DISCOVERIES AMONG THE RUINS OF NINEVEH AND BABYLON; WITH TRAVELS IN ARMENIA, KURDISTAN, AND THE DESERT: BEING THE RESULT OF A SECOND EXPEDITION UNDERTAKEN FOR THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

By Austen H. Layard, M.P., New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 329 & 331 Pearl Street, Franklin Square. 1856. 586p.

Sir Austin Henry Layard (1817-1894) was an English traveler, art historian, politician and diplomat. He is well known as the excavator of Nineveh and Nimrud, ancient Assyrian cities in the mid-XIX century, and the founder of the famous Assyrian king Assurbanapals's library. The results of his works in Mesopotamia had appeared in several publications - in the extensive book "The Monuments of Nineveh" (2 volumes, London, 1849), "Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon with travels in Armenia, Kurdistan, and the desert" (London, 1853), "A Second series of the Monuments of Nineveh" (London, 1853). As a diplomat A.H.Layard was appointed as envoy extraordinary to Spain in 1869 and ambassador to the Ottoman empire in 1877.

During his travels as an excavator and diplomat as well Sir A.H.Layard had studied national minorities of the Ottoman empire (Armenians, Assyrians, Kurds etc.). The Editorial board finds this book useful for those who are interested in the everyday life and condition of Armenians and other peoples in the historical Armenia to be acknowledged through the eyes of Sir A.H.Layard. With this in mind were chosen four chapters of this monograph which contain extensive references to Armenians and Western Armenia (Chapters I, II, XVIII, XIX).

CHAPTER I (pp. 1-34).

THE TRUSTEES OR THE BRITISH MUSEUM RESUME EXCAVATIONS AT NINEVEH. - DEPARTURE FROM CONSTANTINOPLE. - DESCRIPTION OF OUR PARTY. - CAWAL YUSUF. - ROADS RROLIL TREBIZOND TO ERZEROOM. - DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY. -VARZAHAN AND ARMENIAN CHURCHES. - ERZEROOM. - RESHID PASHA. - THE DUDJOOK TRIBES. - SHAHAN BEY. - TURKISH REFORM. - JOURNEY THROUGH ARMENIA. - AN ARMENIAN BISHOP. - THE LAKES OF SHAILU AND NAZIK. - THE LAKE OF WAN.

AFTER a few months' residence in England during the year 1848, to recruit a constitution worn by long exposure to the extremes of an Eastern climate, I received orders to proceed to my post at Her Majesty's Embassy in Turkey. The Trustees of the British Museum did not, at that time, contemplate further excavations on the site of ancient Nineveh. Ill health and limited time had prevented me from placing before the public, previous to my return to the East, the results of my first researches with the

illustrations of the monuments and copies of the inscriptions recovered from the ruins of Assyria. They were not published until some time after my departure, and did not consequently receive that careful superintendence and revision necessary to works of this nature. It was at Constantinople that I first learnt the general interest felt in England in the discoveries, and that they had been universally received as fresh illustrations of Scripture and prophecy, as well as of ancient history sacred and profane.

And let me here, at the very outset, gratefully acknowledge that generous spirit of English criticism which overlooks the incapacity and shortcomings of the laborer when his object is worthy of praise, and that object is sought with sincerity and singleness of purpose. The gratitude, which I deeply felt for encouragement rarely equalled, could be best shown by cheerfully consenting, without hesitation, to the request made to me by the Trustees of the British Museum, urged by public opinion, to undertake the superintendence of a second expedition into Assyria. Being asked to furnish a plan of operations, I stated what appeared to me to be the course best calculated to produce interesting and important results, and to enable us to obtain the most accurate information on the ancient history, language, and arts, not only of Assyria, but of its sister kingdom, Babylonia. Perhaps my plan was too vast and general to admit of performance or warrant adoption. I was merely directed to return to the site of Nineveh, and to continue the researches commenced amongst its ruins.

Arrangements were hastily, and of course inadequately, made in England. The assistance of a competent artist was most desirable, to portray with fidelity those monuments which injury and decay had rendered unfit for removal. Mr. F. Cooper was selected by the Trustees of the British Museum to accompany the expedition in this capacity. Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, already well known to many of my readers for the share he had taken in my first discoveries, quitted England with him. They both joined me at Constantinople. Dr. Sandwith, an English physician on a visit to the East, was induced to form one of our party. One Abd-el-Messiab, a Catholic Syrian of Mardin, an active and trustworthy servant during my former residence in Assyria, was fortunately at this time in the capital, and again entered my service: my other attendants were Mohammed Agha, a cawass, and an Armenian named Serkis. The faithful Bairakdar, who had so well served me during my previous journey, had accompanied the English commission for the settlement of the boundaries between Turkey and Persia; with the understanding, however, that he was to meet me at Mosul, in case I should return. Cawal Yusuf, the head of the Preachers of the Yezidis, with four chiefs of the districts in the neighborhood of Diarbakir, who had been for some months in Constantinople, completed my party.

After my departure from Mosul, in 1847, the military conscription, enforced amongst the Mussulman inhabitants of the Pashalic, was extended to the Yezidis, who, with the Christians, had been previously exempted from its operation on the general law sanctioned by the Koran, and hitherto acted upon by most Mohammedan nations, that none but true believers can serve in the armies of the state. On the ground that being of

no recognised infidel sect, they must necessarily be included, like the Druses and Ansyri of Mount Lebanon, amongst Mussulmans, the Government had recently endeavored to raise recruits for the regular troops amongst the Yezidis. The new regulations had been carried out with great severity, and had given rise to many acts of cruelty and oppression on the part of the local authorities. Besides the feeling common to all Easterns against compulsory service in the army, the Yezidis had other reasons for opposing the orders of the Government. They could not become *nizam*, or disciplined soldiers, without openly violating the rites and observances enjoined by their faith. The bath, to which Turkish soldiers are compelled weekly to resort, is a pollution to them, when taken in common with Mussulmans; the blue color, and certain portions of the Turkish uniform are absolutely prohibited by their law; and they cannot eat several articles of food included in the rations distributed to the troops. The recruiting officers refused to listen to these objections, enforcing their orders with extreme and unnecessary severity. The Yezidis, always ready to suffer for their faith, resisted, and many died under the tortures indicted upon them. They were, moreover, still exposed to the oppression and illegal exactions of the local governors. Their children were still lawful objects of public sale, and, notwithstanding the introduction of the reformed system of government into the provinces, the parents were subject to persecution, and even to death, on account of their religion. In this state of things, Hussein Bey and Sheikh Nasr, the chiefs of the whole community, hearing that I was at Constantinople, determined to send a deputation to lay their grievances before the Sultan, hoping that through my assistance they could obtain access to some of the Ministers of State. Cawal Yusuf and his companions were selected for the mission; and money was raised by subscriptions from the sect to meet the expenses of their journey.

After encountering many difficulties and dangers, they reached the capital and found out my abode. I lost no time in presenting them to Sir Stratford Canning, who, ever ready to exert his powerful influence in the cause of humanity, at once brought their wrongs to the notice of the Porte. Through his kindly intercession a firman, or imperial order, was granted to the Yezidis, which freed them from all illegal impositions, forbade the sale of their children as slaves, secured to them the full enjoyment of their religion, and placed them on the same footing as other sects of the empire. It was further promised that arrangements should be made to release them from such military regulations as rendered their service in the army incompatible with the strict observance of their religious duties. So often can influence, well acquired and well directed, be exercised in the great cause of humanity, without distinction of persons or of creeds! This is but one of the many instances in which Sir Stratford Canning has added to the best renown of the British name.

Cawal Yusuf, having fulfilled his mission, eagerly accepted my proposal to return with me to Mosul. His companions had yet to obtain certain documents from the Porte, and were to remain at Constantinople until their business should be completed. The Cawal still retained the dress of his sect and office. His dark face and regular and

expressive features were shaded by a black turban, and a striped aba of coarse texture was thrown loosely over a robe of red silk.

Our arrangements were complete by the 28th of August (1849), and on that day we left the Bosphorus by an English steamer bound for Trebizond. The size of my party and its consequent incumbrances rendering a caravan journey absolutely necessary, I determined to avoid the usual tracks, and to cross eastern Armenia and Kurdistan, both on account of the novelty of part of the country in a geographical point of view, and its political interest as having only recently been brought under the immediate control of the Turkish government.

We disembarked at Trebizond on the 31st, and on the following day commenced our land journey. The country between this port and Erzeroom has been frequently traversed and described. Through it pass the caravan routes connecting Persia with the Black Sea, the great lines of intercourse and commerce between Europe and central Asia. The roads usually frequented are three in number. The summer, or upper, road is the shortest, but is most precipitous, and, crossing very lofty mountains, is closed after the snows commence; it is called *Tchaïrler*, from its fine upland pastures, on which the horses are usually fed when caravans take this route. The middle road has few advantages over the upper, and is rarely followed by merchants, who prefer the lower, although making a considerable detour by Gumish Khaneh, or the Silver Mines. The three unite at the town of Baiburt, midway between the sea and Erzeroom. Although an active and daily increasing trade is carried on by these roads, no mean whatever have until recently been taken to improve them. They consist of mere mountain tracks, deep in mud or dust according to the season of the year. The bridges, built when the erection and repair of public works were imposed upon the local governors, and deemed a sacred duty by the semi-independent hereditary families, who ruled in the provinces as Pashas or Dereh-Beys, have been long permitted to fall into decay, and commerce is frequently stopped for days by the swollen torrent or fordless stream. This has been one of the many evil results of the system of centralisation so vigorously commenced by Sultan Mahmoud, and so steadily carried out during the present reign. The local governors, receiving a fixed salary, and rarely permitted to remain above a few months in one office, take no interest whatever in the prosperity of the districts placed under their care. The funds assigned by the Porte for public works, small and totally inadequate, are squandered away or purloined long before any part can be applied to the objects in view.

Since my visit to Trebizond, a road for carts has been commenced, which is to lead from that port to the Persian frontiers; but it will, probably, like other undertakings of the kind, be abandoned long before completed, or, if ever completed, will be permitted at once to fall to ruin from the want of common repair. And yet the Persian trade is one of the chief sources of revenue of the Turkish empire, and unless conveniences are afforded for its prosecution, will speedily pass into other hands. The southern shores of the Black sea, twelve years ago rarely visited by a foreign vessel, are now coasted by

steamers belonging to three companies, which touch nearly weekly at the principal ports; and there is commerce and traffic enough for more. The establishment of steam communication between the ports and the capital has given an activity previously unknown to internal trade, and bas brought the inhabitants of distant provinces of the empire into a contact with the capital highly favorable to the extension of civilization and to the enforcement of the legitimate authority of the government. The want of proper harbors is a considerable drawback in the navigation of a sea so unstable and dangerous as the Euxine. Trebizond has a mere roadstead, and from its position is otherwise little calculated for a great commercial port, which, like many other places, it has become, rather from its hereditary claims as the representative of a city once famous, than from any local advantages.

The only harbor on the southern coast is that of Batoun, nor is there any retreat for vessels on the Circassian shores. This place is therefore probably destined to become the emporium of trade, both from its safe and spacious port, and from the facility it affords of internal communication with Persia, Georgia, and Armenia. From it the Turkish government might have been induced to construct the road since commenced at Trebizond, had not a political influence, always hostile to any real improvement in the Ottoman empire, opposed it with that pertinacity which is generally sure to command success.

At the back of Trebizond, as indeed along the whole of this singularly bold and beautiful coast, the mountains rise in lofty peaks, and are wooded with trees of enormous growth and admirable quality, furnishing an unlimited supply of timber for commerce or war. Innumerable streams force their way to the sea through deep and rocky ravines. The more sheltered spots are occupied by villages and hamlets, chiefly inhabited by a hardy and industrious race of Greeks. In spring, the choicest flowers perfume the air, and luxuriant creepers clothe the limbs of gigantic trees. In summer, the richest pastures enamel the uplands, and the inhabitants of the coasts drive their flocks and herds to the higher regions of the hills. The forests, nourished by the exhalations and rains engendered by a large expanse of water, form a belt, from thirty to fifty miles in breadth, along the Black Sea. Beyond, the dense woods cease, as do also the rugged ravine and rocky peak. They are succeeded by still higher mountains, mostly rounded in their forms, some topped with eternal snow, barren of wood and even of vegetation, except during the summer, when they are covered with Alpine flowers and herbs. The villages in the valleys are inhabited by Turks, Lazes (Mussulmans), and Armenians; the soil is fertile, and produces much corn.

Our journey to Erzeroom was performed without incident. A heavy and uninterrupted rain for two days tried the patience and temper of those who for the first time encountered the difficulties and incidents of Eastern travel. The only place of any interest, passed during our ride, was a small Armenian village, the remains of a larger, with the ruins of three early Christian churches, or baptisteries. These remarkable buildings, of which many examples exist, belong to an order of architecture peculiar to

the most eastern districts of Asia Minor and to the ruins of ancient Armenian cities[1], on the border of Turkey and Persia. The one, of which I have given a sketch, is an octagon, and may have been a baptistery. The interior walls are still covered with the remains of elaborate frescoes representing scripture events and national saints. The colors are vivid, and the forms, though rude, not inelegant or incorrect, resembling those of the frescoes of the Lower Empire still seen in the celebrated Byzantine church at Trebizond, and in the chapels of the convents of Mount Athos. The knotted capitals of the thin tapering columns grouped together, the peculiar arrangement of the stones over the doorway, supporting each other by a zigzag, and the decorations in general, call to mind the European Gothic of the middle ages. These churches date probably before the twelfth century: but there are no inscriptions, or other clue, to fix their precise epoch, and the various styles and modifications of the architecture have not been hitherto sufficiently studied to enable us to determine with accuracy the time to which any peculiar ornaments or forms may belong. Yet there are many interesting questions connected with this Armenian architecture which well deserve elucidation. From it was probably derived much that passed into the Gothic, whilst the Tatar conquerors of Asia Minor adopted it, as will be hereafter seen, for their mausoleums and places of worship. It is peculiarly elegant both in its decorations, its proportions, and the general arrangement of the masses, and might with advantage be studied by the modem architect. Indeed, Asia Minor contains a mine of similar materials unexplored and almost unknown.

The churches of Varzahan, according to the information I received from an aged inhabitant of the village, had been destroyed some fifty years before by the Lazes. The oldest people of the place remembered the time when divine worship was still performed within their walls.

We reached Erzeroom on the 8th, and were most hospitably received by the British consul, Mr. Brant, a gentleman who has long, well, and honorably sustained our influence in this part of Turkey, and who was the first to open an important field for our commerce in Asia Minor. With him I visited the commander-in-chief of the Turkish forces in Anatolia, who had recently returned from a successful expedition against the wild mountain tribes of central Armenia. Reshid Pasha, known as the "*Guzlu*," or "the Wearer of Spectacles," enjoyed the advantages of an European education, and had already distinguished himself in the military career. With a knowledge of the French language he united a taste for European literature, which, during his numerous expeditions into districts unknown to western travellers, had led him to examine their graphical features, and to make inquiries into the manners and religion of their inhabitants. His last exploit had been the subjugation of the tribes inhabiting the Dudjook Mountains to the south-west of Erzeroom, long in open rebellion against the Sultan. The account he gave me of the country and its occupants, much excited a

[1] Particularly of Ani. Mons. Texier is, I believe, the only traveller who has attempted to give elaborate plans, elevations, drawings, and restorations of these interesting edifices.

curiosity which the limited time at my command did not enable me to gratify. According to the Pasha, the tribes are idolatrous, worshipping venerable oaks, great trees, huge solitary rocks, and other grand features of nature. He was inclined to attribute to them mysterious and abominable rites. This calumny, the resource of ignorance and intolerance, from which even primitive Christianity did not escape, has generally been spread in the East against those whose tenets are unknown or carefully concealed, and who, in Turkey, are included under the general term, indicating their supposed obscene ceremonies, of Cheragh-sonderan, or "Extinguishers of Lights." They have a chief priest, who is, at the same time, a kind of political head of the sect. He had recently been taken prisoner, sent to Constantinople, and from thence exiled to some town on the Danube. They speak a Kurdish dialect, though the various septs into which they are divided have Arabic names, apparently showing a southern origin. Of their history and early migrations, however, the Pasha could learn nothing. The direct road between Trebizond and Mesopotamia once passed through their districts, and the ruins of spacious and well-built khans are still seen at regular intervals on the remains of the old causeway. But from a remote period, the country had been closed against the strongest caravans, and no traveller would venture into the power of tribes notorious for their cruelty and lawlessness. The Pasha spoke of re-opening the road, rebuilding caravanserais, and restoring trade to its ancient channel-good intentions, not wanting amongst Turks of his class, and which, if carried out, might restore a country rich in natural resources to more than its ancient prosperity. The account he gave me is not perhaps to be strictly relied on, but a district hitherto inaccessible may possibly contain the remains of ancient races, monuments of antiquity, and natural productions of sufficient importance to merit the attention of the traveller in Asia Minor.

The city of Erzeroom is rapidly declining in importance, and is almost solely supported by the Persian transit trade. It would be nearly deserted if that traffic were to be thrown into a new channel by the construction of the direct road from Batoun to the Persian frontiers. It contains no buildings of any interest, with the exception of a few ruins of those monuments of early Mussulman domination, the elaborately ornamented portico and minaret faced with glazed tiles of rich yet harmonious coloring, and the conical mausoleum, peculiar to most cities of early date in Asia Minor. The modem Turkish edifices, dignified with the names of palaces and barracks, are meeting the fate of neglected mud. Their crumbling walls can scarcely shelter their inmates in a climate almost unequalled in the habitable globe for the rigor of its winters.

The districts of Armenia and Kurdistan, through which lay our road from Erzeroom to Mosul, are sufficiently unknown and interesting to merit more than a casual mention. The map will show that our route by the lake of Wan, Bitlis, and Jezirah was nearly a direct one. It had been but recently opened to caravans. The haunts of the last of the Kurdish rebels were on the shores of this lake. After the fall of the most powerful of their chiefs, Beder Khan Bey, they had one by one been subdued and carried away into captivity. Only a few months had, however, elapsed since the Beys of Bitlis, who had

longest resisted the Turkish arms, had been captured. With them rebellion was extinguished for the time in Kurdistan.

Our caravan consisted of my own party, with the addition of a muleteer and his two assistants, natives of Bitlis, who furnished me with seventeen horses and mules from Erzeroom to Mosul. The first day's ride, as is customary in the East, where friends accompany the traveller far beyond the city gates, and where the preparations for a journey are so numerous that everything cannot well be remembered, scarcely exceeded nine miles. We rested for the night in the village of Guli, whose owner, one Shahan Bey, had been apprised of my intended visit. He had rendered his newly-built house as comfortable as his means would permit for our accommodation, and, after providing us with an excellent supper, passed the evening with me. Descended from an ancient family of Dereh-Beys he had inherited the hospitality and polished manners of a class now almost extinct, and of which a short account may not be uninteresting.

The Turkish conquerors, after the overthrow of the Greek empire, parcelled out their newly acquired dominions into military fiefs. These tenures varied subsequently in size from the vast possessions of the great families, with their hosts of retainers, such as the Kara Osmans of Magnesia, the Pasvan Oglus, and others, to the small *spahiliks* of Turkey in Europe, whose owners were obliged to perform personal military service when called upon by the state. Between them, of middle rank, were the Dereh-Beys, literally the"Lords of the Valley," who resided in their fortified castles, or villages, and scarcely owned more than a nominal allegiance to the Sultan, although generally ready to accompany him in a great national war against the infidels, or in expeditions against too powerful and usurping subjects, Sultan Mahmoud, a man of undoubted genius and of vast views for the consolidation and centralisation of his empire, aimed not only at the extirpation of all those great families, which, either by hereditary right or by local influence, had assumed a kind of independence; but of all the smaller Dereh-Beys and Spahis. This gigantic scheme, which changed the whole system of tenure and local administration, whether political or financial, he nearly carried out, partly by force of arms, and partly by treachery. Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid, freed from the difficulties and embarrassments with which an unfortunate war with Russia and successful rebellions in Albania and Egypt, had surrounded his father, has completed what Mahmoud commenced. Not only have the few remaining Dereh-Beys been destroyed or removed one by one, but even military tenure has been entirely abolished by arbitrary enactments, which have given no compensation to the owners, and have destroyed the only hereditary nobility in the empire. Opinions may differ as to the wisdom of the course pursued, and as to its probable results. Whilst greater personal security has been undoubtedly established throughout the Ottoman dominions, whilst the subjects of the Sultan are, theoretically at least, no longer exposed to the tyranny of local chiefs, but are governed by the more equitable and tolerant laws of the empire; his throne has lost the support of a race bred to military life, undisciplined, it is true, but brave and devoted, always ready to join the holy standard when unfurled against the enemies of the nation and its religion, a race who carried the Turkish arms into the heart of Europe,

and were the terror of Christendom. Whether a regular army, disciplined as far as possible after the fashion of Europe, will supply the place of the old Turkish irregular cavalry and infantry, remains to be seen, and, for reason which it is scarcely necessary to enter into, may fairly be doubted. With the old system the spirit which supported it is fast dying away, and it may be questioned whether, in Mussulman Turkey, discipline can ever compensate for its loss. The country has certainly not yet recovered from the change. During the former state of things, with all the acts of tyranny and oppression which absolute power engendered, there was more happiness amongst the people, and more prosperity in the land. The hereditary chiefs looked upon their Christian subjects as so much property to be improved and protected, like the soil itself. They were a source of revenue; consequently heavy taxes which impeded labor, and drove the laborer from the land, were from interest rarely imposed upon them. The Government left the enforcement of order to the local chiefs; all the tribute received from them was so much dear gain to the treasury, because no collectors were needed to raise it, nor troops to enforce its payment. The revenues of the empire were equal to great wars, and there was neither public debt nor embarrassment. Now that the system of centralisation has been fully carried out, the revenues are more than absorbed in the measures necessary to collect them, and the officers of government, having no interest whatever in the districts over which they are placed, neglect all that may tend to the prosperity and well-being of their inhabitants. It may be objected in extenuation that it is scarcely fair to judge of the working of a system so suddenly introduced, and that Turkey is merely in a transition state; the principle it has adopted, whatever its abuse, being fundamentally correct. One thing is certain, that Turkey must, sooner or later, have gone through this change.

