race in Turkestan are a few Persians, mostly liberated slaves ; Indians, who carry on trade and usury in the cities ; a few Gipsies ; and the Russians. Among these last two distinct elements must be noticed,—the Cossacks, who are settled on the borders of the Kirghiz steppe and have assumed many Kirghiz features,@@1 and the peasant-settlers who are beginning to colonize the valley of the Ili and to spread farther south. Exclusive of the military, the Russians number about 75,000, nearly two-thirds being in Semiryetchensk (Cossacks and peasants).

Turkestan has no lack of populous cities, which, notwithstanding recent vicissitudes, continue to be important for their trade, while several others are widely famous for the part they have played in history. Khokand,@@2 Marghilan, Namangan, and Andijan in Ferghana ; Tashkend and Khojend in Syr-Daria ; Samarkand in Zerafshan; Bokhara and Khiva in the independent khanates have each from 30,000 to 100,000 inhabitants.

Populous cities adorned with fine monuments of Arabian archi­tecture, numerous ruins of cities decayed, grand irrigation canals now lying dry, and written monuments of Arabian literature testify to a time when civilization in Turkestan stood at a much higher level than at present. This period was during the first centuries after its conversion to Islam. Now all is in decay. The beautiful mosques and madrasas are dilapidated ; no astronomers watch the sky from the tops of their minarets ; and the scholars of the madrasas waste their time on the most deplorably puerile scholas­ticism. The inspiration of early belief has disappeared ; the ruling motive of the mollahs (priests) is the thirst for personal enrichment, and the people no longer follow the khojas (see p. 639 below). The agricultural labourer has preserved the uprightness, diligence, and sobriety which characterize the Turkish peasant in Asia as well as in Europe ; but the richer inhabitants of the cities are grossly sensual. Centuries of wars, followed by massacres and cruel vengeance, an unceasing civil strife between parties disputing for supremacy in the name of religion, conspiracies, appeals to foreigners, and endless intrigues have hastened the decay of Mohammedan civilization in the khanates of Turkestan and paved the way for Russian conquest.

It remains, however, an open question whether the Russians will be able to bring new vigour to the country and awaken intellectual life. They have failed to do so in eastern Russia, at Kazan, and elsewhere, where both civilizations—the European and the Asiatic —remain as thoroughly estranged from one another as they were three centuries ago. This estrangement is not merely religious, but social and economical. The followers of Islam, whose common law and religion know only of a temporary possession of the land, which belongs wholly to the Prophet, cannot accept the principles of unlimited property in land which European civilization has borrowed from Roman law ; to do so would put an end to all public irrigation works, and to the system by which water is used according to each family’s needs, and so would be fatal to agricul­ture. When taking possession of Turkestan, the Russians began to grant deeds establishing property rights over land in accordance with Roman law. But a study of the Mohammedan system soon put an end to so erroneous a policy, and Mussulman law is still respected. The Russians have abolished slavery in Turkestan ; and their rule has put an end to the interminable intestine struggles, which had weakened and desolated the whole region. The barbar­ous tortures and executions which rendered Khiva notorious in the East are no longer heard of ; and the continual appeals of the khojas for “holy” war against their rivals find no response. But the Russian rule has imposed many new taxes, in return for which Turkestan only gets troops of Russian merchants and officials, who, instead of becoming the exponents of what is best in European civilization, too often accept the worst features of the depraved Mussulman civilization of the higher classes of the country. New tribunals and new justices of the peace are about to be introduced (1887) ; schools are being diligently spread ; but the wants of the natives are set behind those of the children of the Russian officials and merchants and the supposed necessities of Russification. A consulting hospital for Mohammedan women has recently been opened by women graduates in medicine at Tashkend.

East Turkestan.

