderest manner. In burning rage I threw a narcotic poison into the wine-jars. All the monsters quickly fell asleep, except the leader, who was a powerful magician. My wife continued to dance before him: she slipped, and he beat her; but still she kissed him. I now threw myself upon him, but he was too strong for me, and I should have been overcome, had not my dog seized him, and given me time to plunge my dagger into his side. Aided however by his witchcraft, he escaped through a dark passage. The others were all dead, but he still lives, and by means of his spells has caused a king's daughter to fall in love with him, by whom he has two children. He dwells with the children in a cellar under the apartment of the king's daughter, from which a trapdoor leads below. This is the reason why she will not marry, and proposes to all her suitors a riddle which they cannot solve. I took my wife home, and treat her as you see, and rightly so. This is the solution of the riddle; now prepare to die."

The youth begged for time to say a prayer, and took advantage of it to conceal himself in a hollow tree. Gül mounted his wind-horse and rode in pursuit of him; but not finding him he returned home, and began the pursuit afresh upon his cloud-horse; he soon however returned again without success. The youth, slipping out of the garden, escaped, and pre-

sented himself to the king's daughter before the expiration of the three days. He begged her not to insist on his solving the riddle, as it would deeply grieve and offend the king her father. But she only answered, "Solve the riddle or die!" He once more entreated her, but she drew her sword; the king however held her back, and commanded the youth to explain the riddle. Then he requested the princess to retire, and pointing out the trapdoor and secret staircase, besought the king to descend into the vault with a large body of men, and seize the monster; the enchanter however escaped, but the two children were dragged forth, and they were so hideous that the king shuddered at beholding them. The king's daughter was now led forward; and when she saw that all was discovered, she begged for her life, and was willing at once to consent to the marriage; but the king commanded her and her children to be slain, and adopted the youth as his son.

STORY OF ALEXANDER'S BIRTH*.

Alexander the Great was not the son of King Philip, but of a mighty sorcerer, who fell in love with Philip's wife. She was mourning for her husband, who was absent on the field of battle; and the sorcerer promised that he should return by magical

* This is a very remarkable story. The Greek legend makes Alexander the son of Zeus. How has this legend come to Armenia? Dr. Zacher, of Halle, has collected all the tales about Alexander.

means, but this he could only do in the form of a serpent. He himself then assumed that form, and visited her in the night; and he caused Philip to dream at the same time that he too was turned into a serpent. After a time Philip returned, and finding his wife pregnant, commanded that she should be put to death. But she declared that he had visited her on a certain night in the form of a serpent; then he remembered his dream, which agreed with her story, and permitted her to live; but from that time he felt an unspeakable horror of all serpents.

Alexander the Great, on one of his expeditions, came to Mount Ararat; and hearing of a hermit who had performed great wonders, and could foretell the future, he went to him, and said, "Are you the wise man about whom every one speaks?" "God alone is wise," was the reply. "I have heard wonderful things of you," said Alexander; "tell me now what death you will die." "By the hand of my son." "You lie!" exclaimed Alexander, and pierced him through. "You are indeed my son," said the hermit; who then related to him the secret of his birth, and died.

THE CAVE OF TREASURES.

When I left Erivan, Abovian accompanied me to the first station, called Abranka-pos,—literally the 'Mine of treasures.' He informed me that among the neighbouring mountains there is said to be a secret cavern, the entrance to which is known to no

one, and is only visible during certain hours in the year. One day a peasant, mounted upon an ass, was riding past the mountain, and saw a gate which led to a cavern. He stepped in, and beheld before him amazing treasures in gold and precious stones, with which he filled his sack, and placed it upon his ass. As he was about to depart, he found that he had left his thorn-stick behind him in the cave, and returned to fetch it; but the hour for the gate to be open was past, the cavern closed, and the peasant was never heard of again. The ass returned home with its load, and the family of the peasant became very rich*.

* I quote the following extract from Ritter's 'Erdkunde,' chap. x., page 319, for comparison. Wherever the cuneiform inscriptions are found upon rock-walls, the people of the present day think that treasures are buried there, and that these inscriptions are talismans to guard them. The great rock-castle of Van Kalesi, by the common people called Gurab, is situated in Armenia, near the town of Van, south of Ararat. It is a wonderful structure, and even now so strong that it is considered the last and safest refuge for the Turkish Pasha. A great part of it is hewn out of the solid rock, and many legendary tales exist respecting it. A grotto there was most probably once a highly treasured sanctuary of the Assyrians, but now the Armenians have hewn a rude cross over it. Here the most beautiful cuneiform inscriptions are found, and the grotto is even at the present day chosen by the Mohammedans, and still more by their wives, as a shrine for pilgrimage (Ziaret). One part of the building is called the treasure-house (Khazané), under the gate of which great treasure is said to lie, guarded by two men with flaming swords. A serpent lies every night before the talisman (the cuneiform inscriptions), but disappears in the morning through a hole.

Half a mile from this castle there is a rock upon a hill, covered with Assyrian inscriptions, and here is supposed to be the entrance to the subterranean town of the Divs. There are two means of gaining an entrance; the one by deciphering the talisman, the other to be there on the feast of St. John, or on the seventh day after Easter, when the door opens once of its own accord. Should this

SHAH ISMAEL AND THE DISCOVERY OF RICE.

Shah Ismael, the son of Abraham, once conquered the whole earth. He then beleaguered the ocean, which he resolved to empty upon the mountains; and his army was so numerous, that he was able to accomplish this by commanding every man to carry away only one bucketful of water daily. As the sea began visibly to diminish, the men of the sea went to their King, and complained to him of the danger they were in. The king answered, "Go, and bring me news whether the enemy is in haste, or whether he has patience: if he is in haste, then he must eat dirt; but if he has patience, we shall have to pay him tribute." They brought him word, that each man of the army carried away only one bucketful a day. "Then," said the king, "we must submit." So he sent an ambassador to Shah Ismael, but no one could understand his language; whereupon the Shah ordered him to be seized and cast into a well, but at the same time gave him a wife to keep him company. By her the ambassador had a son, who when seven years old was

happen in the morning, when an enchanted cock crows from within, then the hour is lucky; but if otherwise, then the person who enters at once loses his way. Not long ago an inhabitant of Van effected an entrance, but he has never returned home. The door is called Meher door, perhaps Mitra door, or Sun gate.

Compare similar German popular legends of enchanted treasures, and the conditions of their discovery, in Grimm's 'Deutsche Volks-sagen,' also in the 'Hausmärchen.' The tale of Mount Semsî, in the 'Arabian Nights,' will occur to the reader.

able to act as interpreter. The ambassador now appeared before Shah Ismael, and asked him, what the King of the Earth required from the King of the Sea. Ismael answered, "I require one hundred galvar* of the food which the King eats." The ambassador reported this to his master the King of the Sea, who answered, "It is impossible; I will give him all the treasures of the sea, but a hundred galvar of food I cannot give, for I do not possess so much." Shah Ismael then demanded fifty galvar, but the King of the Sea was unable to procure even these, and offered instead his wives and daughters. Finally the Shah was content to accept twenty-five galvar of the food, and this was rice (*scheltik*), which only thrives in water, and had never before grown on the earth. The numerous inland lakes were formed from the emptying of the ocean by the soldiers of Shah Ismael †.

THE INGRATITUDE OF MAN †.

A peasant, who was one day ploughing, found in a hole a serpent benumbed with cold; he took it up, and warmed it in his bosom, until it was restored, and then it tried to sting him. "What!" said the peasant, "have I saved your life, and you now want to sting

* A galvar is equal to twelve hundred pounds.

† This is originally a Tatar story, but is widely known in Armenia.

‡ Compare with this a similar fable in Æsop. In Reineke Voss, by Jacob Grimm, are to be found points of similarity.

me?" The serpent replied, "I cannot do otherwise; Nature has commanded us to sting men, for they are the most ungrateful of all creatures." "That is false," rejoined the peasant, "and three umpires shall decide the question." The serpent consented. First a wise old horse was called on to give his judgement. "It is quite true," said the horse, "that man is ungrateful: after serving him faithfully many years, and saving his life on the field of battle, he orders me to be killed, and sells my hide to the knacker." An old buffalo was next appealed to, and he was of the same opinion as the horse. They then betook themselves to a fox, who whispered into the peasant's ear, "Give me the best hen in your yard, and I will help you out of the difficulty." The peasant gave him a wink in the affirmative. Then the fox seated himself gravely in the judge's chair, inquired of the man the circumstances of the case, and said, "Show me the hole in which the serpent lay benumbed; it seems to me impossible that it could have found room in that hole,—I must see; creep in." The serpent had scarcely got into the hole, when the fox, aided by the peasant, filled it up with earth, and thus the peasant was saved. The next day Reynard came for the hen; but the peasant was asleep, and his servants beat the fox unmercifully, and broke one of his legs; he then pronounced the same sentence as the previous judges, "Man is truly the most ungrateful of all creatures."

THE GRATEFUL SPIRIT.

A wealthy man was once riding through a forest, and found some people wreaking their vengeance upon a dead man, by beating his corpse, which they had hung up on a tree. When he asked them why they treated a dead man with such indignity, they answered that he had died owing them money; whereupon the traveller paid the debt, and buried the body. Years passed by, and this man fell into poverty. In his native town there dwelt a rich man, with an only daughter, whom he was very desirous to see married; she had already had five husbands, who all died on the first night after their marriage, and no one ventured to approach her. Now her father cast his eyes upon this man who had grown so poor, and offered him his daughter. But the man hesitated whether to risk his life, and begged time to consider. One day a man came to him, and offered himself as a servant. "How can I take you into my service," said he, "who am so poor that I can hardly maintain myself?" "I ask neither food nor wages," replied the man, "but only the half of your future possessions." Upon this they came to an agreement. The servant advised him to accept the proffered marriage, and on the wedding-night placed himself sword in hand in the bridal chamber. "What do you want?" said the man. "According to our contract, half your goods belong to me," was the reply; "I do not now require your wife, but

I insist on staying here." When the newly married pair had fallen asleep, a serpent crept out of the bride's mouth to sting the bridegroom to death, but the servant chopped off its head and carried it away. After awhile the servant demanded half the property; the division was made; he also demanded his share of the wife, saying, "She must be hung up, with her head downwards, and I will cleave her in two." Thereupon a second serpent glided out of her mouth. "This," said the servant, "is the last; henceforth you may live with your wife safely and happily. I ask nothing of you. I am the spirit of the man whose corpse you once saved from disgrace, and which you piously buried." So saying the Spirit disappeared.

THE KING WHO BECAME FORTUNATE IN HIS OLD-AGE.

Once there lived a good and benevolent king, to whom a Genius came one day, and said, "I am sent from Heaven to ask, whether you wish to be fortunate in your youth or in your old-age; you may have your choice." The king chose the latter. Misfortune began to flow in upon him: he lost his kingdom, lived as a poor man, and was robbed of his wife by a wealthy merchant. As he was pursuing the latter, with his two sons, he came to a river; and in carrying one of his sons across, a wolf seized the other whom he had left on the bank, and as he rushed to his assistance the first was carried away

by the stream. Thus he believed that both his sons had perished. Being now poor, deserted, and without wife or children, he wandered many years in foreign lands, and came to a country the king of which had just died without an heir. The priests and people had decided to choose as king the man upon whom a white eagle should alight. They all assembled in a large field, and the eagle descended three times upon a stranger, who appeared to be a beggar; it was the dethroned king. All his good fortune now returned, and he became a powerful monarch. One day a rich merchant presented himself, and begged that a watch might be placed over his wife, who was imprisoned in a chest. Two soldiers received orders to watch: and during the night they related to one another the history of their lives, and found that they were brothers. Then the woman knocked at the lid of the chest, and called to them to open it; she had discovered from their conversation that they were her sons. They set her free, and she related her history; then they all fell asleep together. In this state they were found next morning by the merchant, who ran off to the king, to demand that the watchers should be punished for releasing the woman. But soon the whole was cleared up. The king inquired into the matter, and found that they were his wife and children; and the merchant, who had stolen his wife, he ordered to be beheaded.

THE SOULS OF MEN.

After death the souls of men are said to hover over the bodies and graves for seven days*. The soul of the just man blesses the body in touching expressions, for having during its stay on earth preserved it free from sin, and endured labour and fasting to maintain its purity†. But the soul of the wicked man curses his body, as the cause of its perdition. The souls of the just often descend from the bright regions above in the form of beautiful birds, and look down from the trees upon those whom they have loved on earth: the Armenians therefore never kill forest birds, but often point them out to their children, saying, "That is your dear father, your little brother, your sister; be a good child, or it will fly away, and never look at you again with its sweet little eyes."

Traces of paganism are said still to exist in many of the customs and religious rites of the Armenians. In Europe likewise, it is common to meet with hea-

* The belief is common in Russia that the souls of the dead remain near their bodies until they are purified from sin, when they are conducted by their guardian angel to Paradise. They are supposed to follow the same pleasures and occupations as in this life; hence perhaps the custom among so many nations of burying with the dead their most cherished objects,—arms, horses, even wives and slaves.

