Lena, as also the Baikal Mountains and the island of Orkhon; they support themselves chiefly by stock-breeding, but some of them, especially in Irkutsk, are agriculturists (see Transbaikalia). On the left of the Amur there are about 10,000 Chinese and Man­churians about the mouth of the Zeya, and nearly 3000 Coreans on the Pacific coast. The Tunguses, although few in numbers (50,000), occupy as their hunting-grounds an immense region on the high plateau and its slopes to the Amur, but their limits are yearly becoming more and more circumscribed both by Russian gold-diggers and by Yakut settlers.

Finally, in the north-east we find a group of stocks whose ethno­logical place is not yet accurately determined. They are united into a separate North Asian linguistic group, and include the Tchuktchis, who may number 12,000, the Koryaks (5000), and the Kamchadales (3000), the Ghilyaks (nearly 5000) of the lower Amur and north Saghalin, and the Ainos (3000) of south Saghalin. The Yukaghirs (1600) seem to be merely Tunguses. Some 5000 Gipsies wander about Siberia.

Much has been written of late about the sad state of the indigen­ous populations of Siberia.@@1 They are pitilessly deprived of their hunting and grazing grounds and compelled to resort to agriculture, —a modification exceedingly hard for them, not only on account of their poverty but also because they are compelled to settle in the less favourable regions. European civilization has made them familiar with all its worst sides and with none of its best. Taxed with a tribute in furs (*yasak*) from the earliest years of the conquest, they often revolted in the 17th century, but were cruelly reduced to obedience. The tribute was never great (about 11/4 roubles per head); but the official valuation of furs was always only one-third to one-fourth of their real value and the exactions of the authorities trebled it again. In 1824 the settled indigenes had to pay the very heavy rate of 11 roubles per head, and the arrears, which soon became equal to the sums levied, were rigorously exacted. It must be fully acknowledged that severe measures taken by the Govern­ment in the last two centuries prevented the growth of anything like legalized slavery on Siberian soil; but the people, ruined as they were both by the intrusion of agricultural colonists and by the exactions of Government officials, fell into what was practically a kind of slavery (*kabała*) to the merchants. Even the best-inten­tioned Government measures, such as the importation of corn, the prohibition of the sale of spirits, and so on, became new sources of oppression. The action of missionaries, who cared only about nominal Christianizing, had no better effect. It is worthy of notice that the spread of Mohammedanism among the Tatars and Kirghizes and of Lamaism among the Buriats took place under the Russians and was favoured by the Government.

The Russians of Siberia differ to some extent from those of the mother-country. They might have been expected to intermix largely with the Finnish, Turkish, and Mongol elements with which they came in contact; but, in consequence of causes already mentioned under Russia (vol. xxi. p. 78), the mixture is much less than might be supposed; and the continuous arrival of new immigrants con­tributed to lessen the effects of mixtures which really took place. One is accordingly struck to find in Western Siberia compact masses of Russians who have lost so little of their primitive ethnographical features, and to hear throughout Siberia a language which differs from that of northern Russia only by a slight admixture of words borrowed from the natives (mostly relating to hunting or cattle­rearing), and a few expressions of Polish origin. The case is other­wise, however, on the outskirts. Castrén characterized Obdorsk (mouth of the Ob) as a true Samoyedic town, although peopled with “Russians.” The Cossacks of Western Siberia have the features and customs and many of the manners of life of the Kalmucks and Kirghiz. Yakutsk is thoroughly Yakutic; marriages of Russians with Yakut wives are common, and some forty years ago the Yakut language was predominant among the Russian merchants and officials. At Irkutsk and in the valley of the Irkut the admixture of Tungus and Buriat blood is obvious, and still more in the Ner­tchinsk district and among the Transbaikalian Cossacks settled for the last two centuries on the Argun. They speak the Buriat language as often as Russian, and in a Buriat dress the Argun Cossack can hardly be distinguished from a Buriat. In separate parts of Siberia, on the borders of the hilly tracts, the mixture with Tatars was quite common. Of course it is now rapidly growing less, and the settlers who entered Siberia in the 19th century married Russian wives and remained thoroughly Russian. There are accordingly parts of Siberia, especially among the Raskolniks, where the north Russian, the Great Russian, and the Ukrainian types have maintained themselves in their full purity, and only some differences in domestic architecture, in the disposition of their villages, and in the language and character of the population remind the traveller that he is in Siberia. The Russians in Siberia have emigrated from all parts of European Russia; but the special features of the language and partly also of the national character are due to the earliest settlers, who came mostly from northern Russia.

The natural rate of increase of population is very slow as a rule, and does not exceed 7 or 8 per 1000 annually. The great mortality, especially among children, is one of the causes of this, the birth­rate being also lower than in Russia. In Western Siberia the former is 38 per 1000 in towns and 30 in villages, while the births are 43 in towns and 44 in villages. The climate of Siberia, how­ever, cannot be called unhealthy, except in certain localities where goitre is common (on the Lena, in several valleys of Nertchinsk, and in the Altai Mountains). The rapid growth of the actual popu­lation is chiefly due to immigration.

