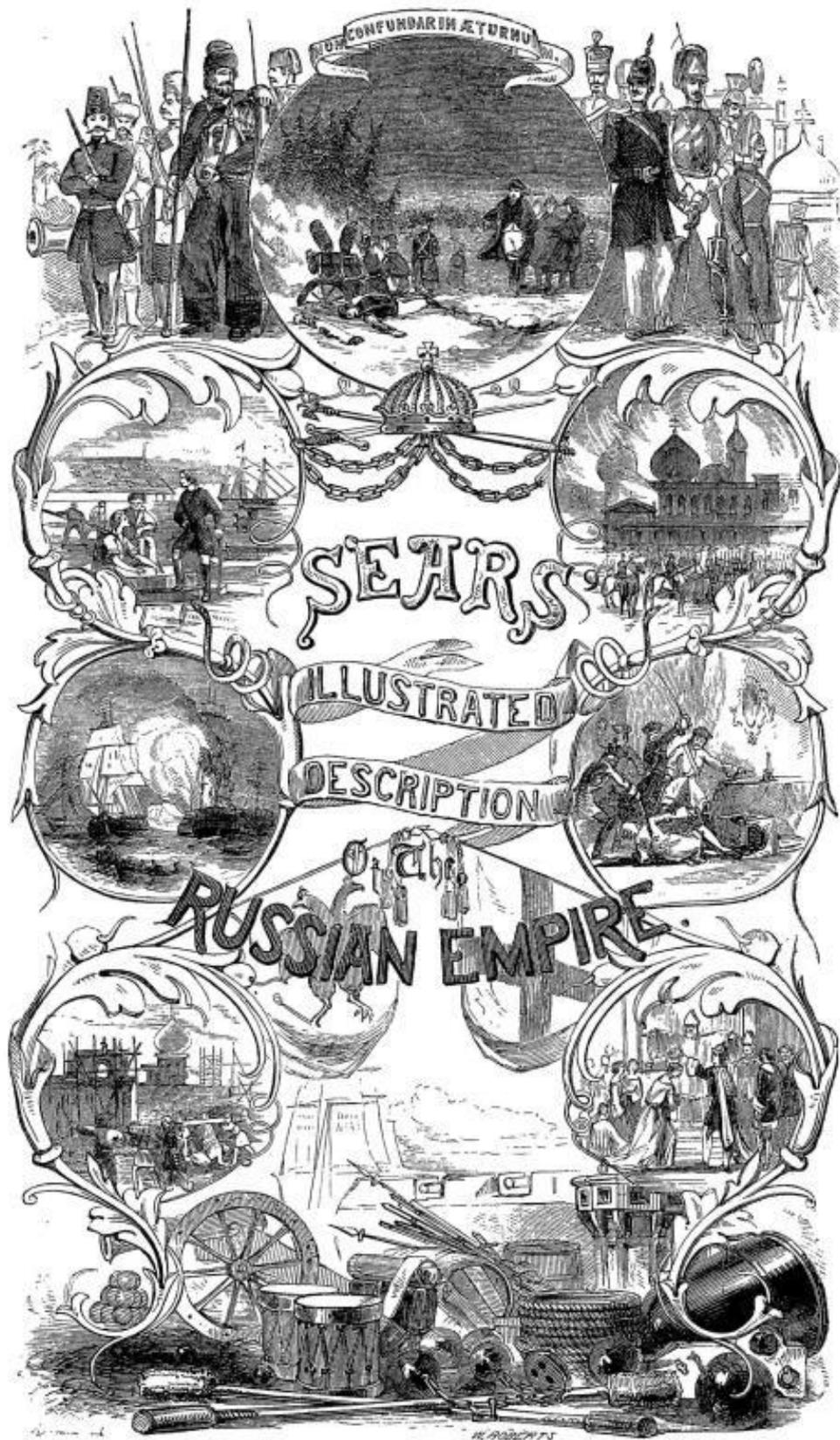


# An Illustrated Description of the Russian Empire



AN  
ILLUSTRATED DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
**RUSSIAN EMPIRE;**

EMBRACING

ITS GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES, POLITICAL DIVISIONS, PRINCIPAL CITIES AND  
TOWNS, POPULATION, CLASSES, GOVERNMENT, RESOURCES, COMMERCE,  
ANTIQUITIES, RELIGION, PROGRESS IN EDUCATION, LITERATURE, ART,  
AND SCIENCE, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, HISTORIC SUMMARY, ETC.,  
FROM THE LATEST AND THE MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

By ROBERT SEARS.

**EMBELLISHED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS,**

AND

*Maps of European and Asiatic Russia.*

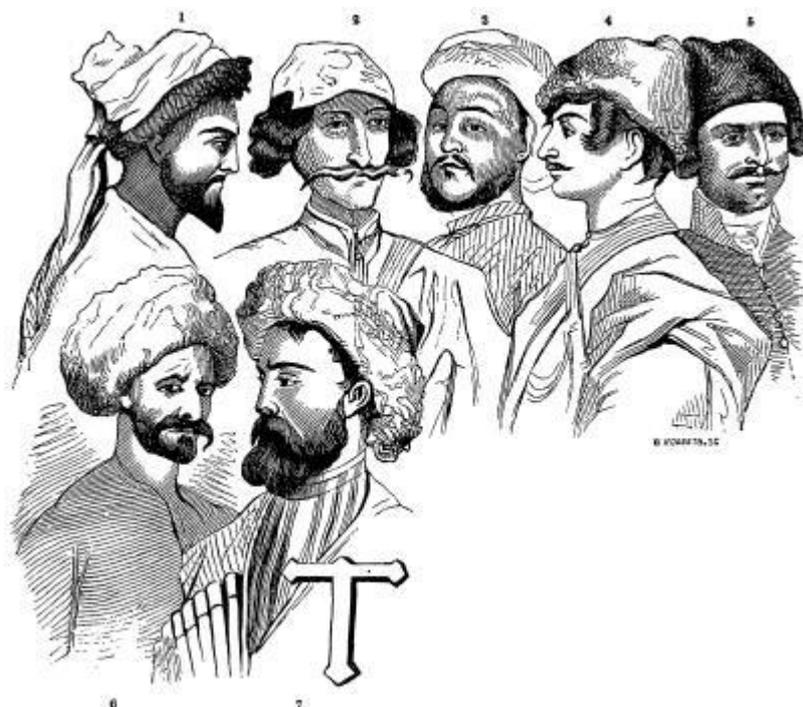
NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY ROBERT SEARS,

181 WILLIAM STREET.  
1855.

# CHAPTER X

**THE CAUCASIAN PROVINCES** ◦ Caucasian Tribes ◦ Georgia: Its Position and Aspect ◦ Rivers ◦ Climate and Soil ◦ Fruit ◦ Its Vineyards ◦ Wines ◦ Domestic Animals ◦ Roads ◦ Manufactures ◦ Female Georgians ◦ Classes ◦ History ◦ Teflis ◦ Its History ◦ Other Towns ◦ Shirvan: Baku ◦ Abcheran ◦ Naphtha Springs ◦ "Field of Fire" ◦ Ghebers ◦ Russian Armenia : Physical Aspect ◦ Guk-cha, or Blue Lake ◦ Mount Ararat ◦ Volcanic Eruption of 1840 ◦ Nakhichevan ◦ Climate and Soil of Armenia ◦ Inhabitants ◦ Echmiadzin ◦ Armenian Language and Literature ◦ Erivan ◦ Akhalzik ◦ Imeritia: Physical Aspect ◦ Natural Productions ◦ Bees and Silkworms ◦ Commerce ◦ Mingrelia : Physical Aspect ◦ Productions ◦ Guria : People ◦ Koutais ◦ Abassia: Its Position ◦ Industry ◦ History ◦ Anapar ◦ Circassia: Extent and Physical Features ◦ Its Hydrography ◦ Climate ◦ Soil and Natural Productions ◦ Animals, Wild and Domestic ◦ Minerals ◦ People ◦ Villages ◦ the Chase and War ◦ Circassian Women ◦ Domestic Habits ◦ Physical Beauty ◦ Education ◦ Religion ◦ Manufactures and Commerce ◦ History ◦ Caucasus: Physical Features and Climate ◦ Stavropol ◦ Other Towns ◦ Dag-hestan : Physical Aspect ◦ Bituminous Springs ◦ Climate ◦ Population ◦ Derbent ◦ Kouba ◦ Tschetschenzes and Lesghians ◦ The Caucasian "War" ◦ Its History ◦ Shaml

The Caucasian country has a very irregular outline, and forms a sort of isthmus between' the Black sea and the Caspian. It is bounded on the north by the governments of Don Cossacks and Astrakhan; on the west, by the sea of Azov, the strait of Enikaleh, and the Black sea; on the south, by Turkish Armenia, the river Arras, and Persia; and on the east, by the Caspian sea. The principal feature of the country is the celebrated mountain-chain of Caucasus, which has been fully described on previous pages. This region includes several ancient kingdoms, states, and provinces, which have acquired historical celebrity.



**Types of Caucasian Races**

The inhabitants of the Caucasian country include a great number of tribes, evidently derived from a variety of stocks, and speaking a diversity of languages. The vignette at the head of this chapter presents types of some

of the more important of these tribes. The portrait seen on the left, marked 1, represents a Tcherkessian, or Circassian; 2, a Mingrelian; 3, a Nogai Tartar; 4, a Georgian ; 5, an Armenian; 6, a Lesghian; 7, a Cossack of Terek. These tribes are all distinguished by one noble quality— an almost inextinguishable love of freedom; and in bodily constitution are at once so robustly and so elegantly formed, that what is known as the Caucasian race is universally acknowledged to be the finest type of man.

The Russians first got possession of this country in the time of Peter the Great, who even extended his dominion along the Caspian sea into Ghilan; but in the reign of Anne the military establishments were withdrawn to Kizliar, and a line of forts carried along the Terek for the defence of the frontier. Mozdok was built in 1763, and from that point the line was extended gradually westward to the sea of Azov, along the northern bank of the Kouban. The wars in which the Russians have been engaged with Turkey and Persia, having led them again to the south of the Caucasus, they have been anxious to establish their authority over the intervening mountain-tribes, who, if not reduced to subjection, are likely to prove most troublesome and dangerous neighbors. In the course of time they may succeed in effecting their subjugation, but as yet their progress has been very slow.

The government of Georgia (Russian, *Grussia*; Persian, *Gurdjistan*; the ancient *Iberia*) is situated near the centre of the Russian possessions, on the south side of the Caucasian range, between the fortieth and forty-third degrees of north latitude, and the forty-third and forty-seventh degrees of east longitude. It has the province of Shirvan on the east; an Armenian mountain-range on the south, which separates the basin of the Kour from that of the Arras ; a branch of the Caucasus on the west, forming part of the water-shed between the Caspian and Black seas; and the central chain of the Caucasus on the north. Thus, surrounded on three sides by mountain-ranges, Georgia is in a great measure shut out from communication with the neighboring countries, there being but one pass either across the Caucasus into Circassia, or across the western range into Imeritia. The length of the province from northwest to southeast, measured on the best maps, is about one hundred and seventy-five miles, and its average breadth from one hundred to one hundred and ten miles. It contains about eighteen thousand square miles.

The surface of Georgia is mostly mountainous, consisting of table-lands and terraces, forming a portion of the southern and more gradual slope of the Caucasus. The country, however, slopes from the south and west, as well as the north, to the centre and southeast, which are occupied by the valley of the Kour, an undulating plain of considerable extent and great fertility. Between the mountain-ranges there are also numerous fertile valleys covered with fine forests, dense underwood, and rich pasturages, watered by an abundance of rivulets.

