in defence of the burgh lands. From an early period shoemakers were a numerous craft in Selkirk, and in 1715 and 1745 they were forced to furnish several thousand pairs of shoes to the Jacobite armies. “ Souters of Selkirk ” is still a synonym for the inhabitants.

SELKIRK, or Selcraig, Alexander (1676-1723), a sailor who is supposed to have been the prototype of Defoe’s “ Robinson Crusoe,” was the son of a shoemaker and tanner in Largo, Fifeshire, and was born in 1676. In his youth he displayed a quarrelsome and unruly disposition, and, hav­ing been summoned on 27th August 1695 before the kirk- session for his indecent behaviour in church, “ did not com­pear, being gone away to the seas.” At an early period he was engaged in buccaneer expeditions to the South Seas, and in 1703 joined the “Cinque Ports” galley as sailing master. The following year he had a dispute with the captain, and at his own request was in October put ashore on the island of Juan Fernandez, where, after a solitary residence of four years and four months, he was taken off by Captain Woods Rogers, commander of a privateer, who made him his mate and afterwards gave him the independent command of one of his prizes. He returned home in 1712; but in 1717 he eloped with a country girl and again went to sea. He died in 1723 while lieutenant on board the royal ship “ Weymouth.”

See Howell, *Life and Adventures of Alexander Selkirk,* 1829. SELMA, a city of the United States, in Dallas county, Alabama, at the head of steamboat navigation of the Alabama river, occupies a plateau on the bluff of the right bank, 95 miles below Montgomery. It has cotton ware­houses, railroad machine-shops, and various factories. The population was 6484 (3660 coloured) in 1870 and 7529 (4184 coloured) in 1880. Selma, which was strongly fortified during the Civil War and the seat of a Con­federate arsenal (where 1800 men were employed), was captured by the Federal major-general J. H. Wilson on 2d April 1865.

SEMIPALATINSK, an extensive province *(oblast)* of the Russian dominions in Central Asia ; administratively it forms a part of the general-governorship of the Steppes, although its northern portions really belong to the Irtish plains of West Siberia. It has an area of 188,300 square miles, and is bounded on the N. by Tobolsk and Tomsk, on the S.E. by China, on the S. by Semiryetchensk, and on the W. by Akmolinsk. As regards configuration, it differs widely in its northern and southern parts. The snowclad ridges (9000 to 10,000 feet) of the great Altai and Narym enter its south-eastern portion, stretching southwards to Lake Zaisan. Another complex of moun­tains, Kandygatai and Kałbinsk, rising to 5000 and 6000 feet above the sea, continues them towards the west; a broad valley intervenes, through which the Irtish finds its way from the Zaisan terrace to the lowlands of Siberia. Many extensions of these mountains and subordinate ridges stretch towards the north. The still lower but wild Jinghiz-tau mountains fill the south-western part of Semipalatinsk, sending out their rocky spurs into the steppe region. In the south, the Tarbagatai (Marmots’) range (9000 to 10,000 feet) separates Semipalatinsk from Semiryetchensk and the Chinese province of Jugutchak. Wide steppes fill up the spaces between the mountains : such are the Zaisan steppe (1200 to 1500 feet), between the Tarbagatai and the Altai ranges ; the plains of Lake Balkash, some 300 feet lower, to the south of the Jinghiz- tau ; and the plains of the Irtish, which hardly rise 600 feet above the sea. All kinds of crystalline rocks—gran­ites, syenites, diorites, and porphyries, as also crystalline slates of all descriptions—are met with in the mountain tracts, which contain also rich gold-bearing sands, silver and lead mines, graphite, coal, and the less valuable pre­cious stones. The geology of the region and even its

topography are still but imperfectly known. Numerous boulders widely scattered around the mountains testify to a much wider extension of glaciers in former times. The chief river of the province, the Irtish, which issues from Lake Zaisan, flows north and north-west and waters Semi­palatinsk for more than 760 miles. Between Bukhtarma and Ust-Kamenogorsk it crosses the Altai by a wild gorge, with dangerous rapids, through which, however, boats are floated. Lake Zaisan, 80 miles long and from 10 to 20 wide, has depth sufficient for steamboat navigation ; steamers tra­verse also for some 100 miles the lower course of the Black Irtish, which flows from Kuldja to Lake Zaisan. The Kurtchum, the Narym, and the Bukhtarma are the chief right-hand tributaries of the Irtish, while the Bukon, the Kizil-su, and many smaller ones join it from the left; none are navigable, neither are the Kokbekty and Bugaz, which enter Lake Zaisan on the west. Lake Balkash, which borders Semipalatinsk in the south-west, formerly received several tributaries from the Jinghiz-tau. Many smaller lakes (some of them merely temporary) occur on the Irtish plain, and yield salt. The whole of the country is rapidly drying up. The climate is severe. The average yearly temperature reaches 43° in the south and 34° in the north ; the winter is very cold, and frosts of - 44° Fahr. are not uncommon, while heats raising the thermometer to 122° in the shade are experienced in the summer. The yearly amount of rain and snow is trifling, although snow­storms are very common ; strong winds prevail. Forests are plentiful in the hilly districts and on the Irtish plain, the flora being Siberian in the north and more Central Asiatic towards Lakes Balkash and Zaisan.

The chief inhabitants are Kirghiz-kazaks, who acknowledged the supremacy of Russia in 1732 and may number now (1886) nearly half a million (479,750 in 1876, of whom 10,950 were settled in towns). The Russian population, which in the same year amounted to nearly 50,000 Cossacks and peasants, has slowly increased since. The aggregate population was in 1882 estimated at 538,400, of whom 34,550 lived in towns. The Russians are chiefly agricul­turists, and have wealthy settlements on the right bank of the Irtish, as well as a few patches in the south, at the foot of the mountains. The Kirghizes are almost exclusively cattle-breeders and keep large flocks of sheep, horses, and horned cattle, as also camels. Hunting and fishing (in Lake Zaisan) are favourite and profitable occupations with the Cossacks and the Kirghizes. In­dustries are of course insignificant, except that of mining,—gold being obtained within the province to the amount of from 300 to 400 lb every year ; the extraction of silver and lead is very limited. Trade is of some importance, and is increasing,—Russian manu­factured articles being exchanged for the raw produce (hides, tallow, cattle) of the region. The province is divided into four districts, the chief towns of which are Semipalatinsk (17,820 inhabitants in 1881), Pavlodar (2260), Kokbekty (3680), and Karkaralinsk (2030). All these towns, lost amidst the sandy steppes, are mere administrative centres. Bukhtarma and Ust-Kamenogorsk (3400), among the mountains, are also worthy of mention.

SEMIPALATINSK, capital of the above province, is situated on the right bank of the Irtish, on the highway from Central Asia to northern Europe. At the end of the 18th century it began to be a centre for trade, reach­ing its greatest development in 1850-60. Kazan and Turkestan Tatars formed the bulk of its population. The town still remains, however, a collection of old wooden houses scattered among unfenced spaces of sand. The Tatar town has a somewhat better aspect than the Russian. The inhabitants (17,820 in 1881) consist of officials, mer­chants, and agriculturists.

SEMIRAMIS. According to the legend which the Greeks received from Ctesias, and which is most fully pre­served by Diodorus (book ii.) in a form that, according to the researches of C. Jacoby *(Rhein. Museum,* 1875, p. 555 *sq.),* is not taken direct from Ctesias but comes through Clitarchus, and has been modified by traits borrowed from the history of Alexander the Great, the Assyrian empire over all Asia as far as the borders of India was created by