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CHAPTER V.

ASIATIC TURKEY.

As in European Turkey, the portion of Western Asia subject to the sultan of Constantinople forms a dismembered political region, the remnant of an empire still kept together mainly through the sufferance of the great European powers. In the north-east the frontier has recently been rectified to the advantage of Russia, which has seized on the strategic points about the main water-partings. The very routes are already planned by which her armies are to descend the Euphrates, and add the Armenian and Kurdish territories to her other conquests. England, also, unable directly to prevent these political encroachments, has sought compensation in the island of Cyprus, whence the course of events may at least be observed, if not controlled. Even the Greeks of the Anatolian seaboard have begun to reassert the old Hellenic autonomy, by the constitution of the principality of Samos, under the official suzerainty of the Porte.

While the Turkish empire in Asia is thus threatened, either by foreign powers on the frontiers, or by its own subjects on the coast, it is fast losing its cohesion in the interior, through the conflict of its discordant national elements. Greek and Turk, Laz and Kurd, Armenian, Maronite, Druse and Ansarieh, have begun that restless agitation which anticipates and hastens the final rupture of the ties still binding them together in one political system. The various provinces of the empire are, moreover, separated by intervening deserts or wasted lands; and in the south long journeys must be made across the wilderness, in order to reach the Euphrates from the cultivated valleys of the Lebanon. Since the Roman epoch the waste spaces have increased in extent. Round about Palmyra and other ancient cities nothing is now to be seen except scattered nomad camping-grounds. Even since the beginning of the present century, many cultivated tracts have become depopulated, either by famine, emigration, or the frequent conscriptions of soldiers seldom destined to revisit their homes.

Hence, whatever be the official administrative divisions, it will be convenient to treat as distinct lands the various countries of Asiatic Turkey, which present a certain unity in their geographical outlines, their history, and ethnical relations. One of these natural regions is formed by the closed basin of Lake Van, with the Kurdish and Armenian highlands between Trans-Caucasia and the Upper Euphrates. The Mesopotamian plain, formerly the seat of powerful empires and of many famous cities, also constitutes a well-defined geographical and historical land. The same is true of the Anatolian peninsula, whose seaboard, fringed with islands and islets, develops a vast

zone of cultivated lowlands round about the thinly-peopled inland region of plateaux and saline steppes. Cyprus, now constituting a portion of the prodigious British empire, must also be studied apart, presenting as it does a distinctly original culture, intermediate between those of Greece and Phoenicia. Lastly, the long hilly district of Syria and Palestine, skirted on one side by the Mediterranean, on the other by the desert, forms a separate physical region, whose inhabitants have played a leading part in the history of the world by their discoveries, commercial enterprise, and diffusion of ideas. There remain the Turkish possessions on the Arabian seaboard, which are best considered in connection with the peninsula with which they form a geographical whole.

LAZISTAN, ARMENIA, AND KURDISTAN. (Black Sea Coast-Basin of Lake Van and the Upper Euphrates.)

Although the present political limits of Asiatic Turkey no longer correspond with its natural frontiers, Mount Ararat forms at least a convenient corner-stone at the converging point of the Russian, Turkish, and Persian territories. From the depression between the Great and Little Ararat, where the three empires meet, the Turkish frontier follows for 90 miles to the west the water-parting between the Aras and Euphrates basins. This is confessedly a temporary arrangement, and to judge from past experiences, fresh wars must sooner or later be followed by fresh annexations to the Russian empire. Elburz, giant of the Caucasus, may repeat to Tandurek, Bingöl-dagh and Argæus what it formerly said to Kazbek, in the lines of Lermontov: "Tremble! Peering towards the icy north, I behold sights of ill-omen! From Ural to Danube the clash of arms; brazen batteries moving forward with sinister rumblings; smoking fuses ready for battle!"

West of Ararat, the green plain of the Echmiadzin basin is skirted by a rugged volcanic chain, some of whose cones, such as the Chinghil and Perli-dagh, exceed 10,000 feet, or about 5,000 above the plain. But the range falls gradually towards the west and south-west, again rising towards the water-parting, and with other converging ridges forming the Bingöl-dagh, or "Mountain of the Thousand Lakes" (11,500 feet), whose winter and spring snows feed the streams radiating in all directions, east to the Aras, north and south to the Kara-su and Murad, the two main branches of the Upper Euphrates. Beyond this point the chief crest of these highlands runs for 150 miles westwards parallel with the Euxine seaboard. Here an opening is at last made for the Kara-su, which trends abruptly south-east to join the other branch of the Euphrates.

The Bingöl-dag is connected with the Erzerum Mountains by a lofty ridge running north, and forming an irregular water-parting east of the sources of the Kara-su. Along this line passes the great military highway between Erzerum and Kars. Here the culminating point is the Palandöken (10,450 feet); but farther west a still greater altitude is attained by several summits of the Perli-dagh, which is skirted by the first great bend of the Kara-su. North of the Erzerum basin the Bingöl is rivalled by the Ghiaur-dagh,

another great centre of streams radiating in various directions. Such are the Tortum-su, which, after forming one of the finest waterfalls in the Old World, flows through deep lava gorges with walls 1,000 feet high, to the Choruk and Black Sea; several head-streams of the Aras and Kura, belonging to the Caspian basin, and lastly, the main source of the Euphrates, which flows to the Persian Gulf. The latter is associated with many local Armenian legends, and is regarded as sacred even by the Turks, who believe that while ordinary sins are washed away by the healing waters of the Euphrates, they prove fatal to those pursued by the wrath of Allah. After its junction with numerous other mountain torrents, the sacred stream descends into the Erzerum basin, where the extensive Sazlik swamps become flooded during the melting of the snows in spring. These swamps are probably the remains of an old lake formerly filling the Erzerum basin, although Radde failed, after a long search, to find any species of lacustrine mollusc in its bed.

The hills encircling this basin are largely of igneous origin, as is evident from the regular cones rising here and there above the crest. At the very gates of Erzerum is a crater formerly filled with water, which has escaped through a deep gorge northwards to the Kara-su marshes. But the highest and most remarkable of these volcanoes is the Sishchik of the Ghiaur-dagh range, which rises to the north-west of Erzerum, 3,960 feet above the plain, and to an absolute elevation of 10,550 feet. From the centre of the crater, which resembles Vesuvius in shape, but greatly exceeds it in size, there springs a cone of black and brown scoriae, round which runs a grassy zone covered with flowers in spring.

THE LAZISTAN AND KURIDSTAN MOUNTAINS.

The Kara-su Valley is skirted on the north by a chain of hills running mainly parallel with the Black Sea, and merging westwards in the Sivas plateau. This is the Paryandres of the ancients, now better known as the Kop-dagh, from a peak of that name rising 13,000 feet above the great highway between Erzerum and Trebizond. The pass crossed by this route, the most remarkable engineering work in Turkey, is 9,000 feet high, or about the same altitude as the Stelvio of the Central Alps. North of it is the Churuk Valley, which, with that of the Kharshut, or Gumish-Kaneh River, forms a surprisingly regular semicircular depression. From the port of Batum, near the mouth of the Churuk, to Tireboli, at the mouth of the Kharshut, the road runs along a vast avenue of peaks, and rises nowhere higher than the pass (6,330 feet) between the sources of the two rivers, near the village of Vavug. The vast crescent enclosed by these two streams is occupied by the Pontine Alps, a lofty range culminating with the Khachkar peak, about 12,000 feet. In these Lazistan highlands the paths are blocked by snow for six months in the year. "The birds themselves," say the natives, "are unable to fly over the hills in winter."

