THE EARTH AND ITS INHABITANTS

THE

UNIVERSAL GEOGRAPHY

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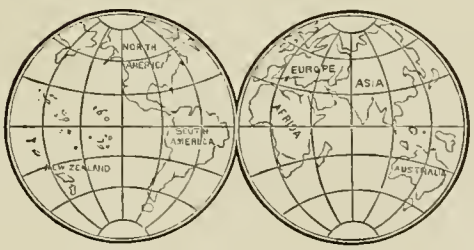
ASIATIC RUSSIA



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CHAPTER II

CAUCASIA.

I.—THE PONTO-CASPIAN MOUNTAIN SYSTEM.

THE Caucasian mountain system is often regarded as belonging to Europe. Rising like a barrier north of the eastern extremity of the Black Sea, it must have seemed to the Greek navigators distinctly severed from Asia, whereas to the traders settled on the northern shores of the Euxine it appeared to form the southern limits of the great Scythian plains. Since that time geographers have discussed the question whether the natural confines of the two continents were indicated by the bed and marsh lands of the Phasis in Colchis, or by the Kimmerian Strait and course of the Tanais. Apart from this question, Hellenic tradition constantly kept in view these mountains, loftier than either Olympus, Etna, Hemus, or the Alps. The history of Greece itself was associated in legend with this distant range, where the first germs of civilisation were sought. Towards the shores of Colchis was directed the famous Argonautic expedition in search of the Golden Fleece, symbolizing the wealth of every sort flowing both from science, trade, and industry. Here, also, the Hellenes endeavoured to find the origin of their race. Deucalion, who peopled Greece, was son of Prometheus, and it was to a rock in the Caucasus that this Titan was bound for having stolen the fire from heaven. A sort of superstition, perhaps associated with the Promethean myth, formerly induced savants to apply the term Caucasian to all the fair European and Asiatic races, thus testifying to the instinctive reverence with which the nations have ever regarded these mountains forming the barrier between two worlds. This border-land was supposed to be still inhabited by the purest representatives of the race, whose beauty, symmetry, and graceful carriage were spoken of as physical advantages peculiar to all the white peoples. Nor has this term Caucasian yet quite disappeared from ordinary language as the synonym of the White, Aryan, or Indo-European stock.

Since the true relief of the land has been determined by Pallas and other explorers, there can be no longer any doubt that the Caucasus belongs to Asia. It is sharply separated from Europe by the deep depression now traversed by the

Manîch, and formerly filled by the waters of the Ponto-Caspian Strait. In the south the system, while preserving its character of a distinct chain, is connected by spurs and a lofty transverse ridge with the Anatolian mountains, so that it forms the advanced mass of the whole continent. Historically, also, the inhabitants of the Caucasus belong to the Asiatic world. Before the intervention of Russia the Georgians, Mingrelians, Armenians, Kurds, Tatars, and other Transcaucasian peoples maintained relations, whether friendly or hostile, chiefly with the inhabitants of Anatolia and Persia. The southern slopes facing the sun are also much more densely peopled than those turned towards the arid steppes of Europe. Hence, even after their annexation to Russia, the centre of gravity of these Asiatic lands was naturally found at the southern foot of the Caucasus, where is concentrated the aggressive force of the empire against the other regions of Western Asia. Recently a considerable strip of Turkish territory has been forcibly added to Transcaucasia, so that this division of the Caucasus, already the most populous, has become nearly as extensive as the northern. It is even larger, if in it be included the province of Daghestan, which, though lying north of the main range, is administratively regarded as part of Transcaucasia.*

The Great Caucasus.

Few ranges are characterized by a more striking unity than the Caucasus, the Kok-kaf or Kaf-dagh of the Turks and Tatars, a section of "the chain that girdles the world," according to the Oriental mythologies. Seen from the distant steppes of Mozdok or Yekaterinogradsk, stretching from horizon to horizon, it seems like a rampart with a thousand sparkling battlements. The poets call it simply the Caucasus, as if it were but one frowning mass reaching from sea to sea for a distance of 720 miles. It is also called the "Great Caucasus," in contradistinction to the irregular spurs of the "Little," or rather "Anti-Caucasus" beyond the Kura basin. Approached from the Euxine or the Russian steppes, it seems at first an impalpable vapour, a hazy cloud mingling with the fogs of the surrounding swamps; then it assumes more distinct outlines, breaking into snowy or wooded crests and deep gorges, the whole soon bounding the horizon, towering above the zone of cloud, wind, and storm, eclipsing the sun midway in its course, threatening the lowlands with avalanches and widespread ruin, hurling the foaming torrents in cascades and rapids down to the plains. Accustomed to the sight of boundless steppes or slight eminences, the Russians could not fail to be struck by these lofty summits which seemed to belong to another nature, whose charm was enhanced by the valour and beauty of its inhabitants.

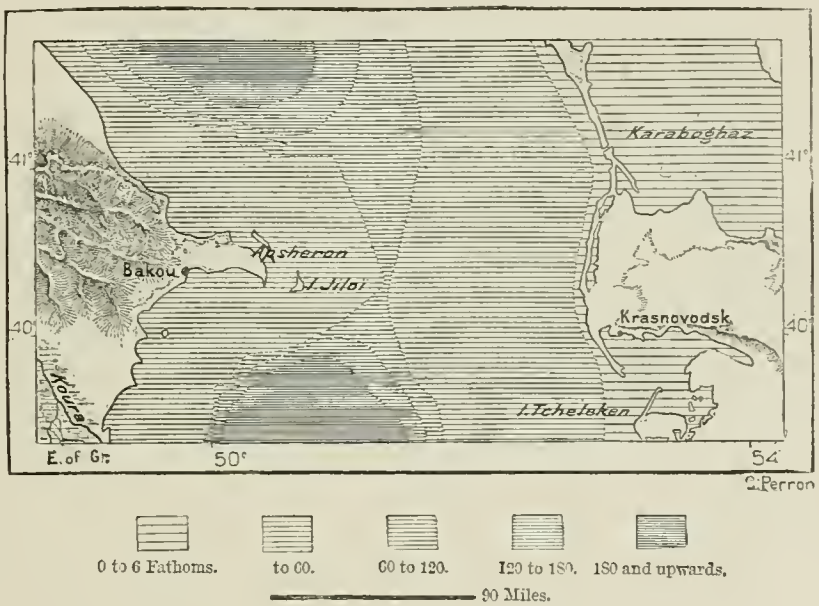
* Area and population of Russian Caucasia:—

	Area in Square Miles.	Estimated Population (1880).
Ciscaucasia	88,900	1,920,000
Daghestan	11,436	500,000
Transcaucasia with Kuba	75,344	3,250,000
Recent conquests	10,636	200,000
Total	186,316	5,870,000

Russian literature reflects the deep impression produced on the imagination by the sight of the Caucasus, and by the warfare waged against its numerous tribes. Pushkin described in song the romantic scenery of Circassia; Lermontov interpreted the traditions of the inhabitants, and made the Caucasus the scene of his novel the "Hero of the Day," which had such a large share in the intellectual development of the rising generation. How many noble spirits have perished, like Lermontov himself, in this region, persecuted during life, all the more honoured in death!

The general south-east and north-west direction of the range suffers but slight deviations. It thus follows the same line as the mountains of Persia, Asia Minor, and so many other Asiatic systems. Its origin is therefore associated with the laws by which a large portion of the crust of the Old World has been modified.

Fig. 14.—Bed of the Caspian.
According to A. Grimma. Scale 1 5 500,000.



In the formation of the surrounding lands the Caucasus has even played a more important part than is evident from its apparent relief. With a regularity surpassing that of all other systems, it is continued beyond the main ridge by argillaceous hills thrown up by igneous agencies. At either extremity low peninsulas heaving with the pressure of pent-up forces are projected seawards—those of Taman on the west, and Apsheron on the east. The first is scarcely separated from another peninsula, that of Kertch, advancing from the Crimean mountains, while the second stretches across the Caspian in a line marked first by volcanic islets, and then by a submerged bank separating the two great northern and southern marine depressions. On both sides of this bank the lead sinks 1,300 feet deeper than the line of projection of the Caucasus. On the east coast the cape north of the Krasnovodsk peninsula is the starting-point of a chain of

heights, hills or single escarpments continuing the line of the Caucasus directly to the Murghab valley between Merv and Herat. Through these eminences and those of North Afghanistan the Caucasian system is connected with that of the Hindu-Kush.

The Caucasus resembles the Pyrenees in its direction, in the serrated form of the main range, in its position between two marine basins, and like them also it may be considered as consisting of two sections of unequal length. But if the gap forming the natural limit between the western and eastern sections is not situated in the middle of the range, it lies at all events almost exactly midway between the two seas. Through this depression passes the great military highway between Russia and Tiflis. On the meridian of this pass the main range contracts on either side to a width of about 60 miles between the two opposite plains, while east and west the highlands spread much farther north and south. The western section, though the narrower, is the higher of the two, for here rise the loftiest summits, six at least of which surpass Mont Blanc, culminating point of Europe.* Daghestan, *i.e.* "the Highlands," comprising the most important region of the Eastern Caucasus, is lower, but more irregular and rugged, than the western section.

The old geographers supposed that the system consisted of a simple unbroken ridge; but the investigations of Abish and others show that the general relief is much more intricate. The chain is almost everywhere formed by two ridges, and in many places even by three or four running parallel, or nearly so, with each other, and connected at intervals by nuclei, thus presenting a formation analogous to that of the Andes. The upper valleys of the Caucasus generally take the form of cirques, or elongated craters, in which are collected the head-streams, and from which they escape through a deep lateral gorge. From the orographic point of view the Koshtan-tau may be considered the culminating point of the system; for this peak, which has never been scaled, rises on the parting-line between the two slopes. Between the sources of the Kuban and of the Adai-kokh, 100 miles farther east, the watershed presents no passes lower than 10,000 feet. The first breach below this elevation is the Mamisson Pass (9,540 feet), situated at one of the sudden breaks in the main range, on a transverse ridge branching off at the Zikari Mountains. East of this pass numerous gaps occur at altitudes ranging from 6,500 to 10,000 feet. Although the triangular survey of the Caucasus has long been finished, the work of exploration is still far from complete. Since 1868 the Kazbek and Elbruz have been ascended by Freshfield, Moore, and Tucker, accompanied by the Chamonix guide Devouassoud, and several other peaks have also been scaled; yet the Alpine Clubs have still plenty of work before them, especially in the Western Caucasus.

The northern and southern slopes of the range differ greatly in their general

* Chief summits of the Caucasus:—

	Feet.		Feet.
Elbruz	18,820	Kazbek	16,800
Kashtan-tau	17,370	Ushba (Besoch-mta)	16,750 (?)
Dikh-tau	17,190	Aghish-tau, or Adish-tau	16,250 (?)

aspects. The latter is on the whole the more abrupt of the two, and the distance from the central ridge to the plains watered by the Kura is about one-half that which intervenes between the same point and the northern valleys of the Sulak and Terek. In the west a similar contrast is presented by the slopes facing the Rion and Kuban respectively. The descent towards the Kuban is very irregular, being broken first by a series of parallel crests, and then lower down by the projections of the upland limestone terraces resembling the glacis of a rampart, which stretch somewhat confusedly from the Euxine to the Caspian, but which present

Fig. 15.—Geological Formations of the Central Caucasus.
According to E. Favre. Scale 1 : 1,400,000.

remarkably distinct outlines about the western hemicycle of the Upper Terek. There is thus developed a vast intermediate valley between the main range and the advanced ridges of Jurassic formation. These terraces slope very gently toward the steppe, whereas the side facing the central chain is broken by steep declivities, some of which present nearly vertical walls over 3,000 feet high. These broken terraces, intersected by rapid torrents, are regarded by the inhabitants as of far greater importance than the higher eminences of the main range, for the pastures and woodlands are here parcelled out as landed property. Every prominence has its name, whereas till recently the Elbruz and Kazbek were the only peaks of the main range known by name to the lowlanders.

Geological Formation—Volcanic Action.

The regularity of the Caucasian system is not confined to the general relief, but is also shown, at least on the northern slopes, in the main features of its geology. The chief range consists principally of crystalline schists, resting here and there on granites, and diminishing in extent as we go eastwards. The Suram transverse ridge, connecting the Caucasus with the Anti-Caucasus, also consists of crystalline rocks; but here the strata are far less regular than on the northern slopes. Right and left of the great central chain, the prominences on both slopes are chiefly composed of limestone and silicious strata of various ages —Jurassic, cretaceous, or eocene. In the north these older formations are covered by the pliocene and more recent steppe lands. In their prevailing characteristics the Urukh, Terek, and Baksan valleys all closely resemble each other. Here the streams rise in wild and rugged granitic cirques, thence traversing marls and sandy clays between glens dotted with numerous villages, beyond which they enter narrow gorges, above whose chalk sides are visible the pastures and woodlands. Lower down stretches the steppe, where the torrents combine to form the Terek. About the middle of the range, between Daghestan and the Western Caucasus, a sort of geological inlet penetrates into the Upper Terek valley, where a vast horizontal plateau of tertiary grits projects like a peninsula between the surrounding chalks. Here the attraction of the hills is unusually active, the deviation of the plummet towards the intermediate rocks amounting to thirty-eight seconds between Vladikavkaz, at the northern base, and Dushet, south of the range.

Porphyries cropping out in the upper regions raise their steep crests above the snow-line, while in the central regions more recent lavas have broken through the crust, especially on the southern slopes. In the north the Elbruz, culminating point of the system, is an old volcano, which was probably active when the Euxine and Caspian were still connected by the Manîch Strait towards the close of the tertiary or beginning of the following epoch. This mountain terminates in a sort of horseshoe cirque, which seems to be a crater partly fallen in. The Kazbek also is a trachyte cone, while the crests of the "Red Hills," farther south, are all volcanic, and the route skirting the Aragva passes along the foot of columnar basalt rocks. Nor are the subterraneous forces still extinct in the Caucasus. Not only are both extremities fringed by boiling mud volcanoes, but numerous mineral and naphtha springs bubble up from underground lakes disposed in symmetrical order on both sides of the range. The hot springs are amongst the most copious in the world, though few of them seem to be associated with the igneous forces lying beneath the main chain.

Earthquakes, probably of volcanic origin, occur at frequent intervals in the valleys of the Kura and Araxis, while regular upheavals of the land have taken place at both ends of the range. The steep cliffs overlooking the little harbour of Petrovsk, in Daghestan, are scored by horizontal lines produced by the former action of the waves, although they are now some 300 feet above the present level of the Caspian. On the Abkhasian coast there are also distinct evidences of

changes of level, and as high as 500 feet there are visible old marine shores in every respect resembling those still washed by the waves of the Black Sea. The marshy springs oozing from the ground at this elevation contain shell-fish, such as the *mysis* and *gammarus*, of the same species as those now inhabiting the Euxine, though their presence has been attributed either to a former communication with that sea, or to the action of water-fowl carrying the spat backwards and forwards in their plumage. Lake Abraû, near Novo-Rossüsk, also contains a semi-marine fauna, which has gradually adapted itself to the fresh water. The remains of buildings in the alluvia near Sukhum-Kaleh, both above and below the surface, show that even in historic times the land has first subsided and then been

Fig. 16.—Hot Springs and Naphtha Regions in the Caucasus.

Scale 1 : 11.000,000.

upheaved, and that it is now again subsiding. The ruins of a fort are at present 15 to 18 feet under water, and a large wall has been found even at a depth of 32 feet. After every storm, coins, rings, and other antique objects are constantly thrown up, and in one instance a gold coronet was discovered in the sands. Similar oscillations have occurred on the Baku coast of the Caspian, where the remains of a building are still visible near the shore.

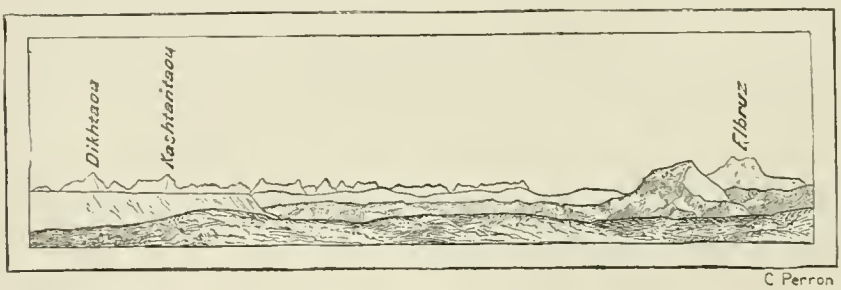
The advanced spurs of the Caucasus are not high enough to conceal the central chain from the inhabitants of the plains. From the steppes of Stavropol, a distance of 120 miles, the snowy Elbruz is distinctly visible, rising in solitary majesty on the horizon. Travellers approaching from the north see it for miles

and miles along the route, constantly increasing in size long before the presence of the range is betrayed by any other peaks to the right or left. But when it suddenly comes in sight it presents a stern, almost a terrible aspect, snow-clad only on the highest crests, here and there furrowed by avalanches, but lacking the charm and variety of the Alpine masses. Being much narrower and simpler in its structure, it is necessarily more uniform than the Alpine system. It is also deficient in grand cascades, its hills having already been furrowed by the action of water into regular river beds.

Water Systems—Snow-line—Rainfall—Glaciers.

The absence of detached masses and of broad intervening valleys deprives the Caucasus of great lakes like those of the Alps. No such lacustrine tarns even occur as are so frequently met in the Swiss and Tyrolese highlands. The fresh-water lakes, formerly stretching along the plains at both sides of the range, have been drained since the glacial period. One of these old lakes, contemporary with

Fig. 17.—Profile of the Caucasus as seen from Patigorsk.
According to Freshfield.



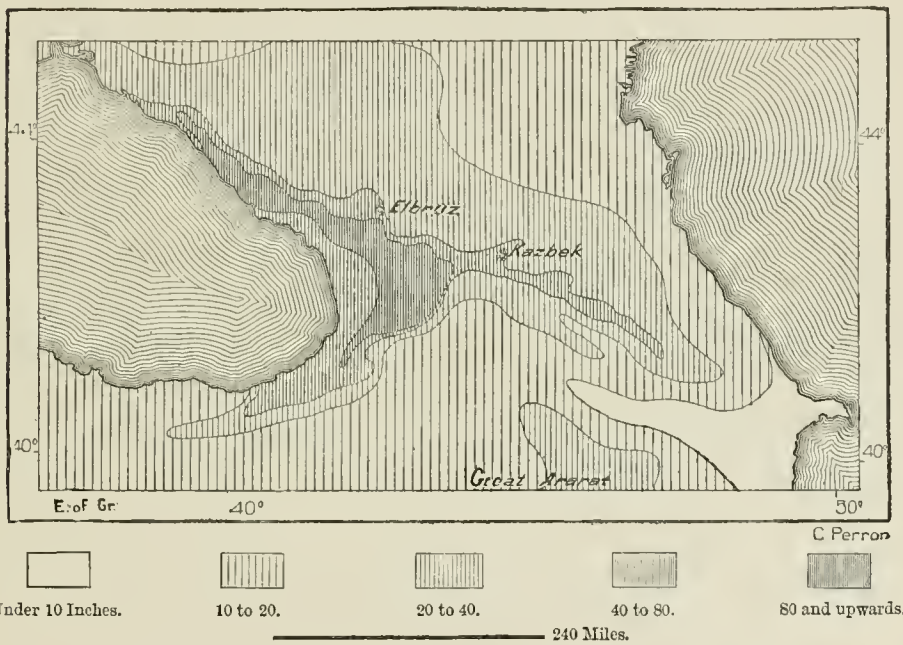
the volcanic eruptions, is now replaced by the cultivated fields of Vladikavkaz and Alagir in the Terek valley. Another of equal extent on the south filled the Karthalian basin between Suram and Mtzkhet, disappearing with the bursting of the embankments that confined the waters of the Kura. The whole of the Alazan valley, with that of its tributary the Aïrî-chai, was also flooded by a lake, which ultimately escaped through a gorge in the advanced spurs of the Caucasus. In fact, all the river valleys, those of the Kuban and its tributaries the Zelenchuck, the Laba, and the Belaya, no less than those of the Kura system, formerly served as lacustrine reservoirs, so that the Caucasian streams, like so many others, may be regarded as reduced lakes or contracted fiords. But the Anti-Caucasus, a vast hilly plateau, or rather an aggregate of irregular masses with axes at various angles, thus presents far more numerous land-locked depressions, and this system accordingly offers in its lakes a marked contrast to the Ponto-Caspian chain.

Although with a greater mean elevation than those of the Alps, the Caucasian peaks are far less covered with snow and ice, not only in consequence of their more southerly latitude and other climatic conditions, but also owing to the

narrowness of the upper crests, and the absence of cirques where the accumulated snows might serve as reservoirs of glaciers. The snow-line varies considerably with the latitude, exposure, amount of snow or rainfall, direction and force of the winds, and relative position of the several mountain masses. The extreme limits would appear to differ as much as 6,100 feet, for, according to Radde, the line falls to 8,460 feet on the western slopes of the Garibolo, whereas Parrot fixes it at 14,560 feet on the north-west side of the Great Ararat. Mount Alagöz, rising to a height of 13,660 feet in the Anti-Caucasus, is entirely free of snow in summer, and even in the Great Caucasus Ruprecht ascended to an elevation of 12,600 feet on the south side without meeting a single snow-field; but this was in the eastern section facing the Caspian. Farther west the moist winds from

Fig. 18.—Rainfall of the Caucasus.

Scale 1 : 10,500,000



the Euxine often cover the southern slopes with snow. In some of the upper valleys of the Rion basin the snowfall is said to amount to from 16 to 23 feet. On the whole, and apart from local differences, the line of perpetual snow would seem to oscillate on the southern slopes between 9,600 and 11,600 feet, and on the northern between 11,000 and 13,000 feet. Thus the mean limit is about 2,000 feet higher than in the Pyrenees, though they lie in the same latitude. This contrast must be attributed to the greater general dryness of the climate, at least on the northern slopes, and to the greater summer heats of the Caucasus. The portion under perpetual snow begins at the Oshtek, or Oshten, in the west, and extends eastwards to the Kazbek, beyond which the snow rests throughout the year only on isolated peaks.

The various meteorological stations established along the range have approximately determined the diminution of humidity, owing to which the snow-line rises gradually eastwards, according as the moist winds recede from the Euxine and approach the Eastern Caucasus, where the continental winds prevail. On the slopes facing the Black Sea the snow or rain fall is three times more abundant than in the centre, and six, eight, or even ten times more so than in the Kura basin and the Apsheron peninsula. At times not a drop of water falls for six months along the lower course of the Kura, for the influence of the west winds from the Euxine reaches no farther than the Suram Mountains, which connect the main range with the Anti-Caucasus, east of Kutaïs. The Caspian itself supplies very little moisture to the Eastern Caucasus, because the limited amount of humidity brought by north-east winds is mostly discharged on the advanced spurs at the foot of the Daghestan highlands.

Notwithstanding the excessive summer heats of this region and its higher snow-line, the mean annual temperature does not exceed that of the Pyrenees, or even of the Alps. For the cold north-east winds, being untempered by the warm south-westerly breezes, which are arrested by the Anatolian plateaux, lower the normal temperature of the Caucasus. The climates of Caucasia and Switzerland have a common mean, but the extremes are much greater in the Ponto-Caspian region than in Central Europe. The temperature in summer and winter varies in Switzerland about 18° or 19°, whereas there was a difference of 27° at Patigorsk in 1876.

The absence of snow produces a corresponding scarcity of glaciers. Yet they are numerous enough, especially about the Elbruz, and there is almost continuous ice for a distance of 120 miles between the Juman-tau and the Kaltber, above the Ar-don valley. The lowest glacier is that of Kalchi-don, or Karagan, which drains from the Adai-kokh into the Upper Urukh valley. According to Freshfield the only Swiss glacier of equal length is that of Alech. But as a rule the frozen streams of the Caucasus descend no farther than 7,000 feet above the sea; that is, several hundred feet above the corresponding limits in the Swiss Alps. Unlike the snow, they reach a lower point on the northern than on the southern slopes, a fact due to the general relief of the mountains, which are much more abrupt on the south than on the opposite side, where they slope northwards in long valleys. Unmistakable evidences of the passage of former glaciers show that in the Caucasian, as in the European mountain systems, the frozen streams reached a much lower depth formerly than at present. About the outlets of the Malka, Baksan, and Terek valleys there occur erratic boulders suspended at a slight elevation along the slopes of the bluffs overlooking the plains. The Yermolov stone, near the northern entrance of the Darial Gorge, is 96 feet long, with a bulk of 197,900 cubic feet, and similar blocks 26 feet long are met at Vladikavkaz, and even 5 miles farther north. In Svania the upland villages now standing over a mile from the extremity of the glaciers are built with the detritus of the moraines here stranded from former glaciers.

At present the best known and most frequently visited glacier in the Caucasus is the Devdoraki, or Devdoravki, one of the eight that descend from the Kazbek.

THE DARIAL DEFILE.

It is visible at a distance of over 5 miles west of the valley watered by the Terek, and crossed by the military route between Vladikavkaz and Tiflis. Its lower course is subject to sudden and violent floodings, and while most of the other Caucasian glaciers are retreating, the Devdoraki has advanced 770 feet between the years 1863 and 1876. The general progress of the ice has been calculated

Fig. 19.—The Kazbek: View taken from the Kazbek Station.

not to exceed 4 inches a day, whereas the average velocity on Mont Blanc is about 12 inches.

Vegetation—Fauna.

While the lower limit of the ice-fields is higher in the Caucasus than in the Alps, forest vegetation reaches a higher point. True timber flourishes at a mean elevation of 7,730 feet. Then come the azalea and rhododendron, the dwarf laurel and bright green sorrel, and lastly, the Alpine plants of the pastures. The zone of trees is higher on the northern than on the southern slopes, thanks, doubtless, to their greater humidity; for, although they receive less rain, they

lose less by evaporation. The greatest elevation is reached, not by evergreen pines, as in Central Europe, nor by the cedar and larch, as in Siberia, but by the birch, while the great forests of the slopes consist chiefly of conifers, the maple, lime, ash, hornbeam, beech, oak, and chestnut. The valuable box, so largely exported to England, and thence to the rest of Europe, forms in certain parts of Lower Transcaucasia impenetrable masses of vegetation, which, especially between Poti and Nikolaya, covers the whole coast of the Black Sea. The queen of Caucasian shrubs is the *Azalea Pontica*, one of the glories of terrestrial vegetation. This lovely plant, whose blood-red autumn foliage contrasts with the dark green of the fir, occupies a zone at least 6,000 feet in vertical height between the

Fig. 20.—Kazbek and Devdoraki Glaciers.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 160,000.

advanced offshoots and the slopes upwards of 6,600 feet high. In some places the azalea is replaced by the rhododendron. The traditional belief in the intoxicating and even maddening effects of its honey has not been confirmed by more recent observation, and would seem to rest on altogether exceptional facts. In Kabarda, where bee-farming is largely developed, no such evil consequences are attributed to the honey of the azalea.

On the lower slopes the wild vine twines round the trunks of the trees, whose branches are festooned with its foliage, intermingled with that of other twining plants. The vine is probably here indigenous, and the walnut is also supposed to have originated in the valleys of Imeria. In no other region are there so many stone fruits, several species of which, elsewhere unknown, are found growing wild in the

forests of Karthalia, south-west of the Kazbek. The Caucasus is, in fact, the classic land of fruit trees, and the gardens, especially of Mingrelia, abound in flowers and fruits, to which Western culture might easily impart an exquisite perfume and flavour. But as we proceed eastwards from the well-watered shores of the Euxine to the arid Caspian seaboard the vegetation gradually diminishes; the forest lands become less numerous as we approach the eastern extremity of the main range; the dry steppe winds burn up the grass itself, and the solar rays are reflected on the bare rock. Some Russian plants grow with difficulty even at elevations where they find a mean temperature answering to that of their native homes. The Russian soldiers have succeeded in acclimatizing the European

Fig. 21.—Forests of the Caucasus.

According to Petermann. Scale 1.: 11,000,000.

vegetables in the upper valleys of Svania, but the beloved birch-tree, which might remind them of their distant fatherland, nowhere acquires a vigorous growth.

The cultivated no less than the wild plants reach a much higher elevation on the slopes of the Caucasus than in the Alps, a fact due to the greater summer heats of the former region. In the district destined some day, perhaps, to be pierced by the tunnel of the future Caucasian trunk line between the Ar-don and Lakhva basins, all the upland villages are surrounded by barley-fields to an altitude of over 6,500 feet. In Ossetia this cereal reaches the village of Kolota (8,230 feet), and farther south it ripens on the slopes of the Alagöz at an elevation of 8,300 feet. Wheat also is grown as high as 6,700 feet, or 3,300 feet higher than in the Alps; maize reaches 3,000 feet, and the vine 3,630 feet, near the village of

Kurta, in Ossetia; but the best vintages of Kakhetia are those of the Alazan valley, 2,500 feet above sea-level.

Many Caucasian forests have been cleared for agricultural purposes, but many more have been wantonly destroyed, and the destruction is still going on in the most reckless manner where timber most abounds. To save the labour of felling the trees, they are burnt down at the risk of setting fire to whole forests. When fodder fails, the trees are destroyed, and the cattle fed with their leaves and sprouts. Hence many regions formerly densely wooded are now bare, and even on the upland slopes the woodlands are rapidly disappearing.

In spite of the ravages of man, most of the original wild animals of the Caucasus are still found there. The chamois and the *tour*, a species of wild goat, frequent the upper valleys, and some herds of the bison or wisant, wrongly described as the *aurochs*, roam over the forests watered by tributaries of the Kuban at the foot of Mount Elbruz. The Caucasian bear, less formidable than the Russian, is found no higher than 5,000 feet, the limit of fruit trees. Like the wolf and lynx, he inhabits the Abkhasian forests, and Prendel met one within 6 miles of Sukhum-Kaleh. The wild boar haunts the thickets of the lowlands, especially along the banks of tarns and rivers. The tiger, said to have come from the plateaux of Persia, rarely ventures to show himself on the plains of Transcaucasia, and never penetrates into the upland valleys. The leopard, hyena, and jackal are not unfrequently met about the Lower Kura, and the jackal occasionally finds his way across the main range to the forests of the northern slopes. In its fauna and flora Transcaucasia already belongs to the sub-tropical Asiatic world, whereas in this respect Ciscaucasia must still be included in the European zone.

Inhabitants—Varied Ethnical and Linguistic Elements.

The well-watered Transcaucasian plains might support as great a population as France, and two thousand years ago were probably abundantly peopled. The northern valleys are also fertile enough to supply the wants of millions; yet Caucasia is on the whole less densely peopled than Russia itself. In the north the steppe prevails, and here the population is restricted to the river banks. In the south also the plains of the Araxis and Lower Kura have remained unpeopled, owing to their extremely unhealthy climate, while in the highlands nearly all the region above the forest zone is a solitude of pasture, rocks, or snows, frequented only by a few herdsmen and hunters. The highest Caucasian village, Kurush, in the Daghestan highlands, about the source of a head-stream of the Samur, is 8,200 feet above sea-level, an elevation nearly equal to that of the Hospice of the Great St. Bernard in the Swiss Alps. But the summits of the chain rise from 6,000 to 9,000 feet above this last inhabited spot of the Caucasus.

The most healthy zone lies between 2,500 and 6,650 feet, and here are situated the sanitary stations where most of the officials of Tiflis, Erivan, and Yelisabetpol spend the summer months. The most favourite elevation is 4,000 feet, where the vine, mulberry, and southern cereals still flourish, and where the pure and cool air


35°
40°
45.
40.
37°
42° E. of Gr.
Temryuk
Anapa
Kouban
Old Seats of the Circassians
(now uninhabited)
Romanians
Abkhazians
Batum
Kurds
Trébizond
Tchoroukh
Erzerum
Rion
Scale
0
REFERENCE.
Indo-Europeans.
Russians &c.
Germans
Greeks & Romanians
Iranians
Tats & Talishi
Kurds
Ossetes
Armenians
CAUCASIANS.
Kartvelians
West.n Hill Tribes
East.n Hill Tribes
MONGOLS.
Tatars &c.
Kirghiz
Turks
Mongols Proper

OF THE CAUCASUS.

600,000.

100 Miles

TUE & Co LIMITED

from the glaciers prevails. The Tatars of the hot valleys harvest their maize in May, send their families and herds to the hills, and soon join them themselves, returning to the plains in time for the autumn vintage. Some of the insalubrious districts remain uninhabited except by a few of the peasantry engaged in irrigating the maize and rice fields. Still the population is densest, not in the healthy region of the advanced spurs, but in the valleys watered by the large rivers and traversed by the main highways. Here the population may easily be doubled as soon as the now forsaken irrigating canals are reopened, thus bringing under cultivation all the valleys of the Araxis and Kura. According to the old chronicles Transcaucasia was formerly six times more populous than at present. When the Mongolian prince, Batu Khan, seized the land in the thirteenth century he compelled every tenth adult male to serve in his armies, thus raising a force of 800,000 men. This would imply a population of 16,000,000, probably about the same number as in the time of Strabo.

At the beginning of the present century commercial relations had fallen off to such an extent that the highways leading from the Euxine to the Caspian, formerly followed by Greeks, Romans, and Genoese, had been completely abandoned. In 1823, for the first time probably for centuries, merchandise was transported from Redout-Kaleh to Baku, and this was considered a memorable event. Even now the communications between the two slopes of the main range are beset with difficulties. It is still untraversed by a line of railway, and till recently the two divisions of Caucasia were connected by one carriage road only. This route, frequently out of repair, and occasionally even destroyed by avalanches and detritus, runs east of Mount Kazbek through the gorges of the Darial, at all times so important in the records of migration and conquest. Known to the ancients as the "Gate of the Caucasus," this route forms in reality a rocky approach, whose issues were defended by strongholds, now replaced by the fortified stations of the Russians.

East of the range the narrow strip of coast commanded on the one hand by the escarpments of the Caucasus, limited on the other by the waters of the Caspian, offered a second and easier highway to the invading or migrating tribes advancing from Asia to Europe, or from Europe to Asia. But this route might here and there be blocked, and one of the passes at the extremity of a ridge in Daghestan was barred, like the Darial Gorge, by a *derbent*, or "fortified gate," whence the name of the town commanding this part of the coast. The Euxine seaboard skirting the Western Caucasus seems since the Roman epoch never to have served as an historical route. But at that time the two divisions of the kingdom of Mithridates were connected by a road skirting the coast, and at several points milestones are still standing, which the Abkhasians look on as "fairy altars." But this road has been deserted since the Byzantine epoch. For centuries this coast-line, some 250 miles long, has been beset by too many natural obstacles, and guarded by tribes of too fierce a character, to serve as a military route, more especially as the sea was always open to Greeks, Genoese, Turks, and Russians to prosecute their commercial or warlike enterprises with the peoples of the Caucasus. The Genoese roads, of which traces have been discovered, did not follow the coast,

but crossed the hills, thus connecting the inland districts with the Euxine seaports.

But these great highways were not forced without a struggle, and every fresh invasion scattered fresh fragments of nations amongst the surrounding upland valleys. Thus the Caucasus has become, in the language of Abulfeda, "The Mountain of Languages," an expression still current in Persia. Strabo tells us that the Greek traders frequenting the port of Dioscurias, on the Euxine, met there no less than seventy peoples, all speaking distinct languages, and Pliny adds that in his time one hundred and thirty different idioms were current in the same place. At present the languages and dialects of the Caucasus are still estimated at seventy. But Uslar, first of Caucasian philologists, points out that every local variety is regarded as a distinct language by traders and travellers, and that in reality the numerous Caucasian dialects may be grouped in a small number of families. Thus the thirty of Daghestan are reducible to five radically distinct. Many were formerly spoken by powerful and widely diffused peoples, now represented only by a few remnants lost amongst the hills, and whom a geologist has compared to erratic boulders, the scattered fragments of now vanished mountains.

The Caucasus, which stands out so boldly against the boundless and monotonous Russian steppes, contrasts no less strikingly in its varied peoples, races, and languages with the vast Slav world stretching from the Euxine to the Frozen Ocean. Nevertheless the Russians are now slowly penetrating into the valleys on both slopes of the main range, where they already number about 1,400,000, or nearly one-fourth of the whole population. They are in a decided majority in the districts bordering on Russia proper; that is to say, in the province of Kuban and the government of Stavropol. Even in Transcaucasia they form one of the chief ethnical elements, especially in the towns and military stations, and here and there their Cossack or nonconformist settlements give a great local preponderance to the Slav race. Whilst many native tribes are disappearing either by extermination or forced or voluntary exile, whilst others are slowly diminishing in the struggle for existence with the Russian invaders, the latter are steadily increasing in the north by ceaseless encroachments on the ethnical frontier-lines, in the south by scattered colonies continually expanding, and thus approaching each other and absorbing the intervening spaces.*

Russian Conquests—Main Physical Divisions.

The long and laborious conquest of the Caucasus, which took about two hundred years, is now a familiar topic. In the north the Russians at first confined them-

* Population of Caucasia according to races:—

	Estimated Population. 1858.	1880.
Russians	840,000	1,410,000
Georgians	830,000	1,150,000
Tatars and Turks	825,000	1,330,000
Armenians	520,000	720,000
Lezghians and other Highlanders	1,400,000	1,050,000
Persians, Tats, and Talishes	75,000	120,000
Other races	36,000	90,000

selves to a line of fortified stations, where the Cossacks kept constant guard, ready at the first signal to leap into the saddle. The Transcaucasian provinces were originally nothing but foreign lands possessing no cohesion with the rest of the empire, but the pressure of the dominant race gradually increased. All the lowland tribes were finally subdued, while those of the uplands were compelled from year to year to contract the limits of their warlike incursions. The Russians not only commanded both seaboards, enabling them to lend a helping hand to their allies or subjects in Mingrelia, Imeria, and Georgia, but they were from the first in possession of the breach presented by the Caucasus between the Terek and Aragva valleys. In 1769 the Darial Pass was crossed by 400 Russians, and in 1784, 1795, 1796, and 1799 they again utilised this route. In the beginning of the present century, when Georgia became an integral part of the empire, a military route connecting Transcaucasia with the north was constructed along the Terek and Aragva valleys, whereby Caucasia was henceforth divided into two distinct fragments. Pushkin describes the risks still incurred in 1829 by travellers, traders, and others on this highway. The daily progress under armed escort from station to station was little more than 10 miles. This first route was succeeded by another over the Mamisson Pass, between the Terek and Rion valleys, and by others through the lateral valleys, cutting off the forests in which the highlanders lurked to fall upon the Russian foe. "I should like," said Shamyl, "to anoint with holy oil the trees of my forest, and mingle fragrant honey with the mud of my highways, for in these trees and this mud lies my strength." But although the bogs are far from having disappeared, the upland forests are no longer inaccessible, and their inhabitants have been subdued. In a song by Lermontov the Kazbek is represented as rising in its majesty, and looking with scorn on the puny swarms approaching from the northern plains to scale it. But when it sees them armed with pickaxe, shovel, and hatchet, grubbing in the soil and felling the trees, it trembles to its base, for it now understands that the day of thraldom is at hand.

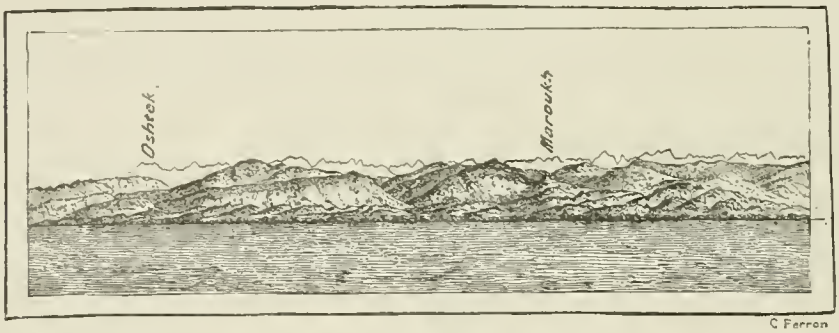
Caucasia consists of a number of distinct physical and ethnical regions, which must be described apart, although they are becoming daily more united by the bonds of common interests. All the Western Caucasus, tapering towards the Sea of Azov, forms, with the Kuban basin and neighbouring steppes, one of these natural regions; another comprises the Central Caucasus, the home of so many different tribes; while a third embraces the Eastern Caucasus, whose inhabitants are sometimes collectively known as Gortzi, or "Highlanders." The Terek basin, the plains and lakes of the Kuma, the half-drained bed of a former sea, offer a marked contrast to this highland region. In the south the Rion and Chorukh basins, partly rescued from the Turks, are inhabited by people of one stock, and constitute a fairly well-defined ethnical province. But in the east the districts watered by the Kura offer no such racial unity, for this region is shared by both Georgians and Tatars. Still it forms at least a distinct geographical province, and the same may be said of the Araxis valley, which is occupied by Tatars and Armenians in common.

II.—WESTERN CAUCASUS: KUBAN BASIN.

ABKHASIANS, CIRCASSIANS, COSSACKS OF THE BLACK SEA.

