

PART II.

Central Asia.

Description of Armenia and Turcomania—Georgia ; the Iron Gate—The Caspian—Kingdom of Mosul—Bagdad ; its Siege and Capture—Tauris—Report of Miraculous Events—Description of Persia—Yezd and Kerman—Journey to Ormuz—Daring Robbers—Description and Trade of Ormuz—Journey to Khorasan—Alaodin, the Old Man of the Mountain—His feigned Paradise—Assassinations—Subdued by the Tartars—Journey to Balkh—To Badakshan—Mines of Ruby and Lapis Lazuli—Peshawer—Cashmere—Source of the Oxus in Lake Sir-i-kol—Plain of Pamir, called the Roof of the World—Extreme Cold—Kirghizes and other rude Tribes—Cashgar—Samarcand—Yarcund—Khoten—Pein—Ornamental Stones—Lop—Frightful Passage of the Great Desert—Kingdom of Tangut ; Manners and Superstitions—Great Caravan Station at Kamul ; strange Customs—Sou-tcheou—Kan-tcheou or Campion—Journey to Ezina and Karakorum—Rise of the Empire of Gengis—Manners, Customs, and Superstitions of the Tartars—Their Government—Conduct of their Wars—Route through Siberia to the Northern Ocean—Various Places on the Frontier of China—The Yak, the Musk Animal, and beautiful Pheasants—Country of Prester John—Imperial Hunting Palaces.

I.—On Armenia the Lesser.

You must know there are two Armenias, a great and a lesser one, which last has a king who rules with pure justice, and is subject to the Tartars. This region* contains many cities and castles, and abundance of all things, with beasts and birds for hunting and hawking ;

* This little kingdom, nearly coinciding with the pashalic of Adana, was formed in the 12th century, under the reign of Alexis Comnenus, by an Armenian lord named Kaghic, whose posterity reigned two centuries.—Marsden, p. 42.

but I must tell you the air is not very healthy. The gentry used formerly to be valiant and good at arms ; but now they are mean and vile, and remarkable only for being hard drinkers. On the seacoast is a city named Lais,* which carries on a very great trade ; for thither all the spices, rich cloths, and other precious articles, are brought from India across the Euphrates, which the merchants of Venice, of Pisa, and of Genoa, come to purchase. By this town we enter the province of Turcomania.

II.—On Turcomania.

In Turcomania† are three distinct races of men :—The Turcomans adore Mohammed, and are simple people, speaking a very rude language. They live amid mountains and valleys where there is good pasturage for cattle, by which they subsist ; and I assure you that they rear excellent horses and mules of great value. The two others are Armenians and Greeks, who dwell mingled in cities, and subsist by merchandise and manufactures ; they work carpets and crimson silk, the richest and most beautiful in the whole world. They have many towns, of which the principal are Como, Casserie, and Sevasto.‡ They are subject to the Eastern Tartars. Now, let us leave them, and speak of Armenia the Greater.

III.—On Armenia the Greater.

Armenia the Greater§ is a large country, and, at the entrance of it is a city called Arzinga, in which is made the best buckram in the world. There are several baths of warm spring water, the best and most beautiful any where to be found. There are many castles,

* Aias, already mentioned, lies near Scanderoon, to which its great trade has since been transferred.

† This name is applied to all that part of Asia Minor then subject to the Turks, consisting chiefly of the modern provinces of Caramania and Roomyah.

‡ Cogni or Iconium, the capital ; Kaisariah ; Sebaste or Sivas.

§ This celebrated and ancient kingdom was then still governed by a separate monarch. It retains at present the name, but is divided between the Persians and Turks.

and cities, among which the noblest is Arzinga, the seat of an archbishop, and the metropolis of the whole district; there are also Argiron and Darzizi.* I assure you the province is very large, and during the summer all the Tartars of the Levant reside here with their flocks and herds, on account of its rich pastures; but in winter they cannot remain because of the severe cold and snow, amid which the animals could not live. Now, in this Armenia is the ark of Noah on a great mountain.† The circuit of its base cannot be traversed in less than two days; and the ascent is rendered impracticable by the snow on its summit, which never dissolves, but is increased by each successive fall. On the lower declivities, the melted snows cause an abundant vegetation, and afford rich pastures for the cattle which in summer resort thither from all the surrounding countries. To the south-east it borders on a kingdom called Mosul, inhabited by Jacobite and Nestorian Christians, of whom we will mention more hereafter. On the north it extends to the Georgians, and on that frontier is a fountain whence rises oil in such abundance that a hundred ships might be at once loaded with it. It is not good for eating, but very fit for fuel, for anointing the camels in maladies of the skin, and for other purposes; for which reason people come from a great distance for it, and nothing else is burned in all this country.‡ Now let us quit Armenia, and tell of Georgia.

IV.—On Georgia and its Productions.

In Georgia§ is a king always called David Melik, which means David the King; he is subject to the Tar-

* Erzeroum and Argish, both still towns of importance.

† Ramusio has "an exceedingly great mountain, on which it is said the ark of Noah rested;" more correct, but we imagine the text is the original. This is Ararat, 17,359 feet high, exceeding Mont Blanc by about 2000. M. Parrot recently ascended it, we believe for the first time.

‡ This is the well known petroleum or rock-oil, found copiously near Baku, in the province of Shirvan.—Marsden, p. 51.

§ In Ramusio and all the editions known to Mr Marsden, the term is Zorzania,—the Z for G being peculiar to the old Venetian dialect. The Paris, Crusca, and Pucci use correctly the G.

tars ; and anciently all the monarchs of this province were born with the mark of an eagle on their left shoulder. They are a handsome people, good archers, and valiant in battle. They are Christians of the Greek church, and wear their hair close shaven in the manner of clergy. This is the province which Alexander could not pass through on account of the narrowness of the path ; because on one side is the sea, and on the other very high mountains, over which it is impossible to ride ; and, as this strait continues above four leagues, a few men might hold out against the whole world. This was the reason why he could not pass ; but he built a very strong tower, that no one might come upon him from the other side, and it is called the Iron Gate.* This is the place mentioned in the book of Alexander, where he enclosed the Tartars within their mountains ; though the Tartars did not exist at that time, but a certain people called Comani, and other races besides. There are many cities and castles, with silk in abundance, with which, added to gold, they make cloths the most beautiful that ever man saw. Here are the finest eagles in the world ; also victuals of every kind in abundance. The province is full of great mountains, and of narrow passes, so that I can tell you the Tartars could never obtain the entire sovereignty of it. There is a monastery called St Leonard, containing a great wonder, which I will now relate. A large lake of water issues from a neighbouring mountain, in which, during the whole year, there is not found a fish great or small, except from the day before Lent down to the evening of Easter Sunday ; and during the whole of that time fishes are taken in great abundance, but none at any other. And know that this sea of which I have spoken is seven hundred miles in circuit, and receives the Euphrates, one of the delights of paradise, and many other great rivers. It is all surrounded by mountain and land ; and lately

* This is the name given to it by the Turks. The report of its being built by Alexander is prevalent among the natives, though perhaps apocryphal.—Marsden, p. 56.

the merchants of Genoa, who have built ships, navigate it, bringing silk, which is called *gelle*.^{*} Into this sea the great rivers Herdil,[†] Geihon, Kur, and Aras enter. In that province there is a grand city named Teflis, with suburbs and fortified posts around it. The inhabitants are Armenian and Georgian Christians, with some few Mohammedans and Jews. There are manufactures of silk and other articles. Now, having told you of the boundaries of Armenia to the north, I will describe those to the south and east.

V.—On the Kingdom of Mosul.

Mosul is a great kingdom on the eastern border of Armenia, and inhabited by various denominations of men, whom I will now describe. There is a race called Arabic, who adore Mohammed; also another who hold the christian law, but not as the church of Rome commands; they err in many things. They are denominated Nestorian and Jacobite, and have a patriarch named Jatolior, who makes archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other clergy, and sends them to all parts of Bagdad, India, and Cathay, as the pope does from Rome. All the Christians who are in those parts are of this sect; and all the cloths of silk and gold, which are called mosulin, are made there. I tell you, too, that the great merchants who are called mosulin, and bring the largest quantity of all costly spices, are of this kingdom.[‡]

^{*} Mr Marsden conjectures very probably that this name is from Ghilan,—a province where raw silk is produced in great abundance. The author is mistaken as to the Euphrates; but it comes near to the Caspian, and he is writing from hearsay.

[†] This is the same name with Etil or Etilia, which we have repeatedly seen applied to the Volga. The Geihon appears to be the Oxus, which was then supposed to fall into the Caspian, instead of the Aral.

[‡] Mosul seems to have been then a main entrepôt for the commerce of Central Asia. We cannot seemingly doubt, that the muslins here procured were those of India, especially when we find the name Muslin applied to merchants bringing other goods from that region. There were some cotton manufactures in the place itself, which might aid the mistake of supposing the whole produced there.

Among its mountains are people called Kurds, who are Nestorian and Jacobite Christians, but some are Saracens, and reverence Mohammed. They are an overbearing and wicked people, ever ready to rob the merchants.* Now let us leave Mosul, and speak of the great city of Baldach.†

VI.—On Baldach.

At this place dwelt the caliph, chief prelate of all the Saracens in the world, as the pope is at Rome. Through the middle of it flows a very large river, by which you can proceed to the sea of India, whence merchants go and come with their goods. From Baldach to the ocean by the stream is a voyage of eighteen days. The merchants going to India sail down that river to a place named Chisi,‡ and then enter the Indian sea. Between Baldach and Chisi is a great city named Bascra;§ and the woods around that city yield the finest dates in the world. In Baldach are many rich cloths of silk and gold, on which birds and beasts are represented; and it is the greatest and noblest city in all these regions. And know, assuredly, that the caliph was found to possess the most abundant treasure in gold, silver, and precious stones that ever was in the possession of man; and I will tell you how it happened. In the year of our Lord, 1255,|| the great sire of the Tartars, who is named Alau,¶ brother to the great sire that now reigns, assembled a very large army, and marched upon

* This character continues notorious and unmitigated to the present day.

† Bagdad, which, though it had lately ceased to be the capital of the caliphs, was still probably the greatest and most flourishing city of Western Asia.

‡ Kishm, a considerable island near the opposite extremity of the Persian Gulf, not far from Ormuz.

§ The great commercial city which we call Bussora, more properly pronounced Basra. The abundance of dates in its neighbourhood is particularly mentioned by Niebuhr.—Marsden, p. 65.

|| This is the date in the early editions; in Ramusio it is 1250; but the real one is 1258.

¶ Hoolaku, son to Taulai, and brother to Mangou Khan.

Baldach and took it by force, which was a glorious exploit ; for it contained more than 100,000 horsemen besides foot soldiers ;* and when it was taken, he found the caliph in possession of a tower full of gold, silver, and other treasure, such as never was seen at once in one place. When he discovered it he sent for the monarch and said : “ Caliph, why have you amassed such a treasure, and what do you mean to do with it ? Did you not know that I was your enemy, and coming to attack you with this mighty host ? Knowing this, why did you not take your treasure, and give it to knights and soldiers to defend you and your city ? ” The caliph replied nothing, because he knew not what to say. Then, said Alau : “ Caliph, since I see you love so much your treasure, I will give it you to eat.” He then commanded that he should be shut up in the tower with the treasure, and that nothing should be given to him to eat or drink. Then he said to him : “ Caliph, eat your treasure as heartily as you please, for you will never eat any thing else.” He was then immured in the tower, where he died at the end of four days.† And after him there never was any other caliph.

VII.—On Toris or Tauris.

Toris‡ is a great city, in a province called Yrac, containing many towns and castles ; but as this is the chief, I will tell you about it. The men live by merchandise, and by fabricating fine cloths of silk and gold. The place is so well situated that merchants proceed hither from India, Baldach, Mosul, Cremosor, and many other places. The Latin traffickers come to meet those from

* This is the statement in the early editions ; in Ramusio the 100,000 men are mentioned as composing the Tartar army.

† This story is given also in the history of Haithon, king of Armenia, and was doubtless the general belief of Western Asia.

‡ Tauris, or Tabreez, a celebrated city of Persia, and a favourite residence of Haroun al Raschid, and afterwards of Hoolaku the Tartar. Chardin describes it as containing half a million of people, and as rivalling Ispahan. It is now greatly decayed.

strange countries, from whom they purchase precious pearls and other valuable articles. The men are of indifferent character and very mixed origin, Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Georgians, and Persians, and some who adore Mohammed. The inhabitants of the city are called Taurisians. Around it are very fine gardens, full of fruits and vegetables.

The Saracens here are most wicked and disloyal. They maintain that whatever is robbed or plundered from men of a different creed is justly acquired ; while they regard as martyrs those of their own sect who die by the hands of Christians. If, therefore, they were not checked by their present rulers, they would break out into many outrages. These principles are common to them all. At the point of death, the priest comes and demands whether they believe that Mohammed was the prophet of God. If they profess this belief, they are assured of salvation ; and through this easy absolution, which leaves scope for the perpetration of every crime, they have succeeded in converting many of the Tartars, who feel thus at liberty to indulge their worst propensities.

Near Toris is a monastery named after St Barsamo, and famous for sanctity. It contains an abbot and many monks, who dress like the Carmelites. Unwilling to lead an idle life, they are constantly weaving woollen girdles, which they place on the altar of their saint during divine service ; and while going round the province to ask alms (as do their brethren of the Holy Ghost), they present these to their friends and persons of distinction, who value them as beneficial in the cure of rheumatism.*

VIII.—On a certain Miracle of the Movement of a Mountain in that Region.

Now I am to tell you of a great miracle† which

* The two preceding paragraphs being only in Ramusio, I incline to think we may recognise in them the same ecclesiastical hand to which there has appeared reason to suppose that his edition has been much indebted.