† This pretended blessing is actually found printed in an Armenian book of devotion. Compare the beautiful tale of the 'Machandelboom,' in Grimm's 'Kinder und Hausmärchen.'

then usages and festivals, which have been converted into Christian ones, or at least deprived of their idolatrous character. Instances of this are especially found in Germany: the "German Michel" is changed into the Archangel Michael; and the "Stout Hans," into St. John. The festival of the goddess Octar retained this name, but was changed into the Christian Easter. The Yul festival with its hill-fires, became the feast of St. John with the St. John's fires. Traces also are said to exist among the Armenians of the ancient Mitra, or sun-worship. The sun indeed is peculiarly honoured, as typical of the Divine grace: the face of a dying person is turned towards the sun; burials take place only in the sunshine, and the head is laid in the coffin toward the East. The Christian festival of Candlemas has superseded the feast of Mihr, or the primæval fire. The festival of the Transfiguration, which continues three days, has supplanted that of Varthavar (Rose-blossoms) of the Spring-goddess Anahid, the goddess of strength and wisdom.

On my return to Tiflis from Erivan, Peter Neu related to me many charming stories, two of which I give here, with these Armenian legends, although in fact they are Chinese tales, which Peter had brought from Persia. The incidents and moral of these two parables recur in numerous tales of various countries; a question arises, whether they are indigenous among each people, or have been transmitted from one country to another.

CHINESE PARABLE ON HOSPITALITY*.

Fohi in the course of his wanderings, coming to a village, knocked at the door of a rich woman, and begged permission to enter. "What!" said she, "do you think I receive into my house every roving vagabond? no indeed, it would be unbecoming a respectable woman—go your way!" Then he went to the cottage of a poor woman, who at once kindly begged him to enter. She set before him the only food she had, a little goat's milk, broke a piece of bread into it, and said, "May Fohi bless it, that we may both have enough!" She then prepared for him a couch of straw; and when he fell asleep, perceiving that he had no shirt, she sat up all night and made him one, out of some linen she had made by her own hard labour: in the morning she brought it to him, begging he would not despise her poor gift. After breakfast she accompanied him a little way; and at parting Fohi said, "May the first work you undertake last until evening!" When she got home, she began to measure her linen, to see how much was left; and she went on measuring, and did not come to the end of it until the evening, when her house and yard were full of linen; in short, she did not know what to do with her wealth. Her rich neighbour, seeing this, was sorely vexed, and resolved that such good fortune should not

* This tale and the following were related to me by Peter Neu, who had heard them in Persia.

escape her again. After some months the traveller came once more to the village ; she went to meet him, pressed him to go to her house, treated him with the best food she had, and in the morning brought him a shirt of fine linen, which she had had made some time before ; but all night she kept a candle burning in her room that the stranger if he awoke might suppose she was making his shirt. After breakfast, she accompanied him out of the village ; and when they parted he said, " May the first work you undertake last till evening ! " She went her way home, thinking the whole time of her linen, and anticipating its wonderful increase ; but just then her cows began to low. " Before I measure my linen," said she, " I will quickly fetch the cows some water." But when she poured the water into the trough, her pail never emptied ; she went on pouring, the stream increased, and soon her house and yard were all under water ; the neighbours complained that everything was ruined ; the cattle were drowned, and with difficulty she saved her life, for the water never ceased flowing until the setting of the sun.

SECOND CHINESE PARABLE ON HOSPITALITY.

On another occasion Fohi was passing through a village in the guise of a poor traveller, when he saw a rich old bald-pate looking out of his window : he asked him for a meal, but the old man drove him away with his dogs. Fohi then went to the cabin of a poor married couple, which stood opposite, and was received

in the most friendly manner ; being extremely poor, they ran one way and another to beg of the neighbours some food for their guest. After the meal he continued his journey, and they accompanied him out of the village : at parting, Fohi discovered himself to them, and offered to grant them three wishes. They asked, first, for eternal salvation ; secondly, that they should no longer need to beg when any one sought their hospitality : for the third wish, they could not think of anything they wanted. " It would not be a bad thing," said Fohi, " if instead of your old cabin you had a comfortable house." " Ah, yes !" they replied, " as my lord pleases ; he knows better than we what is good for us." On returning home, they looked in vain for their cabin ; on its site stood a magnificent palace, which they hardly dared to enter, and in every room they found boxes and chests full of riches.

The old bald-head, having awaked from his after-dinner nap, turned toward the window and beheld the palace ; he rubbed his eyes, once, twice,—still the palace stood before him. Then he called to his wife, " I am dreaming, give me a box on the ear to wake me up." Still there stood the palace. He stepped into the street, and his house in comparison looked little better than a hovel. Then he entered the palace, and found his old neighbours surrounded with wealth, and they told him their wonderful tale. He could hardly hear them out, but hurried home, saddled his swiftest horse, and vaulting on its back, rode off in pursuit of the despised traveller. On

overtaking him, he humbly begged his pardon, and entreated him to return and lodge with him. The traveller refused, but freely pardoned him: whereupon the bald-head implored that three wishes might be granted him likewise. "Wish for nothing," replied the stranger; "you will only wish for evil." But he importuned Fohi until he consented. As he was riding home, meditating upon his three wishes, the horse ran away with him, and in terror he cried, "I wish you would break your neck!" In a moment the horse fell down dead: his first wish was fulfilled. Full of mortification, he took off the saddle and carried it away; and the weather being very hot, he began to think of his wife, whom he always treated as a beast of burden, and involuntarily said to himself, "I only wish my wife had this saddle strapped on her back!" In a moment the saddle disappeared, and to his grief he perceived that his second wish was accomplished. When he got home, his wife, with the saddle fixed upon her back, received him with loud lamentation. He begged her to be quiet, and promised to put her into a box, and carry her about as a show; but still she continued to weep, and shriek, and scold; till at last, endeavouring to quiet her, the words escaped him, "How can I help it? Do not I wish as much as you that the saddle were hanging again on its peg in the stable; but what can we do?" Instantly the saddle disappeared from the back of his wife, and hung again in its old place. The three wishes were fulfilled.

CHAPTER XII.

ARRIVAL AT TIFLIS.—EXCURSION TO THE OSSETES.—PRINCE ERISTAV.
 —OSSETIAN VILLAGES AND FARMS.—ARRANGEMENTS OF THE
 HOUSES.—AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.—RUINS OF A CHURCH.—
 VILLAGE OF INABISCH-UBANI.—EVENING MEAL.—HISTORY OF THE
 OSSETES.—CHRISTIANITY.—SACRED GROVES AND SACRIFICES.—
 CAVE OF ELIJAH.—OSSETIAN SUPERSTITIONS.—MARRIAGES.—
 —POSITION OF WOMEN.—THE WIDOW.—DIVORCE.—INHERITANCE.
 —FAMILY NAME AND RACE.—NOBLES, FREEMEN, AND SLAVES.—
 BLOOD-REVENGE.—COURTS OF ARBITRATION.—AGRICULTURE.—
 NATIONAL PHYSIOGNOMY.—FOOD AND DRESS.—FILIAL RESPECT.—
 LANGUAGE.—SINGING.—FAIRY-TALES.

I LEFT Erivan on the 29th of August, and reached Tiflis the following day. I immediately made preparations for an excursion among the Ossetes. The General Commandant gave me letters to the various Russian authorities stationed in the district I was about to visit, commending me to their protection; a more important circumstance however was my finding in Tiflis a travelling companion, who rendered me great assistance,—Dr. Sabuloff, whom I have already mentioned. He was by birth an Armenian Catholic, had studied at Leipzig, was well educated, spoke German fluently, and eagerly entered into my investiga-

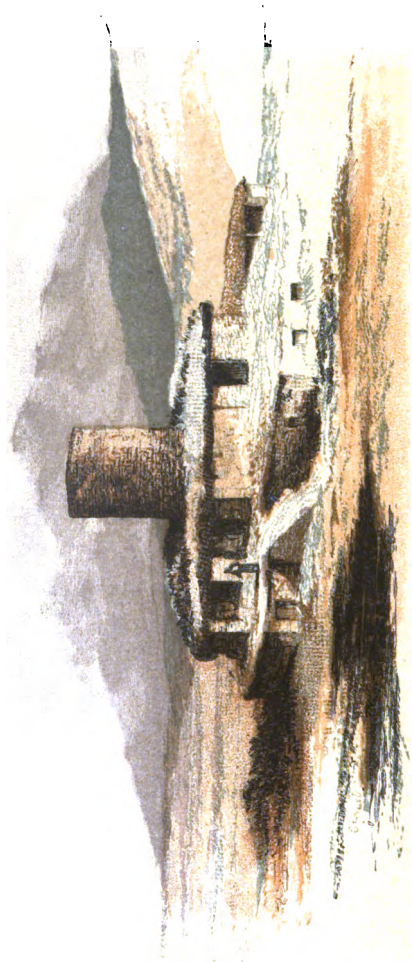
tions. He was known and highly respected by the Ossetes as a physician, and spoke their language; he hired an Ossetian servant to accompany us.

On the 1st of September I started with Dr. Sabuloff, Peter Neu, and the Ossetian, in a vehicle belonging to a German colonist, who had previously driven me to Kakhetia. We struck into the great Russian military road which leads over the Caucasus, and at about ten o'clock reached Duschet, a military station of some importance with an hospital attached to it. We here waited upon the Chief of the Circle, who sent his colleague Prince Eristav to accompany us. This young man possessed considerable knowledge of the affairs and habits of the Ossetes, and readily answered my inquiries. He told me that his family had been settled in Georgia from a remote period, but that it originally emigrated from Circassia. Eristav is a Georgian official title, properly signifying 'Head of the People*.' The Czars of Georgia once subdued a portion of the Ossetes, and appointed the Eristavs and the Madjebellos as their governors. The ruling power being weak, the submission of the Ossetes was

* According to the Georgian Annals, the Emperor Justinian, who, in 575, elevated the first Bagratide Guram to the throne of Georgia, appointed an Ossetian named Rostom or Rostoff to the office of Khssnios-Eristav (Head of the country) of southern Ossetia, which included thirty-nine districts situated in the neighbourhood of the river Khssani; this country, as well as Georgia, at that time belonged to the Byzantine empire. He granted him many prerogatives. The family-name Eristav, which originated in the title of office, is widely spread amongst the Georgian nobility; they are descended most probably from civil officers who bore this title.

partial; they paid tribute only when coerced. Under the Russian dominion a greater degree of order has been introduced. In the villages where Russian soldiers and Cossacks sometimes show themselves, they are obedient, and pay the taxes to the Crown,—for every farm, two kod of wheat and one of barley, also eight abbas for police, post-service, and bridges. The villages are answerable for the whole amount. In the interior, amongst the hills, where there are no roads, the Crown peasants usually pay nothing; occasionally however they bring a sheep as an acknowledgment of the Russian dominion, and to secure themselves from being treated as enemies in case of war. Prince Eristav stated that his family reside in the Ossetian territory, and are partly loved partly feared. Some years ago an Eristav was murdered; he had an Ossetian servant whose brother was a civil officer and a dreaded robber. On one occasion the Eristav came upon this man and shot him. The servant immediately left his master, declaring that, although the latter had a right to seize his brother and condemn him to death, yet, since he had with his own hand shot him without being attacked, he must be regarded as a murderer, and was liable to blood-revenge. Whereupon the Ossetian lay in wait for the Eristav, shot him dead, and escaped to the Circassians, who however gave him up and he was executed.

At Duschet we were furnished with five excellent Cossack horses, and continued our journey across pathless, romantic and wooded hills. We passed some



Ossetia

OSSETIAN FARM, AND WATCH-TOWER.

villages, containing a mixed population of Georgians and Ossetes; the two races could be easily distinguished by the different construction of their houses. We then entered some Ossetian villages, which are always situated on the declivities of hills. The largest are found in the lower districts; among the mountains they seldom contain more than twenty or thirty houses, sometimes but five or six farms. At the highest elevations only single farms are met with; the homesteads are large, castellated buildings, surrounded by walls.

The villages at a middle elevation on the mountains consist of farm-premises, built close together in an amphitheatrical form on sloping ground: they are all fortified, either by a strong tower in the middle, the chief structure in each farmyard being built without windows upon an elevated stone foundation, or else by a wall guarded with towers, carried round the village. The principal buildings of the farms are usually three or four stories high; the lower part contains a large hall, a stable, and a shed for cattle: a flight of steps outside conducts to the second story, and from that to the third and fourth, which last has a small landing-place upon the projecting story below it, and a little court-yard at the side, formed by the high ground of the acclivity. Sometimes there is a lofty stone tower, overlooking all the other premises. In the less elevated districts the farmhouses consist of only two stories, the lower one containing stalls for the cattle, and worked into the side of the mountain,

so that the back and part of the sides are formed of earth or rock. In front there is an enclosed court, containing manure-heaps, ploughs, sledges, and trucks; carriages with wheels are here unknown. A flight of steps leads from the court-yard to the principal building, called the "Chasar," which stands against the hill-side, the latter forming a portion of the back wall; the remaining part, and the other three sides of the house, are formed of beams laid one upon another and jointed together. The second story, which is the principal dwelling, has also a court-yard at the side: around this are placed the storehouses and separate rooms for the married people living on the farm, every married pair (and there are sometimes half-a-dozen) having their own private chamber*. These rooms are raised several feet from the ground, upon four posts, as a protection from the damp: the only roof is constructed of beams, placed one beside another and covered with turf. The door of the principal building is in front, but there is also one at the side leading into the court-yard. All the doors which I saw were of the same form, and fastened by a carved wooden bolt.

