

JOHN MACDONALD KINNEIR

Journey Through Asia Minor, Armenia, and Koordistan, in the years 1813 and 1814; with remarks on the Marches of Alexander, and retreat of Ten Thousand, London: John Murray, Albemarle-Street, 1818 (pp.343-435) .

The extracted passages from captain J.M.Kinneir's memories describe his journey through western Armenia, from Trebisond to Mardin, at the year of 1814.

DEPARTURE FROM TREBISOND, AND ARRIVAL AT ERZEROOM

5th. We departed from Trebisond at noon, and ascending the hills immediately behind the town, traversed for five miles a rough and stony road, when we descended into a narrow valley, and following the left bank of a small but rapid river, called the Mariamana su, reached at the close of the evening, and termination of fifteen miles, the hamlet of Maturage, where it was necessary to take a guard. The mountains on either side of the valley were cultivated to their summits, producing plenty of barley, flax and maize, and the cabins of the natives were perched on the steepest declivities. The river Mariamana, which at the eighth mile is joined by another stream from the S. E., and loses itself in the Black Sea a mile E. of Trebisond, is said to have its source near a neighbouring monastery of the same name, described as being a large edifice standing on the top of a mountain so difficult of access, that any person desirous of entering the building must be drawn up the side of the precipice in a basket. The aga of Maturage said, that it was inhabited by a Greek abbot and several monks, at the same time remarking, as a most wonderful circumstance, that the roof was covered with lead.

8th. It rained so heavily during the night, and the early part of the morning, that we were unable to mount before nine o'clock. We travelled, for the first three miles, in the same valley as yesterday, when we reached the ruined village of Jemishee, where the Mariamana su is joined by another stream, flowing from the S. W. Here, after having crossed the Mariamana su near the junction, we began to ascend a very steep and lofty mountain. The river was on our right hand, and, at the end of the fifth mile, we observed, from above, that it was joined by a third stream from the south. The slopes of the mountains, for the first seven miles, were cultivated; but afterwards, as we still continued ascending, the country became more woody, and the size of the trees gradually increased as we advanced. Firs and beeches were the most common trees, the former below, the latter in more lofty situations. On each hand were deep ravines with rivulets flowing through them, and, at the fifteenth mile we reached a small hamlet, called Mation, where we halted to refresh our guards and horses, fatigued with the badness of the roads and the steepness of the ascent. A short distance from Mation we lost sight of the beech-groves, and only saw a few straggling sycamores, but those also soon disappeared, and, at the eighteenth mile, we were enveloped in a thick mist, whilst

the snow lay three or four feet deep on the ground. The cold was so piercing that we were completely benumbed: the mist, or rather sleet, fell so fast as to wet us to the skin, and when, at six in the evening, we reached the summit of the mountain, (from which the Euxine is visible in a clear day,) the melting snow presented a grand and singular spectacle. From the natural heat of the ground, that which is below is the soonest to dissolve; the snow consequently forms extensive concavities, and a person might walk, for a considerable distance, under a sort of arch, down the middle of which flows a rapid torrent of muddy water. These mountains are called Koat Dag by the Turks, and are probably the same that were defended by the Colchians against the Ten Thousand.¹ As the night advanced the cold became more intense, and therefore intending to push on before the baggage, I ordered my Greek servant to follow us, but he peremptorily refused to obey, and when I asked him to deliver up my pistols, he threw off his turban and cloak, and dismounting from his horse, presented one of the pistols to my breast, threatening, in the most furious and menacing manner, to fire. I was quite unarmed, but my friend, Mr. Chavasse, the moment he had recovered from his surprize at the man's extraordinary behaviour, immediately advanced, and would have killed him on the spot had I not interfered; for although the rascal richly deserved to be punished, I was unwilling to deprive him of life. He ran towards his horse, and mounting, galloped on in front, keeping us, however, always in sight. Our guard was several miles in the rear, and the Tatar stood perfectly composed, and not in any way inclined to take a part in the fray. We now began to descend through deep ravines in the mountains, down the sides of which torrents, occasioned by the melting of the snow, rushed in all directions. At the twenty-fourth mile we crossed a rapid stream flowing N. W. and winding through several narrow defiles, reached at the twenty-eighth mile the village of Estoury, where we passed the night in a miserable cabin. The climate is here so severe, that the people are compelled to live underground, fruits do not reach perfection, and the wretched crops of barley on the steep slopes of the mountains scarcely repay the labour of the husbandman. The nature of the country in short seemed to have entirely changed; all verdure had disappeared, and instead of green fields, fine groves, and flowering shrubs, nothing was to be seen but bleak and barren mountains tipped with snow, intersected with hollow glens and frightful precipices. The villages were hid from the view; the roofs of the cottages being on a level with the ground and covered with earth, so that the path led not unfrequently over the tops of the houses.

9th. During the whole of the night I saw nothing of my servant, and Mahomed Aga, who had been ordered to take the pistols from him, refused, with his usual obstinacy, to comply. In the morning, however, the Greek, humbled and afraid, came to make his peace, but I declined hearing him, unless he first delivered up the pistols, which Mr. Chavasse endeavoured to seize by force, but was prevented by some of our guards. A scuffle instantly ensued, in which we succeeded in getting the pistols into our

¹ From the top of the great mountain, which the Colchians defended against the Ten Thousand, the Greeks reached Trebisond in two days so that the distance exactly corresponds.

possession. The guards were sulky, and threatened us, and on our descending the hills, after we had taken our departure, began to fire their carabines, with the view, I suppose, of intimidating us; but the domestic shewed signs of contrition, and sent the Tatar to us several times to demand pardon. We had mounted at eight o'clock in the morning, although our horses were so much fatigued with the journey of the preceding day, that we despaired of reaching Gemishkhana that night. The road, for the first three miles, led through a defile, and along the left bank of the torrent which we had crossed the former evening; we then turned more to the south, and, at the fifth mile, forded another stream flowing N. W. These two rivers form a junction a few miles from this spot. We now began gradually to ascend by a narrow foot path, leading through a succession of hollows and ravines, until, at the end of the mile, we gained the summit of a mountain called Korash Dag, from which we had a view of the town of Gemishkhana bearing S., distant about five miles horizontally. This mountain was so steep, and the road so bad, that we were compelled to dismount from our horses, and walk on foot for nearly an hour, when we descended into a narrow but beautiful valley, washed by the river Kharshoot, which holds a N. W. course, and enters the Euxine between Tereboli and Euloi. The whole of the valley was one continued garden of fruit trees, irrigated by canals from the river, which we crossed on a stone bridge, and then travelled, for four miles, along its banks under a shade of walnut, plum, apple, pear, almond, and quince trees. We then crossed a small stream, which here joins the Kharshoot, ascended for about half a mile, and entered the gates of Gemishkhana, an extraordinary looking town, built, amidst rocks and precipices, on the brow of the mountains. After waiting at the gate of the governor's palace for some minutes, we were conducted to a pleasant lodging, where we spread our carpets on a wooden platform, erected under the shade of the trees.

Gemishkhana, or the Silver House, is so named from a silver mine in its neighbourhood, which still continues to be worked, but does not yield a third part of the silver which it formerly did. The town is said to contain seven thousand inhabitants, of which number eleven hundred are Greeks, and seven hundred Armenians. It is embellished with five khans, two baths, four Greek churches, and an Armenian chapel; the houses rise one above another, and are better built than those in most Turkish towns. The Greeks, who are very numerous in the adjacent country, have several monasteries, filled with monks, and one, in particular, called Jeuna, a place of pilgrimage, and said to be a large and handsome edifice, richly endowed. Gemishkhana is three days journey from Kara Hissar, over stupendous mountains, only to be passed in summer. The temperature this morning, at 7 o'clock, was 57 of Fahrenheit, and yesterday, at 6 in the morning, 43.

Shortly after our arrival, the master of the house where we were lodged, and several other respectable people, came and entreated us to pardon my servant, who throwing himself at our feet, promised to conduct himself with more propriety in future. Upon the whole we thought it better to receive him again into favour, for to say the truth,

we had it not in our power to punish him, and should have been much in want of his services.

We rested a day at Gemishkhana, and on the 11th, the postmaster sent us seven horses, protesting that there were no more in his stables, although he immediately afterwards brought the others in return for a few rubas. We were, as usual, beset by about fifty people demanding buckshish, but, after rewarding all those who had been of any service to us, we put spurs to our horses, and with difficulty extricated ourselves from the clamours and imprecations of the others. We left the city by the same road we had entered it, and descending the hill recrossed the Kharshout, along the right bank of which we continued to travel, for the first four miles, through groves of fruit trees, that formed a pleasant contrast to the rocky and arid mountains on each side. The valley then became uninhabited and deficient in wood; on the right hand we had the river, and on the left steep and rugged precipices.* At the ninth mile we halted, for a few minutes, at a village called Peka, and, at the twelfth, passed the ruins of a second village, where the river is joined by another coming from the N. E. We then travelled, for four miles, through a country equally rocky and unfertile, the river being considerably diminished in size as we approached its source. At the sixteenth mile we halted, for half an hour, at the village of Boos Kela, which stands at the foot of a stupendous rock crowned by an ancient castle. We then continued our journey still up the valley, until, at the twenty-fourth mile, we quitted the river. As we had been gradually ascending the whole of the day, we gained the summit of the mountains at the twenty-fifth mile, and entered a more open country, affording excellent pasturage, and abounding in springs of good water. Neither tree nor shrub was anywhere visible, but the green meadows were strewn with tulips and a variety of herbs. At the twenty-sixth mile we descended into a plain, having a rivulet flowing parallel with the road on the right hand; at the twenty-eighth mile this is joined by another stream from the N., and the plain widening at the twenty eighth, we saw some signs of cultivation. The crops looked poor and thin, and although the corn in the vale of Gemishkhana was nearly ripe, here it was not more than three inches above the ground. At the twenty-ninth mile was the village of Booboordy, at some distance from the road on the left hand, and at the thirty-third we halted for the night at Balahare, a small place celebrated for the variety of its lilacs and poplars. The houses of this place were, as they usually are in the mountains of Armenia, built almost entirely underground; their roofs were overgrown with grass, and goats and sheep were seen grazing upon them. Notwithstanding the coldness of the night, we preferred sleeping in a large buffalo waggon to the gloomy and filthy interior of these hovels, where air is only admitted through the door, which is seldom left open; and where cows, sheep, and dogs are accommodated in the same room with the family.

* The Greeks, during the first day's march through the country of the Macronians, had on their right an eminence of difficult access, and on their left a river, into which the river that served as boundary between the two nations emptied itself. The banks of this river were covered with trees, which were not large, but grew close to one another. Does not this description answer that of the Gemishkhana river?

12th. We rose before sun-rise, nearly perished with cold, and mounting our horses, continued our journey across a table-land varied by gentle slopes. At one and a half mile we passed the stream abovementioned, greatly increased in size; it receded to the left, taking an E. S. E. course along the foot of a high range of mountains, and fifteen or sixteen miles below the bridge where we crossed, it unites with the river Tehorah. The road, for the whole of the way, led through the same sort of country; that is to say, bare and bleak, but producing a rich kind of grass, and bounded on either side by a range of lofty mountains running parallel with the road; that on the right nearly twenty miles off, and that on the left about half the distance. At the tenth mile we perceived several small villages in the plain; at the thirteenth came in sight of the castle of Byaboot; and at the sixteenth mile reached the casaban of that name, where we were received by a chief, in a house fantastically decorated with the heads and horns of deer nailed upon the walls. Byaboot is a straggling place, about a mile in length, situated on a slope on the banks of the river Tehorah, called, in former times, the Boas and Acampsis; it seems, from its position, to represent the ancient Varutha, and it is defended by a castle which has some marks of antiquity. Several of the houses are tolerably well built, and amongst some ruins we observed the vestiges of a beautiful Turkish tomb, of the same order of architecture as that of Zobeida at Bagdad. The castle occupies an insulated hill of considerable diameter, at the north end of the town, which, according to the tradition of the inhabitants, was founded by a colony of Scythians in the days of Alexander, and flourished as a large city so late as the time of the house of Seljuck.