West of the highlands culminating with Mount Elbruz, the Caucasus becomes a coast range, falling in abrupt escarpments towards the Black Sea. The slope is continued to a great depth under the surface, for even close to the shore the sounding-line reveals a depth of over 12,000 feet. The first section of the coast range west of Elbruz retains a great elevation, and is commanded by snowy crests 10,000 to 12,000 feet high. Here also, as in the Central Caucasus, the main ridge is flanked by parallel chains, which with the transverse ridges form long depressions, and invariably present their steep sides towards the middle chain, their gentler slopes towards the sea. The tracks across the range ascend the valleys parallel with it until they reach the passes, and thus easily skirt the peaks. Near Mount Elbruz the range rises above the snow-line. Here are the Juman-tau, the Marukh, and in the centre the magnificent Oshten, or Oshtek, beyond which the

Fig. 22.—The Western Caucasus seen from off Cape Kodor.
According to Dubois de Montpéreux.



crests diminish rapidly in elevation towards the north-west. The last point taking the name of mountain is the Idokopaz, south-east of the port of Novo-Rossiisk, after which there are nothing but hills, whose base merges with the alluvia of the Taman peninsula.* The range is crossed by few and little-frequented tracks, and even the military station of Sukhum-Kaleh is unconnected by any direct strategic route with the Kuban valley. Pending the completion in 1883 of the carriage road, travellers are obliged to follow the coast across the sandy and shingly beach.

River Systems—Kuban Basin.

Although the coast climate is very moist, the streams flowing to the Euxine are too short to be very copious. They are mostly mere torrents, which carry off the

* Chief elevations in the Western Caucasus:—

	Feet.		Feet.
Oshten	9,506	Nashar Pass (near Mount Elbruz)	9,774
Marukh Pass	11,660	Psegashko Pass	6,360
Sancharo Pass	8,000	Idokopaz	2,460

rain-water falling on the uplands. But a few rivers in the southern valleys, such as the Kodar, Bzîb, and Mzîmta, acquire a certain importance, thanks to the parallelism of the main chain and side ridges enclosing their upper courses. Most of these upland valleys bear the traces of old lakes, which have been drained either by the torrents or by underground streams making their way through caverns excavated in the Jurassic limestone rocks. Thus the Mîchish, represented on most maps as an independent river, is really a branch of the Bzîb, passing for 2 miles under the Pskhuv Mountain, and escaping through an outlet near the coast. The Pitzunda River, running close to the Bzîb, presents a phenomenon of a different order, for it seems to have changed its course within the historic period from the south to the north of Pitzunda.

The Abkhasian streams are of little importance except for irrigation purposes in the lovely gardens and orchards on the coast. Here the palm is associated with European plants, beneath whose shade wind avenues of the rose and jasmine. But most of the streams flowing from the hills now form swamps at the outlet of their valleys, where they poison the atmosphere and decimate the people. Hence the natives generally fix their homes far from the unhealthy coast lands, either in the forests or on the bare plateaux. As soon as the climate has been improved by drainage and clearing the ground of its rank vegetation, this part of the Euxine seaboard, some 240 miles long, will become a second Crimea for the Russians. Still the Abkhasian coast, while warmer and less subject to fogs than the Crimean, has the disadvantage of being less sheltered except on the south side of the lateral ridges. The average high temperature of the water contributes greatly to raise that of the land, which till the end of November stands as high as 58° or 59° Fahr., varying at Sukhum-Kaleh in winter from 45° to 46° Fahr. The south-west gales blow with great violence in spring and autumn, and during their prevalence navigation is very dangerous on a coast destitute of good harbours of refuge. The Abkhasian seaboard is completely sheltered from the cold north-east blasts which sweep the Caspian and Kuma steppes. But at its northern extremity Western Caucasia is not sufficiently elevated to arrest this *bora* of the Euxine, as it has been called by the Italian and Greek sailors frequenting these waters. On January 12th, 1848, the vessels riding at anchor off Novo-Rossiisk were driven seawards or stranded, and one of them sank with all its crew, borne down by the weight of the dense spray suddenly freezing in the rigging and on deck.

The northern slope of the coast range belongs to the Kuban basin. This river, the Kuman of the Nogai Tatars, and Kubin of the Abkhasians, is fed by the Elbruz glaciers, and receives all the torrents and streams of the Western Caucasian valleys, except a few rivulets lost in the steppe before reaching the main stream. Swollen three times during the year by the spring rains, the melting of the snows in summer, and the autumn downpours, it often assumes the proportions of a large river from 700 to over 1,200 feet wide, and upwards of 10 feet deep. But at low water in August and September it is nowhere more than 4 feet deep, and in some years the northern arm of its delta runs dry. All attempts have hitherto failed to render it permanently navigable, although since 1873 the steamers from Kertch

ascend as far as the Tiflisskaya stanitza 16 miles west of the Rostov-Vladikavkaz railway. Beyond this point it is navigable only for flat-bottomed boats.

Thirty miles from the coast the Kuban, which has a mean volume estimated at 39,000 cubic feet per second, branches off into two arms, and these again ramify into numerous minor channels. The Protok, the main northern branch, flows

Fig. 23.—The Akhtari Liman.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 640,000.

towards the Akhtari liman, an inlet in the Sea of Azov. The Kara-Kuban, the southern and most copious, after traversing the marshy lands of the Taman peninsula, again ramifies below Temrûk, discharging partly into the Sea of Azov, partly into the Euxine through a shifting *boghar*, or sandy channel inaccessible to large craft. The two mouths are distant 66 miles in a straight line, and at least 130 round the coast. The delta itself, which resembles that of the Nile in form,

consists of alluvial deposits made in the inner basin of a "liman," or lagoon, separated by an older strip of sand from the Sea of Azov. The soil held in solution by the Kuban being in the proportion of 1 to 480, these deposits would have rapidly filled the liman were they not carried away by the current partly to the Sea of Azov, and partly directly to the Euxine.

Taman Peninsula.

The lower stream has often shifted its bed, and islands and channels have so frequently changed place that the descriptions of the old writers are no longer intelligible. So recently as the fifteenth century the chief discharge was into the Sea of Azov, and since that time it has oscillated between the two branches, every fresh inundation modifying the currents. The Taman peninsula is everywhere studded with marshes and *eriks*, or false rivers, the remains of former freshets, and with river beds and banks showing in their alluvial strata the successive levels of the stream. Although about 24 miles broad, the whole peninsula is frequently transformed to its former insular condition by the lakes and side channels of the main branch. But though thus surrounded by water, this is not a lowland district, for it consists of five parallel chains of hills, occasionally rising 480 feet above sea-level, and separated one from the other by alluvial tracts, which were formerly inlets, and are still partly covered with lakes.

The mud volcanoes of the Taman peninsula seem to have been at one time far more active than at present. They run exactly in the line of the axis or continuation of the parallel ridges, and it was in the same line that a volcanic islet was erupted in 1799 near the town of Temrûk. This mud islet, which was about 1,330 feet in circumference, with an elevation of 13 feet above the sea, soon disappeared, but was replaced in 1814 by a second cone, which remained some time above the surface. These mud hills of the Taman peninsula are amongst the most remarkable on the globe, for they present the complete succession of phenomena from the simple oozing of mud to distinct volcanic eruptions. The Temrûk islet is said to have vomited smoke and flames in 1799, and the Kuku-Oba, or "Blue Hill," 7 miles north-west of Taman, opened its crater in 1794, ejecting flames and fragments of frozen earth to a distance of over half a mile. Other volcanic cones cast up stones, accompanied by argillaceous muds, seaweed, roots of rushes and other aquatic plants, showing that they evidently communicated with the bed of the limans and sea. Formerly numerous fragments of Greek and Scythian pottery were found amongst the erupted matter, and in the immediate vicinity of the cones. In explanation of this fact Pallas suggests that the ancients may have been accustomed to throw in vases and other objects as offerings to the volcanoes.

The naphtha springs of the peninsula and north side of Western Caucasia also run in the line of the mud cones. The tertiary lands whose clays and marls contain this valuable substance occupy an upheaved area of at least 620 square miles, and are also continued under the limans. Lake Temrûk itself contains a

small quantity, which, however, does not prevent the pike, perch, prawns, and other fish from living in its waters. Although wells have been sunk only in the most promising sites, the results have been so far quite as satisfactory as might be expected. The works were begun in 1866 in the Kuda-ko, or "Naphtha Valley," on a piece of ground presented by the Czar to one of his generals. The first well yielded about 2,400 gallons daily, but most of this mineral oil was lost, the reservoir having been swept away by sudden rains. The well itself soon ran dry, but six others were opened in 1870, which jointly yielded 62,000 tons a year. After the boring the jets of naphtha often rose to a height of 50 feet above the ground. Were the district properly worked and connected by rail with the Anapa coast and Kuban basin, it might produce 700,000,000 gallons of distilled oil yearly.

Fig. 24.—The Kuku-Oba Mud Volcano.

According to Pallas. Scale 1 : 23,000.

Inhabitants—The Cherkesses.

Few regions of the Old World have shifted their populations more frequently than Western Caucasia and the Kuban basin. Since the middle of the century wars, massacres, and exile have caused the disappearance of tribes and whole nations from the valleys limited eastwards by the Elbruz, where they have been replaced by other races. The course of history has been abruptly arrested; traditions, languages, dialects, have irrevocably perished, nothing remaining in the land except geographical names more or less distorted in the untrained mouth of strangers.

In the last century the steppes of Circassia were still mostly peopled by the Cherkesses, who even owned grazing lands north of the Kuma, and procured their salt from the lakes in the Manîch depression. In 1859 they numbered about 500,000 in Western Caucasia, and even in 1864, after the wars ending in the Russian conquest, they were still estimated at 300,000. But now they have ceased to exist as a distinct nationality in the country, and in all Caucasia they will soon be represented by a few individuals only. The Abkhasians also of the Euxine seaboard and southern valleys have mostly disappeared, although nominally subjected to Russian rule since 1810, and treated far more leniently than the Cherkesses. They were reduced from about 150,000 in 1864 to 50,000 in

1877, and whole valleys were completely deserted when over 20,000 emigrated in mass after the struggle between the Russians and Turks for the possession of Sukhum-Kaleh during the late war. Their place has been partially supplied by Russians, and the sites of their former habitations are now known only by romantic graveyards overgrown with the wild plum, apple, pear, and vine.

Vanquished by the armies of Nicholas, the Adigheh, or Cherkesses of the northern slopes and Upper Kuban valleys, preferred exile to permanent subjection to the Russian yoke, 76,000 alone accepting the conditions offered them by the Russians. Happy to be rid of such enemies, the Government hastened to facilitate their departure, and their exodus ended in wholesale transportation. A proclamation issued in 1864, after the last battle, ordered all the Adigheh "to quit their valleys" within a month's time under pain of being treated as prisoners of war. The order was obeyed, and over four-fifths of the people were driven at the point of the sword from valley to valley until they found refuge in Anatolia, Cyprus, the Balkan peninsula, and other parts of Turkey. Thus were 260,000 transported by sea to the temporary depôts at Trebizond, Samsun, and Sinope during the first six months of 1864, and according to the official returns 398,000 Cherkesses emigrated between 1858 and 1864. It is easy to understand what the sufferings and mortality must have been of these refugees, crowded on board small craft, or exposed in wretched hovels to hunger, cold, and hardships of every sort. In many places more than half had perished of starvation or disease a few months after quitting their homes. And even on reaching the districts assigned to them, they found themselves surrounded by hostile populations, of different race, speech, religion, and customs. They themselves assumed the air of conquerors, continuing their warlike or predatory habits, and seizing with the sword the fruits of the plough. The exile of the Cherkesses was disastrous alike to them and to those with whom they were thrown.

Although but few Cherkesses survive in the Caucasus, they have so long been regarded as typical of the Caucasian tribes generally, and they have exercised so much influence on those who have not yet emigrated, that they require to be studied as they existed before the exodus of 1864. At that time their determined resistance to the Russian invader had earned for them the reputation of being one of the most heroic peoples on the globe. Their chivalrous traditions, the patriarchal simplicity of their habits, their physical beauty and symmetry of form, rendered them unquestionably the foremost race in the Caucasus, so that their name came to be often applied in a general way to all the highland tribes. Unfortunately they lived only for war, and the very word Cherkess was usually explained to mean "Brigands," "Banditti," or "Highwaymen," although it more probably derives from the *Kerketes* of Strabo. Strangers find extreme difficulty in pronouncing their rude and guttural language, and in their warlike expeditions they are said to have made use of a peculiar dialect.

The Cherkesses belong probably to the same stock as the Georgians, Lezghians, Chechenzes, and other mixed or non-Aryan tribes of Caucasia. Mostly very handsome, they are tall, slim, and broad-shouldered, with oval features, light

complexion, bright eyes, abundant hair, mostly black, but occasionally also chestnut and fair. Both sexes consider obesity and other physical defects as disgraceful, and those who are so afflicted abstain from appearing at the public feasts and popular gatherings. Regarding beauty as the privilege of their race, they seldom intermarried with aliens. Their dress, of a remarkably elegant type, is admirably suited to these erect and pliant figures, and has accordingly become a sort of national costume for all the Caucasians, including even the Russian Cossacks and the peaceful Jews, who are sometimes found wearing the *cherkeska*, with its cartouch pouch, in their case "more ornamental than useful."

Like the Albanians of the Pindus highlands, with whom they present many points of resemblance, the Cherkesses regard the vendetta as the supreme law. Blood demands blood, and the murderer must die, unless he purchase redemption, or succeed in kidnapping a child from the family of his enemy, in order to bring it up as his own, and then restore it to the paternal home. Family feuds lasted for generations; yet, unlike his Svanian neighbour, the Cherkess scorned to lurk in stone houses, but, trusting to his strong arm, resided only in slightly constructed wooden huts. Vengeance, however, was never exacted in the presence of women, sacred beings, who might with a gesture arrest the hand of the slayer, and who yet belonged themselves to fathers or husbands claiming the right to kill them with impunity. According to the old custom, the young man seized by force his intended bride. The daughter of the Cherkess knew beforehand that she must quit the paternal home either by a real or feigned abduction, or else be sold in foreign lands; yet such is the force of habit, that the thought of exile and the life of the harem seldom caused her any dread. Traditionally, however, they confidently expected that their beauty, good manners, and poetic language would insure to them the position of legitimate wives of distinguished persons. The boys, on the other hand, were generally brought up, not by their parents, but by an *atalik*, or "teacher," chosen especially for his physical and moral qualities, his courage, politeness, eloquence, skill in arms and horsemanship. When his education was over the young man returned to his home, but never ceased to regard the atalik as a true father. Thanks to the care thus taken in their education, the Cherkesses claimed to have become "the most polite people in the world."

Although proud of their national freedom, they were not all equal amongst themselves. Yet, while forming three castes of princes, of nobles reduced by intestine feuds, and the simple peasantry, all were grouped in *fleûsh*, or "brotherhoods," and it was these associations of men devoted to each other unto death that rendered their resistance so formidable to the Russians. The authority of the nobles prevailed mostly in the plains, where they had in some places succeeded in establishing a quasi-feudal system. But their peasantry fled to the highland Cherkesses for protection. Hence the incessant wars, resulting in the defeat of the nobles, many of whom adopted the fatal policy of applying to strangers for aid. Below the three classes of freemen there were the slaves, consisting exclusively of refugees and prisoners of war. The will of the freemen expressed in the

JEWS OF THE CAUCASUS.

public gatherings had the force of law, and the princes and nobles constituted the executive. The priests, though ranking with the lords, had but little influence, for, owing to the confusions of creeds, the Cherkesses were at once pagans, Christians, and Mohammedans. As pagans they worshipped Shibleh, god of thunder, war, and justice, and to him after the victory were sacrificed the fairest of the flock. They venerated the tree blasted by lightning, beneath which the criminal found a safe refuge. The gods of the air, water, woodlands, fruit trees, and herds, all animated by the breath of the Great Spirit, had also their special worship, and received offerings, if only a few drops solemnly poured out from the goblet. To soothe the stormy sea, and induce it to spare the mariner, mother, wife, or betrothed committed her votive offerings to the mountain torrent, by which they were borne to the Euxine, whose response was the soughing of the winds and the banking up of the clouds.

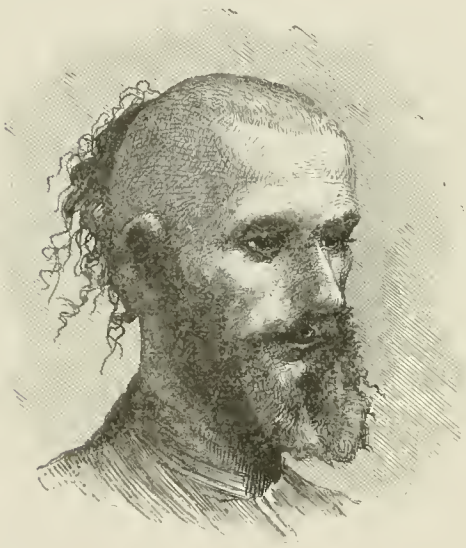
Such was the religion of the ancient Cherkesses; but till the latter half of the eighteenth century the nobles mostly claimed to be Christians, and worshipped in the chapels, whose ruins are still met here and there on the hill-tops. But the Sheikh Mansûr, whom the Russians afterwards sent to die in the island of Solovetz, in the White Sea, made nearly all his countrymen Sunnite Mohammedans. The influence of the Crimean khans worked in the same direction, and the faith of Islam became more and more intensified according as hatred of the Christian Muscovite invaders increased. Nevertheless certain Moslem practices, especially polygamy, were not generally introduced, and the old family life held its ground. In religious zeal neither the Cherkesses nor other western highlanders are to be compared with the Kara-chai, or "Black River" Tatars of the southern Kuban valleys, west of Mount Elbruz, who are strict Mohammedans, engaged in trade, and as intermediaries between the northern and southern Caucasian tribes.

The Abkhasians and Cossacks.

The Abkhasians, who still retain in a slightly modified form the name of Abazes, by which they were known to the Greeks, call themselves Absua, or "People." Before the great emigrations they occupied nearly all the southern slope of the Caucasus between the Ingûr and Bzîb valleys, and at certain points encroached on the Cherkess territory on the opposite slope. Their speech resembles that of the Adigheh, but they differ greatly from them in appearance and customs. The Absua are shorter, of browner complexion and blacker hair than the Cherkesses, and their features are mostly irregular, with a harsh, wild expression. Hence slaves of this race commanded no more than half the price of their Circassian neighbours. Though of less chivalrous appearance, like them they preferred to live by the sword, or scour the sea as corsairs. Before the Euxine had become a "Russian lake," their long galleys, impelled by oar or sail, and with crews of from one hundred to three hundred men, ventured along all the shores of Anatolia, the Crimea, and European Turkey. Many also took service or became slaves in Egypt, where they were numerously represented amongst the

Mamelukes, and where not a few celebrities were natives of some upland Abkhasian valley. Like the Cherkesses, they formed warlike confederacies with their princes, nobles, and freemen, leaving to slaves the hardships of field operations. Some were still unacquainted with money before the Russian rule, exchanges being usually effected by a cow, whose calves represented the interest. It thus sometimes happened that after a few years a small loan had to be repaid by a whole herd. But in 1867 this primitive mode of usury was replaced by that which is in vogue amongst "civilised" nations. Like the Cherkessians also, they were still pagans in thought, while retaining the traces of the old Christian worship in their Moslem creed. Thus they respected churches and the cross, eat pork, and brought to their temples votive offerings of arms, coats of mail, or garments. Even now a chapel, traditionally supposed to have been built by St. Paul on an offshoot of the Marukh, is one of their chief places of pilgrimage. But the most revered temple was still the forest, where they loved to pronounce their solemn vows, and suspend their offerings on the branches of the sacred oak. Here were also formerly placed the coffins of their dead, in the belief that the gaseous explosions would cause the demons to respect their repose. They pay extreme devotion to the departed, and their burial-places are far better cared for than the dwellings of the living.

Fig. 25.—Abkhasian Type.



Several thousand Abkhasians still occupy the upper valleys of the Southern Caucasus, whereas the Adigheh have ceased to exist as a distinct nationality on the opposite slopes. Here the Kara-chai alone have succeeded in hitherto resisting the advancing Muscovite element. Elsewhere the Russians are encroaching incessantly on the domain of the now subdued highlanders. The natives of the Caucasus formerly looked towards the south as the source of civilisation, and they received mainly from Georgia their arms, costly stuffs, and letters. Now they are fain to turn towards the north, whence come the ukases, the armies, and the colonists destined one day to absorb them. Great Russians, Little Russians, Cossacks of both branches, take part in this migratory movement, to which the Government has imparted a distinctly military character by organizing the settlers in companies, battalions, and regiments. All Western Caucasia may be said to be already Russian. Bohemian colonists also, who have received allotments in Circassia, are gradually amalgamating with the conquering race, and the number of Slav immigrants in the Adigheh territory has already long surpassed that of the natives.

The plains of the Lower Kuban and Taman peninsula have been more subject than most regions to successive changes of population, unaccompanied by any appreciable mingling of races. The affinities can no longer be determined of the builders of the dolmens scattered over the peninsula and neighbouring lands, but elsewhere unknown in Caucasia. These dolmens are distinguished from those of other countries by the circular opening in the anterior slab, large enough to allow of a child's head being passed through. The history of the Kuban valley does not embrace these monuments of the age of iron, for it reaches back scarcely more than ten centuries, to a time when this region was occupied by the Khazars and Polovtzi, a remnant of whom were the Kumans, who settled in Hungary. Towards the close of the tenth century the Russian colony of Tmutarakan had already been established in the Taman district, where they had formed relations

Fig. 26.—Cossack Sentinel.

with other Russian settlers in the Crimea. The chronicles describe their struggles with the Yasses and Kosôgs, predecessors of the Cherkesses, and an inscribed stone found near Taman, and now in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, bears witness to the advanced state of civilisation of the early Russian settlers in this region. But they were not numerous enough to hold their ground in the midst of hostile populations, and the country was afterwards occupied by Tatar tribes under Mongol princes. At the beginning of the eighteenth century other Russians made their appearance, not as enemies, but as refugees, in this region. These were the *Nekrasovtzi* Cossacks, who preferred the rule of the Crimean Khan to that of Peter the Great, and who were afterwards joined by numerous Raskolniks from various parts of the empire. The country was thus soon repeopled by Russians, who cultivated the soil, established fisheries on the rivers and lagoons, and

introduced the fine Ukranian cattle since propagated in the Transcaucasian provinces. But these industrious settlers, falling under the Czar's displeasure, were compelled to seek refuge first amongst the Cherkesses, and afterwards in Asiatic and European Turkey. Most of them became ultimately absorbed in the surrounding Moslem populations. They were succeeded by some two thousand Nogai Tatar families from the Crimea, who were in their turn removed in mass by the Russian conquerors to the steppes west of the Don.

Henceforth the country formed an integral part of the empire, and was disposed of at the pleasure of Catherine and her all-powerful minister, Potomkin. The unfortunate Lower Dnieper Cossacks, after many vicissitudes, were transferred, in 1793, to the marshy wastes on the right bank of the Kuban. Numbering 17,000 fighting-men, they were at first well received by the Cherkesses, but soon changed from friends to foes and conquerors. The war of conquest was a war of surprises. Redoubts, watch-towers, and fortified stanitzas were established at all strategical points along the Kuban, and to guard against the enemy lurking in its sedgy banks there were formed those formidable *plastüni* which became the terror of the Cherkess outposts in the protracted border warfare. During these conflicts the Cossacks became gradually assimilated in manners, habits, and dress to the highland Caucasians, from whom they could not always be easily distinguished.

Hand in hand with this hostile struggle of some seventy years, the Cossacks maintained another against the outward surrounding, which is still far from concluded. At their arrival towns, villages, canals, highways, everything had disappeared. The process of resettlement also progressed very slowly in steppe lands, partly destitute of, partly covered by water. In the Kuban delta, where fever is endemic, the rate of mortality is very high, in some years often greatly exceeding that of the births. On an average one-third of the children die in the first year, and half the generation has disappeared between the third and fifth years.

Topography.

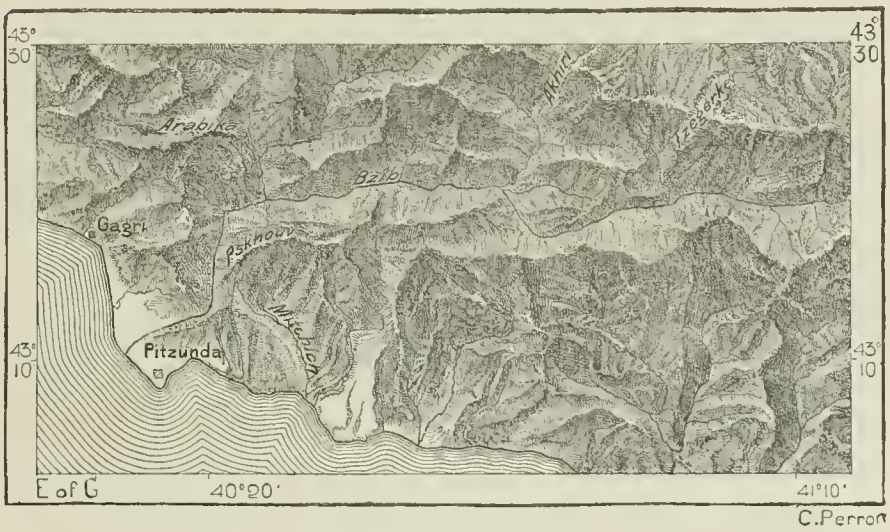
Here there are no large towns. Emigration has carried off most of the inhabitants, the constant wars have laid waste the lands, the absence of roads prevents the transport of produce to the coast, and the coast itself is still unhealthy, and nearly destitute of sheltered havens. Thus are neutralised the great advantages of a region which is, nevertheless, yet destined to become one of the most flourishing in the Old World. Even *Sukhum-Kaleh*, guarding its southern approach, although chief town of a military district, and notwithstanding its deep and safe harbour, is still an insignificant place. Yet it is supposed to occupy the site of the Hellenic town dedicated by the Milesians, some thirty-two centuries ago, to the Dioscuri, and afterwards known by the name of Sebastopol. The ruins of a Greek city, with its streets, open spaces, and the foundations of its buildings, are still partly visible at a depth of several yards in the Sukhum-Kaleh waters ; the remains of canals, roads, and ancient structures may be traced in the

neighbourhood; and the débris of Greek monuments were utilised by the Turks to rebuild, in 1787, the fortress of Sukhum, after it had been destroyed with the town in 1777. The imports and exports of the place have never in the best years amounted to £40,000; but the dolphin fishery is productive, and in 1872 as many as 3,800 were taken in the harbour alone.

The village of *Pitzunda*, the Pythius of the Byzantines, was also at one time an important town, as is evident from the ruins in the neighbourhood. A Byzantine church restored by the Russians is said to have been built by Justinian in 551. It was to the monastery of this place that the exiled St. Chrysostom withdrew when overtaken by death in 407. It afterwards became the chief Genoese trading station on this coast, and from it most of the Italian traders and missionaries set out, who have left in the Western Caucasus so

Fig. 27.—Valley of the Bzîb.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 850,000.



many traces of their presence—churches, watch-towers, coins, arms. Many of the latter, inscribed with Latin or French legends, were still met with down to the middle of the present century in these highlands.

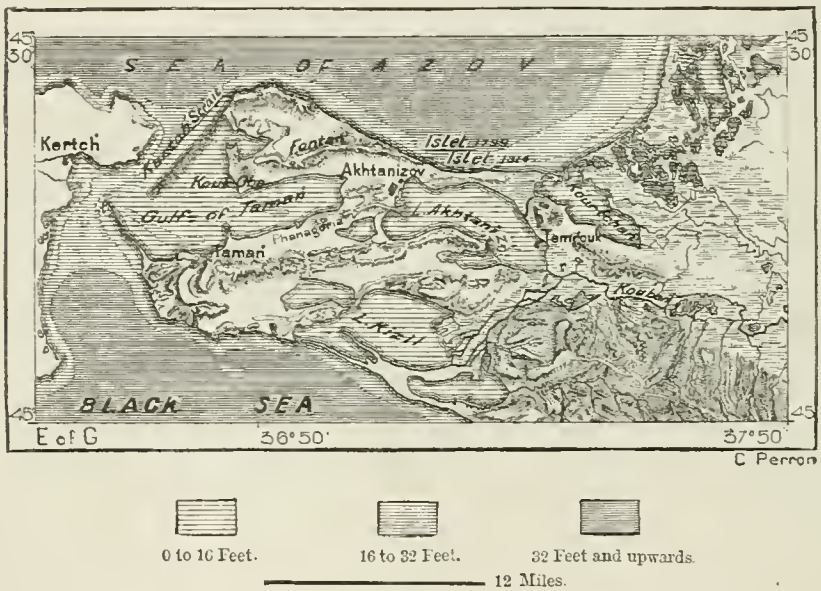
Beyond Pitzunda follow the old forts of Gagri, Adler or Ardiller (Arduvach), and others. Farther on is the deep and well-sheltered roadstead of *Tuapse*, at present a mere hamlet, but destined probably to become the chief trading-place on this seaboard. Meantime, *Novo-Rossiïsk*, or Sûjûk, is the first town on the coast near the extremity of the Caucasus. It does a considerable trade, although the roadstead, like the neighbouring Bay of Gelenjik, is exposed to the north-east gales. The old Turkish town of *Anapa* lies on a still more dangerous spot. Thrice taken by the Russians, it was temporarily suppressed in 1860 in favour of *Temrûk*, administrative capital of the Taman peninsula. At that time Temrûk

was a simple Cossack stanitza on a hill 250 feet high, in the centre of the isthmus stretching between two lagoons connected with the Kuban. In its vicinity are the chief mud volcanoes of the Taman peninsula, forming five distinct groups of about a hundred altogether. For some years past the mud has been applied to the treatment of rheumatic complaints. The village of *Taman*, which gives its name to the peninsula, lies near the strait facing Kertch and Yeni-Kaleh, and a little south-west of the fortress of Phanagoria, which stands on the site of the Greek city of that name.

The stanitzas founded by the Cossacks in the districts watered by the Kuban and its tributaries have over the coast villages the advantage of lying at the junctions of the natural routes across the steppes. Several have grown into real towns, although the houses still remain scattered over a large area. In the

Fig. 28.—The Taman Peninsula.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 1,100,000.



province of Kuban alone there are no less than 146, each with upwards of 2,000 inhabitants, a vast number considering the short period since the colonisation began. In 1872 the population of the Kuban territory rose from 672,000 to 733,000, and, as the normal excess of births over deaths was only 6,000 or 7,000, the immigration could not have been less than 54,000. But such a rapid movement, directed without system towards marshy lands, necessarily entails fatal consequences on many of the new arrivals, more especially as the best tracts are already occupied by high officials and members of the imperial family. Between 1860 and 1870 over 325,000 acres were thus disposed of in the province of Kuban and government of Stavropol.

The Cossacks do not distribute the land in separate holdings. "Together we conquered it," they say, "together we have defended it; it belongs to all of us."

The commune decides every year how the several districts are to be cultivated, and market-garden plots alone are held as private property. Still the officers, being no longer elected by their Cossack comrades, have received with their commission parcels of land, or *khutors*, intended to enhance their prestige. The example of the superior officers was soon followed by other dignitaries, and the stanitzas thus became surrounded by khutors, from which the herds of the commonalty were excluded. In 1842 the Government proceeded with the regular distribution of the land according to the rank of the holders—4,090 acres for

Fig. 29.—Valleys of Erosion in the Kuban Basin.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 750,000.

generals, 1,090 for superior officers, 545 for subalterns, 82 for simple Cossacks. The allotments of the soldiers, constituting the communal domain, were thus cut up into small fragments, and the peasantry protested in vain against a distribution so entirely opposed to their interests. Of late years the Shalopûts and other sectarian communities have acquired a great development in this region, the habits of co-operation giving them exceptional strength, and enabling them to succeed where others fail.

The most populous villages are found in the fertile valleys formed by erosion in the limestone terrace facing the Caucasus. The most important of the stanitzas

lying at the very foot of the Caucasian spurs is *Maïkop*, formerly a first-class strategic point, now a chief mart for the produce of the whole country. In the Kuban valley are also the trading towns of *Batalpashinskaya; Nikolayevskaya*, near the Karakent coal mines; *Ladovskaya;* and *Yekaterinodar*. The last named, now capital of the province of Kuban, does a considerable trade, and at its September fairs, frequented by 25,000 of the peasantry, the exchanges amount to about 2,000,000 roubles. *Yeisk*, founded since 1848, has had a rapid development, thanks to its free trade and productive fisheries, and although its progress has been less marked since its privileges have ceased, it still remains the most populous town on the Caucasian seaboard.

Stavropol, capital of the government of like name, stands at an elevation of 2,000 feet on one of the advanced terraces flanking the foot of the Caucasus. Founded as a mere fort in 1776, it long remained without any importance except as a strategical position on the line of the ten fortresses guarding the plains of Ciscaucasia between the Don delta and the town of Mozdok. But thanks to the fertile lands by which it is surrounded, it has now become one of the most flourishing places in Russia. North of it stretch a number of populous villages in the Yegorlik and Sredniy-Yegorlik valleys, founded chiefly by peasantry from the centre of Russia; hence forming not *stanitzas*, but *selos*, a circumstance which explains the difference of terminations presented by the names of villages in the Kuban and Yegorlik basins.

III.—CENTRAL CAUCASUS.

KUMA AND TEREK BASINS.

Between Mounts Elbruz and Kazbek the main range rises for a distance of 108 miles above the snow-line. At certain intervals side ridges, with the summits of the range, form huge masses towering like glittering citadels of ice above the surrounding highlands. The Elbruz, with its counterforts, constitutes the most imposing of these masses in the Caucasus. It is the "Holy Mountain" of the Cherkesses, on whose snowy peak is enthroned the "Lord of the World, King of Spirits." The Adish, Kashtan-tau, and Dikh-tau also form a sort of promontory projecting beyond the main range, and succeeded farther east by a similar group consisting of the Adai-kokh, Tzea-kokh, and neighbouring mountains. Immediately east of this group the chain is broken by the deep gap through which flows the Ar-don; but the gorge is blocked by a ridge running parallel with the main axis, and culminating with Mount Zikari. In the same way the Zilga-kokh stands at the southern entrance of the depression formed by the torrents flowing between the masses culminating respectively with the Tepli and Kazbek. The latter, which is the Mkinvari of the Georgians, and Urs-kokh, or "White Mountain," of the Ossetes, is still more venerated than Mount Elbruz, thanks probably to its position near the gate of the Caucasus, now known as the

Darial Pass. Here is the celebrated grotto, whence the hermits could ascend, by means of an iron chain, to the "Cradle of Bethlehem" and "Abraham's Tent," as the Kazbek peak is variously known to the native Christians.*

River Systems—Kuma Basin.

The counterforts and terraces falling from the snowy crest of the Caucasus form the various chains of the "Black Mountains," beyond which they develop

Fig. 30.—Passanaûr, on the Tiflis-Vladikavkaz Route.

into a vast semicircle round the Kabarda plains, terminating northwards with the isolated mass of the Besh-tau. Here the streams converge towards the centre

* Mean height of the Caucasus between the Elbruz (18,820 feet) and Adai-kokh (15,485 feet), 12,670 feet. Chief peaks:—

	Feet.		Feet.
Zikari	10,430	Mamisson Pass	9,540
Zilga-kokh	12,840	Krestovaya Gora	7,542
Tepli	14,000	Besh-tau	4,670

of the amphitheatre, like the Alpine torrents collected in the plains of Piedmont, and thus is formed the Terek, the Po of the Caucasus, flowing thence in a swift and copious stream towards the Caspian. Still the waters descending from the more advanced spurs of the Caucasus do not join the Terek, but drain through the Kalaûs and Kuma north and north-eastwards to the steppes.

The Kalaûs is a true steppe river. With the melting of the snows in spring it overflows its banks far and wide; in summer its stream contracts more and more as it recedes from the hills, and at last runs quite dry before reaching

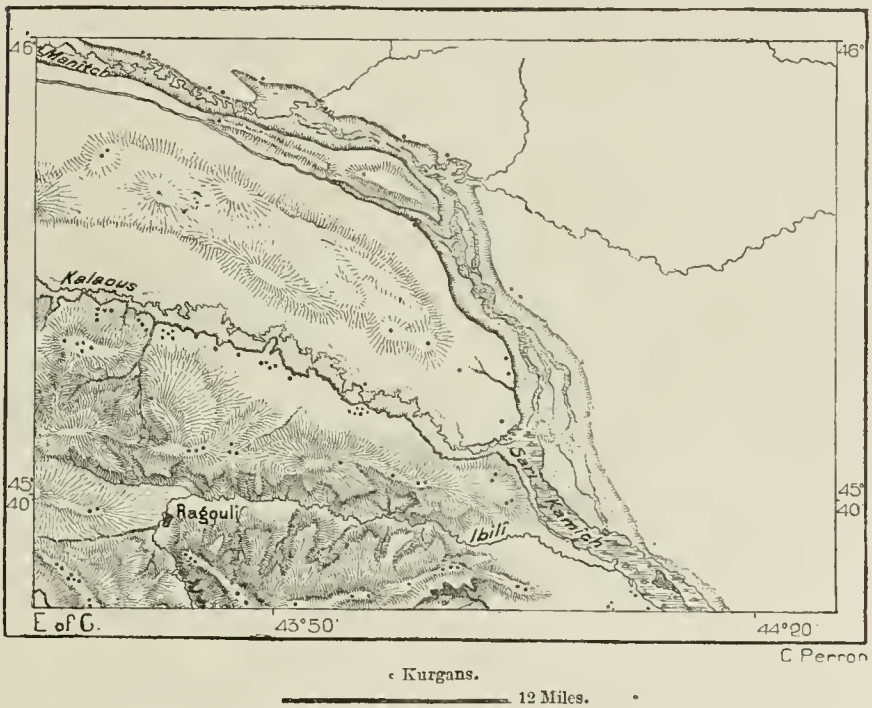
Fig. 31.—The Elbruz Group.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 430,000.

the Manîch depression. It also presents the remarkable phenomenon of a double discharge in the direction of the Euxine and Caspian. Entering the Manîch depression at the water-parting, its floods, arrested and divided into two streams by a small eminence, are diverted west to the Manîch of the Don, east to that which flows to the Kuma delta. Steep banks enclose a bed 2 to 3 miles wide, bearing witness to its former importance. But in this space, large enough to contain the waters of the Nile or Rhone, nothing now flows except a sluggish stream winding its way from marsh to marsh through its sedgy channel.

The Kuma basin is more extensive than that of the Kalaûs, and the streams by which it is watered flow from more elevated ground, some of them from mountains covered with snow for the greater part of the year. On issuing from its upper valley the Kuma is already a copious river; but after receiving its last regular affluent, 150 miles from the Caspian, it gradually contracts as it winds through the steppe. A portion of its waters is evaporated, and the rest is diverted right and left to the pastures of the Nogai Tatars and Kalmuks. It often happens that about 60 miles above its former mouth the last drop is turned aside by the dams of the natives. At one time the quantity of water in the Kuma basin was much greater than at present, and a delta began at the point where the river now

Fig. 32.—Ramification of the Kalaûs.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 620,000.



runs dry. The northern branch flowed to the Western Manîch, whose bed is now replaced by the lakes and tarns of the Hûidûk, strung together like pearls on a necklace. The two other branches of the Kuma, also indicated by fens, pools, and channels, run nearly parallel towards a bay in the Caspian still known as the Kumskiy Proran, or "Mouth of the Kuma." Exceptionally high floods occasionally sweep away the dams constructed by the Nogai Tatars, and the lower beds are then temporarily flushed, as in 1879, when the yellow waters of the Kuma again reached the Caspian.

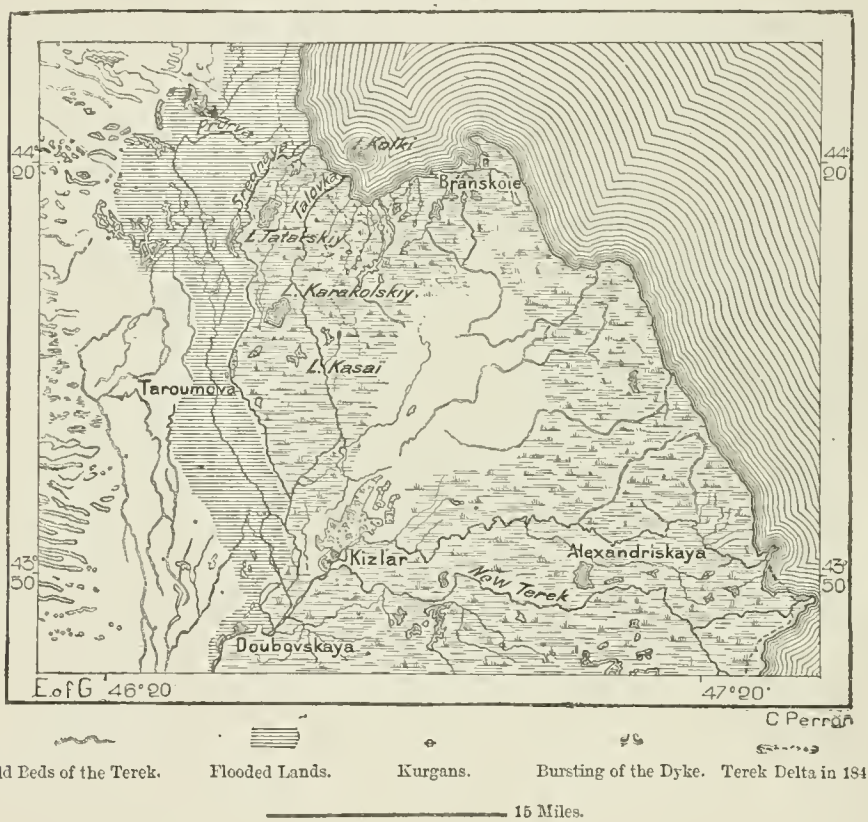
Neither the Kuma nor the Kalaûs discharges water sufficient to feed a Ponto-Caspian canal, and even if such a project were carried out, Serebrakovskaya, the

intended port of the Kuma, would be inaccessible to vessels drawing more than 2 feet of water, while those drawing over 4 feet could not approach within 4 miles of the place.

