RECOLLECTIONS OF A JOURNEY

THROUGH

TARTARY, THIBET, AND CHINA,

DURING THE YEARS

1844, 1845, AND 1846.

BY M. HUC,

MISSIONARY PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF ST. LAZARUS.

A CONDENSED TRANSLATION

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PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

A WORK, whose origin and purpose are explained almost in the first page, would scarcely require any introductory remark, but that it has been found necessary to reduce a little its original dimensions, in order to bring it within the limits of the present publication. Care has been taken, however, that the passages omitted should be those which it is believed the reader would most willingly spare; for instance, a general survey of the Tartar nation, derived, in a great measure, from written and even printed sources, — the account of the return journey from the capital of Thibet, the journey *to* which by a similar route, had been already fully described, — and some details concerning Buddhism, which have been already brought before the public, at length, in the work of Mr. Prinsep.

Protestant readers will not enter into all M. Huc's views on the subject of the conversion of the Buddhist Tartars, and they may, perhaps, think his frequent assertions of the striking resemblance between the outward forms and ceremonies of Buddhism and those of his own Church somewhat *naïve;* but his single mindedness and earnest piety of heart and life will, it is hoped, not fail to meet with sympathy from all Christians, whatever may be their speculative differences.

Some readers will be tempted to smile at the good faith with which he relates certain marvellous stories; and I must own that, having omissions to make, I felt at first tempted to include these among them; but, on consideration, it appeared better to leave them as they stand, since the manner in which they are related is characteristic of the unworldly simplicity, which is as striking as the intelligence of the writer. It is evident that, so far from tending

to impeach his veracity, they afford a strong confirmation of it; for he himself is perfectly aware of the feeling with which they are likely to be received, yet he will not shrink from the statement of what he believes to be the truth, nor from expressing opinions which, looking at these things from his peculiar point of view, he could not help forming. We may have no doubt whatever of the facts, but decline accepting his inferences from them; even while confessing our inability to offer any solution of our own. Perhaps all readers may not be inclined to regard them with so little attention; for, in the oscillation of opinion that may be observed on many such subjects, there appears an occasional tendency at present, not so much to the unconditional rejection as to the over-ready acceptance of whatever bears the impress of the marvellous; a desire to seize on it in support of theories which draw as largely on credulity as ever did tale of goblin or saintly miracle in old times. But the explanations offered on these systems are not much more satisfactory than that of the lady we have somewhere heard of who got over every knotty point in mechanics, by supposing a thing could be done "somehow by means of a screw."

We must be content to remain in doubt as to the precise mode of jugglery by which the "Lama Bokte" — after, to the satisfaction of all beholders, ripping his entrails open with a cutlass — restored himself to perfect soundness a moment after; but we must decline to admit that he effected it by preternatural agency. While we bow with reverence before the mysteries of the invisible world, we may maintain the rights of the understanding within its limited sphere, and not believe that the great laws, on whose unvarying stability the education of the human race, and our individual sanity depend, would be broken through on so many occasions, and for purposes so trivial.

I have alluded to what may be considered the weak points of the author: the charms of his picturesque narrative of personal adventure, in remote regions where scarcely a European foot has ever trod, have been already too widely appreciated to need any remark.

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TRAVELS IN TARTARY,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

TARTARY.

French Mission to Pekin.—The Kingdom of Ou[illegible]—Preparations for Departure.—Tartar-Chinese Hostelry.—Change of Costume.—Sandalchiemba.—Sain Oula (the Good Mountain).—Frosts and Brigands of Sain-Oula.—First Encampment in the Desert.—Great Imperial Forest.—Buddhist Monuments on the Summit of Mountains.—Environs of the Town of Tolon-Noor.

The French mission to Pekin, formerly so flourishing under the first emperor of the Tartar-Mantchoo dynasty, had been desolated and almost destroyed by the numerous persecutions of Kia-King.* The missionaries had been driven out or put to death, and Europe was at that time itself too violently agitated for it to be possible that it could come to the aid of these remote Christian communities. For a long time they were almost forsaken; and when the French Lazarists once more appeared at Pekin, they found only wrecks and ruins. Many of the Christians, to withdraw themselves from the pursuit of the Chinese authorities, had passed the Great Wall, and had gone to seek peace and liberty in the deserts of Tartary; they were living here and there on some patches of land, which the Mongols permitted them to cultivate. By dint of perseverance, the missionaries at length succeeded in re-assembling these scattered remnants; they established themselves in the midst of them, and directed from thence the ancient mission of Pekin, the immediate care of which was entrusted to some Chinese Lazarists. The French missionaries could not, without imprudence, place them-

* Fifth emperor of the Tartar-Mantchoo dynasty. He ascended the throne in 1799.

selves, as formerly, in the bosom of the capital of the empire, for their presence might have compromised the future prospects of the scarcely reviving mission.

In visiting these Christians of Mongolia, we had more than once occasion to make excursions into the *Land of Grass*, and to sit beneath a Mongol tent; and having thus become acquainted with this nomadic people, we became interested in them, and earnestly desired to announce to them the tidings of the Gospel. From that time we devoted all our leisure to the study of the Tartar languages, and in the course of the year 1842 the Holy See crowned our wishes by erecting Mongolia into a vicariate apostolic.

Towards the beginning of the year 1844, couriers arrived from *Si Wang*, a little Chinese village, north of the Great Wall, and the seat of a Christian community, in which the Vicar Apostolic had fixed his abode. He sent us instructions for an extensive journey we were about to undertake, with the purpose of studying the character and manners of the Tartars, and of ascertaining, if possible, the extent and limits of the vicariate. The time for this journey, which we had been meditating for a long time, was at length fixed on, and we dispatched a young Lama, newly converted, to find some camels, which we had sent to pasture in the kingdom of Naiman, and, while awaiting his return, we employed ourselves in finishing some little books of prayer and doctrine which we had been translating into Mongol.

Our books were finished, but our young Lama did not appear. We thought he could not be delayed much longer, and we quitted *He Chuy*, the "Valley of the Black Waters," to go and wait for him at *Pie-lié-Keou*, the "Contiguous Gorges." We considered this latter station a more favourable one for making our preparations; but the days passed on in vain expectation. The coolness of the autumn began to be very perceptible, and we dreaded to begin our journey across the deserts of Tartary during the piercing cold of winter. We resolved therefore to send in search of our camels and our Lama; and a good-natured catechist, a brisk fellow and a good walker, set out with the intention. He returned on the day appointed, but his search had been nearly fruitless, although he had heard from a Tartar that our Lama had set out some days before to bring us our camels. His surprise was great at finding that he had not yet made his appearance.

Again many days passed, and we were still in the same position;

and once more we sent out a courier, who was desired to visit all the places where camels had been at pasture, and to see things with his own eyes, and not trust to reports. The district called the Contiguous Gorges, where we were spending this tedious interval, is a Tartar country dependent on the kingdom of Ouniot.* These countries appear to have suffered great revolutions. The present inhabitants state that the country was once occupied by Corean tribes. These seem to have been driven from it, and to have taken refuge in the peninsula, which they still possess, between the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan. You often meet in this part of Tartary with the remains of great towns, and the ruins of strong castles, much like those of the middle ages of Europe. If you search among them you find lances, arrows, fragments of agricultural implements, and urns filled with Corean money. The Chinese began to penetrate into this country about the middle of the seventeenth century; and at this time the country was still magnificent — the mountains were crowned with fine forests, and Mongol tents were scattered over the valleys among the richest pastures. For a very trifling payment the Chinese obtained leave to cultivate the soil; and by degrees the Tartars were driven out, and forced to seek elsewhere a subsistence for their flocks. The face of the country now soon became entirely changed. The trees were cut down — the prairies burnt — the new cultivation rapidly exhausted the fertility of the soil; and it is to their devastating system, perhaps, that we must attribute the irregularity of seasons that now desolates the country. Droughts are frequent, the violence of the winds tremendous, and the dust rises in such whirlwinds as to veil the sky, and sometimes surrounds you at noon with the darkness of midnight — a thick palpable darkness, indeed, more oppressive than that of the deepest night.

After these whirlwinds comes frequently rain, but in such a furious deluge that, necessary as it is, you cannot but dread it. It is as if the whole mass of water with which the clouds were charged, was let down at once in an immense cascade. Enormous waves roll through the valleys, and fields and harvests disappear beneath a sea of mud. The hail, too, sometimes falls in such immense stones on this unfortunate country, that whole flocks are destroyed in a few minutes. In 1843, during a storm of this kind,

* The name of kingdom is given to the territory of the Tartar tribes, however insignificant, because their chiefs receive the title of *Wang*, that is, King.

one fell, after a terrific noise, in a field not far from our house, which was of the size of a millstone: we had to break it up with hatchets; and, although it was in the warmest season, it did not melt entirely for three days. These alternate droughts and inundations sometimes occasion famines — as they did in 1832, when the whole population was reduced to the most miserable destitution. Houses, fields, animals, were all exchanged for grain, which was sold almost for its weight in gold. The people devoured the very grass of the mountains, and tore up the roots from the earth. The ways were strewn with dead bodies, villages were depopulated to their last inhabitant — there were left neither rich nor poor, for famine had passed over them, and reduced all alike to its pitiless level.

It was in this mournful country that we awaited with some impatience the return of the third messenger whom we had despatched for our camels. But the appointed day passed — and many others, and still there were no signs of him. It seemed undesirable to spend any longer time in this painful and useless expectation, and we began to consider of other means to attain our object. It was settled, therefore, that one of our Chinese Christians should take us in a cart to the town of Tolon-Noor, a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, and then we were to send back this temporary guide, plunge alone into the desert, and pursue our pilgrimage.

The Chinese were greatly terrified at our resolution, but we had reasons for not wishing them to accompany us; it appeared necessary once for all to break through the trammels in which the Chinese have found means to involve most of the missionaries. The precautions, or rather the pusillanimity, of a Chinese catechist would have availed us nothing in the Tartar country, and the presence of a Chinese would only have embarrassed us.

On Sunday, the eve of our departure, all was ready: our little trunks were packed up, and the Christians had come to take their farewell; when, just at sunset, to the surprise of everybody, our courier arrived; but his countenance was sad and disconcerted, and it was easy to see that he brought bad news. "My spiritual fathers," said he, "things are very bad; there is nothing more to expect; there are in the kingdom of Naiman no camels belonging to Holy Church. The Lama has doubtless been killed, and, in my opinion, the devil has had much to do with the affair."

Fear and doubt are often worse than the certainty of evil. These

news at least relieved us from suspense, and there was no occasion to change anything in the arrangements we had made; so, after having received the lengthy condolences of our Christian friends, we went to bed convinced that this would be the last night before entering on our nomadic way of life.

But towards morning we were awakened by a loud noise. Many voices were heard without, and our door was shaken by noisy and repeated strokes. Every one rose in a great hurry. Our young Lama — the camels — all had arrived! It was like a little revolution. The order of the day was immediately changed; our departure was to be delayed till Tuesday, and we were not to go in the cart, but on camels, and quite in the Tartar fashion. We went to bed again, but in a state of excitement that made sleep out of the question; and the remaining hours of the night passed swiftly, in forming plans for the equipment of our caravan.

The next day the Lama explained to us the causes of the delay. First, he had had a long illness; then he had lost some of the animals, and gone into the desert in pursuit of them; and, finally, he had had to go to law to obtain restitution of a mule that had been stolen from him. A lawsuit — an illness — the cattle — these were reasons more than sufficient. While he was giving this explanation, the preparations for our departure were going busily on. All hands were engaged; some in the repair of our travelling mansion, a tent of coarse blue linen; others in cutting us a provision of wooden nails or pegs. Here was one engaged in the cure of a copper kettle — there, another in reducing the fracture of a dislocated tripod. Tailors, carpenters, tinkers, swarmed in the little court-yard of our habitation; for all the Christians were anxious that their "spiritual fathers" should not take the field till they were furnished with every possible comfort.

On the Tuesday morning nothing remained to do but to pierce the noses of the camels, and pass through them a piece of wood which was to serve for a bit; and the cries uttered by the poor animals, during the performance of this painful operation, soon assembled all the Christians of the village. As the Lama was the operator on this occasion, he became the hero of the expedition, and the crowd ranged itself in a circle round him, eager to see how, by means of that bit of wood in the nose, he could make the camels turn which way he would — for this was a novelty to the Chinese. When all was ready we took a cup of tea, and repaired to the

chapel; the Christians sang hymns, and mingled their adieus with tears, and then we set out; — our camel driver, Samdadchiemba mounted on a black mule, leading the way, and drawing after him our two loaded camels; M. Gabet following, mounted on another; and I on a white horse, with a guard of honour of Chinese Christians, who were to accompany us as far as an inn kept by one of the catechists. We got on rather slowly at first; for, as we were inexperienced in the art of saddling and managing camels, we had to stop every moment to set something to rights; but after having gone a few miles, our march became more regular, and we arrived in good order at the inn, where we were received by the landlord, or, in Chinese style, the "Superintendent of the Chest."

In the deserts of Tartary, not far from the frontiers of China, you sometimes come upon one of these lonely inns, which are composed of an immense quadrangular enclosure, made with long poles interlaced with brambles, in the midst of which stands a house of clay, at the utmost not more than ten feet high. This contains a few little miserable chambers on the right and left, and one vast apartment, serving at once for kitchen, refectory, and dormitory, and generally dirty, smoky, and of unsavoury odour. About three fourths of it is taken up by a sort of raised platform about four feet high, and covered with a mat of reeds, over which wealthy travellers also spread their furs and felt carpets. In front of it, fixed in clay, are some immense cauldrons for preparing broth, and with fires beneath, having openings communicating with the interior of the *kang*, as it is called, by means of which, even during the terrible cold of the winter, an elevated temperature is preserved.

As soon as a traveller arrives, the superintendent of the chest invites him to mount on the kang; and there you seat yourself, tailor fashion, with crossed legs, round a table about five inches high. The lower part of the hall is occupied by the people of the inn, who come and go, keep up the fire under the kettles, boil the tea, or knead oaten or buck-wheat cakes for the entertainment of the guests. The kang, in the mean time, presents an animated scene. The travellers are drinking, smoking, playing, screaming, sometimes even fighting; but, as evening comes on, it is transformed into a dormitory. The travellers unrol their coverings, and range themselves in rows; when they are numerous, in two lines, feet to feet. But, though every one lies down, it by no means follows that every one goes to sleep; for whilst some snore

most conscientiously, others continue to smoke, drink tea, and carry on vociferous conversation; and the whole scene is lit by a dim lamp, made of a long wick floating in thick, nauseous-looking oil, in a broken cup fixed in a niche.

As we wished to serve our apprenticeship to the Tartar life, we would not sleep in the inn, but pitched our tent outside; and when we had kindled a large fire of brambles, and unrolled our skins, we lay down. But no sooner had we done so, than the "Inspector of the Darkness" (watchman) began to strike loud blows on the *tam-tam*, a brazen instrument whose sonorous vibrations re-echoed through the valley, and were intended to frighten away the wolves and other wild beasts that frequent these deserts.

The day had scarcely dawned when we were again on foot; but, before setting off, we had to effect a metamorphosis in our costume. The missionaries who reside in China all wear the dress of the Chinese merchants, and have nothing in their costume to mark their religious character. This custom, it appears to us, has been in some measure an obstacle to the success of their missions. For among the Tartars, a "*black man*," that is, a secular person, who undertakes to speak of religion, excites only contempt. Religion they consider as an affair belonging exclusively to the Lamas. We resolved, therefore, to adopt the costume worn on ordinary occasions by the Lamas of Thibet; namely, a long yellow robe fastened by a red girdle, and five gilt buttons, with a violet velvet collar, and a yellow cap surmounted by a red rosette. We also thought it expedient from this time to give up the use of wine and tobacco, and when the host brought us a smoking urn full of the hot wine so much in favour among the Chinese, we signified to him that we were about to change our modes of life, as well as our dress. "You know," we added, laughing, "that good Lamas abstain from smoking and drinking." But our Chinese friends regarded us with compassion, and evidently thought we were about to perish of privation.

After leaving this inn we may be considered to have fairly commenced our pilgrimage, and the only companion of our wayfaring for the future was to be the camel driver, Samdadchiemba. This young man was neither a Chinese, a Tartar, nor a Thibetan, but a little of all three, a Dchiahour. At the first glance it was easy to perceive his Mongol origin; he had a deeply bronzed complexion — a great mouth, cut in a straight line — and a large nose

insolently turned up, that gave to his whole physiognomy a disdainful aspect. When he looked at you with his little eyes twinkling between lids entirely without eye-lashes, and with the skin of his forehead wrinkled up, the feeling he inspired was something between confidence and fear. His life had been spent in rather a vagabond manner, in rambling, sometimes about the Chinese towns, and sometimes in the deserts of Tartary — for he had run away, at the age of eleven, from a Lama college, to escape the excessive corrections of his master. This mode of life had of course not tended much to polish the natural asperity of his character, and his intelligence was entirely uncultivated; but his muscular strength was immense, and he was not a little proud of it. After having been instructed and baptized by M. Gabet, he had wished to attach himself to the service of the missionaries, and the journey we were about to undertake was precisely in harmony with his rambling and adventurous humour; but he was of no use in directing our course, for he knew no more of this country than we did ourselves, and our only guides were a compass and an excellent map of the Chinese empire, by *Andriveau Goujon.*

We journeyed on, after leaving the inn, pleasantly enough, but for the maledictions of some Chinese merchants, whose numerous mules took fright at the sight of our camels, and, rushing right and left, threw the whole train into disorder, and even upset some of the heavy sort of carriages which they were drawing; on which occasions the owners consoled themselves by a thousand imprecations on the yellow colour of our garments, and the size of our beasts. The mountain we were climbing is called the Sain-Oula, that is to say, Good Mountain — a strange name, as it is famous for the disasters and tragic accidents met with on it; and the way across it is rough, steep, and encumbered with masses of rock. It is also subject to such excessive cold that no winter passes without many travellers perishing upon it. Instances have been known of whole caravans, men and animals together, being found dead of cold; and to the danger of the temperature are added those of thieves and of wild beasts. The robbers indeed have regularly established themselves here, and lie in wait for travellers going to or coming from the town of Tolon-Noor; and woe to the man who falls into their hands, for they do not content themselves with taking away his money and his goods, but strip him, and leave him to die of cold and hunger. Half way up this "Good Moun-

tain" is a little temple dedicated to the goddess of it, who bears the name of the "Good Woman" (*Sain-Nai*), and in the temple resides a hermit, whose business it is to throw shovelsful of earth on parts of the road that the waters have rendered impracticable. This service gives him the right to a small contribution which suffices for his maintenance.