The mountains coasting the Euxine, west of the Kharshut, towards the Kizil-irmak, although less elevated than the Pontine Alps, are still high enough to render the communications very arduous. They project lofty headlands at intervals seawards, one of which still bears the name of Yasun-burun, that is, Cape Jason, from the navigator of Greek legend. Numerous traces of old glaciers and moraines are visible in the upland valleys of the Pontine Alps, whose lavas, porphyries, and other eruptive rocks have been everywhere scored by the ice-streams. In this region the glacial period seems to have been preceded by the igneous activity, the only surviving indications of which are the frequent earthquakes and numerous hot springs at the foot and on the slope of the hills. According to Strecker, the Kolat-dagh (9,600 feet), rising above the main range over 30 miles south of Trebizond, is the Mount Theckes whence Xenophon's ten thousand first sighted the sea on their retreat from Babylonia. But this peak is scarcely accessible to an army on the march, while the descent on the north side is altogether impracticable. But south of it, and close to the route which the Greeks must have followed, there stands a hill 8,000 feet high, whence the Euxine is perfectly visible. On its highest point stands a monument of porphyry blocks some 30 feet high, surrounded by some truncated cones, which according to Briot, were erected by the Greeks to commemorate their arrival at the coast.

The vast labyrinth of the Anti-Caucasus, or Armenian Alps, comprises not only the region between the Kura basin, Black Sea, and Upper Euphrates, but also the extensive basin of Lake Van, south of Ararat, and the surrounding districts as far as the Persian frontier. Throughout the whole of this region the mean elevation of the land is very great. Even the lacustrine depression of Lake Dalik-göl, south of the Perli-dagh, stands at an altitude of 7,500 feet, whence its overflow is discharged to a tributary of the Aras. South of it flows the Murad, or Southern Euphrates, in a narrow rocky bed over 6,500 feet above sea level. Northwards this rugged upland region is bounded by the peaks of Ararat, southwards by the less elevated Ala-dagh, whence flow the highest head-streams of the Euphrates, at an elevation of 11,700 feet. Due east of this point stands the still loftier Tandurek (11,850 feet), known also as the Sunderlik-dagh, Khur, or Khori, which of all the Armenian volcanoes still preserves the most numerous traces of the former plutonic forces. The chief crater, over 3,000 yards in circumference and 380 deep, is now flooded by a small Alpine lake. But smoke still escapes from its flanks, and on the eastern slope is a cavern emitting vapours at a temperature of 265° F. Here is heard a continuous booming, which resembles the sound of distant artillery, and which, during one of the Russo-Turkish frontier wars, caused an alarm in the two hostile armies encamped in the neighbourhood. At the north-west foot of the Tandurek well up the copious sulphur springs of Diyadin, covering the ground with their many-coloured incrustations, and forming a thermal stream, which descends through a series of smoking cascades down to the icy waters of the Murad. Farther down the Murad itself disappears in a basalt underground channel, which is continued by a deep canon between two vertical rocky walls.

The Tandurek is connected north-westwards with the Perli-dagh by a ridge, which is crossed by the route from Erzerum to Tabriz, and which would appear to form the true natural frontier between Turkey and Persia. But the eastern valley, watered by Lake Balik with its emissary of like name, is at present included within the limits of the Ottoman empire. The range running east of Tandurek over against Ararat also forms a natural frontier, both slopes of which are occupied by semi-independent Kurdish tribes between the two conterminous states. Eastwards this range projects a few short spurs, terminating with abrupt headlands towards Lake Urmiah. But in the direction of Lake Van several branches stretch for a long way westwards, gradually merging in the plateau, which has here a mean altitude of over 6,000 feet, while some of the peaks on the main range itself rise to an absolute height of 10,000 feet. The same elevation appears to be attained, if not exceeded, by the Hakkiari hills, which sweep round to the south along the southern shore of Lake Van. The circuit of mountains enclosing this lacustrine basin is completed on the north and north-west by another range, culminating with the extinct volcanic peak of Seiban, or Sapan, (about 12,000 feet), which, according to Tozer, is covered with snow for ten months in the year. This majestic cone, formerly supposed to rival Demavend in height, and associated with Ararat in the Armenian legends connected with the Noachian deluge, commands a magnificent prospect of the northern highlands, sweeping round in a vast curve of 180 miles from Ararat to Bingöl-dagh. Southwards is visible the side crater flooded by the Aghir-gol, or "Still Lake," beyond which stretches the basin of Van itself, with its inlets, bays, marshes, and encircling hills. At the west foot of Sapan lies the freshwater lakelet of Nazik, on the water-parting between Van and the Euphrates, to both of which it sends emissaries.

The last southern terraces of the Armenian plateau terminate above the Mesopotamian plains in a line of rugged cliffs scored by deep river gorges, but forming in their normal direction a regular north-western continuation of the Luristan border range. Immediately west of Lake Van rises the vast crater of the Nimrud-dagh composed entirely of scoriae, the south side of which is indented by an elliptic bay, section of another volcano now partly submerged. The whole of Upper Armenia is an igneous region, still subject to frequent earthquakes.

LAKE VAN.

Lake Van, the Tosp of the Armenians, whence its classic name of Thospitis, stands at an altitude of 5,400 feet; that is, 1,100 feet higher than Urmiah. It has an estimated area of 1,470 square miles, or somewhat less than its Azerbaijan neighbour, which, however, it considerably exceeds in depth, and consequently also in volume. On the east side, within 2 miles of the town of Van, the soundings give 80 feet of water, while the bed of the lake sinks to far greater depths along its southern shore. The great bay, however, which penetrates some 36 miles north-eastwards, forms a shallow

expanse, where in spring the mountain torrents develop extensive alluvial deltas. According to a local tradition, this inlet was formerly a fertile plain watered by two streams which continued their winding course south-westwards to Bitlis. In any case, the data collected by Jaubert, Loftus, Strecker, and others, leave no doubt regarding the great changes of level undergone by this inland sea. Between 1838 and 1840 it rose from 10 to 13 feet, and a similar rising seems to have occurred early in the seventeenth century, the waters again subsiding after a few years. Several of the islets along the coast have at times been flooded, and old promontories have been transformed to islands constantly diminishing in extent. The highway skirting the north side has in the same way steadily receded farther inland. The town of Arjish, on the north-east bay, has almost entirely disappeared; while Adeljivas, on the north coast, is now threatened by the rising waters. On the east side also the lake is advancing towards Van, which has itself already replaced a more ancient city of that name. The village of Iskella has been partly abandoned, and the boatmen moor their craft to trunks of trees which now stand far from the shore. To these constant invasions are perhaps to be attributed the local traditions regarding large cities formerly swallowed up by the lake. What is the explanation of a phenomenon, the very opposite of what is observed in nearly all the other Asiatic lacustrine basins? Unless it be due to some local atmospheric currents attracting to this region more rain-bearing clouds than elsewhere, the reason given by the inhabitants themselves must be accepted. According to their statements the underground passages, through which copious streams formerly escaped to the head waters of the Tigris, have been partly effaced, and the reservoir receiving more supplies than can now be carried off by evaporation and subterranean emissaries, must continue to rise until an equilibrium is established, or until the excess is discharged south-westwards to the torrent of Bitlis. It is also stated that the neighbouring nomads have rolled a huge block to the head of one of the underground outlets, and since then the lake has been gradually but steadily rising. The lakelet of Ercek, east of Van, is also expanding, a circumstance which would seem to point rather at a change of the local climatic conditions. Ercek also resembles Van in its saline properties, but contains, according to Millingen, a strong proportion of arsenic.

Van itself is far too brackish to be potable by man or beast. But being still less saline than Urmiah, it contains a more developed fauna. At the mouths of the streams considerable captures are made of a species of fish wrongly identified by Jaubert with the anchovy of the Black Sea. As shown by the naturalist Deyrolle, it is a blay (*Cyprinus Tarachi*), which appears to avoid the more saline waters, and shows itself near the surface only in the spring, from March to May, when the fresh supplies from the melting snows are spread over the heavier salt layers found at lower depths. The saline deposits round the shores both of Van and Ercek, consist in even proportions of carbonate and sulphate of soda, utilised in the manufacture of soap, which is exported as far as Syria.