The Terek.

The Terek is not one of those rivers which, like the Manîch and Kuma, run out before reaching the sea. Its chief sources rise in a cirque about 8,300 feet above sea-level, and it is already a large stream before issuing from the region of

Fig. 33.—Delta and Flooded Districts of the Lower Terek.
According to Litvinov. Scale 1 : 1,000,000.

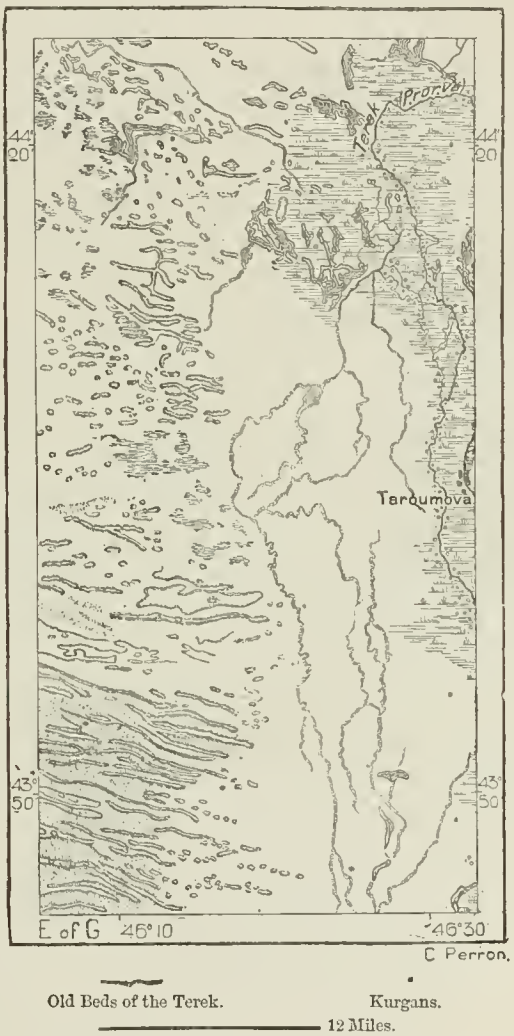


snows and upland pastures. After skirting the Kazbek group on the south and west, it flows from basin to basin through a series of gorges down to the plains below Vladikavkaz. At the foot of a vast declivity filling the bed of an old lake it collects the waters of the Gusel-don, Fiag-don, Ar-don, and several other rapid streams, beyond which it is joined by the Urukh, and its largest tributary the Malka, with its affluents the Cherek and Baksu. Above the Malka junction it already discharges 17,500 cubic feet per second, and during its further course through the steppe to the Caspian it is joined by the Sunja, another large and

rapid river flowing through the country of the Chechenzes, and fed by numerous sulphur streams. One of these is the Melchihi, which is formed by the junction of five copious springs, so hot that several miles lower down it is still unpotable.

Below the Sunja, notwithstanding the losses caused by evaporation and irrigation, the Terek is still copious enough to form a vast delta, with a large number of permanent or intermittent branches frequently shifting with the floods, and changing their relative importance from century to century. One of these is the "Old Terek," formerly the most abundant, but now surpassed in volume by the "New Terek." The delta comprises a coast-line of about 70 miles, and it seems to have been formerly connected on the one hand with the Kuma, on the other with the Sulak by some now partly obliterated channels. West of the present delta are still to be seen the old shores of the Caspian, as well as a number of parallel lines of elongated sand dunes, or *bugri*, exactly similar to those of the Volga delta, and doubtless formed by the subsidence of the water at the time when the Caspian became separated from the Euxine. According to Baer the alluvia of the Terek are encroaching on the Caspian even more rapidly than those of the Volga. Several inlets have already been choked up, and fishing stations which in 1825 stood on the coast were, thirty years later on, nearly 10 miles from the sea. The whole coast-line between the Kuma and Terek has advanced from 1,000 to 2,000 yards since 1841; but all these new and badly drained tracts are still very unhealthy. During the months of July and August the labourers and gardeners complain of swollen heads, and the marsh fever subjects them to hallucinations of all sorts.

Fig. 34.—The Terek Floods of 1863.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 650,000.



The stream of the Terek is amply sufficient to contribute its share towards the navigable canal with which Danilov proposes to connect the Euxine and Caspian. But pending this somewhat remote contingency, its waters and those of its tribu-

taries are utilised in irrigating the bordering steppe lands. The Eristov Canal, fed by the Malka, traverses the northern plains, joining the Terek after a course of 140 miles. Farther north the Kurskiy Canal, also flowing from the Malka, turns the wheels of nineteen mills, and during the floods forms a stream 96 miles long. A third, running north of the Sunja junction, irrigates over 250,000 acres. If skilfully utilised, the waters of this river system, which abound in fertilising matter, might extend far north and north-east the rich Kabarda basin, which promises one day to become a magnificent agricultural region.

Inhabitants—The Kabards.

The Kabards, or Kabardins, who call themselves Kabertaï, occupy nearly all the northern slope of the Central Caucasus between the Elbruz and Kazbek. They are ethnically closely related to the Cherkesses; like them, a fine race, fonder of wars and strife than of peaceful habits, and distinguished from them only by their harsh speech full of gutturals and sibilants. Their princes claim Arab descent, though the difference which some observers have detected between them and their subjects is probably due to outward circumstances and their occasional alliances with foreign families. The Kabards seem to have come originally from the north-west, probably even from the Crimea, whence they have been gradually driven towards the Terek, first by the Nogai Tatars, and afterwards by the Russians. They have retained something of their former nomad life, and are even now far more devoted to the breeding of horses and sheep than to agriculture. The land is still held in common, the woods and pastures remain undivided, and no one has any claim except to the plot tilled by himself. Such plots, when left uncultivated, revert immediately to the commune. Perhaps more than elsewhere in Caucasia daring robbery is held in honour, but on the condition of its being committed away from the village and tribe, and provided that the robber escape detection. In the latter case he would be exposed to the taunts and jeers of the community. Notwithstanding the Russian laws, it is also still considered highly honourable for the young man to carry off his bride. Some days before the nuptials he steals into the chamber where she awaits him, and whence they escape together. On returning to sue for pardon, he may calculate beforehand on the approval of all who still respect the old usages.

The Kabards properly so called number about 32,000. At one time they were the leading nation in Ciscaucasia; but owing to their exposed geographical position, they were the first to lose their independence. The Russians easily penetrated through the Terek valley into the heart of their domain. Forts erected at intervals along the river divided the plains into two distinct regions—Great Kabarda on the west, and Little Kabarda on the east. Between the two runs the great military route over the Caucasus, and here the Russians consequently strove, in the first instance, to establish their power on a solid footing. As early as 1763 some of the Kabards, outwardly Christians, withdrew to Russian territory, settling in the steppe along the middle course of the Terek. At the beginning

of the present century upwards of 40,000, flying from Russian rule, sought a refuge amongst the Kuban Tatars, who welcomed and gave them lands, which are still held by the descendants of those "White Kabards." But the bulk of the nation remained in the Upper Terek basin, and their young men were fain to accept service in the imperial armies. Amongst them were first recruited those magnificent "Cherkesses," as they are called, who figure so conspicuously on all state occasions. Returning to their homes, they have ceased to be Kabards, and take pride not in their ancestral freedom, but in their present thraldom. The ancient usages also become slowly modified by constant intercourse with the ruling race, while their national unity is broken by the intrusion of foreign elements. Isolated villages are already occupied by Tatars, Uruspievtzes, Balkars, Nogais, grouped in democratic communities administered by the elders. The country is also traversed by Jewish usurers in search of fresh victims, while groups of Germans are settled here and there, generally on the more fertile lands. The "Scotch" colony north of Patigorsk has even been already completely assimilated to these Teutonic settlers. On the other hand, the towns, growing daily in size, have become exclusively Russian, and the district north of the Malka has been entirely Slavonised by the Cossacks, who began to make their appearance in this region during the reign of Ivan the Terrible.

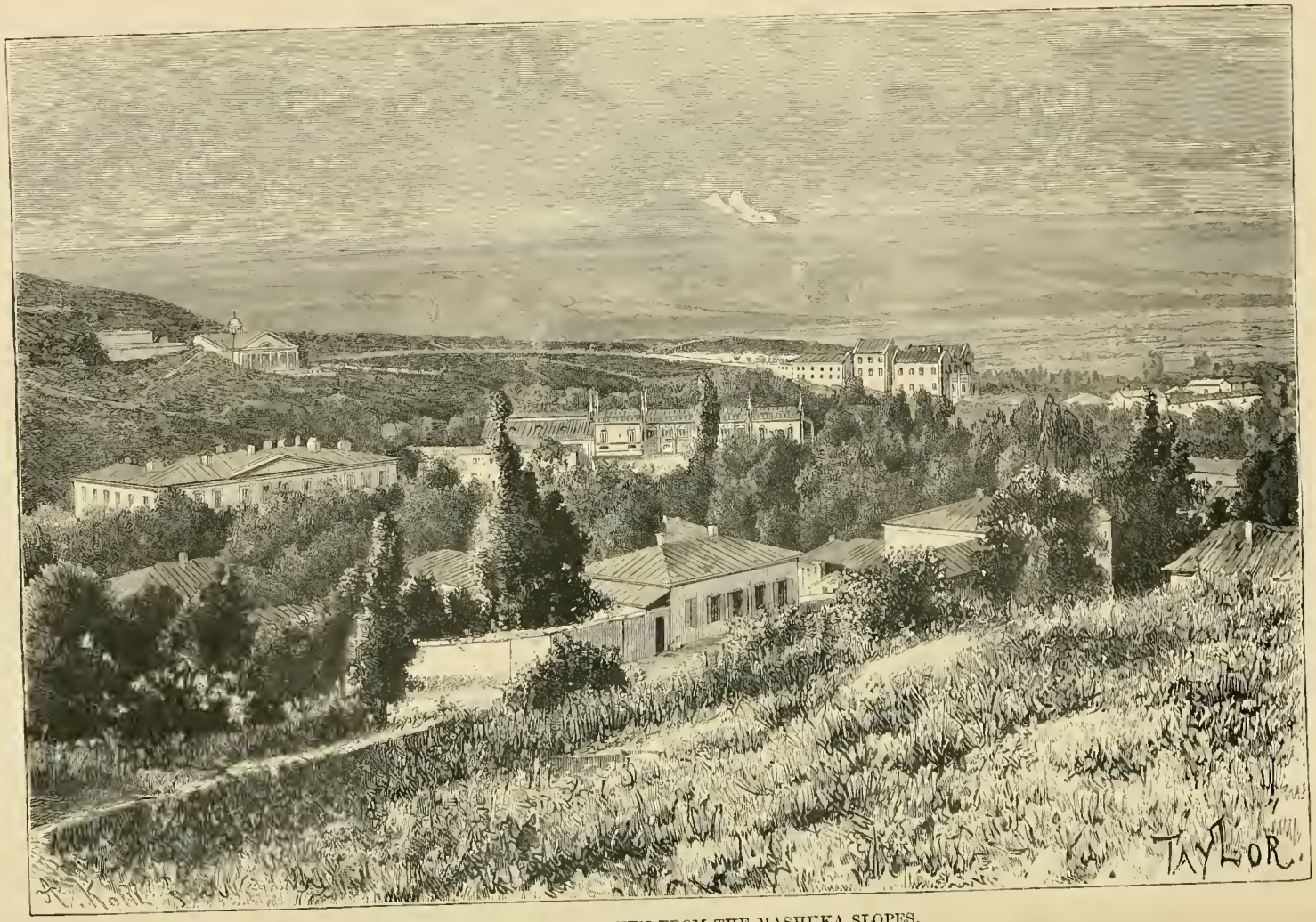
The Osses and Nogai Tatars.

The Osses, more commonly but less correctly known as Ossetes, are as numerous in the Terek basin as the Kabards, but they have scarcely yet ventured on the plains, confining themselves mainly to the upland valleys between Mounts Adai-kokh and Kazbek, west and east. Two-fifths, however, of this nation dwell not on the northern, but on the southern slopes, in the valleys draining to the Rion and Kura, and even on a portion of the Trialetes Hills, south of the Kura plains. They are estimated at upwards of 110,000 altogether, thus forming one of the most important nations in Caucasia. But their fame is due not so much to their power as to the various theories that have been broached touching their origin and affinities. Some have regarded them as Alans; others as the purest representatives of the Aryans in the Caucasus, akin either to the Teutons or to the Iranians; while Vivien de Saint-Martin suggests that they may belong to the race of the Ases, like those who migrated to Scandinavia. Lastly, Pfaff thinks that they are at least partly of Semite stock. But, judging from the great variety of types and features, ranging from the ideal beautiful to the downright ugly, they would seem to be a very mixed people, including Georgian, Armenian, Kabard, and other elements. In the Digor district, on the north slope, several noble families are undoubtedly of Tatar origin, whilst others in the southern valley of the Livash-don are of Georgian stock. Apart from numerous exceptions, the bulk of the people are decidedly inferior in physical appearance to the other races of the Caucasus. Their features are generally angular, their forms heavy, and they utterly lack that pleasant expression, that noble air and

graceful carriage, by which the Cherkesses and Kabards are distinguished. The fair type is more common than the brown, and some are met with blue eyes like the Scandinavians, while others resemble the Jewish dealers in their black or brown eyes, and even in their wheedling voice.

But whatever be their origin, their speech belongs unquestionably to the Aryan family. Their national name is Iron, and their country Ironiston, words suggesting the Iran of Persia. The Digor dialect has a large mixture of Tatar and Cherkess elements, but the pure speech still current in the upland valleys, while ruder than that of the lowlands, abounds in Aryan roots. In their manners and customs the Osses seem also to betray their relationship with the Western nations. They differ from the other Caucasians in their use of the bed, table, and chair; they salute in the European fashion, embracing and shaking hands as in the West; lastly, they brew from barley, and drink their beer from tankards exactly like those of the North German peasantry. In the upper valleys, where wood is scarce, they live in stone towers of great age; but lower down they build little wooden houses like the Alpine barns, shingle-roofed and weighted with heavy stones.

On the whole the Osses do not reflect much credit on the Aryan race. Physically inferior to their highland neighbours, they cannot compare with them in pride, dignity, or courage, although Freshfield calls them the "Gentlemen of the Caucasus." Like their neighbours, they have always been ready to offer themselves to the highest bidder, taking service under the Byzantines, Greeks, or Persians, and returning to their homes to spend in revelry the fruits of their plundering expeditions. They had been so debased by this mercenary trade that they became confirmed marauders, worshipping Saûbareg, god of brigandage, who rides a black horse, accompanying and guiding the freebooters on their predatory incursions. But though still ready for murder and pillage when no danger is run, they took care not to defend their liberty against the Russians at the risk of their lives. Although masters of the central valleys, and consequently of the most important strategical points in the Caucasus, they left the Cherkesses in the west and the Lezghians of Daghestan to fight and perish separately. Instead of occupying the foremost rank in the wars against the aggressor, they waited till victory had decided in favour of the Russians to make up their minds. Poverty had made them the prey of every foreign speculator, and to put an end to all further disputes touching the ownership of the land, the Russian Government declared all the lowlands State property, and removed thither the "unsafe" hillmen. Most of the Osses used to call themselves Mohammedans, but now they pretend to be Christians, and revere St. Nicholas no less devoutly than the prophet Elias. Besides, they had already changed their religion three times during the ten last centuries, and in spite of their present Christianity they practise polygamy, aggravated by the fact that the first wife treats the children of the others as slaves. Pagan practices even reappear beneath the official religion and the remains of the Moslem creed. During Holy Week they make offerings of bread-and-butter on the altars of the sacred



PATIGORSK—VIEW TAKEN FROM THE MASHUKA SLOPES.

groves, in the grottoes, in the former Christian shrines, and then devour the sheep victims of the sacrifice. Their most revered monuments are the *sappads*, or ancient graves, octagonal structures from 12 to 16 feet high, terminating in a pyramidal roof pierced with holes. In some Oss and Cherkess villages the sappads are numerous enough to form veritable cemeteries; but since the middle of the century no new ones have been allowed to be built, because of the gases escaping from them and poisoning the atmosphere.

Of the non-Caucasian peoples the most numerous in the Kuma and Terek basins are the Nogai Tatars, who roam mostly over the eastern steppes, and along the shores of the Caspian and brackish lakes filled by the winter rains, dried up under the summer suns and winds. Akin to those still met here and there on the banks of the Kuban, and partly descended from the old masters of the Crimea, the Nogais are true Asiatics. Like their poor neighbours the Stavropol and Astrakhan Kalmuks, they dwell in felt tents, and when removing to fresh pastures they place their children in the panniers carried by the camels on whose hump the women are perched, and in this order the caravan crosses the desert wastes. Thus are the familiar scenes of Central Asia repeated on the western shores of the Caspian, though this Asiatic region is being gradually contracted, according as the Mongoloid populations are being driven back by the Russians. During the last fifty years the Nogais of the Caucasus have fallen from 70,000 to half that number. In features, stature, and carriage most of them have become Mongolians, assuming by mixture the flat face, broad nose, prominent cheek bones, small and oblique eyes, high brow, and scant beard of the Kalmuks. They are of a gentle and kindly disposition, but wedded to their old usages, haters of all change, and resisting Slav influences except along the river banks, where tillage and the fisheries bring them into constant contact with the Russians, and where poverty obliges them to hire themselves out to the Armenians and Cossacks. With the sad temperament of all Mongolians, they derive their national name, with a sort of melancholy irony, from a word meaning "Thou shalt be wretched."

Some thousands of Turkomans also live in the neighbourhood of Kizlar. According to a tradition, based apparently on a faint reminiscence of submarine geology, these Turkomans crossed over on dry land from the Krasnovodsk headland to the peninsula of Apsheron.

Topography.

Patigorsk (in Russian "Five Hills"), the largest town in the Kuma basin, lies at the southern foot of the Mashuka, an advanced spur of the Besh-tau group. This five-crested porphyry cone rising in the middle of the plain was at all times a rallying-point for the steppe nomads. Hence Patigorsk occupies one of the spots in the Caucasus most frequented by divers tribes, Kabards, Nogais, Cossacks, and others, and it has now become a rendezvous for the Russians of all the surrounding provinces, and even for strangers from the rest of Europe. Patigorsk is, in fact, one of the thermal stations whose abundant sulphur springs are held in

the highest repute, and is more frequented than all the rest of the hundred watering-places in Caucasia, with their seven hundred different mineral springs, as enumerated by Chodzko. Within a radius of 24 miles the Patigorsk medicinal waters comprise a complete series of such as are recommended by modern therapeutics. The twenty springs in Patigorsk itself, with a temperature varying from 85° to 110° Fahr., and yielding on the average 2½ gallons per second, are typical sulphur springs. About 12 miles to the north-east the station of *Jelesnovodsk*—that is, "Iron Water"—indicates by its very name the nature of its twenty springs, which

Fig. 35.—Patigorsk and the Region of Thermal Waters.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 600,000.

differ greatly in temperature and the amount of their carbonic acid, while varying in the quantity of their discharge, which is affected by the earthquakes. Near the village of Yesentuki, west of Patigorsk, there are also twenty springs, but cold, alkaline, and containing iodine and bromine. In the hills to the south-west occurs the magnificent spring known to the Cherkesses as the *Narzan*, or "Drink of Heroes," and now distinguished by the less poetic but more accurate name Kislovodsk, or "Acidulated Water." This spring, whose properties are unrivalled, yields over 375,000 gallons of water, and liberates 190,000 cubic feet of carbonic acid daily. The approach to the sacred spring was formerly defended by a wall

several miles long, flanked by grottoes and by tombs, the traces of which are still visible. Other sources that have not yet been utilised contain chlorine, magnesia, marine salt, while the lakes and pools left in the steppes after the subsidence of the sea have their saline muds filled with microscopic algæ, like the limans of the Euxine.

Patigorsk covers a large space in the valley of the Podkumok, a southern affluent of the Kuma. It stands at a mean altitude of 1,580 feet above the unhealthy atmosphere of the plains, and its climate is further improved by extensive promenades, parks, and gardens. Fine hotels, houses, arcades, and elegant shops well stocked with Russian, English, French, and Oriental wares, give it the aspect of a European watering-place, though dating only from the year 1830. At the end of the last century invalids came to take the waters "under the fire of the Cherkesses." The Russian lords arrived with retinues of some hundred cavaliers and retainers, long lines of equipages, tents, and supplies, during the treatment encamping in the neighbourhood of the spring.

Georgyevsk, north-east of Patigorsk and in the same river basin, was the capital of Ciscaucasia till 1824. When the administration was removed to Stavropol, it fell to the rank of a simple village, but has since recovered its importance as the agricultural centre of the Kuma basin, and as a station of the Caucasian railway. Its prosperity has also been promoted by some German colonies in the neighbourhood. Farther down, on the Kuma and its western affluents, there are merely a few Cossack stanitzas, some of which, such as *Otkaznoïe, Alexandrovskaya, Blagodarnoïe, Praskoveya*, have become towns and important agricultural centres. East of Praskoveya formerly stood the famous city of *Majar*, or Majari, on both banks of the Kuma. The coincidence of names has induced some writers to suppose that Majar was a capital of the Hungarian Magyars. But the word, which is of Tûrki origin, meaning "palace," "edifice," seems to have been the name of one of the four chief cities of the Khazar Empire. The Kipchak Tatars were settled here, and various recently discovered documents show that it was still a flourishing place in the fourteenth century, much frequented by Russian traders. In the time of Pallas there were still standing thirty-two buildings in good repair; now there is nothing to be seen but the remains of towers and heaps of rubbish covering a vast space. The few inscriptions that occur refer all of them to the Moslem Tatars, and the medals that have been dug up had all been struck at Saraï, on the Volga. Numerous kurgans are scattered about, and the Armenian village of Svatoi-Krest has sprung up in the midst of the ruins.

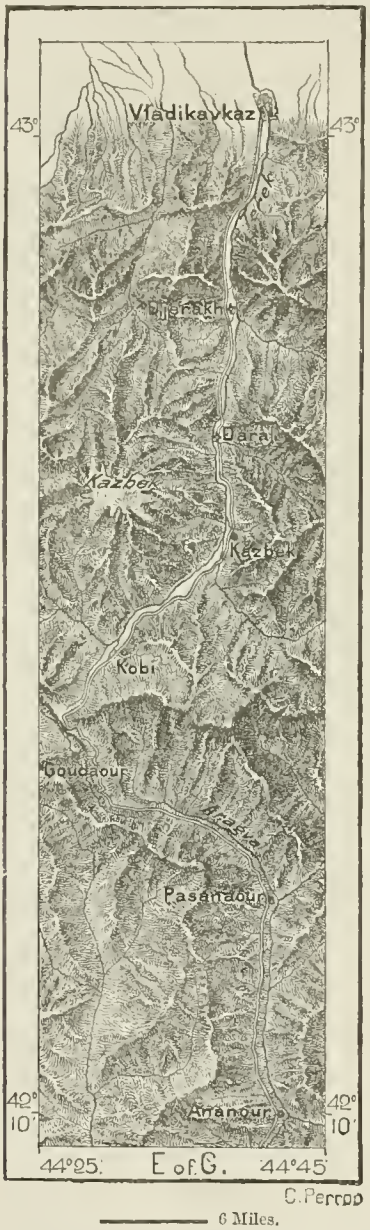
The capital of Kabarda and the chief place in the Terek basin is *Vladikavkaz*, known to the Osses as Kapkaï, or "Gate of the Hills." It lies, in fact, at the foot of the Black Mountains, guarding the entrance to the deep gorges through which the Terek escapes. Standing about 2,300 feet above sea-level at a point commanding the military route through Central Caucasia, it enjoyed paramount strategical importance during all the wars of the Caucasus, and since the reduction of the hillmen it has become a large commercial emporium. Yet the military

and official elements are still predominant, and in 1874 the male was more than double the female population.

Till recently the military route from Vladikavkaz across the Caucasus to Tiflis was exposed to destruction from the angry waters of the Terek, while avalanches of snow and detritus swept over it at the issues of the mountain torrents. Even now it is constantly threatened to be overwhelmed by the Devdoraki glacier, and is generally blocked for seventeen days in the year for a space of 8 or 9 miles. Hence heavy engineering works will have to be carried out, should the project be persisted in of running a line of railway through the Terek valley and under the Caucasus from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis. The prosperity of Vladikavkaz and other towns on both slopes of the main range largely depends on the ultimate choice that may be made of the several alternative lines that have been proposed. It is probable, however, that, before attacking it directly, the main range will be skirted at its eastern extremity by a line connecting the towns of Petrovsk, Derbent, and Baku.

Fig. 36.—The Vladikavkaz-Ananur Route through the Terek Valley.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 640,000.



Yekaterinograd, on the Terek below Vladikavkaz, a former outpost of the Cherkesses, still occupies a vital position near the confluence of the Malka. Here Potomkin founded one of the chain of Russian fortresses in the Caucasus, and seven years later on it was chosen as the capital of the Muscovite possessions in this region. But it lost this position in 1790, since when it has remained a simple Cossack stanitza. The political and commercial centre of the district is *Mozdok*, or "Black Wood," founded in 1759 by a chief of Little Kabarda driven by the fortunes of war into exile. From the first it was a haven of refuge for fugitive Kabards, Osses, Chechenzes, Armenians, and Georgians from Transcaucasia. Till recently the Armenians formed by far the most numerous element, and thanks to them Mozdok had become the chief trading-place in Ciscaucasia. The Russian Government had even favoured it by diverting towards it the military route between Stavropol and Tiflis; but since the completion of the railway it has lost

the advantages thereby acquired. Henceforth its prosperity must depend exclusively on its position as the natural rallying-point of the surrounding populations, and as the entrepôt of the agricultural settlements on the Middle Terek.

Grozniy, which has grown up round the fortress of Groznaya, is now the

Fig. 37.—The Tebulos-mta Group.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 255,000.

natural capital of all the Sunja valley, probably the most fertile in Ciscaucasia. Its mineral waters, known since the middle of the last century, are much frequented, but the neighbouring naphtha wells have no great commercial value.

Of the numerous towns and villages scattered over the Grozniy plain and surrounding hills the most important are *Urus-Martan*, and farther east the Moslem town of *Ak-sai*, in a well-watered district laid out in gardens.

Kizlar, of which mention occurs so early as 1616, was also a place of refuge for fugitives, especially Armenians, who gradually monopolized the local trade. It is happily situated at the head of the Terek delta for traffic and horticulture, the river and its branches supplying all the water needed for irrigating purposes. In 1861 there were in this district over 1,250 flourishing gardens, supplying the Russian markets with all sorts of spring fruits and vegetables. Kizlar is likewise noted for its vineyards, the produce of which, exported from the neighbouring port of Briansk, or Brianskoïe, is used by the Russians in the manufacture of "port," "sherry," "madeira," and other famous southern wines. About 1,250,000 gallons are yearly sold at the Nijni-Novgorod fair.

IV.—EASTERN CAUCASIA.

DAGHESTAN.

Although boasting of no summits rivalling Mounts Elbruz and Kazbek, the general relief of the eastern is far more considerable than that of the central section of the Caucasus. The depressions between the peaks are relatively very high, while the lateral ridges give to this division an expansion of 2° of latitude north and south. Here the different altitudes and dispositions of the groups impart far greater variety to the scene, and in many valleys snowy or wooded heights rise all along the line of the horizon. The rugged and tangled masses long afforded a shelter to the natives against the Russians, who were unable to penetrate into the upper valleys except through the winding beds of the mountain torrents or across unknown tracks, where they were exposed to the ambuscades and sudden attacks of the lurking foe.

Mount Borbalo, source of the streams flowing to the Terek, Sulak, Kuma, and Alazan, is usually regarded as the western limit of Daghestan. Here the Andi, or principal side ridge, branches from the main range, forming with it the triangular space of the Eastern Caucasus. This region presents somewhat the aspect of a vast plateau scooped into valleys, the higher of which nowhere fall more than about 3,000 feet below the surrounding crests. Abish regards the whole of Daghestan as a system of sedimentary, Jurassic, cretaceous, and tertiary rocks overlapping each other, and whose folds have been rent and intersected by crevasses. The culminating point of this system is the Tebulos-mta, rising to a height of 14,990 feet in the Andi ridge. Several other *mta*, or "peaks," in the same chain exceed 13,000 feet, whereas those of the central range vary from 9,750 to about 11,370 feet. Still the line of perpetual snow is reached by several, such as the Sari-dagh, Vitziri, Bazardiûz, Tkhfan-dagh, Baba-dagh, on the main range, and the Alakhûn-dagh, Shalbûz-dagh, Shah-dagh, or Eastern Elbruz, and Kizil-Kaya, in the northern side ridges. East of the Baba-dagh the mountains

fall rapidly towards the Caspian, sinking to mere hills in the Apsheron peninsula. Nearly all these mountains are still known by their Tûrki or Georgian names.*

River Systems.

A few of the torrents rising in the advanced spurs of Daghestan flow to the Sunja, the chief southern affluent of the Terek; but most of these waters are collected by the Sulak, formed by the four torrents which bear the Tatar name of Koï-su. Like the Terek and Ar-don, the Sulak emerges through magnificent gorges on the plains, trending thence eastward to the Caspian. Like them, also, it is gradually encroaching on the sea, and during the floods forms a temporary delta, whose waters are partly mingled with those of the Terek in the vast Bay of Agrakhan, which is rather a lagoon than a marine inlet. In the hope of deepening its channel, Peter the Great diverted to it a permanent stream from the Sulak, but, like so many similar projects undertaken by that czar, the attempt proved abortive: the dykes were swept away by the floods, and the navigable canal choked by the mud. More successful have been the irrigation rills formed some years ago, and bringing under cultivation 150,000 acres about the Lower Sulak.

Of the streams flowing to the Caspian south of the Sulak, the Samur alone assumes the proportion of a river. On emerging from the mountains it ramifies into several branches, which are continually shifting their beds in the midst of the sands and shingle. The Samur, and all the torrents traversing the Kuba district, may be said to form a common delta, intermingling their waters, and jointly encroaching on the Caspian. Like the *fiumi* and *fiumare* of the eastern slopes of the Apennines, these streams are constantly changing their beds, leaving here and there old channels, false rivers, and stagnant pools no longer traversed by running waters. Hence the Lower Samur district, whose hydrographic system is not yet fully developed, is one of the most unhealthy in the Caucasus.

Inhabitants—The Chechenzes.

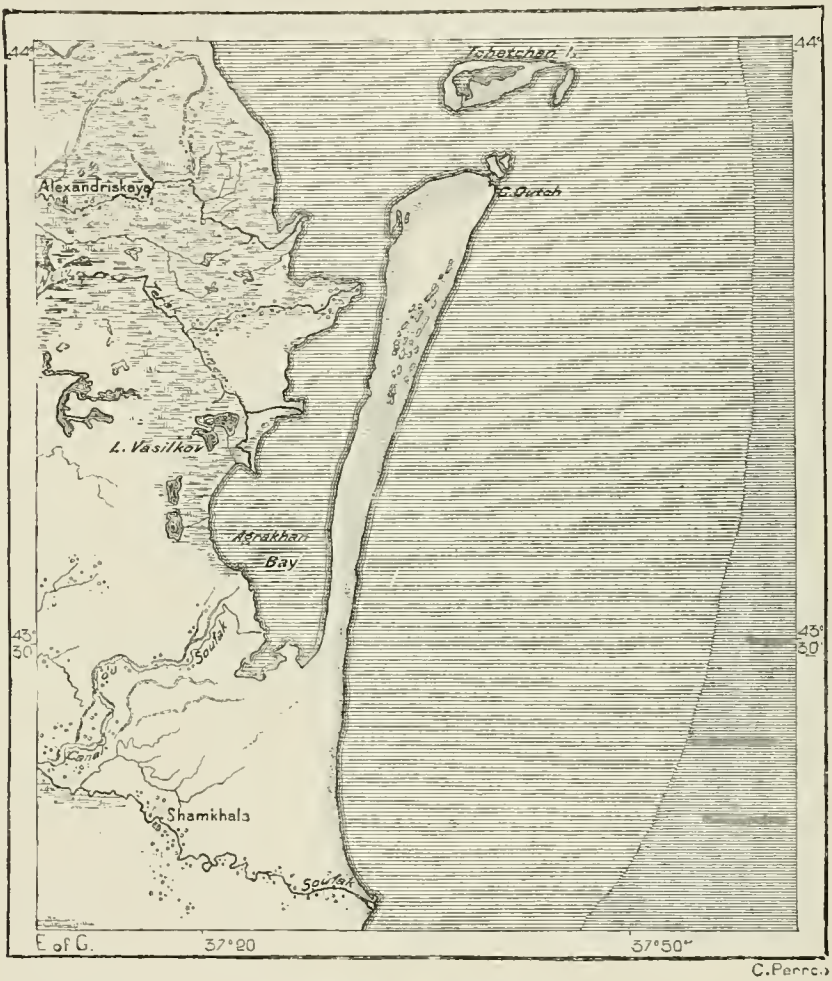
In 1868, at the close of the wars that had laid waste the Caucasian valleys, the Russian Government took a census of the highland population, which was found to number 908,000. In 1872 it was estimated at 995,000, of whom nearly one-half, or about 478,000, were in Daghestan alone. The Chechenzes and Lezghians of the northern slope between Kabarda and the Caspian form at present an aggregate

* Chief altitudes of the Eastern Caucasus:—

Main Range.	Feet.	*Andi Ridge.*	Feet.
Borbalo	11,120	Tebulos-mta	14,990
Sari-dagh	12,180	Kachu	14,220
Vitzîri	12,930	Diklos-mta	13,930
Bazardiûz	14,930	*Eastern Highlands.*	
Tkhfan-dagh	13,970	Alakhûn-dagh	12,930
Baba-dagh	12,100	Shah-dagh	14,160
Atesh-gah (Apsheron)	910	Shalbûz-dagh	14,150
		Kizil-Kaya	12,420

of at least 670,000 souls. This population is made up of several races differing in origin, religion, manners, and speech, though it is now ascertained that most of the idioms here current are merely varieties of a common stock language. One of them is restricted to the single village of Inukh, consisting of some thirty houses,

Fig. 38.—Mouths of the Terek and Lower Sulak.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 720,000.

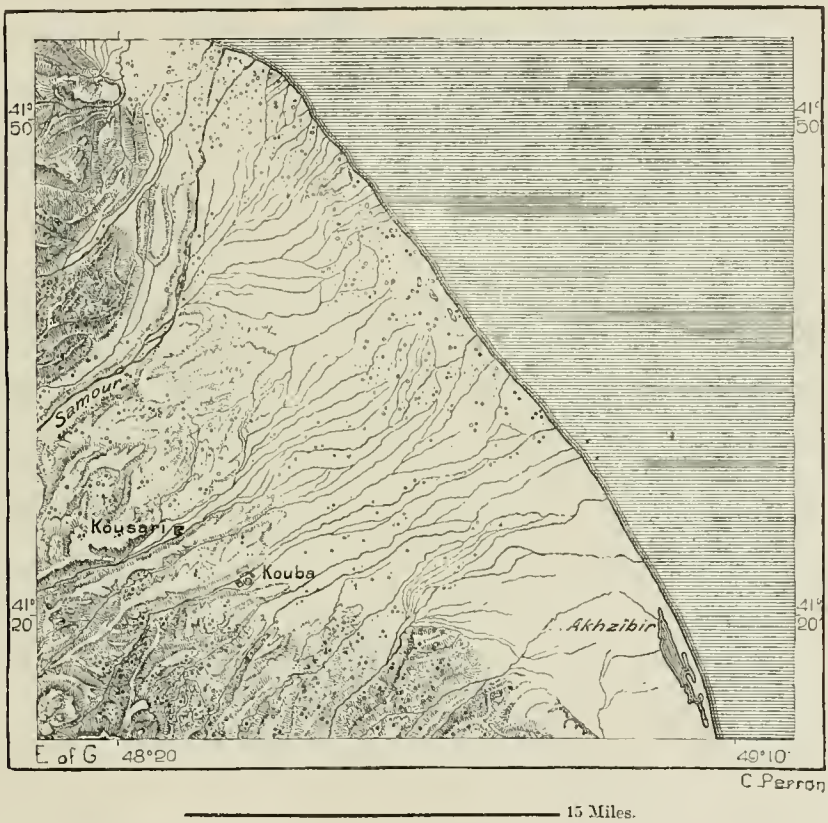


in South-west Daghestan, and none of them possess any literature except the Avar, which boasts of a few documents written in the Arabic character.

Amongst the peoples of the Eastern Caucasus the Cheehens, or Cheehenzes, estimated at about 140,000, are divided into some twenty different groups, each with a distinct language. Known to the Lezghians by the name of Misjeghi, and to

the Georgians as Kists, the Chechenzes occupy the whole of West Daghestan, east of the Osses and Kabards, and even descend from the advanced spurs down to the plains. Their territory is traversed by the Sunja, which divides it into "Little Chechniya," the lowland district, and "Great Chechniya," the highland region. Both the lowlanders and the hillmen fought desperately against the Russians in the last century under Daûd Beg and Omar Khan, in the present under Khazi-Mollah and Shamyl. Sunnite Mohammedans of a more fanatical type than the Cherkesses and Abkhasians of the west, they fought with the devotion inspired by religious enthusiasm, combined with a love of freedom and a warlike spirit. Yet

Fig. 39.—The Kuba District.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 840,000.



they were fain to yield at last, and since 1859 Chechniya, the most fertile and salubrious region in Caucasia, has been completely subdued. In 1819 the fortress of Groznaya, now grown into the city of Grosniy, had been built by the invaders on the banks of the Sunja between the two Chechenz territories, and its "threats," as the name implies, were not in vain. Like the Cherkesses, most of the highland Chechenzes were compelled to forsake their ancestral homes, and those who refused to settle in the plains migrated to Turkish Armenia in convoys of one hundred to two hundred families, escorted by Russian guards. Here fresh misfortunes awaited them. After sanguinary struggles with their new neighbours for the possession of the

land, they were several times removed, and the graveyards of each fresh place of exile retained numbers of the emigrants.

The Chechenzes bear a strong resemblance to the Cherkesses, and, like them, are haughty, well proportioned, active, fond of rich garments, which they wear with an easy grace. Most of them have an aquiline nose, and a restless, almost sinister glance; yet they are generous, and always maintain a certain dignity of speech and carriage: they kill, but never insult. The women of the better classes wear an elegant robe revealing the figure, and wide silken trousers of a pink colour. Yellow sandals, silver bracelets, and a piece of cloth falling over their shoulders and partly concealing the hair, complete their attire. The Chechenz dwellings are nearly all veritable hovels, cold, dank, and gloomy, some dug out of the ground, others formed of interwoven branches, or of stones rudely thrown together. A group of such dwellings forms one of those *aûls* often seen perched on some steep bluff, like erratic boulders arrested on the brink of the precipice. Before the Russian conquest most of the people lived in republican communes, governing themselves by popular gatherings like those of the primitive Swiss Cantons. Other communities were subject to hereditary khans, whose power dated from the time of the Moslem invasion. But all alike obeyed the *adat*, or unwritten code of the common law.

Although much dreaded by the lowlanders as brigands and marauders, the Daghestan hillmen, and especially the Chechenzes, more, perhaps, than any other warlike people, revealed the most brilliant qualities of freemen, at least during the final struggle with the Russians. "We are all equal," they were fond of repeating, and in point of fact there were no slaves amongst them except prisoners of war or their descendants. But these often married the daughters of their masters, and thus became members of the family and the equals of all. The Chechenzes carried their pride to a pitch of fanaticism, but their hospitality was boundless, although associated with eccentric practices. The traveller is often met by a band of horsemen swooping wildly down from the camping ground, firing salvoes over his head, then suddenly stopping within ten or fifteen paces, and saluting him with a profound "Salam aleikum!" In such a society justice was necessarily regulated by the law of life for life, and, notwithstanding the Russian code, this law is still the only one that is respected. Murder, pillage, robbery with violence, can be expiated only by death, unless the offender allow his hair to grow, and the injured party consent to shave it with his own hands, and make him take the oath of brotherhood on the Koran. It also happens that the law of vendetta is at times suspended by some great feasts. When a hillman discovers that his horse has disappeared, he sets out in search of it, fully equipped, wrapped in one of those white woollen shrouds which serve as winding-sheets, and provided with a piece of money to pay the priest who has to utter the prayers for the dead. The robber mostly gets rid of his booty by selling it in some remote clan, but at the sight of the rightful owner armed for a deadly fight the purchaser restores the animal, takes over the shroud and money, and presents himself before the vendor. Should he happen to be the robber, the priest is called in, and they fight it out. But if

the vendor has himself been deceived, he sets out in his turn with the dread emblems of mortal strife, and thus death at last hounds down its quarry, unless the horse-stealer happens to be a stranger from over the hills.