The natives, in this part of Armenia, are a short, stout, and active race of men, remarkably dark in their complexions; they are brave and hardy, enured to cold and fatigue, and passionately fond of hunting the stag, with which the mountains abound. Those who can afford it wear the Turkish dress, and the lower orders a short jacket and wide pair of trowsers, made of brown woollen cloth, manufactured at home, and trimmed with black or red lace; a small cap or turban covers the head, and, instead of shoes, they have a wooden sandal bound with untanned leather. We found them invariably civil, and, considering that they had never seen an European before, they regarded us with very little curiosity. The winters are so severe, that all communication is said to be cut off between Byaboot and the circumjacent villages for four months of the year, in consequence of the depth of the snow. There is no wood nearer than three days' journey, and cow-dung baked in the sun, and collected during the summer months, is the only fuel which the poor can afford to purchase. Instead of walls and bastions, the town is defended by portable towers made of logs of wood. They are musket proof and of a triangular shape, having raised turrets at each angle. If required in any distant part of the country, as not unfrequently happens, they may be taken to pieces, or, if the roads will admit of it, transplanted on three little wheels. We could not help being struck with the resemblance of those machines to the moving towers of the ancients; and in so secluded a part of the world, it is probable that little alteration has

taken place in the customs of the natives for centuries. Our bearings from Trebisond were as follows: one mile and a half S. S. E., two miles and a half S. by E., two miles S., three miles S. by W., two miles and a half S. S. W., two miles and a half S. W., two miles S. W., one mile S. S. W., two miles S. W. by W., one mile S. S. W., three miles S., two miles S. S. W., two miles S. W. by S., two miles S. W., two miles S. by W., two miles S. S. E., two miles S. by E., two miles S., two miles S. by W., two miles S. S. W., two miles W. by S., one mile S. E., three miles S. S. W., one mile S., one mile S. S. W., four miles S. W., six miles S., two miles S. E., two miles S., two miles S. E., S. E., four miles E. S. E., three miles E. by S, two miles E. by N., one mile E. S. E., one mile E. N. E., two miles E. by S., one mile E. S. E., seven miles S. E., one mile E. by N., three miles and a half E. S. E., one mile and a half E. by N., four miles E. S. E., two miles E. S. E., one mile S. E., three miles E. S. E., one mile E. by S., five miles E. S. E.

13th. Byaboot is equally distant from Erzerroom and Arzingan*, and the Tehorah, although here a stream of no great magnitude, afterwards becomes one of the finest rivers in Armenia. It flows from hence to Ispira² and constituting the boundary of the territories of Trebisond and Gueria, enters the Euxine at Balxumi. An event occurred, which might probably have detained us some days at this place. The aga took a fancy to Mr. Chavasse's fowling piece, which he had seen from the window on the day of our arrival, and immediately expressed a desire to have it. He had promised that the horses should be in readiness the preceding evening, but finding that Mr. Chavasse could not be induced to part with his gun, he withheld them, under pretence that they had wandered into the mountains. The drift of his proceeding did not escape us, and we therefore wrote him a note, stating that we were resolved he should not have the fusee, and that if he detained us much longer, I would lodge a complaint against him with the pasha of Erzerroom. We heard no more of him, but the horses came, and at ten o'clock we had commenced our journey to Askela, a distance of twelve hours, or about forty-two miles. The temperature at nine P. M. was 56, at seven A. M. 50, and at mid-day 59.

We crossed the river on a bridge, and then pursued our journey up an uncultivated valley, on a sort of terrace raised along the right bank of the Tehorah. At the fourth mile the valley became contracted, the bed of the river occupied nearly the whole of it; the mountains on each side were grand and striking; but not a blade of grass, nor sign of cultivation, was any where to be seen. At the eighth mile we recrossed the river, here extremely rapid, and travelled for four miles on the left bank. At the twelfth mile we quitted the Tehorah, flowing from the E., and turning towards the S., marched along the edge of a tributary stream nearly as large as the principal branch. At the fifteenth mile passed this stream at a place where it is joined by another rivulet coming from the S., and then followed its right bank, crossing at the seventeenth a tributary rivulet from the

* This is a town about the size of Gemishkhana, and celebrated for its vines.

² Ispira, the ancient Hispiratis, is twenty-eight hours distant from Byaboot. It is said to be the richest and the hottest district in this quarter of Armenia, and produces the most delicious fruits. The city itself is inconsiderable, and only derives consequence from the wealth and number of its dependent villages.

N. We had as yet travelled through a perfect wilderness, dreary and uninhabited; but at the eighteenth mile the country became less barren, the sides of the mountains assumed a verdant appearance, and the banks of the river were covered with beech and juniper trees. The tulip, the beauty of which I had often before remarked, was everywhere conspicuous; and I saw a bush much resembling the gooseberry, with this difference, that it had no prickles, and the leaves were somewhat larger. At the twenty-sixth mile we reached the base of the Cop Dag, formerly called the Scydisses, said to be the most lofty range in Armenia, not excepting Ararat,* which, according to the information of our guides, might be seen from their summits in a clear day. We halted for an hour to refresh our horses, whose food being confined to green forage, they were unable to stand much fatigue. We had traced the river to its source; it was formed by a number of rivulets, some of which originated in the melting of the snow, but the greater proportion in the springs which were everywhere abundant. At sun-set we gained the top of the mountains, having travelled twenty-eight miles: here we enjoyed an unbounded and noble prospect of the surrounding country; a prodigious mass of mountains extended, in bold and successive ridges, far beyond the reach of the eye; the whitened summits of the more elevated ranges, opposed to the verdure of long and narrow vallies washed by foaming torrents, and the brown peaks of the less lofty hills, altogether displayed a scene of uncommon grandeur, and bore a strong similitude to the seas in a stormy day. We counted four distinct ranges running parallel with each other, in a N. E. and S. W. direction; the most northerly was that which I mentioned as being on our left hand the day we entered Byaboot; the second, and most lofty,* that on which we were standing; the third, called the Kebban Dag, bounds the plain of Erzeroom on the S. E., and the last, still farther to the south, skirts the borders of the lake of Van. These mountains are fruitful in springs, the sources of innumerable rivers; and the melting of the snows at this season of the year gives rise to many torrents which dash down the rugged steeps into the plains below. All the rivers on the north side of the Scydisses flow into the Euxine Sea, and all those on the S. are tributary to the Euphrates, which we saw bending its course to the W. in a valley beneath us. Those parts of the mountains where the snow had already melted were covered with a coarse grass, wild thyme, balm, and other aromatic plants, which, when pressed by the horses' hoofs, emitted a delightful perfume. By the time we had reached the summit our horses were completely exhausted; the night was fast closing upon us; and the nearest village being still about fifteen miles distant, we had no alternative but that of passing the night on the mountain: we found it, however, so intolerably cold immediately on the top, that we made an extraordinary effort, and walked for three miles along the edge of a torrent, which, from a small brook, became a rapid stream in the course of this short distance. Its banks were clothed with thick brushwood, the resort of lions and other ferocious

* We had been ascending ever since we quitted Trebisond.

* We were prevented from ascertaining the elevation of those mountains, in consequence of our barometers having been broken.

animals, which, as our guides informed us, descend into the plains during the night, and carry off the sheep and cattle of the peasantry. At the thirty-first mile we unloaded our horses; and having made a fire to frighten away the lions, two of which had already crossed our road, we went to sleep* until the dawn of day, when we awoke benumbed with cold, and continued gradually to descend until we arrived at Askela, the ancient Brepus. We passed several torrents rolling into the Euphrates, the banks of which we reached at the sixth mile, and for the first time since we had quitted Byaboot, perceived some detached plots of cultivated land, but the corn was not more than a couple of inches in height. Near the entrance to Askela we forded a small river coming from the N., and tributary to the Euphrates, which it joins half a mile south of the village. This is a miserable place, inhabited partly by Turks and partly by Armenians, and standing in a valley of the northern branch of the Euphrates, here called the Karasu. The houses are built in the manner so often before described, with this exception, that the scarcity of timber has compelled the natives to arch the roofs, which exhibit a number of little domes resembling lime kilns. We spread our carpet under a poplar tree, and fresh horses being brought us soon afterwards, we resumed our journey to Erzeroom, a distance of nine hours according to the Turks. Immediately on quitting Askela we crossed three streams, within a few yards of each other, all tributary to the Euphrates; the right bank of the latter being partly cultivated, and partly allotted for the feeding of cattle. At the fourth mile we crossed this fine river, which, according to the measurement I made of the bridge, was seventy paces from shore to shore: we then travelled on the left bank for nearly a mile, when we reached a spot where it forms a junction with another river of equal magnitude, the former coming from the E. N. E, and the latter running parallel with the road. The country was flat, interspersed with rising grounds, and tolerably well cultivated, until the twenty-second mile, when we entered the immense plain of Erzeroom, and passed through the village of Elija, anciently Elegia, celebrated for its natural warm baths. We then took a more southerly course, leaving the Euphrates on the left hand, and crossed, at the twenty-third mile, a tributary stream flowing from the S. W. The great plain of Erzeroom is, like all those in Persia, of inconsiderable breadth, compared with its length: it is tolerably well inhabited and cultivated; but the total absence of trees, combined with the lowness of the houses, which makes them hardly visible at a distance, presents a bleak and solitary appearance. At the twenty-fifth mile we passed the village of Giudge, and at the thirtieth entered the city which is situated at the foot of the Kebban range, and at the S. E. extremity of the plain: we traversed a number of mean and wretched streets, and at five in the evening halted at the post house, where we were shewn into a small and filthy balcony, in which we remained about an hour before the Tatar arrived with the baggage. I then dispatched him to the pasha to demand a konak; but the latter expressed a wish that we should remain all night in the post-house, promising to provide us with a lodging

* During this day's march I observed numbers of that little species of animal, the jerboa, so common in Persia. It is here of a light brown colour, somewhat larger than those I had before seen.

in the morning: we however objected to this arrangement, and the pasha, in consequence, sent for the chief of the Armenians, and ordered him to procure an apartment for us without delay. We were accordingly conducted into the quarter of the Armenians, and accommodated with a comfortable room looking into a small garden, where we soon afterwards received a visit from the pasha's physician, a Venetian adventurer, who had now turned doctor, a situation not difficult to fill in Turkey. The person to whom I now allude had, from his own account, been a shawl merchant, and appeared to be acquainted with the most remote countries of the east. He was once in the service of Sir James Mackintosh, in the capacity of butler, and in passing through Erzeroom, on his return from India, procured the situation of physician to the pasha, on a salary of four hundred piastres a month. His dress was the first thing which excited our attention, and certainly his figure and appearance were altogether so perfectly ridiculous, that it was with difficulty we could refrain from laughter. He was of a diminutive stature, hump-backed, and crook-legged, with an enormous head, and long coarse black hair, which hung over his forehead, ears, and shoulders. He wore a shabby blue coat and an embroidered vest, a pair of pantaloons made of green angora shawl, trimmed with silver thread, a pair of silk stockings that had once been white, and yellow slippers. He had a cap of orange coloured silk, trimmed with gold fringe, upon his head, and a long orange pelisse, lined with green camlet, over his coat. This genius was come with a message from the pasha, who wished to know whether it was true that Buonaparte* had been banished to a desert isle. We invited him to supper, and he afterwards entertained us with a history of his adventures.

16th. Mr. Chavasse and the doctor this day inoculated a great many children with the cow-pock, a blessing quite unknown in this part of the world, where great numbers die yearly of the small pox. When the operation was to be performed, our new acquaintance confessed his ignorance of the use of the lancet, but my friend promised to instruct him: crowds of people, old as well as young, came to be vaccinated, and, amongst others, the pasha sent all his children. The general direction of the road from Byaboot to Erzeroom was two miles E. S. E., two miles S. E. by S., one mile S. E. by E., one mile and a half E. S. E., one mile and a half S. E. by E., two miles E. by S., two miles E., one mile S. S. E., one mile S., one mile S. by E., two miles S. E., five miles S. by E., five miles S. E. by E., one mile and a half E., one mile S. E. by E., one mile and a half E. S. E., one mile and a half E. by S., one mile and a half E. S. E., five miles S. S. E., two miles E. N. E., two miles E., two miles S. E., three miles E. by N., seven miles E. N. E., one mile E. by N., two miles E., one mile E. by N., nine miles E by S.

* The natives of the east have always taken great interest in the fortunes of this extraordinary man. His name and exploits had become familiar to them: they looked upon him as the favoured of heaven; and the exaggerated statements of his power were well calculated to make a strong impression on the minds of men naturally fond of pomp and grandeur. The thinking classes of the Turks and Persians contemplated in him their future protector against the hostile intentions of Russia, and listened at first with doubt and afterwards with consternation to the reports of his defeats and rapid overthrow.

DESCRIPTION OF ERZERROOM AND ARRIVAL AT BETLIS

The pashalic of Erzerroom is one of the largest and most important governments in the Turkish empire, inferior only to Egypt, and equal to Bagdad. It extends from the boundaries of Persia and Georgia over the Lesgae and Mingrelia, to the frontier of the Russian territory, and the pasha has a superintending authority over all the begs of Koordistan as far to the south as Sert, while on the west his power is absolute to the neighbourhood of Arabkir. Ahmed, the present pasha, was governor of Ibraile when it was taken by the Russians, and for his gallant conduct on that occasion was advanced to the dignity of Grand Vizir; but being afterwards beaten by Kutusof at Rutchuck, he was deposed and sent to Erzerroom, where he has remained ever since. He is an able and accomplished man, and reported to govern his province with wisdom and liberality. Erzerroom,* known by the name of Arze to the Byzantines, is the largest city in Armenia,* situated in a fine plain about four or five miles south of the Elijak branch of the Euphrates. The houses are small and mean, in some places built of stone, and in others of mud and bricks dried in the sun; the windows being pasted with paper instead of glass. The citadel, which stands almost in the centre of the town, (or what may perhaps more properly be termed suburbs,) is three or four miles in circumference; the walls are in good repair, built in the old manner with battlements and angular towers, and formed of a grey stone, of a very durable quality, dug in the adjoining mountains. The pasha and the greatest proportion of the Turkish population reside within the walls: there are four gates, but none of them merit a particular description. The inhabitants are said to amount to fifteen thousand families of Mahomedans, three thousand seven hundred Armenians, three hundred Armenian catholics,* and three hundred and fifty Greeks. The Armenians have two churches and a metropolitan, the Catholics and Greeks each a church: there are about fifty mosques, twenty khans, seventeen public baths; and the Ula Jami, or great mosque, is said to have room for three thousand people in the aisle. In the event of any European power ever undertaking the invasion of Persia or India, there is certainly no spot east of Constantinople better calculated for assembling a large force than the plain of Erzerroom; horses and cattle are cheap and abundant, forage is everywhere to be procured in the spring and summer, and a considerable stock of corn may be collected from the neighbouring provinces. The roads are excellent at this season of the year, and well calculated for the transportation of artillery in the level parts of the country, where carts drawn by oxen are much in use with the natives. The inhabitants of the towns carry on an extensive trade with all the large cities in Turkey and Persia, particularly with Constantinople, Bagdad, and Erivan. The principal exports

* Procopius talks of Arzeneve beyond the Nymphaeus.