Boats are rare on Lake Van, although Fanshawe Tozer recently crossed it in a fishing-smack, accompanied by a flotilla of five others, and a steamer was launched on its waters by the American missionaries in 1879.

CLIMATE-FLORA-FAUNA

The very existence of Van, Urmiah, Gokcha, and of the numerous smaller lacustrine basins on the Akhaltzikh plateau, between Kars and Tiflis, is sufficient proof that the climate of the Armenian uplands is far more humid than that of Persia. The whole of Lazistan and the hilly region comprised by the ancients under the name of Pontus, lie, in fact, within the influence of the western and north-western winds, which bring from the Euxine an abundant supply of rain during the summer storms, and of snow during winter. Although the rainfall is less copious than on the southern slopes of the Caucasus, where the annual discharge exceeds 75 inches in Mingrelia and Imeria, it amounts to at least half that average in some of the more favoured valleys of Lazistan. In the absence of accurate returns, the mean yearly discharge may be approximately estimated at about 20 inches for the whole of the Armenian uplands.

On the other hand certain districts, such as the Olti plateau, shut off by lofty ranges from the rain-bearing clouds, have seldom sufficient moisture for agricultural purposes. Hence, as on the Caspian slope of Trans-Caucasia, the brooks have here to be collected in reservoirs, and dispersed in a thousand channels over the arable lands. But notwithstanding the barrier of the Pontine Alps, most of Southern Armenia is exposed to the influence of the moist winds, which blow from the Euxine across the Sivas plateau into the funnel-shaped upland valleys facing westwards. They prevail chiefly in winter, when they clothe with a thick mantle of snow the amphitheatre of hills about the head-waters of the Euphrates. In summer they are succeeded by the dry northern and eastern breezes from the great polar current, which traverse the Asiatic continent and melt the Alpine snows. A supply of moisture is also yielded by the south-western winds from the Mediterranean, to which are due the soft, hazy outlines of the hills, and the delicate tints of the landscape, conspicuous even in clear weather. On the northern slopes the superabundant humidity from the Euxine is sufficient to develop rivers, such as the Choruk and Kharchut, whose volume is out of proportion with the extent of their basin. Enough remains even for the southern slope, where it feeds the Euphrates and Tigris, whose united stream in the Shat-el-Arab exceeds all other rivers between the Indus and the Danube. The Euphrates may thus be regarded as a great emissary of the Black Sea, whose evaporated waters are precipitated through this perennial channel into the Persian Gulf.

On the shores of the Euxine a tolerably mild temperature prevails throughout the year. Here the glass seldom falls 10° F. below freezing point, while the moderating influence of the sea prevents the summer heats from exceeding 77° F. But the Turkish Armenian uplands, lying beyond this influence, are subject to extreme vicissitudes of

heat and cold. There is scarcely any spring at Erzerum, where the winter snows rapidly melting, suddenly change the torrents into large rivers. Extended observations are still needed to form a just estimate of this climate, as compared with that of other countries in Europe and Asia, whose meteorological conditions are already determined. But differences of no less than 60° F. have been recorded between dawn and noon, while the glass seems to oscillate between the extremes of 13° F. and 112° F. of absolute cold and heat. The vegetation, retarded by the winter and spring frosts, is stimulated by the early summer heats, when all nature bursts suddenly into full bloom. Wheat is developed from sprout to ear within the space of two months; but it would soon be burnt up by the fierce midsummer sun, were it not supplied with sufficient moisture by artificial irrigation. This cereal is cultivated to an altitude of 6,000, and barley up to 7,000, feet; but at these extreme heights the crops are threatened by the sudden return of frost in the early autumn. On the whole, agricultural operations are confined to lower limits on the Armenian highlands than on the more northerly Georgian slopes of Caucasia. This is due probably to the form of the Armenian ranges, which give access through numerous openings to the northern winds, against which the Great Caucasus presents an unbroken barrier.

In the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, the vegetation resembles that of Mingrelia, but presents fewer species and a less varied display of bright colours. Lazistan, say the natives, is the land of fruits, while Armenia is supposed to be the original home of the vine, pear, and many other species. In the Trebizond district, the hills are clothed from base to summit with a rich vegetable humus, which supports a varied growth of garden plants, orchards, grassy tracts, evergreen and other trees. The towns and villages on the coast are surrounded by citron and olive groves, which are succeeded higher up by the walnut, oak, and chestnut. Beyond these comes the zone of scarlet rhododendrons and azaleas, to the latter of which has been attributed the poisonous action of the honey that intoxicated or demented the Greek soldiers of Xenophon's expedition.

Further inland the Armenian highlands are mostly destitute of arborescent vegetation. Nothing is seen but bare rocks and pastures, in a region which might be covered with timber. Hence animals and even birds are rare, most of the slopes being occupied by nomad pastors, with their flocks of fat-tailed sheep, guarded by half wild collies, which are often more dangerous than bears or wolves. There is also a good breed of horses, extremely gentle yet full of spirit, but inferior in strength to the Turkoman and in graceful action to the Persian species. But the chief resource of the whole of this region is the sheep, of which as many as forty millions are said to be found between Ararat and the Persian Gulf. At the beginning of the century Jaubert estimated at 1,500,000 the number sent annually to Constantinople from the Armenian uplands. Aleppo, Damascus, and even Beirut, are supplied with mutton from Armenia and Kurdistan, and during their campaigns the Turkish armies largely depend for their provisions on the region of the Upper Euphrates.

INHABITANTS - THE LAZES AND ARMENIANS.

The inhabitants of Lazistan, Turkish Armenia, and Kurdistan, estimated altogether at upwards of two millions, belong mainly to the same ethnical groups as the populations of Trans-Caucasia. Here the political frontier forms no ethnographic parting-line. On both sides dwell peoples of Georgian stock; the Turkish Erzerum, like the Russian Erivan, belongs to the Armenian domain; Kurdish nomad pastors frequent the shores of lake Van as well as those of lake Gokcha. At every fresh Russian conquest, migrations, forced or voluntary, have taken place between the conterminous states. Between 1828 and 1830 over 100,000 Armenians passed from Turkey and Persia into Russian territory, where they received the lands of the Turki and Kurdish immigrants into the Mohammedan countries. Since 1877 similar shiftings of the populations have taken place between Turkish Armenia and the provinces annexed to Russian Trans-Caucasia. The Turks of Ardahan and Kars have retired to Erzerum and Sivas, those of Artvin to the Van plateau, the lands thus left vacant being occupied by Armenians from the Upper Chorukh, from the Erzerum and Van districts. In this readjustment of the populations, the Ottoman empire has on the whole benefitted most. The Mussulmans almost unanimously flee from their new Russian masters, whereas many Turkish Armenians prefer the misrule of the pashas to the meddling interference of the Muscovite administration. Thus the chief result of the Russian invasions has been to transform Armenia into another Turkestan.

Nevertheless these displacements, which have been constantly accompanied by a frightful mortality caused by famine, fever, homesickness, and hardships of every sort, are still far from having produced an ethnological grouping coincident with the conventional political frontier. In case of fresh conflicts with the Porte, Russia naturally derives great diplomatic and military advantages from the presence of kindred communities in the conterminous provinces. On behalf of her Trans-Caucasian Georgian subjects, she acquires a right or pretext for interfering in the affairs of their Laz brethren in the Trebizond district. As mistress of the Kurdish pastors, she may claim the prerogative of maintaining order amongst these restless nomads on both sides of the frontier. But especially as possessor of the holy city of Echmiadzin, and guardian of the Armenian Christians, she may feel called upon to insist upon those administrative reforms which British influence has hitherto been powerless to introduce into Turkish Armenia. In European Turkey, Russia has successfully interfered on behalf of the Bulgarians, and obtained for them an autonomous territory stretching nearly to the Gulf of Salonica. In the same way, when the occasion serves, she will be ready armed with a pretext for intervention in favour of the Armenian communities scattered over Western Asia from Erzerum to the Gulf of Alexandretta, over against Cyprus, England's new acquisition in the East. England herself can scarcely expect to offer an efficacious guarantee against farther Muscovite encroachments on the present limits of the Ottoman empire. She can no longer control the course of events in these regions, and

the refusal or neglect of the Turk to introduce the much needed reforms will merely serve an excuse for withdrawing from her new "Protectorate."