All the rivers have more or less an easterly course. The principal is the Kour, or Mthwari (the ancient *Cyrus*). This river rises in the range of Ararat, a little northwest of Kars. It runs at first north, and afterward northeast to about latitude forty-two degrees north, and longitude forty-four degrees east, from which point its course is generally southeast to its mouth, on the western shore of the Caspian. It is in many places of considerable breadth, and sometimes several fathoms deep; but its great rapidity prevents its being of much, if any, service to navigation; and hence rafts only are used upon it. Its principal affluents are the Aragwi from the north, which unites with it at Mtskethi, the ancient capital of Georgia, about ten miles northwest of Teflis ; and the Arras (the ancient *Araxes*) from the south, which joins it not far above its mouth, where its course deflects southward.

The climate of Georgia, of course, varies greatly, according to elevation. It is, however, generally healthy and temperate, being much warmer than that of Circassia, or the other countries on the northern slope of the Caucasus. The winter, which commences in December, usually ends with January. The temperature at Teflis, during that season, is said not to descend lower than about forty degrees Fahrenheit; and in the summer the air is excessively sultry, the average temperature at the end of July, in one year being, at three o'clock in the afternoon, seventy-nine degrees, and at ten o'clock in the evenings seventy-four degrees Fahr.

The soil is very fertile; and agriculture and the rearing of cattle are the chief employments of the inhabitants. Wheat, rice, barley, oats, Indian corn, millet, the *Holcus sorghum* and *H. bicolor*, lentils, madder, hemp, and flax, are the most generally cultivated articles; cotton is found in a wild state, and is also cultivated.

Georgia is noted for the excellence of its melons and pomegranates; and many other kinds of fine fruit grow spontaneously. Vineyards are very widely diffused, and the production of wine is one of the principal

sources of employment. It is strong and full-bodied, with more *bouquet* than Port or Madeira; but from having generally little care bestowed on its manufacture, it keeps badly; and casks and bottles being for the most part unknown it is kept in buffalo-skins, smeared with naphtha, which not only gives it a disagreeable state, but disposes it to acidity. But notwithstanding these drawbacks, and its extensive consumption in the country, considerable quantities are exported. Mr. Wilbraham says that "the Georgians have the reputation of being the greatest drinkers in the world: the daily allowance, without which the laborer will not work, is four bottles; and the higher classes generally exceed this quantity; on grand occasions the consumption is incredible." According to Smith and Dwight, "the ordinary ration of the inhabitants of Teflis, from the mechanic to the prince, is said to be a *tonk*, measuring between five and six bottles of Bordeaux! The best wine costs about four cents the bottle, while the common is less than a cent."

The multiplied oppressions to which the inhabitants have been long subjected, and the fertility of the soil, have gone far to extinguish all industry. The peasant thinks only of growing grain enough for the support of himself and family, and a small surplus to exchange at the nearest town for other articles of prime necessity. The plough in use is so heavy as to require six or eight buffaloes for its draught, and often double the number are used; the harrow is nothing more than a felled tree; and a great quantity of the produce is wasted owing to the grain being trodden out by buffaloes.

Domestic animals of all kinds are reared. The horses and horned cattle equal the best European breeds in size and beauty; and the long-tailed sheep afford excellent wool. Game, including the stag, antelope, wild-boar, hares, wild-goats, pheasant, partridge, &c, is very abundant; bears, foxes, badgers, jackals, lynxes, and it is said leopards, are common. The forests consist of oak, beech, elm, ash, linden, hornbeam, chestnut, walnut, and many other trees common in Europe; but they are of little or no use. The mineral products of the country, though nearly unexplored, are believed to be various: iron is plentiful on the flank of the Caucasus, and coal, naphtha, &c, are met with.

The houses of the peasantry, even in the most civilized parts, are nothing more than slight wooden frames, with walls made of bundles of osiers covered over with a mixture of clay and cowdung, and a roof of rush. A room thirty feet long and twenty broad, where the light comes in at the door; a floor upon which they dry madder and cotton; a little hole in the middle of the apartment, where the fire is placed, above which is a copper caldron attached to a chain, and enveloped with a thick smoke, which escapes by either the ceiling or the door, is a picture of the interior of these dwellings. In the houses even of the nobility, the walls are some times built only of trunks of trees cemented with mortar, and the furniture consists of a very few articles.

The roads, except that across the Caucasus to Teflis, which has been improved by the Russians, are in a wretched state. The vehicles in use are of the rudest kind, and all commodities, except straw or timber, are transported upon horses, mules, asses, or camels. The inhabitants never ride except on horseback. Coarse woollen, cotton, and silk fabrics, leather, shagreen, and a few other articles, are manufactured. The arms made at Teflis have some reputation; but most of the other goods are very inferior, and only enter into home consumption;

Georgia, as before intimated, composes one of the Trans-Caucasian provinces of Russia. Their government is wholly military: and how little soever it may square with our notions of what a government should be, it is not ill fitted for the circumstances of the country; and there can not be a question that its establishment has been most advantageous to the great majority of the population.

The Georgian ladies have usually oval faces, fair complexions, and black hair, and have long enjoyed the highest reputation for beauty in the East; the men are also well formed and handsome. This superiority in the physical form of the Georgians and other contiguous Caucasian tribes, and the low state of civilization that has always prevailed among them, explains the apparently unaccountable fact that these countries have been, from the remotest antiquity down to our times, the seat of an extensive slave-trade. Latterly, the harems of the rich mussulmans of Turkey, Persia, &c., have been wholly or principally supplied by female slaves brought from Georgia, Circassia, and the adjoining provinces; and they also furnished male slaves to supply the Mameluke corps of Egypt and various other military bodies with recruits.

In modern times the Georgians have been divided, with the exception of a few free commoners, into the two great classes of the nobles and their vassals or slaves. Previously to the Russian conquest, the latter were the absolute property of their lords, who, besides employing them in all manner of manual and laborious occupations, derived a considerable part of their revenue from the sale of their sons and daughters! Indeed, the daughters of the nobles not unfrequently shared the same fate, being sacrificed to the necessities or ambition of their unnatural parents!

The Russians have put an end to this traffic; and they have also deprived the nobles of the power capitally to punish their vassals, and set limits to their demands upon them for labor and other services. There can not therefore be, and there is not, a doubt with any individual acquainted with the circumstances, that the Russian conquest has been of signal advantage to the bulk of the Georgian people. It is probably true, however, that the Russians are quite as much disliked by the nobles of Georgia as by those of Circassia; and those travellers who live with them, and credit their stories, will be amply supplied with tales of Russian barbarity and atrocity.

"With a settled state of affairs, Teflis, the capital, might again become, as in the days of the emperor Justinian, a thoroughfare for the overland commerce between Asia and Europe. The Georgians belong to the Greek church, and, since becoming subject to Russia, have been subordinate in ecclesiastical matters to a Russian archbishop at Teflis, who has three suffragans south of the Caucasus. The clergy are generally very ignorant. . A high-school in the capital has been recently erected into a gymnasium ; and in addition to it, there are a few small schools, in which, however, very little is taught. No serf is, or at least used to be, instructed in reading, but all the nobility are more or less educated: the females of this class teach each other, and are commonly better informed than the males. The Georgian language is peculiar, differing widely from the languages spoken by the surrounding nations.

Georgia was annexed to the Roman empire by Pompey the Great, anno 65 B. C. During the sixth and seventh centuries it was long a theatre of contest between the eastern empire of Constantinople and the Persians. In the eighth century, a prince of the Jewish family of the Bagratides established the last Georgian monarchy, which continued in his line down to the commencement of the present century. The last prince, George XI., before his death in 1799, placed Georgia under the protection of Russia (though up to that time it had been regarded as nominally a dependency of the Persian monarchy) ; and, in 1802, it was incorporated with the Russian empire. In the present war (1854) between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, the frontiers of Georgia and Armenia were early the theatre of important military operations, and the Russians falling back, Georgia was in the month of May declared independent; but it is highly probable that, by either reconquest or treaty settlement at the close of the war, the province will again fall under the sway of the czar.

Teflis, or *Tiflis*, the capital of Georgia and of the other Trans-Caucasian provinces, is situated near the centre of the country, on the right bank of the Kour, three hundred miles east by north of Trebizond, in Turkey, in a contracted valley formed by irregular mountains, parallel with the stream on the side of the city, and hills coming down in a point quite to the water's edge on the other. A circular fort covers this point, and, together with a small suburb, is united to the city by a bridge of a single wooden arch, thrown over the river ; while the ruined walls of an old citadel crown the top, and extend down the side of a part of the opposite mountain.

The old and native part of the city is built upon the truly oriental plan of irregular narrow lanes, and still more irregular and diminutive houses, thrown together in all the endless combinations of accident. Here and there European taste, aided by Russian power, has worked out a passable road for carriages, or built a decent house, overlooking and putting to shame all its mud-walled and dirty neighbors. A line of bazars, too, extending along the river, and branching out into several streets, together with much bustle and business, display some neatness and taste, and is connected with two or three tolerable caravanseries. Several old "and substantial churches, displaying their belfries and cupolas in different parts, complete the prominent features of this part of the city.

In the northern or Russian quarter, officers, palaces, government-offices, and private houses, lining broad streets and open squares, have a decidedly European aspect, and exhibit in their pillared fronts something of that taste for showy architecture which the edifices of their capital have taught the Russians to admire.

Teflis has the appearance of an excessively busy and populous place. Its streets present not only a crowded, but, unlike many oriental cities, a lively scene. Every person seems hurried by business. Nor is the variety of costumes, representing different nations and tongues, the least noticeable feature of the scene.

The Armenian cathedral is a large and somewhat striking edifice. There are likewise two mosques ; and, among the other places of worship, is a German protestant chapel. The city has also a French and a German hotel; they are represented, however, as being, in most respects, the reverse of what they should be. House-rent is high, but otherwise living is not expensive. Teflis has many remarkable sulphureous hot springs, their temperature varying from one hundred to one hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit; and to these, it is supposed by some, the city owes its name. Over some of these the Russian government has erected the crown-baths, a plain edifice, but which, by being kept in good order, differs widely from all the other bathing-establishments in the city, and realizes a handsome revenue.

Teflis is very favorably situated for trade, and its commerce is pretty extensive, having greatly increased during the period of Russian occupation. Almost all the trade is, however, in the hands of the Armenians.



