thick woods, torrents and precipices, without a human ha­bitation, except a few sheds erected by hunters when they are in pursuit of game. In approaching the eastern ocean, these mountains decline in elevation, and turning to the north, run parallel to the sea, leaving a narrow space between them. The mountains of Okhotsk run northward down the Lena to Yakutsk ; one runs eastward to the sea of Okhotsk, whilst another continues its course with the penin­sula of Kamtschatka, which consists of a rocky chain of mountains, about which little information has ever been ac­quired.

The surface of Siberia comprises every variety of soil. The tracts which are called steppes are dry, elevated, and extensive plains, which are not inhabited, and some of them, which are uninhabitable, are destitute both of food and water. Others have shrubs growing on them or a stunted herbage, and are watered by streams or wells, though with­out inhabitants, and thus afford pasture to the herds and flocks of the shepherds who range over these desolate plains, ln regard to the soil on these steppes, great variety pre­vails, none being fruitful and proper for meadow or arable land, or indiscriminately for both ; in others the soil is un­fruitful, whether it be sand or salt, or in some cases of a rocky formation.

Siberia is well watered by numerous and large rivers, an account of which may be found in the articde Russia. It may merely be mentioned here, that those great rivers are the Ir- tysch, the Obi, the Jenesei, and the Lena, which have all their sources in the frontier range of mountains, and roll on­wards to the Frozen Ocean. All the other numerous rivers which rise in Siberia, are tributaries of those main rivers.

The cold and mountainous regions of Siberia are great depositories of those vast stores of mineral wealth by which the Russian empire is encircled. The elevated districts of this vast country abound in the most precious ores of all the different metals.

An official account of the produce of the mines of gold, silver, and platina, in Russia, has been published at St. Pe­tersburg ; it embraces a period of sixteen years, from 1823 to 1838 inclusive, and shews the following results :—

Gold. Silver. Platina.

Poods. Poods. Poods.

Produce of the Imperial mines—

In Ural 1,5921/2 ... 29

In Altai, 5381/2 14,7041/4

In Nertshinskoi, 93/4 3,3013/4

Produce of mines belonging to

individuals, 3,0093/4 ... 1,230

5,1501/2 18,006 1,259

Value in Sterling about L.12,000,000 and L.6,000,000.

During the same period, the value of money coined at the Imperial Mint at St. Petersburg, from Russian and fo­reign bullion, was about L.14,000,000 in gold, L.8,000,000 in silver, and L.400,000 in platina.

The population of Siberia consists of numerous tribes, who differ in their origin and their manners, and have been gradually subjected to the Russian authority, paying a stated tribute, which is not oppressive, and following their own pur­suits unmolested. The Mongols, who withdrew from the Chi­nese dominion during the last century, and voluntarily placed themselves under the dominion of Russia, inhabit the regions about the Selenga, in the government of Irkutsk, from the 122d to the l25th degree of longitude, and between the 50th and 53d degree of north latitude They consist of seven stems, or twenty families, which were estimated to compose 6918 males in 1766. The Burats inhabit Daouria, the banks of the Selenga, of the lake Baikal, and of the Upper Jenesei. They are remarkably industrious, and are chiefly employed in pastoral pursuits. The Tartars form a very numerous race, and are found scattered over Si­beria, under the different appellations of Tobolskian Tar­tars, from the river Tobol, on which they dwell ; the Tom- skian Tartars, who inhabit both sides of the river Tom, above and below the city of Tomsk ; the Krasnayarskian and the Kusneretskian Tartars, who greatly resemble the Mongolian tribes; the Tartars of the Obi, who are partly agricultural and partly pastoral in their habits ; the Tar­tar tribe, which dwelt formerly between the Obi and the Jenesei, but which now inhabit the whole country along the river Tschulym ; other tribes, of which it would serve little purpose to give the barbarous appellatious, inhabit the country between the Obi and the Irtysch, which is called the steppe of Baraba. There are others on the left shore of the Jenesei, upon which they follow their pastoral occu­pations amongst the Sayome mountains. Certain districts in the governments of Tobolsk and Kolhyvan, and partly in the eastern half of that of Perm, beyond the Ural mountains, are to be regarded as the peculiar home and seat of the Siberian Tartars. The northern districts of Siberia are possessed by twenty tribes, peculiar to itself. The principal are the Tungouses on the Jenesei, the Ostiaks, the Yakantes, the Samoiedes, and the Tchantchis. The extensive deserts on which roam the pastoral tribe of the Tungouses, extend eastward across the Lena, as far as the Amoor and the Eastern Ocean. They extend northward from the 53d to the 65th degree. The history of the Sa­moiedes is little known. Their present abodes are on the coasts of the Frozen Ocean, from about the 65th degree of north latitude, quite to the sea shore. They swarm up to the 75th degree of north latitude, dwelling on the coldest and most desolate regions of the earth, from the White Sea to the other side of the Jenesei, and almost up to the Lena, and, therefore, being both in Europe and in Siberia. There are the Ostiaks of the Obi, of the Narym, and of the Jenesei. The Ostiaks are not numerous ; but they include many subordinate tribes, which it is unnecessary to specify by name, as they all resemble each other in manners. Giorgi gives the following statement of the population in 1801. In the government of Tobolsk, 622,422 ; in the government of Irkutsk, 451,937.

The religion generally diffused amongst these wild tribes, if it deserve the name, is a rude superstition, or idolatry, congenial to the state of barbarism which generally prevails. The system of Boodh, or of the Lamas, is the creed of the Mongols and Tartars ; and the residence of the Lama, the chief of that religion, is on the Upper Selenga, to the south of Baikal. The great temple was entered by a late travel­ler, who found there about a hundred priests, clothed in red, and seated in successive rows. The high-priest was seated upon a lofty and splendid throne, behind which was an altar, upon which were placed the images of their gods, the inferior ones being arranged in rows along the wall. Of­ferings were presented to them of rice, brandy, and some­times a hen or sheep roasted whole. Their worship con­sists in a great measure of noise, the most formidable sounds being produced by a combination of the most noisy instru­ments, such as bells, kettle-drums, trumpets, shells, and other instruments. Those superstitious rites are, however, denounced by the pure followers of the genuine Lamas. They practise other vile and bloody rites, by way of expi­ating the anger of their gods ; such as leaping, and howling in a frightful mannner, and pretending to wound their backs with knives. Amongst the rude wanderers in the northern regions of Siberia complete paganism prevails, consisting of the ignorant arts of sorcery, and the worship of deformed stone images. The light of Christianity has hardly yet penetrated into these benighted regions. By the recent en­terprising and active efforts, however, of the missionary societies of Britain, aided by the countenance of the Rus­sian government, a beginning has been made in the great work of civilizing and of converting these barbarous tribes.