The robbers of these countries are in general remarkable for the politeness with which they flavour their address. They do not put a pistol to your head, and cry roughly, "Your money or your life!" but they say, in the most courteous tone, "My eldest brother, I am weary of walking on foot. Be so good as to lend me your horse!" or, "I am without money,—will you not lend me your purse?" or, "It is very cold to day,— be kind enough to lend me your coat." If the eldest brother be charitable enough to comply, he receives thanks; — if not, the request is enforced by two or three blows of the cudgel, or, if that is not sufficient, recourse is had to the sabre.

The sun was about to set, and we were still on the immense plateau which forms the summit of the mountain, and whence you obtain an extensive view over the plains of Tartary, and the tents of the Mongols ranged in the form of an amphitheatre on the declivities of the hills. We began to think of encamping for the night, and looked out therefore for a suitable spot, namely one that afforded fuel, water, and pasture, the three essentials for an encampment.

We were yet so little accustomed to this kind of life that we could not get rid of the idea of the robbers, and we therefore chose a place surrounded by great trees, where we thought we should not be exposed to observation, and, after having unloaded our camels, we attempted to pitch our tent on a level spot on the borders of the imperial forest, and by the side of a fountain that issued from beneath the trunk of an aged pine.

The construction of our canvas palace occasioned us, however, a great deal of trouble; but we effected it at last, and then we established our porter at the door. I forgot to say that a porter formed part of our travelling equipage. A large nail was driven into the earth, and to this was attached a chain, terminating in a collar that encircled the neck of our faithful Arsalan, whose office it was to bark at the approach of strangers.

Having thus secured the inviolability of the territor· of which

we had just taken possession, we went to gather sticks and *argols* (the dried dung of animals), and soon commenced our cooking operations. As soon as the water in our kettle began to boil, we threw in some packets of a sort of paste called Kouamien, something like vermicelli, which we had got prepared beforehand; and then, by way of seasoning, we added some small slices from a fine piece of bacon — a present to us from our Christian converts, — and, as soon as it could be imagined to be done, each of us produced from his bosom his little wooden porringer, and filled it. But alas! our cookery was detestable — uneatable! We looked at each other and laughed, but at bottom we were a little vexed, for our stomachs were gnawing with hunger. The fabricators of this Kouamien usually salt it, to make it keep better, but this that we had bought was so horribly salt that it was useless. We gave the first soup made from it to Arsalan, who would have nothing to do with it; and then having poured to it a quantity of fresh water we made a second attempt, but with little more success. The soup was still so salt that we could not drink it; and though Samdadchiemba, whose stomach was inured to anything, threw himself heroically upon the cauldron, we preferred having recourse, as the Chinese say, to the "cold and dry." We took some small loaves out of our provision bag, and, directing our steps towards the forest, sought at least to relish our repast by an agreeable walk. But in the forest Providence enabled us to meet with some delicious fruits, — one like a wild cherry, the other resembling a small apple, and of a pleasant acid flavour; so that our first nomadic supper was better than we had expected.

This imperial forest extends from north to south for three hundred miles, and nearly eighty from east to west, and it has been used as a hunting ground by many successive emperors of China; but, for about twenty-seven years past, these huntings have been discontinued, and not only stags and wild boars, but also bears, panthers, wolves, and tigers abound in it. Woe to the woodcutter or the hunter who should venture alone into its recesses. Those who have done so, have disappeared without leaving a vestige behind them.

The fear of encountering some wild beast prevented our continuing our walk as far as we should otherwise have done; and as darkness was coming on, we regained our tent, and enjoyed a tolerably tranquil night.

We were on foot again as soon as day began to dawn, and after having breakfasted on tea with a handful of oatmeal mixed in it, we loaded our camels again, and resumed our march along the plateau. We soon found ourselves in the presence of the Grand Obo, where the Tartars come to adore the spirit of the mountain. It is nothing more than an enormous heap of stones piled up without any order; at the base is an urn of granite, for burning incense, and the summit is crowned with a number of dried branches fixed at random amongst the stones, and having bones and sentences in Thebetan or Mongol fastened to them. The devout Tartars who pass the Obo do not content themselves with making prostrations and burning perfumes — they also throw on the stones a considerable amount of money. But the Chinese who pass, though they do not fail to stop before the Obo, and perform their genuflexions, take care afterwards to walk round and pick up the offerings that their simple Mongol brethren have deposited there.

In all Tartar countries these heaps of stones are of common occurrence; and we were involuntarily reminded by them of the *loca-excelsa* of the Bible, to which the Jews were wont to carry their adorations in defiance of the prohibition of the prophets.

It was nearly noon, when the ground began to decline from the high table-land, and we descended by a rapid declivity into a deep valley, where we found a Mongol station, and pitched our tents on the borders of a little pond. The sun had just set, and we were busy in boiling water for our tea, when the barking of Arsalan warned us that a stranger was approaching the tent; and soon after we heard the trotting of a horse, and a Tartar made his appearance before our tent, crying *Mendou!* and carrying his joined hands to his forehead. We invited him to take a cup of tea; and, having fastened his horse to a nail in the tent, he came and took a place at our fireside.

"My Lord Lamas," he said, as soon as he was seated, "under what part of the heavens were you born?"

"We are from the sky of the west; and you — which is your country?"

"My poor *yourta*," he replied, "is towards the north, at the bottom of that great valley to the right."

"Yours is a fine country," said we. The Mongol shook his head sadly, and did not reply. "Brother!" we added, after a moment's silence, "the land of grass extends far in this kingdom

of *Gechekten;* would it not be better to sow grain in those prairies? What can you make of this uncultivated land? Are not fine harvests preferable to grass?"

He answered, in a tone of the firmest conviction, "The Mongols are made to live under tents and feed flocks. As long as this custom was maintained in Gechekten, we were rich and happy. Now that the Mongols have set themselves to cultivate the ground and build houses, they have become poor. The Chinese have swallowed up the country; flocks, lands, houses—all has passed into their hands, and we have nothing left but some prairies. There still dwell the Mongols, who have not been forced by poverty to emigrate to other countries."

"Since the Chinese do so much harm, why did you allow them to come into your country?"

"That is a true word; but you know, my Lord Lamas, that the Mongols are simple — they have weak hearts. We had pity on these wicked *Kitat*" (Chinese): "they came to us imploring alms, — we allowed them out of compassion to cultivate a little ground, and the Mongols followed their example. They drank the Chinese wine, and smoked their tobacco—on credit they bought their cloth — and then, when the time came for settling accounts, all was charged forty and fifty per cent. more than its value. Then the Mongols were forced to leave all — houses, lands, and flocks."

"Could you not ask justice from the tribunals?"

"Oh, that is impossible! The *Kitat* knows how to speak and to lie — a Mongol can never gain a lawsuit from a Chinese. My Lord Lamas,—all is lost for the kingdom of Gechekten!" And with these words he rose, made us a genuflexion, and, mounting his horse, disappeared.

We were two days longer crossing the kingdom of Gechekten, and everywhere we had occasion to remark the poverty and wretchedness of the inhabitants. The country is nevertheless astonishingly rich in gold and silver, but these very treasures have been often the cause of its greatest calamities. Though there exists a severe prohibition against working the mines, it often happens that great troops of armed Chinese banditti come and search for gold; and it is said they have a remarkable capacity for discovering it, from the shape of the mountains, and the kind of plants produced on them. But such a discovery does but bring desolation on the country where it is made, for it attracts towards it thousands

of vagabonds, some of whom employ themselves in robbing the inhabitants, while the rest dig for gold and silver. In 1841 the kingdom of Ouniot became the prey of a multitude of these ruffians, who continued in occupation of it for two years, and were not reduced till the king had assembled all his banners and marched against them. Being in such numbers, they made a desperate resistance; but at length, a great number of them retreated into the mine, and the Mongols, perceiving it, stopped up the entrance with great stones. For days together the cries of these unfortunate men were heard, but there was no pity for them, and they were left to perish of this frightful death. The few who escaped were taken to the king, who had their eyes put out, and then let them go.

We had just quitted the kingdom of Gechekten and were entering that of Thakar, when we came up with a camp of Chinese soldiers charged to watch over the public safety; but their presence, far from increasing our confidence, added not a little to our fear, for these men are themselves among the most impudent thieves in the country. We took up our abode, therefore, between two rocks, where there was just room enough to fix our tent; and we had scarcely finished our task when we perceived in the distance several horsemen galloping down the side of a neighbouring mountain, and apparently in pursuit of something that fled before them. Two of them, however, hastened towards us, and, dismounting, prostrated themselves at the entrance of our tent. They were Mongol-Tartars. "Men of prayer," said they, with much apparent emotion, "we come to beg you to draw a horoscope. Two horses have been stolen from us to day, and we have vainly sought to discover the thieves. Oh men whose power and knowledge are without bounds, teach us how we may find them!"

"My brethren," we replied, "we are not Lamas of Buddha; we do not believe in horoscopes; to pretend to such knowledge is false and deceitful." The poor Tartars redoubled their solicitations; but when they saw that our resolution could not be shaken, they remounted their horses, and returned to the mountains.

Samdadchiemba, during this conversation, had remained crouched in a corner by the fire, holding in both hands a bowl of tea, which he never once took from his lips. At length, as they were taking their departure, he knitted his brows, rose from his seat abruptly, and went to the door of the tent. The Tartars were already at a considerable distance; but he uttered a loud shout, and

made gestures with his hands to induce them to come back. Thinking, probably, that we had changed our minds, and would consent to draw the horoscope, they returned; but, as soon as they came within hail, Samdadchiemba addressed them: —

"My Mongol brothers," he said, "in future be more prudent; take better care of your animals, and they will not be stolen. Remember these words, for they are worth more that all the horoscopes in the world." And having finished this speech, he marched gravely back to his tent, and sat down again to his tea. At first we were vexed with him; but, as the Tartars did not appear angry, we ended by laughing.

On the following day, the numerous Tartars and Chinese travellers whom we met on the way were a sign to us that we were approaching the large town of Tolon-Noor; and already we could see before us, glittering in the sun, the gilded roofs of the two magnificent Lama convents to the north of the town.

We journeyed now for a long way between tombs,—for the town is encircled by an immense cemetery,—but here and there among the graves were little spots of garden ground, where, with much care and pains, are cultivated a few vegetables, hard and bitter lettuces, spinach, leeks, and cabbages, which have within these few years past been introduced from Russia, and have succeeded in the north of China wonderfully well. With the exception of these vegetables, the environs of Tolon-Noor produce absolutely nothing. The soil is dry and sandy, and water is extremely scarce: for it is only at a few spots that abundant springs are found, and these dry up in the hot season.

CHAP. II.

Restaurateur at Tolon-Noor.—Appearance of the Town.—Great Founderies of Bells and Idols.—Conversation with Lamas.—Encampment.—Brick Tea.—Meeting with the Queen of the Mourguevan.—Violent Storm.—War of the English against China, as described by a Mongol Chief.—The Emperor's Flocks.—Tartar Manners and Customs.—Encampment by the Three Lakes.—Nocturnal Apparitions.—Grey Squirrels.—Arrival at Chaborte.

Our entrance into the town of Tolon-Noor * was fatiguing and full of perplexity, for we knew not where to alight. We wandered

* This town is marked on some maps by its Mongol name, *Djo-Naiman-Soumé*. (N. lat. 42° 30′).

long through the labyrinth of narrow winding streets, where our camels could not without the utmost difficulty make their way, so encumbered were they with men and goods. At length we found our way to an inn, and, almost without taking breath, unloaded our camels, piled up our baggage in the little chamber assigned to us, ran to the market to buy fodder for our animals, and distributed it among them. The master of the hostelry then came and, according to custom, presented us with a padlock,—having fixed which on the door of our apartment, we sallied out to look for some dinner for ourselves, for we were excessively hungry. We were not long in discovering a triangular flag, which floated before a certain mansion as a sign of its belonging to a house of public entertainment.

We entered a spacious hall, where were distributed with great order and symmetry a number of small tables. We seated ourselves at one, and immediately a teapot was placed before each of us, for this is the obligato commencement of every repast. Before taking anything else you must drink a large quantity of boiling tea. While we were occupied in swelling ourselves out with this beverage, we received the visit of the *Steward of the Table.* This is usually a personage of elegant manners, endowed with prodigious volubility of tongue, who is acquainted with all countries and knows everybody's affairs; but he concludes his harangue by asking for your orders; and, as you name the dishes, he repeats what you say, aloud in a sort of singing voice, for the instruction of the *Governor of the Kettle.* The meal is served with admirable promptitude; but, before commencing, etiquette requires you to go round and invite all the guests in the room to join you.

"Come! Come all together!" you cry. "Come and drink a little glass of wine—eat a little rice."

"Thank you, thank you!" responds the company; "come rather and seat yourself at our table—it is we who invite you:" and then having, in the phrase of the country, "*shown your honour,*" you may sit down and take your meal like a man of quality.

As soon as you rise to go, the steward of the table again presents himself; and, while you traverse the apartment, he proclaims again the nomenclature of the dishes you have asked for, and concludes by naming, in a loud voice, the sum total of the expense; after which you go into the office and disburse the amount.

Two motives had induced us to visit Tolon-Noor. We wished, in the first place, to complete our stock of travelling utensils; and

we also considered it desirable to place ourselves in relation with the Lamas of the country, and obtain information concerning some important points in Tartary; and in pursuit of these objects, we had to traverse almost every quarter of the town.

Tolon-Noor is not a walled town, but a vast agglomeration of ugly and ill-arranged houses, and in the middle of its narrow and tortuous streets you see open mud holes and sewers; and while the foot passengers walk in single file along the slippery pavement, mules, camels, and carts make their way through the deep black foul-smelling mud. Often enough the wheeled carriages upset; and then it is impossible to describe the confusion that takes place in these miserable streets. Goods are either stolen by the thieves who watch for such opportunities, or lost in the mud, and the animals are not unfrequently suffocated. But notwithstanding the few attractions of Tolon-Noor, the sterility of its environs, the extreme cold of its winter, and the suffocating heat of its summers, its population is immense, and its commerce prodigious. Russian goods find their way here by the way of *Kiakta;* the Tartars are constantly bringing vast herds of oxen, camels, and horses, and taking back tobacco, linen, and brick tea. This perpetual coming and going of strangers; the hawkers running about with their wares; the traders endeavouring to entice customers into their shops; the Lamas, in their showy dresses of scarlet and yellow, endeavouring to attract admiration by the skill with which they manage their fiery horses in the most difficult passes,—all these things give the streets a very animated appearance.

The greater number of merchants are from the Chinese province of *Chan-Si,* though they seldom remain permanently in the town, but only long enough to fill their coffers, after which they go back to China. Most of the Chinese make their fortunes here, but the Tartars are often ruined: indeed Tolon-Noor is like a monstrous pneumatic pump for producing a vacuum in Mongol purses.

The magnificent statues of brass and iron, which issue from the founderies of Tolon-Noor, are renowned not only throughout Tartary, but even in the most distant countries of Thibet. From its vast workshops all countries which profess the religion of Buddha receive their supply of idols, bells, vases, and other utensils employed in their idolatrous service. The large images are cast in several pieces, and afterwards soldered together. During our stay at Tolon-Noor, we saw a single statue of Buddha which

made in its various pieces the load of eighty camels. It was intended as a present to the Tale Lama.

We often took occasion to visit the Lama convents, but the Lamas appeared but ill instructed, and their doctrine was always undefined and floating in a wide pantheism, of which they could not themselves render any account. Whenever we required any thing clear and positive, they seemed in great embarrassment, and referred from one to another. The disciples told us that their masters knew all — the masters invoked the omniscience of the Grand Lamas — the Grand Lamas declared themselves ignorant in comparison with certain saints of famous colleges or convents. But all agreed that their doctrine come from the west; on this point they were unanimous. The further you advance to the west, they said, the purer and more luminous will be the doctrine.

When we explained to them the truths of Christianity they never disputed or discussed them, but said calmly: "We have not all those prayers, but the Lamas of the west will explain all. We have faith in the traditions of the west." The Grand Lamas are always from Thibet, and a Lama who has even made a journey to Lha-Ssa is sure afterwards of obtaining the confidence of the Tartars, and being regarded as a superior being before whose eyes the mysteries of the past and the future have been unveiled.

After having maturely considered the information we had obtained, we determined to direct our course towards the west, and quitted Tolon-Noor on the 1st of October. It was not without difficulty that we got through the streets, for our camels could only proceed by stumbling along through the mud holes, their loads tottering at every step, so that we dreaded to see them lose their equilibrium, and go rolling into the mire. When we got to the western extremity of the town, we had no more sewers to cross, but we saw before us an interminable chain of small hills of fine and moving sand, over which we could not advance without great fatigue, and where there was no kind of path. The heat too was suffocating — our animals were bathed in perspiration — and we ourselves were tortured by thirst without being able to find a drop of water.

It was late before we could find a spot fit to pitch our tent on, but by degrees the ground became more firm, and presented some traces of vegetation, and at length it appeared beautifully green. On our left lay the opening of a defile, towards which M. Gabet

galloped, and soon gave a loud shout and made a gesture with his hand. We advanced towards him and discovered that Providence had enabled us to meet with a good halting-place — a small pond, the waters of which were half hidden by thick reeds and marsh plants with some brambles scattered here and there over the hills — it was all that we needed. Hungry, thirsty, fatigued as we were, we could wish for nothing better.

The camels had scarcely lain down before we ran each with his little wooden bowl to the pond, and filled it from between the reeds. It was cool enough, but had a pungent hydro-chloric odour, reminding me of some I had once drank in the Pyrenees, and which was so very nauseous and ill-smelling, that it was sold at the chemists' shops in France at fifteen sous a bottle. When we had sufficiently quenched our thirst, our strength gradually returned; we put up our tent, and then every one set to work. M. Gabet went to gather sticks — Samdadchiemba collected argols in the skirt of his robe, and I sat at the entrance of the tent trying my apprentice-hand in the culinary art, by endeavouring to draw a fowl, while Arsalan watched for its entrails with an attentive and eager eye.