Another custom peculiar to the Ingush tribe illustrates their strong belief in an after-life. When one of the betrothed dies on the wedding-eve, the ceremony is performed all the same, and the dead is joined with the living in a union to be ratified in heaven, the father never failing to pay the stipulated dowry. Christianity still retains a certain hold on the Chechenzes, although all have adopted the Sunnite creed except those of Braguni, on the Sunja. Three churches built on a hill near Kistin in honour of SS. George, Marina, and the Virgin are still much-frequented places of pilgrimage, where rams are offered in sacrifice at certain times. These buildings are choked with animal remains.

The Lezghians, Tats, and Tatars.

Most of the peoples occupying the valleys east of the Chechenzes are grouped under the collective name of Lezghi, or Lezghians. The term has been explained to mean "Brigands," or "Marauders," in Tatar, although it seems more probable to be an old national name, for the Georgians and Armenians have from time immemorial applied the form *Lekhi*, or *Leksik*, to this nation. The number of Lezghian tribes, constantly changing with wars and migrations, is estimated at from fifty to fifty-five, although Komarov, keeping to the main divisions, indicates the domain of twenty-seven tribes only in his ethnological map of Daghestan. All these have distinct dialects marked by guttural sounds extremely difficult of utterance by the European mouth. They have been grouped by Uslar and Schiefner in a number of linguistic divisions, the chief of which are the language of the Avars in West Daghestan, and the Dargo and Kura in the east. Most of the tribes being thus unable to converse together, intercourse is carried on by means of a third language—Arabic usually in the west, and the Tûrki dialect of Azerbeijan in the east. Of all the Lezghian nations the most renowned are the Avars, bordering on the eastern frontier of the Chechenz domain, and comprising over one-fifth of the whole population. Most writers think they may probably be the kinsmen of the Avars who founded on the Danube a large empire, overthrown by Charlemagne. But according to Komarov Avar is of recent origin, meaning in the Lowland Tûrki "Fugitive," or "Vagrant."

Daghestan has too little arable land to enable its half-million of Lezghian population to live on agriculture and stock-breeding. Yet they are skilled tillers of the land, their walled and well-watered plots supplying good corn, fruits, and vegetables. Still they had to depend on emigration and plunder to make good the deficiency of the local supplies. Settled on both slopes of the Caucasus, they were able to swoop down on the Terek and Sulak plains in the north, or on the fertile southern region of Georgia. No less daring, and even more steadfast than the Chechenzes, they had the disadvantage of being broken up into a great number of free tribes often at feud with each other, while the flower of their youth were

accustomed, like the Swiss and Albanians in former times, to hire themselves out as mercenaries to all the surrounding kinglets. In their warfare they displayed more savagery than the Cherkesses, and, unlike them, carried off as a trophy the right hand of their captives when forced to abandon them.

The Lezghians never fought in concert till during the final struggles against the Russians in defence of their hearths and altars. All are Mohammedans except the Dido of the Upper Koïsu valley in Andi, who have the reputation of being devil worshippers, because they endeavour to conjure the evil one by sacrifices. Although much given to wine-drinking, tobacco smokers, and observers of traditional Christian and pagan rites, the Lezghians are none the less zealous Sunnites, and it was owing to their ardent faith alone that they were able for many years to forget their tribal and family rivalries, and make common cause in the *ghazavat*, or holy war against the infidel. Rallying with the Chechenzes round their fellow-countryman Khazi-Mollah, and afterwards round his ward Shamyl (Samuel), of the Koïsu-bu tribe, they drove the Russians more than once back to the plains, often compelling them to abandon their more advanced military settlements and isolated garrisons in the hills. Their strength lay mainly in the spirit of freedom by which they were inspired, and which was kept alive by the deeds of their legendary hero Haji-Murad, renowned in the wars waged against the khans of the Avars. But when the aristocracy of the *naïbs*, or governors, was gradually restored, the people, becoming enslaved to their chiefs, ceased to struggle with the same vigour against the Russians. Surrounded on three sides by an ever-narrowing iron circle of forts and military columns, and seeing their territory cut up by great military routes, they were fain to yield after half their numbers had perished from disease, hunger, and the sword. When Shamyl surrendered in 1859 his followers had dwindled to about four hundred armed men.

Fig. 40.—Nogai Youth.

After the conquest the old family jealousies revived, and the Lezghian districts are now the chief scene of sanguinary strife and murder. About one in every three hundred of the population is either killed or wounded during the year, and the circle of Kaïtago-Tabasseran, west of Derbent, has the melancholy distinction of harbouring more assassins than any other district in the empire. Yet in their neighbourhood dwell the peaceful Ukhbukanes, or Kubichi, who are chiefly

engaged in forging arms for the surrounding hillmen. Indispensable to all, their neutrality is alike respected by all. This industrious tribe claims European descent, but their national name of Frenghi, or Frenki—that is, Franks—is justified neither by their features nor their speech, which is a Dargo dialect. In any case they are a very small community, consisting in 1867 of scarcely 2,000, dwelling in 400 houses. Some of the *magal*, or tribal confederacies, acquired a considerable degree of prosperity, thanks to their common solidarity and individual freedom.

Fig. 41.—Mount Gûnib.

Such was that of the five Dargo clans, whose popular gatherings, which resembled the Swiss *landsgemeinden*, were held in a plain near Akhusha. This magal received refugees from all nations, and their territory was the most densely peopled in all Daghestan.

The Caspian seaboard, forming the historical highway of migration and conquest between Europe and Asia, was naturally occupied by a motley population, in which were represented all the races who had made use of this military and commercial route.

Hence Mongolians, Semites, Aryans, and Tatars are now found crowded together in this narrow strip of coast. The Nogai Tatars have fixed their tents in the northern steppe bordered by the Sulak. The tract stretching thence to Derbent is occupied chiefly by the Kumîk Tatars, numbering over 50,000, and many Armenian traders. Other Tatars, akin to those of Transcaucasia, dwell farther south in the Kuba district. The *lingua franca* of all these races is the Tûrki dialect of Azerbeijan, although the Persians, Tats, or Tajiks, about Derbent and between Kuba and the Gulf of Baku, still preserve their language and usages since the time of the Sassanides, when they settled here. With them evidently came the Jews, who also speak Persian, while their women wear the Iranian garb. But their Persian dialect is mixed with many old Hebrew and Chaldean terms, and according to some authorities those of Kuba, Baku, and Shemakha are descended from the Israelites, who were removed to Persia after the first destruction of the Temple by Salmanazar over two thousand five hundred years ago. The names of their children are those in vogue during the time of the judges, and which have elsewhere been obsolete for the last twenty-five centuries. Most of the Caucasian Jews, however, have become much mingled with, and even absorbed by, the Osses, Georgians, and especially the Tatars, and many villages known by the name of Jût-kend, or "Jewish Town," are now exclusively occupied by communities claiming to be of Tatar stock.

Topography.

In the highland districts there are no towns, though the Lezghian aûls have often been crowded by thousands attracted by local festivities, or rallying round their warrior chiefs. *Khunzak*, formerly capital of the Avar Khans, is now a mere ruin, on a bluff commanding a tributary of the Koïsu, and itself commanded by the guns of a Russian fort. *Ghimri*, above the junction of the two rivers Koïsu, retains nothing but a reminiscence of the national wars, for here died Khazi-Mollah, and here Shamyl was born. *Vedeno*, on a lofty terrace within the Chechniya territory, is an important village overlooked by a Russian fort, which stands on the site of Shamyl's former citadel. Near it is Mount Gûnib, whose upper terrace, 40 square miles in extent, served as the last refuge of the Lezghian prophet and prince.

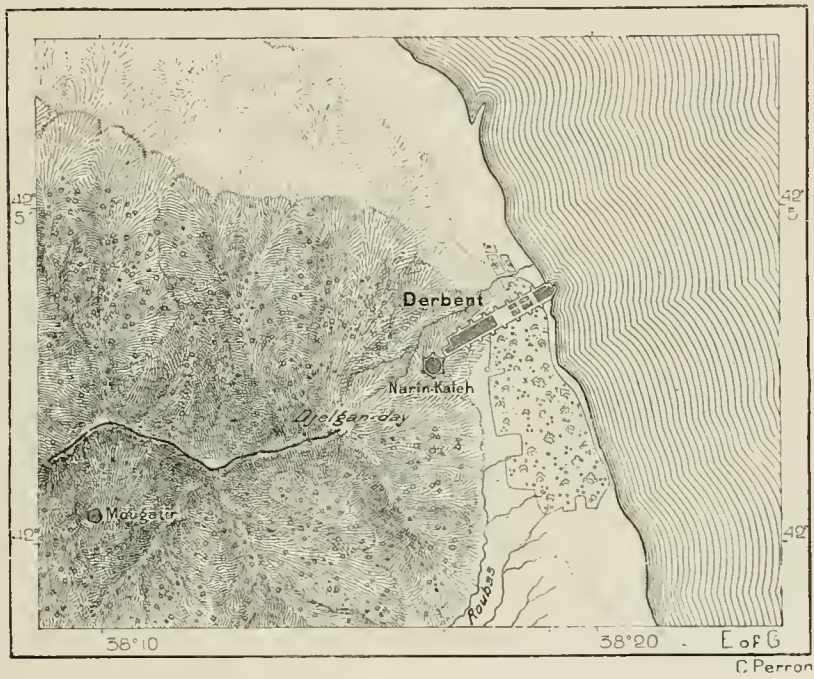
Temir-Khan-Shura, in the Kumîk Tatar country, stands at an elevation of 1,540 feet in a valley opening towards the Caspian. The lake, or tarn, whence its name, is now drained, although fever is here still endemic. The port of all this district is *Petrovsk*, during the wars a place of some strategic importance, and with one of the best harbours on the Caspian, sheltered from the west and south winds, and affording good anchorage in 20 feet of water within 800 yards of the shore. Though of recent origin, Petrovsk has already supplanted its southern rival, *Tarki*, or Tarku, which, with a Tatar population of nearly 12,000 at the beginning of the century, is now a mere village dependent on Temir-Khan-Shura.

The narrow defile between the advanced spurs of the Tabasseran range and the coast is guarded by the city of *Derbent*, or Derbend, traditionally founded

either by the Medes or by Alexander the Great, but more probably by one of the Sassanides about the close of the fifth century. This unique town and fortress is enclosed between two long parallel walls running from the hills to the sea, flanked by towers and inscribed sepulchral stones. Within this inclined parallelogram the houses and bazaar form in reality but one line of buildings somewhat under 2 miles long. As implied by its Persian name, Derbent is merely a large fortified gateway, whence also its various Tatar and Arabic names. All the mediæval travellers describe its walls as advancing far into the sea; but nothing is now visible of this marine rampart, which may be due to a local upheaval. Between

Fig. 42.—Derbent.

Scale 1 : 200,000.



Traces of Old Wall, according to Eichwald.

3 Miles.

the town and the present coast-line there stretches a broad strip of land which was formerly perhaps under water. West of Narin-Kaleh, the citadel commanding it on the west, the wall, here also flanked with towers, follows the crest of the hills in the direction of some distant peak. According to the natives this wall formerly crossed the whole range from sea to sea, and in any case it guarded all the lowlands at the foot of the Eastern Caucasus, for traces of it are still met at a distance of 18 miles from Derbent. There are few more industrious places in Russia than this Persian town, although its population is said to have fallen from 26,000 in 1825 to little over half that number in 1873. In the district are 1,500 well-watered garden plots, yielding wine, saffron, cotton, tobacco, madder,

and fruits of all kinds. Some naphtha wells and quarries of bituminous schists are worked in the neighbourhood.

Less picturesquely situated than Derbent, *Kuba* resembles it in its population and pursuits, its inhabitants consisting chiefly of Mohammedans of the Shiah sect engaged in gardening, and of some thousand Jews occupied with trade. The climate is so unhealthy that an attempt was made in 1825 to remove the town to a more salubrious site some 10 miles farther north-west. But the people refused to follow the Russian officials, who were fain to return to the old town, where, however, they reside only in winter.

In the Samur valley the chief town is *Akhti*, standing at the junction of two torrents in the heart of the mountains.

V.—THE INGÛR, RION, AND CHORUKH BASINS.

MINGRELIA, IMERITIA, SVANIA, LAZISTAN.

This Transcaucasian region, recently enlarged by a slice of territory from Turkey, has long been politically attached to Europe. The Greeks had thrown a hundred and twenty bridges over the Phasis, and constructed a fine carriage road across the mountains between the town of Sarapanes, the present Sharopan, and the Kura valley. To the Greeks and Romans succeeded the Genoese, and even when the Turks seized the seaboard they did so as masters of Constantinople and heirs of the Byzantine emperors. European influence has also made itself felt in religious matters, most of the inhabitants having been Christians since the first centuries of the Church, whereas the two great divisions of the Moslem faith have prevailed elsewhere in Caucasia. Nevertheless the Ingûr and Rion basins have long kept aloof from the general movement of modern culture, and some districts are still in a barbarous state.

This region, the Colchis of the ancients, is equalled by few places for the splendour of its vegetation, its natural fertility and resources of every sort. Yet it is but scantily peopled, with scarcely one-half of the relative population of France. The Ingûr and Rion basins are both of them sharply limited by the Caucasus, Anti-Caucasus, and intermediate Mesk range. From Abkhasia to Lazistan the hills form a complete semicircle, whose lowest point, except near the coast, is at the Suram depression, 3,040 feet above sea-level. This vast semicircle is divided by ridges running parallel with the Great Caucasus into secondary segments, some of which are completely isolated, and form little worlds apart.

The Upper Ingûr valley, which has become administratively the district of Free Svania, forms one of these distinct regions, and is typical of those elongated troughs lying between two parallel crests at an altitude of about 6,300 feet, and skirted north and south by snowy ridges. Here the glaciers of the Truiber have carried their advanced moraines to within 2 miles of the Svan village of Jabeshi, in the commune of Mujal, and the village itself, like so many others, is built on

the detritus of moraines deposited by the old glaciers. The glacial torrents forming the Ingûr are collected in the depression of Free Svania, which is enclosed by a transverse barrier running south of Mount Elbruz. Hence the Ingûr escapes from its upper valley through a narrow and deep rocky defile, in which it flows south-west and south for a distance of 48 miles. From 15 to 30 feet broad, and commanded by granitic or schist escarpments 600 to 1,200 feet high, this gorge presents, nevertheless, a succession of smiling landscapes, thanks to the bushy vegetation of the river banks and to the little mounds of rocky débris at the mouths of the tributary streamlets. Previous to the military expedition of

Fig. 43.—Mouth of the Rion.

Scale 1 : 400,000.

1858 no route had penetrated through this gorge, and Svania communicated with the Mingrelian plains only by a dangerous mountain path.

The gorges of the Rion and its head-streams lack the sublimity of those of the Ingûr, although all of them present some delightful views. The Rion and Tskhenis, the two chief rivers of this basin, both rise amidst the snows of the Pasis-mta, a word almost identical with that of Phasis, given by the Greeks to the river now known by the Georgian name of Rion, or Rioni. Separated at their source by the Garibolo ridge, the two streams diverge more and more, the Tskhenis watering the Svania of the Dadians and Mingrelia, while the Rion flows through Radsha and Imeritia. From the eastern valleys comes the Kvirila, which,

after joining the Khani from the south, unites with the Rion in the fertile plain stretching south of Kutaïs. Here begins the old inlet, which has been gradually filled in by the alluvia of these mountain torrents. Where the Rion becomes navigable it is skirted by broad swampy tracts, mostly concealed by their dense aquatic vegetation, and in places even by thickets and forests. But few expanses of still water remain to recall the time when all this district was covered by the sea.

Nevertheless, near the coast there remains a remnant of the old inlet, still known by the Greek name of Palæostom, or "Old Mouth," and which is supposed to have formerly received the waters of the Phasis. In the last century it seems to have communicated by a navigable channel with the sea, and its fauna is still partly marine, although the water is no longer even brackish. It is in some places over 60 feet deep, and is separated from the Euxine by a straight strip of dunes, which the Rion has pierced, its alluvia, like those of the Ingûr and other Mingrelian coast streams, gradually encroaching beyond it seawards. According to Strabo the Rion and its tributary, the Kvirila, were navigable to Sarapanes, 90 miles from the present mouth, whereas boats now stop at Orpiri, which is about one-third of that distance, and during low water, from July to December, there are scarcely more than 20 inches in the channel.

The mountains forming the watershed between the Rion and Kura basins, towards the east and south-east, are continued uninterruptedly by the Suram Hills westwards to the Lazistan coast range. These mountains, imposing even in the presence of the Great Caucasus, rise above the forest zone to the region of pastures, some reaching an elevation of 8,000 feet, but all falling short of the snow-line. Westwards the Ajara, or Akhaltzikh range, which is the last section of the chain, skirts the Euxine at a distance of little over half a mile from the coast.* Seen from the summits of these Lazistan highlands, which were annexed to Russia in 1878, the land presents the aspect of a storm-tossed sea. Here the highest point is the Karch-shall, south-east of Batûm, which is 11,430 feet above sea-level, while the mean elevation scarcely exceeds 8,000 feet, or about 2,000 feet above the forest zone. Mount Arsiani has all the appearance of an extinct volcano, and lava streams have been discharged in prehistoric times from several neighbouring summits. Their upper slopes are clothed with rich pastures, whose flora is much the same as that of West Europe, while the fruit trees of the valleys rival those of the southern slopes of the Caucasus. Lazistan is an earthly paradise, where the natives have generally shown a keen sense of natural beauty in the choice of the sites for their villages. Each of these villages commands a lovely prospect of flowery meads, steep rocks, mountain torrents, cascades, clumps of trees, and scattered hamlets.

* Chief elevations of the Ajara range:—

	Feet.
Nepis-tzkaro, south of Kutaïs	9,485
Nagebo	8,720
Sagalatlo	8,265
Chekhataï	3,355

All the waters flowing from the Arsiani Hills westwards reach the Chorukh either through the Ajara or the Imarshevi. The main stream rises south of Trebizond, and after receiving its first affluents flows parallel with the coast and the Upper Euphrates valleys. In this part of Asia Minor all the hills, plateaux, and valleys run uniformly south-west and north-east. But after a course of about 180 miles the Chorukh, now swollen by the united waters of the Tortum and Olti, escapes directly towards the Euxine through a deep gorge intersecting the coast range. Beyond the defile it has formed an alluvial plain projecting beyond the normal coast-line, and thus serving to shelter the harbour of Batûm from the west. Although little inferior in volume to the Rion, the Lower Chorukh is even less navigable than the Mingrelian river. This is due to its current, which is so rapid that boats taking four or five days to ascend from Batûm to Artvin make the return trip in eight hours.

Climate—Flora and Fauna.

The climate of Transcaucasia is one of the most favourable for vegetation in the temperate zone. Here plants are intermingled in the greatest variety, and assume their loveliest forms. Thanks to the abundant rainfall and to the barrier opposed by the Great Caucasus to the parching north-east winds, the various forest and cultivated species attain a greater elevation than in most other places enjoying the same mean temperature. Thus the walnut flourishes at 5,500 feet in Svania, where the white mulberry and the vine are found at elevations of 3,000 and even 3,400 feet, while in the Upper Rion valley the cotton-tree is met as high as 2,110 feet. In general the vegetation of West Transcaucasia resembles that of Central Europe and the French Atlantic seaboard rather than that of the Mediterranean shores, although in many respects the Mingrelian flora seems to belong to both zones. The indigo plant grows by the side of the cotton-tree on the banks of the Rion, where maize is the prevailing cereal. The tea plant is even said to occur in Lazistan, where the camphor-tree has been acclimatized. In the flowering season the pomegranate groves give to this region the aspect of a vast garden; but, on the other hand, the eucalyptus, so useful for its febrifugal properties, has failed, owing to the severity of the Caucasian winters. The orange also, which formerly flourished at Poti, has disappeared from Transcaucasia since the middle of the last century. The coast region is subject to excessive moisture, while elsewhere there is rather an excess of dryness. The mean temperature of Kutaïs (58° Fahr.) is somewhat higher than that of the coast towns, an anomaly due to the fierce and parching east wind often prevailing in the Rion valley. This wind loses its virulence as it proceeds westwards, so that at Poti it is no longer disagreeable, and ceases altogether at Redut-Kaleh.

The magnificent Mingrelian and other Western Transcaucasian forests have been exposed to fearful ravages, especially since the finer timbers have been sought after by French and other foreign traders. The walnut has nearly disappeared from all the accessible lowland tracts, while the destruction of the upland forests

is slowly modifying the aspect of the country. Yet but little of the cleared land is brought under cultivation, the primitive methods of tillage still prevail, and no pains are taken to improve the vine, which is here indigenous. Under the universal apathy many cultivated tracts have become overgrown with bracken, while the proprietors, after an absence of a few years, no longer recognise their former farmsteads, now concealed amidst the rank vegetation.

The Ingûr and Rion basins are no less noted for their magnificent fauna than for their rich and varied flora. Free Svania, says Radde, "owns the finest cattle in the world." There are two excellent breeds, one small and sprightly, the other strong, majestic, and admirably proportioned. This is the Ukranian race introduced by the Ciscaucasian Tatar traders into the Upper Ingûr valley, where, under new climatic conditions, its colour has become modified, often assuming the shades and stripes of the tiger. The horse, although not numerous in the upland valleys, is also noted for his strength and action, while the Svanian mules and asses fetch three or four times the price of the lowland breeds. The goat and other smaller domestic animals are likewise distinguished for their symmetrical forms and other excellent properties.

In the lowlands the marsh fevers are no less injurious to the animals than to man. Here the Mingrelian peasantry fail even to rear poultry, which Toropov does not hesitate to attribute to the malaria.

Inhabitants—The Svans and Rachians.

The natives themselves are far from being a pure race. Amidst a great variety of types the contrast presented by the fair and brown Mingrelians is very striking. The former are distinguished by a lofty brow and oval face, the latter by broad features and low forehead, though both are alike handsome and of graceful carriage. From the remotest times the eastern shores of the Euxine have been visited by friends and foes of every race, many of whom must have introduced fresh ethnical elements. Arabs, and even negroes, flying from their Turkish masters, have contributed to increase the confusion. Yet, however numerous were the crossings, all have become blended together, jointly tending to develop the beauty of the original type. In the Mingrelian lowlands, and especially on the advanced spurs up to an altitude of about 3,700 feet, nearly all the men are handsome. But in the heart of the highlands, where the struggle for existence becomes more intensified, the features, especially of the women, are often even ugly. Goître and cretinism are frequent amongst the Svans, and as we ascend the Ingûr from the region of maize to the snowy pastures, the change in the appearance of the inhabitants is analogous to that which is observed by the traveller passing from the Italian lakes to the Alpine gorges of the Valais.

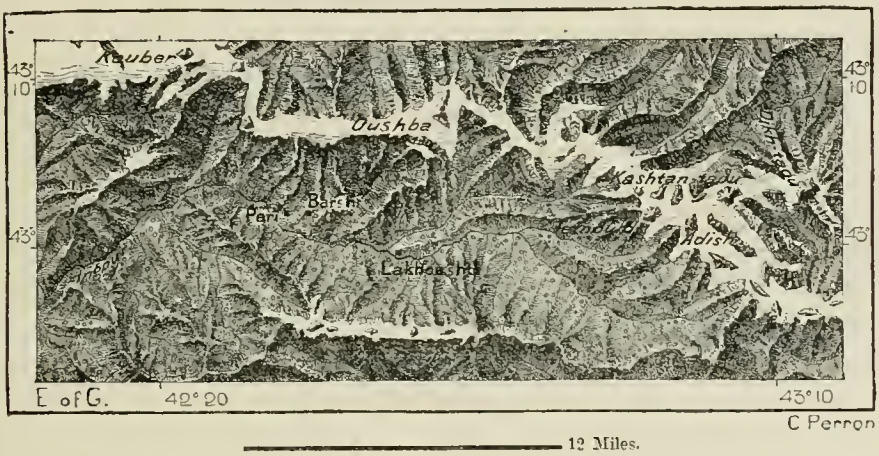
The Svans, who occupy the Upper Ingûr and Tskhenis valleys, are evidently a mixed race, although fundamentally akin to the Georgians, to whom they are also allied in speech. They were formerly a powerful nation mentioned by Strabo, and in the fifteenth century they still held the Upper Rion valley. The present

SVAN TYPES.

survivors seem to descend mainly from fugitives driven from the Mingrelian plains by oppression and the calamities of war. In the secluded valleys bordering on the glaciers they found a secure retreat, almost severed by physical barriers from the rest of the world. More accessible are those of the Upper Tskhenis basin, who have consequently had to endure the hardest feudal rule under princes binding them to the glebe. This branch take the name of Dadian Svans, from the ancient Georgian princely title of "Dadian" assumed by the governing family. They are scarcely to be distinguished from their Imeritian neighbours, and their speech is a pure Georgian dialect. The Dadishkalian Svans, in the western division of the Upper Ingûr basin, are also under a feudal lord of Kumîk Tatar stock; but being regarded as serfs, they were emancipated at the expense of the Russian Government when serfdom was everywhere officially abolished. The eastern communities of the Upper Ingûr have long maintained

Fig. 44.—Upper Ingûr Valley.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 840,000.



their independence, and are still often distinguished by the epithet of "Free," although they took the oath of obedience to Russia in 1853. And in many respects they are still really free, recognising neither lord nor master, and rejecting even the control of the clergy. In the communal gatherings all have an equal voice, and important decisions require to be adopted unanimously, the opposition of a single member causing the whole question to be postponed until unanimity can be secured. Nor does the commune interfere in personal quarrels, which are regulated by the *lex talionis*. Nowhere else in the Caucasus are the laws of vendetta more rigorously adhered to, so that few are met who have not killed their man. All the houses along the Upper Ingûr are real fortresses, perched on rocky eminences, and commanded by square watch-towers 60 to 80 feet high. The doors of these keeps are on the second or third story, and can be approached only by rude ladders formed of the stems of trees.

Hereditary animosities greatly contribute to the reduction of the population pent up in the bleak valley of Free Svania, or Jabe-Shevi; yet it is still so dense

that the people are obliged to emigrate to the neighbouring tribes. In the days of their military power their young men left their homes as conquerors, often undertaking plundering expeditions to the plains, and even in the fourteenth century they were strong enough to burn the city of Kutaïs. Till recently the excessive population was also checked by the practice of infanticide, in which most of the girls perished, while in hard times grown-up children were sold at prices varying from £30 to £50. The small amount of trade carried on by the tribes lower down is monopolized by the Jews, who are grouped in the village of Lakhamuli. These Jews are distinguished from their brethren elsewhere by their warlike habits. But although practising Christian rites and calling themselves Svans, the hillmen of the Upper Ingûr contract no alliances with them, and even refuse to eat at their table.

All the Svans, estimated at over 12,000, are classed amongst the Christian tribes of Caucasia, and even claim a sort of pre-eminence amongst their co-religionists, pretending that their ancestry were baptized by Christ himself. But their Christianity has been developed in a somewhat original manner under the influence of older rites. Thus their little chapels, large enough to accommodate about a dozen, have crypts filled with the horns of the chamois and wild goat, which are objects of great veneration. The priests, or "papas," form a distinct hereditary caste, though their only privilege is exemption from the laws of vendetta. Although not obliged to keep the lower part of the face covered, the women pass a bandage over their mouths when singing national or religious songs, possibly to prevent the devil from entering. All the Svans are also bound to silence when on the march, or chanting sacred hymns, for the least word might draw down the tempest. Analogous superstitions occur amongst the Norwegian fishermen, the Buriats, and the American hunting tribes.

The district of Racha, comprising the Upper Rion valley, is larger and more populous than the western basins of the Tskhenis and Ingûr, and has always offered a route to graziers, traders, and even warlike bands crossing the Caucasus obliquely from the Georgian to the Terek lowlands. Hence the Rachians, who, like most of the people in the government of Kutaïs, are of Georgian race and speech, are more civilised than their Svanian neighbours. But they also are too numerous for their largely unproductive territory, so that thousands are forced to emigrate to the lowlands, seldom returning without having amassed a small fortune. Most of the carpenters and sawyers met with in Imeria and Mingrelia are Rachians.

The Imeritians, Mingrelians, and Lazes.

The Georgians of the Upper Rion basin bear the general name of Imeritians, or more properly Imerians; that is, "People of the other side," in reference to the Suram Mountains separating them from the bulk of the nation. The term Imereth, or Imeria, has been applied, with the shifting of the border peoples, at times to all Western Transcaucasia, at times only to its upper section, Mingrelia being usually reserved for the low-lying region comprising the alluvial lands and coast district. Thanks to their damp, miasmatic, and enervating climate, the Mingrelians are

MINGRELIAN TYPES AND COSTUMES.

mostly of an indolent temperament, while their brethren who have migrated to the dry district of Tiflis are noted for their active habits. A repugnance to labour was also naturally fostered by former devastating inroads, incessant intestine warfare, and the complete thraldom of the peasantry to their nobles. Here was represented every variety of serfdom, and until 1841 the priests themselves were classed as serfs. Even in recent times the Mingrelian princes were accustomed to apply personally for their tribute. Followed by courtiers, retainers, falconers, dogs, and horses, they would swoop down on some unfortunate vassal, living at his expense as long as the provisions lasted, then betaking themselves elsewhere, and thus making a round of revelry as self-invited guests, and leaving ruin in their wake. No women, especially if well favoured, were safe from these despots, who carried them off and sold their children into slavery. Although generally too weak to resist, the Mingrelians were nevertheless occasionally driven by this oppression into revolt, as in 1857 and 1858, when they appealed to arms for the recovery of their captured women, and to get rid of the yoke riveted by their masters round their necks. But all such efforts were quenched in blood, nor was serfdom finally abolished till three years after its suppression in the rest of the empire. But many of its effects still remain, and in a teeming land the Imerians and Mingrelians continue, like the wretched Lombard peasantry, to live almost exclusively on a mess of maize or millet resembling the polenta of Italy. The usual dress is a tattered smock fastened by a cord or strap to the waist, and instead of a hat a bit of cloth retained on the head by a string passed under the chin. The Mingrelian farmstead consists of a wretched hovel of wood or branches, surrounded by badly cultivated maize-fields, with a few lean pigs or goats, and one or two buffaloes wallowing in the muddy pools.

Fig. 45.—Mingrelian Lady.

Although till recently dwelling beyond the political limits of Russian Transcaucasia, the Lazes of the Ajara and Chorukh basins are none the less akin in speech and race to the Mingrelians and Georgians. Those still subject to Turkey, and reaching westwards beyond Trebizond, are also of the same stock, though more or less mixed with other elements, while beyond these limits many geographical names show that in remote times the interior of Asia Minor was largely peopled by Georgians. Rosen has established the near relationship of the Laz and Georgian tongues. The language current on the banks of the Chorukh differs little from Mingrelian, though that of the west coast is largely affected by Turkish

and Greek elements. In their customs also the Lazes resemble the Imerians. Both respect old age, are extremely hospitable, and, while full of curiosity, still maintain a dignified reserve. Like most Caucasians, they are fond of display and rich attire, nor do they deserve the charge of indolence brought against them by careless observers, for their fields are well tilled and their houses kept in good order. The Laz women combine with beauty and symmetry of form a rare reputation for courage. The Moslem Lazes have emigrated in large numbers to Turkish territory since the annexation to Russia in 1878, while the Christians will now probably find their way to Tiflis and the Russian ports on the Euxine.

The national character could scarcely fail to be modified under the Turkish régime. Three centuries ago all the Lazes of the Upper Ajara valleys were Christians, and many villages still boast of well-preserved churches in the best Byzantine style of architecture. Certain communes did not conform to the Moslem creed till about the close of the eighteenth century, and several, though nominally followers of the Prophet, are still practically Christian, the two faiths often overlapping to such an extent that it becomes difficult to say where the one ceases and the other begins. With their religion the Turks also introduced their language into all the towns and large villages, so that the Laz dialect ceased to be current except in the remote rural districts. The Armenian colonies scattered over the land had also forgotten their mother tongue in favour of Turkish, which must now in its turn slowly yield to Russian, just as the Mohammedan must give way to the Christian faith.

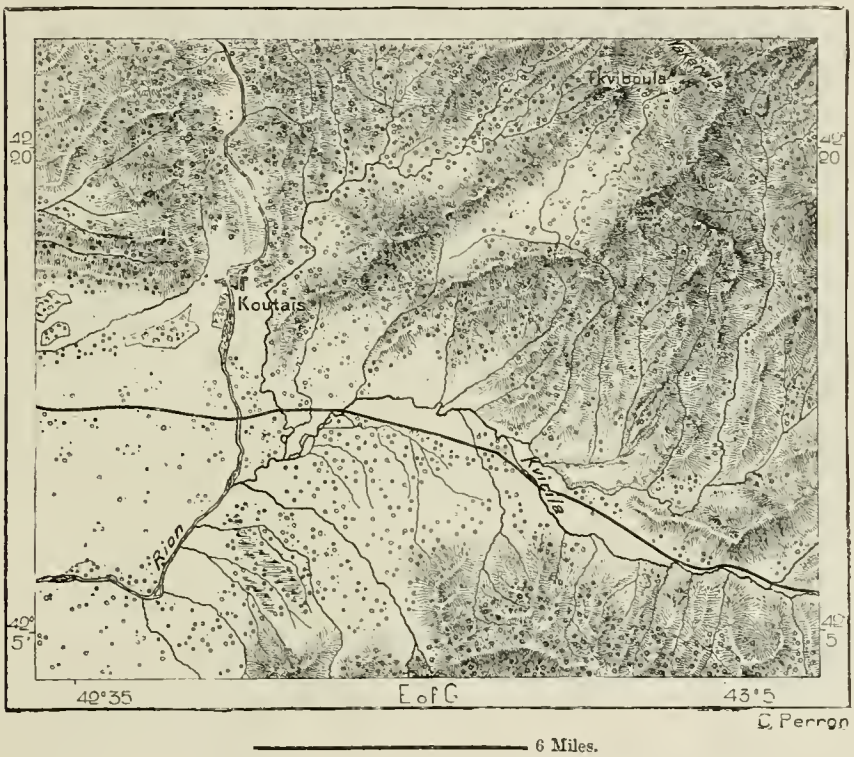
Topography.

The Rion valley, whose commercial importance was already recognised by the prehistoric Argonauts, and where, thirty centuries later on, the Genoese also went in search of the "Golden Fleece," promises once more to play a large part in the general development of trade. For some years past it has been crossed in its entire length by a railway connecting Tiflis with the Euxine, and this is but a first section of the line destined, sooner or later, to reach the Indus. But the site of the old Greek trading route, like that of their chief emporium Colchis, has long been forgotten. The village of *Sharopan*, at the junction of the Kvirila and Dzirûla, claims to stand on the spot where grew the famous grove penetrated by the legendary Jason in search of the "Golden Fleece." At the gorges of the Khani, south-east of Kutaïs, are the extensive ruins of the former Turkish fortress of *Bagdad*, whose Moslem inhabitants were driven into exile in the last century. Nevertheless Bagdad is still a considerable village.

Kutaïs, the present capital of the province, which comprises most of Western Transcaucasia, is happily situated at the junction of the three valleys watered by the Rion, Kvirila, and Khani, and at the head of the alluvial plain stretching thence to the coast. Standing on the first rising grounds of the advanced spurs of the Caucasus, it is well sheltered from the north wind, while its gardens and parks are abundantly watered by the Rion, which traverses the town. Kutaïs, if not the traditional city of Medea, is at all events a very old place, for it is mentioned by

Procopius under the name of Kotatission, and it constantly figures in Georgian history, sometimes even as capital of the kingdom, and always as a noted stronghold. The old town stood on the right bank of the Rion, at the foot of the acropolis; but the modern lies mainly on the opposite bank. Its most remarkable monument is a ruined cathedral built by the Bagratides early in the eleventh century on the acropolis. On it have been modelled most of the other religious edifices in the country, so that it is rightly regarded as the most precious relic of Georgian art. Thanks to its trade and local industry, chiefly hat-making, Kutaïs has recently made rapid progress, the population rising from 4,000 to 12,000

Fig. 46.—Kutaïs and the Rion and Kvirila Junction.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 440,000.



in a few years. In the district is found a species of jet used for bracelets and other ornaments; but the rich Tkvibula coal-fields, some 18 miles to the north-east, have been but little worked. Since 1879 the manganese deposits of the Upper Kvirila valley, estimated at several millions of tons, have also attracted attention.

Khoni, at the entrance of the Tskhenis valley, north-east of Kutaïs, is the market town of the Dadian Svans, and lower down is the large village of *Kulashi*, near the junction of the Rion and Tskhenis, in the most densely peopled district of Caucasia.

Orpiri, the river port of the Rion, at the junction of the Tskhenis, is inhabited by members of the Skoptzi sect, who are mostly wealthy, though the trade of the place has fallen off since the opening of the railway. The two seaports of *Redout-*

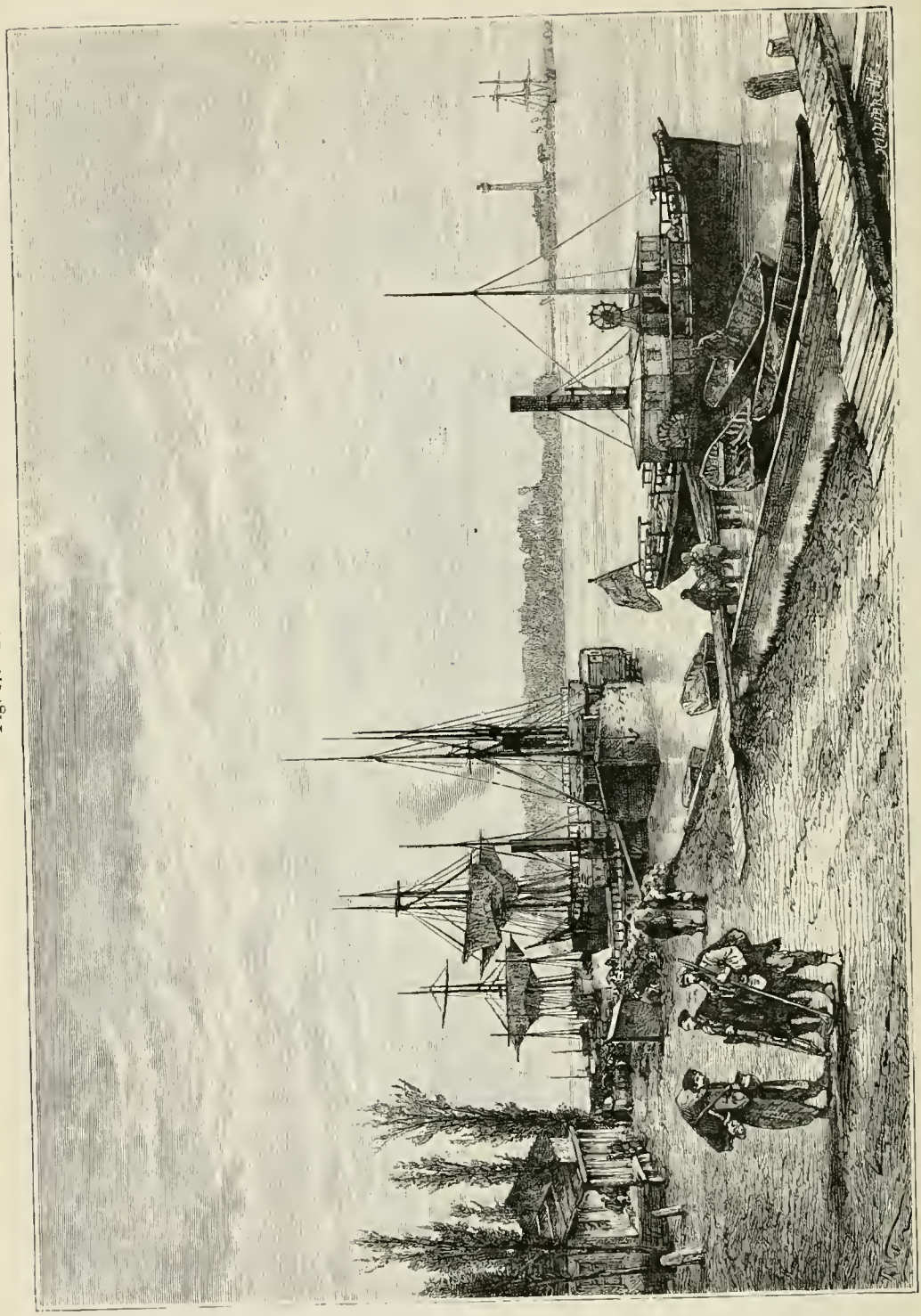


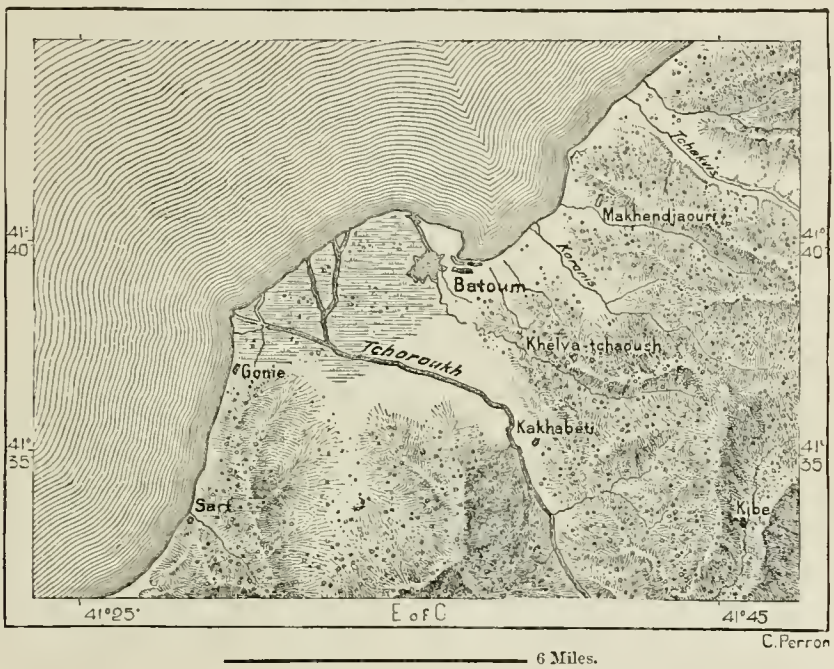
Fig. 47.—Port.