The houses are all arranged on the same plan. First there is an open hall, with a threshing-floor on one side, upon which the corn is trodden out by oxen,

* Dr. Subaloff's Ossetian servant was one of a family of forty-five persons who all lived together on the same farm: at the head of the family was the grandmother. In Croatia, especially on the Military Frontier, the same custom exists; each married couple, of which there are six or eight on every farm, has its own small dwelling, consisting of a single room, built in the court-yard.

not threshed by a machine as amongst the Georgians. There is something quite German in this custom of having the threshing-floor inside the house: with all the other Caucasian tribes which I visited, it is in the open air, in or near the villages. From the hall you enter a large dwelling-room, terminating in a kind of wooden chimney, with a square aperture in the roof. The hearth* is placed beneath this opening, upon the ground, between two large stones: over it, fastened to a cross-beam, is an iron hook, from which hangs a kettle, precisely similar to those in the peasants' cottages of Westphalia and Lower Saxony. The stalls for the milch-cows are on each side of the dwelling-room, that they may be under the eye of the mistress, who, as in Westphalia, can overlook them from the fireplace. There are no windows in the houses, only small square openings. The wooden chair assigned to the head of the family is always placed beside the hearth; it is either three-legged, with a round back carved and ornamented, or stands upon four legs connected by cross-pieces, which form a back and arms. In one house I saw also a sofa-shaped bench, about five feet long, prettily carved. Against the walls stand three-legged benches, which, when required for use, are brought to the fireplace beside the arm-chair; these are however only for the men; the women, including even the mistress, almost invariably seat themselves on the floor. The Ossetes never sit crosslegged, like the Orientals,

* In the Ossetian villages of the valley of Terek, the fireplaces are regularly built.

but always upon chairs, benches, or blocks of wood. They have also low three-legged tables, which I have never seen amongst any of the other Caucasian tribes, who even at their meals merely spread a carpet on the ground. Iron fire-shovels and tongs lay on the hearth, and a roasting-spit with four long forks rested on a three-legged stand and was turned. A kneading-trough, hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, and a churn, resembling those used in the north of Germany, were placed on one side of the fireplace. When the churn is used, it is placed obliquely upon a rocking-stand of wood, and shaken about till the butter is ready. Butter made from cream in this way is not found among any of the other Caucasian tribes, nor even among the Russians, whose butter is merely a sort of grease prepared from the cream.

I observed cradles, quite different from those in other parts of the Caucasus, but similar in form to European ones. The Ossetes are, I believe, the only Caucasians who have bedsteads; these are frequently placed in a niche, and together with the beds, bolsters, and coverlets, exactly resemble those we have in Europe. Even in Russia, the peasants stretch themselves out on the stove, a bench, or the ground, where they spread out their pillow and coverlet; whilst in the houses of the nobility, in the interior of the country, bedsteads are unknown; the beds are laid at night upon sofas, and removed in the morning.

On shelves fastened to the wall beside the hearth are placed the cooking utensils, of copper and iron,

with vessels of wood, glass, and even earthenware, which is purchased at Tiflis; all are bright and clean, showing the pride taken in them by the Ossetian housewife. The Ossetes, like the Germans, brew beer from barley, and give it the same name; the other Caucasians hardly know of its existence*; even the Russians have only the *quas*, a sort of drink resembling beer. They use drinking-horns like those of the Georgians, and, to my astonishment, wooden beer-cans, and on particular occasions wooden beakers, exactly like those used from time immemorial in Germany. Their festive customs likewise have quite a German character. The beaker, fresh filled with beer, is passed from one guest to another; and after each has quaffed, he says, "I drink to your good health!" While one is drinking, the rest sing an ancient drinking-song, accompanied by a clapping of hands:—

"Banas! na kuchta furesti:
Denoason fameste:
Banas! banas! banas!" †

the word *banas!* being repeated until the person sets down the beaker.

Among the agricultural implements, the plough struck me as being quite different in construction from all others I had observed among the Caucasians: it resembles the Mecklenburg hoeing-plough. I no-

* A kind of beer is made by the Circassians from millet or barley-meal, which when fermented is called *Fuda-kosh*, or white drink. The Tatars call it *Braga*. Brandy is called *Fuda-sitza*, or black drink.

† "Drink! Our hands smart:—it runs out. Drink! drink! drink!"

ticed also here the common German hoe, which I had not seen elsewhere. My companion, Prince Pául Lieven, who travelled through Vladikaukas before he rejoined me at Kertsch, penetrated into the interior of the country, passing through several villages of the northern Ossetes, where he made many characteristic sketches: some of these represent mediæval towers and fortresses, which indicate traces of a power and a chivalrous age concerning which history is silent. The farms in the highest mountain districts are even now quite like castles; whilst those in the valleys are mere loghouses. Those on the hills are built of stone, and surrounded by a wall, with a lofty tower in the centre three stories high: the lowest story is assigned to the cattle; in the middle one, which is reached by a staircase on the outside, reside the family; and in the top story are kept the stores. At the very top a watchman is placed, who announces all strangers, friends or foe. The walls of these buildings are remarkably compact and firm, although no mortar or cement is used in their construction. In the court-yard there are several houses, and invariably one set apart for guests.

After passing many villages and farms, we rode up a lofty barren mountain, in the form of a saddle; on a projecting rock are the ruins of a monastery and church, a celebrated place of pilgrimage for all the Christian Ossetes. The church is open on one side, and the roof has fallen in, but the arches are still entire. The interior has been entirely stript of orna-

ment. A secret passage, whose entrance is open near the altar, leads to unknown subterranean depths. Around the church are the small stone cells of the monks, now in ruins*. When Nadir Shah marched through the Caucasus, his army attacked this monastery and church, expecting to find great treasures; but by the time they had forced an entrance, everything had disappeared. In vain they tortured the monks, to make them reveal the hiding-place of their treasures: five hundred monks were at that time in the monastery, and all were murdered. The secret may perhaps be known to some Ossetian families of the neighbourhood; but up to the present time the Russians, notwithstanding every effort, have been unable to discover these treasures. It is however an indisputable fact, that, on the day of the great pilgrimage, the high-altar is all at once ornamented with the most costly vessels and candlesticks of gold and silver, gold

* There are a great many stone churches scattered throughout the Ossetian territory, for the most part in ruins. They are generally isolated, and rarely found in the villages. Their erection is attributed to Queen Tamara, who introduced Christianity among the Ossetes about A.D. 1171-98. Christian priests are however to be found only on the borders of Georgia: it is said that there are no native Ossetian priests at all. These ruined churches are held in high veneration, as is shown by the pilgrimages and the marks of respect paid them on passing. The Ossetes call these old churches *Dsuar*, the Georgian word *Dsvari* signifies *Cross*. The sign of the Cross is used by the Ossetes in some of their superstitious observances: when they first see the new moon, for example, they cut a cross in the air with their daggers; but making this sign with the hand as a devotional practice is not customary among them, and rarely among the Georgians or Armenians. Falling stars they call *Dsuar-atachti*, or flying crosses, and look upon them as sacred.

brocaded coverings and priestly vestments, all which, as soon as the service is concluded, vanish instantly.

It was evening ere we quitted the ruins. We determined on halting for the night at Inarisch-Ubani (Neighbourhood of the Cross), a village at the foot of the mountain. We were hospitably received at a large farm, the owner of which was dead*; his widow now managed the affairs of the estate. We were conducted to the hearth, upon which a large cheerful fire was heaped up, and I was placed in the seat of honour, the chair of the head of the family. The hostess, with her daughters and some other women, were busy making preparations for our supper. The men of the village gradually dropped in, and collected around us: I plied them diligently with questions, Dr. Sabuloff acting as interpreter. Their answers were always prompt and concise, given sometimes by one person, sometimes by another, as each possessed information on the subject of my inquiry, no one showing the least reserve.

It was altogether a singular and highly picturesque scene: the blazing fire alone lighted the hall, which was so spacious, that the rafters of the roof, and the

* The name of this man was Dschugaipfert. His whole genealogy was related to us: he was the son of Bedoipfert, the son of Dschukoipfert, the son of Bedaripfert, the son of Taboipfert. Great importance is attached to descent, of which I shall speak later. The terminations *pfert* and *té* are said to mean, in Ossetian, 'son,' or 'descent.' In northern Ossetia, to the left of Vladikaukas, the termination *man* is much used; there are families named Asman, Leman, etc.—names which have a perfectly German sound; the name of Franz is also frequently met with.

various objects against the walls, were seen only in dim and shadowy outlines. Around us was a motley assemblage of figures, in strange costumes and various attitudes,—some sitting on benches, others standing or reclining before the hearth, or walking about, while the women were diligently at work by the fire. There was an extraordinary stillness: no sound was heard except the crackling of the flames, the little bustle of preparation for supper, and the voice of the person replying to my inquiries: only one spoke at a time, and always in an under tone. I penned down diligently what I heard in my note-book, but the bystanders appeared neither surprised nor annoyed; and whenever I paused for a moment, they asked if I had rightly understood them. The remarkable similarity between the customs of the Ossetes and the Germans has been observed by preceding travellers. Were some German traveller to visit the Ossetes, reside among them, study their habits and customs, and collect their traditions, the results would probably be of great interest, and throw light on the early history of the Germanic race.

When supper was ready, a low table was placed before us, on which was spread a tablecloth with a pattern of blue flowers. Mutton broth, containing pieces of the meat, was first served to us in a wooden bowl. Knives and wooden spoons were then handed to us, with a cake made of cheese, butter, dough, and onions, which tasted extremely well. A similar cake is said to be common among the Thuringian peasants.

Our table was lighted by a burning piece of pinewood stuck in the wall, and a wick placed in a little bowl of tallow. Bread-cakes were baked in the ashes. It is remarkable that all these articles are quite unknown to the other Caucasian races, and are entirely German, or at least European in character.

The Ossetes call themselves Ir and Iron, and their country Ironistan. By the Circassians they are called Kash'ha; by the Tatars, Oss and Tauli; by the Lesghis, Otz, Otze; by the Georgians, Ossi. Those Ossetes with whom I conversed had very obscure traditions of the origin, migration, and history of their race. They said that their ancestors came originally over the mountains from the north; that they at first dwelt in the country now occupied by the Circassians, and had been driven onward as far as their present territory by other races pressing behind. This vague tradition has certainly historical probability. The Georgian annals assert that the Ossetes came from the banks of the Don, and Ptolemy mentions them as living at the mouth of that river. They are said to have built Azof. In the Ossetian language *Don* means 'water' or 'stream,' and countless rivers have this affix.

The Ossetes, who are clearly the same people as the Alani, formerly inhabited also the slopes and plains of the Caucasus, and were governed by their own kings; but in the fourteenth century they were driven out, and forced to retire to the mountains. They have possessed their present territory from an early

date, since the Georgian annals mention them as their neighbours so long ago as the time of Alexander the Great. My Ossetian informants could only mention one fact relating to their history,—that in the time of Vakhtang Goors-Aslan they had a king of their own, named Bagatar*, who, being at war with the Georgian king, had advanced as far as Mzketh; but, as he was in the act of crossing the Koor on horseback, he was shot with an arrow by king Vakhtang.

The majority of the Ossetes are nominally Christians, and belong to the Greek Church; but there are some dwelling on the Circassian frontier who are Mohammedans; neither Christianity nor Mohammedanism however appears to make much impression on them: they are in fact semi-pagans, indeed some are wholly and avowedly heathens†. They offer sacrifices of bread and flesh upon altars in sacred groves; of these the most famous is in the interior of the country, not far from the village of Lamadon; it was originated by the Nards, an extinct tribe, supposed to have been Jews. The cave of the prophet Elijah (As-ilja-leget), the guardian and patron of the Ossetes, is

* This tradition is confirmed by the Georgian annals, which relate that King Vakhtang Goors-Aslan, who reigned A.D. 446–499, defeated the Ossi, and with his own hand killed their two most celebrated leaders, the Tchagatar and the Bagatar, who had challenged him to single combat. According to a Siberian tradition the Bogatiers were wild giants; and the mythical name of Bahatir occurs also among the Tatars.

† Only a small number of the Ossetes are baptized. Those who eat pork pass for Christians; those who abstain from it, for Mohammedans.

in this grove. Profound peace reigns around it; the shepherds pasture their flocks in silence, and neither turmoil, strife, nor rapine dare disturb the calm of these holy precincts. Once, says the legend, a holy man was taken prisoner and carried off to a strange country in the west; when an eagle, bearing him aloft over high mountains and broad seas, deposited him here, and he passed the remainder of his life in performing religious service in the cave of Elijah. This service became hereditary in his family. The eldest descendant, dressed in a coat of his own weaving, once a year ascends the sacred rock alone, and having entered the cave, offers up a mystic sacrifice. No one else is permitted to approach: an attempt to climb the rock would be punished with blindness, and instant death would be the penalty for entering the cave. The interior is said to be composed of emerald; in the centre stands an altar of rock, bearing a golden goblet filled with beer. As soon as the priest enters, he receives the gift of prophecy for the ensuing year. If the beer is agitated in the goblet and runs over, there will be peace and an abundant harvest; but if the beer does not move, there will be war and famine. On the following day a great banquet, to which every one in the neighbourhood contributes, is held in the village of Lamadon, and there the priest of Elijah makes known the events of the coming year.

