of Tobolsk, and of which some ruins are still to be seen. After a course of unremitting fatigue, and a series of victories which almost exceed belief, but of which we have not room to give the detail, our intrepid adventurer dispossessed this prince of his dominions, and seated himself on the throne of Sibir. The number of his followers, however, being greatly reduced, and perceiving he could not depend on the affection of his new subjects, he had recourse to the Czar of Muscovy, and made a tender of his acquisitions to that monarch, upon condition of receiving immedi- ate and effectual support. This proposal was received with the greatest satisfaction by the Czar, who granted him a pardon for all former offences, and sent him the required succours. Yermac, however, being soon after drowned in an unsuccessful excursion, the Russians began to lose their footing in the country. But fresh reinforcements being sent, they not only recovered their ground, but pushed their conquests far and wide ; and wherever they appeared, the Tartars were either reduced or exterminated. New towns were built, and colonies were planted on all sides. Before a century had elapsed, all that vast tract of country now called Siberia, which stretches from the confines of Europe to the Eastern ocean, and from the Frozen sea to the present frontiers of China, was annexed to the Russian domi- nions.

The air of Siberia is extremely piercing ; and it is remarked that in advancing eastward it becomes more intense. M. Gmelin, who was sent to explore this country in 1733, gives some remarkable examples of the extreme cold which prevails. He mentions, that at the foot of Kiringa, on the 10th of February 1738, the mercury, at eight in the morning, stood at 254 in the thermometer which he had along with him, and which answers to 72° in Fahrenheit below 0. In December, at the same place, it answered to 90’ in Fahrenheit below zero, about three in the afternoon ; and afterwards in the course of the same month, to 99, 107, and 113 below 0, the greatest cold answering to 120° in Fahrenheit below 0. At this time sparrows and magpies were seen to fall to the ground struck dead with the intense cold, but revived if they were speedily brought into a warm room. The air at this time is represented as if it were changed to ice, a thick fog, not dissipated by any exhalations as in spring and autumn ; and the writer states that he could scarcely stand three minutes in the porch of his house for cold. At Yakutsk, on the Lena, in November, Captain Cochrane@@1 mentions that Reaumur’s thermometerstoodat32° and 35°, which answers to 40° and 46° in Fahrenheit below zero ; in his journey to Irkutsk it stood at 30° of Fahrenheit, and 35’ be- low zero; and on the 13 th of January the rapid waters of Angora were bound up by the frost, and it became passable on the ice. The Siberian rivers are however frozen ear- lier, and it is late in the spring before they are thawed. The northern and eastern districts of Siberia are rendered unfit for agriculture by the excessive cold. The whole tract beyond the 60th degree of N. lat. is a barren waste, yield­ing neither com nor fruits. Pallas mentions, that to the north of Demiansk, a village in the government of Demi- ansk in about 59½° N. lat., hardly any thing is reared but barley and oats, at most but a little grain. Hemp and flax are sown, but in three years they have scarcely one to- lerable crop. The cabbage that is sown produces no head, but spreads itself in loose green leaves. The repeated at- tempts that have been made about Okhotsk, between 59° and 60’ N. lat., and 160° E. long., or at Udskog-Ostrog, 50° 20' lat., 150° 40' long, to cultivate corn, have been en- tirely unsuccessful, the long winter, and the night frosts in autumn preventing either fruits or grain from coming to perfection ; and in Kamtschatka, where the southernmost course terminates in 51° N. 1at., similar trials have been made without success. A great part of the Siberian ter- ritory that is situated in a more temperate climate, being composed of marshy and saline steppes, is extremely bar- ren. But there are other tracts that are equally produc- tive, that not only abound in extensive pastures, but pro- duce abundance of grain, not of wheat, but of barley, rye, and other inferior descriptions ; whilst farther south there are districts of remarkable fertility. Amongst the Ural and other ranges of mountains, rich and verdant vales and glens are to be met with, which afford pastures for numerous herds of cattle ; a remarkably wealthy district extends along the heart of the Tobol, Iset, and the Issim, and is so abundant in grain, that it supplies the govermment of Tobolsk, as well as the provinces of Perm and Orenburg. Also in the territory of Krasnoyansk, a circle town of the government of Kolhyvan, between 55° and 56° of N. lat., such is the fer- tility of the soil, notwithstanding the severe and continued winter, that no instance was known of a general failure.@@2 This fertile tract commences at Krasnoyansk, and extends to Baikal and the surrounding countries. The quality of the soil is here so rich, being of a black and light mould, that it rejects the use of manure. Most of the fields; if they are left fallow for one year, continue to bear ten or fifteen years more. In consequence of this fertility, provisions are abundant and cheap. Not only are oats, barley, and rye cultivated, but also wheat, though it is not so abundant. These countries, which, if they were industriously cultivat­ed, might give subsistence to populous nations, are chiefly covered with pastures. Beyond the lake Baikal, especi­ally towards the east, as far as the river Argun, they are remarkably fruitful and pleasant ; but such is the indolence of the inhabitants, that several fine tracts of land, which would make ample returns to the peasant for culti­vating them, lie neglected. The pastures are excellent, and abound in fine horned cattle, horses, goats, and other beasts, on which the Tartars chiefly depend for subsistence. However, there arc several steppes or barren wastes, and unimproved tracts in these parts ; and not a single fruit tree is to be seen. There is great variety of vegetables, and in several places, particularly near Kras- noia Sloboda, the ground is in a manner overrun with as- paragus of an extraordinary height and delicious flavour. The bulbs of the Turkish and other sorts of lilies, are much used by the Tartars instead of bread. This want of fruit and corn is richly compensated by the great quantities of wild and tame beasts and fowls, and the infinite variety of fine fish which the country affords.

In that port of Siberia which lies near the icy sea, as well as in several other places, there are woods of pine, larch, and other trees ; besides which, a considerable quantity of wood is thrown ashore by the waves of the icy sea, but whence it comes, is not yet ascertained. On the Ural mountains also, are found pines, birch, fir, cedar, larch, aspin, alder; and on the opposite side a few oaks, elms, lindens, and other trees.

The extreme rigour of the climate, which stunts the ve- getation of Siberia, has no effect on the animal creation, which abounds in the most frozen and desolate tracts. Na- ture, in protecting from the rigour of the cold those animals with a thick fur, which in its rich gloss and softness no art can rival, has rendered them valuable, and they are accordingly hunted for their skin, which forms an important arti­cle of commerce. Of all these furs, the most valuable is the sable, which is found on a species of weazel. This animal is met with in Asiatic Russia, from the Aleutian is- 1ands, and from Kamtschatka to the districts of the Pets- chora and the Kama. The finest sables are those which come from Yakutsk and Wertschink; and amongst these are

@@@’ Narrative of a Pedestrian Journey through Russia and Siberian Tartary, vol. ii. p. 108.

@@@’ Tooke's View of the Russian Empire, vol. iii. p. 238.