We meant for once to give ourselves a feast, and out of pure patriotism to regale our camel-driver with a dish prepared according to the rules of the *cuisinier Français*. The fowl was therefore artistically carved and deposited at the bottom of our kettle: a few onions, a clove of garlick, a little red pepper, and some roots of synapia salted completed the seasoning, and the whole was soon boiling, for on that day we were rich in fuel. After a while Samdadchiemba plunged his hand into the kettle, and drawing from it a piece of fowl, announced to the guests that the hour was come, and immediately the pot was taken from the fire and placed upon the grass, and we seated ourselves round it close enough to touch with the knees, and each armed with two sticks wherewith we essayed to catch the morsels that floated on the surface of the abundant liquid. When the repast was finished, and we had thanked God for the good meal he had provided for us in the desert, Samdadchiemba went to rinse out the kettle at the pond, and we, to complete our feast, set to work to boil some Mongol tea — the well-known brick tea, boiled with salt — which I must own we only drank from necessity, though Samdadchiemba was enthusiastic in its praise. We afterwards planted a little wooden

cross on the site of our encampment, and continued to mark our course in this way in all our subsequent journeys across the wilds.

We had not been more than an hour on our way on the following day, when we heard behind us a confused noise as of a number of men and horses, and turning our heads perceived a numerous caravan advancing towards us at a rapid pace. We were soon overtaken by three horsemen, and one of them whom we recognised by his costume for a Tartar Mandarin, roared out to us in a deafening voice—"Lord Lamas, where is your country?"

"We are from the sky of the west."

"Across what countries have you passed your beneficent shadow?"

"We come from the town of Tolon-Noor."

"Has peace accompanied your route?"

"So far we have journeyed happily—and you—are you at peace?—What is your country?"

"We are Khalkas from the kingdom of Mourguevan?"

"Has the rain been abundant? Are your flocks in prosperity?"

"All is at peace in our pastures. Whither is your caravan proceeding?"

"We are going to bow our foreheads before the Five Towers."

During this short conversation the rest of the troop had come up. We were near a brook, the banks of which were bordered with bushes, and the chief of the caravan gave orders to halt, and immediately the camels arriving in a file described a circle, into the midst of which was drawn a vehicle on four wheels.

Sok! Sok! cried the camel-drivers, and the camels obedient to the order lay down all at once as if struck by the same blow. Then, whilst a multitude of tents rose suddenly, as if by enchantment along the banks of the brook, two Mandarins, decorated with the blue ball, approached the carriage, opened the door, and immediately we saw descending from it a Tartar woman, clothed in a long robe of green silk. It was the queen of the country of the Khalkas who was going on a pilgrimage to the famous Lama Convent of the Five Towers, in the Chinese province of Chan-Si. Immediately on perceiving us, she saluted us by raising her two hands, and said,

"My Lord Lamas, we are going to encamp here—is the place fortunate?"

"Royal pilgrim of Mourguevan," we replied, "you can here light the fire of your hearth in peace. For us, we are about to continue our route, for the sun was already high when we folded our tent."

We took leave of the Mourguevan caravan; but we had not left it far behind when we began to regret not having joined their encampment on the borders of that pretty stream, and among those fat pastures. Black clouds were rising and spreading over the whole sky, and while we were seeking a place for a halt, some large drops fell to warn us that we had no time to lose. We could not, however, discover any spot where there was water, but Samdadchiemba cried out eagerly, "Never mind water—nobody will die of thirst to-day—let us make haste to encamp before the sky falls." Just then we saw in the valley a man driving before him a flock of sheep, and thinking they were going to where there was water, we turned, and hastily followed the same course. The rain now began to fall in torrents, and redoubled the celerity of our march, and to increase our misfortunes the load of one of our camels became loose and swung round under its belly, so that we had to stop to re-adjust it.

By the time we reached the banks of a small lake now already swelled by the rain, our clothes were dripping, and there was no longer occasion to hesitate about the choice of a place to pitch our tent, for all places were alike. The rain presently abated a little, but the wind only increased in violence, and the task of unrolling our tent, which was now in the state of linen just drawn from the wash-tub, became a most formidable one. Fortunately Samdadchiemba was possessed of extraordinary muscular strength, and after great exertion we pitched the tent and obtained a shelter from the wind and a small freezing rain which continued to fall. When this affair was settled Samdadchiemba began to make a speech.

"My spiritual fathers," he said, "I predicted to you to-day that we should not die of thirst; but I said nothing about hunger—I do not answer for that."

There was, however, no possibility of making a fire. There was no such thing as a branch or a root to be seen; and to go in search of argols was utterly useless, for the rain had melted away that only fuel of the desert.

We were about to make our supper on a little flour mixed in

cold water, when we saw coming towards us some Tartars, leading a small camel. After the customary salutations, they said, "My Lord Lamas, the sky has fallen to-day; doubtless you have not been able to light your fire: but men are all brothers, and belong to one another, and *black men* * should honour and serve the holy; therefore we are come to light your fire for you."

These good Tartars had seen us searching for a place to encamp, and imagining our distress for fuel, had brought us a quantity of their argols. We thanked Providence for this unexpected succour, and the *Dchiahour* immediately set to work to prepare our supper, increasing the quantity a little in favour of our two friends.

While we ate our frugal meal, I observed that one of the Tartars was the object of particular attention to the other; and on inquiry we found that the superior had had two years before the honour of serving in the war against the "*rebels of the South*," — that is, the English, having marched with the banners of Tchakar. He had, however, never been called upon to fight; for the *Holy Master* (the Emperor of China) had in his immense mercy granted peace to the rebels soon after, and the Tartar troops had been sent back to their flocks and herds. He had been told, however, by the Chinese what kind of people, or monsters rather, these English were —they lived in the water like fish, and when you least expected it they would rise to the surface, and cast at you fiery gourds. Then as soon as you bend your bow to send an arrow at them, they plunge again into the water like frogs.

We passed a miserably uncomfortable night. The ground inside the tent was a mass of mud; the large fire that had been made was just sufficient to turn into vapour much of the water with which it was saturated, but not to dry our clothes. Our furs were like the skin of a drowned animal, and the only rest we got was when we fell asleep for a few minutes at a time, crouching amongst the cinders with our arms crossed, and our heads dropping down on our knees.

It was with indescribable pleasure that we at length saw the end of this long and dreary night. Day dawned, and the blue and cloudless sky presaged a happy compensation for the miseries of the preceding evening, whilst a brilliant sunshine gave us hopes of soon being able to dry our wet clothes. Gradually under the

* All laymen are called black men among the Mongols.

influence of this glorious weather, the long grass of the prairies that had been beaten down by the rain, raised its head again; and, to complete the expansion of our hearts, we now entered the plains of the *Red Banner*, the most picturesque part of Tchakar.

Tchakar (a Mongol word signifying border country) lies to the north of the great wall of China, and east of Toumet. It is about 450 miles in length and 300 in breadth, and its inhabitants are all soldiers of the Emperor of China, and receive annually a certain sum regulated according to their titles. It is divided into eight Banners, distinguished by their colour — blue, red, white, and yellow, and bluish, reddish, whitish, and yellowish. Each banner has a separate territory, and possesses a kind of tribunal which takes cognizance of its affairs, and a chief called *Ou-Gourdha;* and from amongst these eight Ou-Gourdhas, a Governor-General is chosen. Tchakar is, in fact, nothing but a vast camp; and in order that the army shall be at all times in readiness to march, the Tartars are prohibited under severe penalties from cultivating the ground. They are required to live on their pay and the produce of their flocks.

In the pastures of Tchakar also feed numerous and magnificent flocks and herds belonging to the Emperor. There are camels, horses, oxen, and sheep; and some idea of their numbers may be formed from the fact that, of the horses only, there are three hundred and sixty herds, each containing not less than twelve hundred. Each herd is under the superintendence of a Tartar, who is obliged to replace at his own expense any animal that may be found deficient when they are counted. But the Tartar finds means notwithstanding to turn the riches of the "Holy Master" to account; for when a Chinese has a bad horse, or a decrepit ox, he can for a small sum obtain leave from the Tartar inspector to exchange it for a fine one from the Emperor's herds; and as the number remains the same, there is no fear of the fraud being discovered.

We had never yet traversed such fine countries as these in such fine weather. The wilderness is sometimes terrible, but sometimes also it has its peculiar charms, and the aspect of Tartary is like that of no other country. Among civilised nations you meet with populous towns, a rich and varied culture, countless productions of industry and art, and the incessant agitation of commerce. In those where civilisation has not yet made its way, you find vast forests with all the pomp of an exuberant vegetation. But

Tartary resembles neither the one nor the other. It is a boundless prairie, sometimes broken up by immense lakes, majestic rivers, imposing mountains, but rolling away always into vast and immeasurable plains. You feel alone in its green solitudes, as in the midst of the ocean.

Sometimes where the water and the pasture is fine, the plain suddenly becomes animated. You see rising on all sides tents of various sizes, looking like inflated balloons, ready to rise into the air. Children with a sort of scuttle on their backs are running about looking for argols, which they pile up round the tent. The matrons attend to the young calves, boil the tea in the open air, or prepare the milk; whilst the men, mounted on fiery horses, and armed with a long pole, gallop about in all directions, directing the movements of the vast flocks, which seen in the distance appear to undulate like the waves of the sea.

Sometimes these animated pictures disappear on a sudden; men, tents, flocks, all have vanished, and nothing is left but heaps of cinders, half extinguished fires, and bones for which the birds of prey are fighting. These are all the traces that the nomadic Mongol has passed that way. The flocks and herds have devoured the grass, the chief has given the signal for departure, and the community has gone to seek elsewhere "fresh fields and pastures new."

After having travelled the whole day over the delightful meadows of the Red Banner, we came to a valley that appeared pretty well inhabited; and we had scarcely alighted, when many Tartars hastened towards us to offer their services. They helped us to unload the camels, and construct our mansion of blue linen, and they then begged us to go and take tea under their tents. But as it was already late, we remained at home, and put off our visits till the morrow, for the hospitable manners of our neighbours had already determined us to remain a day among them, and we were glad of the opportunity of repairing some of the damage we had suffered the evening before.

The next day, all the time that could be spared from our little housekeeping, and the recitation of our breviary was devoted to visiting in the Mongol tents. We found it needful, on approaching them, to look to the safety of our legs, for enormous dogs rushed out of them, with great fury, whenever we approached them. A small stick was sufficient for our defence, but we had to

lay it down at the threshold of each habitation, in compliance with Tartar etiquette; for to enter a tent with a whip or stick in your hand, would be to offer the most outrageous affront to its inmates, and imply, in their own figurative style, that they were all dogs.

The Tartar mode of presenting one's self is frank, simple, and free from the innumerable forms of Chinese courtesy. On entering the tent, you wish peace to every body in general, saying *Amor* or *Mendou*, and then go at once and seat yourself at the right hand of the head of the family, who is crouching down opposite the door. A little tobacco is then mutually presented, and a few polite commonplaces exchanged. "Are your pastures fat and abundant?"—"Are your flocks in good order?"—"Have your mares been fruitful?" &c., pronounced with extreme gravity, and then the lady of the tent stretches out her hand towards the strangers, without speaking, and forthwith they produce the little wooden bowl, which is an indispensable *vade mecum* in Tartary, and she returns it to them filled with tea and milk. In tolerably opulent families, a tray is usually placed before visitors, with a modest collation of butter, oatmeal, and slices of cheese, all in separate boxes of varnished wood; and those who mean to be magnificent in their hospitality, plunge into the warm ashes near the fire a small earthenware bottle full of Mongol wine, a sort of spirit rudely distilled from milk, which one must have been born a Tartar to relish.

The most unpleasant circumstance of a visit to a Tartar tent is the almost unsupportable smell occasioned by the grease, with which everything is impregnated, and the generally unclean habits of the people, which have earned for them the appellation of "stinking Tartars," from the Chinese, who are themselves by no means scrupulous on the point of cleanliness, nor perfectly fragrant to approach.

The cares of the family and of housekeeping among the Tartars rest entirely on the woman. It is she who must manage the cows and prepare the milk, go often to a great distance to fetch water, collect argols, dry them, and pile them up round the tent; tan the furs and sheep-skins, and make the clothes; and in these various occupations she has only the assistance of the young children.

The employments of the men are very limited; they consist merely in driving the flocks to good pastures, more of amusement

than work to men on horseback, and occasioning no fatigue unless when they have to pursue stray animals, when they go flying rather than galloping, over the tops of mountains, and down into the deepest ravines, till they have overtaken the fugitive. Their hunting is rather a matter of business than pleasure. When not on horseback, a Tartar is generally quite idle, and passes a great part of the day crouched in his tent, drinking tea, and sometimes he lounges about like a Parisian dandy, though not quite in the same way. When he has a mind to see what is passing in the world, he mounts his horse, and goes galloping away into the desert, without heeding in what direction, and wherever he sees the smoke of a tent rising, he makes a call, and has a gossip.

We took leave of our Tartar friends with mutual good wishes.

"My Lord Lamas," they said, "a good journey to you."

"May you sit in peace," we replied.

"You will encamp to-day," they added, "by the Three Lakes; where the pastures are good and plentiful, but beyond that place there is no water for a great distance."

During the morning the weather was magnificent, although a little cool; but in the afternoon a north wind arose, which blew with violence, and soon became so piercing, that we had to regret not having provided ourselves with large fur caps to protect our faces. We hastened our steps in order to arrive at the Three Lakes, and make ourselves a shelter of our beloved tent, but though we turned our eyes right and left, we could see no signs of lakes. It was growing late, and from what the Tartars had told us, we feared we must have passed the only camping place that we could expect to find that day.

At last, however, we saw at a great distance a horseman moving slowly down into a ravine, and M. Gabet immediately moved off quickly in that direction, in hopes of obtaining some information. The horseman heard him, and turning round hastened to meet him, saying as he came up — "Holy personage, has thine eye perceived the trace of some yellow goats?"

"I have seen no yellow goats," he answered, "but I am seeking water and find none. Is it far from here?"

"Whence come you? Where are you going to?"

"I am from that little caravan that you see down there."

"Then you have just passed close to the water. Permit me, Lord Lama, to walk by the side of your shadow, and I will show

you the Three Lakes." And he urged on his horse with two or three strokes with the whip, to enable it to keep up with the great strides of the camel.

"Men of prayer," he said as he came up with our little caravan —"you have come rather too far—you must turn back. Do you see down there?" and he pointed with the end of his bow. "Do you see the storks moving there among the grass? There are the Three Lakes." We had scarcely moved a few steps in the direction pointed out, when we noticed signs of the presence of the lakes. The grass was thinner and less green, and crumbled like dried branches under the feet of our animals. The white efflorescence of saltpetre became thicker; and at length we found ourselves on the banks of a lake, and saw at a distance two others. We quickly alighted, and endeavoured to pitch our tent, but the wind was so violent, that it was only after great toil, and with much patience, that we effected it.

Whilst Samdadchiemba was preparing the tea, we were resting ourselves on the banks of the lake, and amusing ourselves by watching the camels as they licked with eager pleasure the saltpetre with which the ground was powdered. Especially we liked to see them leaning over the lake and taking long draughts of the brackish water, which ascended in their long necks as in a pump. But suddenly, as we were indulging in this recreation, we heard behind us a confused noise like the sails of a ship flapping in a gale, and we soon distinguished through the tempest loud cries uttered by Samdadchiemba. We ran to him as fast as we could, and arrived only just in time, for the typhoon had torn up and was carrying away our canvas palace. It appeared that the wind since we had been away had changed its direction, and was blowing right into the opening of the tent: and as it was driving the burning argols on the canvas, there was the most imminent danger of fire. The thing to be done, therefore, was to veer about; and at length we had placed the tent once more in safety, with no other damage than the fright, and a little fatigue. The accident, however, had thrown Samdadchiemba into a detestable humour, and he remained so all the evening, for the wind had blown the fire out, and retarded the preparation of his tea.

The wind went down as the night advanced, and at length the weather became magnificent. The sky was clear, and the moon and stars brilliant. Alone in this vast solitude, we could only just

discern in the distance the vague and strange forms of the mountains, rising like gigantic phantoms above the horizon.

As Samdadchiemba was not the man to find much enjoyment in the sublime tranquillity of the desert, we left him entirely absorbed in the care of lighting the fire, and preparing the tea while we went to take a meditative walk round the Great Lake. While there, we were struck with astonishment and some consternation, at hearing a sound which we could not but take for human voices speaking loud, and which it seemed not improbable might belong to robbers. We returned, therefore, quietly to the tent, and made what preparations we could for such a meeting, and the Dchiahour set to work vigorously to sharpen a large Russian cutlas on the soles of his boots. But on returning to the borders of the lake, and instituting a strict search, we found at a short distance a tolerably frequented path, and we conjectured that those who had given us such an alarm, were merely inoffensive passengers, who had been hidden from us by the grass. Samdadchiemba remained sitting up however till a late hour, and entertained us a great part of the time by relating the adventures of his youth, declaring his intention of not going to bed at all, but sitting up to watch the camels. As soon as the first gleam of daylight appeared, he cried to us that the *Pan-tan* was ready. We rose quickly, and having eaten our Pan-tan, that is oatmeal and water, we planted our little cross and pursued our pilgrimage.

It was past noon when we came to three wells which had been dug at no great distance from one another, and early as it was we resolved to encamp, for a vast plain without any habitation extended as far the eye could reach, and as the Tartars had dug these wells, it was probably without water. We pitched our tent therefore, but we soon found that we had chosen a very bad place, for the water was salt and fetid, and we could find no fuel. After we had sought in vain for a long time, Samdadchiemba, who had a very long sight, thought he discovered at a distance a place where a herd of oxen had been feeding, and riding thither on one of the camels, soon returned with a great provision of argols. Unfortunately, however, they proved so far from dry, that it was impossible to make them burn, and though the Dchiahour built up with turf an extremely pretty-looking little furnace, it had the disadvantage of being entirely useless. In vain he arranged and re-arranged, and blew without ceasing — we had smoke in abundance but no fire.

The water in our kettle preserved the most obstinate coolness, and we had to renounce all hopes of tea. But in order to get the water at least a little warm, that its brackish taste and fetid odour might be somewhat disguised, we adopted a new expedient.

In the plains of Mongolia you often meet with a kind of grey squirrel that lives in a hole like a rat. Above the opening of these little habitations, these animals form a sort of dome of interlaced twigs and dry grass, as a protection from bad weather. These elevations, which, dried and burnt by the sun, have the size and form of mole hills, were in great numbers about the place where we had encamped; thirst rendered us cruel, and we began to pull down the habitations of the poor little beasts, who made their escape into their holes as we approached to carry away their roofs. By means of this Vandalism we constructed a faggot big enough to warm some well water, which was our only aliment for that day.