* We had entered Armenia on passing the lofty range of Cop Dag. I have given a short description of this kingdom in my Persian Memoir.

* None of the Armenian Catholics would allow their children to be vaccinated, as they said the pope had issued a bull prohibiting, under pro of excommunication, the use of vaccination.

are leather and copper from the mines of Mount Taurus, and the imports cotton, rice, silk, sugar, coffee, and European cloths. This city is twenty-four hours from Arsingan, forty-eight from Moosh, and thirty-six from Kars. We had several double observations for time and altitude, by which we place the town in 39° 58 N. latitude.

The greater part of the morning following our arrival was occupied in making inquiries respecting the best mode of prosecuting the remainder of our journey to Bagdad. The chief object of our wishes was to trace the retreat of the Ten Thousand; and as we understood that there were only two roads through Koordistan, the first by Paulo and Diarbekr, and the other by Betlis and Sert, we chose the latter as the most probable route of the Greeks. Both were said to be equally infested with banditti, but this did not frighten us; and as the horses of Erzeroom are famous for their size, strength and beauty, we intended to purchase three or four and take our chance of procuring others on the road. We had several brought to us in the course of the morning, but none that exactly suited our purpose; they were large and powerful, admirably calculated for cavalry or carriages, but not so capable of performing long journies as the small blood Arab horse. All animals, indeed, seemed to thrive at Erzeroom, and cows, sheep, and even dogs are larger here than in most other countries which I have visited. The latter are of the wolf breed, with shaggy hair and enormous heads, and are exceedingly fierce.

We had fixed on the morning of the 22d for our departure, but the Tatar was nowhere to be found during the greater part of the day. He had gone out the preceding evening under pretence of waiting on the pasha for our passport, but instead of going thither, he passed the night in a drunken frolic with some of his friends, and did not make his appearance until about three in the afternoon. We took horse at four, and pursued our journey over the hills at the back of the city. At the fifth mile we descended into a hollow, having a fine plain on the left hand and a high range of mountains on the right, as well as in our front. At the seventh mile we passed a torrent flowing to the N. E., and immediately afterwards the village of Neddy Khoi. At the eighth mile another small village, where the Tatar and soorajees wished to stop, being afraid, as they pretended, of travelling in the dark. We would not listen to this proposal but insisted on their proceeding, and on quitting the village began to ascend a steep ridge of mountains, down the sides of which tumbled numberless torrents fed by the melting snow. About a quarter of an hour before sun-set we gained the summit, the temperature being about 48° of Fahrenheit. We then descended a short distance, and afterwards continued our journey amongst the mountains, fording rapid streams at every instant, until midnight, when we discovered by the stars that the soorajees had lost the road. They persisted, notwithstanding, that they were right, and it was with great difficulty we could prevail upon them to stop until daylight; for they said that the mountains were haunted by robbers, and that it was therefore dangerous to halt. The cold was intense, and the ground* under foot being damp and marshy, I told my servant to bring our carpets, but

* Plutarch, in speaking of the invasion of Armenia by Lucullus, says that the corn was grown in the midst of summer, and that before the close of the autumnal equinox the weather became as severe as in the midst of winter the whole

the Tatar, who had not yet recovered from his inebriety, ordered the soorajees on no account to unload the horses; so that we were compelled to lie down on the wet grass. At sunrise, on the 23d, the thermometer was down at 36°, a hoar frost lay upon the ground, and we found ourselves close to the source of a river which we afterwards discovered to be the Araxes.* The soorajees still maintained their former opinion respecting the road, but we knew from the compass that they must be wrong, and after much difficulty forced them to take an opposite direction. We travelled almost due S. down a fertile but uncultivated valley, and along the left bank of the Araxes, which was covered with willows and tufts of wood, the resort of lions, tigers and wild boars. At the sixth mile we discovered the road which we had lost the preceding night, and at the seventh mile crossed the river at a ford near a number of beds of salt, which is procured by pumping water from wells into these beds, where it gradually evaporates, leaving a crust of salt on the ground. We shortly afterwards re-crossed the Araxes, and at the ninth mile reached the village of Tatoos, which is eight hours or about twenty-eight miles from Erzeroom. We had passed through a country affording excellent pasturage on the sides of the hills, and fertile land in the valleys, but all was waste and uncultivated; the severity of the seasons and scarcity of fuel rendering it almost uninhabitable. We halted at Tatoos for a few hours to refresh ourselves and horses, for we had not slept the night before, and on quitting the village turned a range of low hills and lost sight of the valley of Araxes, here called the Tatoos su. The road lay through a broken and uneven country, so that we were continually ascending and descending, until the ninth mile, when we regained the banks of the Araxes. This river, which at the spot where we first saw it was but a petty rivulet, had now so wonderfully increased in magnitude that it was thirty-seven paces wide, and so deep that our horses were almost swimming. At the tenth mile we halted at the village of Gournda,* the first we had seen since we left Tatoos; and afterwards following the right bank of the Araxes for nearly a mile, we turned more to the S., and left the river meandering through a plain towards the N. We travelled for seven miles over a country of the same feature as that which has just been described, and at the twentieth mile began gradually to ascend a very high range of mountains called the Teg Dag. By this time our horses were so much tired that we were under the necessity of turning them loose to graze in the fields for a few hours. The range of the Teg Dag runs in a N. E. and S. W. direction, throwing forth many branches which intersect the plain snow; glittered upon the ground at the place where we halted, although the thermometer, at three o'clock, was up at 68°; and it was five in the evening before our horses were sufficiently refreshed to allow us to proceed. We passed the Teg

country was covered with snow, the rivers were frozen, the country was woody, the paths narrow; and at night the army was compelled to encamp in damp muddy spots wet with melting snow.

* Strabo affirms, that the Euphrates and Araxes falling from Mount Abas, the one pursues a westerly and the other an easterly course, the latter, flowing towards Atropatia, turns suddenly to the N. W., and pawing Mar and afterwards Artaxata, flows through level country into the Caspian sea.

* It flows hence direct to Hassan Kela, anciently Theodosiopolis.

Dag by an opening in the range, descending at the twenty-third mile into the plain of Khinis, where we perceived some flocks of sheep and a few dwarf pear trees, the only shrubs which we had seen since our departure from Erzeroom, excepting the willows on the banks of the Araxes. At the twenty-fifth mile is the Koordish village of Ameran, near which we observed some spots of cultivated land; hence we travelled for about three hours across the plain, and at nine P. M. arrived at the large village of Ginnis or Khinis, which D'Anville supposes to be the city of Gymnias mentioned in the Retreat.* It is situated on the Binguel su, one of the principal branches of the Euphrates, formerly called the Lycus.

24th. The houses at this place are built in every way similar to those described by Xenophon, and the inhabitants, who had never seen an European before, seemed to eye us with the utmost surprize and wonder, but took no liberties. They, as well as most of the inhabitants of the adjacent villages, were Armenians; and, if we might judge from their dress and appearance, had to combat the extremes of poverty and wretchedness. Their church was surrounded by a number of uncouth tomb stones bearing the shapes of horses, elephants and cows. We mounted at nine and followed the course of the Binguel down a valley, in this part tolerably cultivated, but like all the surrounding country entirely destitute of wood. At the third mile forded the Binguel, here sixty-eight paces in width, and so rapid that the horses were nearly carried down by the stream; and, about fifty yards more in advance crossed a second river, equally deep with the former, but not more than twenty-seven paces wide.* These two rivers become united about a quarter of a mile below the spot where we passed them, and their course certainly surprized us, since the Binguel, in all the maps which I have ever met with, is made to flow invariably towards the west, but here it took a direction nearly due east. We followed its right bank until the ninth mile, when our soorajee and Tatar were desirous of spending the remainder of the day at a village called Domaun, but not obtaining our consent they were compelled to move on. Turning to the south we quitted the banks of the Binguel, and entered the mountains, ascending gradually the bed of a small stream. Between the seventeenth and eighteenth mile we arrived at the source of this rivulet, near a spot where the mountains became exceedingly steep and difficult of ascent. We were about half an hour in getting to the top of this steep part, and at the eighteenth mile stood on the summit of the lofty range of Hamur Tegh, where the snow lay several feet deep notwithstanding the thermometer was at 70° in the shade at Domaun. We saw a vast plain below us, through which the Morad or Water of Desire flowed from the N. E. in a thousand serpentine curves; on the W. and S. we beheld nothing but mountains and snow; and bearing E. S. E. distant about thirty or forty miles, the white peak of the Sepan Dag soared above the clouds that floated along its sides. This is one of the most remarkable mountains in Armenia; it hangs over the N. W.

* In five days from Gymnias the Greeks reached the holy mountain of the Theckes, from which they saw the sea; but had they marched at the rate of forty miles a day (which would have been impossible in a country covered with snow, and with an enemy to oppose them) they could not possibly have done it from Khinis.

* This river comes from the S., and has, as we were informed, its source in the adjoining mountains.

corner of the lake of Van, and is said to be so lofty that no person ever reached its summit.* We descended into the plain, and at the twenty-first mile halted at an encampment of wandering Koords, pitched on the banks of a rivulet which empties itself into the Morad. We alighted at the tent of the chief, who gave us a cordial reception, and who, instead of being an uncivilized barbarian as we expected to find him, was smooth and polished in his manners. He beckoned us to sit down, and ordered coffee to be served and dinner to be prepared. The tent was about fifty feet in length and thirty in breadth, made of coarse black woollen cloth, supported by nine small poles. The walls were made with cane bound together by twisted purple silk, and about four feet high; one end was allotted to the women, and the other to the chief, who sat on a silk cushion, having on each side long felts spread for the accommodation of the visitors. Soon after we were seated he addressed the Tatar, desiring to know what sort of a place England was, since he heard the people there were wise and made excellent cloth and pistols. Mahomed Aga, with great gravity, assured him that it was a city two hundred hours in circumference, completely filled with emeralds, rubies and all sorts of rich merchandize; an account which seemed to excite the surprize of the Koord, although he did not express a doubt of the Tatar's veracity. He then ordered his horses to be brought out for us to look at, and we afterwards sat down to dinner, which consisted of a large dish of meat, two plates of cheese, two bowls of sour milk and abundance of good bread, served up on a leather cloth.

We took our leave at five in the evening, and ascending a range of hills to the south of the tents, again descended into the plain of the Morad, when, at the end of the sixth mile, we stopped at the Armenian village of Karagool. The roads to-day were, generally speaking, tolerably good; the temperature, between ten in the morning and five in the evening, varied from 66 to 70 of Fahrenheit, and we had a slight thunder-storm towards sun-set. The country, through which we had passed, was for the most part fertile, covered with fine verdure and great quantities of wild asparagus. The inhabitants of Karagool, like most of the Armenians whom we have seen, appeared to be a rude and inhospitable race, so much so indeed, that it was not till the Tatar had applied his whip to the kia's back, that he would bring us a few measures of barley for the horses. The valley of the Morad at the western extremity of which the village of Karagool is situated, yields the finest pasturage in the world. The soil is rich and fruitful, and the climate mild, compared with what it is in general on the table-land of Armenia; but, notwithstanding these advantages, you hardly perceive a single inhabitant or even a cultivated field, these fertile meadows being now entirely abandoned to any wandering tribe which chooses to take possession of them. The Morad is seen from afar meandering from the N. E., and is joined by the Binguel,* about five miles to the N. E. of

* It rises in a cone and has every appearance of being volcanic. Quantities of opsidian are found along the border of the lake.

* It appears strange that we should have so long remained ignorant of the real course of this river. It is in all the maps which I have seen made to pursue a westerly course, and to enter the northern branch of the Euphrates instead of the Morad.

the village, where we slept. It is the most considerable of all the rivers of this country, and is supposed to be the same, which the Ten Thousand passed by the name of Phrat. It has its source under the walls of Bayazed, and forms a confluence with the northern branch of the Euphrates near Kebban in Mount Taurus. About twelve miles in a E. N. E. direction from Karagool, is a noble lake called Shello, which the people informed us was at least a day's journey in circumference. It was visible from an eminence above the village, and the water is said to be sweet and palatable.

