Asia, conquered Persia, where the degenerate chiefs of the race of Ghenghis still bore sway, broke the power of the Turks in Asia Minor, ravaged and conquered India, and in that country established a dynasty which continued till the close of the last century, when every minor authority in that part of Asia was swallowed up by the extending sway of Britain, on whose bounty the great Mogul, the descen­dant of Ghenghis, is now a humble pensioner. China fell an easy prey to these conquering hordes, and has long been the seat of a Tartar dynasty, having been conquered about the sixteenth century by the Mantchoos, a tribe which issued from the north, near the coasts of the Eastern Ocean. But the rising power of Russia has reduced most of those wandering tribes under her dominion ; and the reign of Independent Tartary is now contracted within a narrow span. The progress of civilization, and the improve­ment of the art of war by the invention of fire-arms, have entirely broken the power of these savage hordes. The Russian cannon now forms a sure barrier against the in­cursions of the Tartar horse ; and under her growing civili­zation and military power, the fiercest tribes have been taught to tremble and obey. All northern Asia, to the limits of China, and eastward to the Pacific Ocean, has been reduced under the power of Russia ; and the narrow space that is now occupied by Independent Tartary is ruled by numerous petty sovereigns, who are often engaged in mu­tual wars, and can never be again formidable to the civi­lized states of Europe. On the contrary, the rude tribes of Asia will hardly be able to maintain their ground against the encroaching flood of European civilization or of Euro­pean arms. The powers of Europe seem now to have im­bibed the spirit of conquest which formerly propelled the Asiatic hordes into the seats of European civilization ; and the late unsuccessful expedition of the Russians from the west to Khyvah, about 240 miles east of the Caspian Sea, and the bold and admirably conducted inroad of the Bri­tish from the east as far as Candahar and Caubul, are among the fruits of this ambitious policy.

This extensive country may be divided into Independent Tartary and Chinese Tartary.

I. Independent Tartary includes that extensive region which stretches from the Caspian Sea, as far cast as the great Himalaya range of mountains, which runs through the centre of Asia, and from which a branch diverges from the main ridge, under the designation of Beloor Taugh, northward, and separates Independent Tartary from the country of Kashgar and from Chinese Tartary. On the south, this country is indistinctly bounded by Persia, and on the north by the provinces of Oufa, Orenburg, and Tobolsk, belonging to Asiatic Russia. Independent Tartary is divided into various states ; namely, L Khyvah, which is a stripe on the banks of the Oxus, of which the length does not exceed between 200 and 300 miles, and the breadth in no place more than fifty. 2. The kingdom of Bockhara or Bukharia, which is by far the most im­portant both in power and extent. The habitable part of this kingdom is small in proportion to the desert with which it is chiefly surrounded, and which may be consi­dered in a great measure as its boundary. It is divided from Khyvah on the west and north-west; to the north-east stretch vast tracts of desert, thinly sprinkled with the tents of the Toorkoman and other tribes, and only inter­rupted by the stream of the Jaxartes ; on the east it is bounded by Kokaun ; and the Oxus, with the mountains from which it flows, may be said to form its southern boundary. The limits of this kingdom are, however, in a state of fluctuation, varying, as is generally the case in the disorderly regions of Asia, with the success of its arms ; so that they can hardly be laid down with any precision. 3. The independent state of Kokaun, which is fully 250 miles in length by 150 in breadth, is bounded on the east from Bockhara by a steep and inaccessible chain of mountains, the two countries being divided by the White River ; on the south it has the mountainous tract which divides it from Buduckshan and Chitral ; on the south-west it is bounded by Kurratageen ; on the east and north-east by mountains tributary to China, and inhabited by Kirgeesh and Kuzaks ; on the north-west by the district of Tash- kund, with mountains and deserts. South and east of Bockhara lies the large and interesting province of Balk ; and about 600 miles east of Kokaun lie the Mahommedan states of Kashgar and Yarkund.

One of the great peculiarities of Asiatic manners:, well calculated to attract attention, is the division of the popu­lation into the two classes of fixed and wandering com­munities. In the richer countries to the south and east of Asia the inhabitants are mostly stationary, dwelling in fixed habitations, and occupied with trade and agricul­ture ; but the northern and western parts, including Ara­bia, Persia, a portion of Afghanistan, Balk, and all the country that lies in the same parallel of latitude, as far east as the most civilized parts of China, and on th west including a portion of Poland and Russia, have been oc­cupied by wandering tribes, migrating with the winter and summer in quest of pasture, and having no fixed habi­tations in towns and villages. This class has been gradu­ally diminishing with the progress of civilization. But in the country we are now describing, the pastoral life is still seen in its original rudeness and simplicity ; and in many districte those shepherds discover all the cruelty and fero­city of the Tartar tribes. The original invaders were the Mongoles from the eastern regions bordering on China; but they have been supplanted in their turn by other inva­ders, and the country is chiefly occupied by the Toorko- mans, and the Oosbecks or Usbecks, and other rude tribes. The Toorkomans are divided into other tribes, the three principal of which are, the Tuckeh, the Gocklan, and the Yamoot. They occupy the country to the north of the El­burz range of mountains, and of Persia, and are found as far north as Khyvah, all along the shores of the Caspian Sea. They are extremely barbarous and cruel in their manners. They live partly by plunder, and pour down from their deserts upon the cultivated countries around, plundering villages and caravans with every circumstance of atrocious outrage, murdering on the spot the old, the feeble, and the helpless. Those who are fit for labour they carry into slavery. They have depopulated many exten­sive districts, which but for them would continue fertile and inhabited. The Toorkomans, and most of the tribes in the same quarter, are Mahommedans of the sect of Soonies ; the Persians again are Sheahs, and the deadly hatred which prevails between these sects may exasperate the fury of their invaders, and add to their cruelties. On the east, there are other tribes who commit the same ra­vages. The captives that are carried off are disposed of to slave-merchants, and are by them sold in the great slave-markets of Khyvah and Bockhara. All these tribes are described by Fraser@@1 as cruel, blood-thirsty, and rapa­cious, even in their private lives and domestic relations. They set no value whatever on human life ; and a word, a look, or some trivial mistake, he observes, is apt to occasion bloodshed. A Toorkoman will put to death his wife, his child, or his servant, for the merest trifle; and if crimes of this sort do not more frequently occur, it is more from con­siderations of interest than from any regard to the ties of blood or affection. “ Even the wars between the tribes,”

@@@, Fraser’s Narrative of a Journey into Khorassan, chap. xii.