It is customary to regard these old Turkish lords as inexorable tyrants - robber chiefs who lived on the plunder of travellers and of their subjects. That there were many who answered to this description cannot be denied; but they were, I believe, exceptions. Amongst them were some rich in virtues and high and noble feeling. It has been frequently my lot to find a representative of this nearly extinct class in some remote and almost unknown spot in Asia Minor or Albania. I have been received with affectionate warmth at the end of a day's journey by a venerable Bey or Agha in his spacious mansion, now fast crumbling to ruin, but still bright with the remains of rich, yet tasteful, oriental decoration; his long beard, white as snow, falling low on his breast; his many-folded turban shadowing his benevolent yet manly countenance, and his limbs enveloped in the noble garments rejected by the new generation; his hall open to all comers, the guest neither asked from whence he came or whither he was going, dipping his hands with him in the same dish; his servants, standing with reverence before him, rather his children than his servants; his revenues spent in raising fountains[2] on the

[2] The most unobservant and hasty traveller in Turkey would soon become acquainted with this fact, could he read the modest and pious inscription, caned in relief on a small marble tablet of the purest white, adorning almost every half-ruined fountain at which he stops to refresh himself by the wayside.

wayside for the weary traveller, or in building caravanserais on the dreary plain; not only professing but practising all the duties and virtues enjoined by the Koran, which are Christian duties and virtues too; in his manners, his appearance, his hospitality, and his faithfulness a perfect model for a Christian gentleman. The race is fast passing away, and I feel grateful in being able to testify, with a few others, to its existence once, against prejudice, intolerance, and so called reform.

But to return to our host at Guli. Shahan Bey, although not an old man, was a very favorable specimen of the class I have described. He was truly, in the noble and expressive phraseology of the East, an "Ojiak Zadeh," "a child of the hearth," a gentleman born. His family had originally migrated from Daghistan, and his father, a pasha, had distinguished himself in the wars with Russia. He entertained me with animated accounts of feuds between his ancestors and the neighbouring chiefs, when without their armed retainers neither could venture beyond their immediate territories, contrasting, with good sense and a fair knowledge of his subject, the former with the actual state of the country. On the following morning, when I bade him adieu, he would not allow me to reward either himself or his servants, for hospitality extended to so large a company. He rode with me for some distance on my route, with his greyhounds and followers, and then returned to his village.

From Guli we crossed a high range of mountains, running nearly east and west, by a pass called Ali-Baba, or Ala-Baba, enjoying from the summit an extensive view of the plain of Pasvin, once one of the most thickly-peopled and best cultivated districts in Armenia. The Christian inhabitants were partly induced by promises of land and protection, and partly compelled by force, to accompany the Russian army into Georgia after the end of the last war with Turkey. By similar means that part of the Pashalic of Erzeroom adjoining the Russian territories was almost stripped of its most industrious Armenian population. To the south of us role the snowcapped mountains of the Bin Ghiul, or the "Thousand Lakes," in which the Araxes and several confluents of the Euphrates have their source. We descended from the pass into undulating and barren downs. The villages, thinly scattered over the low hills, were deserted by their inhabitants, who, at this season of the year, pitch their tents and seek pasture for their flocks in the uplands. We encamped for the night near one of these villages, called Gundi-Miran, or, in Turkish, Bey-Kiui, which has the same meaning, "the village of the chief." A man who remained to watch the crops of corn and barley went to the tents, and brought us such provisions as we required. The inhabitants of this district are Kurds, and are still divided into tribes. The owners of Gundi-Miran, and the surrounding villages are the Ziraklu (the armour-wearers), who came originally from the neighbourhood of Diarbekir. Within a few months of our visit they were in open rebellion against the government, and the country had been closed against travellers and caravans.

Next day we continued our journey amongst undulating hills, abounding in flocks of the great and lesser bustard. Innumerable sheep-walk branched from the beaten

path, a sign that villages were near; but, like those we had passed the day before, they had been deserted for the *yilaks*, or summer pastures. These villages are still such as they were when Xenophon traversed Armenia. “Their houses," says he, "were under ground; the mouth resembling that of a well, but spacious below: there was an entrance dug for the cattle, but the inhabitants descended by ladders. In these houses were goats, sheep, cows, and fowls with their young."[3] The low hovels, mere holes in the hill-side, and the common refuge of man, poultry, and cattle, cannot be seen from any distance, and they are purposely built away from the road to escape the unwelcome visits of travelling government officers and marching troops. It is not uncommon for a traveller to receive the first intimation of his approach to a village by finding his horse's fore feet down a chimney, and himself taking his place unexpectedly in the family circle through the roof. Numerous small streams wind among the valleys, marking by meandering lines of perpetual green their course to the Arras, or Araxes. We crossed that river about midday by a ford not more than three feet deep, but the bed of the stream is wide, and after rains, and during the spring, is completely filled by an impassable torrent. On its southern bank we found a caravan reposing, the horses and mules feeding in the long grass, the travellers sleeping in the shade of their piled up bales of goods. Amongst the merchants we recognised several natives of Mosul who trade with Erzeroom, changing dates and coarse Mosul fabrics for a fine linen made at Riza, - a small place on the Black Sea, near Trebizond, - and much worn by the wealthy and by women.

During the afternoon we crossed the western spur of the Tiektab Mountains, a high and bold range with three well defined peaks, which had been visible from the summit of the Ala Baba pass. From the crest we had the first view of Subhan, or Sipan, Dagh,[4] a magnificent conical peak, covered with eternal snow, and rising abruptly from the plain to the north of Lake Wan. It is a conspicuous and beautiful object from every part of the surrounding country. We descended into the wide and fertile plain of Hinnis. The town was just visible in the distance, but we left it to the right, and halted for the night in the large Armenian village of Kosli, after a ride of more than nine hours. I was

[3] Anabasis, lib. IV. c. 5.

[4] Sipan is a Kurdish corruption of Subhan, i.e. Praise. The mountain is so called because a tradition asserts that whilst Noah was carried to and fro by the waters of the deluge, the ark struck against its peak, and the patriarch, alarmed by the shock, exclaimed "Subhanu-llah," "Praise be to God!" It has also been conjectured that the name is derived from "Surp," an Armenian word meaning "holy." It has only been ascended once as far as I am aware, by Europeans. Mr. Brant, the Bri1ish consul of Erzeroom, accompanied by Lieut. Glascott and Dr. Dickson, reached the summit on the 1st of September, 1838, after experiencing considerable fatigue and inconvenience from some peculiarity in the atmosphere (not, it would appear, the result of any very considerable elevation). They found within the cone a small lake, apparently filling the hollow of a crater; and scoria and lava, met with in abundance during the ascent, indicated the existence, at some remote period, of a volcano. Unfortunately, the barometers with which the party were provided, were out of order, and Mr. Brant has only been able to estimate the height of the mountain by approximation, at 10,000 feet, which I believe to be under the mark. (See Mr.Brant's highly interesting memoir in the tenth volume of the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, p. 49.)

received at the guest-house[5] with great hospitality by one Misrab Agha, a Turk, to whom the village formerly belonged as Spahilik or military tenure, and who, deprived of his hereditary rights, had now farmed its revenues. He hurried with a long stick among the low houses, and heaps of dried dung, piled up in every open space for winter fuel, collecting fowls, curds, bread, and barley, abusing at the same time the *tanzimat*, which compelled such exalted travellers as ourselves, he said, “to pay for the provisions we condescended to accept." The inhabitants were not, however, backward in furnishing us with all we wanted, and the flourish of Misrab Agha's stick was only the remains of an old habit. I invited him to supper with me, an invitation he gladly accepted, having himself contributed a tender lamb roasted whole toward our entertainment.

The inhabitants of Kosli could scarcely be distinguished either by their dress or by their general appearance from the Kurds. They seemed prosperous and were on the best terms with the Mussulman farmer of their tithes. This village, with others in the district, had been nearly deserted after the Russian war, the inhabitants migrating into Georgia. Several families had recently returned, but having finished their harvest, were desirous of recrossing the frontier, probably a maneuver to avoid the payment of certain dues and taxes. Of this Misrab Agha was fully aware. "The ill-mannered fellows," exclaimed he, "having filled their bellies with good things, and taken away the fat of the land, want to go back to the Muscovites; but they deceive themselves, they must now sit where they are." The emigrants did not indeed speak very favourably of the condition of those who had settled in Russia. Many wish to return to their old villages in Turkey, where they can enjoy far greater liberty and independence. This was subsequently confirmed to me by others who had come back to their native settlements. The Russian government, however, by a strict military surveillance along the Georgian frontiers, prevents as far as possible this desertion.

Kosli stands at the foot of the hills forming the southern boundary of the plain of Hinnis, through which flows a branch of the Murad Su, or Lower Euphrates. We forded this river near the ruins of a bridge at Kara Kupri. The plain is generally well cultivated, the principal produce being corn and hemp. The villages, which are thickly scattered over it, have the appearance of extreme wretchedness, and, with their low houses and heaps of dried manure piled upon the roofs and in the open spaces around, look more like gigantic dunghills than human habitations. The Kurds and Armenian Christians, both hardy and industrious races, are pretty equally divided in numbers, and live sociably in the same filth and misery. The extreme severity of the winter - the snow lying deep on the ground for some months - prevents the cultivation of fruit trees, and the

[5] Almost every village in Turkey, not on a high road, and not provided with a caravanserai or khan, contains a house reserved exclusively for the entertainment of guests, in which travellers are not only lodged, but fed, gratuitously. It is maintained by the joint contribution of the villagers, or sometimes by the charitable bequests of individuals, and is under the care either of the chief of the village, or of a person expressly named for the purpose, and called the Oda-Bashi, the chief of the guestroom. Since the introduction of the *tanzimat* (reformed system), this custom is rapidly falling into disuse in most parts of Turkey frequented by European travellers.

complete absence of wood gives the country a desolate aspect. Bustards, cranes, and waterfowl of various kinds abound.

We left the plain of Hinnis by a pass through the mountain range of Zernak. In the valleys we found clusters of black tents belonging to the nomad Kurds, and the hill-sides were covered with their flocks. The summit of a high peak overhanging the road is occupied by the ruins of a castle formerly held by Kurdish chiefs, who levied black-mail on travellers, and carried their depredations into the plains. On reaching the top of the pass we had an uninterrupted view of the Subhan Dagh. From the village of Karagol, where we halted for the night, it rose abruptly before us. This magnificent peak, with the rugged mountains of Kurdistan, the river Euphrates winding through the plain, the peasants driving the oxen over the corn on the threshing-floor, and the groups of Kurdish horsemen with their long spears and flowing garments, formed one of those scenes of Eastern travel which leave an indelible impression on the imagination, and bring back in after years indescribable feelings of pleasure and repose.

The threshing-floor, which added so much to the beauty and interest of the picture at Karagol, had been seen in all the villages we had passed during our day's journey. The abundant harvest had been gathered in, and the corn was now to be threshed and stored for the winter. The process adopted is simple, and nearly such as it was in patriarchal times. The children either drive horses round and round over the heaps, or standing upon a sledge stuck full of sharp flints on the under part, are drawn by oxen over the scattered sheaves. Such were "the threshing-sledges armed with teeth" mentioned by Isaiah. In no instance are the animals muzzled - "thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn;" but they linger to pick up a scanty mouthful as they are urged on by the boys and young girls, to whom the duties of the threshing-floor are chiefly assigned. The grain is winnowed by the men and women, who throw the corn and straw together into the air with a wooden shovel, leaving the wind to carry away the chaff whilst the seed falls to the ground. The wheat is then raked into heaps and left on the threshing-floor until the tithe-gatherer has taken his portion. The straw is stored for the winter, as provender for the cattle.[6]

[6] These processes of threshing and winnowing appear to have been used from the earliest time in Asia. Isaiah alludes to it when addressing the Jews (XXVIII. 27, 28. See Translation by the Rev. John Jones):-

"The dill is not threshed with *the threshing sledge*,
Nor is the wheel of the wain made to roll over the cummin.
.....
Bread corn is threshed:
But not for ever will he continue thus to thresh it;
Though he driveth along the wheels of his wain,
And his horses, he will not bruise it to dust."
"The oxen and the young asses, that till the ground
Shall eat clean provender,
Which hath been winnowed *with the shovel* and with the fan." (xxx. 24.)
"Behold, I have made thee a new sharp threshing wain (sledge) *armed with pointed teeth*." (XLI. 15.)
"Thou shalt winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away." (XII. L6.)

The Kurdish inhabitants of this plain are chiefly of the tribe of Mamanli, once very powerful, and mustering nearly 2000 horsemen for war, according to the information I received from one of their petty chiefs who lodged with us for the night in the guest-house of Karagol. After the Russian war, part of the tribe was included in the ceded territory. Their chief resides at Malaskert.

We crossed the principal branch of the Euphrates soon after leaving Karagol. Although the river is fordable at this time of the year, during the spring it is nearly a mile in breadth, overflowing its banks, and converting the entire plain into one great marsh.

We had now to pick our way through a swamp, scaring, as we advanced, myriads of wild-fowl. I have rarely seen game in such abundance and such variety in one spot; the water swarmed with geese, duck, and teal, the marshy ground with herons and snipe, and the stubble with bustards and cranes. After the rains the lower road is impassable, and caravans are obliged to make a considerable circuit along the foot of the hills.

We were not sorry to escape the fever-breeding swamp and mud of the plain, and to enter a line of low hills, separating us from the lake of Gula Shailu. I stopped for a few minutes at an Armenian monastery, situated on a small platform overlooking the plain. The bishop was at his breakfast, his fare frugal and episcopal enough, consisting of nothing more than boiled beans and sour milk. He insisted that I should partake of his repast, and I did so, in a small room scarcely large enough to admit the round tray containing the dishes, into which I dipped my hand with him and his chaplain. I found him profoundly ignorant, like the rest of his class, grumbling about taxes, and abusing the Turkish government. All I could learn of the church was that it contained the body of a much venerated saint, who had lived about the time of St. Gregory the Illuminator, and that it was the resort of the afflicted and diseased who trusted to their faith, rather than to medicine, for relief. The whole establishment belongs to the large Armenian village of Kop, which could be faintly distinguished in the plain below. The Kurds had plundered the convent of its books and its finery, but the church remained pretty well as it had been some fifteen centuries ago.

After a pleasant ride of five hours we reached a deep clear lake, embedded in the mountains, two or three pelicans, "swan and shadow double," and myriads of water-fowl, lazily floating on its blue waters. Piron, the village where we halted for the night, stands at the further end of the Gula Shailu, and is inhabited by Kurds of the tribe of Hasananlu, and by Armenians, all living in good fellowship amidst the dirt and wretchedness of their eternal dungheaps. Ophthalmia had made sad havoc amongst them, and the doctor was soon surrounded by a crowd of the blind and diseased clamoring for relief. The villagers said that a Persian, professing to be a Hakim, had passed through the place some time before, and had offered to cure all bad eyes on payment of a certain sum in advance. These terms being agreed to, he gave his patients a powder which left the sore eyes as they were, and destroyed the good ones. He then went his way: "And with the money in his pocket too," added a ferocious-

looking Kurd, whose appearance certainly threw considerable doubt on the assertion; "but what can one do in these days of accursed Tanzimat (reform)?"

The district we had now entered formerly belonged to Sheriff Bey, the rebellious chief of Moush, but, since his capture last year, had been made *miri*, or government property. Although all the Mohammedan inhabitants of this part of Kurdistan are Kurds, those alone are called so who live in tents; those who reside in villages are known simply as" Mussulman."

The lake of Shailu is separated from the larger lake of Nazik, by a range of low hills about six miles in breadth. We reached the small village of Khers, built on its western extremity, in about two hours and a half, and found the chief, surrounded by the principal inhabitants, seated on a raised platform near a well-built stone house. He assured me, stroking a beard of spotless white to confirm his words, that he was above ninety years of age, and had never seen an European before the day of my visit. Half blind, he peered at me through his bleer eyes until he had fully satisfied his curiosity; then spoke contemptuously of the Franks, and abused the Tanzimat, which he declared had destroyed all Mussulman spirit, had turned true believers into infidels, and had brought his own tribe to ruin, meaning, of course, that they could no longer prey upon their neighbours. His son, more of a courtier, and probably thinking that something might be gained by praising the present state of things, spoke less unfavorably of reform, though, I doubt not, entertaining equal aversion to it in his heart. The old gentleman, notwithstanding his rough exterior, was hospitable after his fashion, and would not suffer us to depart until we had eaten of every delicacy the village could afford.

Our path lay along the banks of the lake. The people of Khers declare that the Nazik Gul only contains fish during the spring of the year, and then but of the one kind caught in the lake of Wan. I was unable to account for this fact, repeated by the peasants whom we met on our road, until reaching the eastern end of the lake I found that a communication existed between it and that of Wan, by a deep ravine, through which the waters, swollen during the rains and by the melting of the snows in spring, discharge themselves near Akhlat.[7] At this season there was only water enough in the ravine to show the difference of level. In spring the fish seek the creeks and fresh-water streams to spawn, and at that time alone are captured by the inhabitants of the shores of the lake of Wan. During the rest of the year, they leave the shallows and are secure from the nets of the fishermen.[8] The only fish known is of the size and appearance of a herring. It is caught during the season in such abundance that it forms, when dried and salted, provision for the rest of the year, and a considerable article of exportation. I was

[7] The Shailu lake has, I was informed, a similar communication with the Murad Su. Both lakes are wrongly placed in the Prussian and other maps, and their outlets unnoticed.

[8] Yakuti, in his geographical work, the "Moajem el Buldan," mentions this disappearance of the fish, which are only to be seen, he says, during three months of the year. He adds, however, frogs and shellfish.

informed, however, by a Christian, that a large fish, probably of the barbel kind, was found in the Nazik Gul, whose waters, unlike those of Wan, are fresh and sweet.

Leaving the Nazik Gul we entered an undulating country traversed by very deep ravines, mere channels cut into the sandstone by mountain torrents. The villages are built at the bottom of these gulleys, amidst fruit trees and gardens, sheltered by perpendicular rocks and watered by running streams. They are undiscovered until the traveller reaches the very edge of the precipice, when a pleasant and cheerful scene opens suddenly beneath his feet. He would have believed the upper country a mere desert had he not spied here and there in the distance a peasant slowly driving his plough through the rich soil. The inhabitants of this district are more industrious and ingenious than their neighbours. They carry the produce of their harvest not on the backs of animals, as in most parts of Asia Minor, but in carts entirely made of wood, no iron being used even in the wheels, which are ingeniously built of walnut, oak, and kara agatch (literally, black tree-? thorn), the stronger woods being used for rough spokes let into the nave. The plough also differs from that in general use in Asia. To the share are attached two parallel boards, about four feet long and a foot broad, which separate the soil and leave a deep and well defined furrow.

We rode for two or three hours on these uplands, until, suddenly reaching the edge of a ravine, a beautiful prospect of lake, woodland, and mountain, opened before us.

CHAPTER II. (pp.19-34)

THE LAKE OF WAN. - AKHLAT. – TATAR TOMBS. – ANCIENT REMAINS. – A DERVISH. – A FRIEND. – THE MUDIR. – ARMENIAN REMAINS. – AN ARMENIAN CONVENT AND BISHOP. – JOURNEY TO BITLIS. – NIMROUD DAGH. – BITLIS. – JOURNEY TO KHERZAN. – YEZIDI VILLAGE.