Although the impossibility of making fire forced us sometimes to be extremely abstinent, our provisions were fast diminishing, and we had nothing left but a little flour and millet, when we one day met a Tartar who informed us that we were not far from a commercial station called *Chaborté*, that is. Slough.

We turned therefore from the route that we had intended to follow, for we could not get provisions any where else before arriving at the Blue Town, from which we were still distant a hundred leagues, and marching a little obliquely to the left, arrived at Chaborté.

CHAP. III.

Feast of the Moon's Loaves.—Festival in a Mongol Tent.—Mongols in search of our lost Horses.—Ancient abandoned City.—Route from Pekin to Kiaktha.—Commerce between China and Russia.—Russian Convent at Pekin.—Tartar Medicines.—The Devil of Intermittent Fevers.—The Lama Convent of the Five Towers.—Funerals of Tartar Kings.—Origin of the Kingdom of Efe.—Encounter with three Wolves.

We arrived at Chaborté on the fifteenth day of the eighth moon, an epoch of peculiar rejoicings amongst the Chinese, when a feast is celebrated known as the "Feast of the Moon's Loaves," which is of great antiquity. On this day of solemnity labour is suspended, workmen receive from their masters a pecuniary present, relations

and friends exchange gifts of cakes of various sizes, on which is stamped a symbol of the moon, every one puts on his best clothes, and every family presents a scene of gaiety and joy. This festival was, in the 14th century, the period chosen for a great massacre of the Tartars by the Chinese; the signal being given by a paper hidden in the cakes sent round on the occasion. But the Tartars seem to have forgotten all about this, and celebrate the feast without recollecting that it commemorates the triumph which their enemies obtained over their ancestors.

About a gunshot from the place where we were encamped, we saw several Mongol tents, whose size and cleanliness testified the opulence of their inhabitants; and this opinion was confirmed by the immense flocks of sheep and herds of oxen and horses which were grazing around. Whilst we were reciting our breviary in the interior of our tent, Samdadchiemba went to pay a visit to these Mongols, and we soon saw him returning towards us, accompanied by an old man with a long white beard, and a young Lama leading by the hand a child.

"My Lord Lamas," said the old man, "all men are brothers; but those who dwell beneath tents are united as the flesh and the bone. My Lord Lamas, come and seat yourselves in my poor dwelling. The fifteenth of the month is a solemn epoch; you are travellers and strangers; you cannot this evening occupy your place at the fireside of your noble family. Come and repose yourselves for some days amongst us. Your presence will bring us peace and happiness." We told the good old man that we could not quite accept his offer, but that in the evening after prayers we would come and take tea with him and have a chat about the Mongol nation. The venerable Tartar retired, but soon after the young Lama who had accompanied him re-appeared, saying that we were expected. We did not like to persist in refusing an invitation so pressing and cordial, so, having recommended the Dchiahour to watch carefully our abode, we followed the Lama to the Mongol tent.

On entering, we were surprised to find in it a cleanliness to which one is little accustomed in Tartary. There was no fire in it either, and we nowhere perceived any of the coarse cooking utensils which usually encumber Tartar habitations: it was easy to see that all had been arranged for a state occasion.

We seated ourselves on a red carpet, and there was soon brought

from a neighbouring tent, which served as a kitchen, tea with milk, rolls fried in butter, cheese, dried grapes, and sweetmeats.

We then made acquaintance with the numerous Mongol circle in which we found ourselves, and had a long conversation, from which it appeared that the old man was the only one of the company who was aware that the terrible remembrance of the Tartar massacre was associated with this festival. But after a moment's silence he said — "Holy men, however that may be, the day on which you have deigned to descend into our poor habitation is truly a day of rejoicing, and it is not well to occupy the heart with sad thoughts.— Child, he added, turning to a man who was seated near the threshold — "if the mutton is sufficiently boiled take away the milk food." And whilst the person addressed cleared away the first course, the eldest son of the family entered, bearing a small oblong table, on which was placed an entire sheep, cut into four quarters. He placed the table in the midst of the circle, and immediately the head of the family, arming himself with the knife that was suspended at his girdle, cut off the tail of the sheep, divided it into two parts, and offered one to each of us.

Amongst the Tartars the tail is regarded as the most exquisite piece, and is of course offered to the most honoured guests. These tails of the Tartar sheep are of immense size, weighing, with the fat that surrounds them, from six to eight pounds. Great was our embarrassment at the distinction shown us, in the presentation of this mass of white fat, which seemed to tremble and palpitate under our fingers. The rest of the guests were already despatching with marvellous celerity their portions of the mutton — of course without plate or fork, but each with the large piece of fat meat on his knees, working away at it with his knife, and wiping on the front of his waistcoat the fat that dripped down his fingers. We consulted each other in our native language as to what we should do with the dreadful dainty before us. It would have been quite contrary to Tartar etiquette to speak frankly to our host, and explain our repugnance to it, and it seemed imprudent to attempt to put it back by stealth. We determined therefore to cut the unlucky tail into small slices, and offer them round to the company, begging them to share with us this rare and delicious morsel. We did so, but it was not without difficulty we overcame the polite scruples and self-denying refusals with which our hypocritical courtesy was met. After the Homeric repast was concluded, and

there only remained in the middle of the tent a monstrous heap of well-polished mutton bones, a boy took down a sort of violin with three strings, that hung on a goat's horn, and presented it to the head of the family. He passed it to a young man who hung down his head modestly, but whose eyes became animated as soon as his fingers touched the instrument. "Nobles and holy travellers," said the old man, "I have invited a *Toolholos* (minstrel) to embellish the evening with some tales,"—and as he was speaking the *Toolholos* was preluding on the cords, and soon commenced in a powerful and impassioned voice a long poetical recitation on subjects of national and dramatic interest, to which the Tartars listened with eager attention, but which we were too ignorant of Tartar history thoroughly to enter into. Afterwards, at the invitation of our host, he began an invocation to Timour, which is a celebrated favourite among Tartar songs. There were many stanzas, but the burden was always —

"O divine Timour, will thy great soul be soon born again? Come back! Come back! We await thee, O Timour!"

The Tartar troubadour retired after having been refreshed with Mongol wine; and the host, seeing that we had listened with interest, summoned an amateur performer, one of the family, to take his place, saying that he knew how to make the instrument speak, though he was no Toolholos, and encouraging his modesty by reminding him that he would not always have "Lamas of the West" to listen to him.

But modest as he was, the terrible virtuoso, when he had once began, could not be induced to stop, and after listening to his bawling till a late hour, we rose when we could bear it no longer, taking advantage of a moment when he stopped to swallow a bowl of tea, and had just coughed preparatory to a re-commencement of his performance; and saluting the company, and offering the head of the family the customary quantity of tobacco, we gladly made our escape.

You often meet in Tartary with these wandering minstrels, called Toolholos, who go from tent to tent with a violin and a flute suspended to their girdle, and are received in the Mongol families with affability and distinction. They remain often for several days, and at their departure are always presented with tea, cheese, bladders of wine, and other provisions. These poet-singers are also numerous in China, but nowhere perhaps so popular as

in Thibet. They reminded us of the minstrels and rhapsodists of Greece.

On the day following the fête the sun had scarcely risen, when a young child appeared at the entrance of our tent, carrying a small wooden vessel filled with milk, and having suspended on his arm a basket of reeds containing some new cheese, and a slice of butter. Soon afterwards came an old Lama, followed by a Tartar, with a sack of argols on his shoulders. We invited them to sit down in our tent, and the old Lama said — "Brothers of the West, deign to accept these little offerings which our master sends you."

We signified our thanks, and Samdadchiemba made haste to get tea ready, but when we pressed the Lama to wait for it he said — "I will come back this evening, but I cannot at this moment accept your offer. I have not yet marked for my pupil the prayer which he is to study during the day," and as he spoke he pointed to the young child who had brought the milk, and taking his pupil by the hand, he returned to his habitation. This old Lama was the preceptor of the family, and it was his business to direct the child in the study of the Thibetan prayers. The education of the Tartars is very limited. Those only who shave their heads, learn to read and to pray, and with the exception of the rich who let their children study at home, all the young Lamas have to go into the convents, where alone any vestige of learning or science is to be found. The Lama is not only the priest, he is the physician, architect, sculptor, painter, — he is the head, the heart, and the oracle of the laity.

The young Mongol who does not enter into a convent is taught from his infancy the use of the bow and arrow, the gun, and especially the horse, on which he is placed almost as soon as he is weaned. He is first set on a crupper behind the person who is to teach him, to whose robe he clings with both hands; but he soon becomes accustomed to the movement of the animal, and at last almost identifies himself with his steed.

There is scarcely a prettier sight than that of a Mongol pursuing an unbroken horse. Armed with a long heavy pole, at the end of which is a cord with a running knot, they throw themselves on the traces of the wild horse, dash down into rugged ravines, or along the declivities of mountains, and follow every turn till they come up with the chase; then they take the bridle in their teeth,

seize the pole with both hands, and, leaning forward, dexterously fling the cord over its neck. It will often happen that the cord or the pole will break, but I have never seen the cavalier dismounted. A Mongol seems out of his element when he sets his foot on the ground; his step is heavy; the bowed shape of his legs—his bust always stooping forward—his eyes moving incessantly about,—all announce a man who passes the greater part of his life on a horse or on a camel.

When the Tartars travel during the night, it often happens that they do not give themselves the trouble to dismount in order to sleep; and you may see a caravan stop when it has reached a fat pasture, and the camels disperse themselves this way and that, and begin to graze, while the Tartars, astride between their humps, are sleeping as soundly as if they were in their beds.

This incessant activity contributes much to render the Tartar vigorous, and capable of enduring the utmost cold without being in the least inconvenienced.

In the deserts of Tartary, and especially in the country of Khalkas, the cold is so terrible, that during a great part of the winter the mercury freezes in the thermometer; and often when the earth is covered with snow, and the north-west wind begins to blow, it drives the avalanches before it, till the whole plain looks like a great white stormy ocean. The Tartars then fly to the help of their flocks and herds. You see them bounding from side to side, exciting the animals by their cries, and leading them to the shelter of some mountain, or standing motionless in the midst of the tempest, as if defying the fury of the elements and braving the cold. Even the Tartar women will sometimes mount a horse, and gallop after a stray animal, when there is no one else to do it; but in general they confine themselves to the cares of their housekeeping and their needle, with which they are very skilful. The clothes, hats, boots, worn by the Mongols are all made by them, and the latter especially, though not very elegant in form, are of astonishing solidity. It is difficult to understand how, with tools so coarse, they can produce articles that are almost indestructible, though it is true that they take plenty of time to their work. They excel also in embroidery, and exhibit in this a skill, taste, and variety that is really admirable. It is very doubtful whether it would be possible to find, even in France,

embroideries as beautiful and perfect as those sometimes executed by Tartar women.

On the 17th of the month we went early in the morning to Chaborté to buy flour. It is a Chinese station, and, as its name imports, a damp and marshy place. The houses are built of mud, and stand in enclosures of low walls. The streets are irregular, crooked, and narrow, and the whole town has a gloomy and sinister aspect, partly perhaps because the Chinese who inhabit it have a more knavish appearance than anywhere else. All the articles of commerce which are commonly in use amongst the Mongols,—oatmeal, millet, cotton cloth, brick tea, &c., may be bought here; and hither the Tartars of the desert bring its products, namely furs, salt, and champignons.

As soon as ever we returned, we began our preparations for departure; and while we were in the interior of the tent, putting our things in order, Samdadchiemba went in search of the animals that were grazing in the environs. A minute after he returned, leading the three camels, and crying out, in a dismal voice, "Here are the camels, but where are the horse and the mule? They were here but just now, for I tied their feet to hinder them from running away: they must have been stolen. It is never right to encamp near Chinese. Don't every one know that the Chinese in Tartary are all horse-stealers?"

These words came like a clap of thunder on us, but it was not the moment to give ourselves up to lamentation; it was necessary to go immediately in search of the thieves. We threw ourselves each upon a camel, and rushed off in opposite directions, leaving Arsalan to take care of the tent. All our searching, however, proved vain; and then we had nothing to do but to go to the Mongol tents, and declare that our horses had been lost near their habitation.

According to Tartar law, when the animals of caravans go astray, whoever is in the neighbourhood is bound to go in search of them, and even to give others in their place, if they cannot be found. This would appear a very strange law in Europe. You come and encamp in the neighbourhood of a Mongol without his consent, without his knowledge; yet for your cattle, your baggage, your men, he is responsible: if anything disappears, the law supposes him to be the thief, or at least the accomplice.

As soon as we had made our declaration to our Mongol neigh-

bours, the chief said, "My Lord Lamas, do not allow grief to enter your hearts! your animals cannot be lost. Here are neither roads nor thieves, nor associates of thieves. We will search for your horses, and if they are not found, you shall choose at pleasure among all our herds. We wish you to leave us in peace as you have come."

While he was speaking, eight Tartars mounted their horses, and, taking the long pole and cord before mentioned, they commenced their search. At first they dispersed in all directions, performing various evolutions, and often returning on their steps. At length they all united in a squadron, and set off at a gallop in the direction by which we had come.

"They are on their track," said the Mongol chief, who, as well as ourselves, had been watching them. "My Lord Lamas, come and seat yourselves in my tent, and we will drink a cup of tea while we await the return of your horses."

In about two hours' time a child came in and informed us that the horsemen were returning; and, going out, we saw a cloud of dust advancing, and were soon able to distinguish the eight mounted Tartars, and our two lost animals drawn along by the halter, all coming on at full gallop.

As soon as the Tartars came up, they said, with the air of satisfaction that succeeds a great uneasiness, that in their country nothing was ever lost. We thanked the generous Mongols for the signal service they had rendered us; and after taking leave of them we finished our packing up, and set off for the *Blue Town*, the route to which we had quitted to come and furnish ourselves with provisions at Chaborté.

We had gone nearly three days' march when we came to an imposing and majestic antiquity. It was a great forsaken city, with battlemented ramparts, watch-towers, four great gates directed to the four cardinal points, all in perfect preservation, but all sunk three parts into the earth, and covered with thick turf. Since the abandonment of the place, the soil around it has risen to that extent.

We entered the city with solemn emotion: there were no ruins to be seen, but only the form of a large and fine town, half buried and enveloped in grass as in a funeral shroud. The inequalities of the ground seem still to point out the direction of the streets and the principal buildings; but the only human being we saw was a young Mongol shepherd, who, seated on a mound, was silently

smoking his pipe, while his goats grazed on the deserted ramparts around him.

Similar remains of cities are not unfrequently met with in the deserts of Mongolia, but their history is buried in oblivion. Probably, however, they do not date beyond the thirteenth century; for it is known that at this epoch the Mongols had made themselves masters of the Chinese empire, and, according to the Chinese historians, numerous and flourishing towns existed at that time in Northern Tartary. The Tartars could give no information concerning this interesting ruin, but merely say that they call it the Old Town.

Shortly after leaving it we crossed a great road running from south to north. This is the route ordinarily followed by the Russian embassies to Pekin, and, after having traversed the countries of Tchakar and Western Souniout, it enters that of Khalkas, by the kingdom of Mourguevan; thence it extends into the great Desert of Gobi from south to north, crosses the river Toula, and at length terminates in the Russian factories of Kiakta, a town which marks the frontiers of the two empires.

It is divided into two parts; to the north are the Russian factories, to the south the Tartaro-Chinese station; and the intermediate space belongs, properly speaking, to neither power, but is reserved for commercial affairs. The Russians are not allowed to pass to the Tartar terrritory, nor the subjects of the Emperor of China to that of Russia. The trade carried on at this place is very considerable, and appears to be advantageous to both nations.

The Russians export cloth, velvet, soap, and various articles of hardware. They receive in exchange brick tea, of which they make a great consumption, and their cloths are sold in China at a lower price than they fetch in the markets of Europe. It is for want of being well acquainted with the commerce of Russia with China, that certain speculators have sometimes not been able to find at Canton a favourable opening for their goods.

Since 1728 the Russians have been permitted to keep in the capital of the celestial empire a convent and a school, where are educated the interpreters of the Chinese and Tartar-Mantchoo. Every ten years the persons who compose these establishments are changed, and new monks and students are sent from St. Petersburg.

The caravan is conducted by a Russian officer, charged to escort

them to Pekin, and to bring back the former residents; but from Kiakta to Pekin the Russians travel at the expense of the Chinese government, and are escorted from post to post by Tartar troops.

The route to Kiakta, as we crossed it thus in the deserts of Tartary, excited in us a profound emotion. It was the road to Europe, to our country. Involuntarily we drew nearer together; we felt a longing to converse about France; and the subject had so many charms for us, that we took little heed of our road. But the sight of some Mongol tents pitched on a hill recalled our thoughts to our nomadic life. We heard a great cry, and perceived at a distance a Tartar gesticulating vehemently. Presently he leaped upon a horse which stood ready saddled before his tent, and galloped towards us. As soon as he had come up with us, he alighted, and, kneeling down, cried out, raising his hands to Heaven, "My Lord Lamas, have pity on me! come and cure my mother, who is dying: I know that your power is infinite; come and save my mother by your prayers!"

The parable of the good Samaritan recurred to our memory, and we turned back to pitch our tent by the side of the Tartar's. While Samdadchiemba was arranging the tent, we went to visit the sick woman. Her state seemed almost desperate.

"People of the desert," we said to the persons who surrounded us, "we have no skill in simples; we know not how to count upon the arteries the movements of life; but we will pray to Jehovah for this sick woman. You have never yet heard of the Almighty God; your Lamas do not know Him; but trust in Him. Jehovah is the master of life and death."

The circumstances did not permit us to make a long address to these poor people, whose grief for their sick relative permitted only a feeble attention to our words. We returned to our tent to offer up our prayers, accompanied by the chief of the family. As soon as he perceived our Breviary, "Are these," he asked, "the all-powerful prayers of which you spoke?" "Yes," we replied, "the only true prayers; the only prayers that can save." He then prostrated himself separately to each of us, and took up the Breviary, which he carried to his head in token of respect. While we recited the prayers, the Tartar remained crouched at the door of the tent, observing a profound and religious silence. When we had finished, he prostrated himself again.

"Holy personages," said he, "how shall I acknowledge the immense benefit you have accorded me? I am poor; I can offer you neither a horse or a sheep."