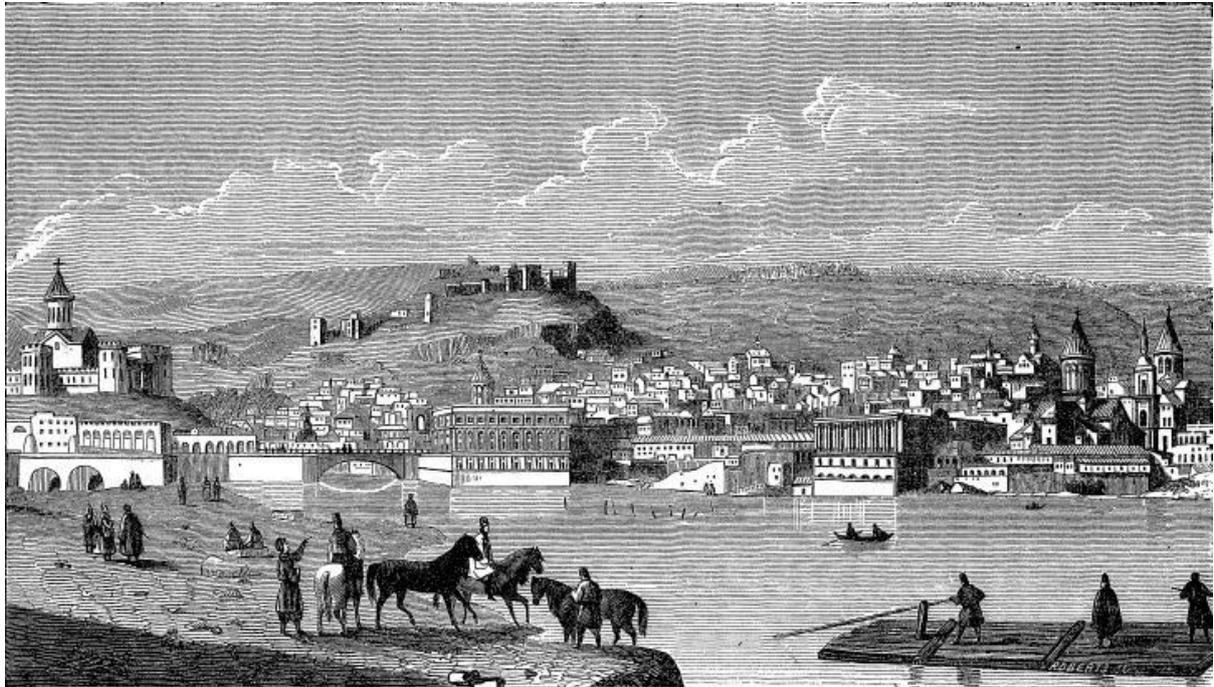
**Georgians of the Heights of Teflis**

In 1830, scarcely half a dozen mercantile houses existed belonging to any other foreigners, and only one European consul (a Frenchman) resided here. In the same year, the Russians founded a school at Teflis, which has since, as already remarked, been erected into a gymnasium ; and there are some other schools.

Teflis, as well as Georgia in general, has for a long while been celebrated for the beauty of its women; and, according to the missionaries, D wight and Smith, " this has not been overrated, for we have never seen a city so large a proportion of whose females were beautiful in form, features, or complexion, as Teflis." Teflis does not boast a very high antiquity. It is said to have been built in 469 by Vachtang, the founder of a dynasty which ruled from the Euxine to the Caspian. It was taken by the Tartars under Zinghis Khan, in the thirteenth century; subdued by the Turks in 1576 ; sacked by Aga Mohammed Khan, shah of Persia, in 1795; and finally fell into the possession of the Russians, with Georgia, in 1802. It suffered greatly from the ravages of the cholera in 1830. It is the residence of the governor-general of Caucasus, and of a Georgian and Armenian archbishop. There are four newspapers published, here in the Russian, Georgian, Persian, and Armenian languages, respectively. Its present population may be reckoned at from thirty-five to forty thousand, the great majority of whom are Armenians, with some mussulman families.

Among the other chief towns are Elizabetpol, or *Ganjah*, ninety miles southeast of Teflis; Signak, fifty-six miles east by south ; and Akhaltsike, a hundred and ten miles west, once the capital of a Turkish pachalic, and having forty thousand inhabitants, but now only thirteen, thousand, chiefly Turkish Armenians: it has some fine churches and ruins. Warzich, in the volcanic region of the Trapovanie and the Kour, formerly the favorite

residence of the Armenian queen Tamar, is an extraordinary spot. It is a complete city, hewn out of volcanic stone, and contains three large churches, entirely cut out of the rock, subterraneous passages, innumerable chambers, finely sculptured, and the queers summer and winter palaces. The whole country around is covered with lava and volcanic products of various kinds.



**TEFLIS, CAPITAL OF GEORGIA**

The province of Shirvan lies on the south of the Caucasus, principally between the fortieth and forty-second degrees of north latitude, and the forty-seventh and fiftieth degrees of east longitude; having the Caspian on the east, Daghestan on the north, Georgia on the west, and the river Kour on the south, which divides it from Talysch, formerly a portion of the Persian territory of Ghilan. It comprises about nine thousand square miles.

Shirvan (*Shirwan*, or *Guirvari*) was formerly a province of Persia. Its climate and natural productions are much the same as those of Georgia. It consists chiefly of a well-watered plain, which produces cotton, rice, wines, and fruits of various kinds; but along the shore of the Caspian there is a flat tract almost a desert. The inhabitants of this province are chiefly Mohammedan Persians.

Baku, or *Badku*, the capital of Shirvan, is situated on the southern shore of the peninsula or cape of Abcheran on the western coast of the Caspian sea, of which it is one of the most frequented ports. The walls of the town were formerly washed by the Caspian, but *they* are at present about five yards distant from it: the sea, however, has gained upon the land in other places, the ruins of ancient buildings being found at the depth of nearly twenty feet. It stands on a declivity, the summit of which is crowned by the palace of the former khans and Persian kings; is defended by a double wall and deep ditch, constructed in the time of Peter the Great, and has two strong forts, under whose protection vessels can anchor in from four to six fathoms water, within eighty yards of the shore, in a spacious road, sheltered from all quarters.

The town is ill built, with crooked and narrow streets. The houses are small, with flat roofs coated with naphtha. The Yirgin's Tower is the most striking object in the place. There are, however, several spacious mosques, public squares, marts, and caravansaries; a Greek and an Armenian church, and some Tartar schools.

The chief exports of Baku and its neighborhood are naphtha, salt, and saffron; in return for which it receives, principally from Persia, raw silk and cotton, rich carpets and shawls, rice, &c.; and from Europe all kinds of ironware and cutlery, cotton, linen, and woollen manufactured goods— thus becoming an entrepot through

which an important trade is carried on between the East and the West. The adjacent island of Salián has important fisheries. Baku has a population of about six thousand.

The jurisdiction of Baku extends over thirty-two villages, with nineteen thousand inhabitants, of whom one thousand are Turkomans. The khanate of Baku was formerly attached to Persia, but wrested from it by the Russians, under Peter the Great, about 1723. It was restored in 1735, but retaken in 1801 by the Russians, to whom it now belongs.

The peninsula of Abcheran, or *Apsheron*, is rocky and barren, destitute of trees, and the water, obtained only from wells, is very brackish. It is in many respects a most singular region, and is particularly famous for its naphtha-springs. The quantity of naphtha procured in the plain to the southeast of the city of Baku is enormous. It is of two kinds, black and white, and its principal sources are about six miles from Baku. The black oil shines with a reddish tint in the rays of the sun, and is used for burning and for coating roofs. The supply seems inexhaustible, some of the wells yielding fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds a day, and on being emptied immediately fill up again; the entire annual yield is upward of four thousand tons!

Near these springs is the Artech-gah, or "*Field of Fire*" nearly half a square mile in extent. A stream of white oil here gushes from the foot of a hill; it readily ignites and burns on the surface of the water: and in calm weather people amuse themselves with pouring it into the sea, where they set fire to it, and it floats away, giving the waters the appearance of a sea of fire. The poor people obtain a cheap light and fire for cooking by driving a clay pipe or reed into the ground, and burning the gas which rises through it. The Persian ghebers or fire-worshippers likewise send the gas in bottles to their friends at a distance. The "*Field of Fire*" is in constant motion, and emits a flame without heat. Occasionally the whole region seems to be in flames; and it appears as if the fire rolled down the mountain-sides in large masses, with incredible velocity, presenting on a winter's night a scene of wonderful sublimity. In ancient times the burning field was one of the most celebrated *ateshyahs* or shrines of grace among the ghebers or parsees of Persia, and frequented by thousands of pilgrims. They have still several temples here, and many of them spend their days in worship and in penitential exercises so severe as often to cost them their lives. The peninsula is likewise celebrated for numerous volcanoes, which discharge immense quantities of mud.

Russian Armenia comprises that portion of the former kingdom of that name which lies south of Georgia and north of the Arras and Mount Ararat, being two hundred miles in length and about one hundred and thirty in breadth. It formerly constituted the Persian province of *Erivan*, by which name it is now sometimes known. It contains about eight thousand square miles.

The country consists of a mass of mountains, crowding on each other and filling up the whole space with volcanic amphitheatres. One of the largest of these amphitheatres is occupied by the great fresh-water lake of Gukcha (blue lake), called also *Sivan*, the surface of which is five thousand three hundred feet above the level of the sea. In the northwestern portion of the lake is an island called Sivan, with a monastery, twelve hundred yards from the shore. The lake is said to be unfathomable, and has the dark-blue appearance of deep water. A branch of the river Zengue, which passes the town of Erivan, carries the surplus waters of the lake to the Arras. The whole country in the neighborhood is volcanic. The soil of the valley of the Arras is extremely fertile, and the mountains are covered with pasture. Directly south of Erivan a small portion of the

Russian territory extends to the southwestward of the Arras, and in the southwest corner of this portion stands the famous mountain *Macis* (*Agridagh*), or Ararat, a view of which is herewith given.



**Ararat, from the Plain of Erivan**

It consists of two mountains — the Great Ararat, on the northwest; and the Less Ararat, on the southeast: their summits, in a direct line, being about seven miles apart, and their bases insensibly blending into each other by the interposition of a wide, level, upland valley. The summit of the Great Ararat is seventeen thousand three hundred and twenty-three feet above the sea-level, and fourteen thousand three hundred and twenty feet above the plain of the Arras. The northeastern slope of the mountain is about fourteen miles in length, and the southwestern about twenty miles. On the former, visible even from Erivan, thirty-two miles distant, is a deep, gloomy, crater-like chasm. The mountain is covered with perpetual snow and ice, for about three miles from its summit downward, in an oblique direction. On the entire northern half, from about fourteen thousand feet above the sea-level, it shoots up in one rigid crest to its summit, and then stretches downward on its southern side to a level not quite so low, forming what is called the "*Silver Crest of Ararat*" Little Ararat rises thirteen thousand and ninety-three feet above the sea-level, and ten thousand one hundred and forty feet above the plain of the Arras; and is free from snow in September and October. Its declivities are greater and steeper than those of the Great Ararat; and its almost conical form is marked with several delicate furrows, that radiate downward from its summit.

The top of the Great Ararat was first reached, October 9, 1829, by Professor Parrot, who reports it to be a "gently-vaulted, nearly-cruciform surface, of about two hundred paces in circuit, which at the margin sloped off precipitously on every side, but particularly toward the southeast and northeast. Formed of eternal ice, without rock or stone to interrupt its continuity, it was the austere silvery head of Old Ararat." Toward the east, this summit is connected, by means of a flattish depression, with a lower summit, distant four hundred yards, and in like manner covered with ice. After remaining on the summit three quarters of an hour, determining the height, and making various observations, Parrot descended to the monastery of St. James; the third day after, he left it. The observations of Parrot have been in every respect confirmed by another Russian traveller, named Abich, who reached the summit of the Great Ararat without difficulty, July 29, 1845. He, with six others, remained an hour on the top, without experiencing any inconvenience from cold, so much felt by Parrot and his companions.

