and populous. But unless in those richer tracts which are interspersed through central Asia, and in the cities on the banks of rivers, the inhabitants generally retain their pas­toral and migratory habits ; and more especially as we pro­ceed farther northwards among the Kirgeesh, who connect Independent Tartary with Russia, and have been already described. Everywhere fertile tracts are to be found ; but the desert, the abode of the wandering tribes, greatly pre­ponderates.

Besides those tribes who still inhabit the country of Tar­tary, this pastoral population is spread over the southern provinces of Russia, which is inhabited by the Kalmucks and Baschkirs. The Kalmucks have been already described. They entirely resemble the other wandering tribes in their habits. They were formerly numbered among the most powerful tribes in Tartary, and they even boasted of the great conqueror Zingis as belonging to their nation. After various wanderings and misfortunes, the whole body settled, in 1723, on the banks of the Volga, from Tzaritzin to Astra- can. They numbered 14,000 tents or families, and owned the supremacy of the czar. They could not, however, relinquish at once their predatory habits, in consequence of which they experienced the iron grasp of Russia, and numbers of them sought an asylum near the frontier of China, whither they emigrated about the year 1771. Those now inhabiting Russia still amount to about 40,000 or 50,000.

The Baschkire inhabit the southern parts of the pro­vinces of Orfa and Orenburg, with part of Tobolsk, be­tween the rivers Belaia, Kama, Volga, and Oural. They were established in these countries from a very early pe­riod, and were instigated to repeated revolts, particularly in 1676, 1708, and 1735; and in 1771 they joined the standard of Pugatscheff. Their power was entirely broken in the course of their various conflicts with Russia ; and after they were subdued, they experienced so much lenity from the Russian government that they are now numerous and prosperous. They retain all their Tartar habits, be­ing entirely devoted to the rearing of cattle, and, so far, to the growing of such a supply of oats and barley as may serve them for winter food when milk fails them. They consist of 27,000 families, and are obliged to furnish their contingent to the Russian armies, being placed on the footing of Cossacs, mounted and equipped at their own expense.

II. Chinese Tartary. On the decay of the Tartar sway over central Asia, and the breaking up of their empire, a vast portion of territory fell under the dominion of China. It comprehends that extensive country which is situated between Hindustan and Asiatic Russia, bounded on the north by the great range of the Altai Mountains, and be­tween the Eastern Ocean and the great range of the Beloor Taugh, which bounds Independent Tartary on the east. This space extends in its widest dimensions over seventy degrees of longitude and twenty of latitude. It is doubtful whether it includes or is bounded by Thibet on the south. It is in many parts mountainous and desert. The great desert of Shamo or Cobi stretches, nearly through its whole extent, over a space of nearly 2000 miles in breadth, and interposes between China and the Russian empire. This immense plain is in many places barren and destitute of wa­ter, but in other places is watered by rivulets and springs, or lakes, and affords pasturage to the hordes that wander over its desert parts, and is covered with herds of cattle. Our knowledge of this tract, especially of its western limits, is but imperfect, and is chiefly derived from the accounts of the early missionaries by whom it was visited. The most westerly district on the other side of the great mountain range of Beloor Taugh includes, according to the most re­cent accounts, the Mahommedan states of Kashgar and Yarkund, about 600 miles nearly east of Kokaun. The ap­pearance of this country is in general more pleasing than that to the west, being better watered and more finely di­versified, more verdant and better wooded, and differing both from the gravelly and rocky soil of Persia. Khorassan, Balk, and from the salt or sandy deserts of Khaurezm or Bockhara to the west. Kashgar is the more westerly of the two, and is situated in long. 76° 15 45'' E. and in lat. 39° 25' N. It is a city of great celebrity, and of great com­mercial resort from the surrounding countries. It embraces a circuit of three miles, contains 10,000 houses, and is crowded with strangers. It was destroyed by Meerza Abubekr, the grandson of Timur, who having afterwards made it his residence, restored it to prosperity, and adorned it with many splendid edifices. Along with several of the neighbouring states, it has been under the dominion of Chi­na for the last seventy or eighty years. Yarkund, which by the road is 180 miles from Kashgar, and is placed in long. 78° 27' 45'' E. lat. 38° 19' N., enjoys a high degree of celebrity in that part of Asia, and is a rendezvous of mer­chants from India, Caubul, and Independent Tartary. The bazaar contains many handsome shops, which are chiefly occupied by the Chinese. The country which surrounds these cities is described as rich and fruitful, well watered and delightful, abounding in towns and villages, in rich cul­tivation, and especially in well-flavoured and delicious fruits.

The conquest of the country by the Chinese, as related by Fraser, took place about seventy or eighty years ago. About the year 1670 or 1680 the countries of Yarkund, Kashgar, and other neighbouring districts, were under the Moghuls or Mongoles, the descendants of Timur, from whom they were conquered by the Kalmucks, whose king resided at Eelah, and appointed governors over the other cities. A great plague having broken out among the Kalmucks, the Mongole lords, seeing the weakness of their rulers, rose in rebellion against them, and succeeded in regaining their lost power. But at this period they put to death an ambas­sador from China, who was despatched to their country by the emperor, on which he sent an army to avenge the in­sult, and after a severe conflict the country was subdued, and has ever since remained under the yoke, though they have still preserved their paternal seat, and live ostensibly under the government of their own princes. According to the accounts of travellers, the strictest order and an effici­ent police are maintained throughout the wide precincts of the Chinese authority ; moderate duties are levied, trade is protected, and a single traveller may journey as securely as a large caravan.

That portion of Tartary which is to the west and north-west of China, is for the most part desert, or a naked and wide-extended plain, with occasional spots which are fertile and well watered, and afford pasture to the flocks of the wandering tribes of Mongoles, Kalkas, and Eluths. The origin of these tribes is but imperfectly known. The Mon­goles are generally considered as having been the great dis­turbers of the world, whose reckless devastation seemed destined to destroy and obliterate arts and knowledge, and every vestige of civilized life. Being gradually broken into separate states, they were partly crushed by the rising power of Russia, and partly fell under the dominion of China. They are really, however, under the rule of the Chinese, though a small portion of them are within the dominions of Russia. These withdrew themselves from the Chinese dominion, and voluntarily put themselves under that of Russia ; and this example would have been followed by other races, had not Russia engaged by a treaty not to give admittance to any more of these tribes. The Russian Mongoles inhabit the regions about the Selenga, in the government of Irkutsk, from the 122d to the 125th degree of longitude, and be­tween the 50th and 53d degree of north latitude. The allegiance of those who are under the dominion of China is secured by a pension to their chiefs. They sometimes also engage in wars with each other, though these con­