It is sad to reflect that such a rich land, one of the fairest, and formerly one of the most productive in the temperate zone, is now so little utilised by man. The population, which cannot be estimated at more than ten or twelve to the square mile, seems to be even diminishing. Yet the dominant Turki race, although still mostly in the tribal state, possesses many sterling qualities, which ought to secure it a considerable part in the common work of human progress. Laborious, long-suffering, persevering, the western Turkoman unweariedly returns to field labours interrupted by invasions. Conscious of the renown of their forefathers, the Kara-Koyunli and the Ak-Koyunli - that is, the "Black" and "White Shepherds" - preserve a feeling of national cohesion unknown to most of their neighbours. Hence the facility with which they absorb fresh ethnical elements, such as Lazes, Circassians, and Kurds, who gradually become assimilated to the ruling race, especially in those districts where nomad habits have given place to agricultural pursuits. For Turkey the true source of regeneration lies rather in these vigorous Turkoman peasant communities than in political alliances or "European capital."

The Lazes of the seaboard and the Ajars of the coast ranges between Batum and Trebizond, are Mohammedans of Georgian stock, endowed with the same fine physical qualities as their Trans-Caucasian kinsmen. Their speech is closely allied to that current on the Mingrelian lowlands, but affected by Turki and Greek elements. At the same time, the migratory habits and different religious and political institutions of the Lazes, cause their dialect to diverge more and more from that of the Russian Georgians, and become more assimilated to the Turkish, which has even already displaced it in some districts on the Upper Chorukh river. These mountaineers are a hardy, industrious race, fond of adventure, formerly much addicted to piracy on the Euxine waters. They are now chiefly occupied with fishing, agriculture, and the transport of merchandise, while thousands seek employment as porters, coppersmiths and tide-waiters in Constantinople. In Lazistan proper, which reaches westwards to Cape Kemer, the inhabitants are almost exclusively of Laz stock. But beyond this point, in the direction of Trebizond and Platana, Laz communities become gradually less numerous, and more interspersed with Greek and Turkish populations. Next to them the most important ethnical elements are the Cherkesses, Abkhasians, and other refugees from the Caucasus, about 6,000 of whom are annually moving westwards. The Armenians have only a small group of villages about Kopi, on the frontier of the Batum district, and the Greek colony is reduced to a few isolated families in the towns along the coast. In certain inland villages, especially at Jivislik, on the road from Trebizond to Gumishkaneh, there occurs an intermediate class of "Mezzo-mezzos," in the morning speaking Turkish and visiting the mosques, in the evening conversing in Greek and celebrating Christian rites. These half caste Hellenes and Lazes have by some been identified with the Macrones, who, according to Herodotus, practised circumcision, and who may have consequently been regarded as a sort of Mussulmans before the Moslem conquest.

Although nowhere in Trans-Caucasia or Asiatic Turkey forming a compact national community, the Haikans (Armenians) form the dominant population on the southern slope of the Chorukh Valley, as well as on the main branches of the Upper Euphrates. They are also in exclusive possession of some upland valleys in the Jihun basin, Asia Minor, where the traditions of the old Armenian empire are still best preserved. The total number of Armenians in the provinces left to Turkey has been variously estimated, according to the political bias of the writers, at from 500,000 to 2,000,000 or 3,000,000. They may approximately be calculated at some 700,000 or 800,000 - that is to say, about one third of the whole Armenian nation. In Erzerum, as in Constantinople, they are distinguished from the Turks by their greater love of instruction and industrious habits. In the vilayet of Van they have almost a complete monopoly of the local trades. They readily migrate, and thousands are now settled in Constantinople, and the other cities of European and Asiatic Turkey, where they find employment especially as builders, artisans, and carriers.

THE KURDS.

While the centre of gravity of the Armenian nationality now lies at the foot of Mount Ararat within Russian territory, the Kurds are concentrated chiefly on the Van plateau, whence their numerous tribes radiate over a vast extent of country. Including in this group the Luri and Bakhtyari of the Persian border ranges, and the various nomads removed by the Persian sovereigns to Khorassan and the Baluch frontier, their domain is found to stretch for about 600 miles from the neighbourhood of Ramadan to Aintab, with a mean breadth of 150 miles. But the few tribes scattered amongst the Armenians, Georgians, and Tatars of Russian Trans-Caucasia, have little cohesion with the Persian and Turkish divisions of the family. The majority recognise the sovereignty of the Porte, although various communities, especially in the Dersim highlands, south-west of Erzerum, still form petty semi-independent states. Elsewhere also, and notably in the basin of the Great Zab, they constitute a compact nationality, powerful enough to aspire to political autonomy in the Turko-Persian border lands. Attempts have even been made to found a common league or confederacy of all the Kurdish tribes, which, however aggressive towards other races, seldom quarrel amongst themselves.

Scattered over such a vast range, the Kurds naturally present considerable diversity of physical types. In some respects they even form distinct ethnical groups, some being affected by Turkoman or Tatar, others by Armenian or Persian elements. Certain tribes, regarded as of pure Armenian stock, are supposed to be descended from old Christian communities converted to Islam. Nearly all the Turkish soldiers stationed in the Kurdish highlands intermarry with the natives, whereby the physical appearance becomes still farther modified. Some are noted for their coarse and even ugly features, while others rival the finest Cherkesses in grace and symmetry of form. Those of the Urmiah and Van basins, who are regarded as the descendants of the Kudraha,

mentioned in the Persepolis inscriptions (the Kardukhi and Gordyans of Greek writers), are of middle size and thick-set, with a haughty expression; while those of the Persian frontier have generally a receding brow, wide eyebrows, long lashes, large mouth, projecting chin, pointed aquiline nose. Many, especially of the Persian tribes, dye their bushy beards and hair red or black, although naturally light hair and even blue eyes are far from rare. Five skulls measured by Duhouset are strongly brachycephalic, thus presenting a marked contrast to the East Persian, Afghan, and Hindu crania. But no general conclusion can be drawn from such partial measurements, still less from the vague comparisons made by the American missionaries with the Redskins of the New World.

The children are very pretty, and the features of the women, who never go veiled, distinguished by great regularity, large eyes, aquiline nose, robust figure, deep black hair, well harmonising with a slightly brown or swarthy complexion. Unfortunately they are too often disfigured, like their Hindu sisters, by the gold ring passed through the nostrils. Both sexes are fond of finery, bright-coloured, costly robes, high head-dresses, enveloped by the men in gorgeous turbans. The Kurd completes his costume by an arsenal of small-arms-revolvers, knives and yatagans - attached to the girdle, rifle swung to a shoulder-belt, a long lance decorated with ribbons and carried in the hand. But this is mere parade, most of such encumbrances being dispensed with in actual combat.

Most explorers and missionaries that have resided any time amongst them have recognised two well defined castes, descended probably from distinct ethnical stocks, and known as the *Kermani* or *Assireta* - that is, nobles - and *guran*, or peasants. The latter, four or five times more numerous than the former in South Kurdistan, are regarded, not without reason, as the descendants of a conquered and enslaved race. Like other serfs attached to the soil, they are known in Turkey as *raya*, or riots. In certain districts they are compelled to till the land for masters who claim over them the right of life and death. Under no circumstances can they rise to the rank of warriors, but, like cattle, change their owners according to the vicissitudes of battle. On the other hand, the military, or noble caste, would be dishonoured by agricultural labour. Besides stock-breeding, their only occupation is pillage and warfare, either on their own account or as mercenaries. The type is inferior to that of the Gurans, being marked by angular features, small sunken eyes, heavy figures. Amongst them are also found a few Chinghianehs, or gipsies, differing in no respect from those of Europe; and the Tere-Kamehs, who occupy about a hundred villages near the Persian frontier, and who, owing to their Turki speech, are regarded as of Tatar descent.