Kaleh and *Poti* are rather shunned by traders on account of the local fevers, and by sailors on account of their bad anchorage. Redout-Kaleh, whose name is

composed of a French and Turkish word, both meaning the same thing, is a poor Russian village founded in the present century as the seaport of the rich Lower Ingûr district, but now almost forsaken in favour of Poti, situated farther south, at the mouth of the river. Its houses, raised on piles and surrounded by palisades, stretch for a considerable distance along the unhealthy marshy banks of the river, whose floodings convert the town twice a year into a peninsula. The harbour is rendered inaccessible to large vessels by the bar at the mouth of the Rion, all the engineering efforts to remove which have hitherto had but partial success. Hence it is little used except for shipping cereals and raw silk. The exports amounted in

Fig. 48.—Batûm.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 320,000.



1876 to nearly 5,000,000 roubles, while the imports average scarcely more than 800,000.

A much finer harbour is that of *Batûm*, lying 30 miles to the south-west, and ceded by Turkey in 1878. Even before the annexation it was far more a Russian than a Turkish port, for here the large Odessa steamers transhipped their cargoes in 60 feet of water to smaller vessels capable of crossing the bar at Poti. Although declared a free port by the treaty of Berlin, Batûm has none the less already become a strong fortress. But with all its advantages, the peninsula created by the alluvia of the Chorukh on the west is constantly increasing, and threatening to still further restrict the available space in the harbour, which is already insufficient to accommodate more than twelve large vessels. But nothing would be easier than to connect the port with the river by a canal, which, with the railway now being constructed by the town of Uzurgeti to the Poti-Tiflis line, will render Batûm the

common outport of the Rion and Chorukh basins. The extraordinary fertility of this region will thus secure it a certain commercial importance in future. The chief exports are cereals, cotton, the excellent apples known in Russia as "Crimean apples," and the oil yielded by the dolphins taken in the bay.

The chief inland town of Russian Lazistan is *Artvin*, standing on the slope of a hill at the outlet of the gorge of the Lower Chorukh, and at the head of its navigation. It is built in the form of an amphitheatre, with a circuit of not less than 5 miles, including its gardens. Besides dyeing, which is its staple industry, it manufactures silks and other woven stuffs. Its traders, mostly Armenians, have relations through Batûm with Constantinople and Marseilles. Here the Laz race is said to reach its highest physical perfection, and all the children might serve as models for the painter or sculptor.

Ardanûj, on a plateau south of Artvin, was formerly capital of the kingdom, and higher up in the heart of the mountains is *Olti*, ceded in 1878 by Turkey. Like Artvin, it is a city of fruits and flowers, and the chief trading-place between Ardahan and Erzerum.

VII.—THE KURA BASIN.

GEORGIA, TRANSCAUCASIAN TATARY.

The Kura and Araxis may be regarded as twin, but independent streams. Of nearly equal length, and draining about an equal area, they remain separated throughout their upper and middle course by plateaux and lofty ranges. In the time of Strabo they had even separate mouths, and at present unite their waters in the neighbourhood of the Caspian, scarcely more than 20 feet above the level of that sea. Ethnically also the two river basins are quite distinct. Both are now no doubt occupied by Tatar peoples, but the Georgians are still predominant in the Upper and Middle Kura valley, while the Araxis is chiefly occupied by Armenians. Politically the former belongs entirely to Russia, whereas the latter rises in Turkish territory, and for about half its course its right bank, with all its southern tributaries, waters Persian districts.

River Systems—The Kura.

The Georgian river known as the Kura, or Kur, names recalling the Greek Kuros (Anglicised Cyrus), has its farthest source in the "Pearl Brook," or "Coral Water," of the Turks, a torrent flowing from a cirque, or old hill-encircled lakelet, through a narrow gorge round the east foot of the Arsiani range. It descends thence through a series of defiles and sudden windings between the Ajara and Trialetes Hills, west and east, down to the plains of Tiflis. In one of these defiles, between Atzkhur and Borjom, it falls altogether about 740 feet through a succession of rapids in the space of 15 miles. The plateau whence flow its head-

streams is very irregular, but it becomes much more uniform between Ardahan and Akhaltzik, where it forms the true water-parting between the Kura and Araxis, with a mean elevation of from 7,000 to 8,000 feet above the Black Sea. The depressions on this monotonous plateau are filled with lakes draining some to the Araxis, some to the Kura, while others have become brackish tarns with no outflow, and others again half dried-up fens and marshes. The aspect of the land still

Fig. 49.—Akhalkalaki Plateau.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 936,000.

speaks of a time when it formed a vast lacustrine basin with inlets ramifying into the surrounding hills. This region was formerly lit up by a double line of active volcanoes rising to the east of Akhalkalaki, and running north and south vertically with the axis of the Trialetes range. Mount Samsar, one of these volcanoes, has an oval crater nearly 2 miles long, and its lava streams stretch north-west over a large portion of the plateau. The Great and Little Abûl, rising from a common base, resemble in form the double cones of Ararat, and from their trachytic

porphyry summits a northern view is afforded, embracing all the Caucasus from Elbruz to the Tebulos-mta. Other extinct volcanoes are disposed in crescent form round the cirque enclosing the romantic Lake Toporovan, which, with its remains of lacustrine dwellings, itself resembles a vast flooded crater. This sublime but gloomy tableland, with its black mountains, yawning abysses, and ancient lava streams, "still haunted by demons and goblins," presents a striking contrast to the winding valley of the Kura, with its leafy shades and sparkling running waters, still occasionally broken by narrow lava gorges and columnar crystalline cliffs many hundred feet high, and capped with the ruins of ancient castles. All these volcanic highlands and rugged terraces rising to the west of Tiflis form a sort of advanced promontory of Asia Minor, about 60 miles long, within whose narrow limits are brewed nearly all the fierce tempests and hail-storms that burst on the neighbouring Karthalian plains. The frequency of these hail-storms has compelled the peasantry to abandon the cultivation of certain districts in this region. A second zone of tempests stretches along the foot of the Yelizavetpol Mountains, preventing the extension of sericulture in consequence of the great mortality caused by thunder amongst the silk-worms.*

Fig. 50.—Tatar Type.

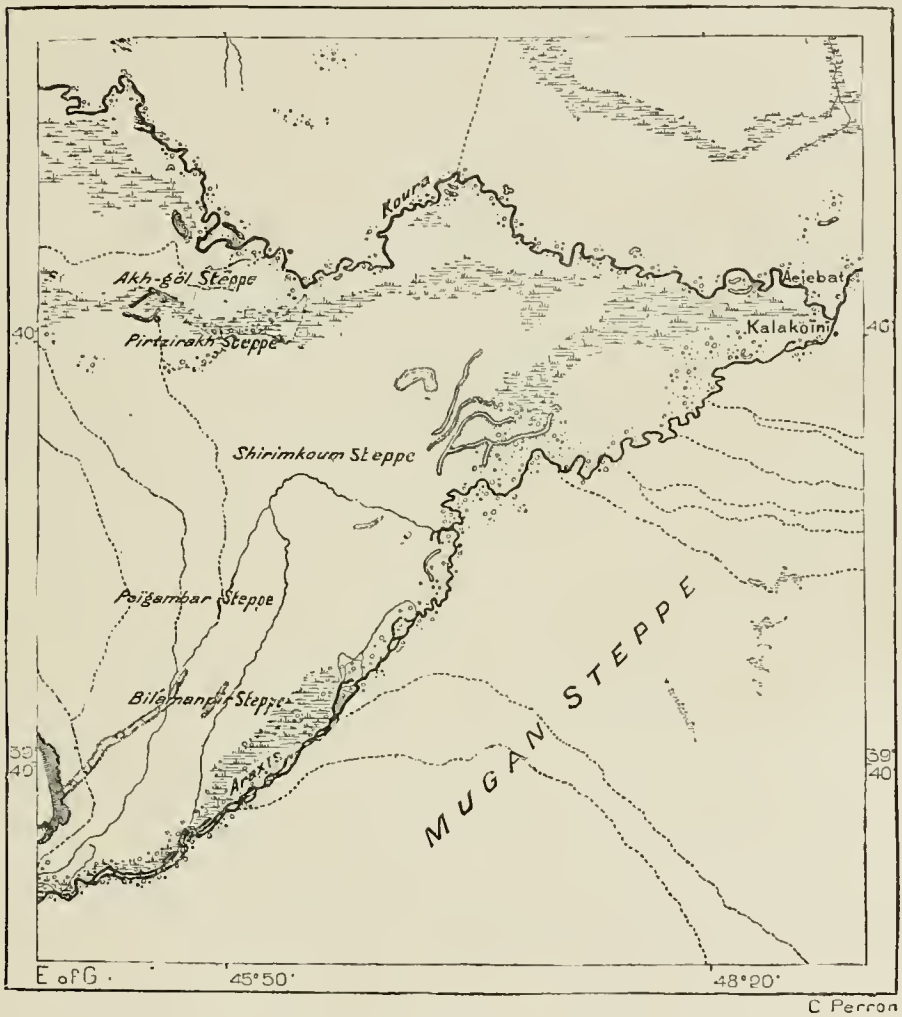
Before its junction with the Aragva, which is scarcely inferior in volume to the main stream, the Kura flows south and south-east mainly in a line with the Great Caucasus and with the Yora and Alazan, the two tributaries which join it after emerging from the upper

* Chief elevations of the Upper Kura basin:—

	Feet.
Kizil-Gyaduk, source of the Kura	10,350
Great Abûl	11,125
Samsar	11,000
Godorebi	10,630
Emlekli	10,165
Koyeretin-dagh, west of the Kura	10,115
Arjevan	9,195
Kanli Pass, between the Kura and Chorukh	9,050
Kojor Pass, between the Akhaltzik plain and Tiflis	4,390

gorges. At the point where it is crossed by the road from Yelizavetpol to Baku, a little below the confluence of these streams, the Kura is already navigable for craft drawing 4 feet, although, owing to the scant population along its banks, the water highway of some 450 miles has hitherto been little utilised. Fishing is almost the only industry carried on along its lower course, which teems with fish

Fig. 51.—The Kura and Araxis Confluence.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 675,000.



probably more than any other spot on the globe. Here the chartered company captures prodigious quantities of "white fish" and sturgeon, paying a yearly revenue to the Government of not less than 120,000 roubles. Yet according to the descriptions of Pallas these fisheries were even still more productive during the last century, when as many as 15,000 sturgeon were taken in a single day.

Whenever the fishing had to be interrupted for four-and-twenty hours the Kura, here 490 feet wide and 70 feet deep, became one moving mass of fish. The diminution of their numbers has been attributed to the introduction of steam navigation, which frightens away the shoals ascending the river to the spawning grounds.

The united volume of the Kura and Araxis is estimated at about 24,000 cubic feet per second, which, in proportion to the area of their basin, is much less than that of the Rion, a difference due to the less abundant rainfall and greater evaporation in the region draining to the Caspian. A large portion of the Kura basin consists of almost waterless desert incapable of cultivation, though rich in herbage after the rains, and in spring frequented by Tatar graziers, who drive their herds to the upland pastures in summer. Even in the heart of Georgia, between the Kura and Yora, and thence to the Alazan, we meet with rocky steppes destitute of permanent dwellings, and above the triple confluence the stony and argillaceous land everywhere presents an aspect of monotonous aridity. During the last century rice was cultivated by the Tatars along the left bank of the Kura, north of Yelizavetpol. But they were compelled by the inroads of the Lezghians to abandon their fields, and nothing now remains except traces of the old irrigating canals from the Yora, and a few Tatar herdsmen, who are obliged to burrow in the ground to shelter themselves from the cold blasts that sweep the bare Karayaz plateaux in winter. With the first spring days they gladly quit their wretched underground hovels, migrating through the beech forests southwards to the fine Alpine pastures of the Gok-chai.

Agriculture—Irrigation Works—Climate.

In these lands civilisation has retrograded, since agriculture has been replaced by a nomad pastoral life. Yet in winter during the low waters the Kura and Araxis together have a total volume of 6,800 cubic feet, and in summer about 35,000 cubic feet per second might be raised for irrigation purposes. But nothing has been done beyond constructing the so-called "Mary Canal" across the Karayaz steppe between the Kura and Yora. Unfortunately this tract is very unhealthy, so that few venture to risk their lives in reclaiming the land. The Tatar populations, who have retained possession of their lands between Nukha and Shemakha, are still able to show the Russians how a proper system of irrigation may transform the desert to a garden. The torrents descending from the gorges of the Caucasus are arrested, on entering the plains, by dams which divide and subdivide them into countless rills, until the last drop of water is utilised before reaching the Kura. But the irrigation works might be met by channels from this river, by which the whole steppe could be brought under cultivation. Some of the waste spaces are at present dangerous for caravans, owing to the want of fodder and the poisonous herbs, such as the Pontine wormwood, fatal to horses. The army sent by Peter the Great in 1722 against Shemakha thus lost all its artillery horses, and the same disaster overtook General Tzitzianov's army a century thereafter.

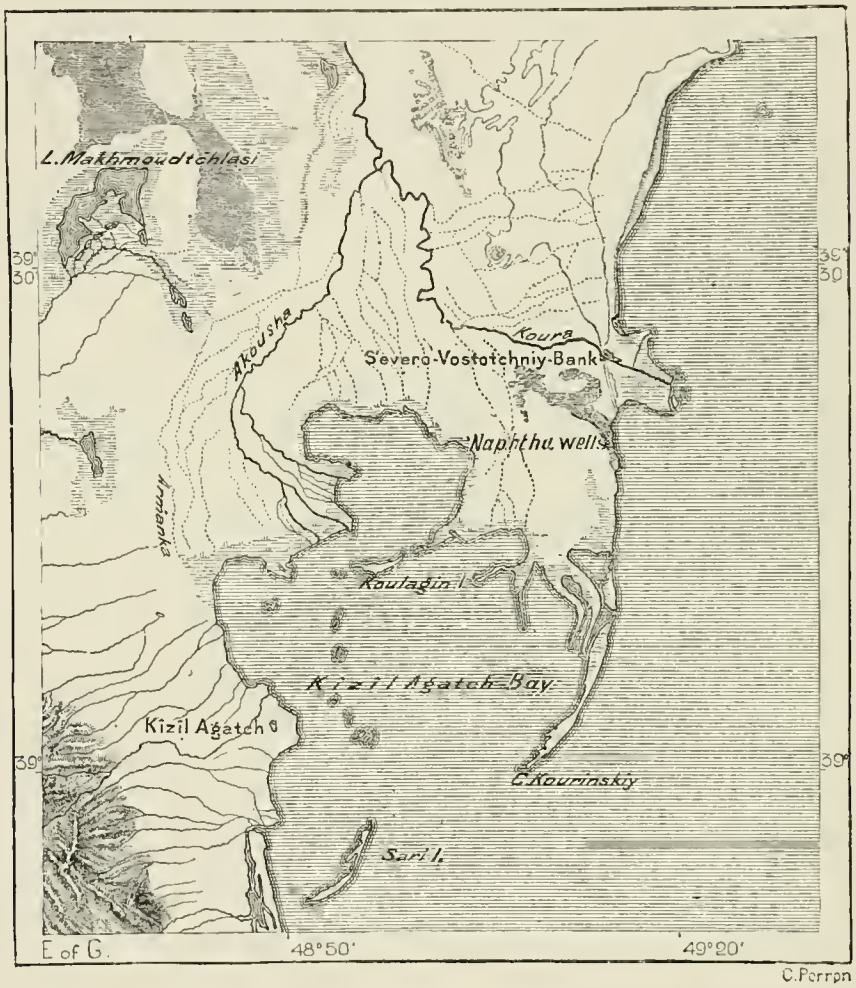
A portion of the Karabagh and Shirikum steppes between the Kura and Araxis, and those of Mugan stretching from the right bank of the Araxis and Lower Kura to the foot of the Talish Mountains, were formerly cultivated and well-peopled districts. The great city of Bilgan, destroyed by Jenghis Khan, stood on a canal constructed fifteen hundred years ago across the Karabagh steppe, and when Timur restored the canal two centuries afterwards this city reappeared and continued to flourish till the last century. East of the Araxis the traces have been discovered of numerous canals running from its right bank eastwards across the steppe; but these could not be restored without tapping the river above the old dams, either because its mean level has fallen, or because the land has been raised by its alluvia. One of the canals followed by Toropov is no less than 90 miles long, and on its banks are the remains of a vast city. Ruined caravanserais and choked-up cisterns also mark the site of other now abandoned trade routes. The plain is here and there dotted with barrows, and throughout the peninsula, formed by the junction of the Kura and Araxis, there are numerous lines of earthworks, flanked by redoubts and hillocks used as outposts. The general disappearance of the population, whose presence is shown by all these remains, dates from the Mongolian invasion of the thirteenth century, when those who escaped service in the armies of Batu Khan abandoned their towns and land, and took refuge in the mountains. The irrigating canals now became choked with mud, and the waters of the Kura and Araxis overflowed into the surrounding depressions, where they formed unhealthy morasses, and even real lakes, such as that of Makhmûd-Chalassi, though many of these have since evaporated, leaving nothing behind except saline tracts fringed with a russet border of sickly vegetation. Elsewhere the land is covered as far as the eye can reach with the grey mugwort or the white-flowering delphinium. Yet it would be comparatively easy to restore its fertility to this region, which might support an agricultural population of at least two millions. The survey carried out in 1860 showed that in the lower plains there are over 5,000,000 acres capable of being irrigated. A large portion of the steppe is covered with a black loam, which only awaits the fertilising waters to become one of the granaries of Western Asia. But even as it is the soil at the foot of the Talish Mountains is moist enough to grow vast crops of cereals, and here the Raskolniks have already flourishing villages, which have begun to do a large trade since the restrictions on free intercourse have been removed. Nowhere else in Caucasia has Russian colonisation been more successful.

Formerly it was feared that the main obstacle to the reclamation of the land would be the insalubrity of the climate, caused, as in the French Camargue, by the decomposition of organic matter under a fierce sun. But this difficulty seems to have been exaggerated. The intense heats of these plains appear to have been formerly symbolized by the multitudes of venomous snakes said to guard their approach. Even Plutarch tells us that the army of Pompey was arrested by fear of these reptiles, and so recently as 1800 the Russians under General Zubov are said to have found the land in winter covered with vipers in a torpid state. But although wild beasts were even supposed to avoid this region, Toropov and other

travellers assure us that serpents and scorpions are so rare on the Mugan steppe that they cause no alarm to the graziers frequenting it. They dig up the ground, but only in search of truffles, which here abound. Land and water tortoises are also extremely numerous wherever there is any moisture, and flocks of antelopes

Fig. 52.—Mouths of the Kura.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 820,000.



are occasionally seen bounding over the plain, while the marshes and running waters of the delta attract vast multitudes of birds.

Lower Kura Basin—Apsheron Peninsula.

Like the Rion, the Kura is continually encroaching on the sea, which it colours for a great distance with its reddish-yellow waters. In the thirty-three years

between 1829 and 1862 the land advanced about 54 square miles. The main channel has also pierced the line of dunes continuing the normal coast-line, beyond which it has ramified into two branches, each of which has developed a peninsula by connecting islets and sand-banks with the mainland. Between the two advanced streams of the delta there are also numerous strips of land, evidently formed by the alluvia of the Kura. Only the north-east swell created by the polar winds has reacted on these deposits, causing them to assume a crescent form, with their concave sides facing seawards. The island of Sari, lying south-west of the extreme peninsula of the delta, is disposed in a similar manner by the same waves. All the Lenkoran coast has also been enlarged by the alluvia first carried seawards with the current, and then driven landwards under the action of the winds. In the same way a broad belt of marshy land has been formed at the foot of the advanced spurs of the Iranian plateau. But these unhealthy tracts are infested by such dense clouds of mosquitoes that the Tatar natives are obliged to pass the night in pavilions raised like picturesque turrets into the purer atmosphere above their dwellings.

The hilly district of Lenkoran, wrenched by Russia from Persia, belongs geographically to that state, for it is merely the escarpment of the lofty terraces rising above the southern shores of the Caspian, and commanded by the Savalan volcano. By holding this district the Russian armies are able to reach within their own territory an elevation of from 4,000 to 6,000 feet, whence they have no further difficulty in penetrating into the Iranian plateaux. Here the land being abundantly watered by the rains brought by the northern winds blowing steadily from the Caspian, its flora and fauna differ from those of the Caucasus. We are already within the domain of the tiger, while some of the plants flourishing in the dense forests resemble those of the tropics. Still the arborescent vegetation covering the slopes of the Talish range between 650 and 6,000 feet corresponds rather with that of Central Europe. Few regions present a greater contrast in their flora than do the slopes of the Talish and the Mugan steppe, the arid parts of which latter yield only five species of plants. Ethnically, also, the difference is equally marked, for the Talish highlands already belong in this respect to the Iranian domain.

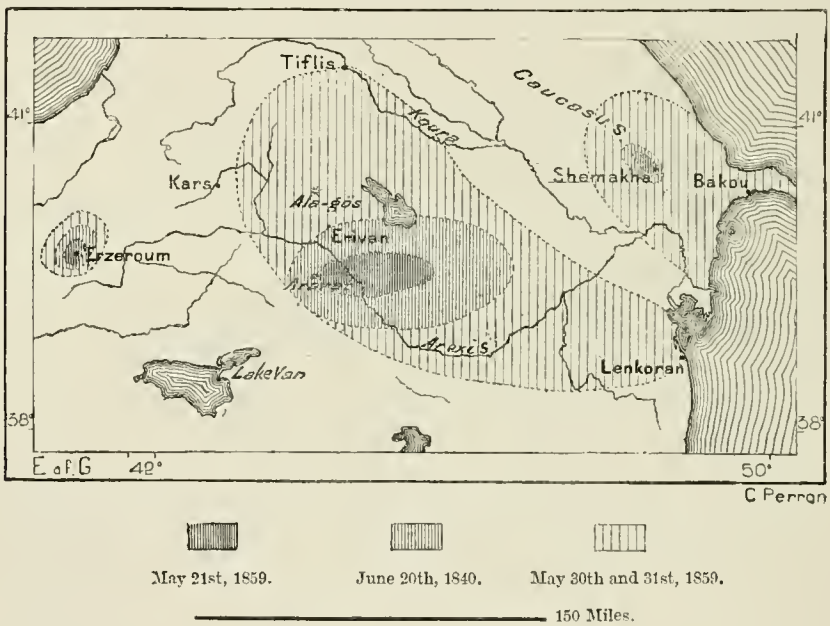
In the district north of the Kura, which still retains its old Persian name of Shirvan, a few eminences isolated in the midst of the plain seem to have formerly belonged to the Caucasian system, from which they have gradually become separated by the erosive action of running water. But this region has also been subjected to more sudden changes by underground agencies. Here earthquakes are still frequent, causing great damage, especially to the city of Shemakha, where in 1669 as many as 8,000 persons were in a few seconds buried under a heap of ruins. According to the local chronicles, the village of Lacha, lying farther south, was completely swallowed up, with all its inhabitants, flocks, and herds. Shemakha, with the industrious village of Boskal, was again wasted in May, 1859, after which the seat of Government was transferred to Baku, and most of the inhabitants left the place. Those who remained again suffered from a violent

shock in 1872. According to Abish the seismatic waves are here propagated north-west and south-east in a line with the continued axis of the Caucasus, and Shemakha consequently lies at no great distance from the centre of the movement. Explosions of burning naphtha occasionally throw up masses of earth and stones, accompanied with smoke and flames. The botanist Koch found the débris of one of these eruptions covering the steppe for a space of over half a mile, where all the crevasses were filled by brackish water with a slight flavour of naphtha.

The Apsheron peninsula, forming the eastern continuation of the Caucasus, together with the coast-line stretching thence southwards to the Kura delta, is the scene of constant igneous activity. Jets of gas, hot springs, mineral oils, mud

Fig. 53.—Chief Regions of Earthquakes in Caucasia.

From the *Memoirs of the Geographical Society* of the Caucasus. Scale 1 : 8,000,000.

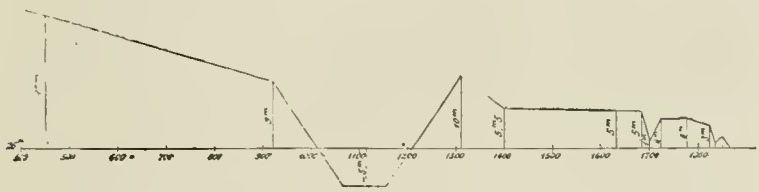


volcanoes, and even lava streams bear witness to the internal commotion throughout the region, which, like the segment of a crater, encircles the Gulf of Baku. It would seem as if the forces by which the Caucasus was upheaved were here still at work endeavouring to continue the range across the Caspian. Yet a subsidence has, on the contrary, been going on during recent times, as shown by the building engulfed in the harbour of Baku, and by the tradition according to which the island of Nargin was formerly attached to the mainland. Khanikov has shown that since the tenth century the seaboard at the eastern extremity of the Caucasus has been subject to various oscillations, rising 60 feet above its present level, then sinking 18 feet below it, and again rising and falling alternately. The whole Apsheron peninsula, with the various islands continuing it eastwards, has evidently

been upheaved, but not uniformly, for the relief of the land shows traces of numerous folds, due, doubtless, to side pressure. Mud volcanoes are dotted over the peninsula, all the depressions are filled with marshy soil, and the coast-line is disposed in curves, like those of the Kura delta. The "Holy Island," north of Apsheron Point, which assumes an analogous form, is of volcanic origin, like all those in the neighbourhood. Kumani, one of them, rose above the surface in 1864, and Lozi, another, was the scene of three eruptions in 1876, during which stones were thrown as far as Cape Alat, on the mainland. Shoals of seals * frequent the coast of the peninsula, but most fishes are driven away by the exhalations of gas and naphtha.

In many places these gases are liberated by simply piercing the surface of the land, and they are so inflammable that a mere spark suffices to set them burning till extinguished by a strong wind or heavy shower. The flames will at times even burst forth spontaneously, and during boisterous nights the hillsides have been swept by sheets of phosphorescent light. Even in the middle of the sea the naphtha streams bubble up, clothing the ripples far and near with a thin iridescent coating. Near Cape Shikov, south of Baku, a gas jet produces such a violent eddy

Fig. 54.—Oscillations of the Baku Coast during the last 1,500 Years.
According to Khanikov.



that boats are obliged to cast anchor to avoid being sucked in. Elsewhere the underground forces not only throw up jets of gas, petroleum, and asphalt, but upheave the very bed of the sea, as was lately seen when an islet rose to the surface near Baku. The legend of Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven, may, in the popular fancy, be possibly associated with the flaming hills and waters of this region.

The chief focus of the burning gases lies some 9 miles north-east of Baku, on the margin of a considerable saline pool near the villages of Balakhan and Surakhan. The district, known by the name of Atesh-gah, has become famous as the hallowed shrine of the fire worshippers. Yet this sanctuary, at least in its present form, would not seem to be as old as is generally supposed, dating only from the seventeenth century, when the courts of the Tatar khans of Derbent, Shemakha, and Baku were much frequented by Indian traders. The "Fire Temple" is now a mere redoubt, tolerated in the corner of a vast naphtha and asphalt factory, which is directly fed with combustible gas from the underground fires. The votaries of this

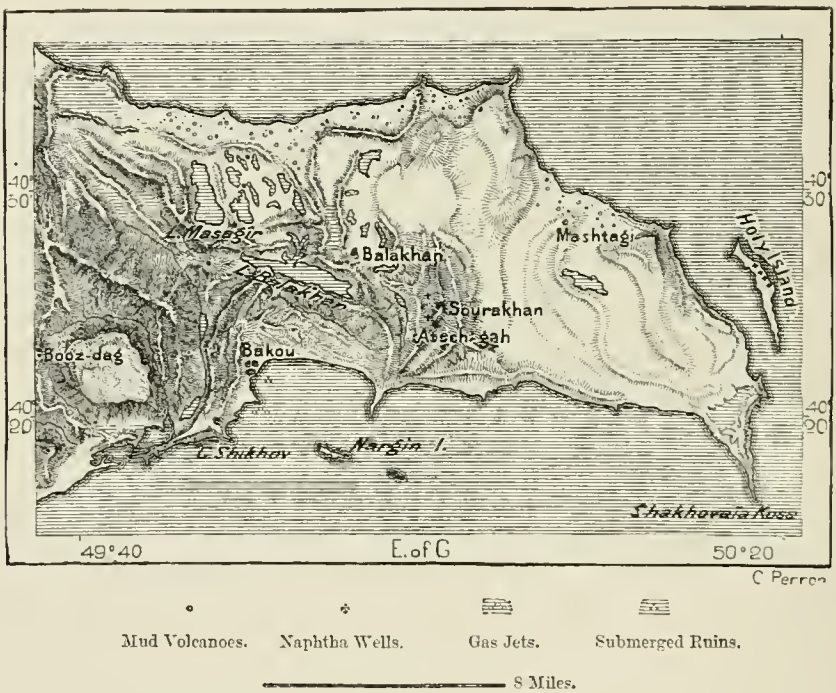
* The Caspian Seal (*Phoca Caspica*) differs specifically from that of Lake Baikal, though both are related to the Ringed or Arctic Seal (*Phoca fatida*). Both are also referred by Joel A. Allen, "History of North American Pinnipeds," to a pliocene ancestor from the south.—Ed.

temple have no longer any notion of a positive creed, and on the altar, by the side of Hindu deities, are seen the vases associated with Parsee worship, Russian images of St. Nicholas, statues of the Virgin, Roman Catholic crucifixes, objects which are all treated with like veneration.

The commercial importance of this great natural workshop has been much enhanced of late years, and the sale of rich naphtha plots has already yielded over 3,000,000 roubles to the State. Nothing can be imagined more simple than the structure of these lime-kilns. It suffices to light the gas escaping from the crevassed calcareous layers, and the stones are gradually reduced by the heat to the state desired by the lime burner. In private houses and workshops these jets are used

Fig. 55.—The Apsheron Peninsula.

Scale 1 : 450,000.



for heating, lighting, and cooking, though the illuminating power of the Balakhan gas is much inferior to that of the artificial article, for it possesses far less carbon. To the internal pressure of the gas is due the rising of the naphtha, which is forced upwards through the sandy and shingly layers below the superficial tertiary strata. With the petroleum stream there are carried up large quantities of sand, which accumulates about the orifice, where it gradually forms conic mounds 50 feet high. So far the seven hundred naphtha wells sunk in the neighbourhood of Baku have shown no signs of exhaustion. They supply over five-sixths of the petroleum of the Caucasus. Between 1870 and 1878 the yield was increased over tenfold, and quite a fleet of steamers and sailing vessels has been equipped for the export of this produce.


ARMAND. KOHN.

But immense loss is caused by the ignorance of those engaged in the trade. Thus a well at Balakhan, yielding 4,800 tons of naphtha daily, ran waste for four weeks before a reservoir could be prepared to receive the oil. The total yield of naphtha at Baku amounted in 1878 to about 7,000,000 cwt., of which nearly 3,500,000 cwt. were exported.

Inhabitants—The Georgians.

In Central as in Western Caucasia the most numerous race are the Georgians, or Karthvelians, descendants of the Iberians spoken of by Strabo. The statuettes found in the graves represent exactly the same type and the same style of head-dress as those of the present inhabitants, so that no change has taken place in this respect during the last two thousand years. Masters of the land from the remotest historic times, the Georgians have succeeded, if not in maintaining their independence, at least in preserving their ethnical cohesion and various national idioms. They formerly occupied a wider domain, and although encroached upon at various times by Persians, Medes, Armenians, Mongols, Turks, and now by the Slavs, their territory still stretches from the plains of the Kura to Trebizond, and from Mount Elbruz to Mount Arsiani. Of all the Caucasian peoples the Georgians, who are estimated at upwards of a million, form the most compact and homogeneous nationality. In Georgia is situated Tiflis, capital of all Transcaucasia.

As a political state Georgia had its periods of prosperity and military fame. Especially in the twelfth century, in the reigns of David the "Restorer," and of Queen Tamara, the Karthvelian kingdom acquired a decided preponderance over all the Caucasian lands, and the name of Tamara has remained popular from the Black Sea to the Caspian. In all the upland valleys she is the theme of countless legends and national songs; most of the ruins scattered over the land are supposed to be the remains of her palaces and strongholds; as a ruler of men the popular enthusiasm ranks her with Alexander; as a saint with St. George and the prophet Elias. But the period of Georgian ascendancy was of short duration, and the invasion of Jenghis Khan was followed by incessant warfare and civil strife, which ended only in 1802, when Georgia was officially incorporated in the Russian Empire. Its geographical situation permitted the inhabitants to maintain their independence and become fused in a compact national body. Most of the Karthvelians dwell on the plains, where the conditions of soil and climate oblige them to live as agriculturists scattered over the land. Their territory is everywhere enclosed by lofty mountains, whose occupants, pent up in their narrow, bleak, and unproductive glens, cast envious glances on the lowlands, never failing to swoop down whenever an opportunity is offered for making a successful foray. The Georgian territory is, moreover, divided into three distinct parts, clearly defined by forests and mountain ranges. The Kura basin in the east, those of the Rion and Ingûr in the centre, and that of the Chorukh in the west, are so many detached geographical areas, whose inhabitants were naturally involved in different political careers. The severance of the Georgian nationality into distinct fragments was also rendered almost inevitable

by the form of the several districts, all of which are greatly elongated east and west.

The Karthvel, or Karthalians, properly so called, who have retained the collective racial name, are the Georgians dwelling east of the Suram Mountains, in the old lacustrine plain whose centre is occupied by the town of Gori, and which terminates at Mtzkhet, ancient capital of Karthalia. They become blended eastwards with the Grusians of Tiflis, whose name is frequently applied collectively to all the branches

Fig. 56.—Mtzkhet, Ancient Capital of Georgia.

of the Georgian family. The Kakhetians, the easternmost of these branches, occupy the Yora and Alazan valleys; west of the Suram Mountains dwell the Imerians and Mingrelians in the Rion, Tskhenis, and Lower Ingûr basins; the Gurians hold the northern slopes of the Ajara Mountains; the Lazes a portion of the Chorukh basin west of that range; lastly, the Svans, with a few other tribes, have found a refuge in the fastnesses of the Upper Caucasus valleys. The various branches of the Karthalian family cannot all of them converse together, largely

owing to the foreign words that have crept into the different local idioms. But the general resemblance is very marked throughout the whole region from Trebizond to Tiflis, while amongst the educated Karthalians complete unity of speech has been maintained by the works of all sorts that have been published in Georgian. At least since the tenth century there has flourished a Karthalian literature, beginning with a simple translation of the Bible and gradually enriched by religious treatises, epic poems, songs, dramas, scientific writings, and more recently with translations of foreign works and periodical publications. Nevertheless the cultivation of the Georgian language and the intellectual development of the nation have been arrested by extreme centralizing tendencies. Since 1807 the Georgian archives and the valuable literary and historical documents found in Tiflis have been removed to St. Petersburg. Studied efforts are also being made to replace Georgian by Russian, and the latter language is now compulsorily taught in all the local schools. The national speech, by some grouped with the Aryan, by others with the Ural-Altaic family, would really seem to stand quite apart, a view already held by Klaproth, and since confirmed by Zagarelli, who has paid the greatest attention to the structure of the language. Like the Basque in Europe, Georgian appears to be the surviving representative of a form of speech formerly current throughout a far wider area, and absolutely distinct from the Aryan, Semitic, and Uralian linguistic stocks. The alphabet in use, at least since the tenth century, is derived, like the Armenian, through the Pahlvi and Zend from the Aramæan.

With the exception of the Lazes, who are mostly Mohammedans, the Karthalians belong to the Greek rite, and to their patron saint, George, is with some probability attributed the name of Georgia, whence the Russian Grusia. North of the Rion and Kura this saint is held in greatest veneration, whereas in the region south of those rivers, including the whole of Armenia, the worship of Mary has everywhere replaced that of Ma, or Maya, goddess of the teeming earth and of the harvest. The Georgians are strongly attached to their faith, and notwithstanding their naturally gentle disposition, they have always energetically resisted the successive religious persecutions of the Turks and Persians. The Byzantine style of their churches, introduced from Armenia, assumed in mediæval times a certain originality, still represented by exquisite naves, belfries, and apses, dating especially from the tenth and two following centuries. Even in the remotest upland valleys the traveller is surprised to meet with churches in a remarkably pure style, mostly standing on pleasant hills in the midst of leafy thickets. Nearly all are so built as to serve also as strongholds, while some are even subterraneous, betrayed by no outward signs, and capable of sheltering the community in troubled times. In Kakhetia the rocky eminences of the Karayaz steppe overlooking the Yora valley are pierced with caverns, said to have been excavated as churches and convents in the sixth century. In all the hilly districts of Karthalia the peasantry are also acquainted with labyrinthine caves, the former abode of a troglodytic people. Hundreds of strange towers are also met, recalling the *nuraghi* of Sardinia, but of unknown origin and use, although each is associated with its special legend.

The old method of constructing dwellings has persisted for over two thousand years. Whole villages consist of nothing but holes dug in the ground or hewn out of the rock, revealed from without only by masses of foliage, or by clay roofs on which the women sit in the cool of the summer evenings. In most of the towns many houses are also still covered, instead of a roof, with a layer of hardened earth about 2 feet thick, and inclined just sufficiently to allow the water to run off through the openings in the low wall enclosing the terrace. On this surface there grows a dense leafy vegetation, in which the *Lepidium vesicarium*, a species of crucifera, predominates; but it withers up in summer, and is got rid of by being set on fire, these nightly bonfires often producing a very startling effect as they blaze up suddenly, and as suddenly die out on the housetops. As regards health the clay terraces are far preferable to the European roofs, as they maintain a warmer temperature in winter and a cooler in summer. Yet, through a blind love of everything foreign, the upper classes in Tiflis have begun to build their houses in the Western style.

The Georgians of the Kura basin, like their Imerian, Mingrelian, and Laz kindred, fully deserve the reputation for physical beauty which they enjoy. They have the same abundant black hair, large eyes, white teeth, delicate complexion, lithe figures, small hands, that distinguish their western neighbours. Yet the appearance especially of their women, who mostly paint, can scarcely be described as prepossessing. They are cold and unattractive, their features lacking the animated expression and bright smile which intellectual development might be expected to have produced. Most of the Georgians have a high, almost flushed complexion, due doubtless to excessive indulgence in wine, of which they are ever ready to take copious draughts in honour of their friends, generally with the Tatar words, *Allah Verdi*, "the gift of God!" The Kakhetians especially, proud of their excellent vintages, consume large quantities, and before the ravages of the oïdium, the usual allowance of the field labourers was here about half a gallon daily. This fiery wine, some of which might compare favourably with the best produced in Europe, is mostly consumed in the country, and one of the most familiar sights in Kakhetia is the well-filled ox or pig skins hanging at the doors of the shops, or crossing the country in waggon-loads. In order to preserve the pliancy of the skins the natives have the horrible practice of flaying the beasts alive, and then smearing the hides with naphtha. This imparts a disagreeable flavour to the liquor, to which, however, even strangers soon get accustomed.