"Mongol brother," we answered, "keep thy heart in peace: the priests of Jehovah ought not to recite prayers to obtain riches. Since thou art not rich, accept from us this slight offering;" and we gave him a piece of brick tea. The Tartar seemed much moved by this proceeding. He said nothing; but tears of gratitude were his reply.

The next day we learned with pleasure that the condition of the sick woman was ameliorated. We would willingly have remained some days in this place, to cultivate the germ of faith deposited in the bosom of this family; but we were obliged to pursue our journey.

We have already said that the art of medicine is practised exclusively by the Lamas. As, according to the opinion of the Tartars, it is always a *Tchutgour*, or devil, whose presence is tormenting the sick person, it follows that he can be cured only by the expulsion of the fiend. Before proceeding to effect this by prayers, a certain amount of medical treatment is entered upon. The pharmacopœia of the Lamas, who are at the same time apothecaries, consists exclusively of pulverised vegetables, administered either as infusions, or rolled into pills. If the little magazine of vegetable medicine be exhausted, the Lama doctor is not at fault. He writes the name of the remedies upon morsels of paper, and rolls them between his fingers, having previously moistened them with his saliva: and the patient takes the paper pellets with the same faith as he swallows the veritable drugs. According to the Tartars, it is precisely the same, whether you swallow a drug or its written appellation.

If the patient be poor, evidently the devil is a little one, and may be dislodged by a very few prayers, or a simple exorcism; but if he be rich, the case is different: then the evil spirit in possession is a devil of condition; and as it is not decent that a *Tchutgour* of quality should be ejected with no more cost than a small devilkin, fine clothes, a handsome pair of boots, and especially a spirited young horse, must be prepared, or he will not turn out. It may even happen that one horse will not do: he may be a devil of such high degree as to have a number of attendants or courtiers in his train; in which case the number of horses exacted by the Lamas

is quite unlimited: that always depends on the greater or less wealth of the patient.

The prayers recited on these occasions are sometimes accompanied by rites of a terrifying and lugubrious character.

Having charge, formerly, of the mission of the "Valley of Black Waters," I had occasion to make acquaintance with a Mongol family, which I visited from time to time in order to familiarise myself with the Mongol usages and language. The old aunt of the noble *Tokourà*, the chief of the family, was one day attacked by intermittent fever.

"I would send for the Lama doctor," said he; "but what will become of me if he say there is a Tchutgour. The expenses will ruin me."

The Lama was summoned, however; and Tokourà's previsions were not mistaken. The Lama announced that the devil was there; and in the evening he began operations for his expulsion, assisted by eight of his brethren. They made a manikin of dried herbs, which they called the devil of intermittent fevers, and stuck it upright in the tent of the sick woman. The ceremony began at eleven o'clock at night. The Lamas ranged themselves at the back of the tent, armed with bells, tambourines, conch shells, and other noisy instruments. The Tartars of the family, to the number of nine, closed the circle in front, crouched on the ground; the old woman was seated on her heels, in front of the manikin. The doctor had before him a large copper basin, filled with grains of millet and little images made of paste. Some sods of burning argol threw a lurid and fantastic light on this strange scene.

At a given signal, the orchestra performed an overture capable of frightening the most intrepid devil; the secular assistants beating time with their hands to the charivari of the instruments and the howling of the prayers. When this infernal music was over, the chief Lama opened his book of exorcisms, scattering the millet seeds around as he proceeded. Sometimes he spoke in a stifled hollow voice, sometimes raised his voice to a loud pitch, and, abandoning the rhythmical measure of the prayers, appeared to throw himself into a violent passion, and addressed warm and animated appeals, with much gesticulation, to the manikin.

After this terrible exorcism, he gave a signal,—the Lamas thundered out a noisy chorus in rapid measure; the instruments were all in full play, and the members of the family rushed out in file,

and made the circuit of the tent, striking it violently with stakes, and uttering cries to make one's hair stand on end. They then rushed in again, and resumed their places, hiding their faces with their hands. The grand Lama then rose, and set fire to the manikin; as the flame rose he uttered a loud cry, which was repeated by all the assistants. The "black men" then seized on the burning devil, and ran to carry it to a distance from the tent; and, while he was consuming, the Lamas remained within, chanting their prayers in a grave and solemn tone.

The family having returned from their courageous expedition, the chanting gave place to joyous exclamations, interrupted by great bursts of laughter. Soon after the whole party issued tumultuously from the tent, every one holding in his hand a kindled torch. The "black men" went first; then came the old woman, supported on each side by two members of her family; the Lamas followed, making night hideous with their horrible music. The patient was taken to a neighbouring tent; the Lama physician having decided that a whole month must elapse before she returned to her old habitation.

Although the greater part of the Lamas cherish the credulity of the Tartars for their own profit, we have met with some who frankly acknowledged that imposture played a large part in their ceremonies. A superior of a Lama convent said to us one day — "When a man is ill it is proper to recite prayers, for Buddha is master of life and death; to take remedies is right also, for the virtue of medicinal herbs is his gift; it is credible also that the Tchutgour may enter into a sick man; but that to induce him to go, we must give him fine clothes and horses is an invention of ignorant and dishonest Lamas, who wish to amass wealth at the expense of their brethren."

The manner of interring the dead among the Tartars is not uniform. In the neighbourhood of the Great Wall, and every where that the Mongols are mingled with the Chinese, the customs of the latter have insensibly prevailed. In the desert, among the veritably nomadic tribes, the whole funeral ceremony consists in carrying the corpse to the summit of a mountain, or to the bottom of a ravine.

The rich Tartars sometimes burn their dead with much solemnity. The body is walled up in a sort of kiln of a pyramidal form, with a small door at the bottom, and an opening at the top

to allow the smoke to escape, and maintain a current of air. During the combustion, the Lamas recite prayers around the monument. When the corpse is consumed, the kiln is demolished, the bones collected, and carried to the Grand Lama, who reduces them to a very fine powder, and, after adding an equal quantity of wheaten flour, kneads the whole carefully, and, with his own hands, fashions a number of cakes of various sizes, which he piles up in a pyramid. The bones thus prepared are afterwards carried with great pomp to a small tower built beforehand in a place indicated by the soothsayer.

The ashes of the Lamas are generally deposited in sepulchres of this kind; many of these little monumental towers may still be seen in the countries whence the Mongols have been chased by the Chinese. The convents, the shepherds, with their tents and flocks, have disappeared; but these towers yet remain to attest the right of the ancient possessors of the land.

The most renowned site of these Mongol sepulchres is in the province of Chan-Si, by the famous Lama convent of the Five Towers (*Ou-Tay*): the ground is said to be so holy, that those who are interred there are sure to effect an excellent transmigration. This marvellous sanctity is attributed to the presence of the old Buddha, who has had his abode there, within the centre of a mountain, for some ages. In 1842 Tokourà, of whom we have already spoken, transported thither the bones of his father and mother, and had, according to his own account, the happiness of viewing Buddha face to face, through a hole not larger than the mouth of a pipe. He is seated in the heart of the mountain cross-legged, and doing nothing, surrounded by Lamas of all countries engaged in continual prostrations.

In the deserts of Tartary, Mongols are frequently met with carrying on their shoulders the bones of their kindred, and journeying in caravans to the Five Towers, there to purchase, almost at its weight in gold, a few feet of earth whereon to erect a mausoleum. Some of them undertake a journey of a whole year's duration, and of excessive hardship, to reach this holy spot.

The Tartar sovereigns are sometimes interred in a manner which appears the very height of extravagance and barbarism: the royal corpse is placed in an edifice of brick, adorned with stone images of men, lions, tigers, elephants, and divers subjects from the Buddhist mythology. With the illustrious defunct they inter,

in a large vault in the centre of the building, considerable sums in gold and silver, precious stones, and costly habits.

These monstrous interments frequently cost also the lives of a number of slaves : children of both sexes distinguished for their beauty are taken, and compelled to swallow mercury till they are suffocated ; by this means, it is asserted, the colour and freshness of the victims is preserved so well that they appear alive. They are then ranged standing round the corpse of their master to serve him as in life. They hold in their hands the pipe, fan, the little vial of snuff, and the other numerous baubles of Tartar royalty.

To guard these buried treasures there is placed in the vault a kind of bow, constructed to discharge a number of arrows one after the other. This bow, or rather these bows, are bound together, and the arrows fixed. This species of infernal machine is so placed that the act of opening the door of the vault discharges the first arrow, the discharge of the first releases the second, and so on to the last. The bow makers keep these murderous machines all ready prepared, and the Chinese sometimes purchase them to guard their houses in their absence.

After two days' march we entered the kingdom of Efe, a portion of the territory of the Eight Banners, which the Emperor Kien-Long dismembered in favour of a prince of the Khalkas to whom he had given his daughter in marriage, and who, in the splendid slavery of the Chinese court, sighed for his flocks and tents, and the freedom of his native deserts. On the other hand, his young wife, accustomed to the soft luxury of Pekin, could not support the idea of passing her life in the desert, and in the company of herdsmen. To reconcile the desires of his son-in-law and the repugnance of his daughter, he bestowed on the Mongol prince a portion of Tchakar, built there a magnificent town, and gave the princess a hundred families of workmen, skilled in the arts and industry of China. In this manner the princess retained her court, and the Mongol prince could enjoy peace in the midst of the land of grass, and all the pleasure of a nomadic life.

The king of Efe brought with him into his little kingdom a number of Mongol Khalkas, who dwell in tents in the country bestowed on their prince. These people are esteemed the most formidable wrestlers of Southern Tartary; but although much superior in strength to the Chinese, these Khalkas are sometimes

overcome by their rivals, who are more agile, and above all more cunning.

In the grand wrestling matches of the year 1843, an athlete of Efe had disabled every opponent who presented himself, Tartar or Chinese. No one had been able to withstand his herculean size and vast strength; the prize was about to be adjudged to him, when a Chinese presented himself in the arena. He was little, meagre, and seemed fit for nothing but to increase the number of the defeated wrestlers. He advanced, however, with a firm and intrepid air, and the Goliath of Efe was already preparing to gripe him in his vigorous arms, when the Chinese, who had filled his mouth with water, suddenly discharged it full in his adversary's face. The first movement of the Tartar was naturally to carry his hand to his eyes, when the cunning Chinese seized him suddenly by the middle, and brought him to the ground amid shouts of laughter from the spectators.

Wrestling is the favourite exercise of all the children of the country of Efe; where to be a good horseman and a good wrestler is the object of the highest ambition.

We encountered on our road a group of children exercising themselves in this manner. The biggest of the troop, who did not appear to be more than eight or nine years of age, took up in his arms one of his companions nearly of the same size as himself, and very plump, and this child he tossed above his head, and caught him again as he would a ball: this *tour de force* he repeated seven or eight times running; and whilst we were trembling for the life and limbs of the child, the others capered and applauded his dexterity by their shouts.

On leaving the little kingdom of Efe, we ascended a mountain on whose flanks grew some thickets of firs and birch trees. The sight gave us extreme pleasure; the deserts of Tartary are generally so bare and monotonous, that the sight of a tree from time to time is an unspeakable relief. This feeling of joy was however quickly succeeded by a different emotion, when a turn of the road brought us full in view of three enormous wolves, who seemed to await our approach with great intrepidity. At the sight of these horrible brutes we instinctively made a dead halt. After the first moment of general stupefaction, Samdadchiemba alighted from his mule, and running to our camels, tweaked their noses with violence: the expedient succeeded admirably; our poor animals uttered cries

so piercing and frightful, that the wolves simultaneously took to flight. Arsalan seeing them run, thought no doubt that it was of him they were afraid, and immediately gave chase: the wolves faced about, and the guardian of our tent would infallibly have been torn to pieces, if M. Gabet had not come to his aid by shouting and tweaking the nose of his camel.

We had not long lost sight of our wolves than we encountered two carts drawn by three oxen each, travelling on the same road as ourselves, but in an opposite direction. To each cart were attached, by heavy iron chains, twelve dogs of fierce and terrific appearance, four on either side, and four behind; the carts were laden with square cases varnished in red, on which the drivers were mounted. We could not conjecture what could be the nature of their charge, to render so formidable an escort necessary; and to question them would not, according to the usages of the country, have been prudent. We contented ourselves, therefore, with asking if we were far from the Lama convent of Chortchi, which we hoped to reach that day; but the barking of the dogs, and the noise of their chains, prevented us from catching their reply. In traversing the bottom of a valley, we observed, on the crest of a hill before us, a long file of objects of indeterminate form. Very soon they appeared to us to resemble formidable batteries of cannon. We fancied we saw distinctly the carriages, the drags, and even the mouths of the cannon pointed directly upon the plain. But what could an army be doing there in the middle of this profound solitude, and an army with a train of artillery. While indulging in a thousand extravagant conjectures, we hurried our march, impatient to examine more nearly this strange apparition. Our illusion was not completely dissipated till we reached the top of the hill, when we discovered that our battery of cannon was a long train of little Mongol carts: we laughed heartily at our mistake, which, however, was not very surprising. Each of these little two-wheeled carts was resting on its shafts; each was laden with a bag of salt enveloped in a mat, the edges of which, projecting beyond the sack, bore no small resemblance to the mouth of a cannon. The Mongol drivers were boiling their tea in the open air, while their oxen were grazing on the other side of the hill.

In default of camels, merchandise is generally transported through the deserts of Tartary by means of these little two-wheeled carts. A few spars of rough timber are all the materials

employed in their construction; and they are so light, that a child can raise them with ease. The oxen which draw them have a small ring of iron passed through their nostrils, to which a cord is attached that links the ox to the cart which precedes him; thus all the carts are held together, and form an uninterrupted file. The drivers bestride the oxen; they are rarely seen in the cart, and never on foot. The road from Pekin to Kiakta, all the roads which end at Tolon-Noor, Kou-Kou-Kote, or at Great *Kouren*, are constantly covered with these trains of carts; and long before they are seen, their approach is announced by the doleful and monotonous sound of the large iron bells suspended to the necks of their oxen.

After taking a bowl of tea with milk with these Mongols, we continued our route, and at sunset pitched our tent on the borders of a brook, about a hundred paces from the convent of Chortchi.

CHAP. IV.

Young Lama converted to Christianity.—Convent of Chortchi.—Collection for the Construction of religious Edifices.—Aspect of Buddhist Temples.—Journey of Guison—Tamba to Pekin.—The Kouren of the Thousand Lamas.—Lawsuit between the Lama King and his Ministers.—Purchase of a Kid.—Eagles of Tartary.—Western Tounet.—Agricultural Tartars.—Arrival at Blue Town.

ALTHOUGH we had not yet visited the convent of Chortchi, we were nevertheless pretty well acquainted with it from the directions that had been given us. The young Lama who had instructed M. Gabet in the Mongol language, and whose conversion to Christianity had given such great hopes for the propagation of the Gospel among the Tartar nations, had been brought up there. He was twenty-five years old when he left the convent in 1837, and he had spent there fourteen years in the study of the Lamanesque books, and was extremely well versed in the Mongol and Mantchoo literature. His master, an old Lama of great learning, and highly respected, had founded great expectations on this disciple; it was therefore, with great reluctance that he consented to separate from him for a time, and only granted him a month's leave of absence. On taking leave, the disciple prostrated himself according to custom at the feet of his master, and begged him to consult on his behalf the book of oracles.

After having read some pages of a Thibetian book, the old Lama thus addressed him:—"During fourteen years thou hast remained at the side of thy master as a faithful disciple, Chobi; to-day, for the first time, thou leavest me. If thy absence is prolonged beyond one moon, thy destiny condemns thee never again to set foot within our holy convent."

The young disciple went, fully resolved punctually to obey the instructions of his master.

As soon as he had arrived at our mission of Si-Wan, M. Gabet took for the subject of his Mongol studies an historical summary of the Christian religion. The conferences, oral and written, lasted nearly a month; and then the young Lama, subdued by the force of truth, publicly abjured Buddhism, received the name of Paul, and, after a fervent catechumenate, was baptized. The prediction of the old Lama was completely fulfilled; for since his conversion, Paul had never set foot in the convent. The convent of Chortchi is inhabited by about 2000 Lamas; it is said to be the favourite convent of the emperor, who has loaded it with gifts and privileges. The Lamas in residence receive a pension from the court of Pekin; and even those who absent themselves, if for reasons approved by their superiors, have their share of provisions and money faithfully reserved for them. To the imperial bounty may be attributed the air of opulence that pervades the convent of Chortchi. The houses are neat, and even elegant; Lamas clothed in dirty or ragged garments are never seen there as elsewhere; and the favour in which the study of the Mantchoo language is held there, is an incontestable proof of devotion to the reigning dynasty.

With some rare exceptions, however, the imperial largesses have little to do with the construction of the Lama convents. These grand and sumptuous monuments, so frequently met with in the desert, are due to the spontaneous zeal of the Mongols. Simple and economical in their dress and manner of living, these people are generous, even to prodigality, whenever any expense for religious purposes is in question. Whenever the building of a Buddhist convent, with its attendant conventual erections, is resolved on, the Lama collectors immediately set out, furnished with passports attesting the validity of their mission. They divide the kingdoms of Tartary into districts, and go from tent to tent, demanding alms in the aid of Old Buddha. They have but to announce their object and produce the *badir* (sacred basin) in which

the offerings are deposited, to be received with joy and enthusiasm. None are excused from giving: the rich bestow ingots of gold and silver; those who do not possess any of the precious metals, offer oxen, horses, or camels; the poorer give lumps of butter, skins, and cordage woven from camel and horse-hair. In this manner immense sums are collected; and in these deserts, so poor in appearance, edifices are reared, as if by enchantment, whose grandeur and opulence would defy the resources of the wealthiest potentates. It was, without doubt, in this manner, by the zealous concurrence of the faithful, that those magnificent cathedrals of Europe were reared, of which the gigantic labour so shames the selfishness and indifference of modern times.

The Lama buildings of Tartary, are almost all constructed of bricks or stone; only the very poorest build their habitations of clay; but they are always so well white-washed, that they form no disagreeable contrast with the rest. The temples are very solidly and even elegantly built, but they have a crushed look; they are much too low for their extent. In the environs of the convent, tall, slender towers and pyramids, generally resting on large bases little in harmony with the meagreness of the edifices they support, are met with in profusion. It would be difficult to say to what order of architecture the Buddhist temples can belong. It is a strange system of monstrous canopies, peristyles, twisted columns, and interminable flights of steps. Opposite the grand entrance is a species of altar of wood or stone, generally in the form of an inverted cone; on this the idols are enthroned, generally seated and cross-legged. These idols are of colossal stature, with fine and regular features, the immeasurable length of the ears excepted. They belong to the Caucasian type, and have nothing of the monstrous and diabolical physiognomy of the Chinese Pou-Ssa.