25th. We mounted at eight in the morning and travelled about a mile and a half, when we arrived on the banks of the Morad, here nearly as broad, deep and rapid as the Tigris at Mosul. We swam the horses across, and then passed it ourselves on a raft supported by inflated sheep skins, the river was swelled, and the water troubled and muddy, occasioned by the snow torrents from the mountains. Thence we ascended a gentle slope, and travelled for eight miles over rough and stony ground full of serpents, which were about four or five feet long, of a red colour, and reported to be poisonous. At the ninth mile we descended into a cultivated district called Leese, and crossing several small streams, all of which seemed to direct their course towards the Morad, reached at the tenth mile an Armenian village of the same name. Most of the inhabitants were busily employed in the fields, ploughing and harrowing, but they seemed to possess but little knowledge of agriculture. The plough is simple, made entirely of wood and drawn by four oxen, the handle is a perpendicular staff, about two feet and a half in height, and the person who guides the plough stands on a small stage projecting behind. We had a visit, soon after our arrival, from a party of the Lesgae, composing the guard of the pasha of Moush, who was encamped in the neighbourhood, and who dispatched them with a complimentary message, intimating that he would furnish us with an escort as far as the boundaries of his government. These people are the scourge of all the neighbouring countries, being generally employed as the guards of the great men; they are mercenary troops, armed with carabines, pistols and daggers, and during the period for which they engage themselves, will serve with great fidelity, even against their nearest relations. They are of a middle stature, firmly built, of black complexions and a fierce menacing air.

Procopius gives the following account of the Euphrates and Tigris. "From a mountain of Armenia not very steep, being five miles to the north of Theodosiopolis, issue two springs, the right spring forming the Euphrates, and the left the Tigris. Tigris, without winding, goes straight on to Armida, taking in no waters by the way, and by the north side of it passes into Assyria. But the Euphrates, not running far, vanishes, not sinking underground but with a kind of miracle. Over the water lies a bog, exceeding deep and six miles long, and two miles and a half broad, wherein much reed grows, and the mud is so stiff, that to passengers it seems firm ground. Horse and foot and waggons pass upon it every day, and stir not the ground, nor discover it to be a bog. The inhabitants every year burn off the reed, that it stop not the way and sometimes a strong wind blowing, the fire pierces to the root, and discovers the rivers in a small channel and the mud in binding up again soon after, restores to the place the form it had. Hence this river runs to the country of Ecclesa, where was the temple of Dians in Tauris: whence Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter, fled with Orestes and Pylades, carrying away the image of Diana."

27th. Leese is eight hours from Moush, and the same distance from Aklat and Malazghird. The temperature this morning at eight A. M. was 64, at ten 70, and at mid-day 74. From Erzeroom to this place, the general bearings of the road were as follows: two miles E., two miles E. N. E., two miles E., one mile E. by S., one mile S. S. E., one mile S. E., half a mile S. S. E., one mile and a half S. by W., six miles S. by E., one mile and a half N. W. N.W., four miles and a half S: S. E., nine miles E three miles E. by S., one mile and a half S. S. E., three miles and a half S. by E., two miles S. S. E, fourteen miles S. E., four miles S. S. E., four miles S. E., two miles S. E., four miles E. by N., three miles and a half E. by S., one mile and a half S. by E., one mile and a half S. E., two miles and a half E. S. E., one mile and a half E. by N., two miles S. E. by S., six miles S. E. by E., two miles and a half S. by E., five miles and a half W., four miles S. W.

The pashalic of Moush is small, but it contains a great number of rich districts in addition to the towns of Moush, Betlis, and Aklat. Most of the villages are inhabited by Armenian Christians, and each parish has its church and ecclesiastic subject to the patriarch of Erzeroom; but the lower classes are in general so poor, that numbers of them, as I before incidentally remarked, emigrate into distant countries, and, after an absence of many years, return to enjoy their savings amongst their families. The women are industrious and spend a great part of their time in spinning cotton and wool. Their dress consists of a loose pair of coloured trowsers, a cloak reaching to the knees, a leathern girdle bound by a large clasp in front, and a handkerchief tied over the head and ears. The Armenians are partly subject to the Turks, and partly to the Koordish begs, but equally oppressed by both.

29th. The pasha sent for Mahomed Aga this evening, and told him that he should be obliged to send us round by the city of Van, the route of Betlis and Sert being interdicted on account of the depredations of the Koords. As he had said nothing of this before, but on the contrary stated the Betlis road to be safe, I did not place much reliance on his assertions, attributing his change of opinion to some other motive. He had before repeatedly asked the Tatar, whether we had any watches, guns, or pistols, and being no doubt disappointed at Mahomed Aga's answering in the negative, proposed sending us by Van, under the idea of forcing us to give him a present, rather than make so great a round. But in this he was again mistaken, for I had no sooner received his message, than I sent my servant, (having had reason to suspect Mahomed Aga's intriguing disposition,) desiring him to state to the pasha, in the most determined manner, that we were resolved either to go to Betlis, or return to Erzeroom. He replied, with the greatest coolness, that if such were our determination, he would order horses and a guide to attend us in the morning on our way to Betlis. The temperature at six A. M. was 58, at nine A. M. 65, and at twelve, 64.

30th. An old and uncouth looking figure, clothed in the Koordish habit, entered our apartment this morning before we were dressed; he spoke the Turkish language so ill, that it was impossible to comprehend him, but we soon discovered that he was the person commissioned by the pasha to accompany us to Betlis. He quietly sat down in

the middle of the room, and calling in some of his ragged attendants, harangued them on the necessity of conducting themselves with propriety, and ordered coffee, cheese, and some other little articles, to be packed up for the journey. There was something so good, and at the same time so ludicrous about this old Koord, that we could not help liking him, and he behaved with so much kindness towards us ever afterwards, that we had no reason to retract the good opinion which we had formed of him. We mounted at eight o'clock, and, at the end of the third mile, arrived at a village called Puink, where we drank some coffee with a beg, the chief of the district. We then travelled over a stony road gently rising from the plain, and, at the eighth mile, passed the ruins of a town and castle, situated at the foot of a range of mountains, called Bellyjon. At the ninth mile we stopped at a miserable hamlet called Altæ Bayazed to refresh our horses, and at the thirteenth, gained the summit of the mountains, whence we had a view of the Lake Nazook, probably the Arethusa of the ancients. After descending the mountains, for about one mile, we arrived on the western shore of the lake, which seemed to be about thirteen breadth of about half a mile, but appeared more open at the east end. It is deficient in romantic beauty from the entire want of wood, and has but one village upon its borders, which is named Jezira Oka, and built on a peninsula at the S. W. side. The water, which I tasted, is sweet and wholesome, and consequently applicable to all the purposes of life. We travelled along the western margin of the lake before ascending the hills on the south, and passed a small river which flows out of it, and said to be one of the sources of the Tigris. At the seventeenth mile we lost sight of the Lake Nazook, and descending from the hills into a small cultivated plain, halted for the night at the Jewish village of Mishi. Here we were cordially received, and we spread our carpets on some fresh hay in a shed in front of the aga's house, which opened on a bleak and dreary country, and commanded a view of the great Sepan Dag, bearing two points north of east. The temperature at six A. M. 52, and at the same hour in the evening 63.

July 1st. We set off at seven in the morning, and, quitting the plain after the third mile, entered upon the ascent of the high range of Nimrood Dag, (called the Niphates mountains by the ancients,) at a place where the elevation is not so great as at others. At the fourth mile we entered upon a table-land, the more lofty parts being tipped with snow, and here, for the first time, we had a distant glimpse of the lake of Van. We travelled for six miles across the table-land with the highest part of the Nimrood Dag on our right hand, until the tenth mile, when, from a small eminence, the lake burst full upon our view. This immense sheet of water is called Arssisse* by Ptolemy, a name supposed to be derived from the town of Argish or Arsis, on the northern shore of the lake. Its length from E. to W. is, I should suppose, about twenty-five or thirty miles, and its width, towards the middle, from nine to twelve; but the bays and inlets are so numerous that it is said to be upwards of ninety hours in circumference, while a vessel

* Strabo informs us that the Lake of Martiana, sometimes called the Blue Lake, from the colour of its waters, is the largest in Armenia, and extends to the borders of Atropatia. He also mentions a lake called Arsena, the waters of which were of a quality to remove stains from cloth.

can sail in four hours with a fair wind from Tedevan to Van, nearly the opposite extremities of the lake. The water is brackish, but it contains, notwithstanding, abundance of good fish: on the N. it is bounded by the huge mountain of Sepan Dag, on the W. by that of Nimrood, and to the S. by a stupendous chain called Haterash or Karaish. All these different ranges, at the time we saw them, were covered with snow; and I presume that the term Niphates was not applied to any particular ridge but to the whole of this elevated tract.* There are three islands on the lake towards the east side, on one of which stands an ancient Armenian monastery; on the N. and E. margin are the cities of Aklat (Chaleat), Argish (Arzes), and Van (Artemita), which in the Armenian language signifies a fortress; but the country on the W. and S. has a wild and solitary look.

We descended from the eminence into a valley, where we breakfasted at the Armenian village of Teyrout, about a mile from the lake, and forty hours from Van. At two P. M., when the heat was a little abated, we re-commenced our journey, and at the close of the evening had marched four hours, or fourteen miles, to Tchokar, also inhabited by Christians, and situated at the base of the last and most lofty peak of Nimrood. We had a delightful ride along the margin of the lake, and within about half a mile of the shore, the mountains descending in a gentle slope towards the water. At the second mile we saw the town of Aklat* bearing E. N. E., and distant about five miles from us: it is a casaban, containing about a thousand houses, governed by a beg, and situated about a mile from the N. W. extremity of the lake, embosomed in orchards of fruit trees. At the seventh mile is the village of Gezag on the verge of the shore; at the eighth that of Teygag, also close to the water, and surrounded by wood, which, in so bare a country, had a pleasing effect. The day was calm and excessively hot, but we found great relief in eating the snow from the sides of the hills. The lake resembled an immense mirror, reflecting the mountains on either side: we could perceive the city of Van on the opposite shore, bearing nearly due E., distant twenty-five or thirty miles,³ and at one particular place we crossed great masses of obsidian, which our guides told us had fallen from the mountains. At the twelfth mile is the village and port of Tednan, at the bottom of a bay or inlet running to the S. W., and three miles due W. of it another village amongst the hills, called Sharbas. As we approached the end of our journey, the slopes of the mountains became clothed with wild roses, intermingled with dwarf oak and pear trees: at the thirteenth mile we descended into a valley separating the range of

* Of the mountains to the south of the Euphrates, which, from Cappadocia and Commagene, extend towards the east, the first is named Tauro, and by some the Gordian Mountains, which divide the valley of Sophene and Armenia from Mesopotamia. What is termed Mount Masius, adjacent to Nisibis and Tigranocerta, afterwards assumes the name of Niphates, where we discover the sources of the Tigris. Mount Niphates, continuing to extend itself, is subsequently called Zagros, and separates Media from Babylonia. – *Strabo*.

* Aklat is a town often mentioned in the history of the wars of Armenia, and its possession was repeatedly disputed between the Greeks, Persians, and Armenians: it was taken by Jellaladeen, and retaken by Aladeen, Sultan of Roum, in whose family it remained for nearly a century, when it fell, with their other possessions, into the power of the Turks.

³ The extremities of the lake at this place ran nearly E. and W.

Nimrood from that of Haterash, a lofty chain extending from Moush along the south margin of the lake, and which entering into Persia becomes connected with the mountains of Salrund and Giroos. They sink abruptly to the water's edge, jutting out into bluff capes and head lands; their summits are barren and rocky, and capped with snow the greater part of the year, but towards the base they are less sterile, and in some places fringed with brushwood. This rugged territory is in the possession of several Koordish begs, who reside in the strong holds with all the pomp and ignorance of our ancient feudal lords, and who have hitherto maintained their independence against both the Turks and Persians. The village of Tchokar could not afford us a decent place to sleep in, so that notwithstanding the coldness of the night, we were obliged to spread our carpets on a bank under the lee of the church, a small edifice of an oblong shape, built of hewn stone, and dimly lighted by small Gothic windows.⁴ Each village has a papas, or priest, who is educated either in the convents or larger towns, and appointed by the patriarch of Erzerroom; the parishes are visited once a year by the bishops and deacons, who, under pretence of scrutinizing the conduct of their deputies, exact money from the peasantry. At Tchokar we purchased a lamb for three piastres (three shillings), in order to entertain our people after the following adventure. About half-way we had encountered a party of the Lesgae, who eyed us with a suspicious look, and seemed doubtful whether or not they might venture to attack us; they passed on, however, and soon afterwards we met some others of the same stamp, well mounted and armed, as were also the former. I was a few yards in advance, and they endeavoured to intercept me, but I avoided them; they then made a push at Mr. Chavasse, and stopped the soorajee, demanding, with a menacing air, whither we were going: they held a parley for a few moments, and one of them cocking his carabine, rode up and seized a baggage horse. The guide and his attendants were not with us; but nevertheless, when we perceived that the Lesgae had seized the baggage, we spurred our horses towards them, with our pistols in our hands: finding us prepared and determined to resist, they abandoned their prey, and turning round, fled at full gallop to call in, as we supposed, the assistance of their companions. During the whole of this scene Mahomed Aga remained absolutely in a state of stupor, with his back towards the banditti, betraying in his countenance symptoms of the most abject fear; and when Mr. Chavasse called upon him to advance, he looked at him without appearing to understand what he said. The Koord and his followers coming up soon afterwards, we pursued our journey without further molestation.

