and ſome Tartar tribes ſubdued: but these conqueſts were not permanent ; and we hear of no further communica­tion between Ruſſia and Siberia till the time of John Baſilowitz II. It was opened again at that time by means of one Anika Strogonoſſ, a Russian merchant who had eſtabliſhed ſome ſalt-works at a town in the government of Archangel. This man carried on a trade with the inhabitants of the north-west parts of Siberia, who brought every year to the town above- mentioned large quantities of the fineſt furs. Thus he acquired a very conſiderable fortune in a ſhort time ; when at laſt the czar, perceiving the advantages which would accrue to his ſubjects from having a regular intercourſe with Siberia, determined to enlarge the com­munication which was already opened. With this view he ſent into Siberia a body of troops, which croſſed the Yugorian mountains, that form part of the north- eaſtern boundary of Europe. They ſeem, however, not to have paſſed the Irtiſh, or to have penetrated far­ther than the weſtern branch of the river Oby. Some Tartar tribes were laid under contribution, and a chief named *Tediger* conſented to pay an annual tribute of 1000 fables. But this produced no laſting advantage to Ruſſia ; for, ſoon after, Yediger was defeated and taken priſoner by Kutchum Khan, a deſcendant of the great Jenghiz Khan : and thus the allegiance of this country to Ruſſia was diſſolved.

For ſome time we hear of no further attempts made by the Russians on Siberia; but in 1577 the founda­tion of a permanent conqueſt was laid by one Yermac Temofeeff, a Coſſack of the Don. This man was at firſt the head of a party of banditti who infeſted the Ruffians in the province of Caſan ; but being defeated by the troops of the czar, he retired with 6000 of his followers into the interior parts of that province. Continuing his courſe ſtill eaſtward, he came to Orel, the moſt eaſterly of all the Ruffian settlements. Here he took up his winter-quarters : but his reſtleſs genius did not ſuffer him to continue for any length of time in a ſtate of inactivity ; and from the intelligence he pro­cured concerning the ſituation of the neighbouring Tartars of Siberia, he turned his arms towards that quarter.

Siberia was at that time partly divided among a number of ſeparate princes, and partly inhabited by the various tribes of independent Tartars. Of the former Kutchum Khan was the moſt powerful ſovereign. His dominions conſiſted of that tract of coun­

try which now forms the ſouth-weſtern part of thc pro­vince of Tobolſk ; and ſtretched from the banks of the Irtiſh and Oby to thoſe of the Tobol and Tura. His principal reſidence was at Sibir, a ſmall fortreſs upon the river Irtiſh, not far from the preſent town of Tobolſk, and of which ſome ruins are ſtill to be ſeen. After a courſe of unremitted fatigue, and a ſeries of victories which almoſt exceed belief, but of which we have not room to give the detail, our intrepid adventu­rer diſpoſſeſſed this prince of his dominions, and ſeated himſelf on the throne of Sibir. The number of his fol­lowers, however, being greatly reduced, and perceiving he could not depend on the affection oſ his new ſub­jects, he had recourſe to the czar of Muſcovy, and made a tender of his new acquiſitions to that monarch, upon condition of receiving immediate and effectual ſupport. This propoſal was received with the greateſt ſatisfaction by the czar ; who granted him a pardon for all former offences, and ſent him the required ſuccours. Yermac, however, being ſoon after drowned in an unſucceſsful excursion, the Russians began to lose their footing in the country. But freſh reinforcements being ſeaſonably ſent, they not only recovered their ground, but puſhed their conqueſts far and wide ; wherever they appeared, the Tartars were either redu­ced or exterminated. New towns were built, and co­lonies were planted on all ſides. Before a century had well elapſed, all that vaſt tract of country now called *Siberia,* which ſtretches from the confines of Europe to the Eaſtern Ocean, and from the Frozen Sea to the preſent frontiers of China, was annexed to the Russian dominions.

The air of Siberia is, in general, extremely piercing, the cold there being more ſevere than in any other part of the Ruffian dominions. The Siberian rivers are frozen very early, and it is late in the ſpring before the ice is thawed @@(a). If the corn does not ripen in Auguſt, there is little hope of a harveſt in this country ; and in the province of Jeniſeiſk it is ſometimes covered with ſnow before the peaſants can reap it. To defend the inhabitants againſt this extreme ſeverity of the climate, Providence ſeems more liberally to have dealt out to them wood for fuel and furs for clothing. As the win­ter’s day in the north parts of Siberia laſt but a few hours, and the ſtorms and flakes of ſnow darken the air ſo much, that the inhabitants, even at noon, cannot ſee to do any thing without artificial lights, they sleep away the greateſt part of that ſeaſon.

@@@(a) M. Gmelin, M. Muller, and two other philoſophers, ſet out in the year 1733 to explore the dreary regions of Siberia, by deſire of the empreſs Anne of Ruſſia. After ſpending nine years and a half in obſerving every thing that was remarkable, they returned to Peterſburgh, ; and an account of this journey was publiſhed by M. Gmelin. In order to examine how far the froſt had penetrated into the ground, M. Gmelin, on the 18th of June, at a place called Jacutia, ordered the earth to be dug in high ground ; they found mould to the depth of 11 inches, under which they met with looſe fand to two feet and a half further, after which it grew harder, and at half a foot deeper ſo hard as ſcarce to give way to the tools ; ſo that the ground ſtill remained unthawed at not leſs than the depth of four feet. He made the ſame experiment in a lower ſituation ; the ſoil was 10 inches deep, after that a looſe sand for two feet and ten inches, below which all was frozen and hard. At Jacutia the inhabitants preſerve in cellars ſeveral forts of berries, which they reckon among their dainties, perfectly good and freſh the whole year, though these cellars are ſcarce a fathom deep. At the fortreſs of Argun, in little more than 50 degrees of latitude, the inhabitants relate that, the earth in many places is never thawed above a yard and half, and that the internal cold of the earth will ſcarce permit a well to be dug, of which they bring an inſtance that happened not long before the author’s arrival at that place. They deſigned to ſink a well near a houſe at