The first view the traveller obtains of the lake of Wan, on descending towards it from the hills above Akhlat, is singularly beautiful. This great inland sea, of the deepest blue, is bounded to the east by ranges of serrated snow-capped mountains, peering one above the other, and springing here and there into the highest peaks of Tiyari and Kurdistan; beneath them lies the sacred island of Akhtamar, just visible in the distance, like a dark shadow on the water. At the further end rises the one sublime cone of the Subhan, and along the lower part of the eastern shores stretches the Nimroud Dagh, varied in shape and rich in local traditions.

At our feet, as we drew nigh to the lake, were the gardens of the ancient city of Akhlat, leaning minarets and pointed mausoleums peeping above the trees. We rode through vast burying-grounds, a perfect forest of upright stones seven or eight feet high of the richest red colour, most delicately and tastefully carved with arabesque ornaments and inscriptions in the massive character of the early Mussulman age. In the

midst of them rose here and there a conical *turbeh*[9] of beautiful shape, covered with exquisite tracery. The monuments of the dead still stand, and have become the monuments of a city, itself long crumbled into dust. Amidst orchards and gardens are scattered here and there low houses rudely built out of the remains of the earlier habitations, and fragments of cornice and sculpture are piled up into walls around the cultivated plots.

Leaving the servants to pitch the tents on a lawn near one of the finest of the old Mussulman tombs, and in a grove of lofty trees, beneath whose spreading branches we could catch distant views of the lake, I walked through the ruins. Emerging from the gardens and crossing a part of the great burying-ground, I came upon a well-preserved mausoleum of the same deep red stone, now glowing in the rays of the sun; its conical roof rested on columns and arches, and on a *kubleh*, or place to direct the face in prayer, decorated with all the richness, yet elegance, of Eastern taste. The cornice supporting the roof was formed by many bands of ornament, each equally graceful though differing one from the other. The column stood on a base riling about nine feet from the ground, the upper part of which was adorned with panels, each varying in shape, and containing many-angled recesses, decorated with different patterns, and the lower part projected at an angle with the rest of the building. In this basement was the chamber; the mortal remains of its royal occupant had long ago been torn away and thrown to the dust. Around the turbeh were scattered richly carved head and foot stones, marking the graves of less noble men; and the whole was enclosed by a grove of lofty trees, the dark-blue lake glittering beyond. Whilst the scene was worthy of the pencil of a Turner, each detail in the building was a study for an architect. Tradition names the tomb that of Sultan Baiandour,[10] one of the chiefs of the great Tatar tribes, who crossed the frontiers of Persia in the fifteenth century. The building still resisting decay is now used as a storehouse for grain and straw by a degenerate race, utterly unmindful of the glories of their ancestors. Near this turbeh were others, less well preserved, but equally remarkable for elegant and varied decoration, their conical roofs fretted with delicate tracery, carved in relief on the red stone. They belong, according to local tradition, to Sultans of the Ak-Kouyunlu and Kara-Kouyunlu Tatars, the well-known tribes of the White and Black Sheep.

Beyond the turbeh of Sultan Baiandour, through a deep ravine such as I have already described, runs a brawling stream, crossed by an old bridge; orchards and gardens make the bottom of the narrow valley, and the cultivated ledges as seen from above, a bed of foliage. The lofty perpendicular rocks rising on both sides are literally honeycombed with entrances to artificial caves, ancient tombs, or dwelling-places. On a high isolated mass of sandstone stand the walls and towers of a castle, the remains of the ancient city of Khelath, celebrated in Armenian history, and one of the seats of Armenian power. I ascended to the crumbling mint, and examined the excavations in the rocks. The latter are now used as habitations, and as stables for herds and flocks.

[9] A small building which sometimes covers a Mohammedan tomb is so called.

[10] A sultan of the Ak-Kouyunlu, or White-sheep Tatars, from whom the tribe derived their name of Baiandouri.

The spacious entrance of some are filled up with stones for protection and comfort, a small opening being left for a doorway. Before them, on the ledges overlooking the ravine, stood here and there groups as noble a race as I have anywhere seen, tall, brawny men, handsome women, and beautiful children. They were Kurds, dressed in the flowing and richly-colored robes of their tribe. I talked with them and found them courteous, intelligent, and communicative.

Many of the tombs are approached by flights of steps, also cut in the rock. An entrance, generally square, unless subsequently widened, and either perfectly plain or decorated with a simple cornice, opens into a spacious chamber, which frequently leads into others on the same level, or by narrow flights of steps into upper rooms. There are no traces of the meant by which these entrances were closed: they probably were as by stones, turning on rude hinges, or rolling on rollers.[11] Excavated in the walls, or sometimes sunk into the floor, are recesses or troughs, in which once lay the bodies of the dead, whilst in small niches, in the sides of the chambers, were placed lamps and sacrificial objects. Tombs in every respect similar are found throughout the mountains of Assyria and Persia, as far south as Shiraz; but I have never met with them in such abundance as at Akhlat. Their contents were long ago the spoil of conquerors, and the ancient chambers of the dead have been for centuries the abodes of the living.

Leaving the valley and winding through a forest of fruit trees, here and there interspersed with a few primitive dwellings, I came to the old Turkish castle, standing on the very edge of the lake. It is a pure Ottoman edifice, less ancient than the turbehs, or the old walls towering above the ravine. Inscriptions over the gateways state that it was partly built by Sultan Selim, and partly by Sultan Suleiman, and over the northern entrance occurs the date of 975 of the Hejira. The walls and towers are still standing, and need but slight repair to be again rendered capable of defence. They inclose a fort, and about 200 houses, with two mosques and baths, fast falling into decay, and only tenanted by a few miserable families, who, too poor or too idle to build a new, linger amongst the ruins. In the fort, separated from the dwelling places by a high thick wall and a ponderous iron-bound gate now banging half broken away from its rusty hinges, there dwelt, until very recently, a notorious Kurdish freebooter, of the name of Mehemet Bey, who, secure in this stronghold, ravaged the surrounding country, and sorely vexed its Christian inhabitants. He fled on the approach of the Turkish troops, after their successful expedition against Nur-Ullah Bey, and is supposed to be wandering in the mountains of southern Kurdistan.

After the capture of Beder Khan Bey, Osman Pasha, the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army, a man of enterprise and liberal views, formed a plan for restoring to Akhlat its ancient prosperity, by making it the capital of the north-eastem provinces of

[11] Tombs, with entrances closed by stones, ingeniously made to roll back into a groove, still exist in many parts of the East. We learn from both the Old and New Testament, that such tombs were in common use in Palestine, as well as in other countries of Asia. The stone was "rolled away from the sepulchre" in which Christ was laid; which we may gather from the context was a chamber cut into the rock and intended to receive many bodies, although it had not been need before. Such also, was the tomb of Lazarus. Raphael, who is singularly correct in delineating Eastern habits and costumes in his scriptural pieces, has thus portrayed the tomb of the Saviour in a sketch in the Oxford Collection.

the Turkish empire. He proposed, by grants of land, to induce the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages to remove to the town, and by peculiar privileges to draw to the new settlement the artizans of Wan, Bitlis, Moush, and even Erzeroom. Its position on the borders of a vast lake is favourable to traffic, and its air is considered very salubrious. From its vicinity to the Persian and Russian frontiers it might become of considerable importance as a military depot. Osman Pasha was about to construct a palace, a bazar, and barracks, and to repair the walls of the old castle, when death put an end to his schemes. In Turkey a man in power, from principle, never carries out the plans, or finishes the buildings of his predecessor; and Akhlat, one of the most beautiful spots that the imagination can picture, will probably long remain a heap of ruins. Scarcely a sail flutters on the water. The only commerce is carried on by a few miserable vessels, which venture in the finest weather to leave the little harbour of Wan to search for wood and corn on the southern shores of the lake.

The ancient city of Khelath was the capital of the Armenian province of Peznouni. It came under the Mohammedan power as early as the ninth century, but was conquered by the Greeks of the Lower Empire at the end of the tenth. The Seljuks took it from them, and it then again became a Mussulman principality. It was long a place of contention for the early Arab and Tatar conquerors. Shah Armen[12] reduced it towards the end of the twelfth century. It was besieged, without result, by the celebrated Saleh-ed-din, and was finally captured by his nephew, the son of Melek Adel, in A. D. 1207.

The sun was setting as I returned to the tents. The whole scene was lighted up with its golden tints, and Claude never composed a subject man beautiful than was here furnished by nature herself. I was seated outside my tent gazing listlessly on the scene, when I was roused by a well-remembered cry, but one which I had not heard for years. I turned about and saw standing before me a Persian Dervish, clothed in the fawn-colored gazelle skin, and wearing the conical red cap, edged with fur, and embroidered in black braid with verses from the Koran and invocations to Ali, the patron of his sect. He was no less surprised than I had been at his greeting, when I gave him the answer peculiar to men of his order. He was my devoted friend and servant from that moment, and sent his boy to fetch a dish of pears, for which he actually refused a present ten times their value. Be declared that I was one of his craft, and was fairly puzzled to make out where I had picked up my knowledge of his mystery and phraseology. But he was not my first Dervish friend; I had had many adventures in company with such as he.

Whilst we were seated chatting in the soft moonlight, Hormuzd was suddenly embraced by a young man resplendent with silk and gold embroidery and armed to the teeth. He was a chief from the district of Mosul and well known to us. Hearing of our arrival he had hastened from his village at some distance to welcome us, and to endeavor to persuade me to move the encampment and partake of his hospitality. Failing, of course, in prevailing upon me to change my quarters for the night, he sent his

[12] "Shah Armen, i. e. King of Armenia, was a title assumed by a dynasty reigning at Akhlat, founded by Sokman Kothby, a slave of the Seljuk prince, Kothbedin Ismail, who established an independent principality at Akhlat in A.D. II00, which lasted eighty years.

servant to his wife, who was a lady of Mosul, and formerly a friend of my companion's, for a sheep. We found ourselves thus unexpectedly amongst friends. Our circle was further increased by Christians and Mussulmans of Akhlat, and the night was far spent before we retired to rest.

In the morning, soon after sunrise, I renewed my wanderings amongst the ruins, first calling upon the Mudir, or governor, who received me seated under his own fig-tree. He was an old greybeard, a native of the place, and of a straightforward, honest bearing. I had to listen to the usual complaints of poverty and over-taxation, although, after all, the village, with its extensive gardens, only contributed yearly ten purses, or less than forty five pounds, to the public revenue. This sum seems small enough, but without trade, and distant from any high road, there was not a para of ready money, according to the Mudir, in the place.

The governor's cottage stood near the northern edge of Akhlat, and a little beyond it the road again emerged into that forest of richly-carved tombs which surrounds the place, like a broad belt - the accumulated remains of successive generations. The triumph of the dead over the living is perhaps only thus seen in the East. In England, where we grudge our dead their last resting places, the habitations of the living encroach on the burial-ground; in the East it is the grave-yard which drives before it the cottage and the mansion. The massive headstones still stand erect long after the dwelling-places of even the descendants of those who placed them there have passed away. Several handsome turbehs, resembling in their general form those I had already visited, though differing from them in their elegant and elaborate details, were scattered amongst the more humble tombs.

From the Mudir's house I rode to the more ancient part of the city and to the rock tombs. The ravine, at no great distance from where it joins the lake, is divided into two branches, each watered by an abundant stream. I followed them both for four or five miles, ascending by the one, then crossing the upland which divides them, and descending by the other. Both afford innumerable pleasant prospects, - the water breaking in frequent cascades over the rocky bottom, beneath thick clusters of gigantic chesnuts and elms, the excavated cliffs forming bold frames to the pictures. I entered many of the rock-tombs, and found all of them to be of the same character, though varying in size. The doors of some have been enlarged, to render the interior more convenient as dwelling-places, and there are but few which have not been blackened by the smoke of the fires of many centuries. The present population of the ravine, small and scanty enough, resides almost entirely in these caves. Amongst the tombs there are galleries and passages in the cliffs without apparent use, and fights of steps, cut out of the rock, which seem to lead nowhere. I searched and inquired in vain for inscriptions and remains of sculpture, and yet the place is of undoubted antiquity, and in the immediate vicinity of contemporary sites where cuneiform inscriptions do exist.

During my wanderings I entered an Armenian church and convent standing on a ledge of rock overhanging the stream, about four miles up the southern ravine. The

convent was tenanted by a bishop and two priests. They dwelt in a small low room, scarcely lighted by a hole care - fully blocked up with a sheet of oiled paper to shut out the cold; dark, musty, and damp, a very parish clerk in England would have shuddered at the sight of such a residence. Their bed, a carpet worn to threads, spread on the rotten boards; their diet, the coarsest sandy bread and a little sour curds, with beans and mangy meat for a jubilee. A miserable old woman sat in a kind of vault under the staircase preparing their food, and passing her days in pushing to and fro with her skinny hands the goat's skin containing the milk to be shaken into butter. She was the housekeeper and handmaiden of the episcopal establishment. The church was somewhat higher, though even darker than the dwelling-room, and was partly used to store a heap of mouldy corn and some primitive agricultural implements. The whole was well and strongly built, and had the evident marks of antiquity. The bishop showed me a rude cross carved on a rock outside the convent, which, he declared, had been cut by one of the disciples of the Saviour himself. It is, at any rate, considered a relic of very great sanctity, and is an object of pilgrimage for the surrounding Christian population. Near the spot are several tombs of former bishops, the head and foot stone of the same deep mellow red stone, and as elaborately carved as those of the old Tatar chiefs near the lake, although differing from them somewhat in the style of their ornaments; the cross, and the bold, square, ancient Armenian character being used instead of the flowery scroll-work and elongated letters of the early Mussulman conquerors. The bishop, notwithstanding his poverty, was, on the whole, better informed than others of his order I had met in the provinces. He had visited the capital, had even studied there, and possessed a few books, amongst which, fortunately for himself, and I hope for his congregation, he was not ashamed to include several of the very useful works issued by the American missionary press, and by that praiseworthy religious society, the Mekhitarists of Venice. The older books and MSS. of the church, together with its little store of plate, its hangings, and its finery, were gone. The last rummage was made by Mehemet Bey, the Kurdish freebooter of the castle on the lake, who, having been expelled from his stronghold by the exasperated inhabitants of Akhlat, took refuge in the Armenian convent, and defended it for nearly a year against his assailants, living of course, the while, upon the scanty stores of the priests, and carrying off, when he had no longer need of the position, the little property he had pulled out of every nook and corner. The tyranny of this chief had driven nearly the whole Christian population from Akhlat. About twenty families only remained, and they were huddled together in the rock tombs, and on the ledges immediately opposite the convent. They are not allowed to possess the gardens and orchards near the lake, which are looked upon as the peculiar property of the ancient Mussulman inhabitants, to be enjoyed by their orthodox descendants, who employ neither care nor labor in keeping them up, trusting to a rich soil and a favorable climate for their annual fruits.

I was again struck during my ride with the beauty of the children, who assembled round me, issuing, like true Troglodytes, from their rocky dwelling-places. Near the end

of the ravine, on the edge of a precipice clothed with creepers, is a half-fallen turbeh, of elegant proportions and rich in architectural detail. It overhangs the transparent stream, which, struggling down its rocky bed, is crossed by a ruined bridge; a scene calling to mind the well-known view of Tivoli. Beyond, and nearer to the lake, are other turbehs, all of which I examined, endeavoring to retain some slight record of their peculiar ornaments. The natives of the place followed me as I wandered about and found names for the ancient chiefs in whose honor the mausoleums had been erected. Amongst them were Iskender, Hassan, and Haroun, the Padishas, or sultans, of the Tatar tribes.[13]

On my return to our encampment the tents were struck, and the caravan had already began its march. Time would not permit me to delay, and with a deep longing to linger on this favored spot slowly followed the road leading along the margin of the lake to Bitlis. I have seldom seen a fairer scene, one richer in natural beauties. The artist and the lover of nature may equally find at Akhlat objects of study and delight. The architect, or the traveller, interested in the history of that graceful and highly original branch of art, which attained its full perfection under the Arab rulers of Egypt and Spain, should extend his journey to the remains of ancient Armenian cities, far from high roads and mostly unexplored. He would then trace how that architecture, deriving its name from Byzantium, had taken the same development in the East as it did in the West, and how its subsequent combination with the elaborate decoration, the varied outline, and tasteful coloring of Persia had produced the style termed Saracenic, Arabic, and Moresque. He would discover almost daily, details, ornaments, and forms, recalling to his mind the various orders of architecture, which, at an early period, succeeded to each other in Western Europe and in England;[14] modifications of style for which we are mainly indebted to the East during its close union with the West by the bond of Christianity. The Crusaders, too, brought back into Christendom, on their return from Asia, a taste for that rich and harmonious union of color and architecture which had already been so successfully introduced by the Arabs into the countries they had conquered.

This connection between Eastern and Western architecture is one well worthy of study, and cannot be better illustrated than by the early Christian ruins of Armenia, and those of the Arsacian and Sassanian periods still existing in Persia. As yet it has been

[13] Iskender, the son of Kara Yusuf, second sultan of the Tatar dynasty of the Black Sheep, began to reign A.D. 1421, and was murdered by his son, Shah Kobad. Hassan, commonly called Usun, or the Long, the first sultan of the Baiandouri, or White Sheep, Tatars, succeeded to the throne A.D. 1467. Neither of these sultans however, appear to have died at Akhlat. I have been unable to find the name of Haroun amongst the sultans of these Tatar dynasties. It is possible that the turbehs may be more ancient than the period assigned to them by the inhabitants of Akhlat, and that they may belong to some of the earlier Mussulman conquerors.

[14] The sketch, not very accurate unfortunately in its details, of the ruined Armenian church at Varzahan (p. 6.), will sufficiently show my meaning, and point out the connection indicated in the text. I would also refer to M. Texier's folio work on Armenia and Persia, for many examples of Armenian churches, illustrating the transition between the Byzantine and what we may undoubtedly term Gothic. It would be of considerable importance to study the remains of churches still scattered over Armenia, and of which no accurate plans or drawings have been published.

almost entirely overlooked, nor are there any plans or drawings of even the best known Byzantine, or rather Armenian, remains in Asia Minor, upon which sufficient reliance can be placed to admit of the analogies between the styles being fully proved. The union of early Christian and Persian art and architecture produced a style too little known and studied, yet affording combinations of beauty and grandeur, of extreme delicacy of detail and of boldness of outline, worthy of the highest order of intellect.[15]

Our road skirted the foot of the Nimroud Dagh, which stretches from Akhlat to the southern extremity of the lake. We crossed several dykes of lava and scoria, and wide mud-torrents now dry, the outpourings of a volcano long since extinct, but the crater of which may probably still traced in a small lake said to exist on the very summit of the mountain. There are several villages, chiefly inhabited by Christians, built on the water's edge, or in the ravines worn by the streams descending from the hills. Our road gradually led away from the lake. With Cawal Yusuf and my companions I left the caravan far behind. The night came on, and we were shrouded in darkness. We sought in vain for the village which was to afford us a resting-place, and soon lost our uncertain track. The Cawal took the opportunity of relating tales collected during former journeys on this spot, of robber Kurds and murdered travellers, which did not tend to remove the anxiety felt by some of my party. At length, after wandering to and fro for above an hour, we heard the distant jingle of the caravan bells. We rode in the direction of the welcome sound, and soon found ourselves at the Armenian village of Keswack, standing in a small bay, and sheltered by a rocky promontory jutting boldly into the lake.

Next morning we rode along the margin of the lake, still crossing the spurs of the Nimroud Dagh, furrowed by numerous streams of lava and mud. In one of the deep gulleys, opening from the mountain to the water's edge, are a number of isolated masses of sandstone, worn into fantastic shapes by the winter torrents, which sweep down from the hills. The people of the country call them "the Camels of Nimrod." Tradition says that the rebellious patriarch endeavoring to build an inaccessible castle, strong enough to defy both God and man, the Almighty, to punish his arrogance turned the workmen as they were working into stone. The rocks on the border of the lake are the camels, who with their burdens were petrified into a perpetual memorial of the Divine vengeance. The unfinished walls of the castle are still to be seen on the top of the mountain; and the surrounding country, the seat of a primeval race, abounds in similar traditions.

We left the southern end of the lake, near the Armenian village of Tadwan, once a place of some importance, and containing a caravanserai, mosques, and baths built by

[15] The Arabs, a wild and uncultivated people, probably derived their first notions of architecture on the conquest of the Persian provinces. The peculiar and highly tasteful style of the Persians, of which traces may still be seen in the remains of the celebrated palace of Chosroes, at Ctesiphon, and in other ruins of southern Persia and Khuzistan, united with the Byzantine churches and palaces of Syria, produced the Saracenic. Already some such modification had, I am convinced, taken place in Armenia by a similar process, the Persian and Imperial power being continually brought into contact in that kingdom. I cannot dwell longer upon this subject, which well merits investigation.