The Christian Ossetes likewise frequently present sacrifices and thank-offerings, consisting chiefly of flesh, fish, and bread, on ancient altars in caves

and sacred groves*, and sometimes on large artificial mounds of stones†. Before the caves of Elijah, (for there are several, that which I have just mentioned being the most celebrated,) goats are slain, and their skins hung upon lofty trees. The Christian festivals are religiously observed, when sacrifices are offered. At Easter a sheep is killed; the flesh is handed round by the oldest person present, while a prayer is recited; the bones and skin are then burned. Different sacrifices are appointed for all the great festivals: on New Year's day a pig is slain, at Easter a sheep or lamb, at Michaelmas an ox, at Christmas a goat. There are four Saints to whom particular veneration is paid,—the prophet Elijah, the archangel Michael, St. Gregory, and St. Nicholas. On the first day of the week, called *Chatzawibon* (Lord's day), and on the seventh, called *Shabate*, the Ossetes wear no covering upon their heads; they do not however distinguish these days by any strictly religious observances. Monday and Friday they consider unpropitious for entering upon an undertaking,—a superstition which also exists widely in Europe. These customs exhibit

* The Georgians and Armenians still offer sacrifices of animals in their churches; their ecclesiastical authorities have never been able to wean them entirely from the practice. St. Nina, who introduced Christianity into Georgia, A.D. 423, found remains of human victims; and her history relates that, after several vain efforts to dissuade the Georgians from sacrifices of all kinds, she succeeded in inducing them to discontinue the immolation of human beings.

† This reminds us of the *Steinringe* and *Hünenringe* of northern Germany and Scandinavia, in which the sacrificial stone rests upon three or five others.

a singular mixture of Christianity and Judaism: if the tradition be correct that the Nards were Jews, the introduction of many of these practices may be attributed to them*.

Superstition appears to abound among the Ossetes, in proportion as Christianity has become obscured. They have fortunetellers, witches, and magicians, who profess to foretell the future by means of visions and conversations with the souls of holy men who are dead. Open robbery is not considered theft; but if anything has been secretly stolen, its owner applies to a sorcerer (*Kurismezok*, wise man), and by means of a present secures his assistance. They proceed to-

* In Kohl's Travels in Southern Russia is a very interesting account of the Ossetes, in which is given the following remarkable prayer: this is, I believe, the only liturgical document which the Ossetes possess.

“God, we implore thy mercy upon us: have pity on us!

Holy Gregory, help us, we implore thee: have pity on us!

Mother of God, we implore thee, have pity on us!

Michael, Gabriel, we implore thee, have pity on us!

Ye mountain churches, have pity on us!

O Narian St. Gregory, have pity on us!

Ye Bussabseli, [lofty mountains in Ossetia,] and ye apostles and angels who dwell upon them, we greet and implore you to have pity on us, who supplicate you!

Ye Georgian churches, have pity upon us! that all the people who live around you may have pity upon us.

Christ, have pity on us!

God of all goodness, help us according to thy justice!”

The form of this prayer is precisely that of the Catholic Litany. Kohl remarks that no mention of the Trinity occurs in it; but, although the Ossetes may have no clear ideas respecting the Trinity, they certainly hold this doctrine. In reference to the expression in the sixth verse, “O Narian St. Gregory,” Kohl observes that Nara is a defile, in which formerly stood a church dedicated to St. George. The place may however derive its name from the Nards.

gether to the house of any person whom they suspect ; the sorcerer carries a cat under his arm, and he exclaims, " If thou hast stolen the article, and dost not restore it to its owner, may this cat torment the souls of thy ancestors ! " It may easily be imagined that such an imprecation is followed by a speedy restitution of the stolen property. If however their suspicions rest upon no particular individual, they proceed in the same manner from house to house ; the thief then, knowing that his turn must come, frequently confesses his guilt at once.

The cat, dog, and ass, are especially regarded as enchanted animals. If a person has a claim against another, or is injured, and is not powerful enough to obtain satisfaction, he slays a cat, a dog, or an ass upon the grave of the ancestors of the wrong-doer, uttering the words, " For the souls of —— ; " and, according to their Pagan ideas, the souls of those named in the imprecation are in danger of being degraded into these animals, if their descendant refuses to satisfy the injured person. The risk is so great, and the reproach would be so intolerable, that the injurer loses no time in making reparation.

The Ossetes hold the graves of their ancestors in great reverence. Many families have hereditary burial-places, and vaults in common. The corpse is always laid with the head toward the west : large stones are heaped over the graves of those who are buried singly, and a square stone, usually six to eight feet high, is erected at the head. Funerals are generally con-

ducted with great solemnities. At the interment the wife and saddle-horse of the deceased are led round the grave three times, as a sign that they were his most individual property, and that they cannot pass into other hands. From that time the horse must never be mounted by another rider, and the wife cannot marry again. Persons struck by lightning are considered sacred, and are buried on the spot where they died, amidst universal rejoicing and shouts of "O Elei, eldar Tschoppe!" (O Elijah, Lord of the rocky mountain!) It is supposed that the prophet Elijah has taken them immediately to himself. The grave becomes a resort of pilgrims, and a black goat-skin is hung beside it, similar to those in front of the caves of Elijah.

The following marriage customs are observed by the Ossetes. The father of the suitor, or, if he is not living, some elderly relative, goes to the parents of the girl and informs them of the young man's wish. If they consent, the girl is asked; if she does not consent, the matter is at an end; but if her answer should be in the affirmative, the bridegroom makes his appearance with his father, and woos for himself; and the price agreed upon, consisting generally of cattle and arms, is handed over to the father or brother of the bride. On the day of marriage the bridegroom appears with a train of relatives and friends at the house of the bride, where a banquet is prepared; the following day the feast takes place at the house of the next neighbour, and so on through

the village, and until this ceremony is ended the bridegroom cannot take his bride home. The bride is conducted by the relatives; when she reaches the door, all the boys of the village pinch and push her about, but she must not defend herself nor utter a sound. The husband, who has meanwhile gone before, receives her at the door with a burning torch in his hand, and lights her in. She is then led three times round the hearth, and placed on a raised seat in front of it. All the women of the village now assemble, and sing before her in turns until cockcrow. During all this time the bride must not utter a word. At the first crowing of the cock, a boy, invited expressly for this office, enters, and stepping up to her, draws the bridal veil from her face, tears it in two, hangs the pieces upon a staff of lime-wood which he carries in his hand, and exclaims, "Nine boys and one girl!" She is now declared mistress of the house, and her *service* begins. The family and guests sit down to eat, but she, instead of joining the party, has to wait on them. Should she feel hunger, she can only satisfy it secretly in another room. When the veil is removed, her face, according to the general Caucasian usage, appears covered up to the eyes. All these customs,—leading the bride round the hearth, placing her on an elevated seat, the women singing before her, and the veil being drawn from her face,—have so much that is German in character, and in their symbolic reference to the duties and rights of the mistress of the house, that a per-

son might fancy himself transplanted to some corner of Germany.

The Ossetes have usually only one wife, but occasionally rich men take two. In this the influence of Mohammedanism is observable; but, with this exception, their domestic habits bear a strong resemblance to those of the nations of Europe. Even their custom of purchasing the wife does not indicate her slavery, for her consent must be obtained before the marriage can take place. They differ from almost all the other Caucasian races in placing no restraint upon social intercourse between the sexes; but it never occurs that a girl loses her chastity before marriage. On the other hand, a newly married wife is obliged to keep strictly retired for some months, and indeed until she has a child. As among the Armenians, she must not exchange a word with any one except her husband; even with her parents, and her brothers and sisters, she converses by signs alone. As soon as she has borne a child,—or, if likely to remain childless, after four years,—she is fully emancipated; and she then, as respects conjugal fidelity, exposes herself to much scandal. A gross and demoralizing abuse has crept in, which saps at the root of domestic life: a father, when his son is at the age of six or eight, sometimes purchases for him, as a wife, a girl of fourteen or sixteen, and cohabits with his so-called daughter-in-law; she becomes perhaps the mother of a son, for whom, when about six years old, the nominal father again purchases a wife, and in

turn lives with her. Of course what has been said above of the affection or consent of the girl, of strict retirement and perfect silence, is not applicable to such cases as these*.

At the same time, the strictest ideas of the rights of marriage prevail among the Ossetes. Every child born in marriage, even if proved to be by incest or adultery, is considered a legitimate offspring, in name, succession, and inheritance. A woman who has borne children cannot, after the death of her husband, marry again out of the family: she has been purchased, and is their property. The father or brother of the deceased may marry her, which indeed the Ossetes consider a matter of duty, a point of honour: they look upon it as a continuation of the first marriage, which is indissoluble. The children of the second marriage rank as children of the first, and inherit the name and property in the same manner. This idea is carried out still further. If the deceased husband has left no brother or father surviving, and the widow is thus obliged to remain unmarried, she is not on that account prevented from living with other men; and any children which may result from such connexions are considered the legitimate offspring of the first marriage. We had an example before us: our hostess was a widow, and had three daughters by her deceased husband; he had been dead five years, but she was now nursing a child less than twelve months old.

* Ernst Wichelhausen, in his 'Gemälde von Moskau' (1803), describes the same abuses as existing in Russia half a century ago.

This boy was the heir to the farm, bore the husband's name, and supplanted in the inheritance the daughters born in wedlock, who received nothing of their father's property, but would be eventually sold for the profit of this bastard. This indeed had already occurred in the case of the eldest daughter, thirteen years of age, whose betrothed explained these particulars to us with the most perfect *naïveté*.

If however the widow has no children, she is permitted to marry again, but the husband must give the family from which she separates half the price originally paid for her; but should she bear a child within a year after the death of her first husband, it belongs to his family. Should the wife (as sometimes happens) be carried off by another man, and the husband is not powerful enough to recover her, the seducer must pay to the husband the full purchase-money. A man occasionally, but very rarely (perhaps only for adultery), divorces his wife and sends her back to her family, who in that case return to him only half the price he paid for her, on the ground that he received her as a virgin, but returns her as a wife. Should he send her back without cause, he receives nothing from the family.

Great courtesy prevails in social life among the Ossetes. The more suitors a girl has, the more she is respected and the higher her price rises; a girl who has not at least one, or a widow who has not several, is so despised as to be publicly spat upon. The wife generally rules paramount in her own house,

and the husband is in most cases decidedly hen-pecked*. But it must be mentioned to the credit of the women, that they are remarkably industrious: they cut the hay and corn, carry the grain to the mill, bring wood home on their backs from the forest, and many of them even plough and manage all the tillage. On the death of the husband his widow has the entire management of the household, until the son has grown up; she then resigns it, and is honourably supported by him. If the widow has no children, and declines to marry again, the property remains in her possession, and at her death passes to the male branch of her husband's family.

The eldest son attains his majority, and assumes the management, as soon as he can mow grass with a scythe. Brothers generally remain together on the same estate, and share the produce. At the death of the father his eldest son receives a horse or a cow or ten sheep, with the paternal mansion; and the youngest, if unmarried, receives a present of arms or cattle, to enable him to purchase a wife; the property is then equally divided among all the sons. The daughters receive nothing, but are sold for the benefit of the estate.

The basis of the social and political state of the

* If it were true that the Ossetes are the descendants of the ancient Sarmatians, those Amazons who united with one branch of the Scythians, and, according to Herodotus, founded a new race, we should be at no loss to discover the cause of this female supremacy. But indeed women do not need to be Amazons to bring men into subjection!

Ossetes consists, not in a feeling of nationality, but in their family clanship. This bond exists however only among relatives of the male line, and bearing the same name; relationship on the mother's side is not recognized. A man is considered more nearly related to a cousin a hundred times removed, who bears his name, than to his mother's brother: he is bound to take blood-revenge for the former, while the latter is in fact not regarded as a relative at all. Thus a family descended from the same ancestors, and bearing the same name, alone receives a guarantee of political safety and individual independence from these ties of blood; the national and communal bond affords a very slight security. A father may marry his daughter-in-law, a brother his sister-in-law, or a son his mother's sister: in this there is nothing illegal or unusual; but to marry a person of one's own name, however distant the relationship, is entirely prohibited*.

The Ossetes are divided into three classes,—nobles, freemen, and slaves. The nobles enjoy great honorary privileges, but no political superiority or territorial dominion. The Georgian annals speak of seven noble families after whom the Ossetes named their rocky valleys, when they were driven from the plains into the mountains. One of these families, the Sidumoni,

* It is curious that the same customs, and views of relationship, exist among the Ostiaks. They never marry their paternal relations, nor take a wife bearing their family name: at the same time they do not hesitate to marry their stepmothers, stepdaughters, or step-sisters; indeed wives of the latter class are in great repute.

was mentioned to me as flourishing at the present day. In northern Ossetia there is a peculiar class of nobles, consisting of twelve large families, said to be descended from Tagoar (the crown-bearer), an Armenian prince: they have the hereditary title and office of Village Elders—a position similar to that of the Armenian Village Elders. The Ossetian nobles attach great importance to purity of blood: if a noble marries a girl of the second class, or freemen, his children are degraded to the third or slave class. The nobles in the north are Mohammedans, and intermarry principally with Circassian nobles. Among the pagan Ossetians there are a few priestly families, who are said to preserve certain idolatrous relics.

Among the Ossetes the slaves are treated as members of the family. The nobles have peasants under them, who rent the land and are freemen; they also hire farm-labourers and male and female servants: I even saw Ossetian female servants at Tiflis: the Georgian girls never enter service, nor any of the Mohammedans, who consider it a reproach to a free woman to serve for hire, although female slaves are not uncommon among them.

