gardening, while the Kirghiz chiefly lead a nomadic pastoral life. Manufactures are represented by a few distilleries; but a great variety of petty industries are practised in the towns and villages. Trade is carried on very largely.

Syr-Daria is divided into eight districts, the chief towns of which, with their populations in 1881, were—Tashkend *(q.v.)* (100,000), Aulie-ata (4450), Jizak (8700), Kazalinsk (2950), Khojend (28,000), Perovsk (3400), Tchemkent (8050), and Tchinaz (300). Turkestan or Agret (6700) and Ura-tube (11,000) also deserve mention. (P. A. K.)

SYRIA. Etymologically, “ Syria ” is merely an abbre­viation of “Assyria,” a name which covered the subject- lands of the Assyrian empire, the subject-peoples being also called “Syrians.” Afterwards, in the Græco-Roman period, the shorter word came to be restricted to the territory west of the Euphrates,—the designation “Syrians,” how­ever, being given to the great mass of the Semitic popu­lations dwelling between the Tigris and the Mediterranean, who are more accurately called Aramæans (Gen. x. 22 ; comp. Semitic Languages, vol. xxi. p. 645 *sq.).* The present article deals with Syria only in its geographical significance. For a map, see vol. xvi. pl. VIII.

Syria is the designation of the country which extends for about 380 miles (between 36° 5' and 31° N. lat.) along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean ; its eastern limit properly speaking is formed by the middle portion of the course of the Euphrates, but in point of fact it insensibly merges into the steppe country which naturally belongs more or less to Arabia. It is only the oases lying nearest the western border of the steppe (*e.g*., Aleppo, Palmyra) that can be reckoned as belonging to Syria.@@1 From time immemorial the land between Egypt and the Euphrates has been the battlefield for the empires of western Asia on the one hand and those of Egypt and Africa on the other. It has also been the territory which the trading caravans of these empires have had to traverse; and by its position on the Mediterranean it has been the medium for transmitting the civilizing influences of the East to the West and again of the West to the East. Hence it is easy to understand how the peoples of Syria should only in exceptional cases have played an independent part either in politics or in art and science ; none the less on that account is their place in history one of the highest interest and importance.

The surface configuration of the country is a uniform one ; the mountains for the most part stretch from north to south in parallel ridges, connecting the Cilician Taurus with the Red Sea range. The continuity is broken for short intervals at one or two points. Immediately con­nected with the Cilician Taurus in the north, and forming part of it, is the Alma Dagh (ancient Amanus). At its highest it does not rise much above 6000 feet, but it has an abrupt descent towards the sea, and terminates at its southern extremity in a bold headland, the Rás el-Khanzír. Here the Orontes reaches the sea through a depression in the chain, and the same outlet forms an important pass into the interior of the country. Frequently in ancient times it was only the territory to the south of the lower Orontes valley that was reckoned as constituting Syria. Farther south is the isolated Jebel Akra', about 6000 feet high (the Mons Casius of the ancients), which was held sacred by the Phoenicians ; still farther to the south are the low Ansairi Hills, which derive their name from the people inhabiting them. Beyond those the Nahr el-Kebír (Eleu-