† This chapter is strongly stamped with the credulity of the

happened between Baldach and Mosul in the year 1225. There was a caliph in the former who held the Christians in great hatred, as it is natural for all the Saracens in the world to do. He thought day and night how he might compel all those in his country to become converts, or else kill them. Many others concurred in that wicked purpose, and they agreed upon this plan : They found in the gospel a text saying that if a Christian had as much faith as a grain of mustard-seed and made his prayer to God, he would be able to join two mountains together. On finding this text, they felt great joy, thinking they had thus either a means of converting them, or a pretext for killing them outright. He therefore sent for all the Jacobite and Nestorian believers in his country, who were very numerous ; and when they came before him, he showed them this gospel, made them read it, and asked if it were true. They replied that it was so. Then, continued the caliph, since so many Christians are here, there surely must be among you this small measure of faith ; therefore, said he, pointing to a large hill in view, you must remove that mountain, or I will put you all to death, because otherwise you must be wholly destitute of faith, and on that account deserve to die. If, however, you will turn to our good law of Mohammed, you shall be forgiven ; and, in the mean time, I allow you ten days to do what is required. He then dismissed them. On hearing what the caliph had said, they were in great fear, and knew not what to resolve. Then they all assembled, small and great, men and women, the bishop, archbishop, and priests of whom there were a considerable number, and they remained eight days and eight nights in prayer, that God, in his mercy, and for the diffusion of his faith, would come to their aid, and enable them to escape this

age, from which it would be unreasonable to expect our traveller to be exempt. On his part it is mere hearsay, and reported as having happened fifty years before he passed through Persia. It may be considered a curious example of the sort of legends then circulated in that part of the world.

cruel death with which they were threatened. But what have I now to tell you? While they were thus deeply engaged in prayer, an angel, by the message of God, appeared to a bishop who was a man of very holy life. He said, "Oh, bishop! do you now go to a certain shoemaker with one eye, and tell him that at his prayer the mountain will be moved." Now this shoemaker was a very honest and chaste man; he fasted and went regularly to mass, and gave every day bread to the poor. I will tell you a thing that he did, to prove his good faith and life. It happened one day that a very beautiful woman came to his shop to purchase a pair of shoes, and in order to make them fit, he was obliged to look at her foot and ankle, and they were so finely shaped that he felt his eye take an undue pleasure in viewing them. As soon as she was gone, he began bitterly to reproach himself, and remembered the text, "if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." He then took a sharp weapon, and stuck it into his eye, so that it burst in his head, and he never saw with it again. Thus you see he was a most holy and good man. When, therefore, the bishop had this vision, he told it to all his people, and they agreed that this shoemaker should be called before them, and when he came, they requested him to pray to God that he would make the mountain move. But when the shoemaker heard what the bishop and the others said, he answered that he was not so good a man as that God or our lady should for his sake do so great a miracle. But the Christians pressed him so earnestly, that he at last agreed, and made the prayer. When the final day was come, they all rose early in the morning, great and small, male and female; and entering the church, they sung the holy mass, and then proceeded out to the plain in front of the mountain. They were fully a hundred thousand, and they all placed themselves in front of the cross. The caliph then came with a vast number of Saracens, eager to slay the unbelievers, for they thought it impossible the hill could

be moved, and they themselves were in great fear and doubt; nevertheless they had good hope in their Creator. Then the shoemaker fell on his knees before the cross, lifted his hands to heaven, and prayed fervently that the mountain might be moved, and the Christians there assembled escape a dreadful death. When he had made his prayer, it was not long before the vast eminence began to stir, and move from its place. The Saracens, on seeing this, wondered greatly, and many of them were converted; nay, the caliph himself became a believer in the gospel, but secretly, and when he died, a cross was found round his neck; for which reason he was not buried in the same place with the other sovereigns, but in a tomb by himself. Now let us leave Baldach and go to Persia.

IX.—On the Province of Persia, and the Journey of the Magi.

Persia is a very extensive province, anciently very rich and flourishing, but now in a great degree wasted and destroyed by the Tartars. It contains a city called Sava, whence the three magi came to adore Jesus Christ when born at Bethlehem.* In that city are buried the three, in separate tombs, above which is a square house carefully preserved. Their hearts are still entire, with their hair and beards.† One was named Balthazar, the other Gaspar, the third Melchior. Messer Marco inquired often in that city about these three magi, but no one could tell him any thing, except that they were ancient

* The same observations may apply to this as to the preceding chapter. It is wanting in Pipino, the Basle version, and in Ramusio, so that Mr Marsden, finding it only in the Italian epitome, has not given it a place. Yet he seems to admit its genuineness, of which there can be no doubt, since it is found in the two Paris, the Crusca, and Pucci versions. As, therefore, we are giving an edition, not a selection, of the traveller's effusions, there seems no ground for its non-insertion.

† There is some appearance of the author here speaking as an eye-witness of this extraordinary scene. He only stands committed, however, to the extent of having seen three bodies partially embalmed; and there is no room to doubt that this art may have been in some degree practised in Persia.

kings, who were there buried. They informed him, however, that three days' journey farther was a tower called the Castle of the Fire-worshippers, because the men there venerate fire, and for the following reason. They say that anciently three kings of that country went to adore a certain prophet, newly born, and carried three offerings, gold, incense, and myrrh, to know if he were a king, a god, or a sage; for they said that, if he took gold, he was a king; if incense, he was a god; if myrrh, he was a sage. They went in one after another, and though they were of different ages and fashions, he appeared to each of them exactly like himself. When they came out and compared what they had seen, they wondered much, and then went in altogether, and the child then appeared to them what he really was, a boy of thirteen days old. They presented to him the three offerings, and he took them all, whence they concluded that he was at once god, king, and sage. He presented to them a closed box, desiring them not to open it till their return home. After having travelled a number of days, however, they were curious to see what was in the box, and opened it, when they found only a stone, which was meant to express that they should remain firm in the faith which they had received. They did not understand this meaning, and despising the gift, threw it into a well, when immediately a great fire came down from heaven, and began to burn brightly. When they saw this wonder, they were quite astonished, and repented that they had thrown away the stone. They however took a portion of the fire, carried it to their country, and placed it in their church, where they kept it continually burning. They revere it as a god, and use it for burning all their sacrifices; and when at any time it goes out, they repair to that well, where the fire is never extinguished,* and from it bring

* This story is evidently suggested by the burning wells or caverns that occur at Baku and other places in Persia, where naphtha and similar inflammable substances are in a state of constant combustion; a circumstance which had probably an effect in producing the adoration of fire in this region.

a fresh supply. This is what all the people of that country tell, and Messer Marco was assured of it by those of the castle, and therefore it is truth.* One of these kings was of Saba, the other of Ava, the other of the castle. Now let me tell you of Persia, its cities, and the actions and customs of the people.

X.—On the Kingdoms of Persia.

Know, then, that in Persia there are eight kingdoms, because it is a very great country, and I will tell you their names. The first is called Casum ;† the second, to the south, Cardistan ; the third Lor ; the fourth Cielstan ;‡ the fifth Istanit ;§ the sixth Cerazi ;|| the seventh Soucara ;¶ the eighth Tonocain,** which is on the remotest frontier. In this last are many fine horses of high value, which are taken in large numbers to be sold in India ; and the greater part of them are worth two hundred livres tournois each. They have also the finest asses in the world, one of which is worth full thirty marcs of silver.†† The men of that country lead these horses to two cities on the banks of the sea of India, called Chisi and Curmosa, and find there merchants, who buy them and carry them into their distant country. In these kingdoms there are many cruel men, who are constantly killing one another, and but for the fear of

* However peremptory this assertion is, we may observe that it is founded wholly upon the testimony of others.

† Casbin. ‡ Seemingly Segistan. § Ispahan. || Shiraz.

¶ Mr Marsden supposes this to be a corruption of Korkan or Gurkan, the ancient Hyrcania ; but Count Boni seems justly to object that this territory lies north of the following, which yet is described the most northerly of all. He suggests the district of Sinjar, traversed by the Hermas, which falls into the Upper Euphrates ; in fact, the modern province of Algezira.—Il Millione, vol. ii. p. 42.

** Called elsewhere Timochain, seems to be the name of the city of Daumghaun, generally applied to the province of Khorasan.

†† The excellence of the Persian horses is too well known to require comment ; the asses are equally famed in the country, and called by Chardin the first in the world. He mentions 400 francs as the price of a good one.—Marsden, p. 79.

the Eastern Tartars, who now rule in this land, they would ruin the merchants. As it is, unless the latter are well provided with arms and bows, they often kill or hurt them severely.* These men all hold the law of Mohammed. In the city are industrious merchants; they make robes of silk and gold of various fashions, and raise also plenty of cotton. The country abounds in wheat, barley, millet, as well as in vines and other fruits.† Some may imagine that the Saracens do not drink wine, as being forbidden by their law; but they quiet their consciences by thinking that if boiled over the fire, which renders it milder and sweet, it may be drunk without breaking the commandment. Changing its taste, they change its name, and no longer call it wine, though it really is so.‡ Let us now leave them, and tell you of Yasdi.

XI.—On the City of Yasdi.

Yasdi § is a beautiful and noble city, with rich manufactures. The people make silk cloths called by its name, which the merchants carry into various countries. They all adore Mohammed. When a man departs from that city, he rides seven days over a plain, where in three places only there are habitations and inns for the traveller. There are many forests filled with partridges and other birds, which afford excellent sport; also

* The elevated tracts of Persia have always been infested by predatory tribes, unless when kept in awe by a vigorous government.

† The fertility of the plains of Persia, and its fine manufactures, especially in silk, have been always noted.—Marsden, p. 80.

‡ I think in these two sentences, so abruptly introduced into Ramusio's edition only, we may discern the foreign hand which has repeatedly displayed such fervent zeal against the followers of Mohammed.

§ This city, commonly called Yezd, lies out of the general route of travellers; but all who have visited it describe its greatness, flourishing commerce, and extensive silk manufacture, which is even mentioned by Ibn Haukul. It has been said to contain 20,000 houses.—Marsden, p. 81; Boni, vol. ii. p. 46.

beautiful wild asses. At the end of these seven days a country called Creman presents itself.*

XII.—On the Kingdom of Creman.

Creman is a kingdom anciently belonging to Persia, and which used to be governed by a hereditary prince; but since the Tartar conquered it, he appoints what deputy he pleases. In that region the stones called turquoises are in great abundance; they are found in the mountains, and excavated from the rocks. The inhabitants make all things necessary for troops, such as reins, saddles, bows, arrows, quivers, and all kinds of arms, according to the custom of the country. The ladies work very neatly cloths of gold and silk, representing with the needle, beasts, birds, and many other objects.† In the

* Here we find the first commencement of an itinerary; for not a single station has been indicated in passing across Persia. Yet I fear we shall not be able to trace the same precision which was so remarkable in the journey through China. The traveller was then very young, and had not probably the same accurate recollection. Many of the stages are much longer, which may have been in consequence of travelling post, the means of which would be furnished to them on going to the imperial court. Yet they begin with a singular deviation in the journey to Ormuz. Count Boni supposes the one here related to be that afterwards made in conveying the two princesses to Ghazan, on the northern frontier. We cannot but imagine, however, that they would go on to Bagdad, and would not be led along this desert and perilous route. Besides, a journey both *to* and *from* Ormuz is here narrated. Amid their own total silence as to the motive, we need not spend much time in conjecture. Perhaps they might have commercial transactions there, or, as enterprising merchants, might wish to view this celebrated emporium. They might even have an idea of proceeding by sea to China. Such deviations, however, give some explanation of the extraordinary period of three years and a half employed in their journey out.

† Kerman, capital of the province of that name, the ancient Carmania (quite different from Caramania in Asia Minor). It is still a considerable city, though much declined since the time when, as Pottinger states, "its manufactures of shawls and arms were celebrated all over Asia." It was also enriched by the transit of the Indian goods landed at Ormuz. Since the passage by the Cape, and the transference even of the Gulf-trade to Bushire, it has greatly suffered. Turquoise mines are found

mountains are reared the finest falcons in the world, for though smaller than the peregrine species, they fly so swiftly that no bird can escape them. When a man leaves the city of Creman, he travels seven days through towns and fortified places, finding much amusement, because there are great numbers of wild beasts and birds. At the end of these seven days, he comes to the declivity of a mountain, and continues two days always descending. There are abundance of fruits, but no habitation, only shepherds pasturing their flocks. The cold on this road during winter is so great that a man cannot safely travel unless with a very ample provision of clothes.

XIII.—On Camandu, Reobarle, and the Karauna Robbers.

At the bottom of this descent is a very extensive plain, at the commencement of which is a city named Camandu,* once wonderfully great and noble, but now much declined, because the Tartar invaders have repeatedly plundered it. The heat here is extreme, and the province is called Reobarle.† Its fruits are dates, pistachio nuts, apples of paradise, and others which do not grow in our country. Here are a species of birds called francolin, which are different from those of other lands, their colour being a mixture of white and black, while the beak and feet are red. The oxen are very large, white as snow, and the hair very smooth, in con-

in different parts of Persia ; but Mr Marsden has not succeeded in supplying proof of their existence in this neighbourhood.—Pp. 83, 84.

* It has been impossible to find any account of this city, though D'Anville's map shows on this site one named Memaun. It is likely that there was a flourishing place on the great caravan-route above alluded to, the discontinuance of which, however, rendered it impossible that it should revive after the catastrophe here mentioned. This tract is now as little known as any in Asia ; yet Marco's description seems to intimate that it would reward the curiosity of some one of our enterprising travellers.

† Mr Marsden observes, that this is probably identical with Rudbar, a name common in Persia, and signifying "a river in a valley." Count Boni suggests Robat, passed by Pottinger on his way from Kerman to Shiraz ; but this appears quite out of the direction.

sequence of the heat. Between the shoulders is a hump, two palms high, and their appearance is the most beautiful of any in the world. When the owner wishes to load them, they bend down as the camels do, and after receiving their burden, rise and bear it well, being extremely strong. There are sheep as large as asses, and with tails so thick and so broad as to weigh full thirty pounds. They are also fat, and make excellent food.* The people have castles and cities surrounded by walls of earth, in order to defend themselves against the Caraunas, a mixed race between the Indians and the Tartars. When these people wish to overrun the country and rob it, they, by their enchantment and diabolical agency, cause the day to become dark, so that you can see to little or no distance, and this darkness they make to last seven days.† They know the places so well, that they can ride during the thickest of it; and they are sometimes ten thousand in number, so that nothing found on the plain, man, beast, or any thing, can escape. They kill the old persons, and carry off the young to sell them for slaves. Their king is called Nogodar, and he went to the court of Ciagatai, who was the brother of the great khan, with 10,000 men, and remained with him, because his uncle was very powerful. During this stay, Nogodar committed a very great wickedness, and I will tell you what it was. He departed from his uncle Ciagatai, who was in Great Armenia, and took with him 10,000 of his people, who were very cruel, and marched by Badasian and through a province called Pasciai, and another called Chesciemur,‡

* This species of sheep is well known in different parts of Asia. Both Russell and Chardin reckon the weight of the tail to be from fifteen to thirty pounds.—Marsden, p. 89.

† This is a startling statement, but we know nothing of the district; its moist and even marshy character, indicated by the luxuriant pasture, might naturally in this hot climate cause the ascent of heavy vapours and fogs. The plunderers, taking advantage of these occasions, might readily, by a superstitious people, be supposed to produce them.