The custom and the law of blood-revenge prevails among both nobles and freemen; and it is remarkable that there are also courts of arbitration and expiation, precisely like those which formerly existed in Germany. If a murder be committed, any relative of the victim is entitled, and indeed obliged, to take revenge, and slay the murderer or one of his family; this ac-

complished, he goes to the grave of his kinsman and exclaims, "I have revenged thy blood and slain thy murderer!" A man who has killed any member of a powerful family often passes years without stirring out of doors; for the avenger is not permitted to enter the house of the murderer; if however the latter has no family to shelter him, he usually enters the service of some noble who is sufficiently powerful to protect him. In one instance which was related to me, blood-revenge was carried on between two families for several generations, until both were almost exterminated; at length they agreed to take two orphan children, one from each family, and slay them together upon an old sacrificial altar; after which a lasting reconciliation was effected. In cases of murder or manslaughter, the injured party is always at liberty to refuse any offer of atonement, and to demand blood-revenge. Frequently however, especially in recent times, the case is referred to a court of arbitration, in which it is customary to tax the wounds of a man who has been killed, at twice the amount for those of one who has recovered, the rate being in proportion to the rank of the family. Compensation for wounds and injuries which are not fatal is fixed by these courts. Formerly it was a prevalent custom for a murderer to pay a fixed price for a certain time to the family of the murdered man, say for a year, during which time the blood-revenge remained dormant.

In these courts of arbitration, each party chooses

three heads of families, not related either to the accused or the accuser, and these six select a seventh as a foreman. The court first requires a solemn declaration from both parties that they will submit to its decision, and demands three sureties on each side. A post is then fixed firmly in the ground, as a symbolical sign that the disputants must abide by their agreement, a curse being invoked upon all who neglect to fulfil it. Each party now presents its version of the matter; the court then retires for deliberation to a place appointed for the purpose, generally in a forest. When the judges have agreed upon a decision, they communicate it to both parties.

The body of every Ossetian has a settled value in the eyes of the judges, which, as it appeared to me, is fixed by public opinion. The father of a family bears a higher value than an unmarried man, and a noble is rated at twice as much as a free man. Every limb is taxed in the same manner. Gaping wounds are measured by barleycorns; a wound is said to be so many barleycorns long: its length is declared by the court, which imposes a penalty of one cow for each barleycorn; so that the infliction of a wound sometimes involves a fine of ten or twelve cows. The judges however frequently declare the wound to be much shorter than it really is, being guided in their decision by its severity, and the degree of danger attending it.

The cow is the unit of valuation among the Ossetes, as it was among the Romans (*pecunia*, from *pecus*.)

and ancient Germans. They say a thing is worth so many cows, or fractions of a cow; the ox is reckoned as two cows. The Ossetes however have for a long time been used to stamped coin; and in the districts bordering on Georgia a cow's worth expresses a regular equivalent in money. I was told by some that a cow is equal to one rouble banco, whilst by others I was informed that it is worth five roubles. The first is probably the value adopted in judicial decisions, and the second the price current. The expiatory penalties awarded by the arbitrators are not estimated solely by their worth in cows; but, as money is extremely scarce, sometimes by other objects, such as swords, guns, etc., which are generally rated very high, often at twice or thrice their actual value.

The maximum of compensation for murder or homicide has been fixed from time immemorial,—whether by the king or by a national decree, is not known. The murder of a freeman who is not a householder is rated at nine times nine cows; that of a head of one of the principal families at eighteen times eighteen cows*, but the court of arbitration diminishes the penalty according to circumstances. In cases of injuries and wounds which are not fatal, popular custom requires every one to submit to the decision of a court of arbitration; but as there is no direct law to enforce this, persons who are powerful enough frequently

* Kohl says that the Ossetes reckon octodecimally,—by eighteens, as we do by tens. This may have been the custom in early times, but on the borders of Georgia they now reckon by the usual decimal system. Their numerals are arranged on this system.

refuse to pay the appointed compensation. The aggrieved person then takes the law into his own hands, and attempts to wound his adversary in return. If the retaliation does not exceed the original injury, the affair terminates; but if the wound given is greater than the one received, the feud begins afresh from the other side. For homicide a mode of expiation by ordeal is sometimes adopted, especially if the perpetrator of the act be poor. The latter is required by the injured family to stand to be shot at by one of their number. The form of proceeding is regulated by the court of arbitration, which orders lots to be drawn by all the marksmen of the family, even the mere boys, appoints the time and place, and measures the distance. One shot is sufficient, whether it hit or miss, whether the wound be mortal or slight, and the affair ends here.

Disputes relating to property are also decided by courts of arbitration. Where open robbery has been committed outside a village, the court merely requires the stolen article or an equivalent to be restored; but in cases of secret theft, five times the value must be paid. Robbery and theft within the boundaries of a village are rated much higher. A proverb says, "What a man finds on the high-road is God's gift;" and in fact highway robbery is hardly considered a crime. When the court has come to a decision, and before pronouncing sentence, it requires each party to cut a notch in a staff of limewood, as a sign of their submission to its decision. When atonement has been

made, the offender is expected to invite the injured man and his family to a feast ; acceptance of the invitation stands for a receipt in full ; if the banquet is not offered, the aggrieved party may claim a fresh compensation. The judges receive, as a remuneration for their trouble, a present from each party, generally one-twentieth of the property in dispute.

The laws of hospitality are strictly observed by the Ossetes. The host considers himself responsible for the safety of his guest, and revenges the murder or wounding of the latter as he would that of a kinsman. Indeed the duties of hospitality are held so sacred, that if an Ossetian receives into his house a stranger, whom he afterwards discovers to be a man to whom he owes blood-revenge, this makes no difference in his hospitality to him ; but when the guest takes his leave, the host accompanies him to the boundary of the village, and on parting from him exclaims, "Henceforth beware ! I am your enemy."

In those districts sloping down to the plains, agriculture is the chief occupation of the people. A three-years' course is adopted : the first year the soil is manured, and wheat sown, the second year barley, and the third the land lies fallow. Rye is little cultivated, and oats still more rarely. Here and there I observed the small Caucasian millet, called *galma*, and in gardens maize, cucumbers, peas, and beans. Corn is reaped with a small sickle, and grass mown with a scythe. On the mountains agriculture is less practised ; the inhabitants depend chiefly

for subsistence on the rearing of cattle, sheep, and goats, of which immense herds are everywhere seen ; they have also excellent horses, of the Circassian breed. Among the Ossetes hay-cutting is one of the most important labours of the year, whilst the Georgians scarcely know the use of hay. Almost all the field-work, except mowing the grass, is performed by the women. The men mostly devote themselves to hunting, pillage, and gallantry ; when at home, they employ themselves in repairing saddles, harness, shoes, etc., and in carpenters', masons', and smiths' work.

The physiognomy, figure, and whole outward appearance of the Ossetes form a perfect contrast to the surrounding Caucasian tribes, especially the Georgians, who are characterized by a tall slender figure, a noble bearing, regular features, aquiline nose, finely formed mouth, dark complexion, black eyes and hair, in short exhibiting the truest type of form and beauty. The Ossetes, on the other hand, are short and thick-set, being rarely above five feet four inches in height, and have broad, haggard features, usually blue eyes, and red or light brown hair. The women are seldom pretty ; they are short, stoutly built, and mostly flat-nosed. Kohl mentions the extraordinarily small and well-formed feet of the Ossetes : I can neither confirm nor dispute the statement, for it was rainy weather, and their thick clumsy shoes rendered it impossible to judge of the size of their feet. The women and girls are nimble in their gait, but the men have the heavy

tread of the German peasant: as Peter Neu walked beside them, they quite reminded me of the Swabian countryfolks.

The bread eaten by the Ossetes is made of wheat or barley, unleavened and baked in the ashes. They boil their meat, and thus obtain soup, which is unknown to the Georgians, who usually roast their meat on wooden spits. As far as I could learn, the Ossetes do not roast either beef, mutton, or goat-flesh, but only game and poultry. I have already remarked the similarity of some of their dishes to those common in Germany. Two classes of national costume may be observed among all the Caucasian tribes,—the Circassian and Persian. The Ossetes have adopted the former, but it does not sit on them so prettily as on the graceful Circassians. They are however very clean, wearing their hair short and cut quite round; they also shave off the beard, but many have moustaches. They bestow great care upon their weapons, some of which are of great antiquity; the frequent letters, Latin inscriptions, and coats-of-arms, upon the sabres and gun-barrels, evidently point to the time when the Genoese were masters of the Black Sea*.

The Ossetes show the greatest love and veneration to their parents, to old-age generally, and especially to the memory of their ancestors. The authority of

* There is a tradition that the "Franki" carried on mining operations in the neighbourhood of Chillak-Gutiate, remains of which still exist. At the present day the mines are worked by the Ossetes, who thence procure lead for ammunition; they also manufacture powder. The Lesghis use only copper bullets.

the head of the family, whether grandfather, father, step-father, uncle, or elder brother, is submitted to unconditionally; the young men never sit in his presence, nor speak with a loud voice, nor contradict him. It is a curious fact, that the Ossetes alone, of all the Caucasian tribes, take off their cap or touch it in the European fashion, as a mark of respect (the women, if seated, merely stand up), and sometimes kiss the hand of the father, the person of rank, etc. A parricide draws upon himself a fearful popular revenge: he is shut up in his house, with all his possessions, surrounded by the populace, and is burned alive. The reverence for their ancestors is remarkable; they consider no oath more sacred or binding than swearing by the graves of their forefathers. If a man has received injury from another, and can obtain justice by no other means, he generally brings his injurer to reason by threatening to disturb the ancestors of the latter in their graves. At the head of each village is an Elder, elected or hereditary, who is also willingly obeyed; he is the arbitrator in minor disputes, and the leader in feuds and warlike expeditions.

The language spoken by the Ossetes, according to the celebrated Russian philologist Sjörn, belongs to the Indo-Germanic stem; at the same time it is an independent language, and more nearly allied to the Persian than to the German, resembling the Finnish in the use of postpositions: it has no prepositions.

Although the Ossetian language does not bear any

near affinity to the German, yet in its tones and cadence it so strikingly resembles the latter, as spoken in the north of Germany, that on hearing it at a little distance, one seems as if listening to the conversation of Saxon peasants. Compared with all the other Caucasian tribes, the enunciation of the Ossetes is slow, which increases this illusion.

The Ossetian singing is European in its character; whilst that of the Georgians and Armenians, the two most cultivated Caucasian races, is uttered in tones which our notes cannot convey; it can only be imitated upon the violin, as our gamut is not adapted to it, and their notes sound to our ears inharmonious and out of tune. With the Ossetes it is quite different: their songs possess the decided melody and regular cadences of our common scale. Those which I heard were in alternate singing: one person sings the melody, whilst the other holds on the key-note, producing an effect by no means unpleasant or inharmonious. The second then sings a verse, and the first sustains the key-note.

The conviction was forced upon me, as upon many preceding travellers, that there must have existed, in very early times, a near relationship between the Ossetes and the ancient Germans; but history is silent, and affords us no means of solving the enigma. The sacred legends give obscure intimations that the European races originated and emigrated from the Caucasian countries lying between the Caspian and the Black Sea.

A mythological tradition of the Scandinavian Germans says, that the later divine race of the Asæ emigrated hence with their people northward* ; but the accredited story informs us that, in the great wanderings of the Teutonic races, especially the Goths, these peoples migrated north to the foot of the Caucasus, established themselves there, and founded a powerful kingdom, from which they were afterwards expelled by Eastern races, the Huns, and driven toward the West. The only certain fact is, that some of them remained in these parts. Many of the Goths settled in the mountains of the Crimea, and traces of them existed there until a recent period. It is indeed possible, that a branch of this Teutonic race may have settled permanently among the mountains of the Caucasus.

To which of these sources can we ascribe the similarity of institutions, and the intermingling of blood between the Germans and Ossetes? If the latter were the original race from which the Germans descended, a greater affinity would exist between their languages, whereas in fact the Ossetian is more nearly allied to the Persian. It may perhaps be said that the German, Persian, and Ossetian are sister-lan-

* Herr von Halberg relates a curious tradition. About a hundred miles along the road between Vladikaukas and Mostov, there are countless Kurgans, high mounds with curious enigmatical statues upon them. These are said by the people to have been thrown up by the Germaiki (Germans) on their way northwards, as landmarks by which they might find their way back. Is this a remnant of the story of the emigration of the Asæ?

guages, deriving their origin from the same Indo-Germanic stem, from which they branched out simultaneously. The emigration of the Asæ, the second source of consanguinity which I have pointed out, seems to me too mythical and obscure to build upon. The accidental similarity of names, such as Ossen, Assen, who are said to have founded Azof on the Mæotis, proves no connexion with the northern Asæ. Moreover the Ossetes call themselves by the name Ir and Iron; the name Ossetes is only given them by other nations. The third conjecture is, that the Ossetes are descendants of the Goths, or other Germanic tribes allied with them. Here again the entire difference of language would appear to raise a radical objection. But it was a peculiarity of the Germanic emigrating tribes, that in their new homes they firmly adhered to their old judicial institutions and habits, their social and domestic customs and modes of life, which they imparted to the people they subjugated. At the same time, in mingling with the conquered race, they thus formed a new people, preserving all the habits and customs, both legal and social, of the mother-country, whilst they lost their own language, retaining merely a slight similarity of construction and a few German words. It was the same with the Franks and Burgundians in Gaul, the Goths and Vandals in Spain, the Lombards in Italy, and the Normans in Gaul and Italy. Is it not possible that some tribe of the Goths may have wandered or been driven into the Caucasus, have

fallen upon the original race of the Ossetes or Alani, conquered and mingled with them, and thus formed a new race? The language of the conquerors may have disappeared, but the German blood, physiognomy, characteristics, institutions, habits, and social customs, may have been so perfectly engrafted and adopted by the conquered country, that no European can travel through it without instantly observing their German origin.