All travellers attest the volcanic nature of the Ararat mountains, as evidenced by the stones found on all their slopes, undoubtedly the products of a crater. They are composed chiefly of trachytic porphyry, and on them pumice and various descriptions of lava have been met with. Reineggs avers that he saw the Great Ararat send forth smoke and flame for three days in 1785; but this is believed to be one of the many romances which that traveller has related. No such occurrence was remembered, in 1843, by individuals resident on the mountain at the period indicated, and no eruption is found recorded in the chronicles of the monastery of Echmiadzin, though they extend back over a period of eight hundred years. All doubt as to the volcanic nature of the two Ararats was put an end to on July 2, 1840, when an eruption took place from the head of the great chasm, which destroyed the monastery and chapel of St. James, the village of Arguri, and their inmates. Dr. Wagner, an enterprising German traveller and naturalist, who visited the spot in 1843, gives in substance the

following account of that event, as related by Sahatel Chotschaieff, brother to Stephen Aga, village elder of Arguri, honorably mentioned by both Parrot and Dubois, and confirmed by other two eye-witnesses : —

" On July 2, 1840, half an hour before sunset, the atmosphere clear, the inhabitants of Armenia were frightened by a thundering noise, that rolled loudest and most fearfully in the vicinity of the Great Ararat. During an undulating motion of the earth, lasting about two seconds, which rolled from the mountain east and southeast, and wrought great destruction in the districts of Sharur and Nakhichevan, a rent was formed in the end of the great chasm, about three miles above Arguri, out of which rose gas and vapor, hurling with immense force stones and earth over the slope of the mountain down into the plain. The vapor rose very quickly higher than the summit of Ararat, and seems to have been wholly of aqueous composition ; for in the same night a heavy rain fell in the vicinity of the mountain—an unusual occurrence in this country during summer. The vapor at first was of various colors, in which blue and red prevailed. Whether flames burst forth could not be ascertained; but the pillars of vapor or smoke had a red tint, which, had the eruption taken place during the night, might possibly have exhibited flame. The blue and red tint of the vapor soon became dark black, and immediately the air was filled with a very disagreeable smell of sulphur. While the mountain continued to heave, and the earth to shake, with the unremitting thunder, along with the subterranean cracking and growling, might be heard the whiz, as of bombs, caused by the force with which stones and large masses of rock, upward of fifty tons' weight, were hurled through the air! Likewise, the dash of the stones as they met in the air in their flight, could be distinguished from the thundering noise issuing from the interior of the mountain. Where these large stones fell, there in general they lay; for, in consequence of the gentle declination of the ground at the foot of the mountain, to roll far was impossible. The eruption continued a full hour. When the vapor had cleared away, and the shower of stones and mud had ceased, the rich village of Arguri, and the monastery and chapel of St. James, were not to be seen: all, along with their inmates, were buried under the mass of stones and mud that had been ejected. The earthquake, which accompanied the eruption, destroyed six thousand houses in the neighboring districts of Nakhichevan, Sharur, and Ardubad. Four days after a second catastrophe occurred, which spread still farther the work of destruction at the foot of the mountain. After the rent in the chasm, whence issued the vapor and stones, had closed, there remained in the same place a deep basin filled with water by the melting of the snow, by the rain, and by a streamlet from above, so as to form a small lake. The mass of stone and clay, which formed a dam, and surrounded the lake like the edge of a crater, was burst by the weight of water, and poured down the declivity of the mountain with irresistible force a stream of thick mud, which spread into the plain, and partly stopped up the bed and altered the course of the small river Karasu. A part of the gardens of Arguri that had escaped the eruption, were destroyed by this stream of mud, which carried trees, rocks, and the bodies of the inhabitants of the village, down into the plain, and to the bed of the Karasu. This stream of mud was three times repeated, and was accompanied by subterranean noises."

That Noah's ark rested on the *top* of Mount Ararat is not to be credited. The difficulty of the descent, and the low temperature of the atmosphere, which must have killed many of the animals, alike preclude the supposition ; and, moreover, the Scriptures do not say it rested on the top, but merely " on the mountains of Ararat." If this be the mountain there referred to — which is somewhat doubtful, seeing that the olive does not grow near it—the ark must have rested on one of its lower slopes. Nakhichevan, eighty miles east of Erivan, claims the honor of being *the oldest city of the world*; and tradition affirms that Noah fixed his residence here after descending from Ararat.

The name *Ararat* is said to be derived from *Arai*, a king who lived 1750 years B. C. He fell in battle, in an Armenian plain, which was hence called "*Arai-Arat*"— *the fall of Aral*. Before him reigned *Amassis*, the sixth from Japhet, who called the country *Amasia*; hence the name *Massis*, or *Macis*, by which alone Armenians in the present day know the mountain. By the Turks and Persians it is called *Agri-dagh*. The third syllable, *dagh*, means *mountain*; but philologists are not agreed on the signification of *Agri*.

Owing to the great elevation of the country, the climate in most parts is rather severe ; but though the winters last long, the summer heats are sufficient to bring all the fruits of the earth to perfection. Although severe, the climate is, however, considered healthy.

The soil of Armenia is reckoned, on the whole, productive, though in many places it would be quite barren were it not for the great care taken to irrigate it; to such an extent, indeed, is the system of irrigation carried on, that in summer many considerable streams are wholly absorbed for this purpose. Wheat, barley, tobacco, hemp,

grapes, and cotton, are raised ; and, in some of the valleys, apricots, peaches, mulberries, and walnuts, are grown. From the nature of the country, the rearing of stock is carried on to a greater extent than agriculture. The horses are spirited, fleet, and fiery. Pines, birches, poplars, and beeches flourish, but there are no thick forests except in the northern parts of the country. The flora is not so varied as might be expected in such an Alpine region; in several respects it resembles the vegetation of the Alps of Tyrol and Switzerland.

The inhabitants are chiefly of the genuine Armenian stock; but besides them, in consequence of the repeated subjagation of the country, various other races have obtained a footing. Of these the principal are the Turkomans, who still maintain their nomadic habits, and from whom the country has received the name of Turkomania. Of the Armenians, but about one half are in Armenia. The remainder, like the Jews, are scattered over various countries; and, being strongly addicted to commerce, play an important part as merchants. They are found all over western Asia; about two hundred thousand are in Constantinople and its vicinity; numbers are in various parts of the Russia empire, Hungary, and Italy; some in Africa and America; and a large number in India, chiefly in the great marts of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. Everywhere they are engaged in banking and trading. In physical structure, they belong to the Caucasian race, and, in general, are well made. Their eyes and hair are black, their look lively, noses aquiline, and their complexion somewhat swarthy. The women are remarkable for the delicacy and regularity of their features. Like the Jews, whom in many respects they resemble, their ruling passion appears to be an inordinate love of gain, but they are generally esteemed honest. Their mental capacity is good, and those who are educated are distinguished by superior cultivation and refined manners; but the mass of the people inhabiting their native country, in consequence of centuries of neglect, are grossly ignorant and superstitious.

The Armenians embraced Christianity in the fourth century; and, in A. D. 536, separated from the Greek church, being dissatisfied with the decisions of the council of Chalcedon. In doctrine, they hold that there is only one nature in Christ, and that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father alone. They have seven sacraments, but, in the mode of using them, differ in several respects from the Roman catholics. They adore saints and images, but do not believe in purgatory. Their hierarchy differs little from that of the Greeks. The *catholicus*, patriarch, or head of the church, has his seat at Echmiadzin, a monastery near Erivan. A minority of the Armenians, chiefly those residing in European countries, acknowledge the pope, and conform, in doctrine and church-government, to the Roman catholic church. They are called *United Armenians*.



**Patriarchal Church and Monastery of Echmiadzin**

The monastery of Echmiadzin, the seat of the *catholicus*, or head of the Armenian church, lies in the valley of the Arras, thirteen miles east of Erivan, near the village of Vagarhabad, which is also frequently though improperly called Echmiadzin. The monastery is surrounded by a wall thirty feet high, entered by four gates, and flanked by towers, which, as well as the walls, are built of brick, excepting the base, and furnished with loopholes, giving to the whole structure the appearance of a large quadrangular fortress. The monastery was founded in A. D. 524; but the church it contains dates from the time of St. Gregory " the Enlightener," who introduced Christianity into Armenia, though various additions have been made to it in later times. The monks have here a printing-press and a seminary ; but little good is to be expected from their labors, as they are unlearned, ignorant, and superstitious.

The Armenian language belongs to the most distant offshoots of the Indo-Germanic root; but still, in its form and structure, has much that it is peculiar, and to the ear it is harsh and dissonant. The old Armenian language, also called *Haican*, which is that of literature, may now be considered a dead language. In the new Armenian language, which is divided into four dialects not differing greatly from each other, there are many Turkish words, and the construction of sentences is regulated by the rules of Turkish syntax. With the exception of some songs collected by Archbishop Moses Choronensis, no specimens of the earlier Armenian literature have been preserved. After the introduction of Christianity, a great taste for the Greek language and literature arose, and a number of works in Greek and Syriac were translated into Armenian. Before A. D. 406, the Armenians had no alphabet of their own, but used indifferently Greek, Syriac, or Persian characters. In that year, however, Mesrop Masdoty invented the Haican alphabet, consisting of thirty-eight letters (thirty consonants and eight vowels), called, from its inventor, *Mesropian*, and which still continues to be employed along with the modern alphabet.

Armenian literature flourished from the fourth to the fourteenth century. Of this period, many writers have obtained a name chiefly as historians and chroniclers. Their works, which might throw considerable light on the history of the East during the middle ages, have hitherto been little consulted. Armenian literature began to sink in the fourteenth century, and since that period scarcely any original work of importance has appeared; but, in all their wanderings, the Armenians have preserved a taste for native literature, and have set up printing-presses wherever they have settled : so that we find Armenian works printed in Amsterdam, Venice, Leghorn, Lemberg, Moscow, Astrakhan, Constantinople, Smyrna, Echmiadzin, Ispahan, Madras, Calcutta, Batavia, &c. The most interesting colony is that on the island of San Lazaro at Venice, founded by the abbot Mechitar Pedrosian in 1717, who there established a monastery, academy, and printing-press, whence important Armenian works have continued to be issued down to the present time.

According to the native historians, the name *Armenia* is derived from *Aram*, the seventh king of the first dynasty, who about B. C. 1800, gave a settled character to the kingdom. The Armenians call themselves *Sales*, or *Haicans*, and trace their origin, in their traditions, to *Haic* or *Haico*, the father and patriarch of the people, a contemporary of the Assyrian king Belus. Armenia subsequently fell into the hands of different rulers, and was exposed to many attacks. The Romans and Parthians had many fierce conflicts for its possession, in one of which the consul Crassus was defeated; but at last, under the emperor Trajan, Armenia Major became a Roman province. It afterward recovered its independence, and was under the rule of its own kings. Sapor, king of Persia, attempted its subjugation in vain, and it remained free until 650, when it was conquered by the Arabians. After this, it several times changed its masters. In the thirteenth century, it was overrun by the Moguls under Zinghis Khan. In 1552, the Turkish sultan Selim II. conquered it from the Persians.

In 1604, Shah Abbas, emperor of Persia, in order to protect his dominions on the side of Armenia against the Turks, resolved to carry off the inhabitants, and to lay waste a large portion of the country, so that it might no longer be able to support an army! This monstrous resolution was executed with the most revolting barbarity. The inhabitants, driven off like cattle, perished by thousands, while their houses were burnt down, and every vestige of civilization obliterated. A part of the survivors were settled in the suburbs of Ispahan, the old Persian capital, where they were kindly treated; but the greater number, being located in an unhealthy part of the province of Mazunderan, were soon swept off by disease.

Until recently, Armenia was divided between Turkey and Persia; but the former ceded to Russia, by the treaty of Adrianople, in 1829, a considerable portion of her Armenian territories; and Russia had previously (in 1827) acquired the entire province of Erivan from Persia. These acquisitions have been consolidated into the government of Armenia.