Khosrew Pasha in the sixteenth century. Entering an undulating country we soon gazed for the last time on the deep blue expanse of water, and on the lofty peaks of the Hakkiari mountains. The small trickling streams, now running towards the south, and a gradual descent showed that we had crossed the water-shed of central Asia, and had reached the valleys of Assyria. Here and there the ruins of a fine old khan, its dark recesses, vaulted niches, and spacious stalls, blackened with the smoke of centuries, served to mark one of the great highways, lead in the days of Turkish prosperity from central Armenia to Baghdad. We had crossed this road in the plain of Hinnis. It runs from Erzeroom to Moush and thence to Bitlis, leaving to the east the Nimroud Dagh, which separates it from the lake of Wan. Commerce has deserted it for very many years, and its bridges and caravanserais have long fallen into decay; when, with the restoration of order and tranquillity to this part of Turkey, trade shall revive, it may become once more an important thoroughfare, uniting the northern and southern provinces of the empire.

We soon entered a rugged ravine worn by the mountain rills, collected into a large stream. This was one of the many head waters of the Tigris. It was flowing tumultuously to our own bourne, and, as we gazed upon the troubled waters, they seemed to carry us nearer to our journey’s end. The ravine was at first wild and rocky; cultivated spots next appeared, scattered in the dry bed of the torrent; then a few gigantic trees; gardens and orchards followed, and at length the narrow valley opened on the long straggling town of Bitlis.

The governor bad provided quarters for us in a large house belonging to an Armenian, who had been tailor to Beder Khan Bey. From the terrace before the gate we looked down upon the bazars built in the bottom of a deep gulley in the centre of the town. On an isolated rock opposite to us rose a frowning castle, and, on the top of a lofty barren hill, the fortified dwelling of Sheriff Bey, the rebel chief, who had for years held Bitlis and the surrounding country in subjection, defying the authority and the arms of the Sultan. Here and there on the mountain sides were little sunny landscapes, gardens, poplar trees, and low white houses surrounded by trellised vines.

My party was now, for the first time during the journey, visited with that curse of Eastern travel, fever and ague. The doctor was prostrate, and having then no experience of the malady, at once had dreams of typhus and malignant fever. A day's rest was necessary, and our jaded horses needed it as well as we, for there were bad mountain roads and long marches before us. I had a further object in remaining. Three near relations of Cawal Yusuf returning from their annual visitation to the Yezidi tribes in Georgia and northern Armenia, had been murdered two years before, near Bitlis, at the instigation of the Kurdish Bey. The money collected by the Cawals for the benefit of the sect and its priesthood, together with their personal effects, had been taken by Sheriff Bey, and I was desirous of aiding Cawal Yusuf in their recovery. Reshid Pasha had given me an official order for their restoration out of the property of the late chief, and it rested with me to see it enforced. I called early in the morning on the mudir or governor,

one of the household of old Essad Pasha, who was at that time governor-general of Kurdistan, including Bitlis, Moush, and the surrounding country, and resided at Diarbekir. He gave me the assistance I required for the recovery of the property of the murdered Cawals, and spoke in great contempt of the Kurds now that they had been subdued, treating like dogs those who stood humbly before him. The Turks, however, had but recently dared to assume this haughty tone. Long after the fall of Beder Khan Bey, the chiefs of Hakkiari, Wan, Moush, and Bitlis had maintained their independence, and Sheriff Bey had only been sent that spring to the capital to pass the rest of his days in exile with the author of the Nestorian massacre.

The governor ordered cawasses to accompany me through the town. I had been told that ancient inscriptions existed in the castle, or on the rock, but I searched in vain for them: those pointed out to me were early Mohammedan. Bitlis contains many picturesque remains of mosques, baths, and bridges, and was once a place of considerable size and importance. It is built in the very bottom of a deep valley, and on the sides of ravines, worn by small tributaries of the Tigris. The best houses stand high upon the declivities, and are of stone, ornamented with large arched windows, trellis work, and porticoes; many of them being surrounded by groves of trees. The bazars are in the lowest parts of the town, and low, ill-built and dirty. They are generally much crowded, as in them is carried on the chief trade of this part of Kurdistan. The export trade is chiefly supplied by the produce of the mountains; galls, honey, wax, wool, and carpets and stuffs, woven and dyed in the tents. The dyes of Kurdistan, and particularly those from the district around Bitlis, Sert, and Jezireh, are celebrated for their brilliancy. They are made from herbs gathered in the mountains, and from indigo, yellow berries, and other materials, imported into the country. The colors usually worn by both men and women are a deep dull red and a bright yellow, mingled with black, a marked taste for these tints, to the exclusion of almost every other, being a peculiar characteristic of the Kurdish race from Bayazid to Suleimaniyah. The carpets are of a rich soft texture, the patterns displaying considerable elegance and taste: they are much esteemed in Turkey. There was a fair show of Manchester goods and coarse English cutlery in the shops. The sale of arms, once extensively carried on, had been prohibited. The trade is chiefly in the hands of merchants from Mosul and Erzeroom, who come to Bitlis for galls, at present almost the only article of export from Kurdistan to the European markets. This produce of the oak was formerly monopolised by Beder Khan Bey, and other powerful Kurdish chiefs, but the inhabitants are now permitted to gather them without restriction, each village having its share in the woods. The wool of the mountains is coarse, and scarcely fit for export to Europe; and the "teftik," a fine underhair of the goat, although useful and valuable, is not collected in sufficient quantity for commerce. There is a race of sheep in Kurdistan producing a long silken wool, like that of Angora, but it is not common, and the fleeces being much prized as saddle and other ornaments by the natives, are expensive. There are, no doubt, many productions of the mountains, besides valuable minerals, which appear to abound, that would

become lucrative objects of commerce were tranquillity fully restored, and trade encouraged. The slaughter-houses, the resort of crowds of mangy dogs, are near the bazars, on the banks of the stream, and the effluvia arising from them is most offensive.

Having examined the town I visited the Armenian bishop, who dwells in a large convent in one of the ravines branching off from the main valley. On my way I passed several hot springs, some gurgling up in the very bed of the torrent. The bishop was maudlin, old, and decrepit; he cried over his own personal woes, and over those of his community, abused the Turks, and the American missionaries, whispering confidentially in my ear as if the Kurds were at his door. He insisted in the most endearing terms, and occasionally throwing his arms round my neck, that I should drink a couple of glasses of fiery raki, although it was still early morning, pledging me himself in each glass. He showed me his church, an ancient building, well hung with miserable daubs of saints and miracles. On the whole, whatever may have been their condition under the Kurdish chiefs, the Christians of Bitlis at the time of my visit had no very great grounds of complaint. I found them well inclined and exceedingly courteous, those who had shops in the bazar rising as I passed. The town contains about seven hundred Armenian and forty Jacobite families (the former have four churches), but no Nestorians, although formerly a part of the Christian population was of that sect.

There are three roads from Bitlis to Jezireh; two over the mountains through Sert, generally frequented by caravans, but very difficult and precipitous; a third more circuitous, and winding through the valleys of the eastern branch of the Tigris. I chose the last, as it enabled me to visit the Yezidi villages of the district of Kherzan. We left Bitlis on the 20th. Soon issuing from the gardens of the town we found ourselves amidst a forest of oaks of various descriptions.[16] It was one of those deep, narrow, and rocky valleys abounding in Kurdistan; the foaming torrent dashing through it, to be crossed and re-crossed, to the great discomfort of the laden mules, almost at every hundred yards, and from the want of bridges generally impassable during the spring and after rains. In autumn and winter the declivities are covered with the black tents of the Kochers, or wandering Kurds, who move in summer to the higher pastures. The tribes inhabiting the valley are the Selokeen, the Hamki, and the Babosi, by whom the relatives of Cawal Yusuf were murdered. There are no villages near the road-aide. They stand in deep ravines branching out from the main valley, either perched on precipitous and almost inaccessible ledges of rock, or bid in the recesses of the forest. Several bridges and spacious khans, whose ruins still attest the ancient commerce and intercourse carried on through these mountains, are attributed, like all other public works in the country, to Sultan Murad during his memorable expedition against Baghdad (A.D. 1638).

About five miles from Bitlis the road is carried by a tunnel, about twenty feet in length, through a mass of calcareous rock, projecting like a huge rib from the

[16] In the appendix will be found a note, with which I have been kindly favored by Dr. Lindsay, upon the new and remarkable oaks found in these mountains, and now for the first time grown in this country from acorns sent home by me.

mountain's side. The mineral stream, which in the lapse of ages has formed this deposit, is still at work, projecting great stalactites from its sides, and threatening to close ere long the tunnel itself. There is no inscription to record by whom and at what period this passage was cut. It is, of course, assigned to Sultan Murad, but is probably of a far earlier period. There are many such in the mountains;[17] and the remains of a causeway, evidently of great antiquity, in many places cut out of the solid rock, are traceable in the valley. We pitched our tents for the night near a ruined and deserted khan.

We continued during the following day in the same ravine, crossing by ancient bridges the stream which was gradually gathering strength as it advanced towards the low country. About noon we passed a large Kurdish village called Goeena, belonging to Sheikh Kassim, one of those religious fanatics who are the curse of Kurdistan. He was notorious for his hatred of the Yezidis, on whose districts he had committed numerous depredations, murdering those who came within his reach. His last expedition had not proved successful; he was repulsed with the loss of many of his followers. We encamped in the afternoon on the bank of the torrent, near a cluster of Kurdish tents, concealed from view by the brushwood and high reeds. The owners were poor but hospitable, bringing us a lamb, yahgourt, and milk. Late in the evening a party of horsemen rode to our encampment. They were a young Kurdish chief, with his retainers, carrying off a girl with whom he had fallen in love, - not an uncommon occurrence in Kurdistan. They dismounted, eat bread, and then hastened on their journey to escape pursuit.

Starting next morning soon after dawn we rode for two hours along the banks of the stream, and then, turning from the valley, entered a country of low undulating hills. Here we left the Bitlis stream, which is joined about six hours beyond, near a village named Kitchki, by the river of Sert, another great feeder of the Tigris. This district abounds in saline springs and wells, whose waters, led into pans and allowed to evaporate, deposit much salt, which is collected and forms a considerable article of export even to the neighbourhood of Mosul.

We halted for a few minutes in the village of Omais-el-Koran, belonging to one of the innumerable saints of the Kurdish mountains. The Sheikh himself was on his terrace superintending the repair of his house, gratuitously undertaken by the neighbouring villagers, who came eagerly to engage in a good and pious work. Whilst the chief enjoys the full advantages of a holy character the place itself is a Ziorah, or place of pilgrimage, and a visit to it is considered by the ignorant Kurds almost as meritorious as a journey to Mecca; such pilgrimages being usually accompanied by an offering in money, or in kind, are not discouraged by the Sheikh.

Leaving a small plain, we ascended a low range of hills by a precipitous pathway, and halted on the summit at a Kurdish village named Khokhi. It was filled with Bashi-Bozuks, or irregular troops, collecting the revenue, and there was such a general

[17] See Col. Sheil's Memoir in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. VIII, p. 81.

confusion, quarrelling of men and screaming of women, that we could scarcely get bread to eat. Yet the officer assured me that the whole sum to be raised amounted to no more than seventy piastres (about thirteen shillings). The poverty of the village must indeed have been extreme, or the bad will of the inhabitants outrageous.

It was evening before we descended into the plain country of the district of Kherzan. The Yezidi village of Hamki had been visible for some time from the heights, and we turned towards it. As the sun was fast sinking, the peasants were leaving the threshing-floor, and gathering together their implements of husbandry. They saw the large company of horsemen drawing nigh, and took us for irregular troops, - the terror of an Eastern village. Cawal Yusuf, concealing all but his eyes with the Arab kefieh, which he then wore, rode into the midst of them, and demanded in a peremptory voice provisions and quarters for the night. The poor creatures huddled together, unwilling to grant, yet fearing to refuse. The Cawal having enjoyed their alarm for a moment, threw his kerchief from his face, exclaiming, "0 evil ones! will you refuse bread to your priest, and turn him hungry from your door?" There was surely then no unwillingness to receive us. Outing aside their shovels and forks, the men threw themselves upon the Cawal, each struggling to kiss his hand. A boy ran to the village to spread the news, and from it soon issued women, children, and old men, to welcome us. A few words sufficed to explain from whence we came, and what we required. Every one was our servant. Horses were unloaded, tents pitched, lambs brought, before we had time to look around. There was a general rejoicing, and the poor Yezidis seemed scarcely able to satiate themselves with looking on their priest; for a report had gone abroad, and had been industriously encouraged by the Mussulmans, who had heard of the departure of the deputation for Constantinople, that Yusuf and his companions had been put to death by the Sultan, and that not only the petition of the Yezidis had been rejected, but that fresh torments were in store for them. For eight months they had received no news of the Cawal, and this long silence had confirmed their fears; but "he was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found;" and they made merry with all that the village could afford.

Yusuf was soon seated in the midst of a circle of the elders. He told his whole history, with such details and illustrations as an Eastern alone can introduce, to bring every fact vividly before his listeners. Nothing was omitted: his arrival at Constantinople, his reception by me, his introduction to the ambassador, his interview with the great ministers of state, the firman of future protection for the Yezidis, prospects of peace and happiness for the tribe, our departure from the capital, the nature of steam-boats, the tolling of the waves, the pains of sea-sickness, and our journey to Kherzan. Not the smallest particular was forgotten; every person and event were described with equal minuteness; almost the very number of pipes he had smoked and coffees he had drunk was given. He was continually interrupted by exclamations of gratitude and wonder; and, when he had finished, it was my turn to be the object of unbounded welcomes and salutations.

As the Cawal sat on the ground, with his noble features and flowing robes, surrounded by the elders of the village, eager listeners to every word which dropped from their priest, and looking towards him with looks of profound veneration, the picture brought vividly to my mind many scenes described in the sacred volumes. Let the painter who would throw off the conventionalities of the age, who would feel as well as portray the incidents of Holy Writ, wander in the East, and mix, not as the ordinary traveller, but as a student of men and of nature, with its people. He will daily meet with customs which he will otherwise be at a loss to understand, and be brought face to face with those who have retained with little change the manners, language, and dress of a patriarchal race.

CHAPTER XVIII. (pp. 335-352)

MEHEMET PASHA. - DESCRIPTION OF WAN. - ITS HISTORY. - IMPROVEMENT IN ITS CONDITION. - THE ARMENIAN BISHOP. - THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS. -THE CAVES OF KHOR-KHOR. - THE MEHER KAPOUSI. - A TRADITION. – OBSERVATIONS ON THE INSCRIPTIONS -TABLE OP KINGS MENTIONED IN THEM. - THE BAIRAM. – AN ARMENIAN SCHOOL. - THE AMERICAN MISSIONS. –PROTESTANT MOVEMENT IN TURKEY. - AMIKH. - THE CONVENT OP YEDI KLISSIA.

MEHEMET PASHA was living during the fast of Ramazan in a kiosk in one of the gardens outside the city walls. We had scarcely eaten, before he came himself to welcome us to Wan. He was the son of the last Bostandji-Basha of Constantinople, and having been brought up from a child in the imperial palace, was a man of pleasing and dignified manners, and of considerable information. Although he had never left his native country, he was not ignorant of the habits and customs of Europe. He had long served the Sultan in difficult and responsible posts, and to his discretion and sagacity was chiefly to be attributed the subjugation of Beder-Khan Bey and the rebel Kurdish tribes. His rule was mild and conciliating, and he possessed those qualities so rare in a Turkish governor, yet so indispensable to the civilisation and well-being of the empire, - a strict honesty in the administration of the revenues of his province, and a sense of justice beyond the reach of bribes. From Christians and Kurds we had received, during our journey through his pashalic, the highest testimony to his tolerance and integrity.

In the evening I returned his visit, and found him surrounded by the chiefs and elders of the city, and by the officers of his household. I sat with him till midnight, the time passing in that agreeable conversation which a well-educated Turk so well knows how to sustain.

I remained a week at Wan, chiefly engaged in copying the cuneiform inscriptions, and in examining its numerous remarkable monuments of antiquity.

The city is of very ancient date. It stands on the borders of a large and beautiful lake, a site eminently suited to a prosperous community. The lofty mountains bordering the inland sea to the east, here recede in the form of an amphitheatre, leaving a rich plain five or six miles in breadth, in the midst of which rises an isolated, calcareous rock. To the summit of this natural stronghold there is no approach, except on the western side, where a gradual but narrow ascent is defended by walls and bastions. From the earliest ages it has consequently been the acropolis of the city, and no position could be stronger before the discovery of the engines of modem warfare. The fortifications and castle, of a comparatively recent date, are now in ruins, and are scarcely defensible, with their few rusty guns, against the attacks of the neighboring Kurds.

According to Armenian history, the Assyrian queen Semiramis founded the city, which, after her, was originally named Schamiramjerd. Here, in the delicious gardens

which she had planted in the fertile plain, and which she had watered with a thousand rills, she sought refuge from the intolerable heats of a Mesopotamian summer, returning again, on the approach of winter, to her palaces at Nineveh.

The first city having fallen to decay, it is said to have been rebuilt, shortly before the invasion of Alexander the Great, by an Armenian king named Wan, after whom it was subsequently called. It appears to have been again abandoned, for we find that it was once more raised from its foundations in the second century B. C. by Vagharschag, the first king of the Arsacian dynasty of Armenia, who made it the strongest city in the kingdom. In the eleventh century it was ceded by the royal family of the Ardzrounis to the Greek emperors, from whom it was taken by the Seljuk Turks. It fell, in 1392, into the hands of Timourlane, who, according to his custom, gave the inhabitants over to the sword. Even in his day, the great monuments of solid stone, raised by the Assyrian queen, were still shown to the stranger.

Moses of Chorene, the early historian of Armenia, has faithfully described its position and its antiquities; the isolated hill, rising in the midst of a broad plain covered with flourishing villages, and watered by innumerable streams; the chapels, chambers, treasuries, and caverns cut in the living-rock, and the great inscriptions written, as it were, on the face of the precipice, as pages are written with a pen on wax. Twelve thousand workmen and six thousand master masons were employed, he declares, by Semiramis to execute those mighty works. The artificial caves and the inscriptions still remain, but modern research has proved that they belong to a far different period than that to which they were assigned by the Armenian antiquary.

The first traveller who, in modern times, examined the remarkable remains of antiquity at Wan was the unfortunate Schulz. He visited the place in 1827. The cuneiform inscriptions carved on the rock were known to exist long before his day, but he was the first to copy them, and from his copies they have been published by the Asiatic Society of France.[18] Since the time of Schulz, the city has undergone many changes. It was seized by the rebel Kurdish chief, Khan Mahmoud, who massacred the Turkish garrison, inflicted large fines upon the Christians, and grievously oppressed the dependent villages. After the troops of the Sultan had made many vain attempts to recover the place, it finally yielded two years before my journey. Under the mild rule of Mehemet Pasha it was rapidly rising to prosperity. The protection he had given to the Armenians had encouraged that enterprising and industrious people to enlarge their commerce, and to build warehouses for trade. Two handsome khans, with bazars attached, were nearly finished. Shops for the sale of European articles of clothing and of luxury had been opened; and, what was of still more importance, several native schools had already been established. These improvements were chiefly due to one Sharân, an Armenian merchant and a man of liberal and enlightened views, who had seconded with

[18] In the ninth volume of the new series of their Transactions; a memoir by Schulz accompanies the inscriptions.

energy and liberality the desire of the Pasha to ameliorate the social condition of the Christian population.[19]

Shortly after my arrival, the Armenian bishop called upon me. He was dressed in the peculiar costume of his order, - long black robes and a capacious black hood almost concealing his head, - and was accompanied by the priests and principal laymen of his diocese. On his breast he wore the rich diamond crescent and star of the Turkish order of merit, of which he was justly proud. It had been asked for him of the Sultan by the Pasha, as an encouragement to the Christians, and as a proof of the spirit of tolerance which animated the government. If such principles were fully carried out in Turkey, there would be good hope for the empire. Although he had been duly elected several years before to his episcopal dignity, he still wanted the formal consecration of the patriarch of his church. This ceremony had hitherto been omitted on account of differences which had estranged the Armenian clergy residing in the Turkish dominions from the head of their sect, whose seat is the convent of Echmiadsin, made over to Russia at the close of the last war. These differences, arising from political interference in the management of the affairs of the Church, had for some time threatened a division in the community, that portion of it which acknowledges the authority of the Sultan wishing to place itself under a patriarch who resides at Cis, in Cilicia, and, consequently, beyond foreign control. The quarrel had now, however, been settled, and the bishop was on the eve of his departure to receive that consecration which was essential to his due admission into the Armenian hierarchy.