In front of the chief idol, and on a level with the altar, is a gilded seat for the living Fo, the Grand Lama of the convent. The whole space of the temple is occupied by long tables almost level with the ground, a kind of divans placed right and left of the Grand Lama's seat, and stretching from one end to the other. These divans are covered with carpets, and between each row a vacant space is left for the Lamas to pass and re-pass. When the hour of prayer is come, a Lama, whose office it is to summon to the choir, places himself in front of the grand entrance of the temple, and blows with all the force of his lungs in a conch shell, looking

by turns towards the four cardinal points. The sonorous summons of this instrument, which may be easily heard at a league's distance, warns the Lamas that the rule calls them to their devotions, and each takes his mantle and hat of ceremony, and repairs to the interior court.

When the conch sounds for the third time, the grand door is thrown open, and the living Fo makes his entry. After he is seated on the altar, all the Lamas deposit their red boots in the vestibule, and advance barefoot and in silence. As they enter, they adore the living Fo by three prostrations; they then place themselves on the divans according to their dignity, cross-legged and face to face.

As soon as the master of the ceremonies has given the signal, by tinkling a little bell, every one murmurs the prayers marked by the rubric, unrolling the formulary on his knees. After this recitation, a minute of profound silence follows. The bell is again agitated, and then begins a psalmody in two choruses to a grave and melodius strain. The Thibetian prayers, ordinarily arranged in verses, and written in metrical style, are admirably adapted to harmony; but sometimes, at certain pauses indicated by the rubric, the Lama musicians execute a kind of music little in concord with the melodious gravity of the psalmody. It is a stunning noise of bells, cymbals, tambourines, conch shells, trumpets, whistles, &c. Each musician strikes his instrument with a sort of fury, and each strives to outdo his neighbour in the noise and disorder he can produce.

The interior of the temple is encumbered with ornaments, statuettes, and pictures, having relation to the life of Buddha, and the various transmigrations of the most famous Lamas. Vases of copper, brilliant as gold, of the size and shape of tea-cups, are placed in great numbers on the steps before the idols. In these vases, perpetual offerings of milk, butter, Mongol wine, and millet are made. On the extremities of each step perfumery pans are placed, in which aromatic plants, gathered on the sacred mountains of Thibet, are incessantly burning. Rich silk stuffs, loaded with tinsel and gold embroidery, are formed into pavilions, whence are suspended pennons and paper lanterns of horn or painted paper.

The Lamas are the only artists laid under contribution for the decoration of the temples. Pictures are to be seen on all sides; but they are almost always executed in a taste and on principles not admitted in Europe. The extravagant and grotesque are predomi-

nant; and the personages, with the exception of Buddha, have often a monstrous and satanic aspect. The clothes seem never to have been made for the figures muffled in them. One would say that the limbs hidden under those draperies are all broken and dislocated.

Among these Lamanesque paintings, we sometimes, however, meet with pieces not destitute of beauty. One day, when we were visiting, in the kingdom of Gechekten, the great convent called Altan-Somné (Temple of Gold), we remarked a picture that struck us with astonishment. It was a large canvas, in the centre of which Buddha was represented seated on a rich carpet. Around this figure of the natural size was arranged, like a glory, a series of portraits in miniature, pourtraying allegorically the thousand virtues of Buddha. We could not sufficiently admire this picture, not only for the purity and grace of the design, but also for the expression of the figures and richness of colouring. One would have thought the persons were alive.

We asked an old Lama who accompanied us for some explanation of this admirable piece of painting.

"This picture," said he, carrying his joined hands to his forehead, "this picture is a treasure of the highest antiquity: it contains all the doctrine of Buddha. It is not a Mongol painting; it comes from Thibet; and was done by a saint of the Clerical sanctuary."

Landscapes are in general better rendered than dramatic subjects. Flowers, birds, trees, mythological animals, are all imitated with exactness and in a pleasing manner, and the colours have astonishing freshness and vivacity. It is a pity that these landscape painters have so very slight a knowledge of perspective and chiaroscuro.

The Lamas are better sculptors than painters, and therefore sculpture is not spared in their temples: indeed it is sometimes lavished with a profusion which says more for the fertility of their chisel than the purity of their taste. Outside the temples there are lions, tigers, and elephants, crouched on blocks of granite. The vast stone balustrades bordering the flights of steps leading to the grand entrance are almost always carved and adorned with a thousand extravagancies in the shape of birds, reptiles, and fabulous animals. In the interior are only reliefs in wood or in stone, always executed with admirable truth and boldness.

The most famous of the Mongol Lama convents is that of Grand

Kouren on the borders of the river Toula. It is there that the great forest which extends to the north as far as the Russian frontier commences. Towards the east it is said to have an extent of two hundred leagues as far as the country of the Solons in Mantchouria. Before reaching the Grand Kouren, a whole month's journey across immense sterile plains resembling an ocean of sand had to be encountered. Nothing can be more melancholy than the aspect of the Desert of Cobi. Not a spring, not a brook, not a tree is there to break the terrible monotony. But on reaching the summit of the Kongour Mountains, which bound the states of Guison-Tamba to the west, the face of nature is completely changed. On every side you see picturesque valleys and amphitheatres of mountains crowned with forests ancient as the world. The bottom of a valley is the bed of the river Toula, which, after taking its rise in the mountain of Barka, has a long course from east to west, then, making a bend beyond Kouren, it enters Siberia, and is finally lost in Lake Baikal.

The convent lies on the north of the river on the vast flank of a mountain. The various temples inhabited by the Guison-Tamba and other Grand Lamas are distinguishable by their elevation and by the gilded tiles with which they are roofed; and in this great convent and its dependencies thirty thousand Lamas are lodged.

At the foot of the mountain the plain is constantly covered with tents of various sizes for the convenience of the pilgrims. Hither throng *pêle-mêle* the adorers of Buddha from countries the most remote. The U-Pi-Ta-Dze, or Fish-skin Tartars, there pitch their tents by the side of the Torgots descended from the summit of the "*Holy Mountain*" (Bokte-Oula); the Thibetans and Peboums of the Himalayas, travelling slowly with their immense processions of long-haired oxen, mingle with the Mantchoos from the banks of the Songari and the Amour, who arrive on sledges. There is a continual pitching or striking of tents; multitudes of pilgrims are coming and going on camels and oxen, in carriages, on sledges, on foot, and on horseback.

Viewed from a distance the white cells of the Lamas, built on horizontal lines one above the other, on the declivity of the mountain, resemble the steps of an enormous altar, of which the temple of Guison-Tamba would be the tabernacle. In the country he is the *Saint* par excellence, and there is not a Tartar Khalka who does not take a pride in calling himself his disciple. If you

meet an inhabitant of the Grand Kouren, and ask his country, he will reply, proudly, "I am a disciple of the Kouren Saint."

Half a league from the convent there is a grand station of commercial Chinese. Their wooden houses are always surrounded with palissades of stakes as a protection from robbers; for the pilgrims, notwithstanding their devotion, make no scruple of helping themselves to other people's property. A watch and some ingots of silver stolen during the night from M. Gabet's tent did not permit us to place unlimited faith in the probity of the "Saint's" disciples.

The commerce of Grand Kouren is very flourishing; Russian and Chinese goods abound; and payments are made in brick tea, whether the article sold be a horse, a house, or any other kind of commodity. Five bricks of tea represent an ounce of silver.

The court of Pekin maintains some Mandarins at the Grand Kouren, under pretext of keeping order among the Chinese residents, but in reality to watch the Guison-Tamba, whose power gives umbrage to the Emperor of China. The government of Pekin has not forgotten that the renowned Ghenghis Khan came of the tribe of the Khalkas, and that the memory of his conquests is not yet effaced from the minds of that warlike people.

In the year 1839 the Guison-Tamba descended to Pekin to pay a visit to the Emperor Tao-Kouan. As soon as his purpose became known terror seized on the court, and negotiators were employed to dissuade Guison-Tamba from the journey, but without effect: they only succeeded in obtaining an arrangement that his suite should not exceed three thousand Lamas, and that he should not be accompanied, as had been intended, by the three other Khalkas sovereigns.

As soon as the Guison-Tamba began his march, a movement was felt throughout all the tribes of Tartary. His passage was everywhere attended by multitudes. Each tribe brought its offering,—troops of horses, oxen and sheep, ingots of gold and silver and precious stones. Wells were dug at intervals along the whole course of the Desert of Cobi, and the kings of the different countries through which the train passed deposited, long beforehand, depôts of provisions in all the appointed halting places. The Lama king travelled in a yellow palanquin carried by four horses, which were led by four great dignitaries of the convent. The three thousand attendant Lamas preceded or followed the palanquin mounted on

horses or camels galloping in all directions. Wherever the palanquin appeared the multitude fell on their knees, and then prostrated themselves wholly with their joined hands raised above their heads.

The Guison-Tamba continued thus his pompous and triumphal march amid his worshippers as far as the Great Wall. There he ceased to be a god, and became only the sovereign of some nomadic tribes despised and mocked by the Chinese, but feared nevertheless at the court of Pekin, on account of the terrible influence they may exercise over the destinies of the empire. Only the half of the suite was permitted to pass the Wall: the rest were forced to encamp north of the Wall in the plains of Tchakar.

The Guison-Tamba remained at Pekin three months, seeing the Emperor from time to time, and receiving the somewhat suspicious adoration of the Mantchoo princes and dignitaries of the empire. At last he delivered the court of his importunate presence, and resumed the route to his states, which, however, he was never again to see; he died on the road, a victim, say the Mongols, to the barbarity of the Emperor, who caused a slow poison to be administered to him at Pekin. This event exasperated the Khalkas without much disconcerting them, as they are persuaded the Guison-Tamba never really dies. In 1844 they learned that their Buddha had become incarnate in Thibet; and while we were encamped in Kou-Kou-Nour on the borders of the Blue Sea, we saw pass the grand caravan of Khalkas going to invite this child of five years old to take up his abode at L'ha-Ssa. The Kouren of the thousand Lamas is also a celebrated Lama convent, which dates from the invasion of China by the Mantchoos. When we visited it, every thing was turned upside down in consequence of a law suit that was going on between the Lama king and his four ministers, called in the Mongol language Dchassak.

The latter had emancipated themselves so far as to marry, and build for themselves private houses without the precincts of the convent. The Grand Lama endeavoured to recal them to order, but the Dchassak had got together a multitude of charges against him, and presented them to Ton-Toun, a great Mantchoo Mandarin, who takes cognisance of Tartar affairs. The suit had already lasted two months when we were at the convent, which betrayed evident marks of the absence of its heads. Prayers and studies were suspended; the great entrance was wide open, and seemed to have remained so for some time; grass was growing in the courts

and on the walls; the doors of the temples were padlocked; but through the crevices of the folding doors we could see that the altars, the divans of the Lamas, the paintings and statues were all covered with thick dust: everything attested a long vacation of service. The Lamas had dispersed, and the very existence of the convent was beginning to be looked upon as threatened. We learned subsequently that, thanks to the outlay of an enormous sum of money, the suit had been determined in favour of the Lama king, and that the four *Dchassak* had been compelled to conform in all things to the orders of their sovereign.

After leaving Chortchi, as we entered the Red Banner, we met a Mongol hunter, carrying on his horse a magnificent kid, newly killed. We had been reduced for some time to our insipid oatmeal, seasoned only by some morsels of mutton fat; and the sight of the kid gave us a desire to vary our food a little: we felt, besides, that the stomach, weakened by daily privation, imperiously demanded more substantial nourishment. Saluting, then, the hunter, we asked the price of the kid.

"Reverend Lamas," said he, "when I snared my kids, I had no thoughts of traffic with them. The Chinese waggoners up there beyond Chortchi wanted to buy my game for four hundred *sapecks*, but I said no! — Reverend Lamas, I will not speak to you as I would to *Kitats*: here is my kid, take it for what you will."

We told Samdadchiemba to give the hunter five hundred *sapecks*, and, suspending the kid to the neck of a camel, continued our route.

This sum is about equivalent to fifty sous French, and is the ordinary price of a kid: a sheep is three times as dear. Venison is little esteemed by the Tartars, and still less by the Chinese. Black meat, they say, is not so good as white. However, in the great towns of China it is met with at the tables of the rich; but that is on account of its rarity. The Mantchoos, on the contrary, are great lovers of the produce of the chase, particularly of the flesh of bears, stag, and pheasant.

About noon we came upon a site of marvellous beauty. After passing through a narrow opening between two rocks, whose summits were lost in the clouds, we found ourselves in a vast enclosure, surrounded by high mountains, on which grew here and there some ancient pines. An abundant spring fed a small brook, bordered with angelica and wild mint. The stream, after making the

circle of the enclosure, escapes through an opening similar to that by which we had entered. As we were admiring the beauty of the spot, Samdadchiemba proposed that we should pitch our tent, and dress the kid, to which we readily assented.

Samdadchiemba had often boasted of his dexterity as a butcher, and was burning with impatience to display it. After having suspended the kid to the branch of a pine, he sharpened his knife on a nail of the tent, and, turning up his sleeves to the elbow, he asked if he should cut up the game in the Turkish, Chinese or Tartar fashion? Having no preference of one method over the other, we left him to do as he chose. In a minute, he had skinned and paunched the animal; he then detached the flesh all in one piece, without separating the limbs, leaving suspended to the tree nothing but a perfectly clean skeleton. This is the Turkish method, and is often practised on long journeys, to save the trouble of carrying the bones.

As soon as this operation was completed, Samdadchiemba cut off some slices of the venison, and began to fry them in stale mutton fat. This manner of preparing kid was not perhaps very conformable to the rules of culinary art, but it was the best of which circumstances permitted. Our regale was soon ready: we were seated in a triangle on the turf, having between us the cover of the saucepan, which served us for a dish, when on a sudden we heard a loud rushing in the air over our heads: and in a moment a large eagle made a rapid descent upon our supper, and carried off some slices in his talons. When we had recovered from our fright, we could not help laughing at the adventure,—that is to say, M. Gabet and myself; but Samdadchiemba was in a fury, not on account of the purloined kid, but because the eagle, as he rose, had given him a box on the ear with the end of his wing.

This accident rendered us more cautious in future. During our journey we had observed more than once eagles hovering over our heads, as if to spy our dinner hour; but our oatmeal did not tempt the royal bird.

The eagle is very frequently met with in the deserts of Tartary. They are never shot at, but make their nests, rear their young, and grow old, without encountering any persecution from man. When resting on the ground there are some which appear larger than an ordinary sized sheep; but before they can launch into the air they are obliged to make a long course, agitating their wings as they go;

after which, when they have once cleared the earth, they rise as high as they please in the aerial space.

After some days' march we quitted the country of the Eight Banners and entered Western Toumet.

The Mongol Tartars of Western Toumet are not nomadic: they cultivate the earth, and apply themselves to the arts of civilized life. We had been more than a month in the desert; our taste had been insensibly modified, and our temperament accommodated by its silence and solitude, and, on re-entering cultivated lands, the agitation, perplexity, and turmoil of civilisation oppressed and suffocated us; the air seemed to fail us, and we felt every moment as if about to die of asphyxia. The sensation, however, was of no long duration. After a time we found it more convenient and more agreeable after a day's march to take up our lodging at an inn, well warmed, and well stocked with provisions, than have a tent to pitch, fuel to collect, and our scanty supper to cook, before we could take a little rest.

The inhabitants of Western Toumet have completely lost the Mongol character, and are all, more or less, Chinese: indeed, there are even many who do not understand a word of the Mongol language. Not a few of them betray something like contempt for their brethren of the desert, and find it very ridiculous to lead a perpetually wandering life, and lodge in miserable tents, when it would be so easy to build houses, and enjoy the kindly fruits of the earth. It must be confessed they have some reason to prefer the life of the husbandman to that of the herdsman, for they inhabit magnificent plains, well watered, and admirably adapted to all kind of cereal produce. When we traversed this country, the harvest was already reaped; but, from the barns we saw on all sides filled with vast sheaves of corn, we could judge how rich and abundant it must have been.

Every thing throughout Toumet bears the stamp of great abundance: no where did we see, as in China, houses half in ruins, nor human beings with emaciated bodies half covered with rags: all the country-people seemed neatly and comfortably clothed, and in nothing was their superior condition more evident than in the number of magnificent trees surrounding the villages, and bordering the roads. The other Tartar countries cultivated by the Chinese have a very different appearance: trees there never grow old; for they are not even planted, as it is certain that they would

be torn up the next day by the poverty-stricken people to serve as fuel.

We had made three days' journey in the cultivated lands of Toumet, when we entered Kou-kou-Khoton (the Blue Town), called in Chinese Koui-Uoa-Tchen. There are two towns of the same name, at rather more than two miles distance from each other, distinguished as the military and the commercial town, to which we went on the day after our arrival. We felt painfully affected, in the bosom of a Mantchoo city, to hear the Chinese language constantly spoken. We could not realise to ourselves a people so apostate from its nationality; a conquering people, whom nothing distinguishes from the people conquered, unless it may be a little less industry and a little more vanity in the former than the latter.

When the Thibetan Lama promised to the Tartar chief the conquest of China, and predicted that he would soon be seated on the throne of Pekin, he would have prophesied more truly if he had said that the chief's entire nation, with its manners, its language, and its country, would be engulfed for ever in the Chinese empire. Let a single revolution overturn the present dynasty, and the Mantchoos would be completely absorbed by the Chinese. The very entrance into their own country would be prohibited to them, for it would be entirely occupied by the Chinese.

In a map of Mantchouria drawn up by the Jesuits, by order of the emperor Khang-Hi, Father Du Halde says that he has refrained from giving the Chinese names on the map for the following reason: "Of what use would it be to a traveller in Mantchouria to know, for example, that the river Sakhalien-Oula is called by the Chinese Hé Loung-Kiang, since it is not with them he will have to do; and the Tartars, with whom he will, have never perhaps heard the name?" This observation might be just in the time of Khang-Hi, but at the present time we must exactly reverse it. In traversing Mantchouria *now*, it is the Chinese whom we encounter; and it is always of the Hé Loung-Kiang we hear, and never of the Sakhalien-Oula.