‡ Peshawer and Cashmere. Mr Marsden has not been able to

losing many of his people and beasts, because the roads were narrow and very bad ; and when they had passed all these provinces, they entered into India, on the borders of one called Dilivar. They came to the city of the same name, and took it from a king called Asidiu Sultan, who was very great and rich. There Nogodar, with his people, continues to rule, and makes war with all the other Tartars who dwell in the surrounding country.* Having told you of this plain, and of the people who produced darkness in order to rob, I must also

trace any history of this prince, who indeed does not appear among De Guignes' elaborate list of the posterity of Gengis. The following notices may throw some light upon the subject. In the oriental history of Haithon, king of Armenia, it is mentioned that Gogodothai (Bergeron, Chagodai in Purchas, part iii. p. 114), second son of Okkoday, the successor of Gengis (and thus a nephew of Zagatai), was supplied by his father with an army, and marched southward into India ; but having to pass over mountains and through deserts, he lost many men and horses, and was unable to make any conquest. He then came and complained of his hard fortune to his brother Jochi, the ruler of Turkestan and Persia, who generously gave him a share of his own possessions. I think, however altered the circumstances, this is evidently the same story. Let us now turn to Dow's translation of Ferishta's Indian History. It is there stated, that in 1242 (about the time that might be supposed) the Moguls invaded the western provinces, plundered Lahore, and then retreated to Ghizni ; that they afterwards attempted to enter by way of Thibet, but were totally defeated ; and that they also failed by way of Koondooz and Talikan. It is added, that in 1245, they made themselves masters of Cabul, Candahar, Ghizni, Balkh, and Herat. Putting all this together, we may with probability infer, that the prince, after his failure in India, obtained reinforcements from his relations, and established a kingdom in Afghanistan, of which our oriental histories seem to contain no record. The unfavourable representations made in the text were naturally dictated by the people who were smarting under the ravages of his predatory bands.

* It is curious that this narrative occurs only in the French edition and in Ramusio, a circumstance creditable to both. In the latter, however, there are some gross corruptions, particularly in introducing Malabar as the chief object and seat of invasion. This, which causes Mr Marsden much perplexity, is, we apprehend, a modern interpolation, after the exploits of Gama and Faria had made that territory an object of intense interest in Europe. Dilivar (Lahore or Lahawar) is also changed to Dely, a town on that coast.

mention that Messer Marco himself was nearly taken by them amid this gloom, but though a number of his companions were captured, and either killed or sold as slaves, he himself escaped to a castle named Canosalmi.*

XIV.—On the City of Cormos.

That plain extends five days' journey southward, and you then come to a descent which continues twenty miles by a very bad and difficult road, full of wicked robbers. You then approach the very beautiful plain of Formosa, watered by fine rivers, with plantations of the date-palm, and having the air filled with francolins, parrots, and other birds unknown to our climate.† You ride two days through it, and then arrive at the ocean, on which there is a city and fort named Cormos.‡ The ships of India bring thither all kinds of spiceries, precious stones, and pearls, cloths of silk and gold, elephants' teeth, and many other articles. It is the capital of a kingdom, having many cities and castles under it, and the sovereign is called Ruemedan Achomac. The climate, however, is intensely hot, and extremely unhealthy, and when any foreign merchant dies, the king inherits all his property. Wine is here made of dates and other spices, and is extremely good; but when drunk by men unaccustomed to it, has a strong purgative quality, though, after some use, it agrees well, and promotes corpulence. The people

* This, Mr Marsden observes, is probably the Persian word *Khanah-al-salam*, "a place of safety." Captain Grant, in describing an adjacent district, through which he travelled, observes, that every village had near it a fort, to which the inhabitants could flee in case of invasion.—*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. v. p. 337.

† This appears evidently to be the plain of Minab, which Captain Grant describes as forty-five miles in circumference, abounding in palms, and fertile in grain.—*Journal*, as above.

‡ Ormuz, in some editions Hormos, the orientals prefixing a soft aspirate, here expressed by *C*. Its fame during the middle ages, as an emporium of Indian wealth, need not be dwelt upon. In 1507, it was captured by Albuquerque, and in 1622, the English and Shah Abbas united in reducing it, when the principal edifices were razed to the ground, and it has now no longer any existence as a city.

live chiefly on dates and salted fish, particularly the tunny ; considering these victuals to be the most wholesome, and that if they used wheaten bread and flesh they would fall sick. The ships are very bad, and many are lost from not being secured by nails like ours, but sewed together by a thread made of the bark of the Indian nut-trees, which being softened in water, becomes like horse-hair, and is durable enough. They use it for want of iron, but it is by no means strong or secure. They have a mast, sail, and rudder, all single, and a coverlet of leather, which is spread over the goods, and on that they place the horses, many of which are transported into India. These ships, too, are not tarred, but covered with the oil of fish. The people are black, and adore Mohammed. They do not remain in the city during summer, for then they would all die, but retire to the country, where they have verdant gardens, finely watered by streams. Even there they would not escape, because there often blows from the sandy tracts that surround the city a wind so excessively hot that it would kill them all, if they did not plunge into the water and thus escape it.* They sow wheat, barley, and other kinds of grain in the month of November, and reap them in March, when they become ripe and perfect ; but none except the date will endure till May, being dried up by the extreme heat. I have also to tell you, when men or women die, great grief is shown, and the ladies, during full four years after the death of their husbands, make lamentations at least once a-day. On these occasions, they assemble their relations and neighbours, who join them in loud moanings and cries. In proof of the extreme violence of the heat, Marco Polo mentions

* This is the sirocco or simoom, the distressing and even fatal effects of which need not be described. Strange as this remedy may seem, Mr Marsden quotes two good travellers, Pietro della Vale and Schillinger, for the fact of recourse being had to it in this very place, represented as the hottest on the face of the earth. Count Boni, vol. ii. p. 54, quotes also Tavernier and Chardin for the unhealthiness, and extreme intensity of the heat.

the following circumstance which occurred during his residence. The ruler of Cormos neglected to pay his tribute to the King of Creman, who took the resolution of enforcing it at the season when the principal inhabitants go into the country. He therefore despatched 1600 horse and 5000 foot through the district of Reobarle, to take them by surprise. Being misled, however, by the guides, they did not reach the place till night, when they halted to rest in a grove near the town. On renewing their march next morning, they were attacked by the hot wind, and all suffocated; not one surviving to carry back the fatal intelligence. When the people of Cormos learned this event, and went to bury the dead bodies lest they should infect the air, they found them so softened by the intense heat, that the limbs, when handled, separated from the trunks; and it was necessary to dig graves close to where the corpses lay.*

XV.—Return to Creman.

We will now leave this city, and not go on to India, for I will describe it farther on in my book, in the proper time and place. We will return, therefore, by another road to Creman, because the countries now to be delineated can be reached only by way of that city, and I must tell you that Ruemedan Achomac, of whom we have just spoken, is subject to its king. The route in returning thither from Cormos is through a very fine plain. There are many springs whence the water issues in a hot state, forming baths very salutary in cutaneous and other diseases. Here is abundance of fruits and dates, also of partridges and other birds; but the wheaten bread, owing to the quality of the water, is so bitter that no one unaccustomed to its use can eat it. I now wish to tell you of a country lying to the north. When a man has left Creman, he travels seven days in that direction, through a very dreary region. During

* Mr Marsden, p. 100, quotes from Chardin an instance of this condition of the bodily frame being actually produced by the action of the simoom.

three days he finds no river, and the little water met with is salt, green like grass, and so bitter that it is impossible to drink it, and if a man tastes even a drop, it produces violent purging. Travellers, therefore, carry water with them; but the beasts being obliged to drink such as they find, suffer severely. The whole tract is an arid desert, destitute of animals, which could not find food. On the fourth day, you reach a river of fresh water, but with its channel mostly under ground. In some spots, however, the force of the current makes abrupt openings, when the stream appears for a short space, and drink is abundantly supplied. Then follows another tract that lasts four days, and is also a dry desert, with bitter water, and no animals except wild asses. At the end of the four days, we leave the kingdom of Creman and proceed towards Cobinam.

XVI.—On the City of Cobinam.

Cobinam is a great city inhabited by Mohammedans. There is abundance of iron, brass, and andanico, of the second of which they construct large and beautiful mirrors; they make here also the tutty, which is extremely good for the eyes, and likewise sponge, in the following manner. They take a vein of earth fitted for this purpose, and throw it into a burning furnace, above which is a grating of iron; then the smoke and moisture ascending adhere to the iron and form tutty, while the earth which remains in the furnace becomes sponge.*

XVII.—On the Province of Tonocain.

When a man departs from Cobinam, he goes through a desert of eight days, and the country is very arid; there is neither fruit nor trees, and the water is bitter and bad, so that he must carry both it and food for himself, but the beasts drink that on the road,

* Cobinam is Khubees, a place once considerable, but now much decayed. Mr Marsden considers andanico to be antimony, and represents it as the substance thrown into the furnace; but the early editions make it an earth. In the French one, the mirrors are of brass; in Ramusio's, of steel.

though very unwillingly. He then comes to a province called Tonocain,* with cities and many castles, bordering upon Persia towards the north; and there is a very great plain on which grows what the Christians call the dry tree, which I will describe to you. It is very large, and its leaves are green on one side and white on the other. It yields a nut like the chestnut; but there is nothing within it. It is a strong wood, and yellow like box; and there is no other tree in those parts for a hundred miles round, except on one side, at ten miles' distance.† It is said by the people of the country to be the place where Alexander fought with Darius. There are many towns and castles, and the inhabitants have abundance of all good things, the climate being neither too cold nor too hot. Now I must tell you of a country called Mulecte, where the Old Man of the Mountain used to dwell.

XVIII.—On the Castle of the Old Man of the Mountain, and how he trained and employed his Assassins.

You shall learn all about the Old Man of the Mountain, as I Marco heard related by many persons. He was called in their language Alaodin, and had caused to be formed, in a valley between two mountains, the largest and most beautiful garden that ever was seen. There grew all the finest fruits in the world, and it was adorned by the most beautiful houses and palaces, the interior being richly gilded, and furnished with finely coloured pictures of birds and beasts, and the most striking objects. It contained several conduits through which flowed

* *Timochain, Ramusio*. There seems no doubt that this is the same word with *Daumghaun*; but we see no necessity for supposing, with Mr Marsden, that they went back to that city, which would be a very retrograde course. The name is here evidently applied to a large province, including probably the best cultivated part of Khorasan. Their direction from Kerman through Khubees would lead to one of its eastern districts, which would also agree better with the subsequent itinerary.

† Mr Marsden, p. 110, proves this to be the plane-tree, which appears really to abound in this part of Persia, but was then unknown in Europe.

respectively water, wine, honey, and milk. Here were ladies and damsels unequalled in beauty and in the skill with which they sung and played on instruments of every description. Now the Old Man made his people believe that this garden was paradise, and he formed it thus because Mohammed had given the Saracens to believe that those who went into that place would meet great numbers of beautiful women, and find rivers of water, wine, milk, and honey; hence the visitors were led to think that this really was paradise. Into this garden he admitted no man except those whom he wished to make assassins. The entry to the spot was commanded by a castle so strong that he did not fear any power in the world. He kept in his court all the youths of the country between twelve and twenty years of age, and when he thought proper, selected a number who had been well instructed in the description of paradise. He gave them a beverage which threw them into a deep sleep, then carried them into the garden, and made them be awakened. When any one of them opened his eyes, saw this delightful spot, and heard the delicious music and songs, he really believed himself in the state of blessedness. When again, however, he fell asleep, he was brought out into the castle, where he awoke in great wonder, and felt deep regret at having left that delightful abode. He then went humbly to the Old Man, worshipping him as a prophet. Being asked whence he came, he told that he had been in the paradise described by Mohammed, relating all he had seen, and saying that he desired much to die and return thither. The chief then named to him a great lord whom he wished him to kill. The youth cheerfully obeyed, and if in the act he was taken and put to death, he suffered with exultation, believing that he was to go into the happy place. If, after performing the deed, he escaped, the Old Man received him with the greatest honour, and when he wished to destroy another chief, employed him afresh, saying that he was sent into paradise. Thus scarcely any person could escape being

slain, when the Old Man of the Mountain desired it; and many barons became vassals to him through the dread of thus losing their lives.*

XIX.—How Alau took and killed the Old Man of the Mountain.

Having now told you of the Old Man of the Mountain and his assassins, you shall hear how he was killed. I had forgot to mention, that he had other old men placed under him, one of whom he sent into the country of Damascus, and the other into Kurdistan. But now let us come to his destruction. It was in 1262 that Alau, the Lord of the East, having heard of his wicked deeds, determined to destroy him. He sent his generals with a great body of men, who besieged the castle full three years, and then could only reduce it by famine. Alaodin being taken, was killed, with all his people, and since that time there has been no assassin; and thus ended his dominion and his wickedness.†

* The dynasty of the Ismailies or Assassins is famous in the history of Asia. Among the great men who fell its victims are mentioned Mostarsched, caliph of Bagdad; a son of the Caliph Mostali; Nizam ul Mulk, a famous Turkish vizier; a reis of Ispahan and one of Tauris; a mufti of Casbin. Count Boni considers the castle to have been somewhere between Casbin and Amol. Mr Marsden, while he admits the particulars here given to coincide with the general belief of Asia, considers them extravagant and incredible. We really see nothing very improbable in such a scheme being adopted by a daring and crafty chief, having to do with a simple and credulous race. That writer and De Guignes suppose that Alaodin merely introduced these youths into his palace, and by indulging them in every luxury made them zealous in his service. We cannot but observe, that such treatment would rather tend to enervate and attach them to life, than impel them thus wildly to renounce it. The term assassin does not occur in Ramusio, but is found in the earlier editions.

† Alau, as formerly noticed, is Hoolaku, brother to Mangou the supreme khan, who sent orders to him to proceed against this atrocious potentate. The latter was for some time protected by Baatu, and his successor Barka; but in 1255 (for the date of the text, as in other instances, is incorrect), Hoolaku invested the castle, and, after a siege of twenty-seven months, reduced it by famine. Rokneddin, who had succeeded to Alaodin, was carried with his family to Karakorum, where they were all put to death. It may be observed, that the term "old man," is an

XX.—Of a certain City named Sapurgan.

When a man departs from that castle, he rides through beautiful hills covered with rich herbage, with fruits and all things in great abundance. The country extends to a journey of six days, and contains cities the inhabitants of which adore Mohammed. Yet sometimes you find a desert of fifty or sixty miles, without water, which men must carry with them. When the traveller has rode six days through the country now described, he finds a city called Sapurgan.* It has great abundance of all things, among which are the finest melons in the world in great plenty, and they are preserved in this manner: The people cut them all round like cucumbers, and dry them in the sun, when they become sweeter than honey, and are sold through all the country. Here is fine hunting of beasts and birds. Now I will go on to another city named Balk.

XXI.—Of the City of Balk.