The modem town of Wan stands at the foot, and to the south of, the isolated rock. Its streets and bazars are small, narrow, and dirty; but its houses are not ill built. It is surrounded by fruitful gardens and orchards, irrigated by artificial rivulets derived from the streams rising in the Yedi Klissia mountains. It may contain between twelve and fifteen thousand inhabitants. The whole pashalic at the time of my visit paid an annual sum of six thousand purses (about 27,000l.) to the Turkish treasury. In the town there was a garrison of a thousand foot and five hundred horse, and the commander of the troops in the district and in the adjoining province of Hakkiari was at the head of five thousand men.[20]

The old hereditary pashas of Wan, as well as the principal families, were of Turkish origin, and came, I was informed by some of their descendants, from Konia (Iconium), about three hundred years ago. The chiefs, however, of the surrounding districts are Kurds. Two families, named the Topchi-oglus and the Timour-oglus, divided

[19] I must not omit to mention the name of Dr. Bimerstein, a German gentleman at the head of the quarantine establishment, from whom I received much civility and assistance during my stay at Wan, and who, by the influence he had obtained over the Pasha, and by his integrity and good sense, had contributed considerably towards the improvement in the condition of the Christians, and the general prosperity of the pashalic. He was a pleasing exception in a class made up of the refuse and outcasts of Europe, who have done more than is generally known to corrupt the Turkish character, and to bring an European and a Christian into contempt. I am proud to say that an Englishman is not, I believe, to be found amongst them.

[20] Wan is about 5600 feet above the level of the sea.

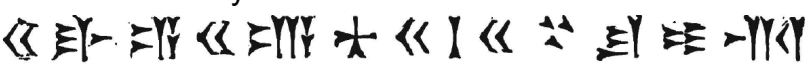
the town into opposite factions, which were continually at war, and carried their bloody feuds almost daily into the streets. The Timour-oglus were the most powerful, and it was through their means that Khan Mahmoud possessed himself of the place.

The inscriptions of Wan are of two distinct periods, though all in the cuneiform writing. The most ancient are in a character identical with that on the oldest monuments of Assyria.[21] The only one not entirely in this Assyrian character is on the southern face of the rock, inaccessible from all sides, but easily legible, on account of the size and distinctness of its letters, by a glass from below. It was copied by Schulz, and is a trilingual tablet of Xerxes the son of Darius, very nearly word for word the same as those of the same king at Hamadan (Ecbatana) and Persepolis.

The earliest inscriptions are found on two square stones built into a wall near the western gateway of the city, and immediately beneath the only entrance to the castle. This wall appears to have been part of the old fortifications, and at a more recent period formed one of the sides of a Christian church, dedicated to St John, but now in ruins.[22] The inscribed stones were taken from some far more ancient building.

The two inscriptions are similar, and contain the names of a king and his father, which have not been satisfactorily deciphered. They are written,

It is remarkable that the royal titles



are precisely the same as to those used by the early monarchs of Assyria, with the exception of "King of Nahiri," a name apparently applied to the northernmost part of Mesopotamia, between the head waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and perhaps even including the lake of Wan. It is possible that this country may also be identified with the Naharina of the Egyptian monuments, which, there are grounds for believing, may have been far to the north of the Mesopotamia of the Greeks.

It is also to be remarked that the language of these inscriptions appears to be Assyrian,[23] whilst that of all the others is peculiar to Wan. Nevertheless, the names of the kings in them can be genealogically connected, as it will be seen, with those on the other monuments.

But the most important records at Wan are carved on the southern face of the isolated rock, round the entrance to a set of excavated chambers, probably once serving as tombs, which, unlike the artificial caves at Bavian and Malthaiyah, may be

[21] The distinguishing feature of the Wan writing is a tendency to repeat the horizontal wedge when two wedges intersect: thus  for  . In this character are the inscriptions at Pahlou, on the Euphrates (Brit. Mus. Series, p. 74.), on a rock near Malatiyah on the same river (copied by M. Mühlbach, and published by the Syro-Egyptian Society), on a column at Patnos (copied by the Hon. F. Walpole), and in various parts of Armenia, but principally in the neighbourhood of Lake Wan.

[22] In Schulz's collection only one of these inscriptions is given (No. 1.); one is seven, the other eight lines in length.

[23] The same forms of expression occur in these inscriptions as in the standard inscription of Nimroud: compare the 2nd and 3rd lines of Schulz's copy with 6th and 7th lines of Brit. Mus. Series, p. 3.

referred to the same period as the inscriptions. As those inscriptions record the victories and deeds of a monarch, it is highly probable that they were placed over royal sepulchres.

A flight of twenty narrow steps cut in the perpendicular face of the precipice, and partly destroyed, so as to be somewhat difficult and dangerous, leads to a narrow ledge, above which the rock has been carefully smoothed, and is still covered with inscriptions in the cuneiform character. Here an entrance, about 7 feet deep, opens into a hall, 341½ feet long, by nearly 21 wide and 12 high, leading by four doorways into as many distinct chambers. Around its walls are window-like recesses, and between them, and on each side of the doorways, are ornamental niches, with holes in the centre, which may have held metal lamps. The floor has been excavated in two places into squares a few inches deep; I cannot conjecture for what purpose.

The door to the left on entering leads into a small chamber, 11 ft. 8 in. by 9 ft. 8 in., surrounded by similar window-like recesses. In it is a second doorway opening upon a well or pit, filled to within a few feet of the mouth with stones and rubbish. There were no means of ascertaining its depth or original use without removing the contents. The three other doors in the entrance hall lead to square rooms, surrounded by niches, but without other ornament. The excavations are sometimes called by the Turks "Khorkhor Mugaralari," the caves of Khorkhor, from a garden of that name below them.

The inscriptions on the face of the rock around the outer entrance to these chambers are contained in eight parallel columns, including in all above 300 lines and thirteen consecutive paragraphs.[24] The letters are large and admirably carved, and the writing is divided by horizontal lines. They are defective in many places, partly from natural decay, but mainly from wilful injury: the obliterated characters may to a great extent be restored by a comparison of the several inscriptions which contain corresponding passages.[25] These rock tablets are the records of a king whose name, according to Dr. Hincks, is Arghistis. He invokes the gods of his nation, and celebrates the conquest of various peoples or tribes, whose names still require to be identified, but who probably inhabited countries to the north of Armenia; he describes the burning of their temples and palaces, and the carrying away of captives and of an immense spoil of horses, camels, cattle, and sheep, the numbers of each being given with apparent exactness. The name of the region in which these conquests were chiefly made seems to read Mana.

The gardens beneath these inscriptions belong to the family of one of the former hereditary Pashas of Wan. A spring gushes forth from the foot of the rock, and over it is a small tablet, once containing a legend in arrow-headed characters, now entirely destroyed. The grounds, as I have observed, are called Khorkhor, and this name has been believed to occur in the cuneiform inscriptions as the ancient name of Wan, on the

[24] These inscriptions are numbered from II to VIII in Schultz's collection.

[25] And see Dr. Hincks's Memoir on the Inscriptions of Wan, 2. In the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

supposition that it is still given to the whole castle. I was assured, however, that it is limited to these gardens.[26]

The remaining inscriptions are on the northern face of the rock. They are five in number.[27] The longest and most important contains twenty-nine lines, and is on the side wall to the left on entering an artificial vaulted recess. It has been partly destroyed by a rude cross cut by the Armenians across the tablet. The cave is called the "Khazana Kapousi," or the treasure gate, and is held to be a sacred spot by Christians and Mussulmans. Beneath it, according to tradition, an iron gate, guarded by genii armed with swords of flame, closes the entrance to a vast hall filled with all manner of riches. The magic words that can alone open this portal are contained in the inscription, which is guarded at night by a serpent who retires at break of day into a hole near the cave.[28]

An inscription of seventeen lines is carved at the entrance to a second artificial chamber, and on tablets cut in the rock are three more, each of nineteen lines, word for word alike, but with orthographical variations in the royal name.

Four of these inscriptions belong to the father of the king, who recorded his conquests on the southern face of the rock. His name, according to Dr. Hincks, may be read Minuas. They merely contain the royal titles and invocations to the gods. The long inscription in the vaulted recess is of the grandson of Minuas, the latest king mentioned on the monuments of Wan. It is of considerable interest as containing the name of a country,  which Dr. Hincks identifies with Babylon, and as enumerating, first in detail, the amount of booty taken from three different countries, and afterwards giving the total amount of the whole. By this double account the one checking the other, a clue was afforded to the signs representing numerals in the Assyrian inscriptions, as well as to their respective values, a discovery for which we are indebted to the sagacity of Dr. Hincks.[29] It gives, moreover, a long list of nations conquered by the Armenian king, of which the principal appears to be called Abana, a name not yet identified.

The Pasha had kindly placed the "Mimar Bashi," or architect in chief of the town, an intelligent and honest Armenian, named Nikòos, under my orders during my researches at Wan. I also found in the place a half-crazy Cawass, who had been all the way to Constantinople to obtain a firman for leave to dig for treasure beneath the inscribed tablets. The imperial document had been granted, with a clause, however, that a share of the riches discovered should be paid into the Sultan's treasury. His search had hitherto been vain, although his purse had been emptied; but he knew all the old stones and inscriptions in the neighborhood. With the aid of these two men I carried on excavations for a short time at the foot of the northern face of the rock, without other

[26] The ancient province of Khorkhorunik was to the west of the lake of Wan; the city of Wan stood in that of Dosb.

[27] Numbered in Schultz's collection from XII to XVI.

[28] Schultz gives this tradition, which, like many others, is probably of very ancient date.

[29] See Dr. Hinck's Paper on the War Inscriptions, in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

results than clearing away the earth from one or two half-buried tablets, and laying bare the artificially smoothed rock.

About a mile and a half to the east of the town, near a small village in the gardens of Wan, is a recess in the rock 15 feet 8 inches high, and 6 feet 7 inches broad, containing a long cuneiform inscription. On the tablet may still be traced the remains of the yellow varnish, or glaze, mentioned by Schulz. The ancient Persians appear to have protected their rock-carved inscriptions by similar means from the effects of the atmosphere, traces of the glaze having been discovered on the great monument of Bisutun.[30] The inscription is called Meher Kapousi, which, according to the people of Wan, means the Shepherd's Gate, from a tradition that a shepherd, having fallen asleep beneath it, was told in a dream the magic word that opened the spell-bound portal. He awoke and straightway tried the talisman. The stone doors flew apart, disclosing to his wondering eyes a vast hall filled with inexhaustible treasures; but as he entered they shut again behind him. He filled with gold the bag in which, as he tended his flocks, be carried his daily food. After repeating the magic summons, he was permitted to issue into the open air. But he had left his crook, and must return for it. The doors were once more unclosed at his bidding. He sought to retrace his steps, but had forgotten the talisman. His faithful dog waited outside until nightfall. As its master did not come back, it then took up the bag of gold, and carrying it to the shepherd's wife, led her to the gates of the cave. She could hear the cries of her husband, and they are heard to this day, but none can give him help.

The inscription of the Meher Kapousi originally consisted of ninety-five lines, comprising the same record twice repeated. Only about sixty are now legible. It was carved by order of two kings, who appear to have reigned together, and whose names Dr. Hincks reads, Ishpuinish and Minuas. It contains little else than a list of sacrifices and offerings made to a multitude of gods, each one receiving a share probably according to his importance in the celestial hierarchy, the lowest in rank getting only one sheep, and the highest seventeen oxen and thirty-four sheep. With the gods of Armenia are mentioned those of foreign nations, who have the smallest portion of the honors, some obtaining but half an ox.

Near the Shepherd's Gate the rocks are excavated into a vast number of caves. In some places long flights of steps lead nowhere, but finish abruptly in the face of the perpendicular precipice; in others the cliff is scarped to a great height without any apparent object. A singular shaft, with stairs, leading into a cavern, is called Zimzim. It is difficult to account for the use and origin of these singular excavations; their height from the plain and their inaccessible position almost preclude the idea of their having been quarries.

[30] Col. Rawlinson, Memoir on the Inscriptions of Behistan, in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Several slabs of black basalt, inscribed with cuneiform characters, have been built into the interior walls of two ancient Armenian churches within the town of Wan.[31] They had been whitewashed with the rest of the building, but the bishop obligingly ordered the plaster to be removed from them. Some of the inscriptions are no longer legible. In the church of St. Peter and St. Paul I found parts of four legends,[32] which appear to refer to two kings, grandfather and grandson, whose names, according to Dr. Hincks, are Ishpuinish and Milidduris. They are historical, containing a record of the capture of many cities, and of the amount of spoil carried away from conquered countries.

In the church of Surp Sahak I was able to transcribe two inscriptions, one under the altar, the other in the vestibule beneath the level of the floor, which had to be broken up and removed before I could reach the stone. The longest consists of forty lines, the other of twenty-seven. The beginning and ending of the lines in both are wanting. They belong to a king whose name Dr. Hincks reads Arghistis, and one of them celebrates the capture of no less than 453 cities and 105 temples or palaces, and the carrying away of 25,170 (?) men, 2734 officers, 73,700 sheep, and an immense number of women, oxen, and other spoil.[33]

The only inscription at Wan that I could not copy was the trilingual tablet of Xerxes. It is on the moat inaccessible part of the rock, about seventy or eighty feet above the plain. Not having a glass of sufficient power, I was unable to distinguish the characters from below. As it had been accurately transcribed by Schulz, and resembles those of the same king at Persepolis and Hamadan, I did not think it necessary to incur any risk or expense in reaching it by means of ropes or scaffolding.[34]

In the rock there are numerous excavated chambers, some even exceeding in dimensions those I have described; but, with the exception of a simple seat or bench of stone, about two and a half feet high on one side of them, they are perfectly plain and unornamented. They appear to have been used as tombs, and Schulz declares that he found human bones in them; but it is doubtful whether those remains belonged to the original occupants. Some are approached by flights of steps cut in the precipice; others are altogether inaccessible except by ropes from above. As they all more or less resemble the one previously mentioned, I will not give a particular account or accurate measurements of them.[35]

I add a list of the kings mentioned in the inscriptions of Wan in the order of their succession, which may be interesting to the historical student.

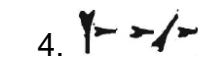
[31] These churches are probably of great antiquity, but no record appears to remain of the date of their foundation. They are dark and rudely built, and have nothing remarkable in them.

[32] Two are given by Schulz, Nos. XXXVIII and XXXIX.

[33] The beginnings of the lines having been destroyed, the numbers are not all complete.

[34] This inscription was copied, with a strong telescope, by Schulz, and is published with the rest of his transcripts.

[35] Schulz has given the measurements, and a detailed account of each cavern, in his Memoirs.

1.  . Lutibri, or Lutibar.[36]
2.  Milidduris.
3.  Ishpuinish.
4.  Minuas.
5.  (or) Argishtis.
6.  Milidduris.

It is yet doubtful to what family of languages the Wan inscriptions must be assigned. Some believe it to be a Tatar dialect; or, at least, to be largely intermixed with the Mongolian element. Dr. Hincks, on the contrary, is of opinion that it is Indo-Germanic, and adduces, in proof, various instances of case-endings corresponding with the Sanscrit.[37] Two of the inscriptions, and the earliest in date, as I have already observed, are in pure Assyrian.

With regard to the date of the monuments there appears to be a clue which may enable us to fix it with some degree of certainty. In an inscription from Khorsabad,[38] amongst the kings conquered by Sargon one is mentioned whose name corresponds with Arghistis, the fifth in the Wan dynasty. Supposing the two, therefore, to be the same, and there is no reason to doubt their being so, we may assume that the monarchs of the Wan records reigned from about the middle of the eighth century before Christ to the end of the seventh; and the evidence afforded by the forms of the characters leads to this conjecture. It is possible that between the death of the obelisk king and the reign of Sargon, the Assyrian monarchs were unable to enforce their authority beyond the lofty range of mountains to the north-east of Nineveh, and that a dynasty, which may indeed have been a branch from that of Assyria[39], established itself

[36] The above are Dr. Hincks's version of the reading of the names. He entertains some doubt as to the correctness of the second and sixth, the first part of which is the name of a goddess, perhaps the Mylitta of Herodotus, though in the Babylonian inscriptions it seems to be written "Gula." It must be observed that they are sometimes written with orthographical variations in the inscriptions, and that those in the above list are, according to Dr. Hincks's view, in the nominative case.

[37] On the inscriptions of Wan. Page 14., Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

[38] Botta, pl. 151. 1. 5.

[39] Since the above was written Col. Rawlinson has announced three synchronisms between the inscriptions of Nineveh and Wan. "Lutipari is found contending with Sardanapalus (the builder of the north-west palace at Nimroud); his son Semiduri is attacked by Deleboras (the obelisk king); and the fifth Wan monarch, Arghisti, is an antagonist of Sargon." Dr. Hincks, however, denies the second identification, and entertains considerable doubt, therefore, as to the first. (Literary Gazette, Dec. 18, 1852, p. 931.) It is a curious fact that the earliest inscriptions found at Wan should be in Assyrian, whilst the others are in an essentially distinct language. Connected with the Armenian tradition, that the two sons of Sennacherib, after they had slain their father, fled into Armenia, and established royal dynasties, which reigned over that country with northern Mesopotamia (St. Martin, vol. i.p. 163.), it might have led to the conjecture that the inscriptions were of a more recent period, and of the time between the fall of the Assyrian empire and the rise of the Persian.

during that period in Armenia, and maintained its independence until a great conqueror again sat on the throne of Nineveh. It is to be remarked that Dr. Hincks believes he has even found an invasion of Babylonia recorded in these Armenian inscriptions. If such be the case, it must be inferred that the territories of the Assyrians were at that time confined within very narrow limits round their capital city.

In the Khorsabad inscription Arghistis is called king of

War-ar-di, apparently the genitive case of War-ar-ad, a name that may be identified with the biblical Ararath, the kingdom of Armenia.[40] But at Wan we have two different names for this country. In the oldest inscriptions (those in the Assyrian language) it is called Nahiri, a name which, as I have already mentioned, was applied by the Assyrians to the very northernmost part of Mesopotamia, if it can be called Mesopotamia at all, between the head-waters of the Tigris and Euphrates. In the others it is termed Biaynee,

a name not yet identified, but perhaps not unconnected with the mountainous province of Adiabene, to the north of Assyria.[41]

At sunrise, on the 8th August, the roaring of cannon, re-echoed by the lofty rock; announced the end of Ramazan, and the beginning of the periodical festivities of the Bairam. Early in the morning the Pasha, glittering with gold and jewels, and surrounded by the members of his household, the officers of the garrison, and the gaily-dressed chiefs of the irregular troops, rode in procession through the streets of the town. As it is customary, he received in the palace the visits of the cadi, mollahs, and principal Mussulman inhabitants of Wan, as well as of the bishop, clergy, and elders of the Armenian Church. The population, rejoicing at their release from a fast almost intolerable in summer, decked themselves in holiday garments, and made merry in the houses and highways. The sounds of music and revelry issued from the coffee-houses and places of public resort. The children repaired to swings, merry-go-rounds, and stalls of sweetmeats, which had been raised in the open spaces within the walls. The Christians add the feast to their own festivals, already too numerous,[42] and, like their Mussulman neighbours, pay visits of compliment and ceremony. Their women, who are said to be handsome, but are even more rigidly concealed than the Mahommedan ladies, crept through the streets in their long white veils.

I called in the evening on the bishop, and next morning, at his invitation, visited the principal schools. Five have been established since the fall of the Kurdish Beys, and the

[40] 2 Kings, XIX. 37, &c.

[41] The country is also thus called in the inscription at Pahlou (Br. Mus. Series, p. 74. I. 20), and that near Malatiyah.

[42] The Mussulmans have only two great annual feasts in which labor gives way to rejoicings and festivities; the Christians of all sects have little else but fasts and festivals throughout the year. A lazy Christian will add to his own holidays the Friday of the Mohammedans, and the Saturday of the Jews.

enjoyment of comparative protection by the Christian population. Only one had been opened within the walls; the rest were in the gardens, which are thickly inhabited by Armenians, and form extensive suburbs to Wan. The school in the town was held in a spacious building newly erected, and at that time scarcely finished. More than two hundred children of all ages were assembled. They went through their exercises and devotions at the sound of a bell with great order and precision, alternately standing and squatting on their hams on small cushions placed in rows across the hall. An outer room held basins and towels for washing, and the cloaks and shoes taken off on entering. Books were scarce. There were not more than a score in the whole school. The first class, which had made some progress, had a few elementary works on astronomy and history, published by the Armenian press at Constantinople and Smyrna, but only one copy of each. The boys, at my request, sang and chanted their prayers, and repeated their simple lessons.