2d. We mounted this morning at six A. M., with the thermometer as high as 64. Since we left Erzerroom the climate had gradually become milder, and we had lately, during the day, felt the sun oppressively hot, although the nights were always cold. For

⁴ They have no bell, but a piece of carved wood, about two feet in length and three or four inches broad, perforated with small holes, and hanging from the roof of the church: it is struck upon by a small mallet or hammer to call the villagers to worship.

the first five miles the road ran across the valley, or rather plain, which separates the two great ranges. At the sixth mile we passed the Betlis su, near its source, and travelled the remainder of the way along its right bank, through an opening in the Haterash; at the eighth mile the village of Sahar; at the ninth crossed a small stream, forming a fine cascade on our left hand, where it meets the Betlis su, and at the tenth a third stream, joining the two former, the whole combined falling over the rocks in a succession of cataracts just before we entered the town of Betlis. The beg ordered an apartment to be prepared for us in his own house, where we should have been perfectly comfortable had we been left to ourselves; but the curiosity of the people to see us was so great, that our room was crowded with company from the moment we arrived until that on which we departed. About half an hour after we had been seated, the beg himself came to visit us: he was a tall handsome man, polite in his manners, and in all respects very different from his wild and clownish followers.

He seemed very desirous of examining our arms, but expressed great contempt for our pistols, which he said were much too short, and not sufficiently ornamented.* He had been in Egypt,* and talked of Sir Sidney Smith, and other English officers, as if he then knew them intimately. The Koords delight in arms more than any other race of men I have ever met with, and pride themselves on the beauty of their horses and value of their accoutrements. When a Koordish chief takes the field, his equipment varies but little from that of the knights in the days of chivalry; and the Saracen who fought under the great Salahadeen was probably armed in the very same manner as he who now makes war against the Persians. His breast is defended by a steel corslet, inlaid with gold and silver; whilst a small wooden shield, thickly studded with brass nails, is slung over his left shoulder when not in use. His lance is carried by his page, or squire, who is also mounted; a carbine is slung across his back; his pistols and dagger are stuck in his girdle, and a light scymitar hangs by his side: attached to the saddle, on the right, is a small case, holding three darts, each about two feet and a half in length; and on the left, at the saddle-bow, you perceive a mace, the most deadly of all his weapons: it is two feet and a half in length; sometimes embossed with gold, at others set with precious stones; and I remember to have seen one in the ancient armoury of Dresden exactly similar to those now used in Koordistan. The darts have steel points, about six inches long, and a weighty piece of iron or lead at the upper part, to give them velocity when thrown by the hand.

* These people place no value on workmanship, but invariably prefer those which are long in the barrel, and gaudy in the mounting.

* In my journeys through the different parts of the Turkish empire, I have questioned many persons who were opposed to the French during the expeditions into Egypt and Syria on the affair of Jaffa; and in justice to Buonaparte I must declare, that not one of them seemed acquainted with a circumstance which has made so much noise in Europe: making every allowance for the indifference of a people familiar with deeds of blood, we are certainly justified in considering this general ignorance of the fact as a strong presumption against its existence: since it is scarcely to be believed, that at set of such a deep and malignant die could, within a few short years, have been entirely buried in oblivion.

The bearings of the road since we quitted Leese are as follow: three miles S. S. E., three miles S. E. by E., one mile and a half S. E., one mile E. by N., one mile and a half S. E. by E., one mile and a half E. by S., two miles and a half S. E., two miles S. S. E., one mile S. S. W., one mile S. S. W , one mile S. S. E., two miles S. E., one mile S. E. by E., two miles S. S. E, three miles miles S. E. by S., six miles S. by E, three miles S. by W., two miles and a half S. W., two miles S. by W., two miles W. S. W., five miles S. W. by S., three miles S. W., two miles S. W., one mile S. S. W.

3d. The old Koord, who accompanied us from Leese, had behaved with so much attention and civility during the journey, that we thought it incumbent on us to make him a more than ordinary present; but still he was not contented, and, under pretence of treating his servants, demanded a few rubas extra, which I gave him. He returned however in the evening, and requested me to lend him ten piastres, promising to repay me in the morning; but as I well knew that the mention of repayment was a mere pretext, in order to extort more money, I pointedly refused him, adding that I was sorry I had already given him so much. Perceiving that he could make nothing of us, he bolted from the room in a rage, abusing us for infidels all the way down stairs, and mounting his horse, which had been waiting for him, set out on his return home. Interest and fear are, I believe, the only motives which can induce a Mahomedan to treat a Christian with common civility.

DESCRIPTION OF BETLIS, AND JOURNEY TO SERT

BETLIS, the capital of this part of Koordistan, is situated in the heart of the mountains of Haterash, and on the banks of two small rivers which flow into the Tigris. In form it resembles a crab, of which the castle, a fine old building, is the body, and the claws are represented by the ravines, which branch out in many different directions. The city is so ancient, that, according to the tradition of the Koords, it was founded a few years after the flood by a direct descendant of Noah: the houses are admirably built of hewn stone, flat roofed, and for the most part surrounded with gardens of apple, pear, plum, walnut and cherry trees. The streets being in general steep are difficult of access, and each house seems of itself a petty fortress, a precaution not unnecessary in this turbulent part of the world: many of them have large windows, with pointed arches like the Gothic; and the castle, which is partly inhabited and partly in ruins, seems to be a very ancient structure, erected upon an insulated and perpendicular rock, rising abruptly from a hollow in the middle of the city. It was the residence of the ancient khans or begs of Betlis, the most powerful princes in Koordistan, until ruined by family feuds. The walls are built of the same stone as the houses, and the ramparts are nearly a hundred feet in height. The city contains about thirty mosques, eight churches, four hummams, and several khans, and the population is said to amount to twelve thousand souls, of which number one half are Mahomedans, and the remainder Christians of the Armenian persuasion. The rivers are crossed by upwards of twenty bridges, each of one arch, and built of stone; the bazars are well supplied with fruits and provisions; but most other articles, such as cloth, hardware, &c., are excessively dear, and indeed not always to be procured. Merchants sometimes venture to bring goods in well-armed caravans; but the state of the country is such, that they are in constant dread of being plundered and put to death.

Apples, pears, plums, and walnuts come to perfection at Betlis; the vineyards of Coultly, a village six miles E. of the town, produce excellent wine and brandy (arrack), but the lands are principally allotted to pasture; and the natives, if we may venture an opinion from appearances, prefer the culture of fruits and vegetables to that of wheat. Their gardens are irrigated by small aqueducts or canals, which convey the water from the rivers or mountains, and I have seldom seen any illiterate people who better understand the art of hydraulics. Some of their aqueducts carry water from a distance of five or six miles; these are small trenches cut round the sides of the hills, where the level is preserved with the utmost precision, without the use of any mathematical instrument; an extraordinary circumstance, considering that the Koords are a rude, uneducated and brutal race, naturally of a fierce and contentious disposition, and who, if we except the change of their religion, have not altered their manners or character since the days of Xenophon. Betlis is nominally subject to a beg, appointed by the pasha of Moush, but the real authority is possessed by the khan of the Koords, the descendant and representative of a long line of feudal lords who were formerly the masters of all the

surrounding territory. He has, I understand, within these few years, in a certain degree become subject to the Porte, and pays it an annual tribute.

The roads since we left Leese have been very good and passable for cannon, waggons, or indeed wheel-carriages of any kind. This is, however, only the case during the summer and autumn months; for in the winter the whole country is laid under snow, the melting of which in the spring occasions such a number of torrents as to render the communication between the towns exceedingly difficult. I look upon it as impossible to make war in any part of the western Armenia during four or perhaps five months in the year: and as the retreat of the Ten Thousand has often occupied my thoughts in my journies across the sultry wilds of Irak, Arabia and the rugged mountains of Koordistan, I could never reflect without a feeling of admiration and wonder on the difficulties which that heroic body had to overcome. The march of an army for so great a distance, through such a country, with one enemy in front and another in the rear, in daily want of provisions and in the full rigour of an Armenian winter, is quite unparalleled in the annals of war; and must ever be looked upon as a memorable example of what skill and resolution are able to effect.* "The temperature at six A. M. this day was 62° of Fahrenheit, at noon 80° and at sun-set 72°.

We continued three days at Betlis, and on the morning of the 7th set out for Sert, the ancient Tigranocerta. We descended from the height on which the aga's house is situated, and, rounding the castle, passed through an old bazar, where I observed several handsome mosques and colleges neglected and fast falling to ruin. We entered one of the many ravines in which the city is situated, the houses being almost hid from the view by the luxuriant foliage of the trees. At the end of the first mile we quitted the suburbs, and, crossing the river twice successively, continued to travel on its left bank over rough and stony ground. It was a considerable time before we could clear the town, for our escort, consisting of twelve savage Koords, under no sort of controul, were continually stopping on one pretence or another, and when, at last, we had got fairly upon the road, they insisted upon mounting the baggage horses; so that in addition to their ordinary load, each of the poor animals had to carry one of these fellows. The confusion was increased by our being unable to speak to them, since not one amongst the number understood Persian or Turkish; and none of our own party knew the Koordish language. At the third mile we quitted the bank of the river, at that place about fifteen paces wide and exceedingly rapid; and turning S.S. W. followed the winding of a defile. After travelling about two miles up this ravine, with a rivulet on our right hand, we came to an open spot in the mountains; and, at the sixth mile, arrived at a small hamlet embosomed in walnut trees. Thence, without stopping, we gained the summit of a high hill, and again descending into a romantic and well cultivated valley, alighted at the end of the eighth mile at a village called Eulak. Here we halted for a couple of hours on the banks of a rivulet, and under the cool shade of a large walnut tree; for the sun was

* Plutarch tells us that Anthony, during his disastrous retreat through Armenia, repeatedly used to call out-Oh! the Ten Thousand!

scorchingly hot, and I felt myself so much indisposed that I could with difficulty sit upon my horse. The mountains in the vicinity of this village abound in marble. In the cool of the evening we again mounted and rode for a mile and a half down the valley, through cultivated fields interspersed with gardens of apple, pear, mulberry, plum and walnut trees; and on quitting this delightful spot again entered the mountains, which were covered with small oak trees, producing abundance of gall-nuts. The road wound for four miles through the mountains over a rapid succession of steep and shaggy precipices, and during this march we were more than once under the necessity of calling a halt, in order to reprimand the guard, who were perpetually straggling from the road and entering the woods with the baggage horses; no doubt with the view of carrying some of them away. I learnt afterwards that they imagined Mr. Chavasse's portmanteaus were filled with gold, and I remarked, at the time, that their attention was in particular directed towards them. At the end of the fifth mile we descended into a narrow glen, between two ranges of stupendous mountains composed of quartz and clinkstone mixed with quartz, rising almost perpendicularly on each side. Their summits were clothed with hanging oaks and white with snow. A rapid river* flowed through the centre of the valley towards the S., which, on inquiry, I afterwards found to be one of the two that flow through Betlis. We followed the course of the stream for two miles up this vale, darkened by the branches of oak, ash, apple and walnut trees; and here, for the first time since we entered Koordistan, we observed some fields of rice, watered by small canals drawn from the river. At the seventh mile we crossed a wooden bridge contiguous to the ruins of another very ancient stone bridge; and, at seven miles and a half, reached the village of Sheck Jama, a poor and miserable place, where we halted for the night. We had understood from the beg of Betlis that the guard and horses were to conduct us all the way to Sert, but on our arrival at Sheck Jama the commander of our escort informed us that his orders were immediately to return to Betlis, and that Ibrahim Aga, a chief who resided in a village two miles off, would provide for our conveyance the remainder of our journey. We had fortunately brought a written order for this Ibrahim Aga, which we lost no time in sending to him.

The thermometer at seven A. M. was at 70°, at ten 76°, at noon 79° and sun-set 74°.

8th. We received a visit from Ibrahim Aga at an early hour in the morning; he seemed, at first, disposed to give us the same guard and horses we had brought from Betlis, but afterwards changed his determination, and said, that we must wait at Sheck Jama until he could get a sufficient number of others from the adjoining villages. We were not much pleased at the idea of being detained, but our best policy was to submit in silence to our fate; and dismissing, therefore, the old guard with a handsome present,

* I have before stated that two rivers flowed through Betlis. The first is that which has its source in the Nimrood Dag, near the lake of Van, and along the banks of which we travelled the day we entered the town. This, it appears, turns suddenly to the S. E. after it has flowed through about half the town, and is the same we again crossed in the valley of Sheck Jama. The second Betlis river comes from the W., and is that which I mention as having twice crossed the day we left the city.

we endeavoured to pass the time in walking about the village and gardens. All kinds of cattle appeared to thrive admirably in this part of the country; the oxen were nearly as large as those in England, and the horses were strong, active and good-tempered; but the inhabitants, who invariably give the preference to the mares, assign as a reason that the latter support the extremes of heat and cold better than the former. I have often had occasion to remark that, after a long journey in very hot weather, mares and geldings appeared to suffer less than entire horses; a circumstance not difficult to account for, if we consider that the latter are more fretful and consequently tire themselves sooner than the former. The Arabs esteem mares for another reason, and say, that they do not neigh like the horses to betray them in the night while on their marauding expeditions. Wheat, barley and sometimes rice seem to be the only kinds of grain cultivated in Koordistan; but there is abundance of common vegetables, such as lettuce, cucumbers, cabbage, &c.