CHAP. V.

Old Blue Town.—Tanners' Quarter.—Roguery of the Chinese Merchants.—Hotel of the Three Perfections. Profitable Working of the Tartars by the Chinese.—Money-Changers.—Mongol coiner of bad Money.—Purchase of Sheep-skin Robes.—Camel Market.—Customs of the Camel Drivers.—Assassination of the Grand Lama of the Blue Town.—Insurrection of the Lama Convents.—Negotiations between the Courts of Pekin and L'ha-Ssa.—Lamas at Home.—Vagabond Lamas.—Lamas in Community.—Policy of the Mantchoo dynasty with respect to the Lama Convents.—Meeting with a Thibetan Lama.—Departure from the Blue Town.

We entered the Blue Town by a wide road running between the vast kitchen gardens that surround the town. With the exception of the Lama convents, which rear themselves above all other buildings, nothing is to be seen but an immense mass of houses and shops, pressed one against the other without any order. The ramparts of the old town still exist in all their integrity, but the superabundance of the population has compelled them to overstep the old limits. By degrees numbers of houses have been built without the wall, and at present the suburbs are of more importance than the town itself.

A tolerably wide street, which was the first we entered, presented nothing remarkable, except a convent called the "Convent of the Five Towers."* Immediately after the convent, the street we were traversing terminated abruptly; to the right and left were two lanes of miserable appearance. We chose the one that appeared the least dirty, and got on at first pretty well; but the further we advanced the filthier it became, and soon it was nothing but one large mud-hole, of which the stench was intolerable. We were in the tanners' street, and we rode slowly and shudderingly forwards, for the liquid mud sometimes concealed large stones, which were surmounted with difficulty; sometimes a treacherous hollow, into which we suddenly plunged. We had not gone fifty steps before our cattle were covered with mud, and dripping with perspiration; and, to crown our misfortunes, we heard before us a great clamour, raised by horsemen and drivers who were advancing

* Not the famous Convent of Five Towers before mentioned, and which is situated in the province of Chan-Si.

in the opposite direction, and meant by their cries to give notice to others not to enter the tortuous path till they had passed. As it was quite impossible for us either to turn back or stand aside, all we could do was to shout in return and await the result, which we did with some anxiety. At a turn of the road the *dénouement* took place. At the sight of our camels the horses took fright, faced about, dashing themselves one against the other, and made off by every issue that presented itself. Thus, thanks to our beasts of burden, we were relieved from the necessity of yielding the *pas* to any one; and reached at last, without accident, a tolerably good street, with handsome shops on each side.

We looked about anxiously in search of an inn, but in vain. It is the custom, in the great towns in the north of China and Tartary, for each hotel to receive only one description of guests; one is for merchants in corn, another for dealers in horses, &c. There is only one which lodges simple travellers, and this is called the inn of passing travellers.

We were inquiring for this inn, when a young man darted out of a neighbouring shop, and accosted us officiously. "You are looking for an inn," said he; "permit me to conduct you to one myself;" and he began to walk by our side. "You will have a difficulty in finding what you want in the Blue Town. Men are innumerable here, but there are good and bad men, are there not, my Lord Lamas? and who does not know that the bad are always more numerous than the good. Listen while I say a word to you from the bottom of my heart. In the Blue Town you will hardly find a man who is guided by his conscience, yet conscience is a treasure. You Tartars, you know what conscience is. I know the Tartars, they are good, they have upright hearts; but we Chinese, we are wicked, we are rogues. In ten thousand Chinese you will scarcely find one who has a conscience. In this Blue Town almost every one makes a trade of cheating the Tartars, and getting hold of their money."

Whilst the young Chinese was uttering all these fine words in an easy off-hand manner, he turned from one to the other, sometimes offering us snuff, sometimes tapping us gently on the shoulder in token of comradeship, and then, taking hold of our horses by the bridle, insisted on leading them himself. But with all these obliging attentions, he never lost sight of the two large trunks carried by our camel. The loving looks that he cast on them from

time to time told plainly enough that he was speculating on their contents: he fancied, doubtless, that they were filled with precious merchandise of which he hoped to obtain the monopoly.

We had been now on the road for more than an hour, and saw no signs of the inn promised with so much emphasis. "We are sorry," said we to our conductor, "to see you take so much trouble. If we did but see whither you are leading us ——

"Leave that to me, my lords, leave it to me; I am taking you to a good, to an excellent inn: don't say I am taking trouble; don't pronounce such words: they make me blush. Are we not all brothers? what signifies the difference of Tartar and Chinese?. The language is not the same, the habits are not alike; but we know that men have but one heart, one conscience, one invariable rule of justice. Stop! wait for me one moment, my lords; I will be with you in a moment," and he darted like an arrow into a shop. In a few minutes he returned, making a thousand excuses for having kept us waiting.

"You are very tired, are you not? oh! that is easily understood: when one is travelling it is always so; it is not like being in one's own family."

Whilst he was speaking we were accosted by another Chinese; he had not the joyous expansive countenance of our first acquaintance: he was thin and emaciated; his lips were small and pinched together; and his little black eyes deeply sunk in their orbits gave his physiognomy a decided expression of villany.

"My Lord Lamas, you are here at last," said he; "you have made the journey in peace; ah? that is well. Your camels are magnificent; you must have travelled quickly and fortunately. At last you are here; that's well. Se Eul," added he, addressing the individual who had first seized upon us, "take care that you take these noble Tartars to a good inn; you must take them to the inn of Eternal Equity."

"That is precisely where we were going."

"Excellent—the master is one of my best friends: it will not be amiss if I go myself. I will recommend him to take care of these noble Tartars. If I did not go myself—it would weigh upon my heart. When one has the good fortune to meet with brothers, one should be useful to them. We are all brothers, are we not, my lords? see us two!" he pointed to his young partner. "We two are clerks in the same shop—we are accustomed to deal

with Tartars. Oh, it is a great thing in this miserable Blue Town to meet with people you can trust."

To see these two worthies with their professions of eternal devotion, one would have taken them for old friends. Unfortunately for them, we knew something of Chinese tactics, and had not quite so much of Tartar *bonhomie* as they supposed. We were pretty well aware that we had to do with a couple of sharpers, who were preparing to appropriate the money of which they supposed us possessed.

By dint of looking on all sides, we at last espied a sign, on which was written in large Chinese characters "Hotel of the Three Perfections, lodging for travellers on Horse or Camel; all sorts of business negotiated with Unfailing Success."

We turned our horses' heads towards the gate; in vain our two esquires protested it was not the right place; we entered, and making the caravan defile through a long avenue, we found ourselves in the great square court of the inn.

At the sight of the little blue caps on the heads of the men swarming about the court we perceived that we were in a Turkish hostelry.

This threw our two Chinese out of their reckoning: however, without losing courage altogether, they continued to play their parts.

"Where are the people of this inn?" cried they, with affected zeal; "let them show us a large room, a fine room, a clean room. Their Excellencies are come: they must be properly lodged."

A principal waiter now made his appearance, with a key between his teeth, a broom in his hand, and a dish with water. Our two protectors seized upon all these articles in a moment.

"Leave that to us," said they; "we ourselves will wait on our illustrious friends; you innkeepers only do things by halves; you only work for money."

And to work they set, watering, sweeping and rubbing, the chamber opened for us. When all was ready we took our places on the *kang*, and they, out of respect, persisted in squatting on the ground before us. Just as the tea was brought in, a young man of elegant figure, and very well dressed, entered the room; he held in his hand a silk handkerchief by the four corners.

"My Lord Lamas," said the old rogue, "this young man is the son of the principal of our house; our master saw you coming, and has sent his son to inquire if you have made the journey in peace."

The young man then placed his handkerchief on the little table before us. "Here are some cakes to eat with the tea; my father has given orders at home to prepare the rice for you. When you have drunk the tea, you will have the kindness to accept a poor and humble repast in our old simple habitation."

"Why thus lavish your heart on our account?" we asked in our turn.

"Oh, my lords, look at our faces," cried all three in chorus; "your words cover them with confusion;" but fortunately the host bringing in the tea cut short all these Chinese civilities.

"Poor Tartars," said we, "how you must be fleeced when you fall into such hands! These words, which we pronounced in French, greatly surprised our three obliging friends.

"What is the name of the illustrious country of Tartary inhabited by your Excellencies?" they asked.

"Our poor family is not of Tartary; we are not Tartars."

"You are not Tartars? ah, we guessed as much. The Tartars have not that air of majesty; their persons do not breathe such grandeur. May we ask the name of your noble country?"

"We are from the West; our country is far from here."

"Ah, you are from the West," said the old gentleman, "I was sure of that; but these young men do not understand things; they do not know how to look at physiognomies. Ah, I know your country; I have made more than one journey thither."

"Without doubt, then, you understand our language?"

"Your language; I cannot say I know it completely, but in ten words I can always comprehend three or four. I find some difficulty in speaking it; but what does that signify, you know both Tartar and Chinese; oh, the people of your country are people of great capacity. I have always been closely connected with your countrymen. When they come to the Blue Town, they always apply to me to make their purchases for them."

The intentions of these friends to our country were not in the least doubtful; and their extreme desire to constitute themselves our agents was quite sufficient reason to get rid of them. When we had finished our tea, they made us a profound bow, and invited us to come to dinner at their house.

"Listen," replied we, gravely; "let us speak some words of reason. You have given yourselves the trouble to conduct us to an inn; it is good; it is your good hearts that have done that; you

have done us much service, you have set things in order, your master has sent us cakes; evidently, you are endowed with hearts whose goodness is inexhaustible. If it were not so, why have you done so much for us who are strangers? You invite us to dinner at your house, and that is good; but it is good also on our part not to accept your invitation. To eat with people with whom we are not bound by long friendship, is not conformable to Chinese usages; it is equally opposed to the customs of the West."

These words, solemnly pronounced, completely disconcerted our sharper friends.

"If we cannot, at present, visit your shop," we added, "have the goodness to excuse us to your master; thank him for the civilities he has shown us. Before leaving the town we shall have some purchases to make, when we will take the opportunity of paying you a visit. To-day we will take our repose at the Turkish tavern, which is close by.

"It is well, the tavern is excellent," said the trio, in a tone that betrayed their mortification.

We then rose and all went out together; we to dine in the town, they to render account to their chief of the ill-success of their intrigue.

Any thing more iniquitous and revolting than the traffic between the Chinese and the Tartars can hardly be conceived. When the Mongols, simple and ingenuous beings, if there are such in the world, arrive in a trading town, they are immediately surrounded by Chinese, who almost drag them into their houses. They unsaddle their cattle, prepare tea, render them a thousand small services, caress, flatter, and, as it were, magnetise them. The Mongols, free from duplicity themselves, and never suspecting it in others, are generally completely duped by all this apparent kindness. They take seriously all the fine sentences about brotherhood and devotion that are lavished on them, and, aware besides of their own want of address in business, they are enchanted to find friends who will transact it for them; a good dinner gratis given them in the back shop is sure to convince them of the good faith of their Chinese "brothers."

"If these people were interested," say the simple Tartars, "if they wanted to rob me, they would not put themselves to such expense on my account."

It is generally during this dinner that all the corruption and

dishonesty of the Chinese come into full play. Having once got a hold on the poor Tartar, they never let him go; they intoxicate him with brandy; they keep him two or three days in their houses, never losing sight of him; they make him eat, drink, and smoke, whilst the clerks of the establishment sell, as they well know how, his cattle, and supply him in return with the articles of which he stands in need. These goods are generally sold at double and often triple the current price; yet they have the infernal talent of persuading the unhappy Tartar that he is making an excellent bargain. Thus, when the victim returns to the "Land of Grass," he is full of enthusiasm about the incredible generosity of the Kitats, and promises himself to see his good friends again whenever he has any thing to buy or sell.

The day following that of our arrival at Kou-kou-Khoton, we went to purchase some winter clothing, without which we could not venture into the desert. For this purpose, it was necessary to sell some ounces of silver. It is known that the only coined money of the Chinese are small pieces of copper about the size of a half sou, pierced in the centre for the convenience of stringing them on a cord. This money, called *Tsien* by the Chinese, *Dehos* by the Tartars, and *Sapecks* * by the Europeans, is the only currency of the empire. Gold and silver are never coined; they circulate in ingots of different weights. Gold-dust and leaf-gold are also in use for commercial purposes: but the bankers who buy gold and silver pay the value in sapecks or notes, representing a certain amount of them. An ounce of silver generally sells for 1700 or 1800 sapecks; but varies according to the greater or less amount of money in circulation in the country.

The money-changers have two ways of gaining in their traffic: if they give a just price for the silver, they cheat in the weight; if their scales are conformable to justice, they diminish the price of the silver. But when they have dealings with Tartars, neither of these methods of fraud are practised; on the contrary, they weigh the metal accurately, and pay above the price current. They appear to be losers by the transaction; and do really lose, considering only the weight and value of the gold or silver; it is in the calculation that they take their advantage. In reducing the money to sapecks, they commit voluntary errors, and the Tartars, who can

* Apparently the money commonly called *Cash*.—Tr.

only reckon with the beads of their chaplets, and are themselves incapable of fraud, take the account as it is given them. They are always satisfied with the sale of their metal, because they have seen it weighed; and have obtained, as they think, a good price for it.

At the money-changers where we went to sell our silver, the Chinese, according to custom, tried the last method of cheating, which ended, however, in their discomfiture.

Their scales were quite correct, and the price they offered a little above the ordinary exchange: the bargain was, therefore, concluded. The head of the firm took the *souan-pan*, or reckoning board, of which the Chinese make use, and, after calculating with affected attention, announced the result.

"This is a money-changer's," said we; "you are the purchasers, we are the sellers; you have made your calculation, we will now make ours: give us a pencil and a piece of paper."

"Nothing can be more just; your words contain a fundamental law of commerce:" and they presented writing materials with great readiness.

After a short calculation, we found a difference of a thousand sapecks.

"Intendant, your *souan-pan* has made a mistake of a thousand sapecks."

"Impossible! can I all at once have forgotten how to reckon with it: let me count again."

He began to manipulate the beads again, while the by-standers looked on in astonishment.

When he had finished — "I was quite right," said he; "there was no mistake," and he passed the board to his partner; the latter verified his calculation, and found it quite correct.

"You see," said the principal, "there is no error: how is it that your reckoning does not agree with ours?"

"It matters little to know why they do not agree; but what is certain is that your calculation speaks falsely and ours tells truth. See these little characters that we have traced on the paper. If all the calculators in the world were to go through this operation and pass their whole lives at it, they would never find any other result than one: they would always find a thousand *sapecks* too little."

The people in the counting-house were much embarrassed: they

were already beginning to change colour, when a stranger who comprehended that the affair might turn out ill for them, took upon him to be arbitrator.

"Let me make the reckoning," said he; and he took the *souan-pan*, and his calculation agreed with ours! The intendant made us a profound bow.

"My Lord Lamas, your mathematics are better than ours."

"No it is not that; your *souan-pan* is excellent; but was there ever a calculator who never made a mistake? You might make one mistake; but we, unskilful as we are, might make a thousand. If we are right in this instance, it is a piece of good fortune." These words, under the circumstances, were rigorously exacted by Chinese politeness. When a person has compromised himself, one must avoid putting him to the blush, or, in Chinese phrase, *carrying away his face*. When our words had "*covered all their faces*," the piece of paper on which we had traced the figures was eagerly seized upon. "This is an excellent *souan-pan*," said they to one another; it is simple, sure, and expeditious. My Lord Lamas, what do these characters signify?

"This *souan-pan* is infallible; these characters are the same as those used by the Mandarins * of celestial literature to calculate eclipses and the course of the seasons."

After a short dissertation on the merits of the Arabian ciphers, our sapecks were counted out to us very exactly, and we took leave.

As soon as we had got our money, we went to provide ourselves with our winter garments; and, remembering the slenderness of our resources, we resolved to apply to a dealer in second-hand clothes. In China or in Tartary no one feels the slightest objection to this proceeding. Those who have visits of etiquette to pay, or a fête to attend, borrow without hesitation a hat, a pair of trousers, shoes or boots, as the case may be: there is but one cause of hesitation ever felt in these mutual lendings — and that is, the fear that the borrower may sell them for his own profit or to pay his debts, after he has done with them. They make no more difficulty of wearing another man's trousers, than of living in another man's house.

This custom, however, was not very agreeable to our habits; we

* The use of the Arabian ciphers was introduced in the observatory at Pekin by the Jesuits.

had never yet been obliged to submit to it; but on this occasion the condition of our purse compelled us to subdue our repugnance. There is no town, however small, that has not its numerous shops for old clothes, which are generally supplied by the pawnbrokers. Very few persons ever redeem articles once pledged; they generally *let them die*, according to the Tartar and Chinese expression; that is, allowing the fixed term to expire, they lose the right of redemption.

At the first shop we entered, they showed us some wretched robes lined with sheep-skin, very old and shining with grease, so that it would have been difficult to say what had been the original colour: the price demanded was exorbitant nevertheless. We could not come to any agreement, and left the shop not without a secret satisfaction, for we felt our self-love too cruelly wounded at the thought of muffling ourselves in those filthy garments.

However, after running about the whole day, making acquaintance with all the rag-dealers in the Blue Town, and tossing over their whole stock, we were obliged to return to the first shop we had visited, and put up with two venerable sheep-skin robes, covered with a stuff we suspected to have been once yellow. M. Gabet's robe was too short, and mine was too long, and it was not possible to make an exchange, our proportions being too dissimilar. We thought at first to have recourse to a tailor, but that would have involved a second attack upon our attenuated purse; so I was obliged to content myself with tucking up the superfluity of my garment under a girdle, and M. Gabet had to resign himself to exhibiting a portion of his legs to the public gaze: after all, the inconvenience amounted to the fact of thus proclaiming to the world in general that we had not the means of dressing exactly to our taste.

The dealer's stock of old hats next passed in review; and we fixed upon two fox-skin caps, resembling in form the *shakos* of our sappers; and, with our parcels under our arms, we returned to the hotel of the Three Perfections.