Such schools, imperfect though they be, are proofs of a great and increasing improvement in the Christian communities of Turkey.[43] A change of considerable importance, and which, it is to be hoped, may lead to the most beneficial results, is now taking place in the Armenian Church. It is undoubtedly to be attributed to the judicious, earnest, and zealous exertions of the American missionaries; their establishments, scattered over nearly the whole Turkish empire, have awakened amongst the Christians, and principally amongst the Armenians, a spirit of inquiry and a desire for the reform of abuses, and for the cultivation of their minds, which must ultimately tend to raise their political, as well as their social, position in the human scale. It is scarcely fifteen years since the first institution for Christian instruction on Protestant (independent) principles was opened by those excellent men in Constantinople. By a wise selection of youths from different parts of the empire, who from their character and abilities were deemed worthy of the choice, they were shortly enabled to send into the provinces those who could sow the seeds of truth and knowledge, without incurring the suspicions attaching to strangers, and without laboring under that ignorance of the manners and languages of those amongst whom they mix, which must always prove so serious an obstacle to foreigners in their intercourse with the natives. A movement of this nature could scarcely escape persecution. The Armenian clergy, not unfavorable to the darkness and bigotry which had for centuries disgraced their Church, and exercising an uncontrolled power over an ignorant and simple people, soon raised a cry against the "Evangelists," as they were contemptuously called. By such misrepresentations and calumnies as are always ready at hand to the enemies of progress and reform, they were able to enlist in their favor the Turkish authorities at the capital and in the provinces. Unfortunately, four sects alone, the Roman Catholic, the Armenian, the

[43] The desire of a large number of the Armenians to improve their institutions, and to adopt the manners of Europe, is a highly interesting, and indeed important, fact. I was amused, after having contributed a trifle to the funds of the school, at having presented to me a neatly printed and ornamented receipt, with the amount of my donation duly filled up in the blank space left for the purpose, the document being signed by the head of the school.

Greek, and the Copt, were recognised by the Porte amongst their Christian subjects. The reformed Armenian Church was consequently without an acknowledged head, and unable, to communicate directly with the government, to make known its tenets, or to complain of the acts of injustice and persecution to which it was exposed. Many persons fell victims to their opinions. Some were cruelly tortured in the house of the Patriarch himself, and others were imprisoned or utterly ruined in Constantinople and the provinces. Sir Stratford Canning at length exerted his powerful influence to protect the injured sect from these wanton cruelties. Through his exertions and those of Lord Cowley, when minister, a firman was obtained from the Sultan, placing the new Protestant community on the same footing as the other Churches of the empire, assigning to it a bead, or agent, through whom it could apply directly to the ministers, and extending to it other privileges enjoyed by the Roman Catholics and Greeks. This act of toleration and justice has given fresh vigor to the spirit of inquiry bred by the American missionaries. There is now scarcely a town of any importance in Turkey without a Protestant community, and in most of the principal cities the American mission has opened schools, and is educating youths for the priesthood. Fortunately for the cause, many men of irreproachable character and of undoubted sincerity from the Armenian nation have been associated with it, and its success has not been endangered like that of so many other movements of the same kind, by interested, or hasty conversions. Those who have watched the effect that this desire for improvement and for religious freedom is gradually producing upon a large and important section of the Christian population of Turkey, may reasonably hope that the time is not far distant when it may exercise a marked influence upon other Christian sects, as well as upon those who surround them; preparing them for the enjoyment of extended political privileges, and for the restoration of a pure and rational faith to the East.

The influence of this spirit of inquiry, fostered by the American missions, has not been alone confined to those who have been out off from their own community. The Armenian clergy, no longer able to coerce their flocks, or to persecute those who left them, have found that the only mode of checking the schism is to reform the abuses of their own Church, and to educate and instruct their people. Schools in opposition to the American establishments have been opened in the capital and in most of the large towns of Asia Minor; and elementary and theological works, of a far more liberal character than any hitherto published in Turkey, have been printed by Armenian printing-presses in Constantinople and Smyrna, or introduced into the country from Venice. This is another, though an indirect, result of their labors, which the American missionaries may justly contemplate with satisfaction, unmingled with any feelings of jealousy or ill-will.

Whilst on this subject, and connected as I have been with the Nestorians, I must not omit a tribute of praise to the admirable establishments of the American missions amongst the Chaldaeans of Ooroomiyah in Persia, under the able direction of the Rev.

Mr. Perkins.[44] It was with much regret that I was compelled to give up the plan I had formed of visiting that small colony from the New World. The Rev. Mr. Bowen, who crossed the frontiers from Wan, has in a true Christian spirit home witness in the English Church to the enlightened and liberal spirit in which their labors are carried on. Forty or fifty schools have been opened in the town of Ooroomiyah and surrounding villages. The abuses that have crept into this primitive and highly interesting Church are being reformed, and the ignorance of its simple clergy gradually dispelled. A printing-press, for which type has been purposely cut, now publishes for general circulation the Scriptures and works of education in the dialect and character peculiar to the mountain tribes. The English language has been planted in the heart of Asia, and the benefits of knowledge are extended to a race which, a few years ago, was almost unknown even by name to Europe.

The Armenian bishop of Wan was not wanting in intelligence and in liberal feeling; but like most of his order, he was profoundly ignorant. He had not seen the valuable works in his native language, even those of the fathers of his Church, published by the Mechitarists of Venice; and was equally surprised and gratified with printed copies of the works of Moses of Chorene, Eusebius, and one or two other authors in Armenian which I had with me. The convents of Wan and of the neighbourhood, he said, were once rich in ancient manuscripts, but they had been carried away by camel-loads some two hundred years before by the Persians, and were believed still to be preserved in Isfahan. With the exception of a few printed copies of the Scriptures, and some religious works for the use of the churches, there are now no books in the city. He received with pleasure from Mr. Bowen a copy of the New Testament in the vulgar Armenian tongue, remarking that it would be a great advantage to the common people to have a version of the Scriptures in a language which they could understand. He was probably not aware that the head of his church had utterly condemned its use, and had anathematised all those who received it.

My companions had been compelled, from ill-health, to leave the plain, and had taken refuge in the convent of Yedi Klissia, from the sultry heats of the plain. Before joining them I visited the village of Amikh, where, according to my Armenian guide, Nikòos, an inscription was engraved on the rocks. I left the city on the 10th of August. Wan stands at a short distance from the lake, and the few boats which traffic along the shores anchor at a small Iskelli, or port, about a mile and a half from the gates. The greater part of this village is now under water, the lake having gradually risen during the

[44] "I cannot refrain from recording the names of the Rev. Messrs. Goddall, Dwight, Holmes, Hamlin, and Schauffler, of the Constantinople missionary station; the late excellent and enterprising Dr. Smith, who, like the estimable Dr. Grant, his fellow-laborer in the same field, and many others of his countrymen, has recently fallen a victim to his zeal and devotion; the Rev. Eli Smith of Beyrout, and Perkins of Ooroomiyah; men who will ever be connected with the first spread of knowledge and truth amongst the Christians of the East, and of whom their country may justly be proud. Personally I must express my gratitude to them for many acts of kindness and friendship. The American mission has now establishments in Smyrna, Brousa, Trebizond, Erzeroom, Diarbekir, Mosul, Aintab, Aleppo, and many other cities in Asia Minor, together with native agents all over Turkey.

last few years. The inhabitants pretend that this rising is caused by a periodical ebbing and flowing, each continuing for seven years, and that the waters will again fall to their former level. It is certain, however, that, from some cause or other which I cannot explain, many villages on the borders of the lake are now partly submerged, and that there appears to have been for some years a gradual increase in the waters.

Leaving the small port, and passing some pans in which a kind of alkaline deposit is collected from the water of the lake to be used as soap, we struck into a fine undulating corn country, abounding in Christian villages. The soil is well cultivated, though by dint of much labor. Eight, or even ten, pairs of oxen are frequently yoked to a plough, which differs from that seen in any other part of Turkey; and having two wheels, one larger than the other, more resembles those in common use in England. The landscape was richly tinted by large plots of bright yellow thistles,[45] cultivated for the oil expressed from the seeds, and used by the Armenians during their numerous fasts. We reached at sunset a deep bay hemmed in by gardens and orchards, and sheltered from the wind by an amphitheatre of low rocky hills. I pitched my tent about a mile from the village of Amikh, near a transparent spring, in a small glade shelving to the water's edge, and embowered in white roses.

Early next morning I sought the inscriptions which I had been assured were graven on the rocks near an old castle, standing on a bold projecting promontory above the lake. After climbing up a dangerous precipice by the help of two or three poles, in which large nails had been inserted to afford a footing, I reached a small natural cave in the rock. A few crosses and ancient Armenian letters were rudely cut near its entrance. There was nothing else, and I had to return as I best could, disappointed, as many a traveller has been under similar circumstances before me.

From Amikh I rode across the country in a direct line to the monastery of Yedi Klissia, whose gardens on the side of the lofty mountain of Wurrak are visible from most parts of the plain. I stopped for an hour at the church of Kormawor before ascending to the convent. An aged priest, with beard white as snow, and wearing a melon-shaped cap, and long black robes, was the guardian of the place. He led me into an arcade surrounding the inner court of the building. Seeing that I was a Frank, he fancied at once that I was searching for inscriptions, and pointed to a circular stone, the base of a wooden column, which, he said, he had shown many years before to a traveller, meaning Schulz.[46] It bears three imperfect lines of cuneiform writing, part of an inscription belonging to one of the Wan kings, whose name Dr. Hincks read Minuas. It appears to record the foundation of a temple. A second inscription on a black stone, and several fragments with the same royal name, are built into the walls.[47]

I copied that which remained of the legends, the old priest hooking a pair of primitive spectacles on his nose, and watching my movements with anxious curiosity.

[45] Called in Turkish Khanjerek.

[46] The inscription is published in his collection, No. XXIII.

[47] Schulz, No. XXIV.

He entreated me, with every term of endearment, to communicate the contents to him. Were they talismans for the discovery of riches, or words of promise to the Armenian nation? They recorded, I told him, the past glories of his race, and might be regarded as a promise that by education, integrity, and reform, these glories might be revived. This explanation was scarcely sufficiently definite to satisfy him. However, in return for the interpretation, he offered me a frugal breakfast of cheese and sour milk.

Eight hours' ride from Amikh brought me to the large Armenian convent of Yedi Klissia, or the seven churches, built of substantial stone masonry, and inclosing a spacious courtyard planted with trees. It has more the appearance of a caravanserai than that of a place of religious retreat, and is beautifully situated near the mouth of a wooded ravine, halfway up a bold mountain, which ends in snowy peaks. Spread beneath it is a blue lake and a smiling plain, and the city, with its bold castellated rock, and its turreted walls half hid in gardens and orchards.

The church, a substantial modern edifice, stands within the courtyard. Its walls are covered with pictures as primitive in design as in execution. There is a victorious St. George blowing out the brains of a formidable dragon with a bright brass blunderbus, and saints, attired in the traditionary garments of Europe, performing extravagant miracles. The intelligence of the good priest at the head of the convent was pretty well on a par with his illustrated church history. He was a specimen of the Armenian clergy of Asia Minor. As he described each subject to me, he spoke of the Nestorians as heretics, because they were allowed, by the canons of their church, to marry their mothers and grandmothers; of the Protestants as freemasons or atheists; and of the great nations of Europe as the Portuguese, the Inglese, the Muscovs, and the Abbash (Abyssinians).

I found two short cuneiform inscriptions; one on a stone amongst the ruins of the old church, the other built into the walls of the new.[48] They also belong to Minuas, and merely contain the name and titles of the king.

[48] Nos. XXVIII and XXIX. Schulz's Collection. Schulz gives three from this convent, one of which may have been covered by the ruins of the former church since his visit.

CHAPTER XIX. (pp. 353-373).

LEAVE WAN - THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCH. - THE ISLAND OF AKHTAMAR. - AN ARMENIAN CHURCH. - HISTORV OF THE CONVENT. - PASS INTO MUKUS. - THE DISTRICT OF MUKUS - OF SHATTAK - OF NOURDOOZ. - A NESTORIAN VILLAGE. - ENCAMPMENTS. - MOUNT ARARAT. - MAR SHAMOUN. - JULAMERIK. - VALLEY OF DIZ. - PASS INTO JELU. - NESTORIAN DISTRICT OP JELU. - AN ANCIENT CHURCH. - THE BISHOP. - DISTRICT OF BAZ - OF TKHOMA - RETURN TO MOSUL

SICKNESS had overcome both Dr. Sandwith and Mr. Cooper. A return to the burning plains of Assyria might have proved fatal, and I advised them to seek, without further delay, the cooler climate of Europe. Mr. Walpole, too, who had been long suffering from fever, now determined upon quitting my party and taking the direct road to Erzeroom.

In the afternoon of the 12th August I left the gates of the convent of Yedi Klissia with Mr. Hormuzd Rassam. Once more I was alone with my faithful friend, and we trod together the winding pathway which led down the mountain side. We had both been suffering from fever, but we still had strength to meet its attacks, and to bear cheerfully, now unhindered, the difficulties and anxieties of our wandering life.

We made a short journey of three and a half hours to the pleasant village of Artamit or Adremit, and encamped beneath its fruit trees in a garden near the lake.[49] Our path on the following day led through a hilly district, sometimes edging a deep bay, then again winding over a rocky promontory. We crossed by a bridge the large stream which we had seen at Mahmoudiyah, and which here discharges itself into the lake. The feast of St. George had been celebrated during the previous day at the church of Narek, and we passed, as we rode along, merry groups of Armenians returning from their pilgrimage. The women, seated with their children on the backs of mules and asses, and no longer fearing the glances of haughty Kurds, had lifted their veils from their ruddy faces. They were dressed in scarlet cloaks, which half concealed their festive robes. To their platted hair was attached a square black pad of silk hung with tassels, and sometimes with coins. Most of the men carried umbrellas to protect themselves from the rays of the sun. In the midst of them we met, surrounded by a crowd of adherents, the Patriarch of Akhtamar, once the head of the Armenian Church, but now only recognised by a small section of Christians living in the province of Wan. He rode a mule, and was dressed in long black robes, with a silken cowl hanging over his head. Several youthful priests, some carrying silver-headed wands, followed close behind him. He was on his way to the city, and I thus lost the opportunity of seeing him at his residence on the sacred island.

[49] There are two cuneiform inscriptions near the village, which are included in Schulz's collection.

On the shores of the lake we found many encampments of gipsies; the men to be distinguished by their swarthy countenances, the women and children by their taste for begging.

We passed through Vastan; in the eleventh century the residence of the royal Armenian family of Ardzrouni, but now a mere village. The convent boat was on the beach, three miles above the usual landing-place. Four sturdy monks were about to row it back to the island. As they offered to take me with them, I left the caravan to journey onwards to our night's encamping place, and with Mr. Rassam and the Bairakdar, we were soon gliding over the calm surface of the lake. Not a breeze rippled the blue expanse. The burning rays of the sun were still full upon us, and the panting boatmen were nearly two hours before they reached the convent.

In the absence of the Patriarch we were received by an intelligent and courteous monk named Kirikor. His hair, as well as his beard, had never known the scissors, and fell in long luxuriant curls over his shoulders. It was of jetty black, for he was still a young man, although he had already passed twenty years of a monastic life. He led us through an arched doorway into the spacious courtyard of the convent, and thence into an upper room furnished with comfortable divans for the reception of guests. Tea was brought to us after the Persian fashion, and afterwards a more substantial breakfast, in which the dried fish of the lake formed the principal dish. Kirikor had visited Jerusalem and Constantinople, had read many of the works issued by the Venetian press, and was a man of superior acquirements for an Armenian monk of the orthodox faith.

The church, which is within the convent walls, is built of the sandstone of a rich deep red color that has been quarried for the turbehs of Akhlat. Like other religious edifices of the same period and of the same nation, it is in the form of a cross, with a small hexagonal tower, ending in a conical roof, rising above the centre. The first monastery was founded by a Prince Theodore in A.D. 653: and the church is attributed to the Armenian king Kakhik, of the family of Ardzrouni, who reigned in the tenth century; but the island appears from a very remote date to have contained a castle of the Armenian kings. The entrance and vestibule of the church are of a different style from the rest of the building, being a bad imitation of modern Italian architecture. They were added about one hundred years ago by a patriarch, whose tomb is in the courtyard. The interior is simple. A few rude pictures of saints and miracles adorn the walls, and a gilded throne for the Patriarch stands near the altar. The exterior, however, is elaborately ornamented with friezes and broad bands of sculptured figures and scroll work, the upper part being almost covered with bas-reliefs, giving to the whole building a very striking and original appearance. The conical roof of the tower, rising over the centre of the cross, rests upon a frieze of hares, foxes, and other animals. Above arched windows are bands of rich foliage, and beneath them, at the base of the tower, a row of small vaulted recesses. The roof of the transept is supported by human heads. Beneath is a frieze, Assyrian in its character, and resembling the embossed designs on

some of the bronze dishes described in a previous chapter.[50] It consists of lions springing upon stags, and figures of wild goats, hares, and deer. Under the projecting roof of the aisle is a frieze, formed of bunches of grapes mingled with grotesque forms of men, animals, and birds. Next is a row of the heads of similar figures, projecting in high relief from the wall. They are succeeded by bas-reliefs representing Scripture stories from the Old and New Testaments, divided into separate subjects by medallions with images of Armenian saints. An elaborate border of scroll work completes the exterior decoration about halfway up the building. The human form is rudely portrayed in these sculptures; but the general design is far from inelegant and the ornaments rich and appropriate. I know of no similar specimen of Armenian architecture, and I regret that time would not allow me to make detailed drawings of the edifice.[51]

In a grave-yard outside the church are several most elaborately carved tombstones belonging to the early Armenian patriarchs. That of Zachariah, who died in the fourteenth century, and who was for one year patriarch at Echmiadsin and for nine years at Akhtamar, is especially worthy of notice for the richness and elegance of its ornaments.

In the portico is a circular black stone, like a millstone, with short cuneiform inscriptions on the two flat sides. They contain the name of the king who carved the great tablet of the Meher Kapousi near Wan, which Dr. Hincks reads Minuas. The inscriptions do not appear to record any events of importance.[52]

A library of manuscripts, said to have been once preserved in the convent, no longer exists. Kirikor assured me that many works of value had been removed some years ago to the capital by order of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch.

The Patriarchate of Akhtamar, or Aghtamar, was founded in 1113 by an archbishop of the island, who declared himself independent of the universal Patriarch, residing at Echmiadsin. Its jurisdiction does not extend far beyond the immediate neighbourhood of Wan, and the ecclesiastic who fills the office is generally even more ignorant than other dignitaries of the Armenian Church. The present Patriarch, I was informed, obtained his nomination by bribing the celebrated Kurdish chief, Khan Mahmoud, with in whose territories his followers mainly reside.

The convent and church are built on a small rocky island about five miles from the shore. On an adjacent islet are the ruined walls of a castle partly covered by the rising waters of the lake. Intercourse with the main land is carried on by the one crank boat which, whenever the weather permits, goes backwards and forwards daily for such provisions as are required by the inmates of the monastery. Khan Mahmoud took the place by collecting together the vessels belonging to Wan for the transport of his troops.

[50] Chapter VIII.

[51] This building affords another clue to the origin of the early Mussulman architecture - Arab and Tatar - of which remains exist in many parts of Asia Minor, and particularly at Akhlat.

[52] Nos. XX and XXI in Schulz's collection. One inscription contains ten, and the other, nine short lines.

Late in the afternoon, accompanied by the monk Kirikor, I was rowed to the farm and garden belonging to the convent, near the village of Ashayansk. We had scarcely reached the land where a violent storm of wind suddenly arose, and lashed the water of the lake into high waves crowned with foam. The monks dragged the boat high on the beach to save it from being dashed to pieces. I was well satisfied not to have encountered the gale, with which our frail bark could scarcely have struggled. It was, however, but one of those mountains squalls which sometimes sweep down the deep valleys, and expend their fury in a short hour. By sunset the air was again serene, and the face of the blue lake once more reflected, like a mirror, the snow-white gulls and black cormorants that floated on its surface.

A few monks live on the farm, and tend the property of the convent, supplying the Patriarch with the produce of the dairy and orchards. They received us very hospitably. Kirikor rode with me on the following morning as far as the large Armenian village of Narek, in which there is a church dedicated to St. George, much frequented in pilgrimage by the Christians of Wan and the surrounding country. It was built by one Tateos Arakil, in the ninth century, according to the priest of the place; but, according to Kirikor, by a certain Theodorus in the time of King Kakhik. It has probably been added to and repaired at various periods, and there are parts, such as the belfry, which are modern, whilst others bear evident marks of antiquity. It is a strong solid building, of the same red sandstone as the tombs of Akhlat.

We had now left the lake of Wan, and our track led up a deep ravine, which gradually became more narrow as we drew nigh to the high mountains that separated us from the unexplored districts of Mukus and Bohtan. We passed a large Armenian village named Pagwantz, near which, on the summit of a precipitous rock, stands the ruined castle of Khan Mahmoud, the rebel chief. He was the eldest of seven brothers, all of whom governed under him different districts on the borders of the lake, and sorely oppressed the Christian inhabitants. Five were captured and are in banishment.