Like the race itself, the Kurdish language presents a great diversity of form, although the common structure is essentially Iranian. The vocabulary has been enriched in the east by Persian, in the west by Arabic and Turkish words, in some district even by Syriac and Russian terms. The Zaza, current at Mush and Palu, presents certain analogies with the Ossetian of the Caucasus; and, according to Lereh, there are

altogether five distinct dialects, one of which, the Kermanji, is spoken by all the tribes west of Mossul. All these idioms are harsh, sounding like a series of explosions, yet less affected by sibilants and gutturals than most of those current amongst the surrounding peoples. To the national literature, consisting of a few songs in praise of their heroes and wild mountain scenery, the American missionaries have added a translation of the Bible and a few religious works. Having no distinct writing system, the Kurds employ the Arabic as modified by their Persian neighbours, and the lettered classes usually exchange the rude national speech for the more cultured Turkish or Persian.

Neither Baluch, Bedouin, nor Apache has developed the marauding instinct to a higher degree than have the warlike Kurd tribes. The chief, whose mountain fastness commands like an eyrie the entrance of the gorges, entertains a band of freebooters, who scour the surrounding highways, and sweep the plunder into his inaccessible den. Armed robbery is regarded as the most honourable of deeds; but smuggling, which might be so easily carried on in an upland region on the confines of three empires, is held in contempt. Advantage, however, is taken of the conterminous frontiers, in order to organise excursions now against one, now against another of the neighbouring states, and when pursued rapidly retire across the border. It is to avoid these dangerous hereditary foes of their race and religion that so many Armenian communities have forsaken their homes and withdrawn to Russian territory. In many districts of the plateau, a chronic state of blockade is kept up against whole towns and groups of villages, where the inhabitants live in constant dread of the marauders. The drastic measures, such as impaling and the stake, taken against them, instead of striking terror into these brigand tribes, have often the effect of stimulating them to frightful reprisals. Suppressed in one place, the incessant struggle breaks out in another, at times compelling the Turkish Government to fit out costly military expeditions. According to Polak, there is one Kurdish sect which strictly forbids the plunder of the living, in consequence of which these sectaries first scrupulously murder their victims before rifling them. Nevertheless, under ordinary circumstances, human life is respected, and clothes and provisions are even occasionally left to the poor in the villages plundered. Bloodshed is avoided except in the case of personal or hereditary feuds, when the laws of vendetta may be enforced in the mosque itself. The chiefs, to whom all yield blind obedience, keep open table, and return in banquets the presents exacted and the products of their plundering raids. The stranger also is well received when he presents himself as a guest.

Notwithstanding their warlike habits and marauding propensities, the Kurds are on the whole more honest and trustworthy than the surrounding races. In general they respect their women, who enjoy for greater freedom than their Turkish and Persian sisters. But the incessant toil to which they are condemned renders their existence so burdensome that mothers are said frequently to make away with their female offspring, in order to save them from their hard lot. But, unlike the Circassians, whom they resemble in so many other respects, they have never been accustomed to sell them to

the purveyors of the Turkish harems. Notwithstanding their many sterling qualities, the Kurds are threatened with extinction in many districts in Persia and Turkey, where they are diminishing in numbers, and here and there merging in the surrounding populations. The serfs, who constitute the bulk of the nation, have no interest in maintaining the relations binding them to the warlike caste, which on its part is condemned to exhaustion by its very mode of existence - a perpetual warfare against all their neighbours. Religious animosity contributes to the work of destruction, at least in Persia, where three-fourths of the Kurds are zealous Sunnites, and consequently regarded by the Iranian Shiah as heretics deserving the worst of fates.

THE KIZIL-BASHES, YEZIDIS, AND NESTORIANS.

In this land of transition, where the remnants of so many peoples have become amalgamated, traces have survived of the most varied forms of worship. A Kurdish community in the sanjak of Sert, has even been mentioned as professing no religion. Amongst the tribes on the Armenian and Kurdistan plateau there exist not only members of every Mohammedan and Christian sect, but also unconscious heirs of the old Persian Mazdeism. The Kizil-Bashes, or "Red Heads," a term applied in Afghanistan and other eastern countries to peoples of Persian stock, are for the most part Kurds. Of 400,000 of these sectaries not more than 15,000 are of Turkoman descent, while two or three tribes call themselves Arabs. The Red Heads, who are centred chiefly in the middle Euphrates basin, on the banks of the Ghermili and Upper Kizil-irmak, are included by the Mussulmans among the Christian sects, because they drink wine, allow their women to go unveiled, and practice the rites of baptism and communion. They are also accused, rightly or wrongly, of celebrating nocturnal feasts or orgies, in which unbridled licentiousness prevails. Hence the term *Terah Sonderan*; or "Extinguishers of Lights," by which they are commonly known. Their religious chief resides in the Dersim district, near the river Murad.

Other detested sectaries are the so-called "Devil Worshipers." These Yezidi, or *Shemsieh* Kurds, although they number scarcely 50,000 souls altogether, are scattered over a very wide area. Their chief settlement is in the Sinjar hills, north of the Mesopotamian plain, but they are also found on the Van and Erzerum plateaux, in Persia and in Trans-Caucasia, near the east bank of Lake Gokcha. One of their colonies is even said to have penetrated westwards to the Bosphorus, over against Constantinople. Hated by all their neighbours, persecuted and reduced by famine and epidemics even more than by the sword, they have nevertheless contrived to survive from age to age, with nothing to sustain them except their faith, and the memory of their trials and afflictions. They pretend that their great saint, Sheikh Adi, wrote a code of doctrine, the so-called *Aswat*, or "Black" Book. But the assertion is unsupported by any documentary evidence. The autonomous Sinjar Yezidis, half-caste Kurds and Arabs, were mostly exterminated in 1838, when those who had taken refuge in the caves were

smoked to death, and their women sold into slavery. Since then no Yezidi community has maintained its political independence.

The accounts given by travellers of the different Yezidi tribes vary so greatly that these sectaries have been referred to several distinct origins. Those residing near the Armenians seem to belong to that ethnical group, and extant documents mention a village in the Van district where the sect was founded in the ninth century. In Sinjar, on the contrary, they are traced to an Arab source, and their cult associated with Islam. In Persia again they are regarded as Guebres. Yet they are connected with the Mussulman world by their very title of Yezidi, derived from Yezid, the detested caliph, grandson of the prophet, and murderer of Hussein. Lastly, the Kurds confound them with the Christian sects of the lowlands, attributing to all alike every conceivable abomination. The ceremonies vary with every district. Some baptise their children and make the sign of the cross; others practice circumcision, which is prohibited elsewhere; in one place polygamy prevails, in another all are strict monogamists; formerly blue was chiefly worn; now this colour is held in horror, and replaced by white.