As we were all lying around the hearth, late in the evening, I entreated my Ossetian hosts to relate to me some fairy-tales, a request with which they willingly complied. The next morning I had only time to note down one of them, which I give here.

A FAIRY-TALE IN A FAIRY-TALE.

There once lived a man and his wife who had sixty bees; they counted them every day, and one time they missed a bee; they sought for it high and low, and at last found it yoked to a plough. The husband set to work to plough, and his wife led the bee; whereupon the bee stung her in the neck. Then the man got some nut-oil, and rubbed it on the wounded part, which swelled up to the size of a mountain. A nut-tree grew out of the mountain on her neck, and bore many nuts. The husband counted the nuts every day until they were ripe, when he shook them

down; but on counting them, one was gone, which he saw the bee dragging away. In a great passion he took up a handful of earth, and threw it after the bee, and out of this sprang a field, large enough to occupy three days in tilling it. This field he sowed with millet, and went every day to see how the crop was growing. One day a wild-boar came, rooted up the field, and destroyed the crop. The man shot the swine dead, and found in its tail a roll of paper, on which the following was written: Once there came together to a mill two men, one rich and one poor; when each of them went to take his own meal, they found it all mixed up together, so that it could not be separated. So of it they baked a cake, and the question arose, to whom the cake belonged. Then they agreed that he who should tell the best story should have the cake; whereupon the rich man began:—"Once upon a time I had a goose, upon which I loaded the food that I intended for ten labourers during the whole day; and she carried the food into the field. But a wolf met her, and ate up half the side of the goose. I healed the wounded side with brush-wood, and again loaded the food upon her back, and sent it to the workmen, and they had their dinner earlier than all the other workmen in the country." This was the tale of the rich man; the poor man then began as follows:—"I and my wife had sixty bees, which we counted every day, till at last one was missing; we searched for it high and low, and at last found it yoked to a plough. Then

I went to plough, and my wife was to lead the bee but it stung her in the neck ; I poured some oil upon the wound, for her neck had swelled up as big as a mountain." And thus the tale goes on, gracefully weaving one story into another without end, until the listeners one by one drop off to sleep. It has quite the character of a dream, and probably produces the effect of dreaming upon the sleepers.

Peter Neu, who never allowed any one to surpass him in story-telling, immediately gave us a pendant to this from a Georgian tale:—A man once had a melon, and as he was cutting it, he let his knife fall into it ; whereupon he took his garden-ladder, and went down into the melon to look for his knife. And in the melon he met a man, who, seeing him so diligently engaged, asked him what he was seeking. "What!" said he, "are you only looking for a knife? why, I have lost sixteen spoons in this horrid place, and have been trying high and low to find them for a month past!"

We returned to Tiflis late in the evening of September the 3rd. On our road we met a troop of Circassians with a great number of horses : my driver stopped to bargain with them, and purchased two : the men were extremely polite and friendly.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEPARTURE FROM TIFLIS.—ROCK-TOWN OF UPLAS ZICHI.—MARAN.—TRADITIONS OF QUEEN THAMARA.—VOYAGE ON THE RIVER RION.—COLCHIS AND THE ARGONAUTS.—MINGRELIA.—RETURN TO KERTSCH.—PROVINCE OF KARABAGH.—THE TATAR KHAN JAFAR-KHULI-KHAN.—BAKU.—ALESCH-DJA.—FIRE-WORSHIPERS.

I REMAINED two days longer in Tiflis, nearly all the time in the company of Dr. Sabuloff; at his table we had a dinner exclusively of ancient Georgian dishes, which were not only a curious novelty, but really excellent. He introduced me to the Princes Orbellian and Zizianoff, from whom I received much information respecting the state of the nobles in Georgia.

I left Tiflis on the 6th of September, taking the same road to Kootais as on my way hither. From this point I turned southward, and sailed down the Rion. My German driver and Peter Neu accompanied me as far as Khori, at which place lived a relative of Dr. Sabuloff, to whom I had a letter of introduction. The old Armenian received me kindly, and on hearing that I was interested about all remains of antiquity, he brought out some ancient documents, among which was a charter of Queen Thamara II., which bore evi-

dence that the Armenian family of Sabuloff had been settled in Khori for five centuries, with the privilege of possessing houses, land, and slaves. On my expressing a wish to visit the singular ruins of the "rock-town" of Uplas Zichi, in the vicinity of Khori, my host desired his son to accompany me.

Starting on this excursion, we rode along footpaths into the mountains, until we reached the Koor, which runs under an imposing mass of rocks. From the bank of the river, a winding path, excavated in the rock four or five feet wide, led up the mountain, a parapet-wall three feet high being left facing the shore. On reaching the first stage or platform, I found a large open space, terminating in a road about ten feet wide, on each side of which a number of regular apartments were excavated in the rock, each about ten to fifteen feet square, and eight to ten feet high. These rooms, in which a door was cut opening to the road, were not excavated laterally in the rock, but hollowed out from above, as was also the case with the road itself; the dwellings must therefore have had a roof, to render them habitable. Tradition gives them the name of the 'town-bazaar.' From this point numerous roads branch out in the rock, with caverns, varying in size, which have once served as dwellings; but there is no indication of regularity either in plan or execution. Proceeding further, we came to a platform in the rock, forming a kind of gallery; a lofty gate, ornamented with bas-reliefs, led into a spacious hall, from which several doors opened into

smaller apartments. The whole bears the name of the Palace of Queen Thamara. We next proceeded to a kind of vaulted temple, excavated in the rock, and resting upon several pillars left standing in the centre. It is difficult to account for such vast labour having been bestowed upon these works,—the labour perhaps of several generations, and in which the chisel was the only implement employed,—when we consider how much easier it would have been to erect buildings upon the same spot: indeed we found here a small church constructed of bricks.

These works, in my opinion, must be assigned to three distinct periods,—the first a prehistorical æra, in which the small troglodyte dwellings had their origin. At a second epoch, probably within the range of history, the larger caverns and the ornaments were doubtless added. To a third, and evidently more recent period, belong the ruins of the small church, and some other insignificant remains of masonry, certainly not older than the fourteenth century. This church is still a place of pilgrimage.

Dubois de Montperau gives a detailed description of this rock-town of Uplas-Zichi*. The tradition of

* There are several similar rock-towns in Asia: the largest is perhaps the mysterious one of Petra, in the district of Edom, on the further side of the Dead Sea: the predatory Arabs, who here live a nomadic life, allow no strangers to visit it. The traveller M. Burekhardt succeeded however in getting access to this place, disguised as an Arab. A narrow path, nearly a league in length, runs between high rocks, at the end of which a view opens, almost unparalleled, over a rocky and mountainous country, covered with thousands of troglodyte dwellings, excavated in the rock, and among them immense gates leading to palaces and temples. It is even said that

the country connects the name of Queen Thamara with these remains ; but we must observe, that all the chief monuments and buildings in Georgia are usually ascribed to her, and many legends are connected with her name. These works are, in my opinion, much

an amphitheatre has been discovered. The adjacent plain is called Vady-Masa.

There is another very similar rock-town on the river Koor, but nearer to its source. The following description of it is extracted from a manuscript account of the Caucasus, by Count Stakelberg, of which I have permission to make use. "At five versts from Zeda-Tmogvi," says the writer, "we reached Vardsie, a troglodyte town lying at the entrance of the valley which opens on to the left bank of the Koor. The splendid flower-gardens around appear to have given it the name of Vardsie ('Rose-castle'). There are several rows of grottos, one above another, and, at the top, a kind of cornice cut in the rock, which serves as a road: this is the centre of the town, which appears as it were built in the air. Staircases, clumsily excavated, lead from one story to another. The principal works are around the top of the rock. Here is shown the palace of Queen Thamara, who is said to have resided here during the summer: it is excavated in a compact whitish stone, and consists of two stories of apartments, with recesses and closets. A large hall is shown, thirty feet long and twenty wide, with a lofty ceiling: a long narrow kind of ottoman runs round the wall. In the centre is the hearth, where the fire was made in the Georgian fashion. On the outside are seen the traces of a wooden balcony. Vardsie lies at an elevation of above five thousand feet, and commands an extremely fine view. At the side of the palace are the grottos assigned to the royal servants; and further on is a church, in front of which a façade of masonry terminates the Hall of Crypts: we entered it by a narrow gate, with two pillars. The interior is marked by great simplicity; there are no sculptures or ornaments, but only the remains of a few frescos upon the walls. The nave of the church is forty feet high, and a huge block of stone serves for an altar, by the side of which are seen the gifts and votive offerings of pious pilgrims. Twice a year an old priest performs Mass here, before an image of the Virgin, which is said to work miracles. The tomb of Thamara is shown in the church, but it is exhibited also in many other places: in fact, although a real historical personage, Queen

older : Queen Thamara lived at the end of the twelfth century, when men had long ceased to dwell in caverns, and were well acquainted with masonry and architecture. She may, not improbably, have converted this rock-town, of a far earlier origin, into a fortress, and possibly have added these ornaments. Another tradition ascribes the entire work to Uplos, son of Khartlos, the great-grandson of Noah ; a second version of this legend attributes it to Abraham.

As I rode back to Khori, on ascending the hill which commands the town, the whole canal-system of Khori, with its innumerable branches and irrigating streams, lay spread out like a map before us. Good cultivation and fertility prevail everywhere ; but the harvests are rendered precarious, partly by the climate, and partly by the predatory incursions of the Ossetes. The citizens of the town do not themselves pursue agriculture, but they let their plots of land to neighbouring villages ; the rent is seldom paid in money, on account of the uncertainty of the returns ; but a share of the harvest is usually received instead. In the immediate vicinity of the town, where such predatory attacks do not occur, the land has a high value.

In Khori I took leave of my good friend Peter Neu.

Thamara figures in all the traditions of this country ; and the traveller hears tales about her throughout the Caucasus, where every castle and old church are attributed to her."

To the west of Sugaretsha we also meet with extensive excavations in a rock, which have for a long time been used as a monastery. Near the village of Padorna, too, not far from Duschek, are similar caves, one above another, and connected by staircases : these served, in times of war, as places of asylum to the neighbouring villagers.

One of my travelling-companions, Herr von Schwarz, had arrived from Tiflis, and early in the morning we continued our journey to Kootais, passing the following night in the camp of a Cossack piquet, and reaching Kootais early on the 8th of September. Here we remained the day, awaiting the arrival of our other companions. In the afternoon Herr von Aderkass rejoined us, but we received no tidings of Prince Lieven, whom we afterwards rejoined at Kertsch.

At noon, the following day, we reached Maran, on the river Rion, the Phasis of the Argonautic expedition. The whole country is laid out in detached farms, which give it a pretty and cultivated aspect. We passed great numbers of people on our road, mostly pilgrims. A nobleman on horseback, richly dressed, fully armed, and followed by a retinue of attendants, particularly attracted our attention; his hair and beard were dyed with henna powder of a brick-red colour, as well as the mane and tail of his white steed. In Maran was quartered a Russian penal battalion of infantry; all the private soldiers belonged to that repulsive religious sect of the Scopzi, or eunuchs, which I have described in my work on Russia.

At our request, the Russian Chief of the Circle allowed one of his officers to accompany us down the river,—a young Mingrelian prince named Gregor Glachvaminobo. The middle of the boat in which we embarked was, by his orders, ornamented to represent a vine-arbour; a number of branches and bunches of grapes, growing wild in a neighbouring

wood, being interlaced over our heads. The voyage was extremely beautiful, favoured by fine weather, and with a magnificent stream, lovely scenery over the hilly country on the banks, rich in the luxuriant tree vegetation of the South. In addition to all these charms of nature, how many recollections of past ages crowded on our minds! This was the famous Colchis, rich in gold, whither the Argonauts came in quest of the Golden Fleece: these shores witnessed the love and exploits of Iason, and the horrors of Medea. Not a vestige of these traditions however survives among the present inhabitants of the country,—the very scene of these adventures. My companions on the voyage, the Mingrelian prince and the boatmen, seemed to have a vivid consciousness of the existence of the hyperborean Russians and the Czar at St. Petersburg, five hundred leagues distant, whose laws and commands they were bound to obey; but of the progenitors of their own race, who were invaded by Iason and the Greeks, of Colchis and Medea, they had never heard, and were in fact ignorant that the Rion was the same stream as the once famed Phasis!

Prince Gregor however, although a stranger to the name of Medea, his kinswoman in the ninetieth remove, appeared to be well informed on the present condition of his country, and I will here give a few remarks which I gathered in our conversation: they may form a supplement to the account I have before given of Mingrelia; should the reader find any discrepancy in the two statements, he may perhaps

attribute this to their relating to different parts of the country.

Mingrelia anciently belonged to Georgia; but in the sixteenth century the Governor, Prince Schikvani, declared himself independent; and his descendants, down to the present day, rule over the country, under the title of Dadian*.