Balk is a great and noble town, and was anciently still more so; but the Tartars have spoiled and wasted it, so that many beautiful houses and palaces of marble are now destroyed.† It was here, as I was told by the people, that Alexander took to wife the daughter of Darius. The people revere Mohammed; and at this point ends the dominion of the Eastern Tartars, this city being the boundary of Persia, between north-east and

improper translation of sheik, chief, or ruler.—Marsden, pp. 119, 120.

* This is evidently Shibbergaun, a town near Balkh. The period of twelve days seems too small; though, as already observed, the journey was probably from the eastern instead of the western part of Khorasan. It may be suspected, too, that the interval of desert has been omitted.

† Balkh, one of the most ancient and celebrated cities of Asia, but which has suffered severely in modern times by its exposure to Tartar invasion. After being restored to some degree of prosperity by a late ruler, Killich Ali, it has been nearly ruined by the violence of Murad Beg, the chief of Koondooz. Moorcroft reckoned it to contain only a thousand families, and, what is singular, could discover no monuments of ancient grandeur.—Vol. ii. p. 494.

east. Now let us tell of another country named Dogana. On leaving Balk, you ride two days between north-east and east, and find no habitation, because the people have all fled to the fortresses in the mountains for fear of wicked men, who lay waste the land. There is no want of water or game, and lions are also seen. No food is to be procured, but travellers must carry it both for themselves and their horses.

XXII.—Of the Castle of Taikan.

When a man has rode these two days, he finds a castle called Taikan,* where there is a great corn-market, and the country round is fine. The mountains towards the south are very high, and formed entirely of salt,† which is the best in the world, and people come for it from a distance of thirty days' journey round. It is so hard, that it can be broken only by great iron hammers; and there is enough to supply the whole human race till the end of time. Departing from that city, you go three days north-east, through a fine country, well planted with grain and fruits. The people, who are followers of Mohammed, are wicked and murderous. They spend much time in the tavern, for they have abundance of good wine, well prepared. They wear nothing on their heads but a cord ten palms long wrapt round it. They are good hunters, and thus supply themselves with venison; but have no clothing except the skins of animals.

XXIII.—Of the City of Scassem.

When a man travels three days, he finds a city named Scassem,‡ which is on the plain, while the others are

* See in a note on the following chapter a discussion as to the place here named.

† There appears no doubt that the immense salt formation which begins at Kalabagh, on the western bank of the Upper Indus, extends northward to this quarter. South of Koondooz, Mr Wood found the valley of Shor-Ab, or the Salt Water, which, draining the mountains of Eshk Meshk, becomes thus impregnated with the mineral contained in them.—Pp. 131, 409.

‡ There seems here a serious difficulty, in which Marsden and Boni could not give us any assistance, as they were destitute of the precise local information recently furnished by Moorcroft

on the mountains, and through it flows a considerable river. There are here many porcupines, and when the hunters set their dogs upon them, the hogs collect together and push their spines against their assailants, and often hurt them severely.* This Scassem is a large province, and the shepherds dwell in caverns on the mountains, which are easily formed, being wholly of earth, and make large handsome habitations.† When a man leaves this city, he travels three days without finding a house, or any thing to eat or drink, being obliged

and Wood. If we assume Taikan to be Khoolloom, and Scassem to be Koondooz, and then reckon the three days from the last to Badakshan, the itinerary will exactly correspond with the geography of the country. But the names have no resemblance, while they are found almost identical in two other points of the territory; Tai-kan in Talikan, and Scassem in Ish-kashm. Yet this space would occupy about twenty journeys; while the first place would be on the border of Badakshan, the latter on its eastern, instead of three days short of its western frontier. The perplexity is increased by variation of texts; for the French, the Crusca, and the Pucci, have *twelve* days from Balkh to Tai-kan, which would carry the traveller to Talikan; but the three days thence to Ish-kashm would be very inadequate, while the relation with Badakshan would be quite broken up. Pipino, the Basle, the Paris Latin, and the Riccardino, all agree with Ramusio in the *two* days. The French fails often in numbers; and the old words *doze*, twelve, and *dou*, two, might, in bad MS., be easily mistaken. The description of Scassem, as situated in a large plain, with a river running through it, corresponds exactly to Koondooz. Ish-kashm, indeed, has also these features, but not so remarkably; and the ruby mines in its vicinity would surely have been mentioned. On the whole, I cannot doubt that Khoolloom and Koondooz are the two stations; though how these names have been applied to them, must be submitted to the decision of oriental scholars. Places in Asia, at the distance of five centuries, are subject to great variation of nomenclature.

* Mr Wood (p. 249) mentions the great facility afforded by the hog-tracks in travelling over the snow, those animals being so numerous, that they had trodden it down like a flock of sheep. He does not expressly say that they were hedgehogs.

† Mr Wood does not fully confirm this, but describes them as always built on the slope of a hill, and sunk two feet under ground. They are spacious, containing under one roof compartments for different related families. To form such houses on this site, much excavation must have been employed.—P. 269-271.

to carry provisions with him, and he then enters the district of Badascian.

XXIV.—Of the Province of Badascian.

Badascian is a large province, whose people adore Mohammed, and have a language of their own. It is governed by kings descended from Alexander and the daughter of Darius lord of Persia, and all these kings are called in Saracen Zulcarnem, which means in their language Alexander.* In this country occur the precious stones called *balasiu*, which are very beautiful and valuable. They are found in the rocks of a mountain called Lighinan, and are cut out of very deep caverns, as is done by those who work silver mines. Know, too, that the king makes them be worked out for himself, and no other man may cut out *balasiu* on that mountain, on pain of death. His majesty sends them as presents to other princes and great lords, either as homage, or in token of friendship, and he likewise sells them for gold and silver. The prohibition is enforced that they may continue valuable; for if all persons were allowed to dig for them, they would be quite depreciated.† You

* This descent is still confidently claimed by several mountain-chiefs in this and the adjacent territories. It is even admitted by the people, among whom it procures great respect. Reports have also been received, that these tribes remained pagan amid surrounding Moslems, and had a peculiarity of language and manners, which might, it was supposed, mark a Greek origin. Of this, Mr Wood (p. 241-271), on attentive examination, could discover no trace. They appeared to him merely the Tajiks, or natives, who had been driven by Moslem conquest into these mountain recesses. The claim appeared to him to rest merely on the vague reverence there entertained for the name of Sekander Zool Kurnein. It probably, however, arose under the Greek kingdom established in Bactria (Balkh) soon after Alexander's death, which continued several ages powerful and flourishing. The sovereigns would probably pass in the country for descendants of the Macedonian conqueror; nor is it unlikely that branches of their families might intermarry with great mountain-chiefs. Genealogical records in such situations are long and carefully preserved.

† The Balass rubies have always been celebrated in the East. (Marsden, p. 132.) Mr Wood was disappointed in his attempt

must likewise know, that in other mountains of the same country are found the stones of which ultramarine is made, and it is the finest and best in the world.* There are also lofty hills containing veins yielding silver in abundance. The country is extremely cold, but it breeds very good horses, which run with great speed over these wild tracts without being shod with iron.† There are found also the falcons called *sacri*, which fly well and swiftly; also those called *lanier*; and there is abundant hunting of beasts and birds. Wheat and good barley are plentiful; they have no oil of olives, but make it from sesamum and nuts. This kingdom has many a narrow pass and strong post to secure it against the entrance of enemies, and the cities and castles are strongly built on high mountains.‡ The people are good archers and hunters, and mostly clad in the

to reach them; but he learned that they were on the northern bank of the Oxus, opposite to Ish-kashm, and at the western extremity of Badakshan. They were said to be 1200 feet above the river, either in red sandstone or limestone, largely impregnated with magnesia, forming a material easily worked. The galleries were described as numerous. They have always, it should seem, continued to be a royal monopoly; but Murad Beg, the tyrannical chief of Koondooz, on conquering the country, being irritated at the small profit which the gems afforded, seized all those employed and sold them as slaves, so that the mines are not at present worked.—P. 316.

* The lapis lazuli mines are also well known, and were found by Mr Wood to the north of Badakshan, on the Kokcha, its principal river. They are about 1500 feet above the water, in an unstratified limestone, veined black and white. The rock is first softened by fire, and then beaten with hammers, till the stone is extracted. For the last four years, this working also has been suspended by the caprice of Murad Beg.—P. 263-266.

† Mr Wood describes the horses of this country as not possessing the body and power of those of Turkestan, but as a small and hardy breed, well suited to the territory. Endurance, he says, is more valued than speed; yet the latter is called into requisition, since the gallop is the usual pace, and distances are measured by the time they can be thus traversed. He says, they are shod on the fore though not on the hind feet, thus only half confirming the statement of our traveller; but there may have been a change since his time.—P. 222.

‡ The mountainous character of the country and its lofty passes are strikingly depicted by Mr Wood, pp. 249, 250.

skins of beasts, on account of the scarcity of cloth. The great ladies, however, wear from sixty to a hundred yards of bombasine wrapped round their body, in order that they may appear very fat, because the men delight in such a shape.*

On the summits of the mountains the air is so pure and salubrious that the inhabitants of the towns and lower valleys, when attacked by fever or other inflammatory complaints, immediately remove thither, and in three or four days recover their health. Marco Polo affirms, that he himself experienced its excellent effects; for after being confined nearly a year by sickness, he was advised to try change of air by ascending the hills, and he then immediately regained his strength.†

XXV.—Of the Province of Pascia.

You are to know that ten days south from Badascian is a province called Pascia.‡ The people have a peculiar language; they are worshippers of idols, and much skilled in enchantments and diabolical arts. The men wear ear-rings and buckles of gold and silver, with pearls and precious stones. They are a very artful and

* "Like the mantilla of Spain," says Mr Wood, p. 224, "the gown of the Uzbek lady envelops the head as with a hood, and from about the ears are suspended the sleeves, long narrow slips of cloth that sweep the ground, and which dangle to and fro as the portly beauty rolls along."

† This paragraph, found only in Ramusio, is submitted to the reader. Besides its absence in all the early editions, it seems mysterious when and how the traveller spent so long a period in this remote region, and why such a circumstance is omitted in even the slight introductory narrative of his travels. We find no recent mention of any unhealthy tracts in Badakshan. Burnes (vol. ii. pp. 227, 228) describes its climate generally as genial and delightful; but that of Koondooz as pestilential.

‡ The name in most editions is Bascia. That in the text is one of three in the French version, here adopted as confirming what we have no doubt is the just opinion of Mr Marsden, that the place indicated is Peshawer. There is no other in that quarter possessing the importance here ascribed to it; and the peculiar heat is fully confirmed by Forster and Elphinstone. (Marsden, pp. 135, 136.) Count Boni objects that it ought to be on the road to Cashmere; but this is not said in the text.

malicious people. The province is extremely hot, and the people live upon flesh and rice. Now let us leave it, and tell of another, which is distant from this seven days towards the south-east.

XXVI.—Of the Province of Kesimur.

Kesimur is inhabited by idolaters, who have a language of their own. They have a wonderful knowledge of the enchantments of devils, making their images speak, and by sorcery changing the seasons, causing great darkness, and doing other wonders which could not be believed unless they were seen. The idols of this province are the heads over all the others, and went down hence to the neighbouring countries. The people are meagre and of a brown complexion ; but the females are very beautiful. They live on flesh and rice, and have a number of cities and castles. They have woods and deserts, and passes so strong that they have little dread of an invader : their king rules with great justice. In this country are hermits, who observe great abstinence in eating and drinking, and carefully abstain from all offences against their faith ; and this is done through veneration of their gods. They have abbeys and monasteries, are held in much reverence by the people of the country, and live to a great age.* The coral brought

* The description here given of this celebrated region does not exactly correspond to our ideas. We do not believe that Marco personally visited it ; yet the lofty mountain-passes and the temperate climate are correctly described ; but he would, we think, have noticed, had he been there, the beauty and fertility of its valley. Moorcroft states that the inhabitants, of the cities at least, are slightly made, and that their complexion varies from dark to olive. The beauty of the females, so celebrated in the East, is mentioned in the French, Crusca, and Pucci, and, though expunged from the others, is again noticed in Ramusio. But the sacred character ascribed to the region, and its being a chief seat of the Boodhist religion here evidently described, is not confirmed by recent authorities. Both Forster and Moorcroft intimate that no oriental nation is so indifferent upon such subjects. (Marsden, p. 140; Moorcroft, vol. ii. pp. 128, 129.) Marsden, however, has quoted testimonies from the Ayin Akbari and Abu'lfazl, to its having, even in the sixteenth cen-

from our land is sold more readily there than in any other nation. From this place you may go to the sea of India, and if we went farther we should enter into that country ; but being to return that way, we will then describe it in due order, and now go back to Badascian.

XXVII.—Of the Countries of Vokhan, Pamier, and Belor.

When a man departs from Badascian, he goes twelve days between north-east and east, along a river which belongs to a brother of the lord of that land. There are many castles, and a good number of inhabitants, who are valiant and adore Mohammed. He then comes to a province named Vokhan, not very large, being only three days' journey in every direction. The people are of the same description, and subject to the ruler of Badascian.* Wild beasts and birds of every kind for hunting are most abundant. Having left this place, and travelled three days, always over mountains, he ascends to a district which is said to be the highest in the world.†

tury, borne this religious reputation. In 1585, however, it was subjected to the Mogul empire, and became the favourite summer residence of the princes of that dynasty. The presence of a Mohammedan court, the most splendid and luxurious in the East, was very inconsistent with the maintenance of an ascetic superstition. Under its influence was seemingly formed that infidel and licentious character which now distinguishes the people. There are remains of splendid temples, but in ruin. (Moorcroft, vol. ii. p. 255.) The absence, too, of all mention of the shawl manufacture is remarkable ; but this splendid fabric may have grown under the patronage afforded by the imperial residence, as it has declined since that was withdrawn.

* This is Wakhan, extending exactly, as here described, along the banks of the Upper Oxus. The inhabitants are Mohammedans, and resemble their neighbours, though living in a somewhat ruder style. They are at present governed by a separate chief.—Wood, p. 369, &c.

† Strong as this expression is, it is nearly correct ; for, as a table-land, only that of Bolivia, which was unknown to our traveller, could rival that here described. Mr Wood estimates its several heights at 15,600 feet, being almost on a level with the summit of Mont Blanc ; and the difficulty of respiration incident to such high situations was decidedly felt. The natives call this place Boni-i-damiah, or the roof of the world.—P. 352-362.