As already stated, by this name we designate that vast depression in the great plateau of eastern Asia which lies between the Tian-Shan Mountains in the north-west ; the steep slopes of the Pamir and of the Tibet plateau, bordered by the Kuen-Lun, in the south-west and south; the Aɫtyn-Tagh in the south-east as far as Lake Lob-Nor; and in the north-east the still imperfectly known mountains

which run east-south-east from the Tian-Shan, having the Bagratch-kul on their northern slope.@@3 Farther east the Kuruk-Tagh and the steep slope of the Gashuñ Gobi separate East Turkestan from the higher terrace of the plateau, so that about Lob-Nor the Tarim depression is narrowed to a width of about 100 miles ; and on the 98th meridian, at Lake Tchin-shen-ho, the steep edge of the Gobi meets the spurs of the Nan-Shañ Mountains.@@4 This region has been and still is designated by a variety of names, such as the Tangut Plain, West Gobi (a most in­appropriate name, as already pointed out by Ritter), Alty- shar or Jity-shar (the land of six or seven cities), Little Bokharia, Kashgaria, and so on. In its physical features it forms a connecting link between the Chinese territories and the Aral-Caspian depression. It covers about 465,000 square miles, but has hardly more than 1,000,000 inhabit­ants.

Although lying at a high altitude (Kashgar 4000 feet and Yarkand 4120 feet), it has the character of a depres­sion in comparison, not only with the mountains, but also with the lofty plateaus which surround it,—Tibet, Pamir, and the Tian-Shan *syrts.* It has a general slope towards the east, and its lowest portions (formerly occupied by a great lacustrine basin) are only 2600 feet above the sea.@@5 At its north-east edge, *i.e.,* at the foot of the remotest offshoots of the Tian-Shan, M. Prjevalsky measured an altitude of only 2600 feet. Its average altitude ranges from 3100 to 3700 feet, increasing to 4200 at its outer rim. No mountains or hills diversify its surface, which is that of a high plain. All the mountains which enclose it rise to considerable heights, far above the snow line. The steep slopes of the Pamir culminate in Tagharma Peak (25,360 feet). In the north the snowclad Kokshaɫ-tau and Kirghiznyn Ala-tau form a series of uninterrupted chains, which reach a height of 24,000 feet in the Khan- Tengri and have at their southern base the broad and high alpine plateaus, or *syrts,* of which the Yuɫduz, dotted with lakes, has acquired historical fame as the meeting- place of the armies of Timur before his Dzungarian march. On the southern borders of East Turkestan, in the Kuen- Lun and Karakorum Mountains, is the Dapsang—one of the highest peaks of the globe ; and farther east the Aɫtyn- Tagh and the Nan-Shañ (with Humboldt and Ritter ranges), which are among the highest mountains of Asia, separate it from the lofty Chaidam or Tsaidam plateau.@@6 East Turkestan is thus secluded by high mountains and plateaus from the rest of the continent. Even the few passes which lead to it climb to altitudes of 14,000 feet. It is open only towards the east, where it is connected with the Gobi depression. Its position as the highway from China to West Turkestan and the Dzungarian empire has made it known, though only very imperfectly until lately, through Chinese documents, the narratives of the journeys of Buddhist missionaries, and the travels of Marco Polo, Rubruquis, and a few Jesuits. From a remote antiquity it was crossed by caravans going from China to Lake Balkash, Ferghana, and the Oxus. The route, after crossing the Gobi, proceeded either to the Dzungarian Gate, or, *via* Kashgar, to the high passes of Terek-Davan and Muz-art, which led to Ferghana and Issyk-kul. Both passes have a wide renown in Central Asia, the latter especially, on account of its difficulties, one of which is a

@@@1 See *Collection of Papers on Turkestan,* St Petersburg, 1876, by MM. Syevertsoff and Khoroshkin.

@@@2 Each of these towns in small capitals is described in a separate article.

@@@3 See the map of Asia, by A. Petermann, in Stieler’s *Hand-Atlas,* No. 58, where the orography of Asia is represented, in the present writer’s opinion, in a more trustworthy manner than on other maps of Asia.

@@@4 See map to Prjevalsky’s fourth journey in *Izvestia* of Russ. Geogr. Soc., 1887.

@@@5 Barometrically observed, the possible error being about 300 feet.

@@@6 Prjevalsky, *Reisen in Tibet und am oberen Laufe des Gelben Flusses,* Jena. 1884.