Notwithstanding the fertility of the land and relatively sparse population, the peasantry of the Kura basin are generally poor, owning little beyond a few mangy cattle and sheep, whose wool looks almost like hair. Like the Mingrelians and Imerians, though to a less extent, the Georgians have suffered from the feudal system. However, since 1864 and 1866 they have at least ceased to be attached to the glebe, and serfdom has been abolished in Transcaucasia, as elsewhere throughout the empire. But the nobles, who have remained large proprietors, have not all of them yet lost the habit of treating the peasantry as beasts of burden, while practices

IMERIAN TYPES AND COSTUMES—GROUP OF DANCERS.

begotten of slavery in the people themselves have not yet disappeared. They are for the most part uncleanly and listless, though their naturally cheerful, social, and upright disposition is gradually asserting itself. They are said to be rather less intelligent than the Caucasian races, and in the schools show less quickness than their Tatar and Armenian neighbours in mastering foreign languages and the sciences, though this may be partly due to the fact that the latter are mainly townsfolk, while the former are a rural population. Theft is a crime almost unknown in the Georgian and Armenian communities, the few cases of larceny that come before the Tiflis courts being mostly committed by strangers. At the same time many are addicted to contraband habits. Nor does their national legislator, King Vakhtang, seem to have entertained any high opinion of their general uprightness. "I have drawn up this code," he writes, "but in Georgia no just sentence has ever yet been, nor ever will be, pronounced." Yet, however barbarous may have been the former Government, it remained for the Russians to introduce corporal punishment of the most degrading form.

One of the most remarkable traits of the Georgian race is their love of song and the dance. They have no great musical talent, and their language, with its numerous gutturals and sibilants, is scarcely adapted to melody. Yet none the less do they keep up an incessant chant all day long, accompanying themselves with the *daïra*, or tambourine, and the *balalaïka*, a sort of three-stringed guitar. Some will, so to say, adapt every movement to musical rhythm, and while weeding their maize-fields or engaged in other field work, the men dispose themselves in groups, singing in various sets snatches of verse suitable to the work in hand. As they advance the chorus becomes more vigorous, and their measured movements more rapid. At the end of the furrow they stop short, shift their places, and in retracing their steps renew the interrupted burden of their song. Despotic masters from gloomy Russia attempted in vain to impose silence on their Transcaucasian labourers. Unaccompanied by the glad music of the voice, the daily task hung heavy on their hands.

Custom has also given force of law to numerous feast-days analogous to the old holidays of "Merry England." On foot, on horseback, or in their ramshackle carts the whole population flocks to the scene, indicated from afar by some venerable church or cluster of oak-trees, and here the song, the dance, trade, revelry, and religious rites all follow in rapid succession. Worship is itself performed with a sort of blind rapture. Pilgrims present themselves before the priest to have the iron collar removed, with which they had symbolized their temporary thraldom to the patron saint; and when released they immolate to his honour the ram or the bull, which afterwards supplies the banquet. Frequently some fair white-robed "spouse of the white George" will cast herself at the feet of the faithful, who must either step on her prostrate body or leap over it to reach the hallowed shrine. The Armenians, and even the Moslem Tatars, come to trade, are at times carried away by the religious frenzy, and join in the chorus and Christian rites. To the sacred succeed the profane dances, which often assume the appearance of a free fight, the victors seizing the girdles of the vanquished, enveloping themselves in

the ample folds of their *bûrkas*, or donning their imposing *papashes*. Formerly the sham fights held in the streets of Tiflis in commemoration of the expulsion of the Persians ended in regular battles, often accompanied by loss of life.

The Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tûshes.

As in the west, so in East Georgia, the ethnical picture is completed by a group of highlanders, who had till recently maintained their independence in their inaccessible upland retreats. On the one hand are the already described Svans, on the other their Khevsur, Pshav, and Tûsh neighbours. The highest eastern valleys about Mount Borbalo have afforded a refuge to fugitives of diverse race and speech, who, amidst these secluded upland snows and pastures, have gradually acquired, if not an independent type, at least a distinct physiognomy. Chechenzes, Lezghians, Georgians, and, according to tradition, even Jews have entered into the composition of these tribes, although the chief ethnical element is no doubt the Georgian from the south, whose presence is also shown by the prevailing Christian practices. Nevertheless the predominant speech on the northern slopes is of Chechenz origin.

Mount Borbalo is no less remarkable as an ethnological than as a water parting. Eastward stretches the Tûsh district, watered by the two head-streams of the Koïsu of Andi; on the south the Alazan of Kakhetia, apart from a few Tûshes, is mainly occupied by Georgians; on the south-west the sources of the Yora and Eastern Aragva rise in the Pshav territory; while the Khevsurs, or "People of the Gorges," dwell in the west and north-west, on both slopes of the central range, though it is impossible to assign definite limits to all these peoples.* They frequently shift their quarters, following their flocks to fresh pastures assigned to them by custom, or acquired by the fortunes of war.

The Pshavs, who reach farthest down, or about the altitude of 3,300 feet, thus abutting on the Southern Georgians, are the most civilised of these highlanders, and speak a Georgian dialect. They have greatly increased in numbers since the pacification of the land has enabled them to bring their produce to the Tiflis market. The Tûshes, though less numerous and pent up in their rugged valleys everywhere enclosed by snowy mountains, are said to be the most industrious and intelligent of all the hillmen in this part of the Caucasus. Most of the men, being obliged, like the Savoyards, to emigrate for half the year, bring back from the lowland populations larger ideas and more enterprising habits. Many have even acquired a considerable amount of instruction, besides several foreign languages. Their own is an extremely rude dialect, poor in vowels, abounding in consonants, with no less than nine sibilants and eight gutturals, one of which combines so inti-

* Population of Upland Borbalo valleys in 1876, according to Seidlitz:—

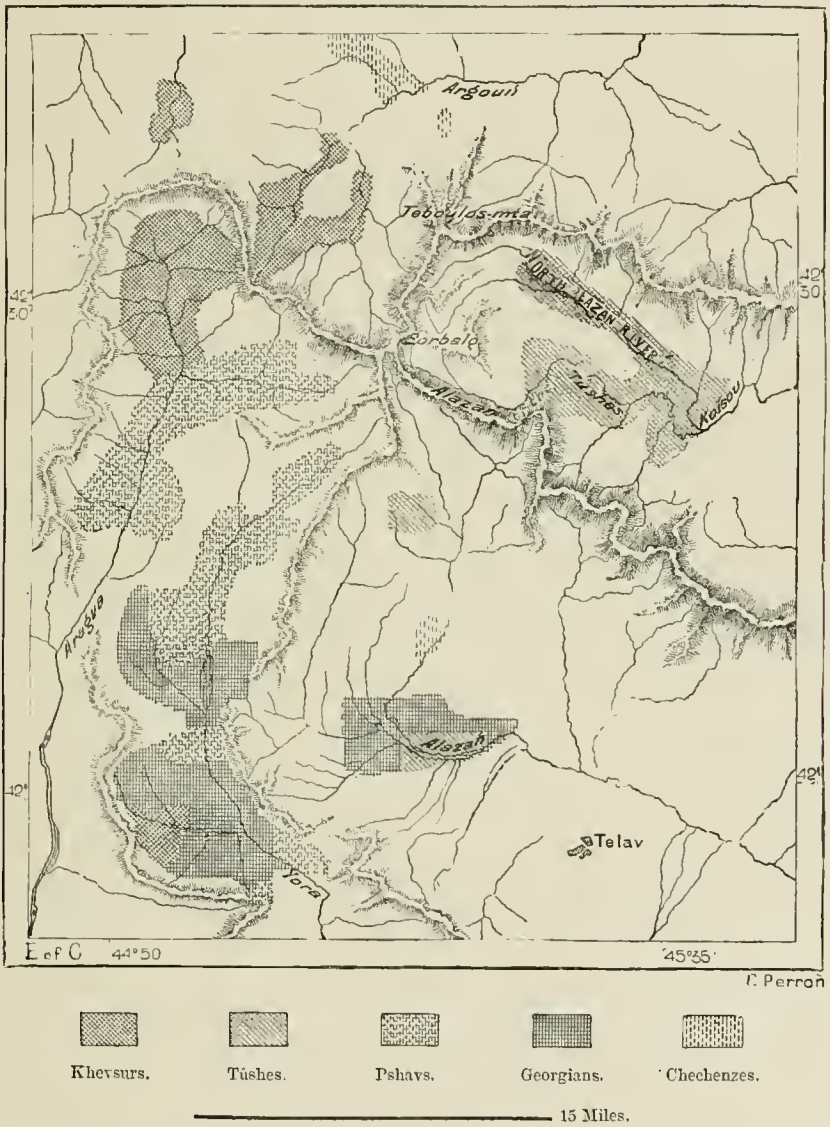
Pshavs	8,150
Khevsurs	6,900
Tûshes	5,050
Total	20,100

mately with the preceding or following consonants that special signs had to be invented to represent the combined letters.

The Khevsurs, completely isolated from each other during the winter by the main range, are still in a very rude and almost barbarous state, although in some

Fig. 57.—The Khevsur, Tûsh, and Pshav Lands.

Scale 1 : 850,000.



respects one of the most remarkable people in Asia. Generally of a lighter brown complexion than the Tûshes, they are evidently a very mixed race, varying considerably in stature, features, colour of hair and eyes, and in the shape of the cranium. Most of them have a savage aspect; some are extremely thin, like

walking skeletons with miraculously animated Death's heads on their shoulders, and with large hands and feet, out of all proportion with the rest of the body. From the surroundings they have acquired muscles of steel, enabling them, even when heavily burdened, to scale the steepest cliffs, and often returning across the snows and rocks from Vladikavkaz with a hundredweight of salt on their backs.

Some of the still surviving Khevsur and P'shav customs resemble those of many Red Indian and African wild tribes. Thus the wife is confined in an isolated hut, round which the husband prowls, encouraging her to support the pains of labour with volleys of musketry. After the delivery young girls steal to the place at dawn or dusk with bread, milk, cheese, and other comforts, the mother remaining for a month in her retreat, which is burnt after her departure. The father is congratulated on the birth of a son, and feasts are prepared at his expense, but of which he may not partake. The struggle for existence in this unproductive land has introduced many practices calculated to limit the number of children to three; but infanticide does not prevail as it formerly did amongst the Svans. The Khevsurs show great affection for their offspring, though forbidden by custom to caress them in public. The boys are generally named after some wild animal—Bear, Lion, Wolf, Panther, &c., emblems of their future valour, while the girls receive such tender names as Rose, Pearl, Bright-one, Daughter of the Sun, Little Sun, Sun of my Heart, &c.

Most of the marriages are arranged by the parents while the children are yet in "long clothes." Nevertheless a formal abduction is still practised, and after the wedding and attendant rejoicings, the young couple avoid being seen together for weeks and months. Yet divorce is frequent, and the example of the Mohammedans has even introduced polygamy in several Khevsur families. The funeral rites are not practised with the same rigour as formerly, when none were allowed to die under a roof, but compelled to close their eyes in face of sun or stars, and mingle their last breath with the winds. In presence of the body the relatives at first feigned to rejoice, but tears and wailings soon followed, accompanied by mournful songs for the departed.

The Khevsurs are very proud of their Christianity, which is certainly of an original type. Their chief divinity is the God of War, and amongst their other gods and angels are the Mother of the Earth, the Angel of the Oak, and the Archangel of Property. They keep the Friday like the Mohammedans, abstain from pork, worship the sacred trees, offer sacrifices to the genii of earth and air. They have priests whose duties are to examine the sick, sprinkle the victim's blood over the people, proclaim the future, prepare the sacred beer, and these dignitaries end by becoming possessed of all the precious stones, old medals, and chased silver vases in the country. The Khevsurs are also, perhaps, the only people in the world who still use armour, coats of mail, arm-pieces, and helmets like those of mediæval knights, and formerly general amongst all the Caucasian tribes. Down to the close of the last century the Chechenz Ingushes still wore the shield and coats of mail. The traveller is often startled by the sight of these armed

KHEVSUR IN ARMOUR.

warriors, who look like lineal descendants of the Crusaders, but whom the law of vendetta alone compels to go about thus cased in iron. All who have to execute or fear an act of vengeance appear abroad with all their offensive and defensive arms, including the terrible spiked gauntlet, which has left its mark on the features of most of the natives.

The Tatars, Talishes, Slavs, and Germans.

Although far less numerous than the Georgians in the Kura basin, the Tatars still occupy nearly all its eastern section below Tiflis. In several districts they are grouped in compact masses of a far purer type than their kinsmen, the Western Osmanli. By the Byzantines and Arabs they were all confused, under the general name of Khazars, with the peoples at that time predominating on the banks of the Don and Volga. Although presenting every variety of type from the coarsest to the noblest, they are in general scarcely less symmetrical than their Georgian neighbours, while harbouring, under a serious and solemn expression, moral qualities not found in other Caucasian races. Those who have preserved their freedom are remarkably sincere, upright, and hospitable, generally very industrious, and superior to their neighbours as stock-breeders, agriculturists, gardeners, and artisans. They are often even better instructed than the Russians themselves, for most of them can read, while many write Turkish very correctly, and some show themselves familiar with Arabic and Persian.

In some respects the Tatars are the civilising element in Caucasia, for their language, the Tûrki of Azerbeijan, is the general medium of intercourse between the various tribes, so that all the natives are commonly comprised under the collective name of Tatars. Amongst them are some representatives of the Kumans and other warlike invaders of Southern Europe, and they could not fail to have acquired a decisive influence in the country, but for a certain apathy of character which has caused them to fall into the hands of Armenian speculators and money-lenders. In their habits those of the Lower Kura, Shirvan, and Baku approach nearer to the Persians than to the Turks. They seldom practise polygamy, and their women generally work freely with unveiled face. On the whole they are remarkably tolerant, nor does the Shiah sect take advantage of its decided ascendancy to persecute either the Sunnite Mohammedans or their Christian neighbours. In some mixed villages the mayors are chosen alternately from the Armenians and Tatars, and even on the Persian frontier the Christians assist at the Shiah celebrations. Thus at Shusha the funeral processions in honour of Hassan and Hussein are escorted by mounted Cossacks, and attended by military bands. Yet the fanatical actors often bewail those martyrs of the Prophet's family by self-inflicted tortures of a most atrocious description, slashing their heads with knives until they are bathed in gore, burying wooden pegs in their skull, attaching iron clasps to the cheek bones and nostrils, confining the shoulders between two sharp swords which pierce the skin at every step, or loading the arms, breast, and loins with chains and amulets fastened by means of iron hooks

sunk into the flesh. The unhappy victims often fall from exhaustion or loss of blood, while the dervishes and priests continue to excite the populace with songs, prayers, and shouts.

In certain eastern districts dwell the Tats, also zealous Shiah sectaries, descendants of the former Persian rulers of the country, and whose name is synonymous with that of Tajik, current throughout Turkestan. They are found in compact groups about Baku, and as far north as Kuba. Most of the Lenkoran district, on the Persian frontier, is also occupied by an Iranian people known as Talishes, who have long dwelt in a semi-barbarous state in the secluded region between the highlands and the swamps of the Lower Kura. Their language is not a Persian dialect, but an independent parallel development, showing a certain affinity to the Afghan. Next to the Georgians and the Tatars, these Tats and Talish Iranians occupy the widest ethnical area in Caucasia, although outnumbered by the Armenians, who are grouped in the towns, and especially in Tiflis. Besides all these races there are a few Mongol tribes in the Lower Kura basin, survivors of the old invaders, who live more or less intermingled with the Tatars along the left bank of the Alazan between Signakh and Zakatali. The hilly district overlooking Tiflis on the west is occupied by some Osses, and even Greeks, invited hither to replace the Tatars in 1829. Lastly, the settled population of Eastern Transcaucasia is completed by several Russian and German colonists, some banished, others voluntary emigrants to this region.

The Russian nonconformists, compelled in 1838 and subsequent years to settle in Transcaucasia, are mostly Molokanes—that is, "Feeders on Milk"—or Dukhobortzi—that is, "Wrestlers in Spirit"—from Taurida. Thanks to their co-operative habits, both are far more prosperous than their Tatar or Georgian neighbours, though in many respects inferior to other Slav colonists. The Germans who, like the Russian dissidents, have also settled near Tiflis and Yelizavetpol, live entirely aloof from the surrounding populations, and by their agricultural skill have converted into gardens the lands conceded to them when they migrated in 1817 from Würtemberg. These Suabian colonists seem, in the course of two generations, to have become remarkably modified under the influence of the physical surroundings. Although they have contracted no alliances with their Georgian, Armenian, or Tatar neighbours, they no longer resemble their kinsmen in the fatherland, most of them being now distinguished by dark hair, black eyes, oval and regular features, graceful and lithe figures.

Topography.

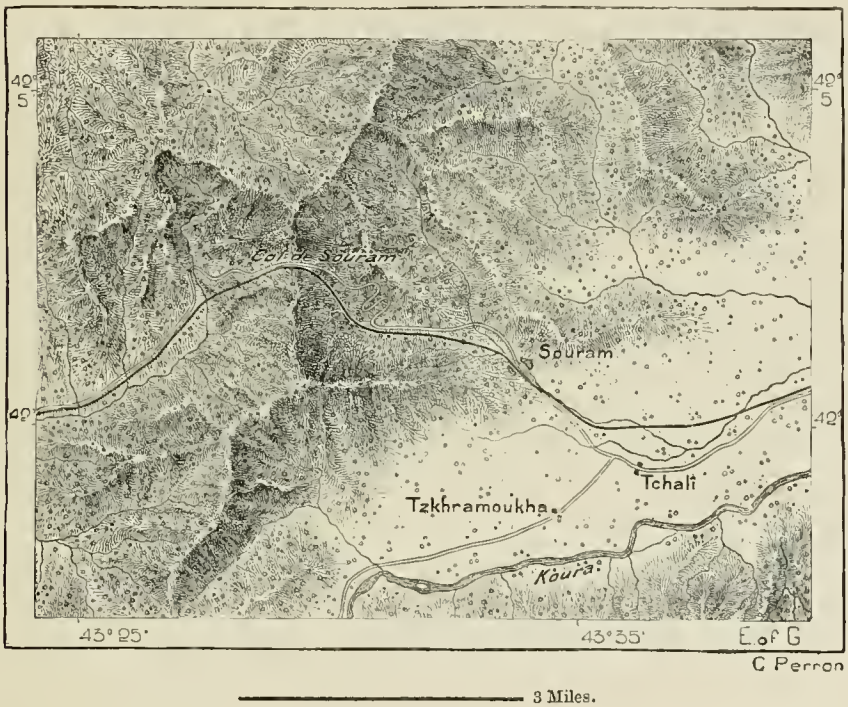
The highest town in the Kura basin is *Ardahan*, a stronghold situated in a fertile cirque at the southern foot of the bluff surmounted by the fortress of Ramazan. By its capture in 1877 the Russians became masters of the more important passes leading towards the Chorukh and Araxis valleys. But eastwards Ardahan still remains unconnected by easy routes with the rest of Transcaucasia, the volcanic region here traversed by the Kura opposing great obstacles to trade.

One of the river gorges below Ardahan encloses the celebrated convent of Vardzia, or Vardzîsh—that is, "Castle of Roses"—entirely excavated in the soft tufa, which is here regularly stratified with layers of black scoria. The underground town contains innumerable cells disposed in stories, and connected by galleries edging the precipice 200 feet above the Kura. The larger spaces form either chapels, where are still to be seen the remains of frescoes, or the so-called summer and winter palaces of Queen Tamara.

East of these defiles stands the important fortress of *Akalkalaki*, on an exposed but fertile plateau 5,630 feet above sea-level. *Akiska*, or Akhaltzik—that is, "New

Fig. 58.—The Suram Pass and Mesk Mountains.

Scale 1 : 210,000.



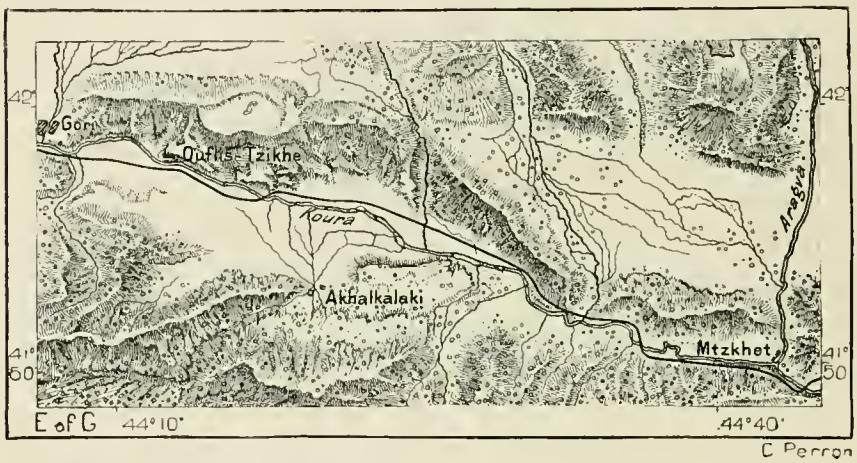
Fort"—which was the old Turkish town of Ak-hissar, or "White Fort," is also an important military town, commanding several of the frontier routes, and in peaceful times the centre of a considerable trade, since the emigration of the Turks chiefly occupied by Armenians, with about a thousand Jews. The old mosque of its citadel, now a church, is one of the finest monuments in Caucasia. The district abounds in hot springs, amongst which those of Aspinza below Vardzia, and Abbas-Tuman to the north-west, attract numerous bathers to one of the most umbrageous and romantic valleys in this region. Descending from Akhaltzik towards Tiflis by the banks of the Kura, we reach the magnificent gorge, whose entrance is guarded by the pleasant watering-place of *Borjom*, 2,665 feet above sea-level.

This is the summer resort of the wealthy classes from Tiflis, and the ruined buildings interspersed amongst the modern palaces and villas show that it was a large centre of population even before the sixteenth century. Here the air is pure and fresh, water flows in abundance, and every eminence is clothed with forests in which the ibex and wild goat are still hunted.

Suram, though small in size, is a busy town, well known to travellers as a resting-place on the route and railway between Poti and Tiflis. It is commanded by a strong castle, which, according to the legend, the owner endeavoured to render impregnable by laying the foundation stone on the only son of a widow. Suram stands at the western extremity of the Karthalian plain, a dried-up lake whose bed is now extremely fertile. The temporary railway at present crossing the Suram

Fig. 59.—The Kura Valley between Gori and Mtzkhet.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 500,000.



Hills will probably be ultimately replaced by another running farther south, and piercing the Mesk range by a tunnel in the vicinity of Borjom.

Gori, capital of the district, and ethnological centre of Georgia, stands as nearly as possible in the middle of the old lacustrine basin, not far from the junction of the Kura, Lakhva, and Mejuda, of which the two latter streams descend from the country of the Osses. Gori is happily situated in a fertile and well-watered district at the foot of a bluff crowned by an old citadel. The wheat of this district is the best in Transcaucasia, and its wines are used in Tiflis for tempering the more fiery vintages of Kakhetia. On a tertiary rock of molasse formation, 5 miles east of Gori, lies the troglodytic town of Uflis-tzikhe, no less remarkable than the convent of Vardzia, and much more accessible to visitors by the railway from Tiflis. The rock, some 660 feet high, consists of strata of varying hardness, carved, sculptured, and excavated from base to summit, so as to present the appearance of a pyramidal group of buildings. These Uflis grottoes were probably at first inhabited by

A STREET IN TIFLIS.

barbarous troglodytes; but their successors were acquainted with the arts and comforts of life, and in these underground chambers are found the remains of Greek, Roman, Arab, and Byzantine architecture.

Mtzkhet, standing at the outlet of the old Lake of Karthalia, though now an insignificant village, was the residence of the Georgian kings in the fourth and fifth centuries. It occupies a vital position at the junction of the main routes from the Darial defile through the Aragva valley, and from the Caspian and Euxine through the Kura and Rion basins. Hence after its destruction the new capital of Georgia and of all Caucasia was founded in the same neighbourhood, but removed, about a thousand years ago, some 13 miles farther south, to avoid the dangerous proximity of the Osses. The piles of a bridge thrown across the Kura in 1841 are said to rest on Roman foundations dating from the time of Pompey. But more interesting are the ruins of the cathedral founded by King Mirian in 328, and since then frequently restored.

Tiflis, capital of Caucasia and the largest city in Asiatic Russia, was a mere hamlet on the banks of the Kura till the fifth century, when the seat of Government was transferred hither from Mtzkhet. The Georgian term Tiflis, Tphilis, or Tphilis-Kalaki, means "Hot Town," doubtless in reference to the sulphur spring rising near the Kura, amidst the porphyries and schists of the Tsavkissi fissure. Yet the name might be equally well applied to it from the sultry summer heat reflected by the bare rocks of the surrounding heights on the basin enclosing the city at an elevation of 1,220 feet above the sea. Nothing is visible in every direction except the slopes of hills or yellow and grey schistous mountains stripped of the forests formerly covering them, and even of the vegetable humus carried away by the winds and rains. The Russians have recently endeavoured to restore these forests, but they have succeeded only in the ravines, on the flats and islands watered by the Kura. Above the quarter where stood the old town, the monotonous uniformity of the rocky landscape is broken by ramparts, bastions, and crumbling towers, while the banks of the Kura present a picturesque view with their three bridges, hanging galleries, low many-coloured housetops, and churches flanked by belfries terminating with octagonal pyramids. Nevertheless the general aspect of the place is not cheerful, the grey tones of the brick and wood work contributing to produce a depressing effect on the traveller. In 1874 nearly half of the houses were still roofed with earth, giving them the appearance of huts, and forming a strange contrast with the grand edifices in their midst. North-west of the old town stretch the regular streets of the new quarter, flanked by heavy buildings, churches, barracks, palaces, in the ultra-Caucasian Russian style. A broad boulevard, much frequented after sunset, vies in the splendour of its warehouses with those of the great European capitals. The town is also constantly spreading northwards, especially round about the Poti railway terminus, along the left bank of the Kura, and in the direction of Mtzkhet.

In its motley population Tiflis is the worthy capital of the Caucasian regions. Although lying within the ethnological limits of Georgia, it is not in a special sense a Georgian city, and even in 1803 of 2,700 houses four only belonged to families

of that nation. The Armenians, constituting one-third of the inhabitants, are the most numerous element, while neither Russians nor Georgians amount to one-fifth, and even amongst the latter must be included the Imerian and Mingrelian "hewers of wood and drawers of water."* A large number of the people are unmarried immigrants, temporary residents raising the male population to about two-thirds of the whole, and partly accounting for the prevailing depravity noticed by all travellers. The bazaars are largely frequented and well stocked with arms, carpets, silks, English or Russian cottons, Paris fancy goods, and other wares. The skilful Armenian jewellers produce various articles of an original type. The baths form another centre of social activity, especially for the Russian, Armenian, and Georgian ladies, who here occupy themselves with the pleasures of the toilet. The city has no remarkable monuments, but possesses a rich natural-history collection, and in the governor's palace may be seen a fine plan in relief of the Caucasus range. Amongst the numerous learned associations noteworthy is the Geographical Society, which is attached to that of St. Petersburg, and has published valuable documents on Caucasian geography and ethnography. Another institution has been formed to collect the old manuscripts of the Transcaucasian languages.

During the oppressive summer heats the parks, pleasure grounds, and botanic gardens in the neighbourhood are frequented by thousands, glad to escape from the close and foul air of the narrow streets. The officials and wealthy traders now also flock to the villas and hostelries of the surrounding uplands. The chief "Sanitorium" is *Kojor*, whose houses are scattered at an elevation of from 4,400 to 5,000 feet along the slopes of a mountain commanding the Tiflis basin, and where the Georgian kings had also their summer residence. Here are the remains of some ancient forests, and Manglis, Beliy-Klûch, and other more remote retreats in the heart of the hills are still surrounded by extensive woodlands. The numerous alabaster quarries of this district supply the gypsum required by the Tiflis builders. Farther south volcanoes pierced by craters and furrowed by crevasses have accumulated vast terraces of lava above the fertile Somkhet district, which is watered by an affluent of the Kura. This country was long the domain of the Orbeliani, a princely family of Chinese origin, who some twenty-three centuries ago settled here as conquerors, followed by Eastern retainers of all races. Various ruins still testify to the former power of the Orbeliani in this region.

On one of the numerous streams to the south-west of Tiflis stands the famous Shamkhor column, already mentioned by Abulfeda in the thirteenth century. This finely proportioned minaret, with its pedestal, frieze, capital, and terminal piece, is 180 feet high; but it is in a very bad state of repair, already inclining from the

* Population of Tiflis in 1876 according to nationalities:—

Armenians	37,308	Poles	1,592
Georgians of all branches	21,623	Jews	1,145
Russians	19,574	Greeks	388
Germans	2,005	Osses	293
Tatars and Turks	2,310	French	267
Persians	1,692	Sundries	1,354

In boarding-houses, barracks, hospitals, and prisons, 14,473. Of these 66,147 are males, 37,877 females.

perpendicular, and the Kufic inscription on the frieze is no longer legible. It dates probably from the ninth century. The basin of the Shamkhor, which flows by the village of like name, is the most important in Caucasia for its mineral wealth. In a cirque in these porphyry mountains, at an elevation of 5,000 feet, are situated the Kedabek works for reducing the copper ores extracted from the neighbouring mines. This establishment, purchased in 1863 by some German engineers, gives

Fig. 60.—Tiflis.
Scale 1 : 36,000.

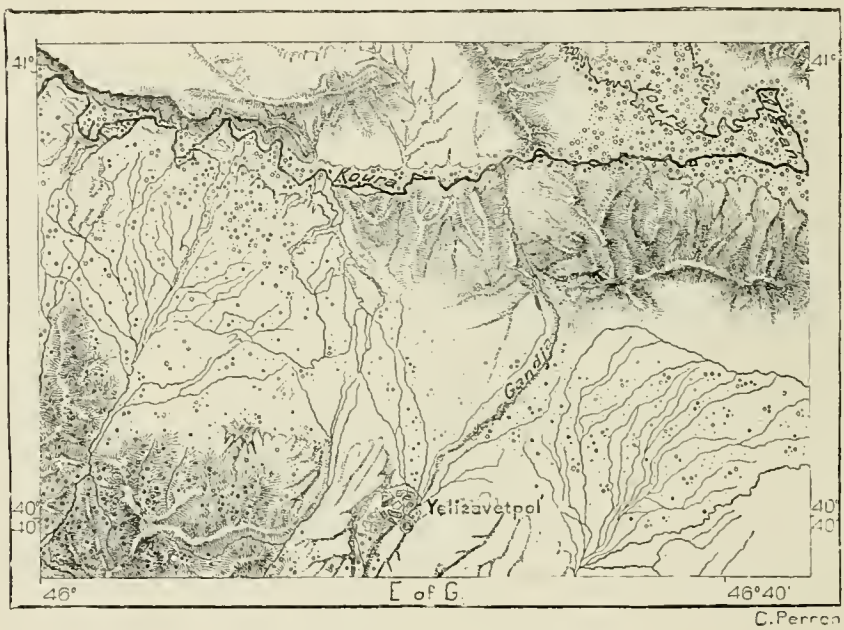
1,080 Yards.

constant employment to 1,000 Persian, Armenian, Tatar, and Greek workmen, and works up, on an average, from 8,000 to 10,000 tons of ore with about 6 per cent. of metal, partly purchased by the Government for the artillery service. It has developed quite a network of railways, and disposes of about 35,000 acres of forests and pastures, and one of the shafts has already been sunk to a depth of nearly 2,000 feet. Near Soglik, in the same basin, are some alum deposits, as rich as those

of Tolfa, near Civita Vecchia, and covering an area of over 12 square miles. These mines have been worked since the time of the Romans, as shown by numerous remains found on the spot. Iron and cobalt are also worked in this part of the Yelizavetpol district.

Some 120 miles south-east of Tiflis lies the old city of *Ganja*, formerly capital of a khanate of like name, and now renamed Yelizavetpol, as capital of the Russian province of Yelizavetpol. It existed in the eleventh century, but some miles from its present site, where are still to be seen the ruins of the old place, popularly attributed to Alexander the Great, who never visited the Kura basin. A little farther south-east stood *Partav*, the old capital of the kingdom of Agvania, or

Fig. 61.—Yelizavetpol and Vicinity.
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 600,000.



Albania, in the district watered by the Terter above its junction with the Kura. Partav was destroyed in the tenth century, according to the Arab historians, by "Rûssi" adventurers from beyond the Caucasus, and its site is now indicated by the village of Barda, or Berdaya. This region was certainly far more densely peopled formerly than at present, and Yelizavetpol itself, rebuilt in the sixteenth century on its present site, was evidently a considerable place, as shown by its extensive ruins and the fine Persian mosque erected here by Shah Abbas. Most of its windowless houses are built of a hardened clay, which is very durable in this dry climate, but which, with the ruins, contributes to give the place an appearance of great age. With its fine plantations it covers a large area, some 12 miles in circumference; yet it is so unhealthy that the officials are all obliged to remove in

summer to the banks of the romantic "Blue Lake" (Gök-göl), to Helenendorf, and Haji-Kend, near the wooded hills of the south. Yelizavetpol is even noted for a local endemic, the so-called *godovik*, or "yearly leprosy," so named because it lasts about one year in defiance of all remedies. This loathsome disease is probably due

Fig. 62.—The Telav Basin.

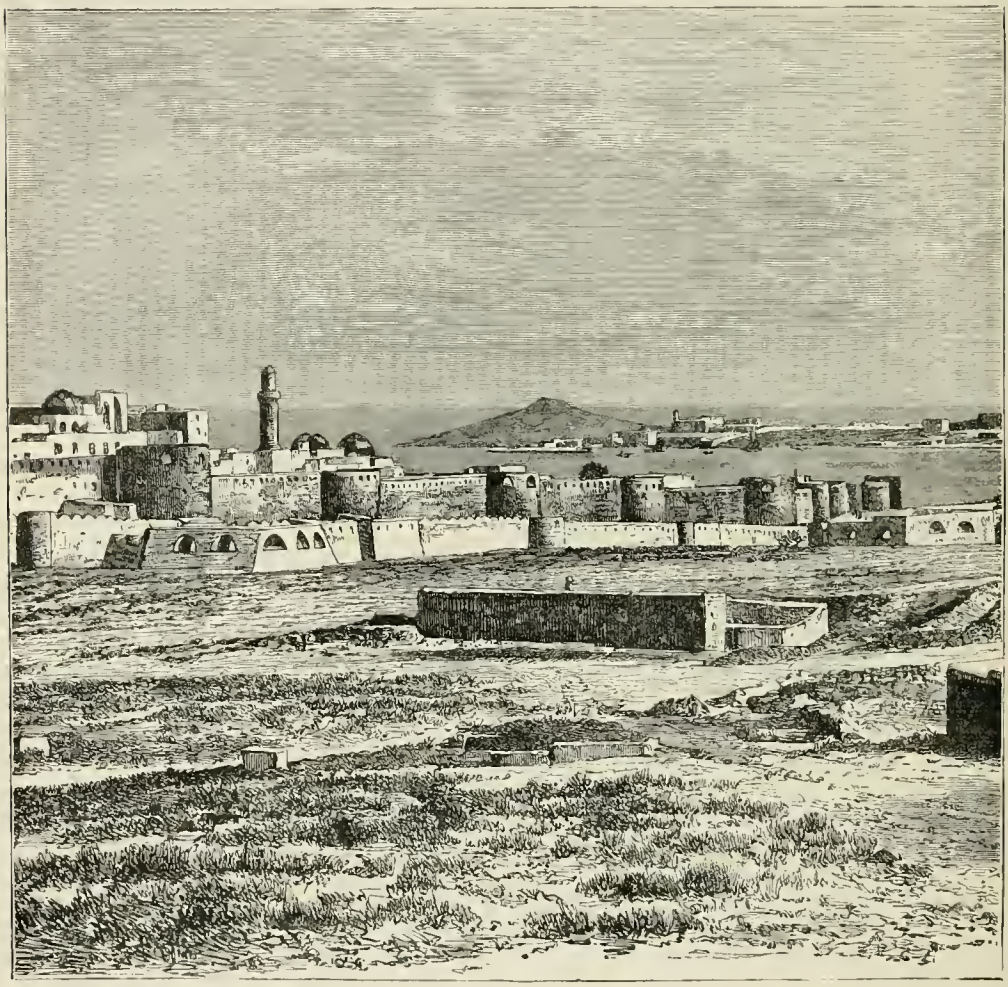
From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 400,000.

to the twenty-two cemeteries close to the town, mingling their contents with the numerous irrigating rills from the river Ganja, whose waters are often absorbed in this way before reaching the Kura. The skilful horticulture of its Tatar, Suabian, and Slav inhabitants has brought the fruits of this district to great perfection, and its cherries especially are the finest in Caucasia. They also occupy themselves with

the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, sericulture, spinning, and weaving, while the trade of Yelizavetpol is chiefly in the hands of the Armenians.

Shusha, the largest town in this government, is also peopled by Armenians and Tatars. Standing 3,500 feet above the sea on an augite porphyry terrace enclosed by an amphitheatre of hills, its climate is one of the severest in Caucasia, while its flag-paved streets, stone houses, fortified buildings, towers, and posterns give it the

Fig. 63.—Baku and Cape Bail-Burni.

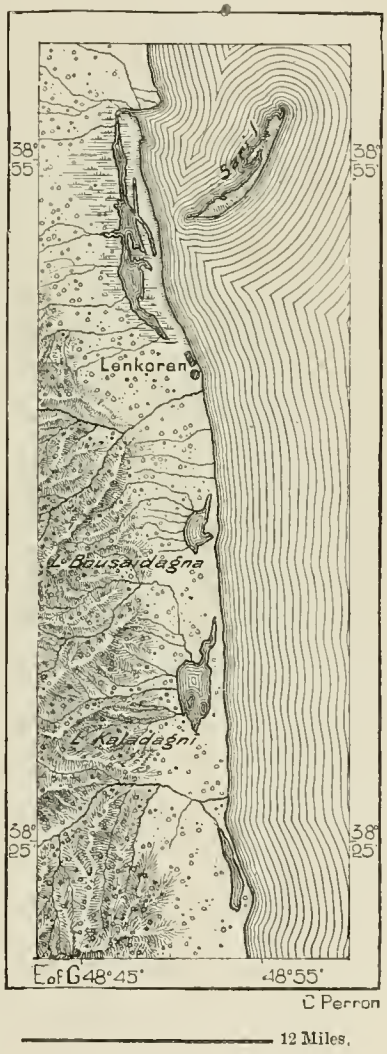


aspect of a mediæval European town. Its Armenian traders, who deal chiefly in silk, have extensive relations with Tiflis, Moscow, and Marseilles.

Telav, capital of Kakhetia, and in the eleventh century the residence of a "King of Kings," is now merely a picturesque village, standing with its ruined forts on the summit of a bluff overlooking the Alazan valley. Yet it has a considerable wine trade, and but for its inconvenient situation might possibly recover some of its former importance. *Signakh*, also commanding the Alazan valley from an eminence

2,600 feet high, was originally a fortress and "place of refuge," as indicated by its Tatar name, but has gradually become a thriving commercial town, with a preponderating Armenian population. *Nukha*, at the foot of the Great Caucasus, is peopled chiefly by Tatars engaged mostly in sericulture and silk-weaving. Here the Khan Hussein built a strong fortress in 1765, which encloses an extremely handsome palace in Persian style. It does a large export trade in raw silk, and since the ravages of the silk disease in the European nurseries it is yearly visited by hundreds of French and Italian buyers.

Fig. 64.—Lenkoran.
From the Map of the Russian Staff.
Scale 1 : 600,000.



Shamakhi, the Shemakha of the Russians, capital of the old province of Shirvan, and formerly the largest city in Transcaucasia, was said to have had a population of 100,000 in the seventeenth century. But it has suffered much from earthquakes, and still more from the hand of man, having been wasted first by Peter the Great, and then by Nadir Shah. Yet ever since the removal of the seat of Government to Baku it has remained the most populous place in the province. It is chiefly engaged in wool-spinning, dyeing, and weaving carpets in the Persian style, said to be the best and most durable in all Asia, and surpassing even those of the French looms in beauty of design, richness of colour, and cheapness. Its seedless pomegranates are also famous throughout the East.

Baku, the present capital of the eastern province of Transcaucasia, exhibits quite an Asiatic appearance, with its low flat-roofed houses, tall minarets and palace of its former khans. Close to the blue waters of its bay stands the so-called "Maiden's Tower," a truncated cone, originally, doubtless, a watch-tower, but now used as a lighthouse. But being otherwise destitute of monuments, the dirty, irregular, and dusty town of Baku, and centre of the naphtha trade, possesses no importance except as the Caspian seaport of all Transcaucasia. In its deep and sheltered roadstead at least fifty vessels are always anchored, some in 20 feet of water within a few yards of the shore, and although still unconnected by rail either with Stavropol or Tiflis, it has the largest trade of any Caspian port except Astrakhan. But it has scarcely any industries, and even all the naphtha and

petroleum refining works are carried on at Balakhani and Mashtagi, in the neighbourhood of the "fire springs."

Salyani, or Salyan, the chief town of the Kura delta, and standing near its apex, derives considerable importance from its productive fisheries and horticulture. *Lenkoran*, or Lenkorud, a maritime town near the Persian frontier, lacks the natural advantages of Baku; for although its Tatar name means "roadstead," it is greatly exposed to the winds and surf, and its shipping is obliged to cast anchor about 2 miles from the coast. The Mard-ab, or "Dead Waters," of the surrounding district also render its climate very unhealthy. In these swampy grounds multitudes of ducks and other aquatic birds are taken by the net, and the cultivation of rice, together with a rich Indian flora, has been introduced by the Hindu traders.