9th. The horses were brought us early in the morning, but before we were permitted even to load them, Ibrahim Aga gave me to understand that he had taken a fancy to the amber head of my pipe. Although I well knew that I should be reduced to the necessity of ultimately granting his request, I refused him at first, that the gift might afterwards appear of greater value, and after much noise and bustle we took our departure at eight o'clock, with the loss of my pipe and a hundred piastres, which I was obliged to disburse amongst the Koords. After the first half mile we began to ascend the mountains which bounded the valley on the left hand; at the second mile saw the village of Sepra, the residence of Ibrahim Aga, on the opposite side of the river, distant about two miles west, and, at the third mile, we lost sight of the river, leaving it flowing through a chasm of the mountains to the right. We continued ascending for nearly three hours, the oak trees continually increasing in magnitude as we approached the summit; the wood was so thick that it entirely protected us from the heat of the sun, and when near the top of the mountains we passed through a small encampment of wandering Koords, pitched in a hollow, and in the vicinity of a spring. These people lived on milk, cheese, and bread made from acorns; their appearance denoted extreme poverty; their hair was long and dishevelled, hanging over their face and neck, and their only covering consisted of a dirty rag tied round their loins. At the end of the third hour we arrived on the summit, from which we had a commanding prospect of the adjoining territory, exhibiting, as usual, successive ridges of craggy mountains, separated by narrow strips or glens, many of which shewed signs of cultivation, and seemed to abound in fruit trees. We descended by a road or rather foot-path, both steep and dangerous, and at the fourth hour or tenth mile, passed a village called Eurak, standing on the face of the mountains. At the eleventh we got to the bottom, and crossing a stream flowing to the W., immediately began ascending another range on the opposite side. At the thirteenth we halted at a spring to refresh our horses, by allowing them to eat the grass which grew plentifully around, and at three P. M. continued our route up the mountain. A mile and a half brought us to the top of this range, which was so steep that we were unable

to descend the opposite side, without dismounting. The descent might be about three miles in length, and the road was one of the worst I ever remember having seen. It was in one part cut out of the rock, and in part formed of huge round stones, the greater portion of which had slipped from their places, and which presenting a polished surface, made it impossible for the horses to keep their feet. At the nineteenth mile we saw, on the right hand, in a small valley, the romantic district of Tasil consisting of two villages, and extensive vineyards, spread over the declivities of the neighbouring hills. At the twentieth mile reached a small stream, and continued to travel along its west bank down a narrow valley, where the Koords were employed in reaping a few scanty crops that shewed the season to be much more advanced here than even at Betlis. Our route, for seven miles, led through the vineyards and windings of this valley, when at nightfall we entered a wretched hamlet called Tiskin. We were here compelled to sleep in the open air, no money could procure us even a drop of milk or morsel of bread, and the guard had to keep watch during the whole of the night, to prevent us from being plundered by the villagers.

10th. We arose at the dawn of day, and ascending a high mountain behind Tiskin, left the stream flowing to the west. At the third mile we descended into a tract of undulating ground, and at the fifth passed the hamlets of Tag and Tolan, the former on the right hand, the latter on the left, at a short distance from the road. At the eleventh we stopped at a large and flourishing village called Halasni, which, like the other two, had a better and cleaner appearance than any we had hitherto seen. They are built of stone and mortar, afterwards whitewashed with lime, and each house is a castle, consisting of a square tower surrounded with a wall sufficient to protect the inhabitants from the attacks of cavalry, or musket shot. At the tenth mile we entered Sert, and rode directly to the aga's house, a large fortified building surrounded by a moat, where we were stopped at the gate by the guard, who said no person was ever admitted within the walls until his arms were taken from him. Mahomed Aga therefore resigned his pistols and dagger, and was introduced into the castle, whilst we remained to be gazed at without for about ten minutes, and were then also allowed to enter. We found the chief in an open veranda, surrounded by a number of men, who beckoned us to be seated; but, observing that the place pointed out was at the lower end of the veranda, we expressed our surprize and retired to a distance. The chief laughed heartily, but intimated his satisfaction at our conduct by giving us the most honourable seat, being that next himself, and calling for pipes and coffee. He could only speak a few words of Turkish, but his moolah, who was present and understood Persian tolerably well, informed us that the direct road to Mosul by Jezira ul Omar was impassable from the depredations of the Koords, who plundered indifferently every traveller and caravan. "The hakim of Jezira," added he, is the most bloodthirsty villain of them all, and therefore recommend you to take the route of Diarbekr." This intelligence seemed to destroy at once our hopes of tracing further the retreat of the Ten Thousand, and putting an early period to our toilsome journey, but we still trusted that the chief might be

induced to grant us strong guard and the protection of his name. The inhabitants of castle gathered around us as if we had been two wild animals; they fingered and carried away whatever they saw, notwithstanding we had taken the necessary precaution of concealing every article that we thought likely to excite their cupidity. In the evening the chief mounted his horse, and, attended by twenty persons on foot, went into the fields inspect, as was his usual custom, the labours of the people. At sun-set carpets were spread on the top of the tower, and all the inmates of his house brought together evening prayers, which were said by my friend the moolah, and no sooner concluded, than they sat down dinner, consisting of large dishes of soup and pillaws, each person being seated according his rank.

11th. We were awakened in the morning by who had brought with him five or six metal watches, desiring me to examine them, and tell him if they were valuable, as they cost him much money; but without waiting my reply, he changed the conversation, and talked about the antiquity of his town, that was once most famous city in the world, and that its ruins could be traced on one side to a village called Wamur, four miles off, and to the banks of the Kabour two miles distant on the other. When he had departed, a number of invalids came to be cured of their disorders, and amongst them one of his sons, who was blind of an eye, and expected his sight to be restored to him in three days, so credulous are these people, and so exalted their ideas of the skill and acquirements of Europeans;* in short, during the whole of the period we remained at this town, we did not enjoy a moment's repose.

* Amongst other acquirements, the orientalist imagine that Europeans are in possession of the philosopher's stone, and some are not wanting amongst themselves who pretend to this gift. A few days before my arrival at Bassora, Mr. Colquhoun, the acting resident at that place, received a message from an Arabian philosopher, requesting a private interview, in order to communicate a most important secret. Mr. C. consented, and next morning the mysterious stranger was introduced to him: embracing the knees of the resident, he said that he was come to supplicate the protection of the English from the cruel and continued persecution of his countrymen, who, having understood that he had the power of transmuting the basest metals into gold, daily put him to the torture to wring his secret from him. He added, that he had just made his escape from Grane, where he had long been starved and imprisoned by the Sheck, and that he would divulge everything he knew to Mr. Colquhoun, provided he was permitted to reside in the factory. My friend agreed to receive him, and in return he faithfully promised to afford a convincing proof of his skill. He accordingly retired, and soon afterwards returned with a small crucible and chafing dish of coals, and when the former had become hot he took four small papers, containing a whitish powder, from his pocket, and asked Mr. C. to fetch him a piece of lead: the latter went into his study, and taking four pistol bullets, weighed them unknown to the alchemist: these, with the powder, he put into the crucible, and the whole was immediately in a state of fusion. After the lapse of about twenty minutes, the Arabian desired Mr. C. to take the crucible from the fire, and put it into the air to cool: the contents were then removed by Mr. C., and proved to be a piece of pure gold, of the same weight as the bullets. The gold was subsequently valued at ninety piastres in the bazar. It is not easy to imagine how a deception could have been accomplished, since the crucible remained untouched by the Arab after it had been put upon the fire; while it is, at the same time, difficult to conceive what inducement a poor Arab could have had to make an English gentleman a present of ninety piastres. Mr. C. ordered him to return the next day, which he promised to do, but in the middle of the night he was carried off by the Sheck of Grane, who, with a body of armed men, broke into his house, and put him on board a boat, which was out of sight long before daybreak. Whether this unhappy man possessed, like

DESCRIPTION OF SERT, AND JOURNEY TO MERDIN

SERT appears, both from its name and position, as well as the tradition of its inhabitants, to represent the ancient Tigranocerta, mentioned by Plutarch in the life of Lucullus: it was founded by the famous Tigranes, king of Armenia,* who called it after himself, and made it the capital of his vast dominions; it was peopled chiefly by the prisoners whom he had seized during the invasion of Syria and Cappadocia, and who returned to their native countries when liberated by Lucullus: the city, nevertheless, preserved its importance until the country was subdued by the Arabs. Sert is now a casaban, or large village, situated in a small plain surrounded on every side by high mountains, and a short distance from a river formed by the junction of the two streams which flow through Betlis, called Kabour by the Koords, and Nicephorius by the Romans.* It contains three small mosques, a college and Armenian church; and the inhabitants, who amount to about three thousand, are in part Mahomedans, and in part Christians of the Armenian, Chaldean (Chaldani), and Nestorian (Nestori) sects. The houses are built in the manner just described, when speaking of the village of Halasni, only on a scale somewhat larger, and having loop holes on the tops of the towers: the apartments are arched, and each house has a hall open at one end for the reception of visitors, and a flat roof where the inhabitants sleep in summer. There are no remarkable monuments of any kind, nor can such be expected in a country where the buildings are seldom composed of durable materials. Our attention was however attracted by several cisterns hewn out of the rock underground, and intended, not like those in Syria and Arabia, as receptacles for rain, but for spring water, which was delightfully cool, even at the hottest hour of the day.

The adjacent country is, comparatively speaking, in an improved state of culture, and the people were busily employed in collecting the harvest, which is not separated or removed from the field until thrashed, and the straw cut into chaff; a custom calculated, no doubt, to give rise to disputes where there is a division of property. But here the produce of the land belongs to the chief, and is retailed by him to his followers, whose labour he commands, and who look up to him for protection and support. These chiefs are regarded with great deference by their vassals, whom they treat with kindness, and

St. Leon, the secret of making gold, we are not called upon to determine; but the suspicion that he did so was amply sufficient to account for the unrelenting manner in which he would seem to have been persecuted by his countrymen.

* This king was totally defeated by Lucullus a few miles from the town, and probably on the banks of the Kabour. It was on this occasion that Tigranes used the following expression descriptive of the small number of his enemies. If they come as ambassadors, they are too many; but if as enemies, too few."

The Greeks who were in the city betrayed it to the Romans, by whom it was plundered. Besides other treasure, Lucullus found in it eight thousand talents of coined silver. Strabo says, that Tigranocerta, from one of the most populous cities in the world, became, in an instant, almost a desert; for Lucullus permitted the natives of Cappadocia and Cilicia to return to their own countries.

* The river Nicephorius, (says Tacitus) with a current sufficiently broad, washes a considerable part of the walls of Tigranocerta. Ann. l. 15. c. iv.

even familiarity, but their word is a law, and they have the power of life and death: they preserve a certain degree of state, seldom move from their seats without a dozen attendants, and their favourite topic of conversation is the antiquity of their families, and their long established independence, which they boast of having maintained since the days of Noah, their grand patriarch. It would indeed be no easy matter for a foreign invader to subdue a country so intersected with narrow defiles, difficult passes, and inaccessible mountains, to which the natives might fly for shelter without the danger of pursuit. Here they can subsist for months on the milk of their goats, and bread made from acorns, whilst the severity of the winter season, combined with the scarcity of forage and provisions, must compel an army to retire or divide itself, incurring, in either case, the risk of being destroyed. The Koords are without faith, and have so little respect for truth, that they systematically whenever it can, in the most trifling degree, answer their purpose: they are jealous of strangers, rude and uneducated, but full of patriotic feeling, and conceive it happy to be permitted to remain unmolested in their native mountains. They are not so strict as Turks in regard to their women, who go abroad with their faces uncovered, and do not shun the approach of the other sex; they venerate the dead, and invariably erect monuments to the memory of those who are supposed to have led a holy life. Their customary dress in this part of the province is a long robe, made of white cotton cloth; but in the neighbourhood of Betlis and Moush they manufacture a sort of striped stuff, resembling tartan. The chief of Sert is, in every sense of the word, a powerful feudal lord, and probably not very different from some of our dukes and earls six or seven hundred years ago.