Erivan, or *Irwan*, the capital of Russian Armenia, is situated on the left bank of the Zengue, or *Sanga*, a considerable river that flows from the lake Gukcha, or *Sivan*, to the Arras, thirty-three miles north-northeast from the foot of Mount Ararat, on the border of the great plain of the Arras, and one hundred and six miles southwest of Teflis. The site of the town is three thousand three hundred feet above the sea-level. It stands partly on a hill, and partly on the margin of the stream, which is here crossed by a handsome stone bridge of several arches, and is very unhealthy during the summer heats. It contains about two thousand houses, interspersed with numerous gardens, and ruins of various dates, the whole fortified and protected by a citadel placed on a steep rock, more than six hundred feet in height, overhanging the river. This fortress, which is about

two thousand yards in circumference, is encompassed by a double rampart of earth, flanked with towers: it contains the ancient palace of the khans, called Sardar, now the residence of the governor; a fine mosque, a cannon-foundry, barracks, &c. The town is irregularly built, with narrow and dirty streets; and the houses, which are built of boulders, and mortar made of clay and straw, give it a mean appearance. It has, however, a handsome bazar, with nearly eight hundred shops, besides several caravansaries, five Armenian churches, one Russo-Greek church, an Armenian convent, five mosques, some aqueducts of a curious construction, &c. An old tower, described by Ohardin, has since been pulled down, and its materials used for building. The town has some manufactures of cotton-stuffs, leather, and earthenware; and, being on the caravan route between Persia and Russia, it has a considerable transit-trade. Its population is about twelve thousand, who are principally Armenians.

The epoch of the foundation of Erivan is unknown. It was taken by the Persians in 1635. The latter retook it in 1724 ; but it was again captured by the Persians, under Nadir Shah (commonly called Nadir Kouli Khan), in 1748. The Russians were repulsed in an attempt to take it in 1808; but they succeeded in 1827, and were confirmed in its possession by the ensuing treaty with Persia.

Akhalzik, *Akalzik*, or *Akiska*, is situated in a district of the same name, one hundred and ten miles west of Teflis, on the left bank of the Dalka, ten miles from its junction with the Kour. It is without walls, but defended by a strong citadel, built on a rock, which, when it belonged to Turkey, baffled all the attempts of the Russians to reduce it. Akhalzik is the seat of a Greek archbishop, and contains two churches, a synagogue, and several mosques—one of which, that of Sultan Ahmed, is built on the model of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and has a college and library attached to it. The latter was accounted one of the most curious in the East; but the Russians have removed about three hundred of the most valuable works to St. Petersburg. The neighborhood produces silk, honey, and wax, with excellent fruits, raisins, peaches, apricots, and figs. Some manufactures are carried on, and the inhabitants prosecute an active trade with various places on the Black sea. Formerly a large slave-market was held here, which the Russians suppressed when they acquired possession of the town. In the vicinity are some alkaline springs. The population, which includes Armenians, Georgians, Turks, Russians, and Jews, is about fifteen thousand. The former Turkish pachalic of *Akhalzik*, or *Tcheldir*, as named by the Turks, forms now a political and administrative subdivision of Russian Armenia. It is a mountainous country, watered by the Kour; the climate is healthy, though the extremes of heat and cold are very great. The soil is fertile, producing maize, barley, tobacco, flax, and cotton, with excellent fruits. Game is abundant. Large numbers of cattle and sheep are raised, and much attention is paid to bees and silkworms. The population consists chiefly of Georgians, Turks, Armenians, and Turks.

Imeritia, Mingrelia, and Guria, the three most western Trans-Caucasian provinces, occupy the whole basin of the Rioni, enclosed on three sides by mountains, and open only toward the Black sea.

The province of Imeritia, or *Imerethi*, is bounded on the north by the Caucasus, east by Georgia, south by Armenia and Guria, and west by the Black sea and Mingrelia. Its greatest length from north to south is ninety miles, and its greatest breadth about seventy-five. It contains about four thousand eight hundred square miles.

The surface of the country has a general slope westward to the Black sea, but is mostly very uneven and rugged, being traversed by ramifications of the Caucasus. The only streams are the Rioni and its tributaries. The climate is excellent, and the soil generally fertile. All the higher mountain-slopes are covered with magnificent forests; many of the loftier valleys afford luxuriant pasture; and in the lower grounds, notwithstanding the indolence and unskilful management of the inhabitants, heavy crops of wheat, barley, maize, tobacco, hemp, and madder, are raised. Fruit-trees grow spontaneously; and chestnuts, walnuts, apricots, cherries, &c, are found in abundance in every quarter. The vine also is said to grow spontaneously, and is often found entwining itself with the trees of the forest. Domestic animals are not numerous, but game is very abundant.

Considerable attention is paid to the rearing of bees and silkworms. There are no manufactures deserving of the name; and the trade, almost wholly in the hands of Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, consists chiefly in exports of the raw produce of the country—particularly wine, grain, silk, wax, skins, wool, and fruit; and imports of woollen, linen, and silk goods, copper and iron ware, cutlery, salt, and colonial produce. The trade in slaves—males for the army, and females for the harems of the Turks — was once the most important in all, but has been put down by the Russians since they acquired the control of the country.

Imeritia, in the fourteenth century, formed part of the kingdom of Georgia. It afterward became independent, and was governed by its own princes ; one of whom, in 1804, voluntarily made it over to Russia.



**Imeritian Prince & Mingrelian Prince**

The province of Mingrelia (the ancient *Colchis*, and the scene of the fable of the Golden Fleece and the Argonautic expedition) is bounded on the north by the Caucasus, on the east by Imeritia, on the south by Guria, on the southwest by the Black sea, and on the northwest by Abassia. Its area is about seven thousand two hundred square miles.

The surface of this province is generally mountainous, but slopes gradually to the south, particularly toward the Rioni, its principal stream. The mountains are generally covered with magnificent forests; and both the lower slopes and valleys are fertile, yielding good crops of millet and abundance of excellent fruit. A good deal of silk and honey are likewise produced. Mingrelia became a vassalage of Russia in 1803, but is governed by its own prince, who takes the name of *dadian*.

The province of Guria, or Guriel, is bounded on the north by Imeritia and Mingrelia, on the east by the district of Akhalzik in Russian Armenia, on the south by the pachalic of Trebizond in Turkey, and on the west by the Black sea. It contains fifteen hundred square miles.

The country is chiefly forest; the soil is very fertile. The inhabitants are principally Georgians, with a few Armenians. Guria, the same as Mingrelia, is governed by a native prince, who acknowledges the czar's supremacy. Ignorance and vice are very prevalent, and even few of the nobles can understand their own language. The general condition of the people, however, is said to have been greatly improved through their connection with Russia. The noble can no longer deprive his servant of life, or sell him to a foreign master, as formerly.

Koutais, *Kotais*, or *Khouthaissi* (the ancient *Cotatis*), the capital of the western Trans-Caucasian provinces, is situated on the left bank of the Rioni, about one hundred and twenty miles west-northwest of Teflis. It is embosomed in fruitful gardens; has in its centre a market-place, in the form of a large amphitheatre, where the inhabitants lounge away much of their time ; and six churches, a seminary with one hundred pupils, and a public

garden tastefully laid out. It is the residence of a governor and a bishop. The inhabitants, consisting, besides Imeritians, of a great number of Armenians and Jews, are chiefly employed in vine and garden culture. The population is about three thousand.

The old town of *Cotatis*, or *Cotaisis*, the capital of ancient Imeritia, is situated on the right bank of the Rioni, to the westward of the modern town, and is reached by a stone bridge over the river. It is little more than a heap of ruins, among which, however, lie broken columns, and capitals covered with inscriptions.

The province of Abassia, *Abkasia*, or *Abchasia*, is bounded north and west by the Caucasian range, which separates it from Circassia; east by Mingrelia; and south by the Black sea. It is about two hundred and sixty miles long, by less than thirty in breadth.

This country is composed wholly of the southern side of the Caucasus mountains—some of whose snow-covered peaks are here from twelve to thirteen thousand feet high—and of the low plains intervening between these mountains and the sea. The prevailing geological formations are greenstone, porphyry, black slate, and Jura limestone.

Immense forests of the finest trees (oak, alder, chestnut, &c.) clothe the mountain-sides, stretching down to the plains, whose Italian climate, ripening maize, figs, pomegranates, the fruits of central Europe, grain, and excellent grapes, invites to profitable cultivation ; but the country is a waste, its numerous ruins alone proclaiming its former flourishing condition. Nor do the Abassians excel in cattle-rearing or commerce—a little of the latter, in felt mantles, fox and polecat skins, honey, wax, and boxwood, being carried on—any more than in agriculture. On the contrary, with such indifference are these branches of industry pursued, that by their means they do not obtain a sufficient subsistence; which, therefore, they eke out in the manner most congenial to their tastes, by plunder and robbery — occupations which, in them, have become a second nature. They were formerly well known as pirates on the Black sea, and many of them prosecuted their fortunes in Egypt, where they rose by their bravery to eminent military rank among the Mamelukes. The slave-trade with Turkey formerly constituted one of the chief employments, and tended greatly to reduce the population. Notwithstanding the watchfulness of the Russians, slaves are still secretly exported. The women are beautiful, and are much sought after in Turkey.

The Abassians belong to the Circassian race, and distinguish among themselves five tribes—Abassians (or *Abkases*) proper, Bsubbes, Tsche-beldies, Aschawes, and Imuozahanes. Abassia, under the Byzantine emperors, formed an independent state, separate from Georgia. In the eleventh century, by heirship, it fell to the kings of Georgia, under whom it decayed; and in 1457 it fell under the supremacy of the Turks. In 1771, the Abassians asserted their independence; and, after various fortunes, about 1823, the reigning prince, Michael Bey, called on the Russians to occupy the country, which they did, by stationing troops at Anapa, Soukgoum-Kaleh, Tambor, Pitzunda, Gagra, and other towns. Anapa, situated on the Black sea, was formerly the chief emporium of the Turkish trade with the Circassian tribes, and from it the Georgian and Circassian slave-girls were supplied. The fort was constructed by the Turks in 1784, when the Russians took possession of the Crimea and the island of Saman. In 1791, the Russians carried it by storm. It was afterward restored to the Turks, who strengthened the fortifications. By a subsequent treaty the Russians again acquired possession. Its trade is chiefly in hides, tallow, wax, honey, &c. The population is about three thousand.

Circassia (*Tcherkessia*, or *Tcherkeskaia*), the largest and most important country in the Caucasus, occupies nearly the whole northern slope of that range of mountains. It lies between the forty-second and forty-sixth degrees of north latitude, and the thirty-seventh and forty-fourth degrees of east longitude. At its northwest corner it reaches the Black sea, but, with this exception, it is bounded on the south and west by the main ridge of the mountains which divide it from the Trans-Caucasian provinces. The northern limit is formed by the rivers Kouban and Terek, which separate it from the government of the Caucasus. Toward the east it terminates at the junction of the little river Sunsha with the Terek, at which point a host of small streams divide it from the country of the Lesghians. In extreme length, from northwest to southeast, Circassia is about four hundred and seventy miles ; in its greatest width, about one hundred miles ; in its least, about forty miles ; and, at an average, seventy miles. It contains thirty-two thousand square miles.

The physical features of Circassia have been generally described in the notice of the Caucasian range on a previous page, and what is peculiar to Circassia is only the consequence of that country's occupying the northern slope of the mountains. With the exception of the lowlands on the banks of the Kouban and Terek, the whole territory is broken into precipitous mountains, small table-lands, and valleys of the most picturesque and romantic description. Its hydrography belongs to two systems, the waters of Kabardah (the eastern section) being all conveyed by the Terek to the Caspian, and those of western Circassia by the Kouban to the Black sea. The former river rises near the Kazbek, and, forcing its way through the pass of Dariel (the ancient "*Caucasian Gate*"), receives, directly or indirectly, thirty-five streams before it quits the Circassian country. Of these, the Malk, which joins it at its eastern bend, is scarcely inferior in size to the principal river. It rises near the eastern bases of the Elbrouz, and is itself the recipient of a considerable number of tributaries. The Kouban rises on the northern base of the Elbrouz, not far from the sources of the Malk, and receives the water of more than fifty rivers, thirty of which fall directly into its bed. It has every reason to be considered exclusively a Circassian river; for, though no part of its northern bank be inhabited by Circassians, it does not receive a single tributary, in its whole course, that does not rise within their territory. A similar remark will apply, in a modified sense, to the Terek, which, like the Kouban, does not receive a single stream from the north, and only one of consequence after entering the Tartar country east of Little Kabardah. The country between the sources of the Malk and Kouban is watered by various streams; and when it is recollected that, in addition to these, innumerable torrents pour from the upper ranges of the mountains, it will be evident that no land can be better irrigated. The water is in general clear and good, but occasionally impregnated with mineral and other extraneous matters. The tributary streams become flooded in winter, and extremely shallow during the heats of summer; the currents of all are extremely rapid, as are those also of the Terek and Kouban, except where the latter forms morasses, which it does in some parts of the flat country, when its course becomes sluggish, and its water thick and muddy.

