The population includes only a few Russians (about 16,000) ; the majority are Tartar shepherds, next to whom come the Iranian Tates and Talyshes (the latter probably aborigines of Baku), who constitute 23∙1 per cent. of the population; some 27,000 Armenians, chiefly about Shemakha, and 35,000 Kurins, or Lezghians, on the slope of the Great Caucasus, must be added, as also some Jews and Arabs.

A mining industry of some importance has been growing up of late in this part of Transcaucasia. The copper works of Kedabek in Elizabethpol yield from 10,000 to 15,000 cwts. of copper annually; nearly 300,000 cwts. of manganese are extracted in Kutais, and 30,000 cwts. of sulphur in Daghestan and Baku ; the coal-mines of Kutais, the alum ores of Elizabethpol, and the fire-clay and cement of Tchernomorsk, are but recently opened up.

The highlands of Transcaucasia, which extend from north-west to south-east for nearly 375 miles, with an average width of 160 miles, must in their turn be sub­divided into two sections—the Armenian plateau, including the provinces of Erivañ and Kars and parts of Baku, and the Black Sea coast-region, including the former province of Batum (now the Batum and Artvin districts of Kutais).

The former of those is an immense plateau separated by the valley of the Araxes from the highlands of Adherbaijan and of Turkish Armenia, which belong to the drainage-areas of the Euphrates or those of Lakes Van and Urmia. All over Kars and Erivañ is a series of plateaus ranging in altitude from 5000 to 6500 feet, sometimes quite flat, sometimes broadly undulating, covered with rich meadows, and for the most part available for agriculture. Dome-shaped mountains, isolated, or grouped into relatively low ridges, rise from these plateaus to heights which range from 8000 to 9500 feet, and occasionally reach 10,000 or 11,000 above sea-level. Several summits in the east exceed that height, and the Alaghöz reaches 13,436 feet.

This plateau region is bounded on the south by the valley of the Araxes, the river which forms the frontier with Turkey, except where it is crossed by Russia in the south of Kars and west of Erivañ. There the river flows in a broad valley 4500 feet above sea-level, and the Kars plateau falls towards it by a steep slope, while on the other side a steep, rocky ridge of exceedingly wild aspect rises as the northern border-ridge of the South Armenian (Alashkert) plateau and the water-parting between the Caspian Sea and the Indian Ocean. This ridge, which includes the Allah-dagh and Kösa-dagh (10,720 and 11,260 feet respectively), as also the Great and Little Ararats (17,100 and 12,990 feet), has no general name, but is described under the names of Shah-ioly, or Agri-dagh.@@1

A number of lakes occur on the plateau, especially along its northern border-ridge, the chief being that of Goktcha, an extensive alpine basin (500 square miles 6310 feet above sea-level) sur­rounded by wild mountains. Most of the depressions of the plateau bear traces of having been under water during the Lacustrine (Post-Glacial) period. Granites and other unstratified rocks con­stitute the nucleus of the Armenian and Kars plateaus. These are covered with Azoic slates, and partly with Devonian and Carbonifer­ous deposits ; Jurassic and Cretaceous are wanting, but the Tertiary (Eocene and Miocene) are widely spread both in the valley of the Rion and Kura and in the depressions of the plateau. Rocks of volcanic origin are widely diffused all over Erivañ : the Alexandropol plateau, surrounded by extinct volcanoes, is all covered with volcanic products, which overlie the Tertiary deposits and in turn are covered with Glacial boulder-clay.

The Alaghöz, the Ararats, and the peaks around Lake Goktcha are huge trachitic masses surrounded by volcanic rocks. Iron and copper ores are widely spread; alum and rock-salt are obtained, the latter at Kulpi and Nakhichevan. Mineral springs are numer­ous. The region is watered by the upper Araxes—too rapid and rocky to be navigated—and its tributaries, most of which flow at the bottoms of deep gorges. The upper Kura waters western Kars. The climate presents all the varieties which might be expected in a region of so varied altitudes. While cotton grows in the dry and hot climate of the valley of the lower Araxes, the winter is severe on the plateau, and Alexandropol (5010 feet) has an average temperature of only 41o∙5 (Jan. 12o∙8 ; July, 73o∙6). The difference between summer and winter is still more striking at Erivañ (3210 feet), which has in January an average of only 5o while that of August reaches 77°∙7. On the Kars plateau the winter is still more severe. Kaghyzman (4620 feet) and Sary-kamysh (7800 feet) have the winter temperature of Finland, and the latter place, with an annual mean the same as that of Hammerfest (36o F.), has frosts of

27° and heats of 99°. The vegetation of the Kars plateau reflects these extremes of climate, and, besides the alpine vegetation of the high *yailas* (alpine meadows), we find there the Anatolian, Armenian, and Pontic floras meeting. The population of Erivañ consists of Armenians (54 per cent.), Tartars (40 per cent.), some 28,000 Kurds, and some 4400 Russians, together with a few Greeks and Jews. In localities under 4000 feet cotton and rice are the chief crops, oil-yielding plants, the vine, the mulberry, and fruit trees being also cultivated. Higher up wheat and barley are grown, while at altitudes above 6000 and 7000 feet the Tartars and Kurds support themselves by rearing cattle. Many petty trades are developed in the towns among the Armenians, and the trade of Erivañ with Persia and Turkey amounts to about 10,000,000 roubles.