But the common bond of union between all the Yezidis, is the worship of the *melek* Taus, their peacock or phoenix king, Lord of Life, Holy Ghost, Fire and Light, represented under the form of a bird with a cock's head, perched on a chandelier. His "prime minister" is Lucifer, the morning star, still venerated notwithstanding his fall. Having themselves fallen, by what right, they argue, could they curse the fallen angel? And as they themselves hope for salvation through the divine favour, why may not Lucifer also resume his rank as chief of the heavenly hosts? The prophets Moses, Mohammed, Jesus Christ, may themselves have been his incarnations: possibly he has already returned to heaven, in order again, as supreme minister, to execute the decrees of the divine legislator. They are struck with horror when they hear the archangel's name blasphemed by Moslem or Christian; and the sentence of death is said to be pronounced against those amongst them who take the name of "Satan." Those who hear it are bound to kill, first the blasphemer, then themselves. They scrupulously comply with the orders of their priests, and many make the pilgrimage to the shrine of Sheikh Adi, on the route to Amadiah, north of Mossul. Their pope, or Sheikh-Khan, resides at Baadli; but the sanctuary is in the village of Lalest, where lived a prophet, the "Mohammed" of the Yezidi. Here are performed the great ceremonies, and here the holy effigy of the *melek* Taus is exposed to the veneration of the faithful. Travellers, and even Christian missionaries amongst them, unanimously represent the Yezidi as far superior, morally, to their Nestorian or Gregorian, Shiah or Sunnite neighbours. They are perfectly honest, showing a scrupulous regard for the property of others. They are also extremely courteous to strangers, kind to each other, faithful to the marriage vow, and of industrious habits. The songs sung by them while tilling the land, or during the evening rest from labour, consist either of fragments of epic poems celebrating the great deeds of their forefathers, love ditties full of sentiment, or else plaintive appeals for redress. "The jackal preys only on carrion; but the pasha drinks the blood of our youth. He severs the young man from his betrothed. Cursed be whosoever two loving hearts

sever. Cursed be the ruler to pity a stranger. Its dead the grave gives not up, but the angel of doom our cry will hear!"

Of the Christian sects surviving in Kurdistan, the most important is that of the so-called Nestorians, a title, however, which they reject, calling themselves "Messianic Nazarenes," "Syrian Nazarenes," or simply "Nazarenes." Their language is an Aramean dialect derived directly from the Syriac; hence the surprising facility with which they learn Hebrew, which the missionaries have introduced into their schools. Numbering, perhaps, 200,000 altogether, they are scattered, like the Yezidi, over a vast territory; and to them probably belonged the now extinct Nestorians of China, as well as the Nassareni-Moplaks of the Malabar coast, whose liturgical language is the Syriac, and who recognise as their head the Babylonian patriarch residing in Mossul. Their diffusion to such remote regions doubtless preceded the occupation of Mesopotamia by the Mohammedans, who did not invade the Julamerk highlands between lakes Van and Urmiah, where the Nestorians had their strongholds and most important communities. But in 1843 their villages were overrun by the surrounding Mussulman Kurds, who massacred the men taken in arms, carried the women into captivity, and brought up the young in the Mohammedan faith.

At present the Porte has no more loyal subjects than the surviving Christians of Julamerk, who, like the neighbouring Kurds, are divided into two classes, the *assireta*, or nobles, and the peasants, little better than slaves. They are governed by a sacerdotal hierarchy, under the patriarchate of a priest-king known as "Mar Shimun," or "Lord Simon." The Nestorians trouble themselves little with the theological subtleties on the human and divine nature of Christ which gave rise to the schism of Nestorius. But ceremonial differences have sufficed to create secular hatreds between them and the other religious sects. The Chaldeans of Mesopotamia and Zagros, who are settled mostly in the Diarbekir district and north of Bagdad, have been united at least officially to the Church of Rome since the sixteenth century. Nevertheless they retain various old rites, and celibacy is restricted to the higher orders of the clergy. Recently, however, some of the Catholic missionaries have been endeavouring gradually to assimilate the Chaldean to the Latin ritual. On the other hand, the Nestorians, who remained faithful to the old Nazarene cult of Syria, have since 1831 been brought chiefly under the influence of the American missionaries. These Protestant evangelisers maintain about sixty stations in the country, contribute to the support of the native clergy and schools, and have more than once protected their highland congregations from the Turks and Kurds.

TOPOGRAPHY.

There are comparatively few towns in these upland regions, which have been so frequently wasted by pillage, famine, and military expeditions. Half the population still leads a semi-nomad existence between the winter and summer pastures, residing during the heats in felt tents 15 to 20 feet high, for the rest of the year in hovels half buried in the ground, with grass-grown roofs rendering them almost indistinguishable

from the surrounding land. Some of the powerful Kurdish chiefs possess large stone houses, but always so disposed as to keep in view the horses who form their main pride and delight.

West of Batum and the Chorukh delta, recently ceded to Russia, no town of any consequence occurs for a distance of over 90 miles along the coast. *Atina*, an old Greek colony, formerly known by the name of Athens, consists of a few scattered houses, and in the neighbourhood some mural remains mark the site of *Eski-Tirabzon*, or Old Trebizond. West of Atina follow the open roadsteads of *Rizeh*, and *Surmeneh*, beyond which comes the famous city of *Trebizond*, the Trapezos of the Greeks, founded some 2,600 years ago by a colony from Sinope. Trebizond was the capital of Pontus, and in the thirteenth century became the metropolis of the empire which was founded by Alexis Comnenus, and which for over 250 years arrested the progress of Islam. Although now merely a provincial capital, it preserves a certain importance as the outlet of Persia on the Black Sea. Notwithstanding its unsheltered anchorage, it has at all times been the port where passengers and goods are landed for the Iranian plateau, and where the produce of Persia is shipped for the West. The route, carried southwards over the rugged intervening highlands, is essentially a historic highway, the shortest and easiest between the Euxine and North Persia by the Bayazid Pass and the plain of Erzerum. The section between Trebizond and Erzerum now forms a fine carriage-road 200 miles long, accessible even to artillery. But the Trans-Caucasian railway from Batum and Poti through Tiflis to Baku, which must sooner or later be continued round the Caspian seaboard to Persia, is already threatening to deprive Trebizond of most of its trade. Nevertheless the imports and exports were still valued in 1881, at £1,733,000 and £1,000,000 respectively; and since the interdict imposed by the Russian Government on the Caucasian transit trade, the French sugars and English woven goods intended for the Persian market have again been diverted to the old route over the Armenian plateau.

Of the old ramparts, built in form of a trapezium, whence the name of the city, the lines are still marked by several ivy-clad towers and a ruined castle on the coast. The modern quarter of Ghiaur-Meidan, lying beyond the walls on a cliff east of the town, is occupied by Armenians, Greeks and the European merchants settled in the place. Here is also a considerable Persian colony, which supplies nearly all the local artisans. In an enormous cave on the Kolat-dagh hills south of Trebizond is the famous Panagia of Sumelas, the Miriam ana, or "Mother Mary," annually visited by 8,000 or 10,000 Greeks in the month of August. Even the Turkish women flock in large numbers to the shrine to implore her intercession against fever or sterility. She can dispel all calamities, but is especially potent against locusts, whence the title of "Panagia of the Locusts," by which she is known from Paphlagonia to Cappadocia. To the monastery belong extensive domains along the Euxine seaboard between Trebizond and Constantinople.

West of Trebizond other Greek names recall the days when Hellenic influence predominated on the coast of Pontus. *Tireboli*, or *Tarabulus*, is one of the numerous

Tripolis or "Three Cities," whose walls afforded a refuge to people of threefold origin. It has the advantage over Trebizond of lying at the mouth of a considerable stream, the Kharshut, which, however, flows through gorges too narrow to allow of a road being opened along its course. Farther on is the little seaport of *Kiresun*, the old Greek settlement of Kerasos, so named from the Armenian *keraz*, cherry, whole forests of which tree formerly encircled the town. But the staple exports at present are filberts, of which 3,500 tons, valued at £60,000, were shipped for Russia and other places in 1881.

Between Trebizond and Erzerum the chief station is *Baiburt*, which lies at the foot of the Kop-dagh on the eastern head-stream of the Chorukh. Like most other upland towns in Turkish Armenia, it is little more than a collection of hovels and ruins, commanded by a strong citadel dating from the Seljuk period. In the neighbourhood is a still finer castle, the Ghenis-kaleh, built by the old Genoese traders on the highway to Persia. The silver mines in the vicinity, as well as those of *Gurmish-khaneh*, lying further west in the upper Kharshut basin, are no longer worked, having been partly flooded since the middle of the present century, when they were the most productive in the Ottoman empire. The copper mine situated some 12 miles to the south-east of Baiburt, at one time employed 500 hands, and its deepest shaft descended 1,300 feet into the ground. The whole valley of Chorukh is strewn with the ruins of castles, churches, and towns. Yet the entire district might be changed to a vast garden, like the lateral valley of *Tortuni*, which supplies Erzerum with fruits and vegetables. In the neighbourhood stand the church and monastery of *Erek Vank*, the most remarkable monument of Georgian art.