The inhabitants of Mingrelia are divided into three classes,—princes, nobles, and peasants,—although there is no essential difference between the princes and nobles: those of the latter class who are hereditary princes (Dsinoki, and Desinardi), have the rank of village chiefs. The other nobles (Sakur) have only single estates and peasants. The princes and nobles are virtually independent of the Dadian, rendering him no tribute or service, except that, upon the death of a father, the eldest son rides over to the Dadian's court, and presents himself as his new vassal. The landed estates are all inherited by the eldest son, who shares with his brothers the personal chattels, and gives the latter a dowry, which, in cases of dispute, is fixed by the arbitration of friends. The land is cultivated, and used by the peasants, who are properly required to pay

* Whether this is a family name, or a mere title, I do not know. The old traveller Chardin, who is still one of the best authorities in all that relates to the Caucasus, says that Dadian signifies in Persian "Head of Justice;" and he adds that the Dadian, as well as the kings of Georgia, asserted their descent from the royal prophet David (*Voyage en Perse*, i. 254). Eschwald, in his *Travels*, states that Dad-jan signifies in the Georgian language "Chief Cup-bearer." Prince Wakhout considers Dadian as no family name, but merely an official title.

only a tithe ; the most arbitrary oppression however prevails, the princes and nobles extorting from the peasants as much as they possibly can : whether the latter are actual serfs, is not very clear. A peasant is at liberty to remove, and change his master ; but in doing so he is obliged to leave behind one-half of his property. If a peasant steals away furtively, he may be reclaimed, but not after he has been registered in another commune : and if he has resided thirty years undisturbed in a place, he is free from any claim on him.

The Dadian has only the revenue derived from his own estates, and the dues paid by his peasants, who have nominally to give him nine roubles banco on each farm ; the peasants are however generally too poor to pay this amount.

The princes and nobles are at liberty to sell their estates to one another, but not to any foreigner without the Dadian's consent. The country is divided, after the Russian manner, into Circles, with a Chief at the head of each, who has jurisdiction in all cases of dispute under the amount of two hundred roubles banco. There is a higher tribunal, with jurisdiction over the whole country, to which appeals may be preferred. These institutions however are but feeble attempts to introduce European forms of administration, —the mere shadows of legal order, exercising in fact no active authority ; the people are with difficulty accustomed to such a system, and the judges are perfectly incapable of fulfilling properly their duties,—they act simply as subordinate police functionaries.

We landed in the evening, and were hospitably received by a Mingrelian nobleman. His house formed a large hall, with a hearth in the middle, on which a good supper was in preparation. On each side of this hall was a small apartment, and in one of these a European bed—a rare phenomenon here—which our host had purchased of a German colonist.

The following day we sailed leisurely down the Rion, landing at noon at a small village. The good people, who were extremely poor, offered us all they had, and were very grateful for the payment we made them. We lighted a fire, and prepared the food ourselves. Prince Gregor here took leave of us, and late in the evening we reached the small fortress of Poti. It being too late to go in search of a lodging, we spent the night on board our boat. The following morning we rode about fifteen versts along the bank to Redout Kalé, the point whence we had started on our travels. Here, according to a previous arrangement, we were to await General von Budberg, with the Russian steamer, who had promised to take us back to Kertsch.

After remaining here five days, the steamer arrived, and we embarked. Proceeding south, we reached at noon the limit of the Russian territory, the small fort of Nicolaieff in Gooria, on the frontier of Asia Minor. The wind blew hard from the northwest, and a boat, which was lowered to land the General's aide-de-camp and another officer, was upset before our eyes; the crew were however safely landed, with the aid of some Turkish sailors. A question now

arose, whether, having been touched by these men, they should not be obliged to keep quarantine; from this alarm however they were relieved; by their having already landed again on the Russian soil: it would have been no trifling annoyance to have been detained a prisoner in this wild and lonely spot for a whole month, until the arrival of the next steamer.

The General landed the next morning, to visit the chief town of Gooria, but I did not go on shore till the afternoon. The country was beautiful and hilly, with the snow mountains of Anatolia in the distance. The vegetation here is luxuriant, and the climate moist and warm, well calculated to engender the Caucasian agues, which are peculiarly obstinate. Not improbably I caught here the germ of an attack, which seized me ten days later in the Crimea. In the house of a Russian family here we found the temperature raised excessively high, although the thermometer in the open air stood at 30° (Réau.): a heated atmosphere is said to be the best preservative against the prevalent fevers.

On our return to Kertsch we revisited the small Russian fortresses on the coast; and after encountering another severe storm, we reached the harbour of Kertsch on the morning of September the 22nd.

In accordance with the instructions given by General von Neidhardt, considerable information had been

everywhere afforded me by the Russian civil officers, as well as the inhabitants of the country, which I have introduced in different parts of the present Work. The eastern provinces, near the Caspian Sea, I did not visit; but my three companions, who had travelled in those countries, related to me many interesting accounts, especially respecting the province of Karabagh, which I shall present to the reader, in order to facilitate a comparison of them with the corresponding position of affairs in Georgia and Armenia.

The present Russian province of Karabagh* (the population of which is very mixed, consisting principally of Armenians and Tatars) was in former times an Armenian principality, under the native princely family of Abomelech, which was tributary to Persia. In the middle of the last century, the government was in the hands of three brothers, who ruled in common, with the eldest at their head. Upon the death of the latter, continual quarrels arose between the two remaining brothers. The people became discontented, and difficult to control, especially the Tatars. Seizing a favourable opportunity, a large Tatar village in the mountains elected its village-chief, Pana Khan Jaspasche, a man of obscure origin, to be its prince, and declared itself independent of the Armenian Meliks. The surrounding villages soon joined, and at length Pana Khan acquired sufficient power to de-

* This province is very fruitful: the harvests in the valleys along the Araxes surpass all previous accounts of fertility. Karabagh was the native place of Rustan, Napoleon's Mameluke.

throne the Armenian princely family. The dominion thus passed over from the Armenians to the Tatars, from the Christians to the Mohammedans. Pana Khan contrived also to maintain a virtual independence of Persia. He built Schusha, and made it his capital. After his death, his son Ibrahim Khan succeeded him, who, being hard pressed by the Persians, sought the protection of Russia, and received into his residence a garrison which, at his request, General Zizianoff assigned him. Ibrahim Khan was however of a fickle character; he soon grew tired of the Russians, and again laid himself open to Persian intrigue. An ambassador was sent to his court, offering the hand of a daughter of the Shah for his young grandson, Jaffar Khuli Khan. The boy's father however resisted the influence of the Persian Court, which he mistrusted, and adhered to the Russians. As long as he lived, he prevented his old father Ibrahim forming an alliance with the Shah. He died in 1805, when his son Jaffar was only fourteen years of age. The intrigues of the Shah now gained ground, and Ibrahim, who was nearly eighty years old, fell completely into his snares. But Jaffar, who retained the enmity to the Persians which he inherited from his father, repaired secretly to the Russian commander Lessenevich, and acquainted him with all that was going on. A council of war was held, in which Jaffar took part; and it was resolved to make old Ibrahim prisoner, and carry him off to Russia. Jaffar however obtained permission to try first the

effects of kindness and an appeal to Ibrahim; engaging that, if this failed, he would himself and alone make his grandfather prisoner. Accordingly Jaffar and Lessenevich, with fifty men, rode out of the citadel by night, and hastened to the country-house where Ibrahim was residing. The Russians concealed themselves. In the morning Jaffar went alone into his grandfather's room, and falling on his knees entreated him to desist from his alliance with the Persians, urging that they had solely in view his and his family's ruin, and that treachery and danger to life and property were alone to be expected from them. But the old man remained inexorable. When Jaffar saw that all his efforts were vain, he on a sudden threw his arms around Ibrahim, sprang with him on his horse, and carried him off to his companions in waiting. Ibrahim was taken to Russia, and nothing more was heard of him.

A question now arose respecting a successor to the throne, to which Jaffar had undoubtedly a clear hereditary title, in addition to his having proved a faithful friend to the Russians: nevertheless a youth of such energy and enterprize appeared to the Russian authorities a dangerous person to govern the country; and they consequently placed Ibrahim's second son, Mehti Khuli Khan, upon the throne in 1806. Jaffar, then only fifteen years old, incensed at such injustice, collected his court-followers, galloped out of Schusha with drawn sword, and, cutting his way through a body of Russian troops who attempted to arrest his flight,

escaped in safety to Persia. But he was soon tired of remaining in that country, and being urgently invited by the Russians, he returned to Schusha, and was reinstated in the possession of all his property. Meanwhile Mechti Khuli Khan had rendered himself hated by his weakness and oppressive conduct, whilst every kind of intrigue was directed against him; he was put in fear for his life, and was induced to take a sudden flight to Persia, in 1822, where he was probably one chief instigator of the Perso-Russian war. In 1826, without any previous declaration of war, the Persians invaded Karabagh with forty thousand men; they surrounded a Russian battalion in the mountains, who, after a courageous and sanguinary defence, were cut down to the last man. The siege of Schusha succeeded, which was however so resolutely defended by the inhabitants and the Russian garrison (consisting of only 350 men), that after three months the Persians were obliged to raise the siege.

Jaffar had meanwhile remained passive; but during the war he was induced to remove to Simbirsk, and afterwards to St. Petersburg, where he was received with the greatest distinction by the Emperor; a general's rank and an income of 24,000 roubles banco were given him: after four years he returned to Schusha. Herr von Aderkass visited him there. Jaffar's residence exhibited a mixture of Oriental and European life and manners: the outside of the building was similar to that of any wealthy Tatar in Schusha; whilst in the interior several apartments were furnished quite

with European comfort and elegance,—handsome mahogany furniture, sofas, tables and chairs, pictures, mirrors, a chandelier, etc. Jaffar, dressed in his general's uniform, decorated with orders, received his guests with European politeness. He is a tall and handsome man, with a noble physiognomy, a proud bearing, and herculean strength. The party took their seats round the tea-table, and presently members of the household and Oriental guests entered: the latter seated themselves in Eastern fashion on cushions ranged along the walls, with their legs drawn under them, smoked and sipped tea, but were silent unless addressed. Among the rest was Mirza Tschamael, the former minister of Ibrahim, who had advised the alliance with the Russians. Tea, with a variety of cakes and confectionery, punch, sherbet, and ice, were handed about by servants in European livery, while other attendants were in waiting in the Tatar and Circassian dress; a costly Viennese musical clock played during the visit.

After the termination of the war with Persia, Jaffar's uncle, the deposed khan, Mehti Khuli, was, at the intercession of Paskewitsch, permitted to return to Schusha, with a pension and the rank of a major-general.

Upon the flight of Mehti Khuli Khan, in 1822, the Russians assumed the government of Karabagh. An exact survey of the province was made, with a view, among other objects, to ascertain the ground-rent of all the landed property; as the taxes paid to the landed proprietors and the Government, which had

been assessed under the Tatar dominion, appeared too high. This survey is an interesting historical and statistical monument of industry and knowledge: I select from it the following notes.

* The Tatars and Armenians of Karabagh form a motley and mixed population; the former mostly leading a nomadic life, and roving about in the summer, after they have cultivated their fields sufficiently to yield the bare necessary produce. They wander in the mountains, which are rich in wood and pasture, and during the hot months journey as far as the confines of the snowy regions, among the dwellings of the predatory Koordish Tatars. In the autumn they return for the harvest to the plains, which in the rainy season yield excellent pasture for their flocks. They are a wealthy and hospitable race: single Tatars possess thousands of sheep, hundreds of buffaloes, and large numbers of horses of the finest breeds. The mountaineers are comparatively poor; but amidst the mountains of Karabagh is an elevated table-land, where the winter corn peculiar to colder climates is cultivated; whilst in the hot plains of the Koor and Araxes rice and cotton flourish greatly, and the deeper valleys, from their southern climate, are richly clothed with vineyards.

The whole burden of taxation falls upon the farmers, their villages or communes, and appears to be regulated by the produce of the soil and the demands of the landowners. The mode of levying the taxes is very complicated, and differs in almost all the villages:

they are mostly paid in kind. The Khans had formerly large territorial possessions, the revenue derived from which contributed to meet the wants of the State, in addition to the direct taxes.

The country is divided into twenty-two Magkals, or circles. Each village forms a community, which has a Kevika, or elder, over it, together with a body of decemvirs (Tschauſch), generally one or two surgeons, and a priest or moollah. These officers are exempt from the payment of taxes, as are also the farms of widows and the poorer classes, various persons in the service of the Khan, inspectors of the water-works, etc.

The principal taxes are a fixed money payment to the State, and a variety of contributions toward the household expenses of the Khan, such as the supply of fodder for his horses and cattle, butter, wood, sheep, and oxen, and sometimes also a payment in money. The Soljan is a tax paid in wheat; the Maldschagat is one consisting of a fifth of all crops of corn, cotton and rice, etc. There are other imposts, which are rendered variously in money, produce, and service; such as furnishing the post service with horses, ploughing and harvesting the lands of the Khan, etc. These duties are always levied with reference to the character of the population: the nomadic communes generally pay in cattle, rather than corn. The smaller charges on produce are frequently commuted into a money payment. A tax is laid on marriages, in some parts amounting to ten roubles. There

are communities of Retschpars, a class of socmen, who pay a few taxes from the produce of their ground, perform various services, such as cultivating the melon-gardens, etc., and receive in return a certain portion of the produce of the land. In the harvest-time they claim, beside their food, three sheaves out of every twenty. The field-implements and working cattle are the property of the lord of the soil. The communes, in renting their lands to strangers, bargain to receive one-tenth of the produce.