Here he finds a plain between two vast hills, through which flows a very fine river, issuing from a large lake ;* and it is the best pasturage in the world, for a lean animal becomes fat here in ten days.† All kinds of wild animals abound ; in particular, a species of sheep with horns of three, four, and even six palms long. These are formed by the shepherds into large spoons, out of which they eat ; and are even employed in enclosing the places where they keep their cattle. The horns are heaped up in large quantities along the road, for the purpose of guiding travellers during winter, when it is covered with snow.‡ While a man passes for twelve days along this high plain, which is called Pamier,§ he sees neither habitation nor verdure, but must carry all his provisions along with him. No birds can live in

* This is the Oxus issuing from the lake Sir-i-kol, fed from the perpetual snows of the surrounding mountains. Mr Wood (p. 355) was peculiarly struck with the accuracy of the description given by our traveller of this spot. The mention of the lake occurs only in Ramusio, and is creditable to that edition.

† Mr Wood (p. 365) was informed by the Kirghiz of the grass here being so rich, that a sorry horse is brought into good condition in less than twenty days. " Their flocks and herds," says he, " roam over an unlimited extent of swelling grassy hills of the sweetest and richest pasture." This luxuriant vegetation, caused probably by exuberant moisture, is remarked also in the valleys of the Himmaleh, where the inhabitants assert, that whatever is cropped during the day is reproduced in the night.—Account of India (Edinburgh Cabinet Library), vol. i. p. 32.

‡ Mr Wood (pp. 350, 351) fully recognises the astonishing size of these horns, which, projecting above the snow, often indicated the direction of the road ; and were disposed in a semicircle round the summer encampments of the Kirghiz. They belong, he says, to an animal between the goat and the sheep.

§ M. Humboldt seems to charge our traveller with applying this name to a plain, when it belongs merely to a station, situated, according to him, in 39° 30' N. lat. Mr Wood, however, who was on the spot, fully confirms Marco's statement (p. 331), describing Pamir as a very lofty table-land, stretching north from 37° 2', consequently Humboldt's station was only its northern limit.—Fragmens de Géologie et de Climatologie Asiatiques (2 tom. 8vo, Paris, 1831), p. 56.

this cold region ; and I can even state that the fire does not burn so clear nor with the same colour as in other places, nor does it cook victuals so well.* Leaving this place, he has to go on forty days between north and north-east, and passes many rivers and deserts ; and in all this journey finds neither verdure nor habitation, but must carry all his provisions along with him. This country is called Belor.† The people live in very lofty mountains. They are idolaters, extremely savage, violent, and cruel, subsist by hunting, and dress themselves in the skins of beasts.‡

XXVIII.—Of the Province of Cascar.

Cascar was anciently a kingdom, but is now under the dominion of the great khan. The people adore Mohammed, and have cities and castles ; they are situated between the north and east. They subsist by merchandise and manufactures, having also fine gardens, vineyards, and orchards, with a good supply of silk. The merchants, in carrying on their trade, go round the whole world ; but they are sordid and covetous, eating and drinking very poorly. Some Nestorian Christians reside here, observing their own customs and laws.

* Humboldt (Fragmens, &c. pp. 56, 57) remarks that our traveller was the first who pointed out this circumstance, which he himself often found verified in his mountain excursions. It arises, we imagine, not as Mr Marsden supposes from the severe cold, but from the thinness of the air.

† Beloor or Beloot Taugh is the name given to that lofty range, which shuts in on the west Thibet and Chinese Turkestan. All accounts agree as to its elevated and desolate character. Marsden, pp. 144, 145.

‡ It must be confessed that Mr Moorcroft gives rather an opposite character, representing them as simple and peaceful shepherds, many of them owning large herds and flocks. This, however, was from hearsay ; while Mr Wood, who reached their country, describes them (p. 338) as inveterate thieves, who rifle every caravan they can master, and commit robberies even on each other. Mention is, however, made by him of a tribe called the Kazaks (pp. 337, 343), who inhabit the low plains along the foot of this great mountain range, and who really correspond to Mr Moorcroft's report, being probably the race described to him ; but they did not come under the view of our traveller.

The people have a language of their own ; and the province extends five days' journey.* Now let us leave it and speak of Samarcand.

XXIX.—Of the City of Samarcand.

Samarcand is a very great and noble city, lying to the south, inhabited by Christians and Saracens. The people are governed by a nephew of the great khan, who, however, is not his friend, but is in open hostility against him. I have to tell you a great wonder which happened in this city. You must know that not very long since, Ciagatai, brother to the great khan, became a Christian, and was lord of that and of many other countries. The believers of Samarcand rejoiced greatly at his conversion, and erected a large church in honour of it, bearing the name of St John the Baptist. They took a large and fine stone belonging to the Saracens, and made it the base of a column, which rose in the middle of the edifice, and supported the whole roof. Now it came to pass that Ciagatai died, whereupon the Mohammedans, having been much enraged at this stone

* This city and territory, called commonly Cashgar, is mentioned by Ptolemy as the country of the Casii, and by Ibn Haukul and Edrisi under the name of Chage ; but Ritter (*Asien*, vol. vii. p. 409) justly observes, that our traveller is the first who has given any distinct account of it. The place is still the most important in Eastern Turkestan, retaining a great trade, particularly in horses, but, from causes to be afterwards explained, is now in this respect inferior to Yarcund. Humboldt supposes it to contain 15,000 houses and 80,000 inhabitants (*Fragmens*, &c., p. 250) ; but Burnes (vol. ii. p. 230), while estimating Yarcund at 50,000, considers it the more populous of the two. All this territory, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was independent ; but in 1757 the Mantchoo rulers of China, taking advantage of internal dissensions, reduced it to subjection. They merely hold it, however, in military occupation, allowing the Mussulman magistrates to administer the government. Mr Fraser (*Travels in Khorasan*, App. pp. 114, 115) considers them thus in a happy situation ; yet they themselves thought otherwise, since in 1827 they raised a formidable insurrection, but being subdued, their leader was taken and put to death. This city, now the chief military station, has always a garrison of 5000 Chinese.—Burnes, vol. ii. p. 228-231.

being taken for the use of the church, consulted with each other how to recover it by force. This they could now easily do, being ten to one of their adversaries. Several of their elders went and told the Christians that they wished to receive back the slab, which had been formerly theirs. The latter answered, that they would willingly restore it, but for the injury it would do to their building, and offered to pay a fair price for it. The others replied, that they wished neither gold nor treasure, but must have their stone. The government now belonged to the nephew of the great khan, who commanded that within two days it should be restored. When the Christians received that order, they were much grieved, and knew not what to do. They went, however, and with many tears implored John the Baptist to relieve them in this tribulation. On the morning of the day when the stone was to be returned, the pillar, by the power of our Lord, rose up at least three palms, and supported itself as well as when the stone was beneath it, and has continued to do so till this day. This was and still is accounted one of the greatest miracles that ever happened in the world.* Now let me tell you of a province which is called Yarcan.

* It was a considerable disappointment, when expecting a description of this celebrated Asiatic capital, to find only the ridiculous legend here narrated. Ciagatai, commonly called Zagatai, was one of the sons of Gengis, who actually held sway in this region. According to the histories, he usually resided with his brother Okkoday, but he might visit occasionally this fine possession. Mr Marsden repels the idea of his being a Christian; yet Pétis de la Croix (*Histoire de Genghiscan*, p. 100) mentions that, amid the philosophic indifference which reigned at his court, several members of the conqueror's family embraced this and other creeds. At all events, the Nestorians may have gained his favour in preference to their rivals. In regard to Marco, we may notice that, as on other occasions, he only displays the credulity of his age, and is merely repeating a distant hearsay, for we can see no ground to think with Mr Marsden that he ever visited Samarcand. The nephew here mentioned as hostile to the great khan is doubtless Kaidu, whom we have already seen (p. 108) making war against that

XXX.—Of the Province of Yarcan.

Yarcan is a province five days' journey in length. The people obey the law of Mohammed, but there are some Nestorian Christians; they are subject to the nephew of the khan mentioned above. All necessities are in great abundance. Cotton is also grown, and the inhabitants are skilful artisans. They suffer severely by swellings in the legs and in the throat, occasioned by the bad quality of the water.* Finding nothing else worth mentioning, I shall go on to Cotan.

XXXI.—Of the great Province of Cotan.

Cotan is a province between north-east and east, and is eight days' journey in length. The people adore Mohammed; they have a number of cities and castles. The capital is a noble town, called by the name of the kingdom. They have all things in abundance, a large supply of silk, with vineyards and good orchards. They carry on merchandise and manufactures, but are not men at arms.†

monarch, and the seat of whose power we shall afterwards ascertain to be in this part of Tartary.

This city, in the fourteenth century, acquired an extraordinary splendour, when Timur, after conquering the greater part of Asia, made it his capital; and his tomb, a lofty edifice, still adorns it. On the breaking up of his empire, it of course declined; and when the succeeding princes transferred their seat of government to Bokhara, it fell into such decay, that its once celebrated colleges were tenanted by wild beasts. (Izzut Oollah, in *Oriental Magazine*, Calcutta, vol. iv. p. 129.) Efforts have recently been made, and with some success, to restore it; yet Sir Alexander Burnes (vol. ii. p. 184) still reckons the population short of 10,000.

* Called elsewhere Carchan, Barcam, Karkan; but the name in the text (from the French) comes nearest to the usual modern one of Yarcund. This city was first known through our traveller, and since his time has acquired great additional importance in consequence of its conquest by the Chinese, who made it the exclusive seat of commerce on this frontier, as Canton and Kiachta elsewhere. The population is reckoned by Sir Alexander Burnes at 50,000. That writer mentions the disease called the guinea-worm as committing great ravages in Bokhara, and it may probably extend to this adjacent territory.

† This country, commonly called Khoten, by the Chinese

XXXII.—Of the Province of Pein.

Pein is a province five days' journey in length, between north-east and east. The people adore Mohammed, are subject to the great khan, and have a number of towns and castles. The noblest city and capital is called by the name of the kingdom. Here is a river in which are found the stones named jasper and calcedony. The people are very well supplied with necessaries, and grow a good deal of silk.* They live by merchandise and arts, and have a custom which I will now tell you. When a woman has a husband who has gone a journey, and is to be absent above twenty days, as soon as he has departed she takes another partner, being fully allowed by usage to do so; while the husband, in the place

Yuthia, and in Sanscrit Kustana, was first pointed out to Europe by Marco, and is now well known as the finest tract in Eastern Turkestan. It is celebrated for its mild climate, the copious product of silk and wine, the industrious and peaceable character of the inhabitants. Most writers, like Marco, have given the same name to the capital; but Moorcroft's informant calls it Elchi, while Izzut Oollah (*Oriental Magazine*, vol. iv. p. 296) has it Aichi. It is said to contain 6000 houses, and there are reported to be in it and five other cities 102,000 inhabitants. (Moorcroft, vol. i. p. 367-369.) Ritter considers Khoten to contain in all about two and a half millions.—*Asien*, vol. vii. p. 353.

* The position of this city has hitherto defied conjecture; for though D'Anville has laid it down (seemingly too far east), he relied upon the data of our traveller. The following may throw some light on the subject:—Timkowski, among the cities of this quarter, mentions Ouchi with its dependencies, Aksou, Sairam, and *Bai* (vol. i. p. 390). This last, as in oriental names B and P may be considered identical, and *a* and *e* easily convertible, is in fact equivalent to Pei. Again, Moorcroft gives the itinerary of a merchant who seems to have followed nearly in the steps of Marco. He describes the river which waters Khoten as meeting with another, and the united stream flowing on for six days' journey, when it comes to *Bai*. This gives very precisely the position assigned by our traveller to Pein. The ornamental stones mentioned are found in the Khoten rivers, and as the waters flow on to *Bai*, are likely to occur there also. They are named by Moorcroft (vol. i. p. 375) jasper agate; by Timkowski, *yu* or oriental jade. The latter (vol. i. p. 395) relates that they are obtained in the bed of the stream by diving, and are variously coloured with white, green, yellow, and vermillion.

where he goes, takes another wife. Know that all the provinces now described from Cascar to the present, and still farther on, belong to Great Turkey. Now let us tell of a province named Ciarcian.

XXXIII.—Of the Province of Ciarcian.

Ciarcian is a province of Great Turkey, lying between north-east and east, with a capital city of the same name. The people adore Mohammed, and have a good number of towns and castles. There is a river bringing jasper and calcedony, which, being of excellent quality, they take to sell in Cathay, and thus make great profit. This province is sandy, as well as the whole road from Cotan hither; and much of the water is bad and bitter, but in various places it is good. When an enemy passes through the country, they flee with their wives, children, and cattle, two or three days' journey through the sand to places abounding in fine water and pasturage; and no one can tell where they have gone, because the wind blowing the sand obliterates all traces of their march, and they thus escape the invader. But when a friendly army passes through, they send away only the beasts, because the troops would take and eat them, without any payment.* After departing from Ciarcian, you go five days through the waste, finding the water bad and bitter, but occasionally sweet and good. At the end of these five days you come to a city which lies at the commencement of the great desert, wherein provisions are laid in for its passage, and therefore I must tell you about it.

* This place is the same called in the common maps Hara-shar, but by Izzut Oollah (*Oriental Magazine*, vol. iv. p. 293) and Moorcroft's informer, Karashehr, which is explained to mean the "Black City." It is described as seated on a large navigable river, formed by the junction of those flowing respectively from Khoten and Yarcund. Timkowski (vol. i. p. 388) describes it as abounding with good pasturage and water; but this probably applies only to the district around the capital. It seems odd that Mr Marsden should refer it to the Chen-chen of De Guignes, which he afterwards, with better reason, applies to a quite different territory.

XXXIV.—Of the City and Desert of Lop.

Lop* is a large city at the entrance of the great desert bearing its name, and lying between the east and north-east. It belongs to the khan, and the people adore Mohammed. You must know that those persons who wish to pass this tract rest in the city a week to refresh themselves and their cattle ; then, having taken a month's provisions and provender, they enter upon the desert, which I assure you is so extensive that if a man were to travel through its whole length, it would employ a year ; and even at its smallest breadth, a month is requisite.† It consists altogether of mountains and valleys of sand, and nothing is got to eat ; but after travelling a day and a night, you find sweet water sufficient for from fifty to a hundred men, with their animals. A larger body could not be supplied. Thus, water is seen daily, or altogether in about twenty-eight places, and except in three or four it is good. Beasts or birds there are none, because they could not find food ; but there is a great wonder which I must now tell you. When a party rides by night through this desert, and any one lags behind, or straggles from his companions through

* The lake of Lop is a conspicuous feature shown in the Jesuits' map, and called by Timkowski (vol. i. p. 389) Lob-nor. It appears to be the final receptacle of the united streams flowing from Khoten, Yarcund, and Cashgar. The town of Lop is not any where mentioned ; but it is probable there should be one on this site ; and the present route, as we shall have again occasion to observe, is very little frequented.