12th. I endeavoured to prevail on him to grant us a strong guard to go to Jezira, which was but sixteen hours distant, whereas the road to Diarbekr, or even Merdin, was a circuit of at least six or seven days' journey; but he was deaf to my entreaties, and said he could not think of risking the lives of his followers in so hazardous an undertaking; that he would give us letters to his friends on the route to Merdin, and that horses were ready for us when we were sufficiently refreshed to begin our journey. We had no reason to doubt the sincerity of this man, as will appear in the sequel, and therefore, resolving to follow his advice, departed at noon, and having travelled about three miles through the plain of Sert, began to ascend a range of mountains which bound it on the south. At the fourth mile was the district of Shirvan, consisting of two villages: at the sixth, the top of the range from which we saw the Kabour coming from the north, and winding through the mountains: it crosses the plain of Sert, four miles from the town, and is, no doubt, the river of the Centrites, which the Ten Thousand found so much difficulty in passing, and which Xenophon represents as separating the Carduchi from Armenia, as being two hundred feet broad, and only fordable in one place. The Kabour was, I should guess, nearly eighty yards wide, very rapid, and certainly not fordable anywhere near the spot where we crossed it; but all the rivers of the east vary so much in size at different times of the year, as greatly to mislead those who are not aware of this circumstance; they swell in consequence of the melting of the

snow, at the end of March or early in April, and commence gradually to fall from the beginning of June to the end of July. Having reached the foot of the range at the termination of the tenth mile, we took shelter from the sun in a grove of oak on the banks of the Kabour, where the thermometer, under the shade of the trees, was up at 100, and where we remained until the heat had sufficiently subsided to enable us to continue our journey along the left bank of the river, which we passed at the twelfth mile, over an old stone bridge of five arches: we soon afterwards entered a succession of bleak and barren hills, intersected with gloomy defiles, the scene of many a murder, according to our guides, who indeed intimated that all the natives of the country might be looked upon as robbers, provided they could commit such acts without the fear of resistance. At the nineteenth mile we arrived at a place called Ooshu, consisting of a large castle, situated on an eminence, and surrounded by a number of mud huts. It was night before we reached this place, but the moon shone bright, and the long figures of the Koords, dressed in white from head to foot, were seen gliding along the battlements. We knocked at the gate, which was opened by five or six persons, who introduced us into an outer court, whilst our Tatar held a parley with the chief, who spoke to him from the top of the great tower or keep, as it is called in our old castles. He ordered his people to conduct us to the roof of the gate, where we slept soundly until morning; and on quitting his habitation the servants, for the first time since we left Constantinople, refused to accept of any present.

13th. We followed a path leading through, an undulating country, producing excellent crops of wheat and barley, and bounded on the left by a lofty chain of mountains. At the fourth mile is the district of Herbo Peri, consisting of several villages, possessed by a sect called Yezidee, who worship or rather deprecate the devil; and at the tenth we reached the castle of Redwan, a building similar to that of Ooshu, and the residence of a Yezidee chief: it stands on a rock overlooking the Erzen branch of the Tigris, and is surrounded by about a hundred huts, inhabited by Yezidees, Armenians and Chaldeans. The chief was himself absent; but we met with a kind reception from his brother, who conducted us into a large open shed, formed of the green leaves and branches of trees, replaced every second or third day, and erected outside of the castle. We were seated but a few minutes in this rural hall, when the whole village assembled to look at us, but our host, in a commanding tone, which shewed that he was accustomed to be obeyed, forbade them to molest us. Amongst the attendants I remarked an Armenian who was particularly civil to us, and who seemed to possess a good deal of local information, as well as the entire confidence of his master; for the Yezidees live in enmity with the Christians. This strange sect take their name from the Arabian general, who put the sons of Ali to death; they have places of worship, but in regard to the nature of their devotions, I could alone ascertain that they respect, or rather dread, the power of the evil spirit, whose name cannot be mentioned in their presence without exciting an indescribable sensation of horror. The tomb of their founder, Sheck Aad, is still shewn at Mosul; and although their principal resort is in the

mountains of Sinjar, they are also scattered over this part of Koordistan,* and entertain an hereditary antipathy to the mussulmen, by whom their sect has suffered many bloody persecutions: they are a brave and active race of men, drink wine and other strong liquors, and although cruel from education and principle, yet more tolerant on points of religion, and free from many of the narrow prejudices of their neighbours.

We were requested by the Armenian, on no account to spit in their presence, since, if he told the truth, we could not offer them a greater insult. A short time after our arrival, a younger brother of the chief came into the room, whose rudeness equalled the civility of the other: he walked over our carpets without pulling off his boots, sat down upon our cushions without being invited, and frequently looking us directly in the face, burst into loud and repeated peals of laughter.

Fresh horses were brought us about two o'clock; but some dispute having arisen regarding the baggage, my Italian servant cocked one of his pistols, and threatened to shoot some of the attendants, so between the violence of his temper, and the fierce independent spirit of the Yezidees, I was fearful something unpleasant might occur, and therefore endeavoured to preserve peace; but this was unnecessary, for they treated him with great contempt, and by way of punishment, made him ride without a saddle to the end of the stage. We mounted at three P. M., with the thermometer at 98, and descended to the bank of the river, which we forded. The source of this branch of the Tigris is reported to be at a place called Susan, a little to the north of Betlis; it followed a S. E. course; was about sixty yards wide, but did not take our horses much above the knees. We travelled for two miles and a half along the banks of the river, and then halted at a village called Givers, to enable our polite host, who had accompanied us, to collect a body of horse to escort us on our journey. We then traversed a country rich in grain, gently ascending the slopes which led to the summit of the range on our left hand; and when nearly half-way up the hill, the Yezidee sent his friend, the Armenian, to demand buckshish, saying that, as he was about to return home, he hoped that we would give him something handsome as a token of remembrance. We gave him fifteen gold rubas, with which he seemed satisfied, and departed, leaving us at the mercy of about a dozen armed ruffians. He would not, however, receive the money at first, but told the Tatar to give it to the Armenian, from whom I afterwards observed him take it when he thought he was not observed. Shortly afterwards the Armenian came up close to me, and complaining bitterly that his master had not left him a single piastre, took a purse from his pocket, the mouth of which he opened towards me in such a manner that no person, with the exception of myself, could perceive it, and significantly pointing towards it, expressed a desire that it might be filled; but when I declined complying with this moderate demand, he suddenly changed his tone, and became as impertinent as he had before been troublesome with his attentions. At the sixth mile we arrived at a spot where several families of Koords were residing in caves cut out of the side of the

* I was told that there are ten thousand families of them between Erzen and Jezira. The former is an ancient town, formerly called Thospia, situated in the vicinity of a lake eight hours from Redwan.

mountains. At the ninth mile we gained the summit of the mountain, which branched out to the right and left, and at last opened into the table land of Diarbekr. At the thirteenth mile descended by a gentle slope into the plain, which was covered with luxuriant crops of wheat and barley, and where the people, who were employed in reaping, came to us as we passed with handfuls of grain, requesting the present of a few piastres to enable them to keep the harvest. Almost the whole of the corn consumed by the inhabitants of Diarbekr is grown in this noble plain, which is about forty hours, or probably one hundred and twenty miles in length, and of a soil capable, as I was informed, of yielding two crops in the year. At the eighteenth mile passed the castle and village of Bashboot, situated under a low range of mountains running parallel with our route, and distant about two miles on the right hand. Here the roads, which ever since we had quitted Betlis might be considered as all but impassable, began to improve, and as we advanced into the flat became excellent. At the twentieth mile we got to the end of the stage, and stopped at a Chaldean village named Kiverzo, about four miles from which the kin, or lieutenant, of the pasha of Diarbekr was encamped, with an army of two thousand men, near a church which he had besieged for several months. We had not been seated half an hour, when a deputation of the principal inhabitants waited upon us to entreat that we would use our influence with the kia to save the church from being burnt, as it was, they said, an ancient and holy edifice. In reply to our question regarding the cause of the dispute, they stated that the pasha had demanded a larger sum from the natives of the village of Mercuri, where the church is situated, than they could afford to pay, and had thus driven these poor people, amounting to about three hundred Chaldeans and Armenians, into revolt. We promised to speak to the kia, but I had no hopes that anything we could say would have any effect. The temperature at three P. M. this day 100, and at sun-set 80. Some few miles before we reached the village, one of our guards, observing a stray sheep under the protection of a dog, made towards it, and, in the most dexterous manner, lifted it upon his horse without dismounting, whilst his manner of shifting it from one side of the horse to the other as any person approached him, shewed that such exploits were familiar to this promising youth. He and his companions then retired to a remote corner of the meadow, with the intention, no doubt, of supping on their prey, but I heard no more of them until the morning, when they sent a message to demand a present.

14th. The promise I had made the Armenians, to petition the kia in the behalf of their friends made them alert in bringing us horses in the morning. We were mounted and on the road at six A. M., and, in the course of an hour and a half, reached the Turkish camp, pitched about three quarters of a mile from the church, a quadrangular building, situated on the declivity of a hill which so completely commanded it, that it might have been taken in half an hour with the aid of a single field piece. The siege had, however, continued upwards of two months; not a man had been wounded on either side, and the Turkish camp, for confusion and irregularity, resembled more a country fair in England, than an encampment of soldiers in the face of an enemy. Mahomed

Aga, who was extremely anxious to go to Diarbekr, instead of taking the more direct route to Merdin, had gone on before to tell his own story to the kia; and on our arrival we were met by the byrakdar, or standard bearer, who informed us from his master that horses were ready to carry us to the former. I asked him the distance of Merdin and Diarbekr from the camp, to which he replied that they were each about thirty hours, and that both roads were equally safe. As therefore we had eventually to go to Merdin, I thought we might as well proceed thither at once, as make a round of eighteen hours (the distance between the two cities) merely to humour our Tatar* and I accordingly requested an audience of the kia,* to whom we were shortly afterwards introduced. We beheld an emaciated figure about forty years of age, reclining on a sort of portable wooden sofa, ornamented with yellow velvet fringed with gold: the tent was filled with people, but a place was reserved for us on the right hand of the kia, who appeared to be in a wretched state of health, and asked us for medicine. When we intimated our desire of going to Merdin instead of Diarbekr, he expressed his surprize and said that our Tatar had informed him, that we particularly wished to go and see the latter added "I advise you to go the more direct road, and will send my byrakdar to take care of you." We then took our leave, and mounting the horses that had been prepared for us, quitted the camp, after a fruitless effort to arrange the dispute between him and the villagers.

When we had gone about a mile, a person passed us at full speed, saying, that the garrison had made a sally from the church, and, on looking round, we perceived that there was great confusion in the camp, some firing their carabines and muskets in the air, and others riding furiously in different directions. This army had neither piquet nor outpost of any description, nor did they even take the trouble of surrounding the church; so that the besieged, as we were informed, came out every day for their provisions and water. We travelled for five miles through fields of wheat and barley, and stopped at a village called Tilmuz, where we were to change horses. On the right we had a range of hills running parallel with the road, at the foot of which flowed one of the branches of the Tigris, formerly called the Nymphaeus, and on the left, distant about eight miles, another range of high hills which we gradually approached. At Tilmuz the heat was excessive, and we were much troubled by the impertinent curiosity of the Koords, who thrust themselves into our room in such numbers, that we were afraid of being stifled. I had before remarked, that although it was the middle of harvest, the villages were crowded with men at all hours of the day, notwithstanding that each person, who chose to work, received, as the price of his labour, twenty-four paras, or about seven pence per diem, and as much bread, cheese, and milk, as he could consume.

We quitted Tilmuz at three in the afternoon, when the thermometer was at 96, and at eight in the evening reached the mud village of Gerizlar, where we were accommodated on the top of a house. We passed, about half way, the hamlet of Teppa,

* His object of going to Diarbekr was to purchase a sort of chintz manufactured at that place, which he might sell for a considerable profit at Bagdad.

* The kia is next in rank to the pasha.

three quarters of a mile from the road on the right hand; the hills, in this quarter, had now gradually sunk into the plain, and there was a gentle slope towards the Batman su, which flowed about four miles distant from the road. Gerizlar was inhabited by Christians of the Chaldean and Nestorian sects, who treated us with much attention and kindness. The evening was delightful, and it was pleasant to see all the inhabitants of the village, men, women, and children, enjoying themselves on the tops of their respective houses, which were all upon a level with each other. The men lay extended on their carpets smoking their long pipes; the women were either employed in suckling their infants or in pounding corn; children were squalling in one quarter, and dogs barking in another; whilst the melancholy but incessant croaking of the storks perched upon the chimney tops, formed altogether an interesting and animated picture of an oriental village. The stork, which is regarded by the natives of the east as sacred, makes its appearance in the spring, lays its eggs and hatches its young; it departs in August or September, and is said to winter in the Abyssinian deserts. I have repeatedly seen this bird disgorge large rats and other animals perfectly undigested.