Erzerum retains some of its former importance as the most advanced bulwark of Turkey towards Russia, and as the converging point of the caravans crossing the Armenian highlands, or radiating from this point towards Trebizond and Batum, Sivas and Diarbekir, Bagdad, Teheran, and Tiflis. The transit trade between the Euxine and Persia has greatly diminished since the completion of the Trans-Caucasian railway from the Black Sea to the Caspian; and after the Russian invasions of 1829 and 1877, the most skilful and industrious Armenian artisans, notably the workers in metal, left the city in the wake of the conquerors. Thus deprived at once of its trade and industries, and threatened with further aggression and political changes Erzerum has in recent times suffered greater losses than most other Turkish towns. It is also avoided by strangers, owing to its excessively severe winter climate. Lying at an altitude of 6,500 feet above the sea, in a treeless, marshy plain, its streets are blocked by snow for more than half the year. But during the summer months it presents a more inviting aspect, with its amphitheatre of mountains and snowy cones, the grassy slopes of the lower hills, and the cultivated tracts of its fertile and well watered alluvial plain.

The isolated hill crowned for centuries by the citadel of Erzerum, explains the choice made of this spot for strategical purposes. The ancient Armenian trading city of *Arzen* stood farther east. The fort of *Theodosiopolis*, erected at the beginning of the fifth century above the city of *Garin (Karin)*, also took the name of Arzen, or *Arzen-er-Rum*, that is, "Arzen of the Romans" (Byzantine Greeks), whence the modern Erzerum. Few

places have been subject to more frequent assaults than this stronghold, which was successively taken and retaken by the, Persian Sassanides, by the Arabs, Mongols, Turks, and Russians, belonging in turn to every nation except the people in whose territory it stands. According to the vicissitudes of war, the population has fluctuated enormously. Before the siege of 1829, Erzerum is said to have contained 130,000 inhabitants, who were reduced the following year to 15,000. Its only striking monuments are the picturesque gray basalt citadel, and the mosque of the "Two Minarets," covered in the Persian style with enamelled porcelain. With the exception of leather-dressing, and some metal works, the local industries have almost disappeared, and the neighbouring mines are now closed. Yet this is the traditional home of the first workers in metal, those Tibarenians and Chalybes, who forged arms, and bronze and iron instruments, at a time when their neighbours were still in the stone age.

West of Erzerum, the main route follows the banks of the Kara-su (Upper Euphrates) down to the hot springs of *Ilja*, the most frequented in Armenia, and across several populous basins alternating with narrow gorges. But for a distance of 120 miles no town of any size occurs, till the ancient city of *Erzenjan*, or *Erzingan* (*Erez*), is reached, which lies in a fertile plain watered by several small tributaries of the Euphrates. Even before the Christian era, Erez was famous as the sanctuary of the Armenian goddess, Anahid (Anaitis), who became successively the Artemis of the Greeks, the Roman Diana, and the Panagia of the Christians, when the old temple was transformed to a church of the Madonna. Before the rise of Erzerum, Erzenjan was the chief city of the Haïk country, whence the Armenians take their national name of Haïkans; and even when visited by Marco Polo it was still a large place, where were produced the finest "bouquerans" (muslins?) in the world. But it was overthrown by an earthquake in 1667, when half of the inhabitants perished in the ruins. Lying at an elevation of 4,500 feet, it enjoys a milder climate than Erzerum, and on its fertile plain are successfully cultivated the vine, melon, and other fruits of the temperate zone.

Below Erzenjan, a bluff overhanging the Euphrates, before it plunges into the profound gorges lower down, is crowned by the walled city of *Kemakh*, where the kings of Armenia at the beginning of the Christian era had their finest temples, their treasury, state prison, and tombs. But a still more remarkable place is *Eghin* or *Akin*, which stands on the right bank of the Kara-su (Euphrates) above the confluence of the Chalta-chai. Here the river is deflected from its westerly course towards the Mediterranean, and begins to describe the series of bends through which it escapes from the Armenian highlands to Mesopotamia. In this romantic region Eghin occupies one of the finest sites in Western Asia, and has become a favourite retreat for the Armenian traders who have made their fortunes in Constantinople and in the cities of the lowlands. In the tributary Chalta-chai valley the chief place is *Divrig* or *Divrighi*, which is supposed to stand on the site of the *Nicopolis*, or "City of Victory," founded to commemorate the triumph of Pompey over Mithridates. Goitre is very prevalent in these highlands, and especially in the Eghin district.

East of Erzerum the main route to Persia crosses the easy pass of *Deveh-boinu*, leading from the Euphrates to the Aras basin, and formerly fortified to protect the city against the Russians. Here is also the old fortress of *Hassan-kaleh*, now a mere collection of hovels at the foot of a hill crowned by the ruins of a fort wrongly attributed to the Genoese. Below *Hassan-kaleh* the route bifurcates near the Trans-Caucasian frontier, one branch running north-east along the course of the Aras to the town of *Khorasan*, and thence to Kars, the other winding up to the *Deli-baba* Pass and down to the valley of the Upper Murad, or Eastern Euphrates. Here are *Topra-kaleh*, almost entirely abandoned since the first Russian invasion; *Uch-Kilissa*, or the "Three Churches," a much frequented place of pilgrimage; and *Diyadin*, at the foot of an ancient fortress at the junction of the head-waters of the Murad. Near *Diyadin*, now merely a ruined caravan station, formerly stood the great city of *Zahrawan*, destroyed by the Persians in the middle of the fourth century, when it is said to have contained about 80,000 inhabitants, of whom 50,000 were Jews.

Bayazid, which lies south of the main route to Persia, and of the water-parting between the Euphrates and Urmiah basins, replaced the old Armenian city of *Pakovan*, founded in the first century of the new era. The present town, which is named after its founder, Sultan Bayazid I., forms one of the most picturesque groups of ruins in Western Asia. The steep slopes are covered with an amphitheatre of buildings, above which rise a half-ruined palace and a graceful minaret, commanded by a strong citadel. Still higher up a red marble crag streaked in white forms, with a snowy crest, a suitable background to this romantic scene. The palace, built by a Persian architect, was, till recently, the finest in the Turkish empire. Porticoes, colonnades, and walls are entirely constructed of the rich red marble from the neighbouring hill; the interlaced arabesque and foliated sculptures display marvellous taste and delicacy, combined with a sobriety of judgment rare amongst Persian artists. The mosque has been degraded to a barrack; the neighbouring buildings have been rent, and a large portion of the city levelled to the ground, by earthquakes; but the graceful minaret still maintains its equilibrium. Convalescent fever patients were formerly sent from Erivan to enjoy the benefit of the pure air of Bayazid.

South and south-west of the old lacustrine basin, where the Murad is joined by the *Sharian-chai* from the *Pasin* plateau, the course of the Upper Euphrates has not yet been entirely explored, although traversed by numerous travellers. No great caravan route runs in the direction of this upland river valley, which is inhabited by fierce and formidable Kurdish tribes. Amongst the few centres of population in this wild region, the most noteworthy are *Melezgherd* (*Manazgherd*), which supplies a great part of Armenia with salt from the *Tuzla-su*, or "Salt River," and *Mush*, capital of the Pashalik, watered by the Murad. *Mush* lies not on the river itself, but on an extensive lateral plain at the issue of a rocky gorge commanded by mountains, on which the snow lies for six months in the year. But lying 1,600 feet lower down than Erzerum, it enjoys a milder climate, in which fruit-trees and even the vine are cultivated. The ruined citadel was formerly the

residence of those Mamigonians who were governed by princes from Jenasdan that is, China - during the first centuries of the vulgar era. In the Mush district were born two illustrious Armenians: Mezrop, inventor of the Haïkan alphabet, and Moses, the historian.