Agriculture is the chief occupation both of the settled Russian and of the native population. South Siberia has a very fertile soil and yields rich crops, but immense tracts are utterly unfit for tillage. In the lowlands of Western Siberia it is carried on up to 61° N. lat.@@2 On the high plains fringing the alpine tracts on the north­west it can be carried on only in the south, farther north only in the valleys, reaching 62° N. lat. in that of the Lena, and in the alpine tracts in only a few valleys, as that of the Irkut. On the high plateau all attempts to grow cereals have failed,—only the wide trenches (Uda, Selenga, Djida), already described, giving encourage­ment to the agriculturist. On the lower plateau, in Transbaikalia, grain is successfully raised in the Nertchinsk region,—with serious risks, however, from early frosts in the valleys of the mountain- ridges which rise above its surface. South-east Transbaikalia suffers from want of water, and the Buriats irrigate their fields. Although agriculture is carried on on the upper Amur, where land has been cleared from virgin forests, it really prospers only below Kumara and on the rich plains of the Zeya and Selimja. In the depression between the Bureya range and the coast-ranges it suffers greatly from the heavy July and August rains, and from inunda­tions; while on the lower Amur the agriculturists barely maintain themselves by growing cereals in clearances on the slopes of hills, so that the settlements on the lower Amur and Usuri continually require help from Government to save them from famine. The chief grain-producing regions of Siberia are—the Tobol and Ishim region, the Baraba, the region about Tomsk, and the outskirts of the Altai, which cover an aggregate of 330,000 square miles (155,000 in the Altai); they have a thoroughly Russian population of nearly 2,000,000 inhabitants, and nearly 8,600,000 acres are under crops. The Tobolsk region, mostly covered with *urmans,* but having nearly 1,000,000 acres cultivated, and the northern districts of Semipala­tinsk, which are being rapidly colonized, must be added to the above. On the whole, in the basins of the Ob and Irtish, the annual yield is about 2,350,000 quarters of summer wheat, 1,260,000 of summer rye, 3,240,000 of oats, and 6,000,000 bushels of potatoes. The figures for Eastern Siberia are not so reliable,—about 1,100,000 quarters of various grains in Irkutsk (one-third raised by the Buriats), 400,000 in Transbaikalia, 40,000 in Yakutsk, about 100,000 in the Amur province, and 25,000 in the Maritime Pro­vince; and the Yeniseisk peasants sell every year about 700,000 cwts. of corn. The Minusinsk district, one of the richest in Siberia (45, 000 inhabitants, of whom 2800 are settled and 24,000 nomadic), has more than 45,000 acres under crops; and in the whole pro­vince of Yeniseisk about 3,000,000 acres are cultivated.

Cattle-breeding is extensively carried on in many parts. In the Ob and Irtish region of Western Siberia there are about 2,000,000 horses, 1,500,000 head of horned cattle, 3,000,000 sheep, and 100,000 reindeer; for Eastern Siberia the figures are approximately 850,000 horses, 1,100,000 horned cattle, 1,120,000 sheep, and about 50,000 reindeer. The industry is, however, carried on in the most primitive manner. In Transbaikalia little hay is made, and the Buriat horses seek their food throughout the winter be­neath the thin sheet of snow which covers the steppes. A single snowstorm in spring sometimes destroys in a few days thousands of horses thus weakened. In Western Siberia the “Siberian plague” makes great ravages, and the average losses are estimated at about 37,500 head of cattle annually.

Bee-keeping is widely diffused, especially in Tomsk and the Altai. Honey is exported to Russia. The seeds of the stone-pine are collected for oil in Western Siberia.

Hunting still continues to be a profitable occupation, the male population of whole villages in the hilly and woody tracts setting out in October for a month’s hunting. The sable, however, which formerly constituted the wealth of Siberia, is now so scarce that four sables per man is the maximum in the best districts. Squirrels, bears, foxes, snow-foxes, antelopes, and especially deer in spring are at present the principal objects of the chase. But even in Yakutsk the total produce of hunting was in 1879 only 65 sables, 2360 snow-foxes, 23,440 ermines, 140,550 squirrels, 1780 foxes, 145 bears, 1310 reindeer, and 26,780 hares. The forests on the Amur yielded a rich return of furs during the first years of the Russian occupation, and the Amur sable, although much inferior to the Yakutsk and Transbaikalian, was largely exported. In 1862 1800 sables and 40,000 squirrels were killed in the province of Amur,

@@@1 Yadrintseff's *Siberia as a Colony* contains a summary of this literature with bibliography.

@@@2 The northern limits of agriculture are 60° N. lat. on the Urals, 62° at Ya­kutsk, 61° at Aldansk, 54° 30' at Udskoi, and 53° to 54° in the interior of Kam­chatka (Middendorff, *Sibirische Reise,* vol. iv.).