In the communities under private proprietors, the services rendered are of different kinds, the latter having to pay nearly all their dues to the landowner *in naturá*, as cloth for garments, salt, sacks, woollen stuffs for pack-saddles, carpets, worsted, etc.

One of the most remarkable places in the Caucasian countries, and perhaps in the whole world, is Baku, situated on the Caspian Sea, with its naphtha-springs and flames issuing from the ground. My travelling companion Herr von Schwarz, who had visited this spot and the Fire-worshippers residing there, gave me an interesting account of it by a friend of his, from which I will make a few extracts, in conclusion of the present Work.

BAKU AND ATESCH-DJA.

The word Baku is said to be derived from the Persian, in which Baade-kubah is, literally, 'Place of the shifting winds.' Atesch-Dja signifies 'Fire-land.'

The entire road from Shumacha to Baku crosses the barren spurs of the Caucasus, which branch off southward into the extensive plains of the Mugan Steppes, terminating on the east in Cape Apscheron. In every direction are seen only naked and rocky chains of mountains and hills; whilst in the lowlands, which are rich in herbage, flocks of sheep and troops of grazing camels are met with. Near the station of Morosi are the ruins of a considerable town, of ancient appearance, though it was still standing during the campaigns of Nadir Shah, in 1734. The Tatars build very slightly, and will never leave any architectural monuments to tell of their history.

On entering the Circle of Baku, the country becomes more open and cultivated, extensive fields of wheat lying around the Tatar villages; although in the immediate vicinity of Baku the country is again more desolate. The shores of the Caspian Sea are mostly barren and hilly; the colour of its waters is a dull light-green, and it has no breakers. Baku stands in the centre of a small bay, and consists of a confused assemblage of grey-coloured houses, with flat roofs, covered with asphaltum; its aspect is anything but cheerful: it is inhabited principally by Tatars, with a small proportion of Armenians. The houses are

crowded within the fortified walls; they have no windows looking on to the street; and the entire back of the dwellings, facing the courtyard and gardens, consists of a close wooden lattice, which shuts out any view, and in which are portions capable of being removed or pushed aside, for the openings to serve as doors or windows: in some parts open corridors are thus formed. The apartments of the women and domestics have windows, without glass, no stoves, but occasionally an open hearth. Above the grey mass of houses rise a few minarets and fortified towers. To the left, on entering the fortress, stands the dwelling of the last independent Khan of Baku, Hussein Khuli Khan*,—a square building, now the residence of the commandant, and quite Europeanized. Out at sea, a verst and a half distant from the town, are said to lie the ruins of an ancient fortress; this is remarkable, if true, as the level of the Caspian Sea is continually sinking, a foot in twelve years. No vessels are seen upon it, but the ugly Astrakhan fishing boats and the black Persian merchantmen. The scene all around is desolate and dull, enlivened by no green trees, red roofs, or clear water, no variety of colouring. The streets in the town of Baku are very narrow, many being impassable for carriages: but such conveyances have only been introduced since the Rus-

* His son is a General in the Russian service, and is considered a learned man: he has written a Russian book on the Tatar languages, and has long been collecting materials for a history of the Caucasian countries.

sian dominion, as the Tatar always travels on horseback, and despises a person who cannot ride.

Atesch-Dja lies seventeen versts north of Baku. As we approached it, evening was drawing in, and the sky was cloudless. On a sudden, standing out in relief against the deep blue southern sky, a strange-looking building rose before us, forming an equilateral triangle, each side being about 190 paces long. On the outside, this triangle consisted of a low flat-roofed building, of one story and without windows. In the courtyard, withinside the walls, were merely a row of cells, with no windows, but a door opening into the yard. In the middle of the court was a kind of temple. Upon a pedestal, with three steps, stood four square pillars, about two feet in diameter, four feet apart, and eight feet high: these are surmounted by a cupola. In the south-east corner of the court stands another round pillar; these are all hollow, and convey the gas from the earth. On the north-east side is a room for strangers, raised one story above the chief building, with windows and a gallery running round it. The whole edifice is of modern date, having been erected probably early in the present century. A wealthy Hindoo, named Ottumschan, contributed the principal sum toward its cost, beside the Government. There were formerly only wretched huts for the anchorites, and the flaming gas streamed forth from the earth through a few holes. The flame now issues from an opening in the centre of the temple, and out of the five hollow pillars, a foot in dia-

meter and to a height of four feet,—a bright flame, waving heavily and slowly from side to side against the dark sky,—a truly marvellous and spectral sight! Outside the building the flames issue from numerous holes in the earth; and indeed in every part of the country, to a distance of two or three versts around, on digging to the depth of a foot, the gas streams forth and readily ignites: the inhabitants of the country use this fire for culinary purposes.

This building, a kind of conventual abode, is the residence of the Ghebers, in Persian named Atescherust, or Fire-worshippers, the last remains of the devotees of that primitive religion which in remote ages was so widely spread. In the west of Hindostan and eastern Persia this religion still prevails over whole districts; but in other parts of Asia it is only found occasionally. In Astrakhan there also exist at the present day a small number of these Fire-worshippers. The object they hold most sacred, as the symbol of divinity, is the holy fire, which at Atesch-Dja issues from the earth, and ignites spontaneously, without any artificial aid. Hither the most pious repair as pilgrims, many of them remaining here in complete seclusion till the close of life, absorbed in religious contemplation, in presence of the sacred element.

The anchorites now residing here are from the west of India, the Punjaub; and all of them have, even at an advanced age, made the long and dangerous pilgrimage on foot through Affghanistan, Bokhara, and China, round the northern extremity of the Caspian

Sea. The brethren were, at the time of our visit, ten in number; but a few years later, they were reduced to five. On entering the courtyard we saw several of these men,—tall, thin figures, with features bronzed by an Indian sun. Several long and roughly hewn tombstones were lying about, some with a Sanscrit inscription cut upon them. In the centre of the open hall of the temple (if it may be called so), a long flame issued from a small hole in the earth, its yellow and blue colours giving it a strange and ghastly aspect: it is unaccompanied by the slightest noise; the flame plays in the air, rises, and then sinks, like the shades of the underworld into the stillness of the grave.

Over the door of each cell was a long Sanscrit inscription. In the interior we found the greatest cleanliness and order: the floor and walls are covered over with the blue clay of the place, which gives the whole a uniform light-blue tone. Outside each door, on the left, is a round hearth, constructed of clay, with a hole in the middle, out of which issues a flame; a few rude cooking-utensils stood about it. Beside each door, on the right, stands the couch of the anchorite, consisting of a hard straw mattress and a pillow. At the head of it a small flame rises from the earth. In front of the centre of the wall stands a little altar, a foot and a half high, formed of three steps, covered with shells and pebbles, small pictures, and images cast in bronze. At the side of the altar another small flame issues from the ground, which is regarded as peculiarly sacred, no layman being permitted to approach it.

The anchorites received us in silence, and with a humble demeanour. The sacristan and one or two others could converse in Persian. In one cell we saw a man on the point of death: he was kneeling, with his brow touching the earth; for several days he had been in this attitude; the others had covered him with a coarse cloth, on removing which he looked like a corpse. Occasionally he fell from exhaustion, but with painful effort raised himself again to his kneeling posture.

In another cell we found a tall old man, stark naked; his whole body was covered with earth, and between his eyebrows was a patch of yellow colour (with which the Tatars and Persians dye their nails, beard, and hair), as symbolic of flame. The old man had resided here twenty-five years; he spoke only Hindee, but the sacristan interpreted to us what he said. We addressed several questions to him, which he answered solemnly and slowly; "Of the four elements," he said, "I revere first the earth; and I have covered my body with earth, in order to be in constant contact with this element. I desire, after my death, to be buried in a sitting posture. If any of us worship in preference one of the other elements, his body is burned, and his ashes scattered to the winds: unless he worships fire, when his ashes would be collected and distributed among his relatives. Many of us believe in five elements,—the fifth being that free medium of transmission by which we are rendered capable of deriving enjoyment from benefits: light

reaches us in a perceptible way through the eye,—air, through the nose, mouth, and ear,—the fruits of the earth, through the mouth. This medium of enjoyment is itself a gift of the Creator's, which imparts the power of enjoying the elements, and this medium they worship as a distinct element,—not the senses themselves, but the channel of admission of the elements to the senses.”

A larger apartment, in other respects arranged like the rest, was divided by a thin partition-wall, breast-high, with an opening in the centre, and from the top of which streamed forth a high flame; beside it lay a small piece of crockery, to extinguish the flame when necessary. A hermit, reclining against this wall, was pointed out to us as a Brahmin: he had a bronzed complexion, a high forehead, finely chiselled features, thick snow-white hair, and a white pointed beard; he was dressed in a long light-yellow coat, with slashed sleeves, and a pointed red cap. This man appeared to be at the head of the fraternity: their public prayers are held in his cell. One of them calls to prayer, by blowing on a large conch, with a shrill, prolonged sound; immediately they all assemble in the Brahmin's cell, place themselves before the altar, and repeat a prayer, in a kind of recitative, accompanied by the tinkling of little bells. The Brahmin then sprinkles them with holy water, and lays on the tongue of each a few grains of rice out of a flat dish.

The cemetery of the brethren lies above the building, and in the centre of it is a well. When this pit,

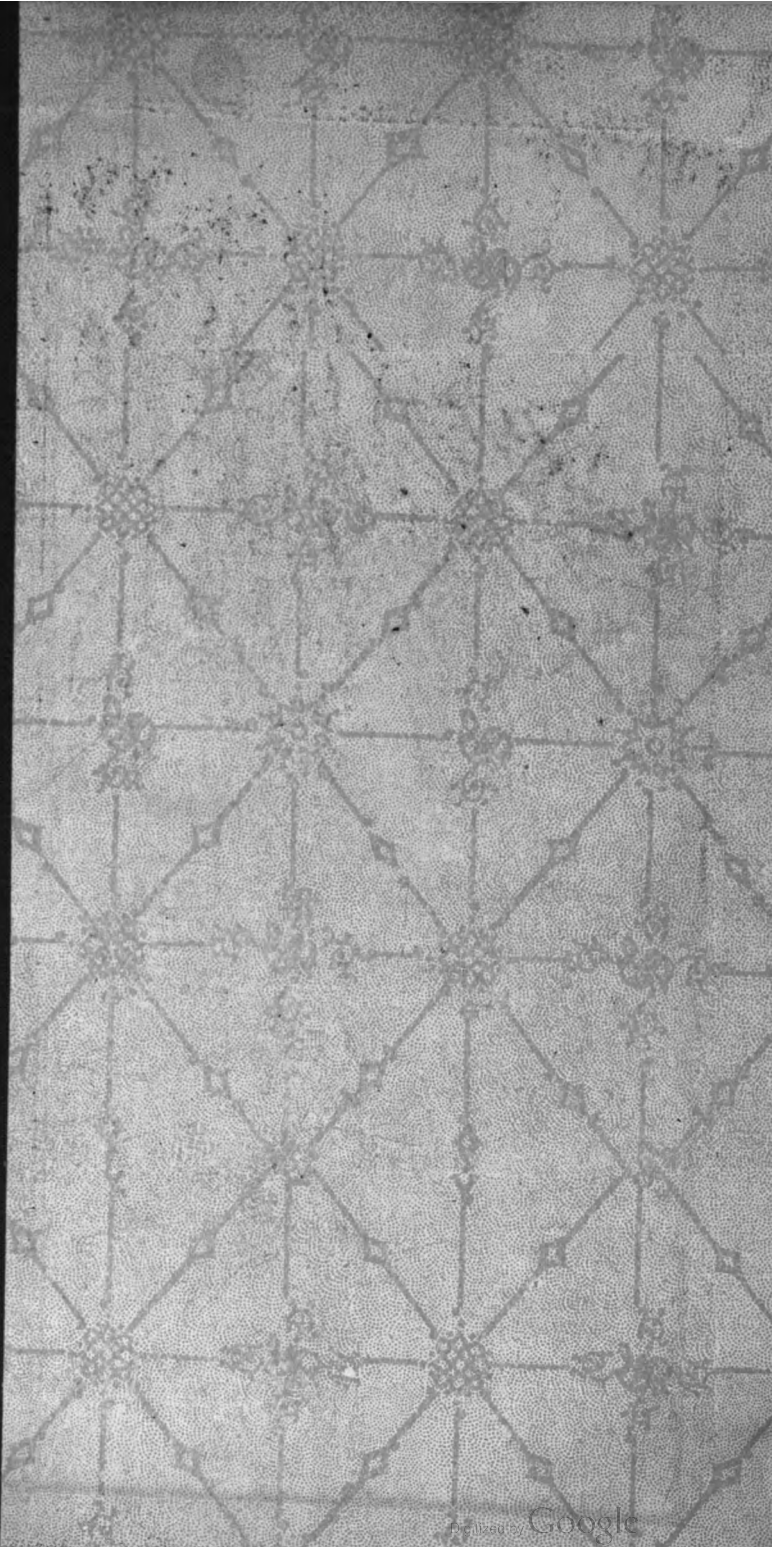
after being for awhile covered up, is opened again, and a wisp of lighted straw thrown into it, the gas collected ignites with the noise of thunder, and a red column of flame rises, four feet in diameter, and thirty feet high; the sparks from the burning straw are scattered far into the air, in the form of a splendid sheaf of fire.

As we quitted this extraordinary place, the same night, the red glare of these fires was reflected brilliantly on the dark sky. 4

THE END.







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