South of Lenkoran stands the equally inconvenient and insalubrious little port of *Astara*, at the mouth of a river of like name, which here marks the frontier of the Russian and Persian Empires. From Persia, Astara imports dried fruits, gall nuts, and raw cotton, in exchange for cotton stuffs, iron and copper ware, and samovars. It has a yearly trade of nearly 1,000,000 roubles.

VII.—RUSSIAN ARMENIA.

ARARAT, ALAGOZ, PLATEAU OF LAKE GOK-CHAI, AND ARAXIS BASIN.

The Araxis basin presents on the whole a marked geographical unity, forming, north of the Iranian tableland, a broad semicircular zone, with its convex side facing southwards, and everywhere enclosed by lofty mountains, except near the Caspian, where the hills fall towards the alluvial plains of the Kura and Araxis. Neither of these rivers forms a uniform ethnological domain, for Armenians, Georgians, and Tatars dwell on the banks of the former, while the Araxis valley is occupied by Armenians, Kurds, and other Tatar peoples. Still the Armenians everywhere preponderate not only in culture and influence, but also in numbers. Politically also the Araxis basin is divided between the three converging states, the region of all the head-streams belonging to Turkey, and most of the right bank of the main stream to Persia, while more than half of the whole basin, including the best strategical points for a descent on the Euphrates valley, are now Russian territory. Russia is thus mistress of the famous Mount Ararat, and of the convent of Echmiadzin, the religious capital of the Armenians, and centre of their nationality.

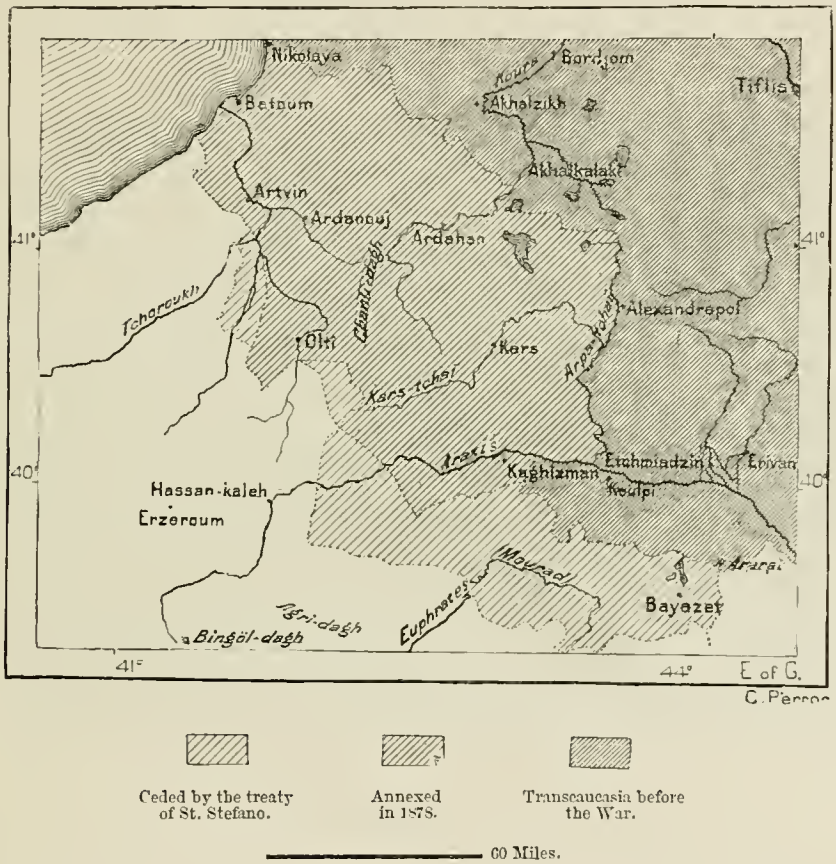
Orography—Ararat—Ala-göz.

North of the sources of the Araxis the mountains sloping northwards towards the Euxine are cut up by ravines and glens into irregular chains and spurs, such as the Kirechli, Soghanli, and Childir-dagh, which, north of the Kars basin, merge in the lacustrine plateau bordered eastwards by the Abul and Samsar volcanoes. Although presenting serious obstacles to intercommunication, none of these ranges

attain the altitude of the Caucasus and Anti-Caucasus, the highest summit being the Kizil-dagh, or "Red Mountain," between the Kars basin and Lake Childir, which is only 10,460 feet, and consequently below the normal snow-line. South of the region of the Araxis head-streams the highlands become narrower, but more elevated, here forming a single parting range running east and west between the Araxis and Euphrates or Murad valleys, with several extinct craters over 10,000 feet high, and culminating with the Perli-dagh in the centre, and the Chingil,

Fig. 65.—Recent Russian Conquests.

Scale 1 : 3,500,000.



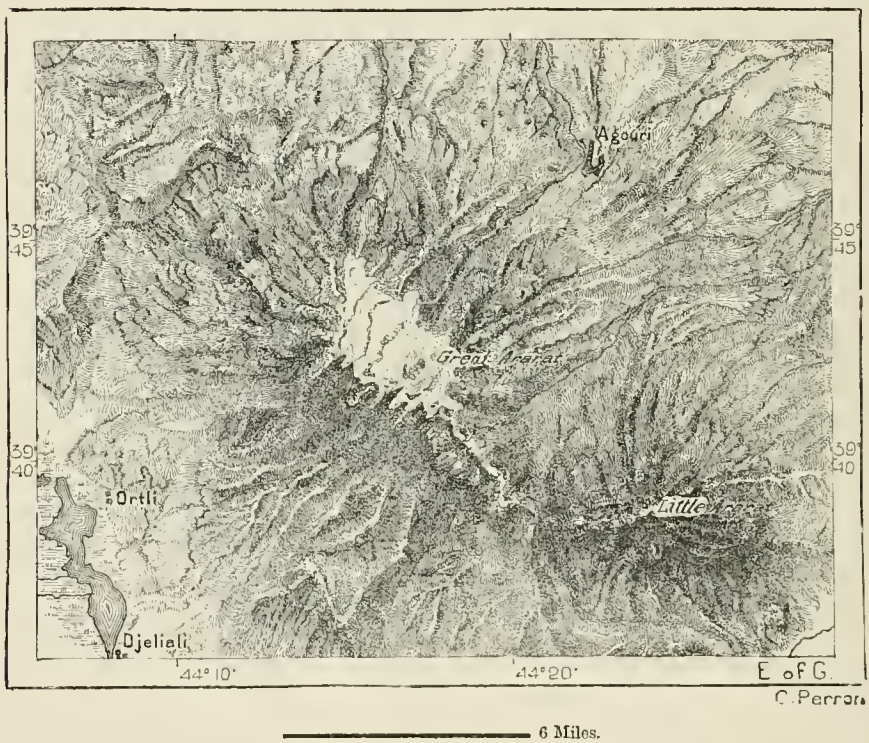
near the eastern pass leading from Erivan to Bayazid, both about 10,830 feet above the sea.

Several streamlets flowing to the Araxis indicate, by their name of Tuzla-su, the nature of their waters, which spring from extensive salt beds. North of the Perli-dagh stands Mount Kulpi, one of the largest masses of rock-salt in the world, rising on a tertiary plain near the point where the Araxis passes through a narrow basalt gorge above its junction with the Arpa-chai. The surrounding hills, destitute of vegetation, and composed of red, blue, green, or grey marls, impart to

the landscape a most motley appearance. The Kulpi salt mines, which are confined to a central layer from 100 to 210 feet thick, have probably been longer worked than any other out of China. The Armenians tell us how Noah drew his supplies from this source, and even show the very spot where he began his mining operations. In the abandoned parts of the works hammers and other implements are frequently picked up, dating from the stone age. These objects are all made of diorite, a rock found nowhere in the district, and which must have been procured from distant countries. The mining operations are still carried on in a rude manner, and owing to the absence of roads, the produce is limited to the Tiflis and

Fig. 66.—Ararat.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 320,000.



Erivan markets. Between 1836 and 1876 the average yield has risen from 4,000 to 16,300 tons.

Ararat, "historical centre of the Armenian plateau," and central point of the line of tablelands stretching across the eastern hemisphere from the Cape of Good Hope to Bering Strait, rises above the eastern continuation of the volcanic chain running between the Araxis and the Euphrates. But its snowy crest towers to such a height above the surrounding mountains that they become dwarfed to mere hills, while the hilly plateaux seem to stretch like plains at its base. Its very name of Ararat, probably of Aramæan origin, is synonymous with supereminence, while its Armenian designation, Masis, is also said to mean "grand," or "sublime."

The Turks call it Agri-dagh, or "Steep Mountain," and the Persians Koh-i-Nuh, or "Noah's Mount." This superb mass, grander than the Hellenic Olympuses, naturally became a sacred object to the peoples of the plains, the mysterious summit whence men and animals descended to people the world. The Armenians show the very spot where Noah's ark grounded, and where it is still guarded by genii armed with flaming swords.*

Viewed from Nakhichevan, Ararat looks like a compact conic mass rising on the north-west horizon; but from Bayazid on the south, and Erivan on the north, it is seen to consist of two distinct mountains disposed in the direction of the Caucasus—Great Ararat, with a double peak in the north-west; Little Ararat, with a rounded crest in the south-east, and with a deep intervening depression. Both

Fig. 67.—Mount Ararat.

masses, with their counterforts, occupy an area of about 380 square miles between the plains of Bayazid and Erivan. Like those of Etna, their slopes are almost everywhere gently inclined, although the ascent is rendered very difficult lower down by occasional lava streams, and higher up by the snows, nearly always softened under the solar rays in summer. The Armenians speak of the prodigies by which too daring shepherds have ever been prevented from scaling the "Mother of the World," and the failures of Tournefort and Morier lent a colour to their statements. When Parrot at last scaled the highest crest in 1829, they unani-

* Elevations of the Araxis and neighbouring plains:—

	Feet.		Feet.
Great Ararat	16,760	Bayazid (citadel)	6,634
Little Ararat	11,680	Echmiadzin	2,810
Intermediate Col	8,785	Erivan	3,200

mously denied the truth of his account, and for a long time succeeded in casting a doubt on his veracity, until the exploit was repeated by other adventurers. In 1850 Khodzko passed five whole days on the summit in order to prosecute his work of triangulation in Caucasia. He passed thence south-east to Mount Salivan, 204 miles off, and north-west to Mount Elbruz, distant 264 miles, corresponding by means of heliotropic signals with the astronomers stationed on Mount Akh-dagh, in the centre of the Gok-chai plateau.

At an elevation of 11,600 feet, Ararat is still everywhere clothed with vegetation; but herbage ceases at 12,500 feet, while nothing occurs except an Alpine flora between 13,200 and 14,300, which marks the line of perpetual snow. The species of the Upper Ararat are all either identical with, or allied to, those of the Alps, but they are much less numerous, a fact doubtless due to the greater dryness of the atmosphere on the Armenian mountain. Its fauna also is comparatively very poor. The wolf, hyena, and perhaps the panther, haunt the thickets at its base about the Araxis; but higher up nothing is met except an ibex, a polecat, and a species of hare.

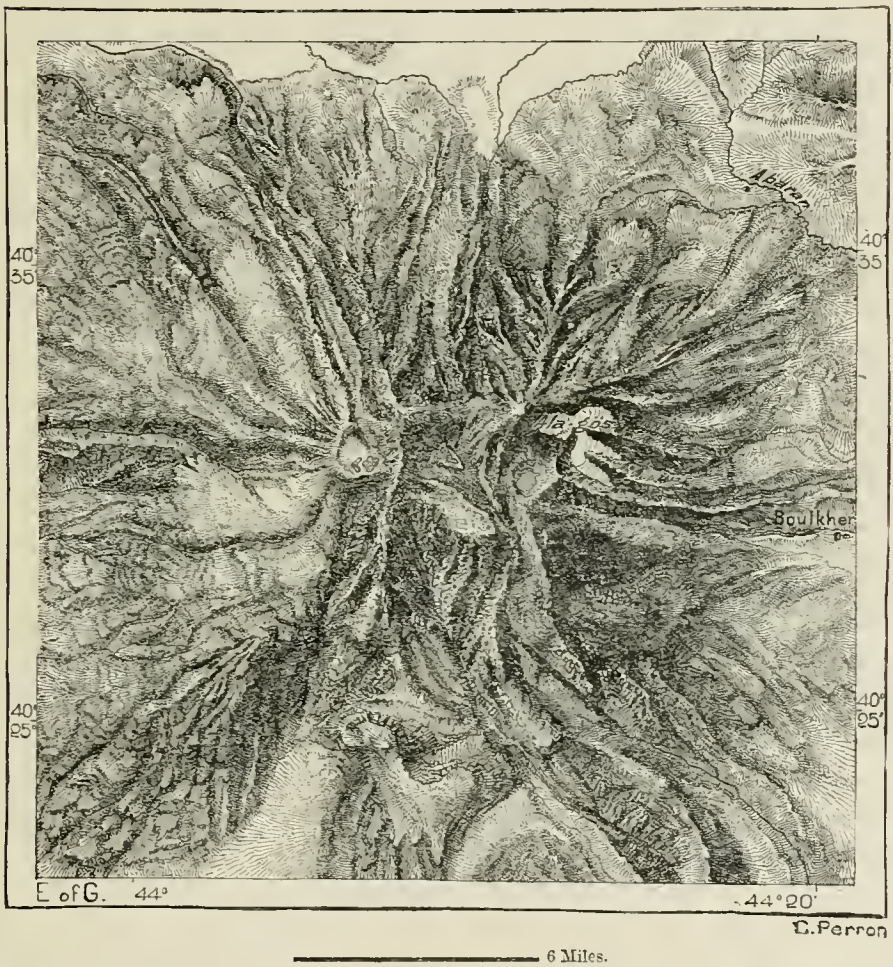
Although only 3° of latitude farther south than the Pyrenees, the lower slopes are free of snow much earlier, and the snow-line itself is about a mile lower down than on the Iberian range. Still the snow reaches much further down in the ravines of erosion by which its flanks are furrowed. In several gorges these snows become true glaciers, of which the chief is that of St. James, whose cirque has undoubtedly been formed by a former eruption analogous to that of the Val del Bove on Mongibello. In more remote times the glaciers reached much lower, as shown by the scored and polished surface of the trachite rocks.

Notwithstanding the vast quantity of snow lying on its slopes, Ararat is almost entirely destitute of water. Wagner failed to discover anything beyond two springs at its base, from which mere rills trickle away amongst the stones. Hence its sides remain arid and parched, while the neighbouring mountains, also of volcanic origin, discharge torrents numerous enough to form vast and deep lakes at their feet. During dry seasons Ararat becomes altogether uninhabitable, the want of shade and moisture driving away the flocks, and even the birds of the air. It is therefore probable that the water from the melting snows disappears in crevasses, or beneath the ashes and lavas, either collecting in underground lakes, or forming a network of hidden streams. These waters, transformed to steam by the subterraneous fires, may perhaps explain the terrible eruption of 1840, when an old crater above the convent of St. James suddenly reopened, ejecting a dense vapour far above the summit of Ararat, and diffusing sulphurous exhalations round about. The mountain groaned threateningly, casting up from the fissure vast quantities of stones and rocks, some weighing as much as 5 tons. Jets of steam escaped through numerous crevasses, and springs of hot water bubbled up from the bed of the Araxis. The convent itself disappeared beneath the débris, together with the rich and populous village of Arguri, supposed by the Armenians to be the oldest in the world, and to mark the spot where Noah planted the vine on leaving the ark. There perished on this occasion, besides the 2,000 inhabitants

of Arguri, several thousands at Erivan, Nakhichevan, and Bayazid, victims of the earthquake felt at those places. Four days afterwards a fresh disaster destroyed nearly all the land under cultivation about Arguri. The water and slush, collected in the crater partly from the melting snows, burst their barriers, overflowing in long streams of mud down the slopes, and converting the plain into a vast morass. The Arguri eruption is the only one mentioned in historic times, though Ararat

Fig. 68.—Ala-göz.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 300,000.



has been the scene of frequent and violent earthquakes. The statement of Reineggs that he saw flames and smoke emitted from the summit in 1785 is more than doubtful, for the phenomenon was witnessed by none of the natives.

The Allah-ghöz, or rather Ala-göz ("Motley Mountain"), faces Ararat from the opposite side of the Erivan plain. It is a volcanic mass, with a truncated cone 13,900 feet high, but with its counterforts occupying a wider area than its

haughty rival. Its lava streams descend south and east towards the Araxis valley—west and north towards Alexandrapol, in the Arpa-chai basin. It takes its name from the diverse colours of its scoriæ, pumice, and obsidians, varied here and there with herbage and bright flowers. Three of the old craters now form as many small lakes, although but few streams reach the plains, the running waters gene-

Fig. 69.—Lake Gok-chai.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 1,000,000.

rally disappearing beneath the scoriæ, and feeding the Aïger-göl, a lake lying south of the mountain, and draining through the Kara-su to the Araxis.

Lake Gok-chai—The Karabagh—Flora and Fauna.

Isolated like Ararat, the Ala-göz is connected only by low ridges with the northern highlands. These run parallel with the Caucasus, and connect the volcanic chain of the Akhalkalaki plateau with the mountains overlooking Lake

Gok-chai, east of Erivan. These mountains—Somkhet, Pambak, and others from 8,000 to 10,000 feet high—stand on such an elevated plateau that the ridge is easily surmounted by passes approached by long and gently sloping inclines. The Eshek-Maidan Pass, on the trade route between Tiflis and Erivan, stands at an altitude of 7,230 feet at the north-west angle of a hilly plateau, where the intersection of the various axes of the Caucasus forms a labyrinth of chains radiating in all directions, although mainly running north-west and south-east, parallel with the Great Caucasus.

Fig. 70.—The Alapolarim Lava Streams.
From Dubois de Montpéreux. Scale 1 : 303,000.

The ridges maintain a mean uniform elevation, rising everywhere about 3,300 feet above the plateau forming their common base, although a few extinct cones attain a relative height of 5,000 feet, or about 13,330 above sea-level. This intersection of ridges of uniform elevation explains the formation of a vast lake filling a cavity in the plateau 6,440 feet above the Euxine, and in summer only discharging its waters through Zanga, south-west towards the Araxis. This is the Gok-chai, or "Blue Water," of the Tatars, and the Sevanga of the Armenians. Although 550 square miles in extent, or two and a half times larger than Lake Geneva, Chardin is the first European traveller who mentions it. The mean depth varies from 150 to 250 feet, but its waters, fresh in the northern section, slightly brackish in the south, harbour five species only of fish, including the trout and salmon, although these are so numerous that from 2,000 to 3,000 trout have been taken at one haul.

The lake forms an irregular triangle, contracted towards the centre by two advancing headlands, and as it is everywhere encircled by grey and snowy mountains, the landscape presents on the whole a grand and solemn, though somewhat sombre aspect. The lava and porphyry slopes are perfectly bare down to the

water's edge, while of the old cities nothing now survives except crumbling masses, beneath which numerous coins have been found dating from the time of the Sassanides. The villages also lie hidden away in sheltered nooks, so that little is visible beyond a few hamlets half buried in the ground, and the so-called "Tombs of the Giants," numerous tumuli scattered over the plateau, which is under snow eight months in the year. Nearly all the cultivable land has long remained fallow, so that the country has again become a desert. Till recently no craft navigated the lake, which, notwithstanding the fierce storms sweeping down from the hills, is often ice-bound in winter. On a volcanic islet in the north-west corner stands the convent of Sevan, noted throughout Armenia since the ninth century. It would be hard to conceive a more forlorn place of exile than this bleak island of black rocks, whose inhabitants are condemned to silence except for four days in the year. But the villages of the neighbouring plateau have become convalescent retreats for the people of the unhealthy town of Erivan, where dangerous fevers are endemic.

East of the Gok-chai and its encircling volcanoes, conspicuous amongst which is the Alapolarin, the labyrinth of intersecting ranges is continued south-eastwards, under the collective name of Karabagh, the Rani of the Georgians. Although the ravines preserve their snows throughout the year, not more than three or four of the crests in this region rise above the snow-line. Such are the Gämish (12,460 feet), source of the Tërter, the Kazangöl-dagh, and its southern neighbour, the Kapujish (12,380 feet), continued southwards towards the town of Ordubat by steep rugged hills crowned with peaks. South of these culminating points of Eastern Armenia, and beyond the gorge of the Araxis, rise other mountains of equal height, and similarly furrowed with snowy ravines. Between the chain commanded by Mount Kapudish and the Shusha Mountains lies the Zangezûr basin, at a mean elevation of 4,000 feet, apparently an old lacustrine depression, like the Gok-chai, whose waters have been drawn off by the Bergushet and Akera Rivers, which unite before reaching the Araxis valley. In the centre of this basin the conic Ishikli, or Kachal-dagh, rises to a height of over 10,000 feet, and the scoriæ and ashes ejected by the surrounding volcanoes have been accumulated on the bed of the old lake to a thickness of several hundred yards, since deeply furrowed by torrents.

The flora of these highlands bears a remarkable resemblance to that of the European Alpine regions. Here are the same beeches, oaks, aspens, undergrowth, and flowering plants. The upland valleys, covered with a thick layer of black loam, are very fertile, whence probably the name of Karabagh, or "Black Garden," by which this country is known. But on the arid slopes, with the thermometer at 104° Fahr. during the summer months, little grows beyond the wild sage and other aromatic plants, while the fauna is chiefly represented by reptiles, scorpions, and formidable tarantolos (*Phalangium araneoides*). The Karabagh horses, however, which climb the cliffs like goats, are said to be the finest in Transcaucasia.

The Araxis Basin.

The Araxis, or Aras, pre-eminently the Armenian river, rises beyond Russian territory to the south of Erzerûm, and receives its first tributaries from the Bingöl-dagh volcano, the "Mountain of the Thousand Streams," some of which flow southwards to the Euphrates. After entering Russian Transcaucasia its still feeble volume is doubled by the junction of the Arpa-chai, or Akhurean, descending from the volcanic plateaux of Alexandrapol and the Ala-göz. Thanks to this supply, it is enabled to contribute largely to the irrigation of the Erivan basin, which would else become a desert waste. Diverted southwards by the Gok-chai and Karabagh highlands, it escapes from the old lacustrine bed through a narrow rocky gorge with falls from 200 to 270 feet broad, where its seething waters descend between steep rugged cliffs at an average rate of 15 feet in 1,000 yards, falling at one point as much as 45 feet in the same distance. Ordubat, above the Arasbar gorge, is still 3,090 feet above the Caspian, yet within 60 miles of this place the river has already reached the lowlands. After receiving the Bergushet it sweeps round the southern base of the Diri-dagh, beyond which it is joined by several torrents from the Persian highlands, ultimately joining the Kura after a course of about 470 miles. At the Diri-dagh it is crossed by the Khûdaferîn Bridge, attributed traditionally to Pompey, but which is certainly of more recent date. Higher up are the ruins of another bridge, referred by the natives to Alexander the Great, but which may well be a Roman structure. Below that of Khûdaferîn there are no other bridges, and here the former hydraulic works and irrigation canals have been mostly abandoned, so that instead of promoting the fertility of the steppe, they combine with the swamps of the Kura to render this tract of the Caspian seaboard all but uninhabitable. The Araxis is said to be showing a tendency to trend more to the right, and again separate itself from the Kura, and flow independently to the sea, as in the time of Strabo.

The Araxis basin is exposed to greater extremes of temperature than most regions in Western Asia. The climate of Erivan is even more severe than that of Tiflis, the temperature falling in winter to —20° Fahr., and rising in summer to 104° and even 110° Fahr. Hence the frequency of malignant fevers and other epidemics in Erivan. "In Tiflis," says the Armenian, "the young are not to be distinguished from the old; in Erivan the living are no better than the dead." Fortunately during the summer heats the Erivan plain is swept at nightfall by a cool north or north-west wind, blowing fiercely from the Ala-göz highlands. It generally begins to blow about five P.M. and lasts the greater part of the night, but is accompanied by such clouds of dust, and even sand, that the inhabitants are confined to their houses during its prevalence. All the poplars in the neighbourhood of Erivan are slightly inclined toward the south-east.

These pyramidal poplars are a conspicuous feature of the landscape in the Araxis basin. But a more remarkable plant is the *nölbönd*, a species of elm, whose leafy branches form a vast canopy of foliage absolutely impenetrable to the solar rays. Although one of the finest ornamental trees in the world, it is found

nowhere beyond the limits of Russian Armenia. The apricot grows in all the gardens, and rice, cotton, and sesame are also cultivated, besides a vine producing a strong wine of a brown colour, somewhat like sherry or madeira. But this vine has to be buried underground in winter, and regularly watered in summer. In this climate everything perishes, and the ground becomes baked like burnt clay, except where the irrigating channels convert the desert to a green oasis. The former irrigation works were all developed by the Persians, and an English engineer now proposes to distribute the waters of the Arpa-chai over the desert plains of Sardarabad. Meantime field operations are carried on in the most primitive fashion. Although skilful traders, the Armenians are bad agriculturists, but scarcely worse than their Tatar neighbours. In several districts the land is also exposed to the ravages of wild boars, which haunt the brushwood and sedgy banks of the Lower Araxis. Yet the zealous Tatars hold these unclean beasts in such horror that they will neither soil their hands by pursuing them themselves, nor allow others to interfere with them.

Inhabitants—The Armenians.

The chief nation in the Araxis basin, numerically the fourth in Caucasia, and second to the Russians alone in influence, are the Armenians, or Haï, Haïk, or Haikan, as they call themselves. The term Armenia, of Aramæan origin and probably meaning "highlands," is extremely vague, and applied in a general way to all the region of plateaux overlooked by Ararat. Armenia proper, or Hayasdan—that is, land of the Haïk—has shifted its borders from century to century with the political vicissitudes and migrations of the race. At present it comprises most of the Araxis basin, a large portion of the Kura valley, all the Upper Euphrates basin as far as the junction of the two main head-streams, the shores of Lake Van, and a few isolated tracts in Persia about Lake Urumiyah. The centre of gravity of the nation has been gradually removed northwards from the neighbourhood of Lake Van and the Eastern Euphrates valley, where a village still bears the national name of Haïk. But from all parts of the globe the scattered fragments of the people turn their eyes towards Ararat and the plains of the Araxis as their true fatherland. Here they are still found in the most compact and homogeneous masses, and here the Armenian tongue is spoken in the greatest purity, approaching nearest to the old language still employed in the churches, but which has ceased to be current since the close of the fourteenth century.

At the time of the Russian conquest in 1828—30, about 130,000 Armenians of Persia and Turkey migrated to the Araxis and Kura valleys, here replacing the Kurds and Tatars, who in their turn took refuge in the lands that had remained in the power of the Mohammedans. During the war of 1877-8 a similar cross migration took place. The districts of Ardahan in the Upper Kura valley, and of Kars in the Araxis basin, lost the greater part of their Mussulman inhabitants, receiving in their stead a multitude of Armenians from the Upper Euphrates, the

ARMENIAN TYPES AND COSTUMES.

Chorukh, and especially from the tract ceded to Russia by the treaty of St. Stefano, but restored to Turkey by the Congress of Berlin. These national movements were doubtless attended by a frightful loss of life, and even now religious and racial hatred gives rise to terrible tragedies. But the populations have, on the whole, been grouped more in conformity with their natural affinities.

Hitherto no reliable estimate has been formed of the number of Armenians in Asia Minor under Moslem rule, but they are probably less numerous than those subject to Russia.* The whole nation, usually estimated at three and even four millions, would seem scarcely to exceed two millions, of whom no less than 200,000 reside in Constantinople. Tiflis, the second Armenian city in numerical importance, lies also beyond the limits of Armenia proper, and the same is true of several other Transcaucasian towns in which the Armenian element preponderates.

Deprived for centuries of all political unity and national independence, the Armenians have been scattered over the Eastern world since the days of Herodotus, who met them in Babylon. When their country fell a prey to foreign conquerors they preferred to become "strangers amongst strangers than remain slaves in their native land." They migrated in multitudes, and since the eleventh century have been settled in Russia, Poland, Bukovina, and Galicia. At present they are found in all the large emporiums of trade from London to Singapore and Shanghae, everywhere distinguished by their commercial enterprise. They have often been compared with the Jews, whom they certainly equal in religious tenacity, spirit of fellowship, mercantile instincts, and commercial skill. But they are less adventurous, and whereas individual Jews have penetrated to the ends of the earth, sustaining alone the struggle for existence, the Armenians seldom advance except in compact groups. The majority of the nation have also remained in their original homes, where they are far from showing the same aversion as do the Jews to agricultural pursuits. In several districts of Transcaucasia all the peasantry are of Armenian stock, and in some of their villages in the Karabagh district they are occupied temporarily as masons or carpenters, pursuits which the Jews are never found engaged in.

Nevertheless the Semitic element probably entered largely into the formation of the Haïk race, for numerous migrations and even transportations in mass have taken place from Palestine to Armenia. The Haïks may in a general way be regarded as Aryans closely allied to the Persians; but during the incessant wars, conquests, and migrations of the last four thousand years they have become mingled with all the neighbouring peoples, and especially with the Jews, multitudes of whom were removed by the Assyrian kings to the Armenian highlands. The Bagratides, the most famous royal race that has ruled over Hayasdan and Georgia, even claim

* Probable number of Armenians in the world:—

Caucasia and European Russia	840,000
Asiatic Turkey	760,000
Persia	150,000
European Turkey	250,000
Elsewhere	60,000
Total	2,060,000

to be descended from David of Israel. Amongst the other foreign elements said to have exercised a considerable influence on the nation, mention is made of the Manigonian tribe, introduced in the third century of the new era into Somkhet, in Armenia, by a prince of Jenasdan—that is, of China. But the chroniclers show clearly that most of these foreigners, arriving, like the Normans and Varangians, as warriors and mercenaries, were in fact Iranians, probably allied to the Tajiks of the Oxus basin.

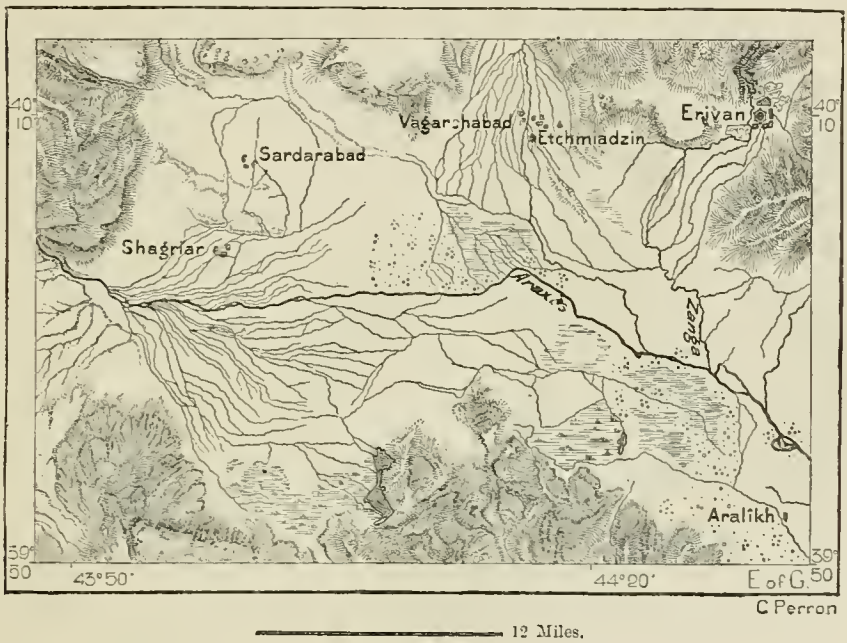
The Armenian language is included by all philologists in the Aryan family. Its affinities are chiefly with the Bactrian ("Zend"), its syntax is completely Iranian, and its vocabulary greatly resembles the Greek and Slavonic. Although very harsh and abounding in consonants, it rivals the Hellenic in its wealth of words and grammatical forms, as well as in its flexible structure and unlimited power of word-building. Still the numerous modern varieties have borrowed largely from Turkish and Georgian, and the speech current in the Lower Araxis basin is a veritable jargon, in which the Tatar element at times prevails over the Haïkan, while in Shirvan numerous Armenian communities have forgotten their mother tongue as completely as have the more distant settlements in Bukovina and Transylvania. In the convent of Echmiadzin, where it is spoken in its purest form, it still remains a purely Iranian dialect, whose origin and development are well illustrated in a local literature, continued uninterruptedly over a period of two thousand years. Rock inscriptions in the cuneiform character occur in the Van district. Other Haïkan documents are extant in Persian and Greek letters, and in the flourishing literary period (fifth century A.D.), when three hundred schools were open in the country, the peculiar alphabet now in use was introduced. The people still show a great love of instruction; schools are supported in all the communes; and the villagers have often to contend either with the Russian Government, or with the clergy, jealous of the influence exercised by their teachers. The scientific and literary movement has become very active, and in proportion to their numbers the Armenians probably print more books than any other people in the empire. To the former theological, historical, metaphysical, and grammatical works are now added translations of foreign masterpieces, and even in Anatolia are found close students of French literature. In 1854 about twenty-two Armenian presses were at work in Europe and Asia, issuing periodicals in Tiflis, Constantinople, and other towns, and publishing the old monuments of the language, especially in Moscow, Vienna, Paris, and Venice. The most famous establishment of this sort abroad is the convent founded in 1717 by the monk Mekhitar, or the "Consoler," in the island of San Lazzaro, near Venice. Here are published many valuable documents, and in the library are preserved some rare Oriental manuscripts.

The Mekhitarists, like most of the communities residing beyond the limits of Transcaucasia and Turkey, belong to the United Armenian rite, in union with the Roman Church, while preserving some of their traditional practices. But the bulk of the nation in the Euphrates and Araxis valleys have remained faithful to the old Orthodox cult. The dogmatic differences dividing the nation into two hostile religious sects turn chiefly on the nature of Christ, hell, and purgatory, the authority of the councils, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and sundry rites. But

beneath the outward teaching of both forms are preserved numerous symbols dating from still older religions. The Armenian was the first nation converted in mass by Gregory the "Illuminator," about the beginning of the fourth century. But while changing its deities, it lost few of its traditions, and modified its worship very gradually. The sacred fire is even still commemorated, as in the days of Zoroaster. On the annual feast a recently married couple consume in a copper basin the richest fruits of the earth, flowers of all sorts, ears of corn, the vine and laurel branches. On all important occasions the people turn towards the sun as if to seek for aid from that source. During the great feasts bulls or rams crowned with wreaths and decorated with lighted candles are led into the churches or under

Fig. 71.—Araxis and Zanga Basin.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 600,000.



the sacred trees, and afterwards sacrificed with songs and prayers—evidently the sacrifice of Mithra bequeathed by the old to the new religion.

The "Katholicos," or spiritual head of the nation, derives his power from the possession of a precious relic, the right hand of the martyred Gregory. Chosen by the dignitaries of Echmiadzin when not designated by his predecessor, he is obeyed by all his co-religionists of the Gregorian rite; he names the bishops, who are nearly always selected from the monkish communities; and he addresses the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem as a superior. Hence the extreme importance attached by the Russian Government to the possession of Ararat and the sacred convent of Echmiadzin. By seizing this strip of territory, so renowned throughout the East, the Muscovites have at the same time secured the spiritual ruler of over 2,000,000 human beings. The St. Petersburg authorities, who usually view with scant favour all religions antagonistic to the Orthodox Greek,

have accordingly been careful to treat the Katholicos with the greatest respect, thus acquiring a sort of protective right over all the Armenians settled in Turkey. On several occasions excessive zeal for the "Russification" of all the inhabitants of the empire has doubtless led to acts of violence and oppression even in Armenia. But the caprice of governors and political dreams do not prevent the Armenians from, on the whole, exercising a considerable influence in the empire—an influence due to their knowledge of languages, to their tact, often even to their intriguing spirit and adroitness in gaining access to the bureaucratic circle. They have long enjoyed a large share in the government at Constantinople, and they have already begun to play a part in St. Petersburg analogous to that often exercised by wily Italians at the French courts. Even in Transcaucasia they are gradually taking possession of the soil, and constantly encroaching on their Tatar neighbours.

Fig. 72.—Armenian Woman.

The Armenians of Russian Transcaucasia differ little in their physique from the Georgians, except that their features are generally rounder, their neck shorter and thicker. Many are inclined to obesity, probably from their sedentary habits. With fine heads of brown hair, large, black, and languid eyes, they seem to be of a gentle and almost melancholy temperament. Yet they do not lack valour in resisting attacks, as shown by the Seven Years' War of Independence, which they sustained in the beginning of the eighteenth century against the Persians in the Karabagh highlands, and since then in many local revolts against the Turks. Though they do not go about armed with an assortment of pistols and daggers, like the Georgians of the Rion basin, they have contrived far better to preserve their liberties, and have never fallen under the hard yoke of serfdom, which has been the lot of most of their neighbours. Notwithstanding the prevailing ignorance, they betray a remarkable degree of intelligence and aptitude, especially in the acquisition of languages. It has been said that "the intelligence of the Georgians is only in their looks, whereas that of the Armenians is in their head." But on the whole they seem to take life too seriously, and are somewhat indifferent to the charms of poetry, although they have produced some good poets even in recent

times. Their favourite studies are theology, metaphysics, and philology, and their influence has been chiefly felt in the more solid walks of literature. Fragments of Eusebius, Philo, Chrysostomus, and other Greek fathers, which were supposed to have been irrevocably lost, have been found in old Armenian translations by the Mekhitarists of Venice and Vienna.

In most places the Armenians keep themselves aloof from the surrounding populations, generally forming distinct trading communities, and in the Tatar and Georgian towns rendering themselves no less indispensable, hated, and despised than the Jews in East Europe and Germany. But popular feeling is of little consequence to men living quite apart in the seclusion of the family circle, where they still practise patriarchal habits. The grandfather commands—children, sons-in-law, and grandchildren obey. The wife, condemned to silence till the birth of her first child, wears round her neck and the lower part of her face a thick bandage concealing the mouth, and obliging her to converse in signs like a dumb creature. Even after childbirth she speaks only in a low voice till advanced in years, but undertakes all the household duties till the marriage of a sister-in-law. Strangers are rarely welcomed into the domestic circle, and many villages might be traversed without suspecting them to be inhabited, so completely are dwellings and gardens walled off from the outer world.

The Tatars of the Lower Araxis valley differ in no respects from the Tûrki tribes of the Kura basin. Here also are found a few Gipsies, besides some Kurdish herdsmen, mostly temporary immigrants from Persian and Turkish Kurdistan. Amongst them are several hundred Yezides, regarded by all their neighbours with a sort of horror as devil-worshippers. The sedentary Kurds are numerous only in the Zangezûr district, south-east of the Gok-chai, where they number about 13,000, mostly assimilated in dress, and often even in speech, to the Tatars.

Topography.

The chief town of the Upper Araxis valley is *Kaghizman*, pleasantly situated in the midst of trailing vines, cherry, apricot, peach, and other fruit trees. In the same district, but on a tributary of the main stream, lies the capital of Upper Russian Armenia, the celebrated city and fortress of *Kars*, thrice conquered from the Turks in 1828, 1855, and 1877, and definitely ceded to Russia in 1878. Even before the Russo-Turkish wars it had often been exposed to attack. Capital of an Armenian kingdom during the ninth and tenth centuries, it was sacked by Tamerlane, by Amurat III., and again by the Persians, its strategical importance constantly attracting the attention of invaders. For it occupies a central position between the upper basins of the Kura, Araxis, Chorukh, and Euphrates, commanding all the mountain passes between those valleys. At this point the Kars-chai, confined in a narrow rocky bed, makes a double bend, first partly encircling the town, and then sweeping round the citadel. Built of lava blocks, and standing on a black basalt eminence, Kars could formerly defy the attacks of its assailants. But since the invention of artillery it was found necessary to fortify the surrounding heights, and during the late war the eleven detached forts

enclosing an entrenched camp formed a line of defence 11 miles in circumference. These forts, with their basalt and obsidian rocks, are the only attractions of a town which, although 6,150 feet above sea-level, enjoys a considerable trade.

A carriage road descending eastwards from the Kars-chai to the Arpa-chai valley connects Kars with *Alexandrapol*, a Russian stronghold whose fortifications have been continued almost uninterruptedly since 1837. At that time nothing existed here except the village of Gumrî, peopled by Armenian refugees. Situated near the east bank of the Arpa-chai, in a basin commanded on the south by the Ala-göz, and 1,330 feet lower down than Kars, Alexandrapol lies in a better-cultivated district, abundantly watered by the Arpa-chai. It succeeded to *Ani*, former residence of the Armenian Bagratides, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1319, and whose extensive ruins still cover a triangular headland overlooking the right bank of the Arpa-chai. According to probably exaggerated

Fig. 73.—The Kars-chai Valley: Kars and Alexandrapol.

From the Map of the Russian Staff. Scale 1 : 500,000.

accounts of the native chroniclers, Ani had at one time a population of 100,000, with 1,000 churches and other public buildings.