† The great desert of Cobi or Shamo, extends from the sources of the Amour to the borders of Thibet, in a direction between north-east and south-west. The entire length cannot fall much short of 2000 miles, which perhaps could not easily be traversed in much less than a year. We never heard, however, of any one who followed such a course, the object being generally to cross it on the way to China. On this long line it varies much both as to breadth and sterility, generally increasing towards the south, and in proportion to its distance from the branches of the Altai. The quarter where it was crossed by Marco appears to have been peculiarly formidable, and we shall immediately observe that another has been more generally followed ; but the present was probably chosen as the most direct.

sleep or any other cause, when he seeks to return to them, he hears spirits speak to him in such a manner that they seem to be his comrades, and they frequently call him by name, and thus lead him out of his way so that he never regains it, and many persons are thus lost and perish. I must tell you, too, that even by day you hear these voices of spirits, and even tambours, and many other instruments sounding.* They find it necessary, also, before going to rest at night, to fix an advanced signal, pointing out the course to be afterwards held; likewise to attach a bell to each of the animals, that they may be more easily kept from straggling. In this manner, amid much danger and fear, this desert is passed. Now we must tell you of the countries that lie on the other side.

XXXV.—Of the Province of Tangut and City of Sacchion.

When you have rode thirty days through this desert, you find a city named Sacchion,† which belongs to the

* This passage no doubt bears a stamp of the age and region; yet when we consider the dreary situation of one who, in the depth of night, should be separated from his company in the midst of this vast wilderness, we can little wonder that the illusions here described should arise. Nor is it surprising that even during the day, when travelling amid the deep silence of the desert, mysterious noises should be conjured up or exaggerated. Mr Wood, in a somewhat similar tract, was assured, and found some reason to believe, that a peculiar sound accompanies the march of a caravan, arising seemingly from a stream of sand raised by the movement of so many animals. It was chiefly sensible on a slope; probably too where there is a mixture of flints or pebbles.—Pp. 181, 182.

In Ramusio this account is expanded into considerably greater extravagance. It is said—"In the night they are persuaded they hear the sound of a large cavalcade on the one side or the other of the road. Sometimes likewise by day the spirits assume the appearance of their travelling companions, who address them by name, and endeavour to conduct them out of the proper road. Some also are said, in crossing the desert, to have seen what appeared a body of armed men advancing towards them, and, apprehensive of being attacked and plundered, have taken to flight." It seemed unfair to our traveller to incorporate these statements with his text; but we have given the following sentence, which may be founded on real information.

† This is undoubtedly Cha-tcheon or Sha-shew, a sort of advanced post of China, on the eastern border of the desert.

khan. The province is called Tangut,* and the people are idolaters, mixed with some Nestorian Christians and Saracens. The first have languages of their own; they subsist not by merchandise, but by the grain which they produce from the earth. They have many abbeys and monasteries, all full of idols of various shapes, to which they offer frequent sacrifices and homage. Every man who has children rears a sheep, and at a particular festival at the end of the year, leads them along with that animal into the presence of the god, to whom they all perform reverence. They cook the sheep and offer it very humbly before the idol, leaving it while they make their prayers for the safety of their children. They then take the meat and carry it to the house, or wherever they please, send for their relations, and eat it with great joy and respect. They afterwards collect the bones, and preserve them with much diligence. You must know likewise, that when any one of them dies, his body is burned, and after he is carried to the place for this last ceremony, they erect in the middle of the path a house of cane, covered with cloths of silk and gold. When the dead man is laid before this ornamented house,

* Tangut is one of the most celebrated names in the history and geography of Asia during the middle ages. Klaproth (*Journal Asiat.* vol. xi. p. 461, &c.) estimates it as extending between 33° and 45° N. lat. and from 13° to 33° long. W. from Pekin. He considers it as including the country of the Eighurs, with the northern part of China as far as the Hoang-ho. He divides it into four provinces: Kamul, Barkoul (or Tchinsi), Turfan, and Ouroumpsi. It composed the once powerful kingdom of the Hia, a people who seem distinctly traced to their origin in Great Thibet. Being, according to Klaproth, driven thence, they migrated northward, and not only occupied this part of Central Asia, but overran afterwards a great extent of the empire. They brought with them from its central seat the Boodhist superstition, here indicated by the extensive monasteries and various rites. Marco thus proves his accurate observation; for, in crossing the desert, he had left behind him Turkestan, where the Mussulman faith had been generally established. De Guignes (quoted by Boni, vol. iv. p. 96) states their original name to have been Tanh-hiang, changed for the country into Tangut, and for the people into Hia. Their power was completely crushed by Gengis and his successors, and the very name of Tangut has gradually died away.

they place before him wine and victuals, believing that he will be similarly honoured in the other world. At the place of burning, too, they cut in paper, men, horses, camels, and coins of the size of bezants, convinced that the deceased will possess all these things in the future state. On this occasion, all the instruments in the land are sounded before the corpse. I must tell you, too, that after death the relations send for the astrologer, who is informed of the day, month, and year of his nativity, and then divines, by his diabolical art, the day on which the burning ought to take place. If it should be a week, a month, or six months, they keep it all that time, and never burn it till the appointed day. During this interval, they deposit it in a large box covered with cloth, and so preserved with crocus and other spices that no stench arises. Throughout this period, they place daily before the box meat and drink, and leave it there for some time, till they think he has eaten it. These sorcerers, too, often tell the relations that the dead body must not be carried out by the main door, but by a private one, or even through a breach made in the wall.* All the idolaters in the world proceed in this manner. Now I must go to another city which lies to the south, near the extremity of this desert.

XXXVI.—Of the City of Kamul.

Kamul† is a province, formerly a kingdom, containing

* Mr Marsden (p. 169) has quoted good authorities for the observance of these ceremonies in Thibet, the chief seat of the religion of the Lamas.

† Called also Khamil, softened by the Chinese to Hamil. The traveller here, and we suspect in his next chapter, evidently turns aside from his route to describe remarkable objects. This city being, as he justly states, north-west from Cha-tcheou, could not have been visited without a retrograde movement, and without again crossing and recrossing the desert. His father and uncle, however, might very likely have passed it in their journey out or home. Being, as here described, situated in a sort of oasis, it affords the means of crossing the waste with greater facility, and therefore, though circuitous, is generally preferred. It was taken by the ambassadors of Shah Rokh, and by Goëz (Marsden, p. 173); also by Izzut Oolah. Moorcroft's inform-

cities and castles, with a capital of the same name. It stands between two deserts, the great one already described, and a smaller one, extending three days' journey. The people are all idolaters, and have a peculiar language; they live by the fruits of the earth, having enough to eat, and also to sell to the passenger. They are men of great gaiety, thinking of nothing but to sound musical instruments, to sing, dance, and delight their hearts. When a stranger comes to lodge in a house, the master is highly pleased, and leaves him with his wife, desiring her to treat him in every respect as a husband, while he himself goes and spends two or three days elsewhere. All the men of the province proceed in this manner, and do not account it any disgrace. The women are handsome, gay, and fond of diversion. Now, when Mangou Khan reigned as sire of the Tartars, it was reported to him how the people of Kamul gave over their wives to strangers, when he sent orders that, under a severe penalty, travellers should not be henceforth entertained in this manner. When they received this injunction, they were greatly grieved, held a council, and did what I will now tell you. They made up a large present, and sent it to Mangou, praying that he would allow them to treat their wives according to the custom handed down to them by their ancestors, who, for this kindness to strangers, had gained the favour of their idols, and their corn and other crops had greatly multiplied. When he heard this message, he said, "Since you are so bent on your own shame, let it be so." He allowed them, therefore, to do as they pleased, and hence they have always maintained this custom.*

ant, after following our traveller's route to Karashehr, then struck northward to Ouchi, and thence crossed the desert to Kamul. (Vol. i. p. 378.) The latter, according to Timkowski (vol. ii. p. 386), is still equally frequented, the concourse of caravans giving it the appearance of a large capital.

* This degrading practice, as formerly observed, is but too common at great caravan-stations, especially where merchants remain a considerable time. Sir A. Burnes (vol. ii. p. 232)

XXXVII.—Of the Province of Ginghintalas.

Ginghintalas* is a province which is near the desert, between north and south, sixteen days' journey in extent, and subject to the great khan. It contains cities, castles, and three descriptions of men, idolaters, adorers of Mohammed, and Nestorian Christians. On the borders of it, towards the north, is a mountain containing a very abundant vein of copper and antimony. There is also one from which is made the salamander; but do not suppose this is the animal so called, for no creature can live in fire, because it is compounded of the four elements. It is only through ignorance that the salamander is called an animal; and a Turk, named Zurficar, who was very learned, and governor of this province for three years under the great khan, being much employed in working the mines, gave me an account of it. When this ore is taken from the mountain, and is broken, it strings together, and forms a thread like wool. Being then dried, pounded in a large mortar, and washed, there remains that thread of which I have spoken. Being then woven like wool, it forms cloth, which is dingy in colour at first, but when placed and left some time in the fire, it becomes white as snow, without dirt or stain. This is the truth of the salamander, and every thing else said about it is mere fable.† I can tell you, too, that at

mentions, that the system of temporary wives prevails even at Yarcund. The superstitious motive alleged was doubtless conjured up to conceal a still baser one. In Ramusio, it is asserted that they obeyed the command of the khan three years; but that the earth ceased to yield its accustomed fruits, and various unfortunate events occurred, which induced them to send the deputation mentioned in the text. No such statement is to be found in any early edition.

* In the Crusca and Pipino, Chinchitalas. De Guignes and Marsden suggest Chen-chen, or Leou-lan, to the south of Kamul. Count Boni points it out on the Jesuits' map, in about 40° N. lat. and 15° long., W. from Pe-king. I incline to mention Barkoul, called by the Chinese *Tchinsi*, a province of Tangut, elevated and cold, about 100 miles N. W. of Kamul. (Klaproth, as above; Ritter, Asien, vol. i. p. 379.) The expressions seem to indicate a site beyond Kamul, and the hilly character of the tract would accord better with its containing remarkable minerals.

† The later editions exhibit a striking proof of the manner

Rome there is a cloth which the great khan sent to the pope as a costly present, and the sudarium of our Lord was placed within it. Now let us tell you of other provinces to the south-east and east.

XXXVIII.—Of the Province of Succur.

When you have departed from the province now described, you go ten days in the same direction. In all that way there are few habitations, nor does any thing occur worth mentioning. You then find a district called Succur,* with a capital of the same name. The people are Christians, and idolaters, and under the great khan. All the three provinces last described belong to the general one named Tangut. Through all its mountains, rhubarb is found in great abundance, and the merchants purchase and carry it over the whole world.† They cannot, however, take this road through the mountains with any animals but those accustomed to the country, because a poisonous plant grows there, which, when eaten, causes the hoofs to drop off; but the native cattle, having learned its dangerous quality, carefully avoid it.‡ They live by the fruits of the earth, but attend little to merchandise. Now I must tell you of another city.

in which the author has suffered by the corruption of his text. In Pipino and Ramusio the paragraph begins by saying, that "cloth is made of salamanders." This has been treated as an instance of gross credulity. In the present text, from the French and Crusca, the name of the animal is evidently introduced as a simile, and the idea of its actual existence treated with contempt. The mineral here mentioned is the asbestos, distinguished by its peculiar qualities of separating into threads which can be woven into cloth, and of being incombustible. It is now well known, and specimens are preserved in the British Museum and other places.

* In the French Suctuir, in Ramusio Succur. The name in the text is taken from the Crusca, as coming nearest to that of the place undoubtedly meant, which is Sou-tcheou, the first on that extreme north-western part of the province of Shen-see which projects far out into Tartary.

† This plant is still produced here of peculiar excellence, and is a leading article in the trade with the Russians at Kiachta. Marsden, p. 180.

‡ This sentence occurs only in Ramusio, and Mr Marsden has not been able to find any confirmation of the fact.

XXXIX.—Of the Province of Canpicion.

Canpicion* is a great and noble town, chief and capital of the whole province of Tangut. The people are idolaters, and there are some who adore Mohammed, and also Christians who have three large and beautiful churches. The first have monasteries and abbeys according to their custom, with a very great number of idols, some of which, I assure you, are ten paces high, severally formed of wood, of earth, and of stone, all beautifully covered with gold and ivory. Their priests live more respectably than others, and guard themselves against luxury, though they do not hold it for a very great sin. They observe the lunar months like ours, and in one of them do not kill any beast or bird. For five days they eat no food that has had life, and live more strictly than usual. They take sometimes thirty wives, or as many as they have wealth to maintain, and give them a dowry in beasts, slaves, and money; but the first wife ranks always as the principal.† If any of them do not please him, she may be divorced. They marry their cousins and even the wives of their father,

* This city, called by Ramusio Campion, by the Persian ambassadors Kam-giou, by Goetz Can-ceu, is Kan-tcheou, situated farther east in the same projecting part of Shen-see. Pétis de la Croix also calls it the capital of Tangut; but perhaps he followed our traveller. According to Klaproth (*Journal Asiat.* vol. xi. p. 463), the residence of the sovereign of that country had been at Hing-tcheou, now Ning-hia; but as his power had been for some time extinguished, Kan-tcheou was then probably the chief city of the region.

† Although our traveller had formerly described the Boodhist observances, he was struck by seeing them here on a greater scale than before. Large monasteries and gigantic images are its leading features, carried out always to the utmost extent that the means of the worshippers admit; they would therefore be more ample in this great capital than in the former almost desert route. The practice of polygamy startles Mr Marsden, as being contrary to the precepts of this religion, and its practice in Thibet; but there is no want of proof that the Tartars, while adopting its forms and observances, do not allow it to interfere with a habit so rooted among them as that of taking as many wives as they are able to support. Mr Marsden himself quotes Pallas for this observation, which is fully confirmed by Timkowski, vol. ii. p. 310.

and do not regard as sins many things which we account great ones ; for they live like beasts : therefore let us leave them and go to the north. But I must tell you that Messeri Nicolo, Maffio, and Marco, remained in that city a year, on particular business which I need not enter into. We shall now go sixty days northwards.*

XL.—Of the Province of Ezina.

After riding twelve days, you come to a city named Ezina,† which is at the northern extremity of the desert of sand, and still in Tangut. The people, who are idolaters, breed camels and other beasts, and have falcons of different species and of good quality. They live by the fruits of the earth and cattle, and are also employed in merchandise. In this city, a man lays in provisions for forty days, during which time, travelling from Ezina northwards, there is neither habitation nor inns. But the people, except during summer, remain in the valleys ; and in the mountains they find a number of wild beasts, especially asses : there are also pine-forests. At the end of these forty days they reach a northern province, and you shall hear what it is.

XLI.—Of the City of Karakorum.