On both sides of the ravine were villages and ruined castles. Numerous streams from the hill-sides irrigated plots of cultivated ground. Ere long we entered a rocky barren tract, patched here and there with fragrant Alpine flowers. After climbing up a steep declivity of loose stones like the moraine of a Swiss glacier, and dragging our horses with much difficulty after us, we found ourselves amidst eternal snow, over which we toiled for nearly two hours, until we reached the crest of the mountain, and looked down into the deep valley of Mukus. This is considered one of the highest passes in Kurdistan, and one of the most difficult for beasts of burden. The flocks of the nomade Kurds of Bohtan were feeding in the gullies, cropping the sweet and tender herbs nourished by the snow. The descent was even more rapid and precipitous than the ascent, and we could scarcely prevent our weary horses from rolling down into the ravine with the stones which we put into motion at every step. At the foot of the pass is a small Armenian church called Khorous Klissia, or "the church of the cock," because a black cock is said to warn the traveller when the snowdrifts hide the mountain tracks.

There was no other pathway down the rocky ravine than the dry bed of the torrent. As we approached the widening valley the springs began to collect together and to form a considerable stream, through which we had to wade as we best could. A track, occasionally followed by the solitary foot-traveller, and by the shepherds in their periodical migrations to the uplands, had been carried here and there over the foaming water by trunks of trees. But these simple bridges had been washed away during a recent storm. Leaving the laden horses to find their way over the stones and through the torrent, I rode onwards with Hormuzd. We passed soon after a deep natural cavern, from which burst, white with foam and struggling through a bed of pink flowers, a moat abundant spring. This was one of the principal sources of the eastern branch of the Tigris, here called the river of Mukus, which, according to an Armenian tradition, only issued from the rock for about five hundred years ago.

A ride of eight hours brought us to the large scattered village of Mukus, the principal place of the district of the same name. We were met, as we drew near, by the Mudir or governor, an active bustling Turk, who had already chosen, with the usual taste of an Eastern, the prettiest spot, a lawn on the banks of the river, for our tents, and had collected provisions for ourselves and our horses. The good Pasha of Wan had sent to the different chiefs on our way, and had ordered preparations to be everywhere made for our reception. The Tigris is here a deep stream, and is crossed by a stone bridge. The houses are built without order, on the slopes of the mountain, each family choosing some open place more free from stones than the usual rocky declivities to cultivate a small plot of ground. There is no room for them in the narrow valley. The place may contain altogether about two thousand inhabitants.

The district of Mukus, anciently Mogkh, and one of the provinces of the Armenian kingdom, had only lately been brought under the authority of the Sultan.[53] Like the rest of this part of Kurdistan, it had long maintained its independence under hereditary chiefs, the last of whom, Abdal Bey, after several times defeating the Turkish troops sent against him, was at length captured as he was flying into Persia. Of its sixty villages forty are inhabited by Christian Armenians. The revenues amounted the year of my visit to little more than 100,000 piastres (about 910 l.), of which the village of Mukus contributed 42,000. The garrison consisted of only forty regular soldiers and forty Albanians, so completely had the seizure of their chiefs discouraged the wild Kurdish tribes who dwell in the mountains, and were formerly in open rebellion against the Porte. This nomade race forms the principal part of the Mussulman population, and is the most fierce and independent in Kurdistan. Mukus was anciently celebrated for its mines. None are now worked, and even the site of the greater part of them is unknown.

[53] The ancient Armenian province of Mogkh was bounded on the south by a part of Assyria called by the Armenians Arovasdan. It was governed by Armenian princes, whose descendants still reigned there in the tenth century. (St. Martin, i. 175., who by mistake places Mukus on the Khabour.) Ammianus Marcellinus mentions the district under the name of Moxoene. According to a tradition, the mountains to the south of the lake of Wan were the original seat of the Armenian race. (St. Martin, I 206.)

The Pasha of Wan had sent miners from Arghana to examine those of silver and copper, but their report being unfavorable, no further attempt was made to explore them. The Armenians of Mukus weave the striped woollen stuffs, some of rich color and fine texture, worn by the Kurds, and export a little honey and wax, but have no other trade. The border districts are Karkar (containing about eighteen villages), Khiawash, Isparut, Bidar, and Shattak.[54]

The Mudir showed the greatest anxiety for our welfare during the night, continually visiting our tents to see that the Albanians he had placed as guards over our property did not sleep, as the village swarmed with Bohtan thieves.

The principal Armenians of Mukus with their priests spent a morning with me. They knew of no ruins or inscriptions in the district, and I found them even more ignorant than their fellow-countrymen of the districts around Wan, whose stupidity has passed into a Turkish proverb. Long subjection to the Kurds and a constant intercourse with Mussulmans, have led them to adopt their manners and dress; their religion at the same time consists of mere outward profession, and the punctual performance of a few ceremonies and fasts.

We left Mukus early in the afternoon, accompanied by the Mudir. The path following the course of the river, leads to Sert Jezireh and the Assyrian plains. We soon turned from it, and entered a valley running eastwards. On the mountain-sides were many villages, buried, like those of Tiyari, in orchards and groves of walnuts. We forced our way through thickets and through matted climbing plants hanging from the branches of trees, the track being continually lost in rivulets or in watercourses for irrigation. The valley soon narrowed into a wild gorge. High above us, in a cave in the rock, was an ancient Christian chapel, which I visited, but without finding anything of interest in it. The ravine ended at length in the gardens of Aurenj. We chose amongst them a sheltered nook for our night's resting-place.

Next day we crossed a high mountain ridge covered in some places with snow, separating the district of Mukus from that of Shattak. Its northern and western slopes are the summer pastures of the Miran Kurds, whose flocks were still feeding on the green lawns and in the flowery glens. On the opposite side of the pass we found an encampment of Hartushi Kurds, under one Omar Agha, a noble old chieftain, who welcomed us with unbounded hospitality, and set before me every luxury that he possessed. I could scarcely resist his entreaties that we should pass the night under his tent. I had honored it, he declared, by entering into it. All that it contained, his children, his wives, and his flocks, were, upon his head, no longer his but my property. I had no wish to profit by his generosity, and at length we parted. Resuming our journey we

[54] The principal villages in the Mukus district are Aughin, Nouravos, Kasr, Achichos, Kerkichos, Aurenj, Kotzabiloor, Auveriss, Parangos, Mangoneh, Komos, Ketchoks, Amaghus, Marakos, and Berwar. Of the nine districts into which, according to the Armenian writers, the province of Mogkh was divided, I could recognize no name in the modem villages and valleys. From Mukus to Jezireh there are five caravan days' journeys, and to Sert three, by difficult mountain roads.

descended by a precipitous pathway into a deep valley. A broad stream, another arm of the eastern Tigris, wound through it; its glittering waters had been just visible amidst the gardens of Shattak, from the mountain-top.

Here again the Mudir had been apprised of our coming, and was ready to receive us. He had collected provisions for ourselves and horses in an open space on the river bank. Shattak is a small town, rather than a village. It is chiefly inhabited by Armenians, an industrious and hardy race, cultivating the sides of the mountains, on which are built their villages, and weaving in considerable quantities the gay-colored woollen stuffs so much esteemed by the Kurds. In nearly every house was a loom, and the rattle of the shuttle came from almost every door. The large and flourishing Armenian communities inhabiting the valleys between lake Wan and the district of Jezireh, appear to be unknown to modern geographers, and are unnoticed in our best maps. The difficulties and dangers of the road have hitherto deterred travellers from entering their mountains. The existence of this people in the very heart of Kurdistan might, if taken advantage of by the Porte, be the means of establishing an important trade and of quieting and civilising a country but recently brought under its rule. The mountains produce galls, wool (some of which has the same silky texture as that of Angora), the small under-wool of the goat called *teftik* (a valuable article of export), and minerals. In the bazar at Shattak I saw a few English prints, and other European wares brought for sale from Wan.

The priests and principal Armenians of the place came to me soon after my arrival, and I learnt from them that efforts had already been made to improve the condition of the Christian community, now that the oppressive rule of the Kurdish hereditary chiefs had been succeeded by the more tolerant government of the Sultan. A school had been opened, chiefly by the help of Sheran, the active and liberal Armenian banker of Wan.

The town itself is called by the Armenians Tauk, by the Kurds Shokh, and when spoken of together with the numerous villages that surround it, Shattak. It stands near the junction of two considerable streams, forming one of the head-waters of the eastern Tigris, and uniting with the Bohtan Su. The largest comes from the district of Albagh. These streams, as well as that of Mukus, abound in trout of the moat delicious flavor. The entire district contains fifty villages and numerous *mezras* or hamlets. The revenues are about the same as those of Mukus. A few Mussulmans live on the right bank of the stream opposite Shokh, round the ruins of an old castle, medresseh (college), and mosque, all apparently at one time handsome and well-built edifices. They prove that the place was once a flourishing Mohammedan town. The castle belonged to Nur-Ullah Bey, from whom it was taken by Beder Khan Bey, who gave it to Omar Agha, a chief of the Hartushi Kurds, the last independent lord of the place.

We left Shokh on the 17th August by a bridge crossing the principal stream. The Mudir rode with us up a steep mountain, rising on the very outskirts of the town. After a long and difficult ascent we came to a broad green platform called Tagu, the pastures of the people of Shattak, and now covered with their tents and flocks. This high ground

overlooked the deep valleys, through which wound the two streams, and on whose sides were many smiling gardens and villages. We stopped at an encampment of Miran Kurds, a large and wealthy tribe, pasturing their flocks far and wide over the mountains and ravines of Shattak and Nourdooz. Their chief had died five days before. We had passed on the road his son, a boy covered with embroidery and gold, and surrounded by armed servants. He was on his way to Wan to receive a cloak of investiture from the Pasha, who had recognised him as lord of the clan.

Crossing a high mountain pass, on which snow still lingered, we descended into a deep valley like that of Shattak, chiefly cultivated by Armenians. We crossed a small stream, and ascended on the opposite side to Ashkaun, whose inhabitants were outside the village, near a clear spring, washing and shearing their sheep. We had now entered Nourdooz, a district under a Mudir appointed by the Pasha of Wan, and living at a large village called Pir-bedelan.

Our ride on the following day was over upland pastures of great richness, and through narrow valleys watered by numerous streams. Here and there were villages inhabited by Kurds and Armenians. We were now approaching the Nestorian districts. The first man of the tribe we met was an aged buffalo-keeper, who, in answer to a question in Kurdish, spoke to me in the Chaldee dialect of the mountains. Hormuzd and my servants rejoiced at the prospect of leaving the Armenian settlements, whose inhabitants, they declared, were for stupidity worse than Kurds, and for rapacity worse than Jews. Chilghiri was the first Nestorian village on our way. The men, with their handsome wives and healthful children, came out to meet us. We did not stop there, but continued our journey to Merwanen, which we found deserted by its inhabitants for the Zomas, or summer pastures. The Kiayah, or chief, however, with one or two of his people, had ridden down to examine the state of the crops, and turning his horse he led us up the steep pathway to his tents. They were huddled up in a little rocky nook, high on the mountain, and in the midst of snow. Unlike the Kurds, the Nestorians do not shift their encampments, but remain on one spot during the whole time they are in the Zomas. They thus live for some months in the midst of the dung of animals and filth of all kinds, whilst vermin abounds as plentifully as in their wretched villages. The cattle and flocks are kept during the night in folds, formed by a circular wall four or five feet high, built of loose stones. The dwellings indeed consist of little more than such rude inclosures, with coarse black goat-hair canvas stretched over them. As the nights are cold, and protection from the high winds is necessary in these lofty regions, a shallow pit is dug in the centre of the hut, in which the family crouches for warmth when not engaged in out-door occupations. Although poor and needy, the people of Merwanen were not less hospitable than other Nestorians I had met with. They brought us as the sun went down smoking messes of millet boiled in sour milk and mixed with mountain herbs.

The Nestorian Christians of these Kurdish districts dress like their Mussulman neighbours, and can scarcely be distinguished from them. They still go armed, and are

less exposed to oppression than the suffering tribes of Tiyari. The Kiayah and a party of musketeers escorted us next day to a large encampment of Hartushi Kurds, near the outlet of a green valley, watered by many streams, forming the most easterly sources of the Tigris.[55] Abd-ur-Rahman, the chief, was absent from his tents collecting the annual salian or revenue of the tribe. In his absence we were received under his capacious goat-hair tent by a conceited mollah, who, being the spiritual adviser of its master, considered himself also the joint owner of his personal property. He did the honors, as if we were his guests, in a very patronising fashion. A scene of activity rarely witnessed in a Kurdish community reigned around. The banks of a small stream running through the midst of the camp were crowded with sheep: some being washed in the pure water, other being under the scissors of the shearers. Groups of boys and women were already beating and pressing the newly-cut wool into felt, a manufacture of the Hartushi Kurds much prized for its close yet soft texture. In the tents girls were seated before the long warps stretched over the green-sward for the woof of their beautiful carpets. I was not unknown to these mountaineers, who wander during the winter in the plains to the east of the Tigris, below Jezireh, and frequently come into Mosul to trade. A group of chiefs, gaily dressed in the striped cloth of Bohtan, soon collected round us. The wives of Abd-ur-Rahman Agha did not suffer their husband's good name for hospitality to be forfeited. Although Hormuzd and myself were the only partaken of the feast, a primitive table-cloth formed of the skins of the wild goat was spread before us, and covered with a great pile of the white and delicate mountain bread.

The mountain rising above us was the boundary between the pashalics of Wan and Hakkiari and the watershed of the Tigris and Zab. On the opposite side of the streams uniting their waters flowed towards the latter river. The first district we entered was that of Lewen, inhabited chiefly by Nestorians. The whole population with their flocks had deserted their villages for the Zomas. We ascended to the encampment of the people of Billi, a wretched assemblage of dirty hovels, half tent and half cabin, built of stones and black canvas. Behind it towered, amidst eternal snows, a bold and majestic peak, called Karnessa-ou-Daoleh.[56] Round the base of this mountain, over loose stones and sharp rocks, and through ravines deep in snow, we dragged our weary horses next day. The Kurdish shepherds that wander there, a wild and hardy race, have no tents, but, during the summer months, live in the open fields with their flocks, without any covering whatever.

After a wearisome and indeed dangerous ride, we found ourselves on a snowy platform variegated with Alpine plants. The tiny streams which trickled through the ice were edged with forget-me-nots of the tenderest blue, and with many well-remembered European flowers. I climbed up a solitary rock to take bearings of the principal peaks around us. A sight as magnificent as unexpected awaited me. Far to the north, and high

[55] The several streams forming the headwaters of the eastern branch of the Tigris mentioned in this Chapter were not before known, I believe, to geographers.

[56] The encampment at Billi was 8612 feet above the level of the sea.

above the dark mountain ranges which spread like a troubled sea beneath my feet, rose one solitary cone of unspotted white sparkling in the rays of the sun. Its form could not be mistaken; it was Mount Ararat. My Nestorian guide knew no more of this stately mountain, to him a kind of mythic land far beyond the reach of human travel, than that it was within the territories of the Muscovites, and that the Christians called it Bashut-tama-hamda. From this point alone was it visible, and we saw it no more during our journey.[57]

To the east of us were mountains scarcely less imposing or picturesque in form than Ararat, but more rocky and more naked. We were again drawing near to the lofty peaks of Jelu, beneath whose eastern precipices we had journeyed in the plain of Gaour. But the Zab divided us from them. Into the deep and narrow valley through which this river flows we gazed from the top of the Kamesseh-ou-Daoleh Pass. Over against us were the Nestorian districts, at one time inhabited by the only independent Christian tribes of Asia, and still the dwelling-places of this remnant of a primitive church.

We descended rapidly by a difficult track, passing here and there encampments of Kurds and the tents and flocks of the people of Julamerik. To the green pastures succeeded the region of cultivated fields, and we seemed to approach more settled habitations. Following a precipitous pathway, and mounted on a tall and sturdy mule, we spied an aged man with long robes, black turban, and a white beard which fell almost to his girdle. A few lusty mountaineers, in the striped dress and conical felt cap of the Christian tribes, walked by his side and supported him on the animal, which with difficulty scrambled over the loose stones. We at once recognized the features of Mar Shamoun, the Patriarch of the Nestorians, or, as he proudly terms himself, "of the Chaldaeans of the East." He had not known of our coming, and he shed tears of joy as he embraced us. Kochhannes, his residence, was not far distant, and he turned back with us to the village. Since I had seen him misfortune and grief, more than age, had worn deep furrows in his brow, and had turned his hair and beard to silvery grey. We had last met at Mosul, the day previous to his escape from confinement into Persia. Since that time he had been wandering on the confines of the two border countries, but had now sought repose once more in the old seat of the patriarchs of the mountain tribes.

We soon reached his dwelling. It is solidly built of hewn stone, and stands on the very edge of a precipice overhanging a ravine, through which winds a branch of the Zab. A dark vaulted passage led us into a room, scarcely better lighted by a small window, closed by a greased sheet of coarse paper. The tattered remains of a felt carpet, spread in a comer, was the whole of its furniture. The garments of the Patriarch were hardly less worn and ragged. Even the miserable allowance of 300 piastres (about 2l. 10s.), which the Porte had promised to pay him monthly on his return to the

[57] The bearing I obtained of Mount Ararat (N. 15°.30 E) corresponds correctly with its position on the best maps. Our distance was about 145 miles.

mountains, was long in arrears, and he was supported entirely by the contributions of his faithful but poverty-stricken flock. Kochhannes was, moreover, still a heap of ruins. At the time of the massacre Mar Shamoun scarcely saved himself by a precipitous flight before the ferocious Kurds of Beder Khan Bey entered the village and slew those who still lingered in it, and were from age or infirmities unable to escape.

Mar Shamoun, at the time of my visit, had no less cause to bewail the misfortunes of his people than his personal sufferings. The latter were perhaps partly to be attributed to his own want of prudence and foresight. Old influences, which I could not but deeply deplore, and to which I do not in Christian charity wish further to allude,[58] had been at work, and I found him even more bitter in his speech against the American missionaries than against his Turkish or Kurdish oppressors. He had been taught, and it is to be regretted that his teachers were of the Church of England, that those who were endeavoring to civilise and instruct his flock were seceders from the orthodox community of Christians, heretical in doctrine, rejecting all the sacraments and ordinances of the true faith, and intent upon reducing the Nestorians to their own hopeless condition of infidelity. His fears were worked on by the assurance that, ere long, through their means and teaching, his spiritual as well as his temporal authority would be entirely destroyed. I found him bent upon deeds of violence and intolerant persecution, which might have endangered, for the second time, the safety of this people as well as his own. I strove, and not without success, to calm his unreasonable violence. I pointed out to him his true position with regard to the American missions, trying to remove the calumnies which had been heaped upon them, and to show in what respects they could benefit and improve the condition of the Nestorians. I could not disguise from him that in education and the free circulation of the Scriptures, there could alone be found any hope for his people. I showed him that, if he wished to foster an interest which bad been naturally felt amongst Protestants for the remains of a primitive Church, exposed to great oppression and great sufferings, he must reform the abuses which had unfortunately crept into it, and endeavour to render his clergy equal to the task of instructing and guiding their flocks. He answered, as might have been expected, that be wished to be helped in that labor by priests of the Episcopal Church of England, whose doctrines and discipline were more in conformity with the Nestorian, than those of the American missionaries. If such men would join him, he was ready, he declared, to co-operate with them in reforming abuses, and educating the community. It was almost in vain I observed to him that, as the Church of England had hitherto not listened to his appeals, and as there was no immediate prospect of help from her, it was his duty, as well as his true interest, to assist in the good work so zealously and disinterestedly

[58] Those who wish to have a painful picture of the nature of the interference amongst the Nestorians, to which I allude, may read Mr. Badger's Nestorians and their Rituals, and Mr. Fletcher's Travels in Assyria. Although Mr. Badger naturally gives his own version of these transactions, the impartial reader will have no difficulty in seeing the misfortunes to which the unfortunate opposition to the American missions naturally led.

begun by the American missionaries, and which they were desirous of carrying on with his sanction and support.

The Nestorian community had greater wrongs to complain of than their Patriarch. The Turkish government, so far from fulfilling the pledges given to the British embassy, had sent officers to the mountains who had grievously ill-treated and oppressed the Christian inhabitants. The taxes, which the Porte had promised to remit for three years, in consideration of the losses sustained by the unfortunate Nestorians during the massacres, had not been, it is true, levied for that time, but had now been collected altogether, whole districts being thus reduced to the greatest misery and want. Every manner of cruelty and torture had been used to compel the suffering Christians to yield up the little property they had concealed from the rapacity of the Turkish authorities. The pastures and arable lands around their villages had been taken away from them and given to their Kurdish tyrants. Taxes had been placed upon every object that could afford them food, and upon their mills, their looms, and their hives, even upon the bundles of dried grass for their cattle, brought with great labor from the highest mountains. There was no tribunal to which they could apply for redress. A deputation sent to the Pasha had been ill-treated, and some of its members were still in prison. There was no one in authority to plead for them. They had even suffered less under the sway of their old oppressors, for, as a priest touchingly remarked to me, "The Kurds took away our lives, but the Turks take away wherewith we have to live."