The climate, soil, and natural productions of Circassia, are also the same with those of the Caucasus generally; but the temperature is rather lower than on the southern slopes, except on the banks of the Kouban, where the greater depression more than compensates for the difference of aspect, and where the extensive marshes and the exuberant vegetation create miasma, which render it more pestilential than any other district in the whole region. There is a greater proportion of bare rock in Circassia than in Georgia and the other countries south of the main ridge; but on every shelf, and in every rift, trees, grain, vegetables, and fruit of almost every kind, are produced from most fertile soil.

The animals, also, are on the same scale of abundance and variety, whether the wild or domesticated tribes be considered—the quadrupeds, birds, fishes, insects, or reptiles. The Circassian horses are nearly as famous, and quite as good, as those of Arabia. Cattle of all kinds are abundant in the extreme; and, in addition to the herds forming the numerous stocks of the pastoral population, the *aurochs* and *argali* (wild ox and sheep) still wander among the mountains, with the ibex and another beautiful variety of the goat. Game of all kinds, winged, hoofed, or clawed, are found in equal abundance, but differing in kind, in the mountains and plains; nor are beasts of prey, as jackals, wolves, bears, lynxes, and tiger-cats, &c., much less numerous, though they seem to be but little regarded by the natives. Wild-boars are found, especially among the swamps of the Kouban, and it is affirmed that the tiger is not wholly unknown. The reptile and insect tribes are equally numerous. In one of the campaigns of the Russians, besides the thousands who fell victims to the bad air, it is stated by Spencer that numbers died *from the mortified bites of moschetoes*.

Both natives and Russians believe that the mountains abound in gold and silver, but apparently on no good grounds. Iron, however, lead, and copper, are found; and saltpetre is very abundant. Salt is nowhere found within the limits of Circassia; and since Russia has excluded the natives from the brine-pits in the Caucasian steppe, and sealed their ports against the trade of Turkey and Persia, they have been almost totally deprived of that necessary.

The Circassians are divided into five classes. 1. *Pschi*, or *pschech* (princes). 2. *Uork* (ancient nobles). 3. The freedmen of these princes and ancient nobles, who, by their manumission, become themselves noble, and are called *uork* of *uork*. 4. The freedmen of these new nobles, called *begualia*. 5. The vassals, or *tcho'kotl*. Between the ancient and recent nobility there is no real distinction, except that, in military service, the latter are still under the command of their former masters; nor is there any great practical difference between the *begualia* and the *tcho'kotl* or vassals. The latter are, of course, the laborers, and are subdivided into such as are engaged in agriculture and such as serve the superior classes in the capacity of menial servants. Of the

former, many are wealthy, nor is the state of any, one of great degradation, since there are very few if any offices of labor which prince or noble would consider derogatory to himself. To every princely house belongs a certain number of *uorkr* or *usden*, as they are called by the Russians; and the latter are the direct proprietors of the vassals. Of these last, though all are unquestionably slaves, those engaged in agriculture can not be sold singly; and the sale of any is so rare as almost to be prohibited by custom. On the other hand, it appears the vassal may transfer his duty to another *usdan*; which is, of course, a great protection from ill usage. The vassals pay no money-tax, and though they are compelled to supply their lord with all he wants, yet this, from the check upon the noble's power just alluded to, extends no further, usually, than to bare necessities; since, should the latter carry his demands too far, he runs the risk of losing his vassal altogether. The relation between prince and *usdan* is precisely the same as that between *usdan* and vassal: the noble must supply the necessities of his sovereign; but should the exactions of the latter become excessive, the former may transfer his allegiance to another prince. The *usden* must pay the debts of their prince, and the vassals those of their *usden*; and in each case the inferior must make good all losses sustained by his superior, whether from robbery or accident: by which arrangement it is evident that all losses or expenses are defrayed, ultimately, by the vassal. The head of the princely house is the leader in war; and his *usden* are bound to attend him with all their retainers, or as many as may be required.

There is no people, not even the Arabs, among whom pride of birth is carried to a greater height than among the Circassians, especially those of Kabardah. In this district, if an *usdan* were to marry or seduce a princess, he would forfeit his life without mercy; and the same result would attend the attempt of a *begualia* or vassal to ally himself to a noble house. An Abassian prince is, in this respect, considered equal only to a Circassian *usdan*, and can obtain a Circassian wife only from that class. The rigorous enforcement of this custom has preserved the different ranks very distinct, though Pallas has observed, even in the Kabardahs, some traces which indicate a descent from Tartar mothers. It must be observed, however, that there does not appear to be any restriction upon a man's taking a wife or a concubine from an inferior class; and the issue of such connections take rank from the father, but are not accounted equal to the descendants of a pure stock from both parents. Thus, there are princes of the first, second, and third class, &c, according to the greater or less degree of inferior blood which they inherit from their maternal ancestors. This state of society, closely resembling the feudal institutions of the Gothic ages, seems to imply the division of the Circassians into two distinct people, a conquering and a conquered race; but when or how the present relations were established, is involved in impenetrable obscurity.

The whole of the Circassian and Abchasian tribes live in small villages scattered here and there, without the slightest approach to anything resembling a city or walled town; indeed, the prince or noble has an unconquerable aversion to any castle or place of artificial strength, which he regards as only fitted to restrain his state of wild freedom. He lives, therefore, in the centre of his village, which usually consists of forty or fifty houses, or rather huts, formed of plaited osiers, plastered within and without, covered with straw or grass, and arranged in a circle, within the area of which the cattle are secured at night. These primitive dwellings, which strongly resemble, in form and appearance, the humbler residences in Arabian towns, have, however, the peculiar recommendation of being unexceptionably clean, which is also the case with the persons, dress, and cookery, of the inmates. From the slender nature of the buildings, they are evidently not formed for long endurance, and a Circassian village is, in fact, by no means a fixture. The accumulation of dirt in their neighborhood, the insecurity of the position, and frequently even the caprice of the inhabitants, cause them to be from time to time abandoned. On such occasions the dwellings are destroyed, the household utensils packed up, and the whole colony migrate in search of a new abode. While stationary, however, there is much comfort in a Circassian's hovel, for those who can dispense with superfluities; but, as may be supposed, their domestic arrangements are of the most simple kind.



**Circassians**

The usual occupations of the higher classes are the chase and war, on which expeditions, or those of a predatory kind, they depart with no other provision than a little millet or wheat, and that without the slightest fear of suffering from want, since every man who possesses and can use a rifle is sure of finding provision on every hedge. In these expeditions the Circassians carry with them tent-covers of felt, but chiefly for the purpose of protecting themselves from sudden storms, as, in fine weather, the hardy mountaineer throws himself on the ground, and sleeps with no other covering than the heavens. While in his hut, the Circassian, of whatever rank, is his own carpenter, weaver, carver, and shepherd. It does not appear, however, that the higher classes often take part in agricultural pursuits, not so much because it is considered derogatory, as from that species of indolence (quite consistent with great occasional exertion) which recoils from regular and continuous labor.

The occupations of the women consist in spinning and needlework. They make the clothes of their household, down to the very shoes, and also saddle-cushions, housings, and horse-trappings, and sheaths for the warriors' swords and poniards. They frequently excel in embroidery, are skilful dairy-women, and sometimes even noblewomen may be seen taking a part in field-labor. As in other half-barbarous societies, the greater portion of labor falls upon the females ; but their condition is far superior in Circassia to what it is in most other eastern countries.

As Mohammedanism is little more than a profession among these people, their habits, with the exception of some formal observances with regard to food, have undergone but little change by its introduction. The sexes mix freely together while unmarried, and, under the restriction of caste, love-matches are probably as numerous here as in other parts of the world. The husband has, however, to purchase his bride of her father; and neither husband nor wife, from the moment of their union, is permitted to appear in the presence of the parents for a year, or until the birth of the first child. It is a still more remarkable custom, that the husband must never be seen in company with his wife ; and though the latter is permitted to receive without restraint the visits of strangers, yet the former is never present on such occasions, and the matrimonial correspondence is always carried on by stealth, and in the utmost secrecy. The greatest insult that can be offered to a prince or *usdan*, is to inquire after the health of his wife or family! The son of a prince is committed, at the age of three days, to the care of an *usdan*, by whom he is brought up, and never again seen by his father till he is married : the son of an *usdan* remains in the paternal household till he is three or four years old, when he, in like manner, is consigned to the care of a stranger! The foster-father stands in every respect in the place of the natural parent. He receives no payment for his trouble, but claims all the duty and service of his ward. The cause of this very remarkable custom is said to be the wish to prevent the effect of indulgence consequent on a home education, in enervating the character; but though it destroys the usual affection subsisting between father and son, it establishes another not less strong between the guardian and his ward, which is usually as intense as any exhibited in the social connections of other countries.

The daughters are brought up at home, and at the age of ten or twelve years have their waists enclosed by tight-fitting stays, or a broad band of untanned leather, *which is never removed nor loosened* till they are married. On the wedding night the husband cuts this boddice open with his dagger, an operation which is frequently attended with danger. As a fine waist is considered the great beauty of a Circassian, men are also subjected to a very heavy compression on that part, but nothing to that which the females endure. The girde remains on the latter for a period varying from two to six years (a girl unmarried at seventeen rarely finds a husband), during which time the victim is growing; — and, in addition to this, they are (still further to "improve" the form) so sparingly fed, that the young unmarried females, have often a look of ill health. The finest-looking women are the young wives.



**Circassian Females**

The Circassians have long been proverbial for their beauty of form and figure, especially the women; and, though they have in this respect been confounded with the Georgians, yet all the accounts of the modern and the most accurate travellers concur in describing them as an extremely handsome people—tall, finely-formed, slender in the loins, small in the hand and foot, elegantly-featured, with keen, lively eyes, fresh complexions, and remarkably intelligent countenances. Their bearing is manly and dignified; but they have a kind of lofty gait, which perhaps indicates, and may, at all events, be easily mistaken for, haughtiness. The dress of the men consists of shirt, tunic, and cloak, much resembling those of the Calmucks, but formed of better materials, and in general richer. The female costume is not very different except in being longer. The men crop the hair, leaving only a single lock hanging from the crown; they wear thick mustaches; and the warriors and *learned* classes (priests and physicians) suffer the whole beard to grow. The women's heads have luxuri-riant tresses, but both sexes eradicate every appearance of hair on all other parts of their bodies, by means of a caustic ointment of unslaked lime and orpiment. The princes and *usden* rarely go out unarmed; and in his coat-of-mail, helmet, musket, pistols, bow, quiver, and shield, the Circassian chief forms a most imposing and picturesque object. In this dress they pay their visits of state, and in this also they ride out on their warlike or predatory expeditions.