South-east of Ani is *Talish*, which also seems to have been an Armenian capital, the ruins of whose high walls and towers now afford shelter to a wretched hamlet. The whole of the Lower Arpa-chai valley is a land of ruins. To the west are the remains of *Pakaran*, or "Assembly of the Gods," and a little farther south those of two other capitals, *Erovantashad* and *Erovantagerd*, built successively by Erovan II. north of the Araxis and Arpa-chai confluence, and said to have formerly contained 30,000 Jewish and 20,000 Armenian houses. *Armavir*, also founded by the same king, has left but few remains on a hill overlooking the plain skirted by the Kara-su Canal, near the Araxis. Lastly, south of this river stands *Kara-Kaleh*, the "Black Castle," wrongly supposed by some to have been the ancient Tigranocertes, but still a most picturesque object perched on a frowning precipice,

with towers built of alternate rows of red porphyry and black lava, at whose feet rush the foaming waters of a mountain torrent.

Echmiadzin, the present religious capital of the Haïkans, lies to the west of Erivan, nearly in the middle of the plain. In the neighbourhood is the small town of *Vagarshabad*, but Echmiadzin itself is little more than a vast convent surrounded by a cob-wall, and commanded by a church with pyramidal belfry and side turrets. The lower story of the buildings is concealed by a plain quadrangular enclosure of dull grey walls, so that there is nothing to relieve the monotony of these heavy masses except the surrounding thicket of poplars and fruit trees, a few flower beds, and limpid streams. Yet this monastery, whose name means "the only son has descended," is the capital of the Armenian world. Here, according to the legend, the "Son of God" appeared to Gregory the Illuminator, and at one thunder-stroke hurled the pagan divinities beneath the earth. For here formerly stood Ardimet-Kaghat, the "City of Artemis," the "Armenian Venus," to whose shrine worshippers flocked from all quarters. The deities have changed, but for at least five-and-twenty centuries this has remained a hallowed spot. The library contains six hundred and thirty-five old manuscripts, and its printing-press, the oldest in Armenia proper, publishes a periodical and some popular works. One of the bells bears a Tibetan inscription with the famous mystic words, *om mani padmi hùm*, showing that at some unknown epoch Armenia must have had relations with the Buddhist world.

Erivan, capital of the chief government in Russian Armenia, and the second city of the Araxis valley, stands at the north-east angle of the old lacustrine basin traversed by the river, and on the banks of the Zanga, here diverted into a thousand irrigating rills. It is chiefly inhabited by Armenians, who have succeeded to the Tatars occupying it under the Persian rule. It holds an important commercial and strategical position at the entrance of the upper valley leading to Tiflis and the Kura basin over the Gok-chai plateau, and its fortress, perched on a columnar basalt cliff, has been the scene of many stirring events. Built mostly in the Persian style, it boasts of some picturesque structures, including a handsome mosque decorated with arabesques, and shaded with magnificent elms. The district, commanding a superb view of Ararat, is very fertile and well watered. But the wretched climate, with its violent changes of temperature, dust, and fevers, would soon depopulate the place, but for its extreme strategical importance on the Turko-Persian frontier and the rich rock-salt mines in the neighbourhood. In summer the Russian officials retire to Semonovka, Delijan, and other sanitaria among the surrounding hills. The copper mines of this region are no longer worked.

East of Erivan are the ruins of *Bash-Karni*, or Garni, another old capital, which the natives pretend was founded four thousand years ago, and which contains the remains of a Greek temple, probably dedicated to the Armenian Venus. But more remarkable than its ruins are its basalt columns, blue, green, red, and other igneous rocks, the scene of former eruptions, through which now foams a mountain stream. In the same wild and rugged region lies *Kegart*, Kergash, or Aïrivank, the "Convent of Hell," half of which is hollowed out of the tufa and lavas. In the centre of the plain, watered by the Karni-chai, stood *Artaxates*,

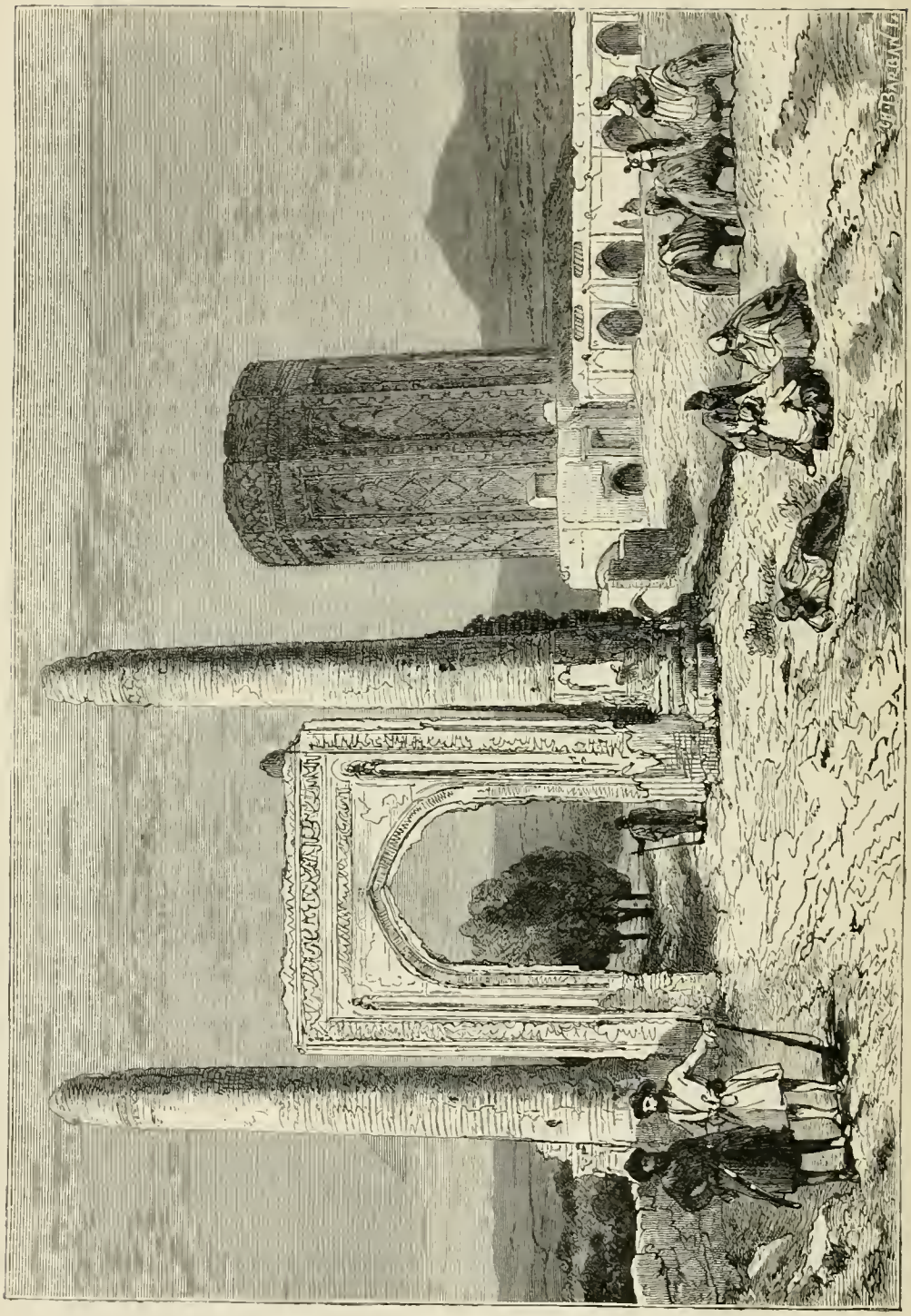
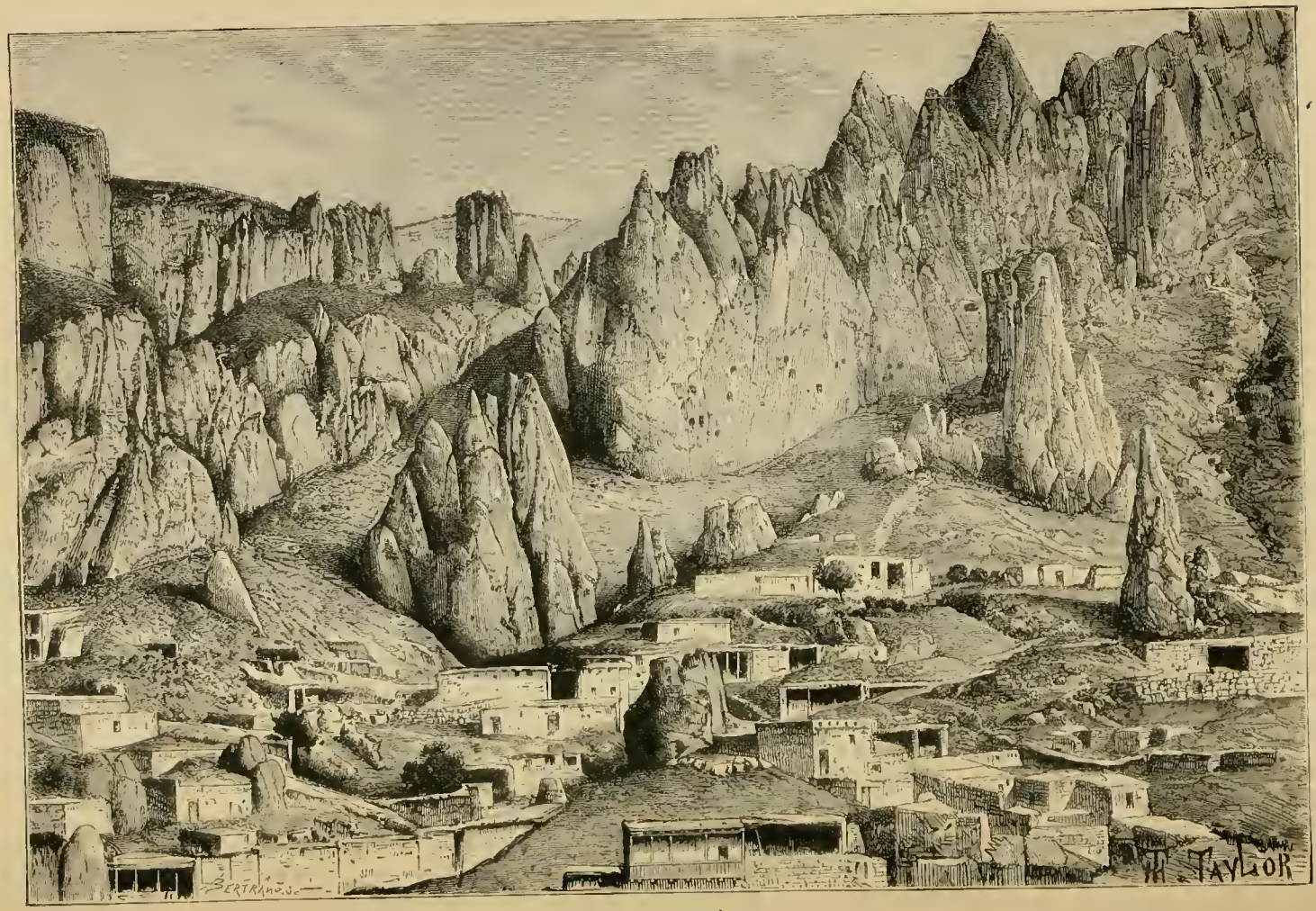


Fig. 74.—Nakhichevan.

built by Artaxias, General of Antiochus, on the plains of Hannibal, and which remained the capital of Armenia till destroyed by Corbulo in the reign of Nero.



TOWN OF GIRÛSI.

It was succeeded by Neronia, which yielded later on to Vagarshabad, and was finally overthrown by Sapor II. in 370, when its 200,000 Armenian and Jewish inhabitants were put to the sword or carried captive into Persia.

Nakhichevan, or Nakhijevan, capital of the district stretching south-east of Ararat, is said to be even an older place than Echmiadzin, having been traditionally founded by Noah after planting the first vine on the slopes of Ararat. Its very name means the "First Dwelling," and a mound is shown in the neighbourhood in which Noah is supposed to be buried. The town, already mentioned by Pompey under the name of Naxuana, has been repeatedly rebuilt, and all the present houses are constructed of stones from previous ruins. The gateway of an old palace flanked by two brick minarets bears a Persian inscription surrounded by rich arabesques, and near it stands the "Tower of the Khans," a twelve-sided building bearing a long inscription with letters in relief. Nakhichevan is now inhabited chiefly by Tatars occupied with gardening and vine growing, and has been much reduced since the time of the Persian rule, when it had a population of 40,000. The district is well watered, and in the neighbouring hills are rich salt mines, worked since prehistoric times. The millstones, cut from a variegated sandstone, are highly esteemed throughout Armenia.

South-west of Nakhichevan is the frontier station of *Jufa*, on the banks of the Araxis, and facing an old Persian caravanserai, which is commanded by a stronghold perched on a red sandstone escarpment. At the beginning of the seventeenth century Jufa was the richest and most industrious place in Armenia, with a population of 40,000. But Shah Abbas the "Great" commanded the inhabitants to emigrate in mass to New Jufa, near Ispahan, those who lagged behind being thrown into the river, and the town burnt to the ground. Its most noteworthy remains are its ruined bridge and the tombs of its vast necropolis. In 1854 the population had dwindled to ten families living in a ruined caravanserai.

Ordubat stands on the Araxis, below Jufa, near the Migri Gorge, south of the Karabagh Mountains. It is the pleasantest place in Armenia, being in a fertile district watered by numerous streamlets and irrigation rills, and studded with villas scattered over the wooded heights of the neighbourhood. A few miles to the north-west is the thriving village of *Akulisi*, inhabited by wealthy Armenians. The copper mines of the surrounding hills yielded no more than 117 tons of pure metal in 1877.

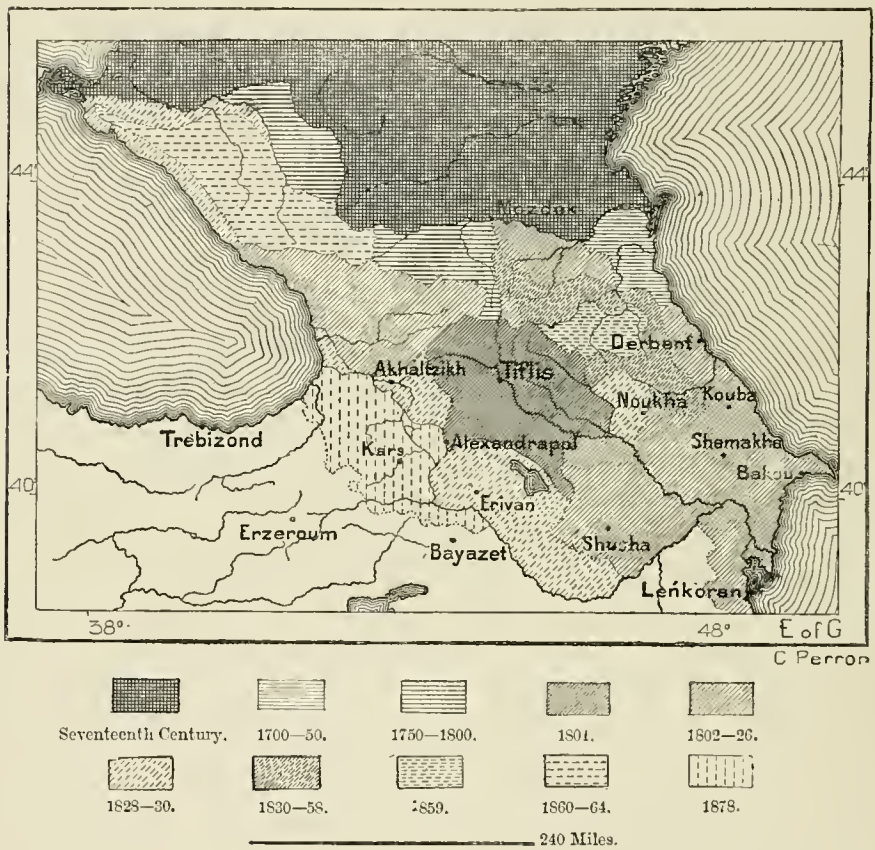
The double basin of the Bergushet and Akera, between the Ordubat and Shusha Hills, comprises the administrative district of Zangezûr, and contains no towns, but several important villages peopled by Armenians, Tatars, and Kurds. The largest is *Khinzîrak*, but the administrative capital is *Girûsi*, the Koriss of the Armenians; that is, the "Village of Pillars," so called from the "needles" of tufa rising above the slope of the terrace on which the village is situated. The flat-roofed houses are disposed in the form of a flight of steps, beneath which the inhabitants move about in underground streets. Other dwellings are excavated in the igneous scoria of the terrace, but the present village is a modern place 1,000 feet lower down than the old Girûsi. For a few weeks in summer it becomes a busy trading-place, when 50,000 nomads of the surrounding districts drive their flocks to the rich Zangezûr pastures.

VIII.—GENERAL CONDITION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CAUCASUS.

The Russians are not recent arrivals in Caucasia. A portion of the Kuban basin was peopled by them since the close of the tenth century, and in 914 others reached Berda, at the foot of the Karabagh Mountains. Over two hundred years ago Stephen Razin sacked Baku, and in 1723 Peter the Great pushed his conquests to the Persian frontier. For over a century the Muscovite power has secured a

Fig. 75.—Progress of Russian Conquest.

Scale 1 : 10,500,000.



footing in Transcaucasia, which has been gradually annexed to the empire either by conquest, purchase, or voluntary cession.

In spite of wars, migrations, wholesale exiles, and the insalubrity of certain districts, the population of Caucasia has rapidly increased since the conquest, although still relatively inferior to that of European Russia. The losses have been repaired by the immigration of the Cossacks, Russian peasantry, and Armenian fugitives, while the population of all the provinces has been increased by the normal excess of births over deaths. At the beginning of the military occupation Caucasia was a Russian tomb, fevers more than decimating those attacked during

the course of the year. But experience, quinine, a better hygienic system, and here and there the draining of the marshy lands, have brought about wonderful improvements, and at present the mortality of the Russians is less than in Russia proper.* A similar phenomenon has been observed in Algeria, where the French and Spanish immigrants have gradually become acclimatized. The actual rate of mortality is less in Caucasia than in any other part of the empire, and in this respect the country takes a foremost position in the world. The number of suicides is, on the other hand, rather high, and it is remarkable that they are here about equal in both sexes, whereas in Europe those of men are generally three or four

Fig. 76.—Fever Districts in Caucasia.

times greater than those of women. Amongst the Armenians and Osses the cases of female suicides are even more frequent than those of males. This is, perhaps, due partly to the enforced silence and monotonous lives of the Armenian women, and partly to the brutal treatment to which the Oss women are subjected.

A large portion of Caucasia rising above the zone of cereals can scarcely be inhabited except by a pastoral population. But there are also extensive tracts, formerly under cultivation, which have been rendered unproductive by desolating

* Mortality of the army of the Caucasus:—1837, 1 in 9 of those attacked; 1846, 1 in 17 of those attacked; 1862, 1 in 41 of those attacked. Total mortality:—1864, 25 in the 1,000; 1872, 19·86 in the 1,000. Total mortality in the Moscow district, 41·11 in the 1,000.

wars and the abandonment of the irrigation works. The vast plains of Echmiadzin, the Lower Kura, and Araxis have thus been partly changed to deserts, and even the region confined by the Alazan, Yora, and Kura is now a barren steppe, notwithstanding the copious streams surrounding it on all sides. The neglect of the irrigating canals has caused the disappearance of millions, but the population everywhere reappears with the gradual revival of these works and with the progress of the drainage system. Cultivated fields thus succeed to the swamps, and the land becomes at once more healthy and more populous.

Land Tenure—Agriculture.

In taking possession of Caucasia the Russian Government introduced great changes, often of a contradictory character, in the laws affecting landed property. These were further complicated by all the vicissitudes of conquest, the wasting of cultivated districts, destruction of nomad encampments, depopulation and wholesale shifting of the people, military and agricultural colonisation. During the first period of Russian rule all the colonies were of a military character. Composed of Cossacks, at once peasantry and soldiers, they had to build villages and forts, to till the land, dig canals, open up highways, and keep constant watch against the enemy. One feels amazed at the vast amount of work performed by these men, thanks to whom all the western division of Ciscaucasia has been finally settled. Its settlement would have been even still more thorough, had not the Government long prevented its peaceful colonisation by the Russian peasantry. Millions of serfs might have migrated to this region had they been free to do so.

In all the already peopled districts of Caucasia the Government at first pursued the simple policy of securing the loyalty of the native princes by guaranteeing to them the property of the land, though occasionally compelled, as in Kabardia and Daghestan, to favour the people against their chiefs. But this system was soon abandoned, and towards the end of the reign of Nicholas every effort was made to gain over the local aristocracy. In many places serfdom was introduced, and large fiefs granted to the nobles. Some of the Kabard princes thus received domains of 30,000, 100,000, and even 250,000 acres, so that the State was afterwards obliged to repurchase many of these lands either for the Cossack settlers, or for the communes after the abolition of serfdom. The principle was even laid down in 1863 that the whole of the lands should belong to the communes; but in practice the large properties were maintained, and in Kabardia alone 140 lots, each of about 1,400 acres, were reserved for influential persons likely to be useful to the Government. All the officers of the army also received freehold allotments independently of the lands assigned to the communes, while all the forests and pastures remained undivided. Thus was brought about a state of things analogous to that of Russia. Below the large proprietary class came that of the peasantry, sharing the land according to the communal system of rotation, and paying an average tax to the State of about 3 roubles per family.

The serfdom, which under divers forms prevailed throughout most of Caucasia,

was at first aggravated under Russian rule, and even when abolished in 1866 very harsh conditions were imposed on the emancipated. In virtue of "free contracts" they were bound to pay the landlords either 200 roubles or six years' manual labour, children under fifteen years being charged 150 roubles, or ten years of forced labour. When the serf was at the same time owner of cattle or movable property this was divided into three parts, of which one part only was assigned to the freedman. Hence much misery, especially in the lowland districts.

The agricultural produce of Caucasia already suffices for a considerable export trade. Land was formerly valued in Imeria at from 22 to 28 roubles the hectare (2½

Fig. 77.—Density of the Population of the Caucasus in 1873 per Square Mile.

acres), whereas now it fetches ten times that amount; but the eastern districts of the Kura and Araxis, exposed to storms and locusts, have increased less rapidly in value. The superabundant cereals are largely used in the distillation of alcohols. Far more than Bessarabia, the Crimea, or the Lower Don valley, Caucasia is the "vineyard of the empire." In 1875 the land under vines still scarcely exceeded 212,000 acres, but the districts where wine might be grown certainly exceed those of France, and they have hitherto escaped the ravages of the phylloxera, though not those of the oïdium. Caucasia supplies most of the wines consumed in the empire, the rich vintages of Kakhetia being used chiefly for the table, those of Kislar and the Lower Terek for

mixing with other vintages. In the Akhaltzik district the vine is cultivated to a height of 4,800 feet above the sea. Tobacco is also becoming an important crop, 9,840 acres having yielded 1,700,000 kilogrammes of leaf in 1876, and supplying the chief article of export from the Black Sea ports. The Transcaucasian plains produce some cotton, which during the American war increased rapidly, and even found its way for a time to the markets of the West. At present the mean annual yield scarcely exceeds 480 tons. The raw silks of Nukha and Shemakha are highly appreciated, especially by the French weavers. Since the spread of the silk disease in the south of France Eastern Caucasia has become one of the most important fields for the production of the finer qualities. In 1848 a number of French female

Fig. 78.—Highways in Caucasia.

According to N. de Seidlitz. Scale 1 : 7,680,000.

Railways.
Railways in progress.
Carriage Roads.
120 Miles.

spinners settled in Zugdidi, Nukha, Shemakha, and other towns to teach the native women the art of winding the thread. For many other products, especially fruits and spring vegetables, Caucasia is destined to take the same position as regards Russia as Algeria has taken towards France. Tropical heats prevail in the Araxis valley, and wherever sufficiently watered the soil produces excellent crops. There is also a succession of climates on the mountain slopes, suitable for raising produce of the most varied character.

Population—Industries—Trade—Education.

The population of Caucasia, nowhere as dense as in Western Europe, is concentrated especially on the Mingrelian plains, where the climate and vegetation

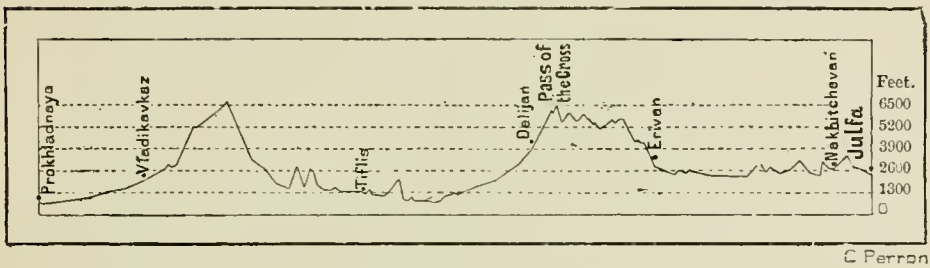
most resemble those of the west of France. In the districts of this region it amounts to about 80 per square mile, and these more densely peopled tracts are at the same time the most flourishing, and have most to spare for export.

The chase and forest produce have ceased to be of any economical importance, since most of the plains have been peopled and the mountain slopes largely cleared. But the fisheries are very productive in the Sea of Azov, the Euxine, and especially the Caspian. The Akhtari and Yeïsk limans, the river Kuban, the coasts of Poti and Batûm, the Lower Terek, and, above all, the Kura and Gulf of Kizil-Agach abound in animal life, and contribute largely to the support of the people and to the export trade to Russia and Persia.

Manufactures are still mostly confined to the old traditional industries, and to those connected with mining operations. But implements dating from the stone age are still found in use side by side with the powerful modern machinery now employed at the Baku naphtha wells, the Kedabek copper mines, the Saglik alum works, near Yelizavetpol, and the iron works of Chasash, in the Bolnis valley, 14 miles south-

Fig. 79.—Section of the Route from Vladikavkaz to Jufa.

Scale 1 : 8,000,000.



120 Miles.

Scale of Altitudes fifty times larger than that of Distances.

west of Tiflis.* This state of things must necessarily continue until the Caucasian provinces are connected with the rest of the world by means of good roads. Each of the two great divisions has but one railway, one connecting Ciscaucasia with the Russian system by the Rostov-Vladikavkaz line, the other connecting Tiflis with the Euxine. But both slopes of the Caucasus are crossed only by the military routes passing beneath the Kazbek glaciers and over the Mamisson Pass. In the east the range is skirted by the road from Derbend to Baku, and in the west the Abkhasian coast route will soon be opened to traffic. The great lines of railway destined to connect Vladikavkaz with Tiflis, Yelizavetgrad with Petrovsk and Baku, Groznaya with Saratov *viâ* Astrakhan, Batûm with Rostov, have only just been begun. The line from Tiflis to Baku, which will complete the junction of the two seas, has also

* Steam-engines in the Caucasian mines (1876), 91 horse-power. Water engines in the Caucasian mines (1876), 174 horse-power.

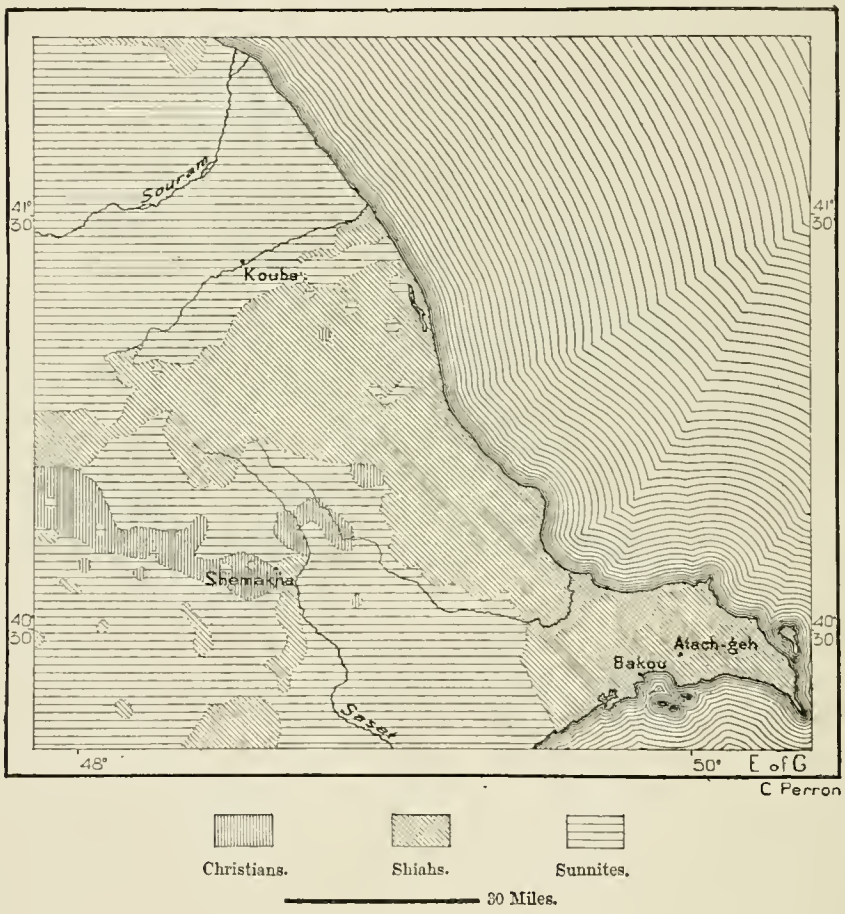
Mining returns (1876) :—

Silver	810 lbs.	Alum	130 tons.
Lead	1,785 cwt.	Salt	24,530 „
Copper	2,550 „	Coal	5,218 „

been recently taken in hand. For the last twenty years the project has been entertained of a great international line between Europe and India, to follow the west coast of the Caspian *viâ* Baku and Lenkoran to Reshd, and so on across the Iranian plateau. Meantime the southern plateaux are approached by one good road only, the military route between Kars and Erzerum forming a continuation of that between Tiflis and Kars *viâ* Alexandrapol. One branch of this route descends southwards towards Erivan and the Persian frontier at Jufa.

The general trade of Caucasia must long remain inadequate to meet the expenses of the international highways to Asia Minor and Persia. In 1878 the imports and

Fig. 80.—Shiahs and Sunnites in Eastern Caucasia.
From Official Returns. Scale 1 : 2,000,000.



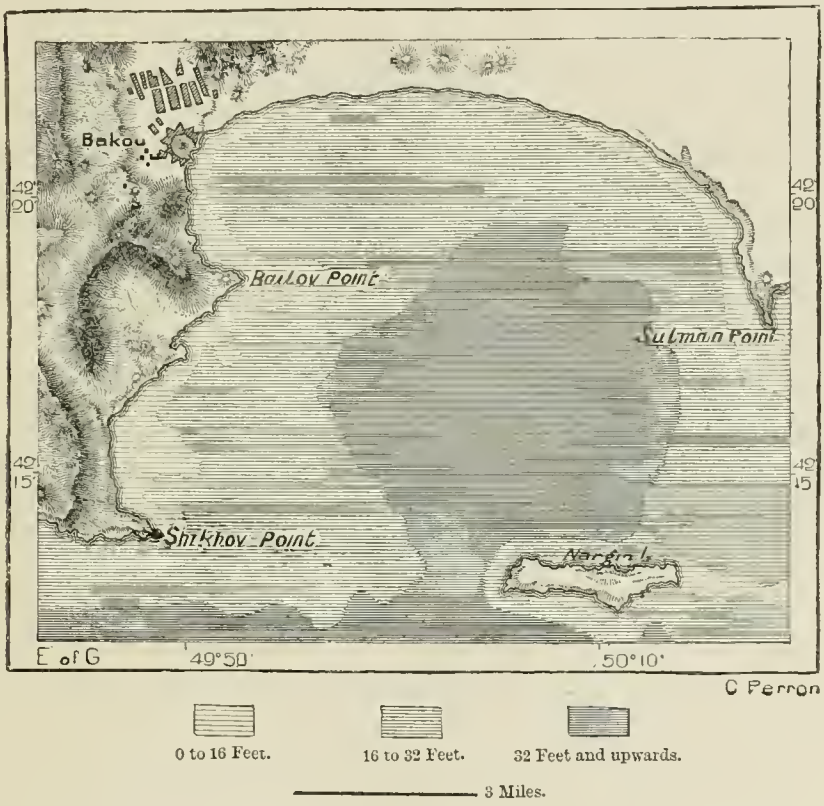
exports amounted altogether to about 12,000,000 roubles, or less than 4 roubles per head of the population. Although Persia communicates more easily with Europe by the north than by other routes, its exchanges with Transcaucasia and Astrakhan fall short of 5,000,000 roubles.

If Caucasia still lacks the material unity imparted by a well-developed railway

system and large commercial marts, it is still more deficient in that moral unity which flows from the sentiment of a common nationality or group of nationalities possessing the same interests and aspirations. Instruction also is in too backward a state to allow the youth of the various races to acquire that feeling of brotherhood derived from a community of ideas. Nevertheless great progress has been made in this respect, and in many schools the Armenian is now found associated with the Tatar, the Russian with the Georgian. Moreover, a large number of the middle and upper classes send their children abroad. In 1879 there were no less than twenty-eight Armenians in the various schools and colleges of Zurich. But a great

Fig. 81.—Baku Harbour.

Scale 1 : 250,000.



obstacle to instruction in common is caused not only by the variety of languages, but by the different alphabets in current use. The Abkhasians, Osses, and Daghestan highlanders were altogether unlettered until Lhuillier, Schiefner, Uslar, and others invented writing systems suitable to express the fifty distinct sounds of their languages. Caucasia, more perhaps than any other region, stands in need of some such common system as that proposed by Lepsius in 1852, and subsequently under other forms by Bell, Coudereau, and others.

Religions—Finance—Administration.

But Caucasia is noted for its diversity of creeds quite as much as for its great variety of speech. Paganism under many forms still survives amongst the hillmen. Here are found the two great Moslem sects, numerous especially in the government of Baku,* where they are distinguished from each other by the cut of the hair and by other practices. Here also dwell Jews, converted Israelites, and Judaizing Christians, besides Orthodox Greeks, Georgian and United Armenians, which are the prevailing forms of Christianity. But dissidents are also numerous, far more so even than might be supposed from the official returns. The Molokanes especially have important colonies in the government of Stavropol, near Tiflis, on the Akhalaki plateau, in the Mûgan steppe, and they are now spreading in the annexed territories.

All these national and religious differences have necessitated different theories and practices in the administration of justice. Hence, after many useless efforts, the Government has been compelled to abstain, at least for the present, from introducing a common system of jurisprudence. Amongst the Moslem highlanders two codes are still maintained—the *shariat*, or religious code based on the Koran, and the *adot*, or common law. The former is appealed to only in religious, family, and testamentary questions, while the latter regulates the ordinary affairs of property and communal interests. Its decisions are pronounced in public by elected judges, and certain villages noted for their scrupulous administration of justice have been chosen by usage as veritable courts of appeal in all doubtful cases.

Most of the hillmen still foster a feeling of animosity against their conquerors, and recall with pride the days of their ancient independence. Amongst the lowlanders, some, like the Nogai Tatars and the Tats, know that they have kinsmen and co-religionists elsewhere, and regard themselves as strangers in the land. Others, like the Kurd shepherds, are immigrant nomads, always ready to strike their tents. The Georgians feel that their destiny is rather to serve the Russians than become their equals, while the Armenians endeavour to make themselves masters of all by the power of money. The Slav invaders, although already the most numerous relatively, have not yet succeeded in giving political cohesion to the population. Their ascendancy is mainly of a military character, and Caucasus remains still for them campaigning ground quite as much as a field for colonisation.

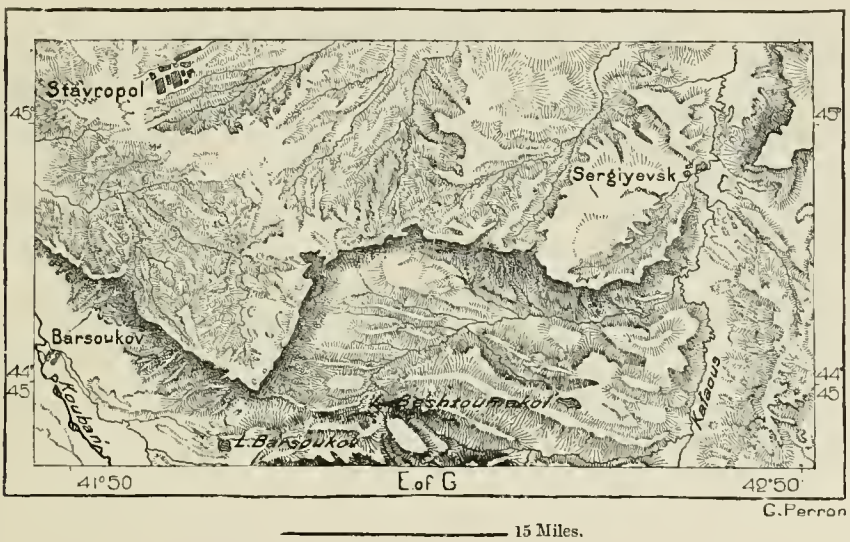
From the strategic point of view Asia Minor and Persia are completely open to the armies of the Czar. The Euxine has become a Russian lake, while the Caspian belongs still more exclusively to the northern Power. Here the fleet at anchor in the commodious harbour of Baku may at the first signal ship an armed force for the coast of Mazanderan. Alexandrapol and Kars, strongholds and arsenals of the first importance, threaten the upper basin of the Euphrates, and all the passes are already in the hands of the Russians. In case of a struggle with England for supremacy in Western Asia, Russia occupies a masterly position. The Bosporus has already been three times threatened from the north; now it may also be attacked

* Mohammedans in the Baku government (1873):—Shiah sect, 270,787; Sunnites, 206,121.

from the east. If England reigns supreme in the Mediterranean, she would still look in vain for armies strong enough to oppose the Russians in Asiatic Turkey, of which she has, perhaps imprudently, guaranteed the present limits. Through the Euphrates valley Russia may also at her pleasure advance towards the "holy places" once conquered by the Crusaders, and over which Christians of all sects are endeavouring to acquire a religious preponderance. Is it not further evident that the influence of Russia must increase in that direction with the growth of population in Caucasia? At all times the peoples of the Ararat and Anti-Caucasus highlands took a large part in the political movements of Western Asia, and these peoples have now become the van of the immense Slavonic nation. Against this formidable power the only barrier would be an alliance of free peoples. But it can scarcely be hoped that the Armenians, Kurds, Turks, and Arabs of the Tigris and

Fig. 82.—Stavropol.

Scale 1 : 800,000.



Euphrates basins will soon become emancipated, and forget their religious hatreds and national rivalries sufficiently to unite against the common foe.

The Caucasian peoples possess no political privileges over the Slav inhabitants of the empire. All alike are subjected to the same autocratic will of the Czar, whom all are equally bound to obey "in spirit no less than in act." None of them enjoy constitutions guaranteeing their rights, though several are still more or less protected by written or unwritten codes. The Czar is represented in Caucasia by a lieutenant-general, or viceroy, with full administrative powers. The families of the former native rulers, while deprived of all political authority, are still in the enjoyment of pensions, privileges, and honours, thanks to the "eternal and faithful submission" sworn by them to the Czar.

The Caucasian budget, whose receipts amounted in 1878 to 6,750,000 roubles, is included in the general finances of the empire. Transcaucasia alone, including

Daghestan, has a general budget, which increased from 5,358,470 roubles in 1870 to 8,784,980 in 1880, and which would amply suffice for the local expenditure, were this not doubled and occasionally quadrupled by the maintenance of considerable forces in the frontier fortresses. The deficit thereby created varies in time of peace from 18,000,000 to 40,000,000 roubles, rising in time of war to 55,000,000 and upwards, and amounting in the ten years between 1869 and 1878 altogether to no less than 343,131,000. The receipts in the whole of Caucasia amounted in 1878 to 16,339,703 roubles, and the expenditure to 71,660,325, leaving a deficit of 55,320,622. The chief receipts are derived from the excise on alcohol, which averages about one-third of the whole income.

Caucasia is administratively divided into provinces of very unequal extent, all of military origin, and officially designated either as governments, provinces, circles, or divisions. Tiflis, capital of all Caucasia, is at the same time the chief town of Transcaucasia, while Stavropol, advantageously situated on the line of approach to the centre of the main range, is the chief administrative capital of Ciscaucasia. Daghestan, which would seem to belong properly to the northern, has been included in the southern division. So also the district of Kuba is comprised in the Transcaucasian government of Baku, doubtless owing to the ethnical and religious unity of the populations dwelling on both slopes in the eastern division of the range. Derbend, or "The Gate," thus remains the political limit of the two regions north and south of the Caucasus.

The Appendix contains a table of all the provinces, with their districts, areas, and populations according to the official returns for 1873—7. Here Daghestan has been separated from Transcaucasia proper. The Trans-Caspian district, depending administratively on the military government of Caucasia, and comprising a portion of the still unsettled Turkoman country, belongs geographically to the Aralo-Caspian region, from which it cannot properly be separated.