15th. We departed at eight in the morning, and travelled for five miles over the low range which we had been gradually approaching on the left; it then rapidly descended to the village of Osman Khoi, situated about a quarter of a mile below the confluence of the Batman su,* and the Diarbekr branch of the Tigris. This village was built on the declivity of a rocky mountain, where I observed a great number of artificial excavations, many of which were capacious, lighted by regular doors and windows, and adorned with well-proportioned pillars. They are used as habitations in the winter, as stables and sheep folds in the summer, and although they are very numerous all over Koordistan, none of them are the work of time. The chief of this place, a person of some consideration, having eight or ten villages under him, received us with great seeming reluctance, and, supposing that we did not understand him, abused the guide for bringing Feringi Gours to his house. He became somewhat more tractable, however, when the standard-bearer told him that his master desired we might be treated with attention; he offered us coffee, and calling for his horse and arms, said he would himself accompany us to Byram Khoi, on the opposite bank of the Tigris. He conducted us about a mile up the left bank of the Batman su, when he ordered his attendants to strip and prepare to pass the river; he allotted two men to each horse to prevent accidents, as the stream was deep and rapid, and there were doubts whether or not the cattle could pass without swimming. I certainly expected more than once to have been carried away by the force of the current, and this was actually the case with one of our escort, who was compelled to abandon his horse. We crossed the river half a mile above its junction, at a spot where it was one hundred and twenty yards in breadth, although it was then said to be very low, compared to what it had been a fortnight before. Having reached in safety the opposite shore, we traversed a sandy flat overgrown with fern, so

* Some of the Turks call it the Bulespena or Barima river, and D'Anville supposes that this is the Tigris of Pliny, and the same whose sources were seen by the Ten Thousand.

high that it hid the horses from the view, and, at the end of half a mile, reached the Diarbekr branch, a stream nearly of the same width, but not so deep as the Batman su. We consequently forded it without difficulty, and entered the plain of Mesopotamia and the district of Byram Khoi, consisting of thirty villages under Beker Aga, Koordish chief. We halted at a small village, where, with the utmost exertion, we procured a cup of milk, but no horses were to be found, and our baggage was therefore conveyed, by four miserable asses, to a village called Murza, six miles farther. The road led through an undulating productive country: on the left, distant about nine miles, was a low range of hills, but on the right the plain extended beyond the view. At Murza they refused even to give us asses, and set at defiance the threats of the byrakdar, who went in search of some great personage to an adjoining village. We, in the mean time, made acquaintance with a delhi bashi, or trooper, belonging to Beker Aga, who happened to be in the village, and through his influence, with the aid of a few rubas, we were enabled to march six miles more, to a village called Mathra, where, an hour after sun-set, the thermometer was at 85.

16th. We departed, at six in the morning, with the thermometer at 70. Shortly after quitting the village, we ascended a low range of hills which broke off to the right, and travelling through a cultivated country, reached Kian Khoi, the residence of Beker Aga, at the end of the seventh mile. We were shewn into a long and dismal chamber lighted only by one small window, where, fatigued with the heat of the weather, and want of sleep the preceding night, we hoped to have a few moments of repose, but this hope was vain; since we had been scarcely seated before the chief entered with about thirty of his followers, and, harassed as we were, we had to undergo the usual penalty of shewing our arms, watches, &c. The watches and seals he did not fail to covet, but the short and plain English pistols were rejected with disdain. One of my seals, a Kairngorum, caught the eye of Beker Aga, who instantly imagined that it must be a diamond, and desired to have it. But I assured him that it was no diamond, and observed, if it had been one, I should not have been so imprudent as to wear it in public whilst travelling through his territories. He smiled, and putting his hand into his bosom, took from thence a small parcel, and opening ten or twelve different folds of paper, handed us an old drop of a chandelier, demanding to know its value, as he said he had taken it in pledge for a large sum of money. Not to put him out of conceit with his treasure, we told him it was a jewel of inestimable value, upon which he again folded it carefully up and returned it to his bosom.* Before half an hour had elapsed, the room became so insupportably hot, and the air so oppressive, that we entreated him to order some of his people to retire, but he answered, that they accompanied him wherever he went, and that, if we were tired of his society, he would leave us to shift for ourselves. He paid little or no respect to the byrakdar, said that he never condescended to read fermauns, and that if the kia had not been so near him with an army, he would have

* This is rather an extraordinary circumstance, since the natives of the East are in general excellent judges of precious stones.

stood in no sort of ceremony in appropriating to his own use any thing we possessed. Compelled by necessity to bear with him, we spent the greater part of the day in a state of absolute misery, and finding the standard-bearer of no manner of use to us, we gave him a present and dismissed him. After much entreaty, and the promise of a reward to some of the attendants, five mules were brought to us towards the close of the evening, but the chief swore we should have no more, and that he would make the Tatar and servants ride on the top of the baggage. They at first refused to suffer so great an indignity, but were in the sequel glad to submit, for this boisterous ruffian threatened to put them to death, and ordered the mules to be taken away. We at last contrived to pacify him, and he sent a horseman with orders to accompany us as far as Merdin. From Sert to Kian Khoi the country is rich in flax and corn, and totally devoid of wood or fruit trees, but at Byram Khoi the country had already changed its nature, and we soon afterwards entered the rugged chain of Mount Masius, interspersed with vineyards, and covered with a small bush similar to the sloe. At the eighth mile we descended from the mountains into a narrow valley; it was past eleven o'clock, and the moon shining with uncommon splendour, enabled us to perceive, at some distance up the dell, the high walls of the castle of Houseena built upon a rock, and the residence of Ibrahim Effendi, a powerful chief. After riding round the walls of this large and lofty edifice, we entered the gate, and passing under the Gothic arches of a ruined building, dismounted in the lower court, whence we were conducted up a flight of steps hewn out of the rock, and crossing another court, ascended a wooden platform or stage spread with carpets and cushions, where several people were preparing to go to rest. We were extremely fatigued, and, after a slight repast, also went to sleep, glad of the opportunity of enjoying a few moments repose.

17th. The effendi having prepared horses for us in the morning, we departed from his castle at eight o'clock, and, at four in the evening, entered with joyful hearts the gates of Merdin, after a journey of seven hours or about twenty-four miles. For six miles our route lay up the valley of Houseena, and along the banks of a small river, which separates the pashalics of Bagdad and Diarbekr. The hills were covered with vineyards, and the bottom of the valley with orchards and gardens of apricot, peach, mulberry and walnut trees. At the seventh mile we quitted the valley, and turning more to the S. pursued our course over a rough and stony road, and when nearly half way we discharged the horseman given us by Beker Aga, with what we conceived to be a handsome reward for his services. But he was nevertheless dissatisfied, and imagining he could frighten us, placed his lance in the rest, and, pointing it to my breast, demanded buckshish in a threatening tone of voice. I avoided him by turning my horse on one side, and, cocking a pistol, threatened to shoot him if he moved. This had an instantaneous effect, he drew back apparently much disconcerted, and carefully avoided coming near me afterwards, although he had nothing to dread from Mahomed Aga, who, as usual, remained a tranquil spectator, satisfied that it was dangerous to quarrel with the Koords. On passing the summit of a hill, at the eighteenth mile, the town

and castle of Merdin opened to the view, and we immediately afterwards descended, by a steep and narrow path bordered by vineyards, into a rocky valley, which separated the range we had just quitted, from that on which the city is situated. Here the effendi's son, who had accompanied us from Houseena, sent to demand a present, as he said he was fearful of entering the city walls, in consequence of having murdered one of the inhabitants some time before.* The other man also came, and in the most humble manner entreated the Tatar to intercede for him; wherefore, taking into consideration the distance he had come with us, I ordered the servant to give him something more, and both together shortly afterwards disappeared amongst the mountains. These people have an idea that Englishmen are laden with gold, and invariably make a point of extorting as much as they can get. At the twenty second mile we began to ascend the rocky mountain on which the city stands, and after many turnings and windings entered the gate. We took up our quarters with my old friend the archbishop, who gave us a kind and most hospitable reception.

How delightful did this evening appear after the bustle and fatigues we had lately undergone! We now looked upon all our troubles as over, and little imagined that the worst were yet to come. In momentary dread of being assassinated, either by banditti or our guards whilst on the road, and pestered in the villages with the importunities of the natives, we might safely assert that from the moment we had quitted Trebisond, until that of our arrival at Merdin, we had been in a perpetual state of disquietude and alarm. The terrace, on the archbishop's house, where we were seated, commanded an extensive view of the vast plain of Mesopotamia, once crowded with cities and villages, but now a dreary waste abandoned to the wandering Arabs, who sometimes pitch their flying camps amidst the remains of many of those cities.

At Ras ul ain, the ancient Resena, eighteen hours S. W. of Merdin, our host saw the ruins of a magnificent temple; eight or ten beautiful marble columns lay overturned in the sand; and the Arabs informed him that there were many more underground. This place takes its name from the source of the Kabour, the ancient Chaboras, which is close to the village, and is, according to my friend's account, a noble spring rising from the earth with prodigious force, and forming a considerable stream even at the fountain head. Five hours S. by W. of Merdin is a village called Cofurtoot, where he perceived the ruins of an ancient city, and amongst other remnants a noble bridge almost entire. Yengi Shehr, a village twenty hours hence, and five from Haran, also displays a fine arch and many other vestiges of former grandeur. Of the famous city of Haran little or nothing remains. Nicephorium, now called Racca, has been visited by the archbishop, who represents it as a considerable place chiefly inhabited by Arabs, and containing some handsome ruins. Of Dara and Nisibis I shall speak more at large hereafter. The land, in the vicinity of Merdin, is said to be so fertile, that, without culture, it will produce four and five hundred fold: and three hours W. of the city is a village called Kela Bin, or

* Such atrocities may give the reader some idea of the state of the Turkish government at present in these parts, where the power of the pasha is in general continued to the place of his residence.

the thousand fold, so named from the richness of the land in its vicinity. The earth, when pressed in the hand, feels as if mixed with oil, and it appeared to me to be the same sort of soil as that in the plain of Antioch. From Sert to Merdin the bearings of the road were as follows: three miles and a half W., two miles S. W., five miles S. S. W., one mile and a half S. E. by S., one mile S. S. W., three miles and a half S. W., six miles W. by S.-one mile W. by N., two miles N. W., three miles and a half W. S. W., three miles and a half W. by S.-two miles W. N. W., three miles S. W. by S., one mile W. N. W., two miles W. by N., one mile W. by S., two miles W., two miles W. by N., two miles W. N.W., three miles N. W., two miles N. W. by W. four miles N. W. by N., three miles W. S. W., two miles S. W. by W. two miles and a half W. by N., two miles and a half W. N. W., three miles W. by S., one mile S. W. by W., two miles S. W., one mile and a half S. by E., one mile S. S. W., one mile W. S. W., two miles S. S. W., one mile S. S. W., eight miles S. W., four miles S. W., one mile S. S. W. one mile S. W. by S., one mile S. W., one mile W. by S., three miles S. S. W., three miles S., one mile W.-one mile S. W., half a mile S., one mile and a half S. S. E., two miles S., one mile W., two miles S. S. E., two miles S., six miles S. W., one mile S. E., two miles S. E. by E., six miles S. S. W.

18th. Our host presented us this morning with some beautiful gems, and several medals of Seleucus Nicator, found in an urn lately dug up by a peasant of Mount Thor, whilst ploughing in a field. A few of the coins had been saved by the archbishop, but by far the greater part of them had been melted down. The temperature at seven A. M. was 60, at noon 80, and at sun-set 70.

I have given, in a former work, a description of the town of Merdin, the old Roman position of Marde. It is situated on the south side of a steep and rocky mountain, the summit of which is crowned with a citadel now in ruins; the town is surrounded by a stone wall about two miles and a half in circumference, which, commencing at the castle, is carried round the face of the hill, in the shape of a half moon. The houses are well built for a Turkish town, and most of them are very ancient. The governor has the rank of Waiwode, and is appointed by the pasha of Bagdad. The inhabitants are a mixture of Turks, Arabs, Chaldeans, Nestorians, Catholics, Armenians, Jews and Jacobites. There are also, I understand, about a hundred families of Guebres or worshippers of fire, who hold their mysteries a profound secret, and expose their dead on the top of a tower to be torn by vultures as at Bombay, Yezd, &c.

I wrote to the mutesellim this morning, requesting him to give us post-horses to go to Nisibin; in the evening I received his answer, stating that we should have them in the course of a few days, but advising us to wait for a caravan, as the passage of the desert between Nisibin and Mosul was attended with much danger, in consequence of the depredations of the Yezidees of Sinjar. This daring community are said to amount to upwards of two millions of souls, and have, within these few years past, grown into such power as to threaten the adjacent territory with subjection. They dwell in villages, or rather subterraneous caverns, excavated in the sides of the mountains of Sinjar, a lofty range which intersects the plain of Mesopotamia to the S. E. of Merdin; and where they

were originally compelled to seek refuge from the sanguinary persecutions of the Mahomedans, against whom they wage a cruel and incessant warfare. The soil is sufficiently fertile to render them independent of foreign supplies; the mountains every where abound in excel lent water and pasture land, while the apricots, peaches, grapes and figs of Sinjar are acknowledged to be the most delicious in Irak Arabi. I could learn but little of the customs or religious rites of the Yezidees, who, like most nations in the East, are divided into tribes or families, governed by Shecks, who possess both the spiritual and temporal power, and are firmly united in one common bond of union for the preservation of their liberty and independence. In the side of a great mountain called Abdul Azeez, thirty hours S. by E. of Merdin, is a deep cavern, where, on a certain day in the year, they make their offerings to the devil by throwing jewels or pieces of gold and silver into the abyss, which is said to be so deep that no line ever reached the bottom and supposed to lead into the infernal regions. They dress in the same manner as the Turks; their force consists of bodies of irregular cavalry armed with long lances, swords and pistols; their horses are excellent and capable of supporting great fatigue; and in their plundering expeditions, they either murder those whom they attack, or strip them of the whole of their property, and leave them to perish in the desert.

19th. The temperature at six in the morning was 70, at ten A. M. 84, at noon 96, at three P. M. and at sunset 86. We received an order from the mutesellim, who had gone out the day before at the head of a body of horse to clear the road to Diarbekr of the banditti by which it has been for some time past infested.