Karakorum is a city three miles in circuit,‡ which was

* The traveller appears at Kan-tcheou to close his itinerary into China, as no series of stations is thence given either to Kambalu, or to the place called Clemenfu, where the party found the emperor. He has taken advantage, however, of his long residence, either by excursions, or as we rather suspect by careful inquiry, to obtain information respecting the countries stretching from it in various directions ; and these he now communicates.

† This city, though now ruined, is mentioned in the history of Gengis as one of great importance, and its capture in 1224 ranks among his important exploits. It is described as situated on a river flowing from the north, and falling into the Hoang-ho near Kan-tcheou.—Pétis de la Croix, p. 376.

‡ Our readers who have perused the narratives of Carpini and Rubruquis must be familiar with this celebrated Tartar capital. Its dimensions appear here exaggerated ; but probably the space occupied by the tents of the erratic tribes is included. Even after the removal of the court to Pe-king, this place continued to possess great importance, being the residence of a

the first that the Tartars took when they issued from their country, and I am to tell you of their actions and manners, how they gained command, and spread themselves over the world. You must know that they dwelt in the north, about Ciorcia, in which region are great plains, and no abode in cities or castles, but good pasturage, large rivers, and abundance of water. They had no lords, yet paid tribute to the great sire, named in their language Unchan, whom we call Prester John, and who is spoken of over all the world. They paid to him one beast out of every ten; but they multiplied so greatly, that he became afraid of them, and resolved to separate them into different countries; for which purpose he sent his barons among them. The Tartars on hearing this were much grieved, and, holding a council, determined to flee through desert countries to the north, where he could not reach nor injure them. They then ceased to obey or pay tribute to him,* and remained thus for a long time.

XLII.—On Gengis, the first Khan of the Tartars.

Now it happened that, about 1187, the Tartars appointed a king, who was named in their language Gengis Khan. He was a man of great worth, sense, and prowess; and let me tell you, when he was elected, all the Tartars in the world that were scattered through those strange countries came and owned him as their lord. He maintained his power with great vigour, and the multitudes who ranged under his standard were almost innumerable. When he saw so numerous an army, he went conquering other countries, and made himself master of eight provinces; yet he neither injured nor robbed the people of any thing, but placing them under leaders in whom he

governor who possessed the power of life and death. To this office Kublai, in 1293, named his grand son Temur. When that prince, however, succeeded to the throne, and removed to China, this Tartar capital sunk into decay, and we are not aware of any modern notice of its existence.—Ritter, *Asien*, vol. i. p. 561.

* According to the learned history of Pétis de la Croix, the first step in throwing off the yoke of Ouang Khan consisted in refusing to pay tribute to him.

could confide, led them on to other triumphs. Thus he overthrew, as you have heard, a multitude of nations ; and seeing his good command and mildness, they cheerfully followed him, upon which he formed the design of subduing a great part of the world. In the year 1200, he sent a message to Prester John, asking his daughter to wife. Hereupon that monarch was very indignant, and said,—“ What impudence is this in Gengis Khan ? Knows he not that he is my man and my vassal ? Return, and tell him that I would burn my daughter sooner than give her to him, and that he deserves to be put to death as a traitor and disloyal to his lord.” He then desired the messengers to depart forthwith, and never return. They presently went away, and coming to their master, told him in order all that the other had said.

XLIII.—His Battle with Prester John, and Victory over him.

When Gengis Khan heard this boastful speech, his heart swelled, so that it almost burst within him ; for you must know he was a man of very great pride. He then said to his minister, and to all about him, that he would not continue to hold the sovereignty, unless Prester John were made to pay more dearly for this villany than ever man did, and he must soon be made to see whether he was his vassal. Then he summoned round him the greatest army that ever was seen or heard of, and sent notice to Unchan that he must defend himself, as he was coming against him. When that prince knew certainly the approach of Gengis with so great a force, he made light of it, saying, they were not men-at-arms ; yet resolved that should he approach, he would do all in his power to take and put him to death. He then ordered all his people to be prepared and summoned from many and strange parts, and a greater host and of more formidable aspect was never seen. And why make a long story ? The khan, with all his people, came to a great and beautiful plain, named Tenduc, in Prester John's country, where he pitched his

camp, and rejoiced greatly to hear that his enemy was coming, because it was an excellent situation for giving battle. He sent for his astrologers, who were Christian and Saracen, and required to know which would conquer in that battle, he or his antagonist. The latter could tell nothing of the truth ; but the former showed it openly ; for they brought before him a cane, cut in the middle, and placed the two parts on different sides, and wrote the name of Gengis on one, and of Unchan on the other, telling him, that when they had made their enchantment, he whose cane should come above that of the other would conquer in battle. He desired that this should be shown to him as soon as possible. Then they took up the Psaltery, read certain portions, and performed their enchantment, when presently the cane on which was the name of Gengis, without any one touching it, joined the other, and mounted above it, and this was witnessed by all present. When he saw this, he was greatly rejoiced, and seeing that the Christians were men of truth, held them always in great honour.* Two days after, the armies engaged, and it was the greatest battle that ever was fought. The slaughter was terrible on both sides ; but at length Gengis conquered, his enemy was slain in the engagement, and he himself became master of all his land. From that day he went on conquering many castles and provinces, and reigned six years ; but, at the end of that time, he besieged a fort, named Cangui, where he was wounded in the knee by an arrow, and died. This was a great misfortune, for he was a brave and wise man.†

* In the edition of Pipino and all the subsequent ones to Ramusio inclusive, no mention is made of the Christians as concerned in this conjuration. Supposing these editors clergymen, they might have respectable motives for suppressing facts little honourable to the professors of this true faith. The text here given, however, being supported by all the early authorities (the two Paris editions, the Crusca and Pucci), appears undoubtedly genuine.

† We are obliged to observe, that the author's historical information does not display the accuracy usually found in his observations and descriptions. His early account of Gengis

XLIV.—On the Khans who reigned after the Death of Gengis.

After the death of Gengis, the next khan was Cui, the third Bacui, the fourth Alton, the fifth Mangou, the sixth Kublai,* who is greater and more powerful than all the rest; for the other five together had not so much power as this Kublai; nay, let me tell you, that all the emperors in the world, and all the Christian and Saracen kings, do not equal him, as is shown fully in our book. Now you must know that the great lords of the lineage of Gengis Khan are buried in a lofty mountain called Altai, and whenever the chief lords of the Tartars die, if it should be a hundred days' journey distant, they must be conveyed thither

exhibits indeed a rude conformity with the best histories, which do not themselves rest on any very assured basis. (See p. 43-47.) But his placing the death of that conqueror only six years after the conquest of this rival, and thus sixteen years before its real period (in 1226), appears, after all the excuses urged by Marsden and Boni, to be most extraordinary. Yet we can scarcely doubt that he would use the best means within his reach, and can only infer the gross ignorance which reigned in this splendid court, on subjects which might have been supposed most deeply to interest it. It appears, indeed, that no attempt was made to draw up a written history of the conqueror's exploits till the time of Ghazan Khan, whom our traveller visited on his return. A Mongol chief, called Poulad, then took extraordinary pains to collect all the traditions on the subject.—Marsden, p. 198.

* Our traveller has not redeemed his historical character by this list of the great khans, successors of Gengis. He has made five instead of the four whom our readers may recollect, Okkoday, Cuyne or Kuyuk, Mangou, and Kublai. Two of these five also appear to have been princes that never reigned; so that one is omitted. There is much appearance, however, as if these names had been tampered with by editors, with the view of accommodating them to preconceived ideas. Thus, Bakui, *French*; Backui, *Crusca*; Bacchia, *Pucci*, becomes in *Ramusio* Bathyn, identifying him with Baatu or Bathy, so well known by his invasion of Europe. I rather suspect him, however, to be Okkoday or Oktai, placed only by mistake after instead of before Cuyne. Again, Alton, *French*; Alcon, *Crusca*, becomes in *Riccardino* Alau; in *Gryneus* Allau, the name given elsewhere to Hoolaku, the conqueror of Bagdad. I should somewhat suspect the person meant to be Taulai or Tuli, the father of Kublai, who never, indeed, reached this supreme power; yet the report of his having done so might become popular in the court of his son.

to be interred. I will tell you another striking wonder ; that when the bodies of the khans are carried to these mountains, the conductors put to the sword all the men whom they meet on the road, saying, " Go and serve the great lord in the other world ;" and they do the same to the horses, killing also for that purpose the best he has. You must know that when Mangou died, more than 20,000 men were slain, who had been met on the road when his body was removed to be buried.*

XLV.—On the Religion, Customs, and Manners of the Tartars.

Now since I have begun speaking of the Tartars, I will tell you many things about them. They abide during winter in plains and warm situations, where there is abundant herbage for their cattle ; and in summer they retire to cool places on mountains and high valleys, where water abounds. They have wooden houses covered with felt, of a round shape, which they convey with them wherever they go ; for they have them so well bound with twigs as to be easily carried. Whenever they take down and set up a house, the gate is always placed to the south. They have waggons so well covered with black felt, that if it should rain the whole day, no water would reach any thing within ; and they are drawn by oxen and camels. On the top they place their wives and children ; and I must tell you that the ladies buy, sell, and perform all the work necessary for their husbands, who do nothing but hunt, hawk, and go to war. They live on flesh, milk, and the produce of hunting, and likewise on rats of Pharaoh,

* The custom of interring the Mongol chiefs at the Altai appears confirmed by the numerous golden ornaments which Pallas describes as having been dug out of tombs in that region. For the dreadful massacre here reported, neither Mr Marsden nor Count Boni have been able to find any other authority ; but they insist upon that of our traveller being sufficient. Considering it, however, as only a hearsay statement from such informants, above fifteen years back, I feel inclined to consider it as vastly exaggerated. In Ramusio the number is only 10,000.

which are found here in great numbers.* They eat also the flesh of camels, dogs, and indeed of every kind of animal, and drink mare's milk. They shun the seduction of married females, as a most vile and shameful thing; and the wives are very faithful, performing extremely well the business of the household. Every man may take as many as he pleases, even to a hundred, if he can maintain them; yet they hold the first as the principal and most respectable. They scruple not to marry their cousins, and if the father dies, the eldest son may take all his wives, except his own mother; he marries also the widow of his deceased brother. They celebrate their marriages by great festivals.

The Tartars, who believe in a deity of a sublime and heavenly nature, burn incense in censers to him, and pray that he may preserve them in health of mind and body. They have also one called Nacygai, whom they call their earthly god, who guards their children, cattle, and corn. They fashion him of felt and cloth, keep him in their house, and pay him great honour and reverence. They make for him also a wife and children of cloth, placing the first on his left hand, and the latter in front. Before eating, they take the fat meat and anoint his mouth with it; then lay bread before the door of his chamber. Having done this, they say that their god and his family have had their share, and sit down to their own meals. I told you that they drink mare's milk, but it is in such a manner that it seems white wine, being of an agreeable taste, and called *chemius*.† The wealthy wear rich robes of gold and silk, with varied furs of the ermine, sable, and fox. Their har-

* These animals are described by Bell and Du Halde as a species of marmot, of a brownish colour, that burrow in the hills of this part of Asia. Our traveller identifies them with the ichneumon, popularly called the mouse or rat of Pharaoh. The Crusca has *pomi* (apples) of Pharaoh, an evident mistake. The Paris Latin makes a very strange one, dropping the rats, and translating *faraon farrum*, grain, the representing of which as abundant would have been indeed most erroneous.

† Koumiss, a well-known fermented preparation of mare's milk, used by all the Tartar nations.

ness is beautiful and of great value ; their arms are bows, swords, and clubs ; but the first is more used than the others, because they are excellent archers. On their back they wear armour of buffalo and other very strong hides.

I will tell you the manner in which they maintain justice. If a man has stolen an article of little value, they give him seven lashes, or seventeen, or twenty-seven, going on thus always to three hundred and seven,* and many die under them. If he steals a horse or any thing else for which he deserves to die, he is cut through the middle with a sword ; yet if he can pay nine times the value of what he has stolen, he is allowed to live. Every lord or other man, who owns oxen or any cattle, makes them be marked with his seal, and then allows them to feed on the plains or among the mountains ; and whoever finds one straying brings it to him whose mark is upon it. The sheep and lambs, however, are guarded by a shepherd. Their cattle are all remarkably large, fat, and beautiful. They have another wonderful custom which I had forgot ; for when two men have one a son, the other a daughter, dead at the age of four, they marry them together, and represent the union by cards, which they set on fire, and when they see the flame and smoke ascending, they make great shouts and run backward and forward, saying that the dead are going to their children in the other world, and are to be husband and wife there. They do more, for they paint on cards the similitudes of men, horses, cloths, bezants, and harness, then burn them, and say that all these things will be possessed by their children in the other world.†

XLVI.—On their Wars, and the Order of their Armies.

The Tartars are good men-at-arms in battle, capable

* In Ramusio, the numbers are 7, 17, 27, 37, 47, and so on to a hundred.

† Mr Marsden, p. 219, has quoted from Navarette and Sir John Malcolm testimonies to the existence of this extraordinary custom in Tartary and the parts of China bordering on it.

of much endurance ; and they can go through more warlike toil than other men. Often, when necessary, one of them will remain a month without any food, except the milk of a mare and the flesh of animals killed by him in hunting, his horse feeding on the grass, without his needing to bring barley or straw. He is very obedient to his master, and when necessary will remain the whole night armed on horseback. They are the men in the world most capable of enduring fatigue and trouble, subsisting at the least expense, and best fitted for conquering lands and kingdoms. They arrange their armies in the following manner. When a Tartar lord goes to war, he has with him 100,000 men. He places a chief over every ten, every hundred, every thousand, every ten thousand, so that each officer, even the commander of the hundred thousand, has to deal only with ten persons ; for he gives his orders to the chiefs of ten thousand, they to those of one thousand, they to those of a hundred ; and thus every man answers to his captain. The hundred thousand is called a tut, and ten thousand a toman.* When the armies are marching through plains and mountains, they send 200 men two days in advance, also behind and on each side, so that they cannot be attacked by surprise. And when they are marching a long way they carry no baggage, but merely two large leathern bags, in which they put their milk, and a little earthen pot for cooking their victuals. They take a small tent, under which they remain during rain. And I tell you also, that when necessary they ride full ten days without food, and without lighting a fire ; but piercing a vein of their horse, they drink his blood. They have likewise their milk dried into a species of paste, which, when about to use, they stir till it becomes liquid and can be drunk. When they go to battle with their enemies, they conquer

* In Ramusio, the tut or tuo is made 100, and the toman 1000. The number of 10,000 assigned to the latter, given in the text from the French version, is undoubtedly the correct one.—Marsden, p. 215. The *Crusca* omits the toman.

in this manner : they apparently betake themselves to a shameful flight, for they have so trained their horses that they turn round and round like dogs. And when they are fleeing and hotly pursued, they fight as well as when they face the enemy ; for in their swiftest flight they wheel about and discharge their arrows, which kill both men and horses of the opposite army, who, when they think their adversaries discomfited and vanquished, fall themselves one after the other. When the Tartars have thus made a great slaughter, they turn and rush on so violently, that they soon gain a complete triumph. All that I have told you here applies to the genuine Tartars ; but they are now much altered ; those who live in Cathay have adopted the manners and customs of the idolaters ; those in the Levant imitate the Saracens.* I have said nothing here

* The reader who has followed the accounts of this people given by Carpini and Rubruquis will be able to compare them with that here furnished. Theirs is fuller, and drawn from more intimate inspection at a time when the inhabitants were more unmixed than they are here stated to have become after the conquest of China. Our traveller's description is evidently not copied from them, yet exhibits so close a coincidence as is creditable to both parties. They had mentioned that in the field every species of stratagem was studiously resorted to. The statement here made that they systematically fought flying, though it has passed into popular belief, is probably exaggerated.