The population of the province of Kars (167,610 in 1883) is very mixed. In a remote antiquity it was inhabited by Armenians, whose capital Ani, Mren with its beautiful ruins of a grand cathedral, and several other towns now in ruins testify to the former wealth and populousness of the country. After the fall of the Armenian empire the Turks occupied the region ; Kurds from Kurdistan and Diarbekr invaded the alpine pasturages of the valley of the Araxes ; later on, Kabards, Circassians, Osses, and Karapapakhs found refuge there ; and finally, after the last war the Mohammedans emigrated to Asia Minor (82,760 in 1878-81), while Christian Armenians, Greeks, Russian Raskolniks, and some Yezids took their place. The population consists now of Turks, Armenians, Turcomans, Greeks, Kurds, Adherbaijan Tartars, Gipsies, and Russians. The Kars *sanjak,* which was one of the granaries of Turkey, has lost this reputation ; but the crops (chiefly wheat and barley) are now again increasing where the early frosts do not interfere with agriculture. Cotton is raised in the Olty region ; and in the valley of the Araxes gardening and the culture of the silkworm are widely diffused ; while cattle-rearing is the chief source of income in the highlands, especially with the Kurds, who move their felt tents on the *yailas* to higher levels as the summer sun burns up the vegetation.

The western part of the Transcaucasian highlands com­prises the Batum and Artvin districts, which now belong to Kutais. The whole of the region is occupied by alpine ridges—the Pontic ridge in the west, and those of Arjar and Arsian in the east, whose highest peaks rise to 10,000 and 11,000 feet, without, however, reaching the limits of perpetual snow. The Tchorokh and its tributaries, moun­tain streams enclosed in deep valleys, water the region ; the Tchorokh is navigable by small boats for 60 miles.

The coast region enjoys an excellent climate ; the average yearly temperature at Batum is 65° F., that of the coldest month (February) being 41°∙5*,* and that of July 76°∙5. During the last four years the thermometer never fell lower than 39°∙5 at Batum. The rainfall is excessive (93∙4 inches), and days are recorded on which the amount of rain exceeded 10 inches. The region has accordingly a very luxuriant and subtropical vegetation, and even higher up the hills the villages are literally buried amidst gardens. The higher hills have luxuriant meadows. Rice is cultivated in the coast region, and millet, barley, tobacco, and a variety of fruit- trees on higher altitudes. The inhabitants (about 90,000 in 1884) are chiefly Georgians, approaching the Gurians most nearly. The Lazes number about 2000 and the Kurds about 1000. A few Khemshilli, or Mohammedan Armenians, have found refuge in the gorge of Makrial.

*Towns.—*The chief towns of Transcaucasia are more important than those of northern Caucasus. Tiflis (*q.v.),* with 104,024 in­habitants in 1883, is the capital of Caucasia. Kutais (*q.v.*) (13,000), to which tradition assigns an age of 4000 or 5000 years, has grown rapidly of late, owing to its situation at the head of the alluvial plain of the Rion and the proximity of the Tkvibula coal deposits and the Kvirila manganese mines. Khoni (4000) and Orpiri are mere administrative centres of Kutais. Redut-kale (620) has lost its importance as a seaport, and Poti (3110), at the mouth of the Rion, has not yet become an important port, notwithstanding efforts to improve its roadstead and its railway connexion with Tiflis and Baku. The chief Black Sea port of Transcaucasia is Batum (*q.v.),* which has been diligently fortified of late, and has now a popula­tion of 12,000. Artvin (5860) and Ardjari are the two other chief towns of the Batum region. The chief towns of the government of Tiflis besides its capital are Gori, capital of Georgia (population 4800), Mtzhet (770) at the junction of the Vladikavkaz highway with the Transcaucasian railway, Telav (7020), Dushety (3600), Zakataɫy (1080), chief town of a separate military district, and Sig- nakh (10,340), which are built in the spurs of the main chain ; while Akhaɫtsikh (18,270), on the upper Kura and on the Kars plateau, is a busy centre for petty trades. The old city of Ahaɫkaɫaki (3200) on the same plateau is now a Russian fort. Elizabethpol, Nukha, and Shusha *(qq.v.)* are the principal towns in the province of Elizabethpol. Baku *(q.v.),* the terminus of the Transcaucasian

@@@1 W. Massalsky, “Government of Kars,” in *Izvestia* of Russ. Geogr. Soc., vol. xxiii., 1887.