therus) falls into the sea, and here north Syria may be held to terminate. To the south of this begins the Lebanon district (see Lebanon, vol. xiv. p. 393); an imaginary line drawn eastwards from a point a little to the south of Tyre will represent the southern boundary of what may be designated as middle Syria. Occasionally Syria is spoken of in a narrow sense, as distinguished from Palestine ; but there is no scientific ground for such a practice, for the mountains of Palestine *(q.v.),* the southern third of Syria, can be described as a southward continuation of the mountain masses already referred to, and cis-Jordanie as well as trans-Jordanie Palestine is simply a portion of Syria. Indeed the district as far as Sinai can be spoken of as a fourth division of the same country. A glance at a geological map reveals this very clearly. Cretaceous limestone constitutes the bulk of the hills and plateaus of Syria, and extends towards Sinai, where the zone of primitive rocks is reached. In the south of Palestine, nummulitic limestone and Nubian sandstone make their appearance from Sinai and northern Arabia. In addition to these, alluvial soils are principally met with. In middle Syria especially, eastwards from the upper course of the Jordan, great basaltic masses occur ; in the Hauran (comp. Bashan, vol. iii. p. 410) there are basalt peaks nearly 6000 feet in height. The basalt mountains are often much broken up so as to be quite inaccessible (Harra); but the basalt when decomposed forms the best of arable soils. It is only in isolated cases that the igneous formation ex­tends into western Syria. The tableland to the east of the principal mountain chains consists partly of good clay soil ; the steppe *(bádiyet esh-sham,* also called *hamád),* which has an average elevation of about 1800 feet, ex­tends towards the Euphrates with a gradual slope.

The direction of the principal valleys is determined by that of the mountains. The chief river of Syria in the narrower sense is the Orontes (Arabic *El-'Asi),* which rises in the Beká', the mountain valley between Libanus and Antilibanus, and follows a northerly course. At Antioch, where it is augmented by the stream which flows from the great lake of Ak Deniz, it turns westwards, falling into the sea near the ancient Seleucia. Not far from the source of the Orontes is that of the Lítáni (formerly Líta), which runs south­wards through the Beká', and afterwards westwards through a deep gorge of its own excavation, having its mouth a little to the north of Tyre ; in its lower course it bears the name of El-Kásimíye. The principal river of south Syria is the Jordan *(q.v.).* Like it, most of the other streams of Syria rising on the eastern side of the water­shed terminate in inland lakes. Of these may be named the El-A'waj and the Barada (Pharpar and Abana) of Damascus, which lose themselves in the lakes and marshes to the east of the city. In like manner the river of Aleppo falls into the lake El-Math. The 'Afrína (Ufrenus of the ancients) falls into the Ak Deniz lake, and so into the Orontes ; the Sádjúr is a tributary of the Euphrates. Other lakes are the great salt lake to the south-east of Aleppo and the remarkable lake near Homs, in the neighbourhood of which the ruins of the old Hittite city of Kadesh have recently been discovered. The coastal streams have been enumerated under Lebanon and Palestine *(q.v.).*

Two distinct floral regions meet in Syria (comp. Lebanon). That of the coast is Mediterranean, and is characterized by a number of evergreen shrubs, with small leathery leaves, and of quickly flower­ing spring plants. On the coast of Phcenicia (comp. vol. xviii. p. 801) and southwards towards Egypt more southern forms of the same vegetation occur, as, for example, *Ficus Sycomorus,* and especially date-palms. This region is separated from the easterly one, that of the steppe flora, by the ridge of Lebanon and the mountains of Palestine. It is distinguished by the variety of its species, by the dry and thorny character of its shrubs, and by its marked poverty in trees. The Jordan valley has on account of its low level a sub-tropical character. As regards cultivated species, Syria is the home of the olive tree, which, like the vine, is found in all parts ; but the white mulberry for silk is limited to a small district. Syria is throughout far from unfertile ; the district of the Hauran is one magnificent corn-field, while the orchard land about Damascus is renowned far and wide. In former times, how­ever, cultivation was carried on with much greater zeal, and the arrangements for irrigation—a necessity everywhere, especially on the side bordering on the steppe—were much more considerable and more carefully seen to. The numerous ruins on the lands at

@@@1 In the cuneiform inscriptions Syria is called *Mát Haiti, “* the land of the Cheta, ” a designation transferred from the north Syrian people of that name (see below) to the region as a whole ; *Mat Aharri,* the “hinder” or “western” land, denotes more properly the southern portion, but is also used for the whole. By the Arabs it is called *Esh-Shám.* (more properly *Esh-Sha'm),* “the land on the left hand,” as distinguished from *Yemen,* “the land on the right”; but the de­signation originally implied a wider region than the Syria defined above, including as it did a portion of Arabia.