Having in the course of this volume heard so much of the Tartars, the reader may not be unwilling to learn something of their present state, as recently observed by Timkowski ; in whose eyes they appeared to retain all the habits which might enable them again to overrun and desolate the world. They are, however, held in subjection by China, and their irregular hordes could not now make head against a disciplined force. Room is thus left only for the display of their most amiable qualities : kindness in their families,—generosity and hospitality to strangers. Their tents are still similarly constructed ; milk, with occasionally a little mutton, continues to be their staple food. They have been generally converted to the Shaman superstition, which has gained possession of nearly all Eastern Asia ; yet they have not the means of celebrating its rites with the same pomp as elsewhere. Its priests are as usual called in to perform magical cures ; but they have introduced among this rude race some tincture of books and literature.—*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 295-347.

of the mighty acts of the great khan, the sire of all the Tartars, nor of his splendid imperial court ; for these wonderful things are described elsewhere in this book. But let us now return to our route on the great plain where we were when we began to speak of their actions.

XLVII.—On the Plains of Bangu, and the extreme Parts of the North.

When you depart from Karakorum, and from Altai, where the khans are interred, as I have related above, you go northwards through a country which is called the plain of Bangu, and continues during a journey of forty days. The inhabitants, who are called Mecri, and are very savage, live on the flesh of animals, chiefly deer, nay I assure you that they ride upon these animals. Their customs resemble those of the Tartars, and they are subject to the great khan. They have neither corn nor wine, but in summer abundance of beasts and birds for hunting and hawking ; though in winter none remain in the country on account of the intense cold. After travelling these forty days you come to the ocean ; and there is found a mountain, where the peregrine falcons build their nests. You must know this place contains neither men nor women, nor beasts, nor any birds, except one species, which is called *barghenlac*, on which the hawks feed. They are of the size of partridges, have feet like parrots, and tails like swallows, and they fly very swiftly. When the great khan wishes peregrine falcons, he sends thither for them. In an island of that sea, too, are bred the gerfalcons ; and I assure you the place is so far north, that the polestar remains behind, and is seen to the south. Those birds are bred on that isle in such abundance, that the great khan obtains as many as he pleases ; while others are conveyed to Argon and other lords of the East.* Now that

* The country here described is evidently the eastern part of Siberia ; and though the account is given only from distant hearsay, it is by no means incorrect. The dreariness of its aspect, the absence of culture, the disappearance in winter of

I have told you of these northern provinces as far as the ocean, let us return to Canpicion.

XLVIII.—On the great City of Erginul.

When a man departs from that city, he goes five days eastward through a country where there are many spirits, who are often heard speaking during the night. You then find a kingdom called Erginul,* belonging to the great khan, and included in the large province of Tangut. There are a good many towns, the chief one bearing the same name; and the people are a mixture of Nestorian Christians, idolaters, and Mohammedans. Proceeding thence south-east, you come into the country of Cathay, when you will find in the way a city named Singuy.† There are a good many other towns, still in

animals, even of the rein-deer, are all characteristic features. The shores of the northern ocean in this quarter are very little known to ourselves, but are doubtless as desolate as described, and the rocks are likely to be tenanted by powerful birds of prey. The search after these to gratify the passion for falconry, then universal among the Tartar chiefs, was evidently the impulse which led to the opening of this route. The barghenlac cannot be identified; and it seems scarcely probable that it should be the only bird; yet we have very little means of judging.

In Ramusio, it is said that the gerfalcons sent from Europe are not conveyed to the great khan, but only to some of the Tartar or other chiefs of the East. There is nothing of this in the early editions.

* Marco, having finished his northern excursion, begins another in a different direction, the tracing of which is attended with some difficulty. This and the two following districts, however, are expressly mentioned by Pétis de la Croix (p. 481) as parts of Tangut, which Gengis held in subjection; there can be no doubt, therefore, that these existed and were known under the names by which he describes them. Mr Marsden supposes Erginul to be Kokonor, but seemingly on no good ground, the distance being, as he admits, much greater than here stated, and the direction south-south-west, instead of east. The Jesuits' map exhibits, in exactly the position indicated, a place called Nguei-yuen. If we just make the not unusual change of the first N into R, the names will sound very similar. The Paris Latin has Erguyl; the Italian MS. Ergiuul.

† Mr Marsden supposes this to be Si-ning, a well-known station on the frontier of China Proper. Boni, however, observes, that from a place five days' journey east of Kan-tcheou, the route thither would be due south. He conceives, therefore,

Tangut, and subject to the great khan ; and the inhabitants are as above described. There are a vast number of wild oxen, as large as elephants, and very beautiful, —their back being entirely covered with white and black hair, three palms long. These animals are also caught and tamed, when they do twice as much work as the common ox.* This country, too, produces the best musk in the world, and I will describe the animal by which it is supplied. It is small, about the size of an antelope, which it resembles in the feet and tail, but has a soft thick hair like the stag, no horns, only four teeth, two above and two below, three inches long and very sharp. It is a beautiful creature ; and, on its being taken, there is found a bag between the skin and the flesh, containing a bloody imposthume, which, when the skin is cut through, is drawn out, and forms the musk whence issues so strong an odour.† In this country it is very abundant, and of good quality. The people also raise plenty of corn, and engage in merchandise and manufactures. The region extends to a journey of full twenty-five days. There are pheasants twice as large as ours, with tails from seven to ten palms long.‡ Others re-

with seeming probability, the city here mentioned to be Si-ngan, capital of Shen-see. That extensive province, stated afterwards to be twenty-five days' journey in length, appears here correctly described. Its fertility and populousness are combined with a degree of rudeness which makes it approximate to the neighbouring districts of Tartary. Mr Marsden urges in support of his view the statement of its being still in Tangut ; but, as we have already observed, this name was then extended as far as the Hoang-ho, and consequently included Shen-see.

* This is the yak or *bos grunniens*, having its shoulders and tail covered with a profusion of soft black hair ; an appendage which must augment its apparent size, here somewhat exaggerated. It more properly belongs to Thibet ; but Du Halde, in describing Shen-see, intimates its occurrence here, by mentioning the number of wild bulls and the manufacture of *cow's hair*.

† The musk animal also belongs peculiarly to Thibet ; but, like the other, appears introduced by Marco in treating of the country where he first saw it. It is elsewhere repeatedly mentioned. In Ramusio, the bag is said to be formed at the time of full moon ; but this fabulous statement is not in the early editions.

‡ The fine pheasants of China, with the length of their beauti-

semble ours ; and there are various birds, with finely coloured wings. The people, who are idolaters, are fat, with small noses, black hair, and no beard unless on the chin. The ladies have no hair except on the head, and are every way very handsome. The men are voluptuous, and are authorized by their law and usage to take as many wives as they can maintain. If a woman is beautiful, though of humble birth, a great baron readily espouses her, giving to her mother such a sum of money as may be agreed on.

XLIX.—On the Province of Egrigaia.

When a man departs from Erginul, and goes eight days eastward, he finds a province of Tangut called Egrigaia,* where there are cities and castles, and the chief one is named Calacian.† The people are idolaters ; yet there are three towns held by Nestorian Christians. They are subject to the great Tartar ; and in this city is made cloth of camels' hair, the most beautiful and valuable in the world. There is a kind of wool whence they manufacture very fine white camlets in great quantities.

ful tails, have of late years attracted the attention of Europe, and adorned its menageries.—See Account of China, Edinburgh Cabinet Library, vol. iii. p. 418.

* The traveller, now returning to Erginul, proceeds eastward to the place here named, of which Mr Marsden can find no trace unless in the Eighur country ; but this lies in quite a different direction. M. Klaproth (*Jour. Asiat.* vol. xi. p. 63) observes that Hing-tcheou, now Ninghia, the residence of the former sovereign of Tangut, was called, in the language of that country, Eyirkiai, which he supposes with great probability to be the Egrigaia of our traveller. In fact, if we take Erginul to be Nguei-yuen, we shall find it to be exactly in the specified distance and direction from that place.

† Marsden suggests that Calacia may be the Cailac of Rubruquis, or Cialis of Goetz ; which Count Boni justly rejects as admitted to be at an immense distance from the territory here treated of. He suggests, seemingly on good grounds, Calatu, a place on D'Anville's map, some distance north of Ninghia, and on a branch of the Hoang-ho, in the most northerly part of its course. Our traveller now enters upon a third detached itinerary, to illustrate interesting objects adjacent to those of which he has been treating.

These the merchants convey by many routes to Cathay and other parts throughout the world. Now let us go to Tenduc, in the territory of Prester John.

L.—On the Province of Tenduc, and of Gog and Magog.

Tenduc is a province towards the east,* where there are cities and castles, and the chief one bears the same name. The people belong to the great khan, like all those formerly subject to Prester John. In this province there is a king named George, descended from that prince, and who indeed enjoys his power. He holds the land under the khan, but only a part of that which was possessed by his ancestor. I assure you, however, that the khans have often given their daughters and female relations to the reigning kings of this line. In this province are found the stones whence azure is made; they are plentiful and good. Camlets, too, are woven of camels' hair. The natives live on cattle and the fruits of the earth, and have likewise some merchandise and manufactures. The Christians, as already mentioned, are masters of the land;† but there are also idolaters and worshippers of Mohammed. There is likewise a people

* Tenduc is mentioned by Pétis de la Croix (p. 34) as one of the most extended tracts of Karakithay. This name, meaning the Black Cathay, belonged to a district occupied by numerous Chinese, who, when their country was overrun by the Leao and the Kin, sought new settlements in the wilds of Tartary. They filled a long territory to the south of Mongolia and north of Tangut, and reaching apparently farther eastward than is represented in the map of M. D'Avezac. They introduced into this wide region a degree of culture and population to which it was before a stranger; but which, amid subsequent revolutions, it has been unable to support. It yielded, however, to the arms of Ouang Khan, and was incorporated into his dominions; afterwards, with the others, it was annexed to the empire of Gengis. Mr Marsden's idea of any connexion with the Tungusi appears quite unfounded.

† We have mentioned elsewhere the widely prevailing report of Ouang Khan being a Christian sovereign, and therefore named Prester John. The statement now made tends to confirm it. We may notice also the letter to the Pope from Juan de Monte Corvino, who boasts of having baptized the son of Prince George here mentioned.—Marsden, p. 244.

called Argon, meaning in French Guasmul, that is, mixed of two different races. They are handsomer than the others, more prudent and commercial. Know that in this province was the chief seat of Prester John, when he ruled over the Tartars and all the surrounding countries; and this George is the sixth in succession from him. This, too, is the place which we in our country call Gog and Magog, but they call it Ung and Mungul;* and in each province was a different race of people,—in Ung were the Gog, and in Mungul dwelt the Tartars.

When a man rides through that province seven days eastward towards Cathay, he finds many cities and castles. The inhabitants are Mohammedans, idolaters, and Christians; they carry on trade, and manufacture fine gilded cloths, called *nascisi*, with various kinds of silk cloth, and are subject to the great khan. There is a city named Sindacui, with many manufactures of harness and trappings necessary for an army. In the mountains of that country is a place named Idifu, where there is a very productive silver mine. They have no want of beasts and birds for hunting. Now let us depart from this province and its cities, and travel three days, when we shall find a town named Cianganor, in which is a fine palace of the great khan [already described, p. 136].

LI.—On the City of Chandu.

Departing from this city, and travelling three days between north and north-east, you come to another named Chandu,† built by Kublai, the great khan now

* Gog and Magog were celebrated in the Middle Ages, especially among the Saracens, as two mighty giants who held a fortified station in the north of Asia. The resemblance of their names to Ung and Mungul, with a corresponding roughness of character, seems to have suggested the present crude theory respecting their identity.

† The position of this place seems to admit of no doubt, since Gerbillon, in 1691, while accompanying the emperor on an excursion into Mongolia, visited its ruins. He mentions them under the name of Shangtu, as those of the country palace of

reigning. Here he has built a most magnificent palace. [This, too, was formerly described when treating of the mode of life and hunting residences of that great monarch, p. 133, &c.]

the emperors of the Yuen dynasty, as the Chinese termed that founded by Kublai. The position is in lat. 40° 22' N. N. E. of Pe-king. Gerbillon particularly notices the great abundance of every species of game. Its position must determine the preceding one of Cianganor, from which it is stated to lie three days' journey north-east. In that precise site we find a cluster of lakes, with several rivers agreeing exactly with the description given in Part I. Chap. xxiv. Besides the itinerary data, every particular shows the two places to be closely adjacent. I cannot, therefore, but much wonder that Mr Marsden should fix it, on a mere rude resemblance of name, in the Chahan-nor, or White Lake, situated, as he admits, at a very great distance. M. Ritter (*Asien*, vol. i. p. 141) suggests the *Taal* nor, which is indeed nearer; but still more than three days distant. It lies, besides, due north, instead of south-west, as stated by our traveller, whose authority therefore must be entirely thrown aside if we adopt either of these suppositions. Indeed, I cannot but remark, that Mr Marsden has been peculiarly unsuccessful in tracing the positions on this frontier, so that, were it not for the aids of Count Boni and M. Klaproth, I should have found myself much at a loss. This failure appears to have arisen chiefly from his unfortunate habit of supposing himself at liberty, where he could find the slightest resemblance in name and description, to suppose his author guilty of the most enormous errors as to distance, direction, and position. In a note on one of these chapters he agrees with Forster, that "Marco Polo does not point out the situation of his places in the proper order, but goes from one to another just as his fancy leads him." It is hoped, however, that reason has now been given for believing that most of these alleged mistakes are in fact those of his editors and interpreters.