My tents were pitched on a lawn near Mar Shamoun's dwelling. Near to us was a small church, built about 160 years ago, on an isolated rock. The only entrance to it is by a low door, high up from the ground, and reached by a ladder. The interior consists of a yard in which service is performed during summer, and an inner chamber for winter. Mar Shamoun officiated every evening about sunset in the open air, reading the whole service himself, dressed in his usual robes. A few persons from the ruined village attended, and formed his congregation.

We remained a day with the Patriarch, and then took the road to Julamerik, three caravan hours distant from Kochhannes. This town has been more than once visited and described by English travellers. Its castle, strongly built and defended by towers and bastions, is picturesquely situated upon a bold rock, overlooking the valley of the Zab. It was until lately held by the celebrated Kurdish rebel chief, Nur-Ullah Bey, but, since his capture, it has been garrisoned by a small force of Turkish regular troops. The town and bazars are far below it.[59] They were almost deserted, their inhabitants, as is the custom of the country, living in tents with their flocks amid the summer pastures on the mountains.

Near Julamerik we met many poor Nestorians flying, with their wives and children, they knew not whither, from the oppression of the Turkish governors.

The direct road by Tiyari to Mosul is carried along the river Zab, through ravines scarcely practicable to beasts of burden. It issues into the lower valleys near the village

[59] Julamerik is 5625 feet above the level of the sea.

of Lizan. Instead, however, of descending the stream, we turned to the north, in order to cross it higher up by a bridge leading into Diz. I had not yet visited this Nestorian district. Mar Shamoun, as well the people of Julamerik, declared that the mountain pathways could not be followed by beasts of burden; but a man of Taal offering to show us a track open to horsemen, we placed ourselves under his guidance. On the banks of the Zab, I found the remains of an ancient road, cut in many places in the solid rock. It probably led from the Assyrian plains into the upper provinces of Armenia. There are no inscriptions or ruins to show the period of its construction; but, from the greatness of the work, I am inclined to attribute it to the Assyrians.

We picked our way over the slippery pavement as long as we could find some footing fur ourselves and our beasts, but in many places, where it had been entirely destroyed, we were compelled to drag our horses by main force over the steep rocks and loose detritus, which sloped to the very edge of the river. At length, after many falls, and more than once turning back from the polished rocks, across which the track we carried, we found ourselves before a wicker suspension bridge. This primitive structure had been almost washed away by recent floods, and now hung from the tottering piers by a slender rope of twisted osiers. It seemed scarcely able to bear the weight of a man. However, some Nestorians, who, seeing us from the opposite side of the river, had come to our help, undertook to carry our baggage across, and then to lead the horses over one by one. After some delay this dangerous passage was effected without accident, and we entered the valley of Diz. But there was another stream between us and the first Nestorian village. We had to ford an impetuous torrent boiling and foaming over smooth rocks, and reaching above our saddle-girths. One of the baggage mules lost its footing. The eddying waters hurried it along and soon hurled it into the midst of the Zab. The animal having, at length, relieved itself from its burden, swam to the bank. Unfortunately it bore my own trunks; my notes and inscriptions, the fruits of my labors at Wan, together with the little property I possessed, were carried far away by the stream. After the men from the village had long searched in vain, the lost load was found about midnight, stopped by a rock some miles down the river.

We passed the night in the miserable village of Rabban Audishio. Only two families dwelt in it; the other inhabitants had been slain in the massacre. The church was large, but deserted, for there was no priest to serve in it. Three brothers, who owned the only huts still standing near, fed a few lamps with oil, and burnt daily before the altar a little incense, whose grateful perfume scented the evening breeze. Near the church were the ruins of a former dwelling-place of Mar Shamoun, who once resided in this village.

On the opposite side of the valley, but high in the mountains, was the village of Seramus. The pathway to it being precipitous, and inaccessible even to mules, we turned to Madis, the residence of the Melek, or chief, of the district of Diz. We crossed the stream by a rude bridge consisting of two poles, resting on opposite rocks. The horses and mules again forded the torrent, but this time without mishap. The Melek was

abroad collecting the taxes, which he had been summoned to pay to the governor of Julamerik. The villages of Diz, like those of the Nestorian valleys in general, stand in the midst of orchards and cultivated terraces. They were laid waste, and the houses burnt, during the first massacre. Diz was the first Christian district attacked by Beder Khan Bey. The inhabitants made a long and determined resistance, but were at length overpowered by numbers. Those who fell into the hands of the Kurdish chieftain were put to death without mercy, none being spared, as in Tiyari, for slaves. The trees were cut down, and the villages reduced to their present state of misery and desolation. They might slowly have recovered had not the Turks, by an unjust and oppressive system of government and taxation, checked all the efforts of these poor but industrious people to cultivate their lands, and rebuild their ruined dwellings.

We continued our journey through a deep and narrow valley hemmed in by high mountains and by perpendicular cliffs. The Melek met us on the road near the village of Cherichereh, or Klissa. The old man turning back with me, I dismounted and sat with him beneath a walnut-tree. He had little to tell but the usual tale of misery and distress. The Turkish governor had called upon the district to pay about 150l., a small sum certainly, but more than he could collect by seizing all the little property of the inhabitants. Even the seed for their next harvest had been taken from them, as well as the very millet with which they made their coarse bread. The valley produces nothing but a little rice, garas (a kind of millet), and barley, a few walnut and apple trees and hemp. Scarcely any wheat is raised, and the taxes levied on mills almost prevent its being ground into flour. The district formerly contained thirteen villages. Only one hundred and twenty families with three priests were left. Many had run away to avoid the payment of taxes, and the rest only waited until they could escape the vigilance of the Turkish authorities to follow the example. Melek Beniamen implored me to help him in his difficulties; but I could do no more than offer words of sympathy and consolation.

Leaving the Melek to pursue his tax-gathering, we rode through a magnificent valley, now narrowing into a wild gorge walled with precipitous cliffs, then opening into an amphitheatre of rocks encircling a village imbedded in trees. A church, called Marshalita, built on a natural pinnacle, was a conspicuous object as we journeyed in the ravine below. It was far too high and difficult of access for the pious wayfarer to tum aside to it from his path; a cross had, therefore, been rudely cut, by way of compromise, in a stone by the roadside beneath it, and the Nestorians who were with us kissed it reverentially as we passed. Another lofty rock was pointed out to us as the place of refuge of a few of those who escaped the massacre: on a third could be seen the remains of an ancient castle, attributed, like all such ruins in the East, to the Franks. The valley at length was abruptly closed by the towering peaks and precipices of the Jelu mountain. At its foot is the village of Khouresin, where we encamped for the night. The inhabitants were, for the most part, like the other people of Diz, in the Zomas, or summer pastures.

The next morning, alter with difficulty dragging our weary beasts up a steep and even dangerous mountain track, we found the Nestorian families with their flocks at the very base of those cliffs of naked rock, which, rising far above the surrounding mountains of Hakkiari, form the peak of Jelu, and are visible even from Mosul. On all sides of them was snow; but the small recess in which they had built their miserable hovels of loose stones, mud, and dried grass, was carpeted with Alpine herbs and flowers. These poor people were in extreme wretchedness and want; even their clothing had been taken for taxes.

Not far from the Zomas of Diz were the tents of the villagers of Jelu. They also had encamped on the very verge of eternal snow, but within the boundaries of Diz, as there were no pastures on the other side of the pass in their own district. They were better clothed, and showed more signs of comfort, if not of wealth, than their unfortunate neighbours. Many of the men spoke a little Arabic, and even Turkish, learnt during their yearly visits as basket-makers to the low country.

We were still separated from the valley of Jelu by a shoulder jutting from the lofty Soppa-Durek mountain. Before reaching this rocky ridge we had to cross a broad tract of deep snow, over which we had much difficulty in dragging our heavily-laden mules. When on the crest of the pass we found ourselves surrounded on all sides by rugged peaks, the highest being that known as the Toura Jelu, of which we had scarcely lost sight from the day we had left Mosul. It is probably the highest mountain in central Kurdistan, and cannot be under, if it be not indeed above, 15,000 feet. On its precipitous sides, rising like an artificial wall of rock, the snow cannot rest; but around it are eternal glaciers. Some Nestorian bunters assured me that they had followed the wild goat even to its summit, whence they gazed upon a view of sublime extent and grandeur, the Desert stretching like a vast sea beneath them, and the city of Mosul distinctly visible in the distance. The pass we crossed before descending into the valley of Jelu is considered the highest in the Nestorian country, and is probably more than 11,000 feet above the level of the sea.[60]

These mountains abound in bears, leopards, wolves, chamois, wild goats, and sheep, of which I was assured there are three distinct varieties. The large yellow partridge, as well as the red-legged, are also found in great numbers.

From the top of the pass we looked down into a deep abyss. The flocks of the Jelu villagers had worn a small pathway in its almost perpendicular sides during their periodical migrations to and from the Zomas; but frequently it was only marked by a polished line across flat, slippery rocks of enormous breadth, or by a faint streak over the loose stones. Down this terrible descent we had to drag our jaded horses, leaving our track marked in blood. I have had some experience in bad mountain roads, but I do not remember to have seen any much worse than that leading into Jelu. After numerous accidents and great labor we left a rocky gully, and found ourselves on a slope ending,

[60] According to observation by the boiling water thermometer the encampment of the people of Jelu was 10,000 feet above the level of the sea, consequently the crest of the pass must have exceeded 11,000.

at a dizzy depth, in a torrent scarcely visible from our path. The yielding soil offered even a more difficult footing for our beasts than the polished rocks. One of our mules soon fell, and rolled over and over with an avalanche of stones for two or three hundred feet. We fully expected to find the animal dashed to pieces; but breaking away from the broad pack-saddle, it contrived to check its rapid course and to regain its legs. Its load, however, was hurled into the valley, and we watched it as it bounded from rock to rock, until it was lost to sight in the depths below. We continued our journey, and it was an hour or two before the active mountaineers succeeded in recovering our lost baggage.

The wild mountain ravine was now changed for the smiling valley of Jelu. Villages, embowered in trees, filled every nook and sheltered place. We descended to Zerin or Zerayni, the principal settlement, and the residence of the Melek. To our left were two other villages, Alzan and Meedee.

As my large caravan descended the hill-side; the inhabitants of Zerin took us at once for Turks, and we lacked that hospitable reception which two or three years before would have awaited a stranger in these Christian communities. Wherever the Osmanli has placed his foot; he has bred fear and distrust. His visit has ever been one of oppression and rapine. The scarlet cap, and the well-known garb of a Turkish irregular, are the signals for a general panic. The women hide in the innermost recesses to save themselves from insult; the men slink into their houses, and offer a vain protest against the seizure of their property. In many parts of Turkey the new system and the better discipline of the army have placed a check upon these scenes of injustice and violence, and the villager may hope to get some, if not adequate, pay for the supplies he furnishes to those who quarter themselves upon him. But in the Nestorian valleys the old habits were still in vigor, and the appearance of a stranger caused a general hiding and dismay. When, at last, we had satisfied the trembling people of Zerin that we were not Mussulmans, they insisted upon our being Americans, of whom they had at that moment, for certain religious reasons, almost as great a distrust. At length they made out that I was the Balios[61] of Mosul, and the Melek arriving at this crisis we were received with due hospitality. Our baggage was carried to the roof of a house, and provisions were brought to us without delay.

Although, during his expedition into Tiyari, Beder Khan Bey had seized the flocks of the people of Jelu, and had compelled them, moreover, to pay large contributions in money and in kind, he had not been able to enter their deep and well-guarded valleys.[62] The blackened walls, the roofless house, the plundered church, and the neglected vineyard, which marked in other parts of the mountains the once flourishing villages of the Nestorian tribes, did not disfigure the smiling district of Jelu. Its inhabitants, too, still maintained to a certain extent the appearance of their former prosperity,

[61] Consuls are so called in Southern Turkey and Persia, and all European strangers are supposed to be consuls.

[62] Beder Khan Bey was afterwards troubled by a conscientious scruple for not having also visited Jelu with fire and sword, and massacred the Infidels. He was projecting an invasion of the district the year that he was captured by the Turkish troops.

notwithstanding the rapacity and injustice of their new masters. Both men and women were gaily dressed in the many-colored garments usually worn by their Mussulman neighbours.

The Nestorians of Jelu have no trade to add to their wealth. Shut out from all intercourse with the rest of the world, during six months of the year, by the deep snows of the lofty mountains that surround them, it is only in summer that they are able to exchange a few loads of fruit and a little honey and wax in the districts about Amadiyah for such supplies of corn as may serve for their immediate wants. Many of the men, however, wander during the winter into Asia Minor, and even into Syria and Palestine, following the trade of basket-making, in which they are very expert. Thus they save money, and are able in the summer to cultivate the land around their villages. There was only one priest in Zerin, and there appeared to be in Jelu less of that earnest religious feeling so peculiar to the Nestorians than in any other Christian district I had visited. The travels of the men, and their intercourse with the rest of the Christian world, have not improved their morals, their habits, or their faith.[63]

The district of Jelu is under a bishop whose spiritual jurisdiction also extends over Baz. He resides at Martha d'Umra (the village of the church), separated by a bold rocky ridge from Zerin. It was Sunday as we descended through orchards, by a precipitous pathway, to his dwelling. The bishop was away. He had gone lower down the valley to celebrate divine service for a distant congregation. The inhabitants of the village were gathered round the church in their holiday attire, and received us kindly and hospitably. From a belfry issued the silvery tones of a bell, which echoed through the valley, and gave an inexpressible charm to the scene. It is not often that such sounds break upon the traveller's ear in the far East, to awaken a thousand pleasant thoughts, and to recall to memory many a happy hour.

The church is said to be the oldest in the Nestorian mountains, and is a plain, substantial, square building, with a very small entrance. To me it was peculiarly interesting, as having been the only one that had escaped the ravages of the Kurds, and as containing therefore its ancient furniture and ornaments. Both the church and the dark vestibule were so thickly hung with relics of the most singular and motley description, that the ceiling was completely concealed by them. Amongst the objects which first attracted my attention were numerous China bowls and jars of elegant form and richly colored, but black with the dust of ages. They were suspended, like the other relics, by cords from the roof. I was assured that they had been there from time out of mind, and had been brought from the distant empire of Cathay by those early missionaries of the Chaldean Church, who bore the tidings of the gospel to the shores of the Yellow Sea. If such were really the case, some of them might date so far back as the sixth or seventh centuries, when the Nestorian Church flourished in China, and its missions were spread over the whole of Central Asia. The villagers would not, in the

[63] The villages of Jelu are Zerin, Biri Khanee, Martha d'Umra, Nara, Muta, Tellana, Bokhrani or Be Bukra, Uri, Nerik, Zer, Gubawa, Serpilta, Shemsiki, Maturie, Bispira, and Bakshi (Kurdish).

absence of their bishop, allow me to move any of these sacred relics. The sister of the Patriarch, they said, had endeavored to wash one some years before, and it had been broken. Hung with the China vases was the strangest collection of objects that could well be imagined: innumerable bells, of all forms and sizes, many probably Chinese, suspended in long lines from one side to the other of the church, making a loud and discordant jingle when set in motion; porcelain birds and animals, grotesque figures in bronze, remains of glass chandeliers, two or three pain of old bullion epaulets, and a variety of other things, all brought at various periods by adventurous inhabitants of the village, who had wandered into distant lands, and had returned to their homes with some evidence of their travels to place in their native church. The walls were dressed in silks of every color and texture, and with common Manchester prints. Notwithstanding the undoubted antiquity of the church and its escape from plunder, I searched in vain for ancient manuscripts.

We followed the valley to the village of Nara, where the bishop was resting after his morning duties. A young man of lofty stature and handsome countenance, dressed in the red-striped loose garments of the Kurds, and only distinguished by a turban of black silk from those around him, came out to meet us. A less episcopal figure could scarcely be imagined; but, although be seemed some Kurdish hunter or warrior, he gave us his benediction as he drew near. We seated ourselves together beneath the shade of a gigantic tree; and whilst the good people of the village were preparing a simple repast of yagbourt and garas, we discussed the affairs of the church and the political condition of the tribe.

It was difficult to determine whom the poor bishop feared most, the Turks or the American missionaries; the first, he declared, threatened his temporal, the others his spiritual, authority. I gave him the best advice I was able on both subjects, and urged him not to reject the offer that had been made to instruct his people, but to identify himself with a progress on which might be founded the only reasonable hope for the regeneration of his creed and race. Unfortunately, as in the case of Mar Shamoun, strange influences had been at work to prejudice the mind of the bishop.

A broad and rapid torrent crossed by a bridge, and a steep mountain wooded with oak, over which we climbed by a rugged pathway, separate the districts of Jelu and Baz. The first village we came to was Shouwa, but we rested for the night at Martha Akhtayiah,[64] adjoining Ergub, the furthest limits of my journey to the Nestorian districts in 1846. Our reception here was far different from that we had experienced in Jelu. We were at once recognised by the villagers. The men and women crowded round us, vieing with each other in offers of hospitality. We alighted at the clean and spacious house of the Melek, who was, however, away at the time of our arrival The inhabitants had been shamefully ill-used and over-taxed by the Turkish authorities, and were driven to a state of despair. I had, as usual, to listen to sad tales of misery and misfortune, without having it in my power to offer either consolation or relief.

[64] I.e. The lower village, corrupted into Makhtaiyah.

We were now in the track I had followed during my former visit to the mountains.[65] Crossing the precipitous pass to the west of Baz, which, since my first visit, had been the scene of one of the bloodiest episodes of the Nestorian massacre, we entered the long narrow ravine leading into the valley of Tkhoma. We stopped at Gunduktha, where, four years before, I had taken leave of the good priest Bodaka, who had been amongst the first victims of the fury of the Kurdish invaders. The Kasha, who now ministered to the spiritual wants of the people, the Rais of the village, and the principal inhabitants, came to us as we stopped in the churchyard. But they were no longer the gaily dressed and well-armed men who had welcomed me on my first journey. Their garments were tattered and worn, and their countenances haggard and wan. The church, too, was in ruins; around were the charred remains of the burnt cottages, and the neglected orchards overgrown with weeds. A body of Turkish troops had lately visited the village, and had destroyed the little that had been restored since the Kurdish invasion. The same taxes had been collected three times, and even four times, over. The relations of those who had ran away to escape from these exactions had been compelled to pay for the fugitives. The chief had been thrown, with his arms tied behind his back, on a heap of burning straw, and compelled to disclose where a little money that had been saved by the villagers had been buried. The priest had been torn from the altar, and beaten before his congregation. Men showed me the marks of torture on their body, and of iron fetters round their limbs. For the sake of wringing a few piastres from this poverty-stricken people, all these deeds of violence had been committed by officers sent by the Porte to protect the Christian subjects of the Sultan, whom they pretended to have released from the misrule of the Kurdish chiefs.

The smiling villages described in the account of my previous journey were now a heap of ruins. From four of them alone 770 persons had been slain. Beder Khan Bey had driven off, according to the returns' made by the Meleks, 24,000 sheep, 300 mules, and 10,000 head of cattle; and the confederate chiefs had each taken a proportionate share of the property of the Christians. No flocks were left by which they might raise money wherewith to pay the taxes now levied upon them, and even the beasts of burden, which could have carried to the markets of more wealthy districts the produce of their valley, had been taken away.[66]

We remained a night in Tkhoma to see the Meleks who came to us from Tkhoma Gowaia. On the following morning, it being the Feast of the Virgin, the people assembled for prayers - a crowd of miserable, half-naked men, women, and children. Leaving the valley, we crossed the high mountain inclosing Tkhoma to the south, and passed through Pinianish into Chaal, a district inhabited by Mussulmans, and which bad consequently not suffered from the ravages of the Kurdish chiefs. It presented, with its still flourishing villages surrounded by gardens and vineyards, a vivid contrast to the unfortunate Christian valley we had just left.

[65] Nineveh and its Remains, vol. I. p. 209.

[66] On my return to Mosul I sent to Constantinople a report of the exactions and cruelties to which the Nestorians had been subjected by their Turkish rulers; but nothing, I fear, has been done to amend their condition.

A rapid descent through a rocky gorge brought us to the Zab, over which there were still the remains of a bridge, consisting of two poles fastened together by osier bands placed across the stone piers. It almost required the steady foot and practised head of a mountaineer to cross the roaring stream by this perilous structure. The horses and mules were with much trouble and delay driven into the river, and after buffeting with the whirlpool and eddies reached, almost exhausted, the opposite bank.

We now entered the valley of Berwari, and, crossing the pass of Amadiyah, took the road to Mosul, through a country I had already more than once visited. Leaving the caravan and our jaded horses, I hastened onwards with Hormuzd, and travelling through a night reached Mosul in the afternoon of the 30th Aug., after an absence of seven weeks.