The Circassian, like the Arab, is a strange mixture of ferocity and hospitality. The unfortunate traveller who approaches his country without securing the protection of some chief, is seized as a slave by the first native who

meets him ; but, on the other hand, should this protection be extended, the whole power of the host, or *konak*, as he is called, is strained to procure, not only the safety, but the accommodation of the guest. The form of granting protection is remarkable. The wife of the *konak* gives the stranger her breast to suck, after which ceremony he is regarded as her son, and the whole tribe as his adopted brethren. Robbery and plunder are considered honorable occupations: but the charge of thieving is accounted an insult, because it implies detection! The custom of blood-revenge, called *thlil-uasa*, is very similar to that of Arabia: in cases of murder, the friends of the murdered are allowed to take the life of the homicide, or that of any of his relatives within the fourth degree. The ransom by fine is, according to the Prussian traveller Pallas, never taken; but Spencer (a British traveller), on the contrary, affirms that it is almost always preferred.

The exclusive nature of Circassian marriages has been already noticed. It is, however, as little inconsistent, that while a Circassian prince would unhesitatingly slaughter an *usdan* of his own tribe, or an Abchasian, who should presume to wed his daughter, he *will as unhesitatingly sell her* to Turk, Persian, Turkoman, Nogai Tartar, or Calmuck ! Spencer, who professes to admire every institution of these people, has ingeniously discovered that this practice has tended to *refine* and *civilize* the inhabitants of the Caucasus ! He admits, indeed, that it has occasioned wars and feuds innumerable among the petty tribes, from the rapacity with which they have overrun each other's territory in search of beauty for the foreign market. The greater portion of the females thus sold have, however, always been from among the Trans-Caucasian people—the Imeritians, Georgians, Mingrelians, and Abassians;—the Circassian slave-trade having been chiefly confined to the male sex, from which they supplied the Mameluke and other slave-troops of Egypt and Turkey.

The laws of Circassia rest only on long-established custom. They are administered in a council of elders, but not always by the reigning prince, if any other of his rank possess the requisite qualities in a higher degree. The council consists not of princes and *usden* only, but also of the wealthier and more aged vassals, who, in the judgment-seat, are regarded as on an equality with the higher classes. The laws themselves are based upon the principle of retaliation, and the business of "the court" seems to consist of little else than the assessment of damages. Robbery of a prince is punished by the restitution of nine times the property stolen ; of an *usdan*, by simple restitution, and a fine of thirty oxen. The prince or *usdan* can scarcely commit a robbery on a vassal, since his abstract right to all the property of the latter is tacitly acknowledged; and the punishment of robbery by one vassal of another, appears to vary with the circumstances of the case. Fine, as among the Arabs, seems almost the universal punishment, except in cases of murder and adultery; in both of which cases the punishment is left in the hands of the injured party. The offending wife has her head shaved, her ears slit, the sleeves of her garment cut off, and in this trim is returned, on horseback, to her father; who, if he can not sell, generally kills her. The paramour is certain of death, being a marked man by all the husband's tribe. Polygamy is allowed, but very rarely practised. The Circassians are very attentive to their breeds of horses, and have distinct marks to show the noble races from which they have descended. The stamping a false mark upon a filly is a forgery for which nothing but life can atone!

Learning is a complete blank. The Circassians have not even an alphabet, and consequently neither book nor manuscript in their own language. The few who read, and they are very few, use the Tartar or Arabic tongues, both of which, the former especially, are very generally understood. Every tribe would seem to speak a modified language, since, within a narrow space, not less than *seventy-two dialects*, or *patois*, have been enumerated; and one particular spot, where this variety is more remarkably exhibited, has been surnamed, by Abulfeda, an oriental writer, *Jebel-el-Alason* (" the Mount of Tongues"). These dialects totally differ from any other language at present known: their pronunciation consists of strange, uncouth, deep, guttural sounds, which European letters can hardly express, and European organs vainly attempt to articulate; and, what is singular (considering the absence of written characters), and adds to the perplexity of the philologist, there is a *secret* dialect, apparently an old barbarous gibberish, peculiar to the princes and *usden*, and used by them chiefly on their predatory excursions.

The religion of the Circassians exhibits a strange jumble of Christianity, Mohammedanism, and paganism. The first, unfortunately, has scarcely a nominal existence, and is chiefly discernible in a superstitious reverence paid to" the cross, figures of which, in stone, are set up in many localities, which in consequence often become famous try sting-places, and at which some kind of worship is paid. The paganism appears in the homage which is rendered, principally by the vulgar, to two spirits, a good and a bad—*Merem*, a benevolent deity, and *Tschible*, the spirit of thunder. Mohammedanism, as before remarked, is the nominal faith, and exists in a

more definite form. In some districts, considerable influence is possessed by its *mollahs* or priests, who latterly, in addition to their proper duties, act as teachers, and keep a few schools, in which—as there is no printed vernacular—Turkish, Tartar, Arabic, and occasionally a little Persian, are taught. The true Circassian education is that which the youths receive who are trained to war from their earliest years, and never cease from it till they are able to take the field.

Arts, manufactures, and commerce, are at the lowest ebb among the Circassians. The doctors are simply conjurers or saints, who profess to cure diseases by charms and the roughest applications of actual cauterization. Their success may be surmised from the fact that, notwithstanding the length and inveteracy of the war with the Russians, very few instances of maimed Circassian warriors are to be met with: to be wounded among these people is generally to die. Of artificers and skilled mechanics, there are only cutlers, armorers, and goldsmiths; who, however, exhibit great ingenuity in the construction and decoration of the warriors' arms. A view of the interior of one of their armor-manufactories is given on the opposite page. The art of preparing gunpowder has been known for ages in the Caucasus, and the abundance of saltpetre renders the inhabitants independent of other countries for this important element of warfare; their mode of manufacture is, however, very primitive. It has been already stated that the women are the great manufacturers of clothes, which may be said to be the only manufacture which these people possess. They formerly traded with Persia and Turkey for their chain and other armor, and with Tartar tribes northward for salt; the equivalents on their part being their children and cattle. The Russians have annihilated both trades; and this is said to be one great cause of the hatred entertained against them by the Circassians.

The Circassians having no annals, and very few traditions, their early history is almost a blank. Much ingenuity and labor have been employed in endeavoring to trace their origin through the affinities of language. The success as yet has been very partial; but there can be no doubt that they came from the East. Authors differ, however, as to the nation or tribe from which they have descended: some maintain that they were originally Medes; while others affirm that they are a branch of the Arabians, whom they greatly resemble in their laws and customs: indeed, the Kabardahs claim this descent, and there is a common tradition among the Circassians that the whole people are descendants from Ishmael. They may be divided into two great classes: the Circassians proper, or *Tcherkessians*; and the *Tschetschenzes*, who inhabit Lesghia, or western Daghestan. They take the common name of *Adighe* or *Adeches*, a name denoting a *mountain-ravine on the sea*. But the word *Tcherkessians* is Tartar, and literally means *cut the road*; that is, *highwayman* or *robber*, one who makes communication unsafe. It also bears this signification: *tcherk*, to *cut off*, and *kes*, the *head*. The general name given to these people in the Caucasus is *Kasack*, whence some have inferred that they are of the same race with the Cossacks of the Don and the Volga, which is doubtless an error, for the word *Cossack* has a general, and not a national signification, and means a man who leads a wandering and martial life.

From these regions Greece received her first inhabitants, and in return appears to have sent back colonists, who settled on the Circassian coast, and ultimately fell under the Roman domination. In more modern times, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, they became subject to the kingdom of Georgia, whose queen, Tamar, is said to have spread a knowledge of Christianity among them. In 1424, they threw off the Georgian yoke, asserted their independence, and not only maintained it, but extended their boundaries so far, that they were at last brought into fierce conflict with the Tartars, who ultimately prevailed and made the Circassians their tributaries. They continued so till 1705, when they rose against their oppressors, and, by a decisive victory, effected their freedom.



**ARMOR MANUFACTORY IN CIRCASSIA**

Their first connection with Russia took place in 1555, when the princes of the *Besch Dag* submitted to the czar Vassili-Ivanovich. From that time the Russian power has been constantly increasing in the Caucasus. In 1781, Russia acquired the Kouban as a frontier; and, in 1784, the Turks built the fort Anapa, and thence directed their efforts to stir up the Circassians against their great enemy. Anapa, taken by the Russians in 1807, was restored to Turkey in 1812, at the peace of Bucharest, owing to Napoleon's expedition to Moscow. The quiet which followed this treaty was used by the Turks to convert the Circassians to Islamism, and thus implant in them an ever-during enmity to Russia. In 1829, Anapa again fell into the hands of the Russians; and, by the treaty of Adrianople, they also acquired all the other Turkish possessions on this coast. Upon this they ground

their claims of sovereignty over Circassia, which in fact was never under Turkish rule. The claim was indignantly scouted by the Circassians, who, knowing that, under the vigorous government of Russia, their robberies would be repressed, as well as their traffic in slaves, flew to arms, and for many years maintained a brave but unequal struggle; most of the country meanwhile, with the exception of some mountain-fastnesses, falling under the sway of the czar. Though till recently (when they rose in a general rebellion during the Russo-Turkish conflict of 1854, the result of which it is now impossible to foresee) no open war has for some time existed between them, a single-handed border warfare has long been carried on with the Cossacks that on all sides surround and watch them.

The province of Caucasus is bounded on the north by the governments of the Don Cossacks and Astrakhan, on the east by the Caspian sea, on the south by Circassia, and on the west by Circassia and the sea of Azov. Its greatest length from northwest to southeast is about three hundred and eighty miles, and its greatest breadth from north to south is one hundred and seventy miles, comprising an area of forty thousand square miles.

This province is traversed from north to south, near its centre, by a low ramification of the Caucasus mountains; but, with this exception, the surface is flat, consisting generally of an alluvion, which toward the east appears to be of very recent formation. It is not traversed by any river of importance (the Kouma, since the lower part of its course was lost in the sand, no longer deserves the name), but is watered on part of its northern frontier by the Manytch, and on the southern by the Kouban and the Terek.

The climate is in general very mild, and there are some fertile tracts, particularly in the neighborhood of the Terek, but a great part of the alluvial flats is covered with salt pools and marshes, which make the soil where they prevail altogether unfit for cultivation. The injury is, in some measure, compensated by the large quantities of excellent salt which is obtained from them. Some of the steppes yield tolerable pasture, on which numerous herds of cattle are reared.

The chief products of the soil are grain, including Indian corn, and wine. The mulberry thrives well, and considerable attention has recently been paid to the rearing of silkworms. Bees also are carefully attended to, and honey and wax form a considerable article of export.

Owing to the neighborhood of the warlike mountaineers of the Caucasus, a considerable army is always maintained within the province, and most of its towns are fortified. The population is composed of a great variety of half-savage tribes — Cossacks, Tartars, Circassians, &c., with some Russians and Armenians.

Stavropol, the new capital of the province, is a neat, fortified town, situated near the Kouban. Gheorghievsk, or *Georgievsk*, the old capital, and still the residence of the governor-general of Caucasus, is a small town, situated on a steep height near the left bank of the Kouma, or *Podkouvka*, ninety miles southeast of Stavropol. It is regularly built, and contains a government-house, one Greek and one Armenian church, six hospitals (mainly for the use of the army), a *lazaretto*, and several granaries. The inhabitants are composed principally of Cossacks of the Volga, who are engaged in agricultural pursuits, and Russians and Armenians. The environs are picturesque, and the air pure. The population is about three thousand.

Konstantinogorsk, twenty miles southwest of Gheorghievsk, is celebrated for its sulphur-baths; and at Kislavodsky there is acid-water. Karass, a neat town situated between the two last-named places, at the foot of the Besch Dagh (five mountains, four thousand three hundred feet high), is remarkable for a colony of Germans and Scotch. Mozdok is a commercial town, and one of the principal military stations on the line of the Terek. It was built in 1763, under Catherine II.