After its junction with the Kara-su, which flows from a "fathomless" crater in the plain of Mush, the Murad plunges into a deep gorge, forming a cataract, from the sound of whose roaring waters the neighbouring village of *Gurgur*, or *Kurkur*, takes its name. Although already very copious, the river is not yet navigable below this point. Dashing against its rocky walls, the current here recoils in swift eddies, or descends in rapids over the reefs. At certain points the hills running athwart its course confine it to a very narrow bed between vertical walls or abrupt escarpments rising several hundred yards above the stream. Near the village of *Akrakli*, the Murad is only some twenty paces broad, and assumes the character of a regular river only after passing the town of *Palu*. But the attempts made to navigate it, from this place to the confluence of the two Euphrates, have hitherto proved unsuccessful. The current, which at *Palu* is still 2,880 feet above sea-level, is too swift for ordinary craft, which are here replaced by the *kelleks*, or rafts made of thin planks bound together with ropes and supported by inflated sheepskins. Six of these floats will carry four men over the eddies and rapids. The last bridge across the river above Hilleh is at *Palu*, which is commanded by a picturesque citadel, traditionally attributed to the hands of genii. In the neighbourhood is a cuneiform rock inscription, and the district yields the best wine in Armenia. A little farther south are the important iron-works of *Sivan-maden*, where the hills and valleys are strewn with rich blocks of black ferriferous ore. Near *Sivan-maden* the water-parting between the Tigris and Murad lies within half a mile of the latter river, whose chief northern affluent is the *Mezur-su*. Near the junction is the wretched hamlet of *Mazgherd*, in which Taylor recognises the Iranian Hormuz-ghere, or "City of Hormuz." Here formerly stood a fire-temple, whose remains, visible at a vast distance, are still venerated by the neighbouring Kizil-bash and Armenian communities.

Below the confluence of the Murad and Kara-su, the main stream is still locally known as the Murad, a name said to be derived from the numerous forts erected on the surrounding hills by Murad I. The term Frat (Euphrates) borne by the Kara-su, is not usually extended to the united waters till they reach the plain. No large town has sprung up at the confluence, and *Kyeban-maden*, which stands on the left bank a little lower down, evidently owes its origin to the recently abandoned argentiferous lead mines of the vicinity. The cliffs here at intervals confining the stream to a narrow bed, also prevent the formation of roads, so that all the caravan routes, towns, and strongholds, lie higher up on the plateaux and in the lateral valleys. In the triangular space formed by the two Euphrates, the chief place is *Chemech-gadzak*, the ancient *Hierapolis*, which is enclosed on three sides by sandstone rocks, full of formerly inhabited caverns. On the western plateaux *Arabkir*, or "Arab Conquest," lies 2 miles south of *Eski-shehr* ("Old Town") in a depression encircled by black basalt scarps. This gloomy upland recess has

been converted into a smiling garden by its industrious inhabitants, whose weavers import spun cotton from England for the local looms.

The peninsular district limited north by the Murad, west and south by the great bend of the Euphrates, is commanded by the fortified city of *Kharput* (*Karberd*), which overlooks a fertile and well cultivated plain, yielding all the fruits of the temperate zone. In the middle of this plain stands the town of *Mezereh*, known also as "New Kharput." The "Armenian College" founded at Kharput by the American missionaries, has become the chief centre of public instruction for the whole of Armenia and Kurdistan.

In the south-eastern section of the Armenian plateaux, the largest place is *Van*, which gives its name to the neighbouring lake. It stands about 2 miles from the east bank in a level plain, surrounded on the north, east and south by bare limestone hills. The city proper is enclosed on three sides by broad ditches, and a double rampart of crenelled walls flanked by towers. But the outer city, that of the *Baghlar* or "gardens," is far more extensive, stretching a long way across the fertile plain, which has given rise to the saying, "Van in this, heaven in the next world!" In summer nearly the whole population leaves the inner town for the suburban district, whose glories are mostly concealed by high walls from the passing traveller. The wine of the local vintages is light and very pleasant to the taste. The native women weave a species of goat-hair waterproof moire antique, highly esteemed even in Constantinople. The walled town, like so many other places in Kurdistan and Persia, is sometimes known as *Shemiram* or *Semiram*. In this case, however, there is historical evidence to show that, before taking the name of Van, from an Armenian king, its second founder, it was specially designated by the title of *Semiramgherd*, or "City of Semiramis." The historian, Moses of Khorene, who saw the magnificent palaces attributed to the famous queen, states that she brought from Assyria sixty architects and 42,000 workmen, who were employed for five years in the construction of those palaces and gardens which became one of the "wonders of the world." Here Semiramis chose her summer residence in order to enjoy the pure air of the highlands. Although no trace remains of the Assyrian buildings, the rock of Van, which towers in isolated majesty above the terraced houses clustering at its foot, offers none the less an inexhaustible mine of wealth to the archaeologist. This huge mass of nummulitic limestone, which is 2,000 feet long and about 100 high, comprises three main sections, all containing numerous galleries, flights of steps, crypts, and inscriptions. At all elevations the lines of cuneiform characters are visible on the bare rocky walls. Schultz, who was afterwards assassinated in Kurdistan, was the first to study them by means of a telescope erected on the top of a minaret. Rubbings were subsequently taken by Deyrolle, by means of ropes and ladders suspended in mid-air. One of the inscriptions, which, like that of Bisutun, is trilingual, relates almost in the same words the great deeds of Xerxes, son of Darius. But other far more ancient writings had long defied all efforts to interpret them, till they yielded up their secret to the patient labour of Professor Sayce und M. Guyard. Their texts, composed in Old Armenian, are no longer a mystery, and the events here recorded in marble archives

will gradually be revealed by these imperishable documents. But in the Van district there are other rock inscriptions, which still await an interpreter, for the attempt made by Sayce to find a key for their solution in the Georgian language of Trans-Caucasia cannot yet be regarded as entirely successful.

Topra-kaleh, another Assyrian stronghold, south-west of Van, has been recently explored by MM. Chantre and Barry. From the fortifications, which form three distinct systems of basalt walls and towers, a view is commanded of the vast amphitheatre of hills, and of the lake, in whose blue waters is mirrored the snow-capped cone of Seibandagh. Farther on, the town of *Akhlat* occupies a point on the lake, where the route to Mush and the Euphrates begins to ascend towards Lake Mazik. But little now remains of this formerly populous city, whose ruins are scattered amidst the surrounding gardens, and whose tombs are still to be seen hollowed out of the surrounding sandstone rocks. East of Van the town of *Erchek* overlooks the southern shore of Lake Erchek or Ertesh, beyond which runs the border range between the two empires. Here the "Cut-throat Pass," familiar to the marauding Kurds, leads down to the military station of *Kotur*, which belonged formerly to Turkey, but which, by the Treaty of Berlin, has been ceded to Persia, together with a territory some 500 square miles in extent. The last Turkish valley in this direction is the lovely plain of *Abaga*, which begins at the southern foot of the Bayazid Mountains.

From Van is visible towards the south-west the hilly islet of *Aktamar*, which was formerly a peninsula, but is now about 2,5 miles from the shore. To the Armenian kings, who long resided here, is due the church, dating from the tenth century, which stands in the middle of the island. It is the finest and richest in Turkish Armenia, and its patriarchs at one time claimed equal rank with those of Echmiadzin. In a river valley south of Van is another famous monastery, that of *Yeddi-Kilissa*, or the "Seven Churches," where young Armenians of good families are educated in a college, modelled, like the normal school of Van, on the training establishments of the West. The Armenians of this district are great travellers, thousands annually seeking employment in Constantinople and the cities along the Euxine seaboard, or visiting Bagdad, Aleppo, Vienna, Paris. The total number of emigrants was estimated at upwards of 30,000 in 1837, when the return movement averaged about 3,000.