Kizliar is situated on the left bank of the Terek, fifty miles above its mouth. It is dull and sombre; a few of the houses are of brick, but the greater part are of wood. The situation being low, and exposed to inundations, is very unhealthy. The inhabitants are chiefly employed in agriculture. Kizliar, being an entrepot for the traffic between Astrakhan and Persia, carries on a prosperous trade, which is wholly in the hands of the Armenians. The exports are wine, brandy, oil of sesame, cotton and silk stuffs. The population, exclusive of the garrison, is about ten thousand.

The triangular portion of the Caucasian country bounded by the river Terek on the north, the Caspian on the east, the summits of the Caucasus on the southwest, and Circassia on the northwest, is generally known by the name of Daghestan, a name derived from the Tartar *Tagh stan*, signifying *a mountainous country*. It lies between the fortieth and forty-third degrees of north latitude, and the forty-sixth and forty-ninth degrees of east longitude. Its greatest length is about two hundred miles, and its breadth forty, comprising about nine thousand three hundred square miles. This is exclusive of the western portion, called *Leghislan*, or *Lesghia*, which is estimated to contain six or seven thousand square miles.

Daghestan consists partly of plains, but, as its name implies, chiefly of mountains, offsets from the Caucasus, which separate deep valleys as they traverse the province southeast, toward the plains lying along the Caspian sea. They are chiefly of limestone. In the southern parts of the province are numerous bituminous springs, some of which are worked, and afford, in addition to *petroleum*, an inexhaustible supply of black and white naphtha, while others have for ages emitted a burning stream, known by the name of *Indian fire*. (For a description of similar springs, see Shirvan, the adjoining Trans-Caucasian province.)

Notwithstanding the generally mountainous character of Daghestan, it comprises many valleys and level tracts of great fertility. Its climate is various: on the plains it is warm and unwholesome; on the slopes of the mountains it is more temperate and healthy; but still more decidedly so on the higher elevations. Agriculture is carefully attended to, and good crops of grain are produced; also silk, cotton, madder, flax, saffron, and tobacco. The vegetables and domestic animals are nearly the same with those of Europe. The wild animals are tigers, panthers, buffaloes, and camels, the latter also being domesticated.

The population of the lowlands is composed of a mongrel race of Persian, Arabian, Syriac, Turkish, and Tartar origin, mixed with the original Caucasians. They are of middle size, strong, and active. The mountains are inhabited by a variety of Caucasian tribes: among the most prominent are the Inghushes, the Lesghians, the Easts, the Kumiks, and, above all, the Tschetschenzes. The mountaineers are generally tall and well formed. They are brave and hospitable; but revengeful, given to falsehood, theft, and intrigue, and noisy and boisterous in their convivialities. The people generally are careful agriculturists and industrious fishermen, taking sturgeon and turtle in such quantities as to form a considerable export trade to Persia and Russia. The religion is chiefly Mohammedan, and their language is composed of dialects of the Tartar tongue, mixed with Armenian, Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew. The principal towns are Derbent, Tarki, Nizabad, and Kouba.

Derbent is an ancient but decayed town on the Caspian, and formed for many centuries the key of the Persian empire in this quarter. It is surrounded by strong walls, built of large stones; and on the summit of the hill, on the declivity of which the city stands, there is a fort or citadel, of a triangular figure. The streets are very narrow, and the houses mostly of one story, with a terraced roof. Large quantities of saffron are grown in the vicinity, and the inhabitants prepare rose-water and opium; but the trade of the place is small. Its population, composed chiefly of Georgians, Armenians, and Jews, is about twelve thousand. In the neighborhood is a famous tomb, said to be that of forty Saracen heroes, who were killed in battle against the "infidels," when Derbent was taken by the califs. The Mohammedan Lesghians still make pilgrimages to it. Kouba, fifty miles southwest of Derbent, is a considerable town; and at Bereikleï, twenty miles northwest, resides the khan of the Kaitaks, who bears the title of *ouzmeï*, and exercises a sort of sovereignty over the Akushas and the Kubashas.

The Tschetschenzes and Lesghians inhabit the northwestern portion of Daghestan, bordering on Circassia; and the latter are said to be the most predatory and ferocious of all the Caucasian nations. They are mostly Mohammedans, but a few vestiges of Christianity may be traced among them. They are divided into numerous tribes, whom the nature of their country keeps so isolated, that no such thing as a general confederacy or national union can be maintained among them. Their language has no analogy with any known tongue except that of the Samoides, of northern Siberia, to which it bears a distant resemblance: it is divided into numerous dialects, which have been reduced to eight classes, and the people using them comprise so many small states. The first of these is the Avar, which includes the Avars and fourteen other tribes resembling them. The Avars are believed to be the remains of the Avars, or *Huns*, who took refuge in this part of the Caucasus, and are probably of the same primitive stock with the Magyars of Hungary. The other chief tribes of Lesghians are the Akushas, the Kubashas, and the Kasi-Kumiks. The Akushas dwell on the Koisou, and form a republic, composed of about thirty villages. The Kubashas also live near the Koisou, in a large town of the same name, and eight dependent villages. They are a peaceful tribe, and are known throughout the Bast as the *Zer-kherans*, or *makers of coats-*

*of-mail*: they manufacture splendid armor, and fine cloth or shawls, which they exchange for cattle and produce. The Kasi-Kumiks dwell on a branch of the same river, and are governed by a khan, whose authority extends over a hundred villages. He resides at Chahar, and can raise six thousand men. They are zealous Mohammedans, and fiercely opposed to the Russians.

The Lesghians had long been the terror of surrounding nations ; but, in 1742, they were driven by the arms of Nadir Shah to seek protection from Russia, and swear allegiance to the czar. It was during this war, that the shah (having retaken the Trans-Caucasian provinces wrested from Persia by Peter the Great) attempted with forty thousand men to penetrate the defiles of the Caucasus, but was defeated at the pass of Dariel, the dangers of which passage in ancient times gave origin to the Persian proverb— " When the king is too happy, let him enter Dariel!"

Daghestan is the seat of the Caucasian war waged by Shaml and his followers, the Lesghians, the Tschetschenzes, and other tribes of the eastern section of the Caucasian range. This fierce conflict between the mountaineers of Daghestan with the Russians began about the commencement of the present century, on the absorption of this territory, with Georgia, by the Russian empire. It was formerly interrupted from time to time, but has now raged without respite for some twenty-five years. On the Russian side, Zizianoff, a prince of Georgian origin, was one of the first who, about forty years ago, struck the Tschetschenzes with awe. One of his most able successors was Yermoloff, equally respected and dreaded by the Caucasian tribes. He was recently living in Moscow, more than eighty years old, and in a kind of silent disgrace with the emperor. Paskiewitch replaced Yermoloff for a few years, and in 1832 was followed by Baron Rosen, to whose administration are ascribed the disasters suffered by Russia from 1832 to 1836.



**CAUCASIAN MOUNTAINEERS ON A PREDATORY EXCURSION**

About the year 1823, a sect of religious enthusiasts sprang up among the *ulemas* or Mohammedan clergy of the Caucasus. Sheik-Mansour was the forerunner of this sect. Nearly thirty years after his death, Khasi-Mollah or Khasi-Mohammed, standing upon the new creed, raised the standard of religious fanaticism for the defence of the national independence. The principal feature of this new theology is the belief in a certain perfectibility of the worn-out forms of Islamism. Khasi-Mollah claimed to be directly inspired and advised by God; and the revelations thus received were communicated by him to his immediate companions, called *murides* or *murshides*, who formed a warlike priesthood, and a kind of body-guard for the prophet. He was soon surrounded by numerous believers from all parts of Daghestan, and especially from among the

Lesghians and Tschetschenzes. Khasi-Mollah warred for two years against the Russians, but finally, at the storm of the village of Himry, in 1832, he met the death of a hero and of a prophet, fighting to the last, and, even after he had fallen, exciting his companions by inspiring songs. All the *murides* fell with him on the battlefield. Among them was a young man named ShamyI : struck by two balls, and pierced by a bayonet, he lay there, bathed in his blood, among the corpses of his companions.

The history of Shamy's escape after this battle is still unknown. A few months from the catastrophe of Himry, he was the first *muride* near the new *Iman*, named Hamsad Bey, who was assassinated by some of his rivals in 1834. ShamyI succeeded him, raised the standard of Khasi-Mollah, and the war of extermination began. He was born in 1797, at the same village of Himry, and at the age of thirty-seven became the chief of the Tschetschenzes. In person he is of medium size, with light hair-; his eyes, covered by long and bushy brows, are full of fire ; his beard, though white, does not give him the appearance of age. He is very abstemious, eats little, drinks water, and sleeps but a few hours. For a long time the fastness of Akulcho was his residence, whence he darted upon the foe. " Mohammed was the first, ShamyI is the second prophet of Allah!" is the war-cry of Daghestan.

In 1839, the Russian general Grabbe attacked ShamyI in his retreat of Akulcho. The fortress was dismantled by heavy artillery, but the Tschetschenzes did not suffer at all. Sheltered in vaults and crevices, they rushed out to fire their deadly rifles, and then disappeared. Several assaults were thus repulsed by them; but finally the rocks were mined, and at the fourth assault, after horrible bloodshed, the Russians took the fortress, on the 22d of August. But ShamyI was not to be found among the dead. With a few *murides* he had retreated to the caverns of the mountain. There they constructed a kind of raft, which they threw into the stream at the foot of the rocks. They sprang on this floating conveyance, while they were fired at from both banks of the river. All perished but one, who leaped into the current, reached a sure spot, and disappeared in the mountains. This was ShamyI. After this defeat, he visited the western tribes of the Caucasus, and preached among them the holy war against Russia, but without success. On his return he selected a new abode in the fortress of Dargo, situated in an almost impregnable position. Grabbe attacked him there in 1842. When the Russian army had completely entered the primitive forests and defiles around Dargo, it was surrounded by the warriors of ShamyI, and more than half of it destroyed. This was the most terrible defeat sustained by Russia during this whole protracted contest.

The war continued to be disastrous for the imperial troops. The commanders were changed again and again, and finally Prince Woronzow was sent there with unlimited powers. At that moment the authority of ShamyI was absolute and extensive. He ruled the Lesghians (including the Avars), the Tschetschenzes, the Kists, and the Kumiks. ShamyI, not only a warrior, but a legislator, had established over the unruly princes of these tribes a kind of theocratic monarchy; he had united tribes hitherto hostile to each other, organized a numerous military force, and in 1843 commanded above five thousand of the best cavalry in the world. His body-guard was then a thousand men. When Woronzow took the command of the Russian army, his first idea was to avenge the defeat sustained at Dargo. He cut roads through the forests, and indeed felled the trees entirely for miles of country. Heroic feats on both sides signalized this campaign; but Dargo was finally taken and destroyed in the course of the year 1845. In 1846, ShamyI descended with nearly twenty thousand horse upon the western side of the Caucasus, invaded the Kabardians, and, not being able to bring them to his side, pillaged the country, and returned to Daghestan without the Russians overtaking him.

Since that time, Woronzow has slowly proceeded to enclose ShamyI in an iron circle, and the area of his activity has narrowed more and more. From time to time, he has been wont to rush from his retreat upon the enemy, and to inflict on him the severest blows, but has not been able to carry on the war on a large scale. A visionary priest, an enthusiastic prophet, a warrior and a legislator, for a moment it seemed his destiny to become the sovereign of the Caucasus, and to secure his country against the encroachments of Russia. More recently this has appeared impossible, and it remains to be seen whether it can be revived by the events of the Turkish war. One thing is certain, and that is, that whatever may be the final result, the Russian arms in Asia will meet no more redoubtable or heroic antagonist than ShamyI.