The commercial importance enjoyed by the Blue Town arises from the Lama convents, whose celebrity attracts hither Mongols from the most distant parts; hence the commerce is almost exclusively Tartar. The Mongols bring great herds of oxen, horses, camels, and sheep; they also sell here skins, mushrooms, and salt, the only produce of the deserts of Tartary; and they take in return

brick tea, cloths, saddles for their horses, sticks of incense to burn before their idols, oatmeal, millet, and some domestic utensils. Koukon-Khoton is also famous for its camel trade. The place of sale is a vast square, into which run all the principal streets of the town. Elevations shelving on both sides, from one end of the square to the other, give this market the appearance of a field deeply furrowed. The camels are placed in a line, so that their fore feet rest on these elevations, and this position displays, and, in a manner, increases the stature of the animals, already so gigantic. It would be difficult to describe the confusion and uproar that prevails in this market. To the cries of the buyers and sellers who are quarrelling or talking, as people talk when a revolt is at its height, are joined by the long groans of the poor camels, whose noses are incessantly tweaked to try their address in kneeling and rising.

To judge of the strength of the camel, and the weight he can carry, he is loaded by degrees; if he can rise with his burden, it is a proof that he can easily bear the weight during the route.

Camels are never bought or sold by the persons immediately interested, but by means of agents, who have no personal interest in the transaction, one taking charge of the seller's interest, the other of the buyer's. These "*talkers of sale*" have no other employment, but go from market to market to "*push business*," as they say. These persons are generally good judges of cattle, extremely voluble of speech, and moreover consummate rogues; they discuss the merits and demerits of the animal at once with vehemence and cunning, but as soon as the question is of price, the talking ceases, and they communicate only by signs. They seize each other by the hand, and express with their fingers, hidden under the large loose sleeves of their robes, the prices respectively offered or refused. When the bargain is concluded the buyer gives them a dinner, and they receive a commission varying in different localities.

There are five great convents in the Blue Town, each inhabited by more than 2000 Lamas, and fifteen smaller ones, which are a sort of dependencies on the greater. Without fear of exaggeration, the number of resident Lamas may be reckoned as 20,000. As to those who inhabit the different quarters of the town, and employ themselves in commerce or jockeyship, they are innumerable. The convent of the Five Towers is the handsomest and most celebrated; it is the residence of a *Hobilgan*, that is to say, a

Grand Lama, who, after being identified with the substance of Buddha, has already passed through several transmigrations. He now occupies the altar of the Guison-Tamba, which he ascended subsequently to a tragic event which had like to have brought about a revolution in the empire.

The emperor Khang-Hi, in the course of an expedition against the Oelets, passed through the Blue Town, and went to pay a visit to the Guison-Tamba, who was then Grand Lama of the Five Towers. The latter received the emperor without rising from his throne, or giving him any mark of respect, and Kian-Kan, a great military mandarin, indignant at the want of reverence shown for his master, drew his sabre, and slew the Guison-Tamba on the steps of his throne. This tragic event caused an insurrection in the convent, and in a short time the exasperation communicated itself to the whole body of Lamas in the city. They flew to arms on all sides; and the life of the emperor, who was attended by a very scanty suite, was in the greatest danger. To calm the irritation of the Lamas, he publicly reproached Kian-Kan for his deed of violence; but he replied, "If the Guison-Tamba was not the living Buddha, why did he not rise in the presence of the master of the universe?—if he was Buddha, why did he not know that I was going to put him to death?

The danger to the emperor, however, became so threatening, that he was obliged to strip himself of the imperial habit, and disguise himself as a private soldier; and by favour of this, and the general confusion, the emperor succeeded in rejoining his army, which was at no great distance. The greater part of his suite were massacred, and among them the murderer of the Guison-Tamba.

The Mongols sought to take advantage of this event. It was soon announced that the Guison-Tamba had transmigrated in the country of the Khalkas; that these people had taken him under their protection, and sworn to avenge his assassination. The Lamas of Grand-Kouren actively organised themselves; they laid aside their red and yellow robes, and put on black ones, in memory of the tragedy of the Blue Town; they let their hair and beards grow in sign of mourning; everything presaged a grand movement among the Tartar nations. Nothing less than the great activity and rare diplomatic talents of the emperor would have sufficed to arrest its progress. He entered promptly into negotiations with the Talé-Lama, sovereign of Thibet, who undertook to use all his

influence over the Lamas to restore order, while Khang-Hi should intimidate the Khalka kings by his troops. By degrees peace was re-established; the Lamas resumed their red and yellow robes; but, as a memorial of their coalition in favour of Guison-Tamba, they still wear a black stripe on the collar.

Since that epoch, a Hobilgan has replaced the Guison-Tamba in the Blue Town; and the latter is definitely installed at the Grand-Kouren in the country of the Khalkas. The Chinese emperor, however, is far from satisfied with this arrangement; he does not believe all the doctrine of transmigration; and he sees clearly that in pretending that the Guison-Tamba has reappeared among them, the Khalkas have at their disposal a power capable of struggling with that of China. To cashier the Guison-Tamba would be a dangerous audacity; he seeks, therefore, by tolerating, to neutralise his influence. In concert with the court of Lha-Ssa, he has decreed that the Guison-Tamba shall be recognised as legitimate sovereign of the Grand-Kouren; but that after his successive deaths, he shall *always* transmigrate in Thibet. Khang-Hi hoped, with reason, that a Thibetian by birth would not so readily espouse the resentments of the Khalkas against the court of Pekin. The Lamas who flock to the Blue Town from all parts of Tartary, rarely settle there definitely. After having taken their degrees in the sort of universities there, they return home; for they generally prefer the smaller establishments, of which there are such numbers in the "Land of Grass." The life they lead there is more free, and more conformable to the independence of their disposition. Sometimes they live in their own families, employed, like other Tartars, in the care of their flocks and herds, and prefer the abode of the tent to that of the convent with its rules and daily recitation of prayers. These Lamas have little of the monk but the habit, and are called Home Lamas.

The second class is composed of those who neither reside with their families nor in convents; these are the *Vagabond Lamas.* They live like migratory birds, without ever settling any where. They travel about apparently for the sake of travelling; they wander from convent to convent, stopping on the road at all the tents they meet with, relying on the never-failing hospitality of the Tartars. There they seat themselves by the hearth without ceremony, and, while drinking their tea, enumerate with pride the countries they have traversed. If the fancy takes them to pass the

night in the tent, they stretch themselves in a corner, and sleep till the morning. When they do set off at last, all paths seem the same to them. They walk with downcast eyes, a long staff in their hands, and a goat-skin wallet on their back. If they are fatigued, they take their rest at the foot of a rock, on the top of a mountain, at the bottom of a ravine, wherever chance or their inconstant fancy leads them.

The vagabond Lamas visit all the countries accessible to them—China, Mantchoria, Khalkas, Southern Mongolia, Ounang-Hai, Kou-Kou-Noor, north and south of the Celestial Mountains, Thibet, India, and sometimes even Turkistan. There is not a river they have not crossed; a mountain they have not ascended; a Grand Lama before whom they have not prostrated themselves; a people among whom they have not lived, and of whom they do not know the manners and the language. Losing their way in the desert is not possible, since all ways are alike to them. Travelling without any object, the places they arrive at are always those where they desire to go. The legend of the Wandering Jew is exactly realised in the persons of these Lamas. One would say they are under the influence of some mysterious power, which drives them incessantly onward; and it seems as if God had caused to flow in their veins something of that motive force which urges worlds forwards in their course, without ever permitting them to rest.

The Lamas living in community compose the third class. A Lamaserai, or Lama convent, is a collection of little houses, built round one or more Buddhist temples: these habitations are more or less large and handsome, according to the means of the proprietors. They are permitted to keep some cattle; cows for the supply of milk and butter, which form their staple food; a horse to visit the desert; and sheep for their regale on fête days.

In general, all these establishments are royal or imperial foundations, of which the revenues are distributed at certain periods among the Lamas, according to their rank in the hierarchy. Those who have the reputation of being good physicians, or good *fortune-tellers*, have many opportunities of profit besides; but they rarely become rich nevertheless. Their general character is childish and improvident; and they spend their money as readily as they gain it. A Lama who has appeared the evening before in garments both torn and dirty, will the next day, perhaps, rival the highest dignitary in the convent in the richness of his habit. As soon as he has

any money at his disposal, he runs to the nearest trading town, and equips himself from head to foot magnificently; but it is always probable that he will not keep his fine clothes long enough to wear them out. After some months, he betakes himself anew to a Chinese station, not to play the *elegant* among the fine silk warehouses, but to pledge his yellow robes at the Mont de Pieté, whence he rarely redeems them. The shops of the dealers in second-hand clothes in the Tartar-Chinese towns, are encumbered with the spoils of Lama wardrobes.

The number of Lamas in Tartary is very great. I believe that, without exaggeration, I may say they compose one-third of the population. In almost all families, with the exception of the eldest son, who remains "a black man," the other male children are all brought up to be Lamas; their inclination being not at all consulted in the matter. It is said, that the government of Pekin encourages this custom, with a view of checking the population of Tartary; and it is certain, that while it leaves the Chinese Bonzes in poverty and neglect, it shows especial honour and favour to Lamaism. The ancient power of the Mongols — the fact that they were once masters of the empire — has never been forgotten, and, to obviate the possibility of a new invasion, no opportunity of weakening them is ever lost. Nevertheless, although Mongolia is very thinly peopled in proportion to its extent, it would be very possible for a formidable army to issue from it. The Grand Lama need only move a finger to raise the Mongols as a single man, from the frontiers of Siberia to the extremities of Thibet, and make them rush, like a torrent, to whatever point the voice of the saint should call them.

The profound peace which they have enjoyed for two centuries, has not entirely destroyed their taste for warlike adventures, and the great campaigns of Genghis Khan, which carried them to the conquest of the world, have not yet vanished from their memory; in the abundant leisure of their nomadic life, they like to talk on these subjects, and to feed their imaginations with vague projects of invasion.

During our short stay in the Blue Town, we kept ourselves in constant relation with the Lamas of the most famous convents, with the view of obtaining all the information possible on the state of Buddhism in Tartary and Thibet; and here, as well as at Tolon-Noor, every one repeated to us, that as we advanced towards the west, we should find the doctrines growing more luminous and

sublime. Lha-Ssa, they said, was the grand focus of light, the rays from which became weakened as they were diffused.

One day, when we had occasion to speak with the Thibetan Lama on the subject of religion, we were greatly surprised to find that a brief summary of Christian doctrine which we gave him appeared by no means unfamiliar to him, and he even maintained that it did not differ much from the faith of the Grand Lamas of Thibet. "We must not," he said, "confound religious truth with the numerous superstitions which amuse the credulity of the ignorant. The Tartars are simple; they prostrate themselves before all that they meet,—all is *Borhan* in their eyes. The Lamas, the books of prayer, the temples, the conventual buildings, the bones that they pile up upon the mountains, all is placed by them on the same rank; at every step they prostrate themselves, and cry, Borhan! Borhan!"

"But do not the Lamas admit innumerable Borhans?"

"That requires explanation," he replied, smiling; "There is but one sole sovereign being who has created all things; he is without beginning and without end. In India he bears the name of Buddha; in Thibet that of Samtché Milcheba (Eternal, All-Powerful); the Chinese call him Fo, and the Tartars Borhan. All are equally Buddha."

"Is Buddha visible?"

"No, he is without body: he is a spiritual substance."

"Thus Buddha is one only, and yet there exist innumerable Buddhas, such as the *Chaberons* and others."

"Buddha is incoporeal; one cannot see him; but the Talé-Lama, the Guison-Tamba, and all the other *Chaberons* are visible, and have received a body like ours."

"How do you explain that?"

"That doctrine," he replied, stretching out his arms and assuming a remarkable tone of authority, "is true; it is the doctrine of the west; but it is of unfathomable profundity; one cannot reach it."

These words of the Thibetan Lama astonished us not a little; the unity of God; the mystery of the Incarnation — the dogma of the real presence — appeared to us enveloped in his belief. Yet with ideas so sound in appearance, he admitted the metempsychosis, and a species of Pantheism of which he could render no account.

The new light thus thrown on the religion of Buddha induced

us really to believe that we should find among the Lamas of Thibet a more purified symbolism; and we persisted in the resolution we had already adopted, to push on towards the west.

When we were about to set off, we summoned the master of the hotel, according to custom, to settle our account; and we calculated that, for three men and six animals for four days, we should have to pay at least two ounces of silver. But we had the agreeable surprise of hearing him say —

"My Lord Lamas — let us not make any reckoning. Put 300 sapecks (1*s.* 3*d.*) into the chest, and let that suffice. My house," added he, "is recently established, and I wish to obtain for it a good reputation. Since you are from a distant country, I wish you to tell your illustrious compatriots that my hotel is worthy of their confidence."

"We will certainly speak of your disinterestedness," we replied; "and our countrymen, when they have occasion to visit the Blue Town, will not fail to stop at the Hotel of the Three Perfections."

CHAP. VI.

Meeting with a Devourer of Tartars.—Great Caravan.—Arrival in the Night at Chagan-Kouren.—Refusal to receive us at the Inns.—Hospitable Reception at the House of a Shepherd.—Overflowing of the Yellow River.—Crossing the flooded Country.—Encampment under the Portico of a Pagoda.—Embarkation of the Camels.—Passage of the Yellow River.

We quitted the Blue Town on the fourth day of the new moon, and it was not without great difficulty that the little caravan made its way out of the town. The streets were blocked up with men, carts, animals, and benches on which the merchants displayed their wares, so that we could only advance very slowly, and had to make long halts, and it was near noon when we arrived at the last houses of the town near the western gate. There we found at length a broad smooth road on which our camels could move their limbs freely. A chain of steep rocks that rose on our right sheltered us so well from the winds of the North that the rigour of the season was scarcely felt. The country we were traversing was still part of Western Toumet, and we observed everywhere the same marks of ease and prosperity that we had seen on the east of the

town; and there were numerous villages with all the accompaniments of an agricultural and commercial life. Although it was not possible to pitch our tent in the midst of cultivated fields, we wished, as far as circumstances permitted, to accustom ourselves again to our Tartar mode of life. Instead, therefore, of going to an inn to take our morning's repast, we sat down under a tree, or at the foot of a rock, and breakfasted on some little loaves fried in oil, of which we had laid in a store at the Blue Town. The passers-by laughed at our semi-savage mode of living, but they were not surprised, for even in countries where inns are in abundance, the Tartars are in the habit of carrying on their cooking operations in the middle of the road. We retired to an inn, however, to pass the night, on account of our animals, who of course found no food in a road of this kind.

On the second day after our departure, we met at one of these inns a very curious personage.

We had just finished feeding and tying up our camels, when we saw coming into the large court-yard an enormously fat traveller, who led after him by the bridle a very lean horse. He wore a large straw hat, with brims so broad that they hung down on his shoulders, and he had a long sabre attached to his girdle which did not look at all in keeping with his jolly physiognomy.

"Steward of the kettle," said he, as he entered, "is there room for me in this inn?"

"I have but one room to give to travellers," was the reply, "and that is at present occupied by three Mongol men who have just arrived. Go and see whether they can receive you."

The new comer trudged, with a heavy step, towards the place where we were already installed.

"Peace and happiness to you, my Lord Lamas," said he, addressing us as he entered: "do you occupy all the room in this apartment, or is there a little left for me?"

"Why should there not be some for you, since there is for us?" we replied. "Are we not all travellers alike?"

"Excellent words, excellent words! You are Tartars, I am a Chinese; but you understand the rites of politeness — you know that all men are brothers:" and with these words he went to tie up his horse by the side of ours, and then, returning, deposited his baggage on the *Kang*, and stretched himself upon it at full length like a man tired out. "Ah ya! Ah ya!" said he at length, "here I

am then at my inn — Ah ya! It is better here than on the road— Ah ya! here one can rest a little."

"Where are you going?" asked we, "and why do you wear a sword?"

"I am going through Tartar countries, and then it is always good to have a sword by one's side. One doesn't always meet with honest people."

"You perhaps belong to some Chinese Salt Company?"

"No; I am from a great commercial house in Pekin, and I have been sent to collect debts from the Tartars; and you — where are you going?"

"We are going towards the Yellow River — and then we shall continue our journey across the country of *Ortous*."

"You are not Mongols it seems?"

"No, we are from the sky of the West."

"Ah ya! then our trade is not very different; —you are, like me, *eaters of Tartars*."

"Eaters of Tartars! What is the meaning of that?"

"Our trade — yours and mine — is to eat the Mongols,—we by traffic, you by prayers. The Mongols are simple; why should we not profit by them to get a little money?"

"You are mistaken. Since we have been in Tartary we have spent a good deal of money, but we have never taken from the Mongols a single sapeck."

"Ah ya! Ah ya!"

"You fancy, perhaps, that our camels, our baggage, and all that, comes from the Tartars. You are mistaken. All we have has been bought with money from our own country."

"I thought you said you came into Tartary to say prayers?"

"You are right, we did come for that. We know nothing about trade."

We then entered into some explanations to endeavour to make this jovial gentleman understand the difference between the servants of the true God and the worshippers of Buddha."

"Things are not managed that way here," said he: "the Lamas never say prayers gratis; and, for my part, if it was not for money, I would never set foot in Tartary:" and at these words he began to laugh immoderately — swallowing, at the same time, great gulps of tea.

"So you see," we resumed at length, "we are not of the same trade. Say in future only that *you* are an eater of Tartars."

"Ah! I believe you," cried he, chuckling: "we merchants, we do, to be sure, gnaw them to the bone."

"We should like to know," said we ——

"What! don't you know the Tartars?" was the answer. "Don't you know that they are simple as children, when they come into our towns? — They want to have every thing they see — they seldom have any money, but we come to their help. We give them goods on credit, and then of course they must pay rather high. When people take away goods without leaving the money, of course there must be a little interest of thirty or forty per cent. Then, by degrees, the interest mounts up, and you come to compound interest; but that's only with the Tartars. In China the laws forbid it; but we, who are obliged to run about the Land of Grass — we may well ask for a little extra profit. Isn't that fair? A Tartar debt is never paid — it goes on from generation to generation; every year one goes to get the interest, and it's paid in sheep, oxen, camels, horses,— all that is a great deal better than money. We get the beasts at a low price, and we sell them at a very good price in the market. Oh! it's a capital thing — a Tartar debt! It's a mine of gold."

The *Yao-Chang-Ti* (collector of debts) accompanied this explanation of his mode of doing business with peals of laughter. He spoke the Mongol language very well, and it was easy to see that a Tartar debtor who should fall into his hands would find himself in no pleasant position. He was truly, as he said in his picturesque style, "an eater of Tartars."

The next day was marked by a very melancholy incident. After a few hours' march, we perceived that Arsalan was no longer following the caravan. We made a halt, and Samdadchiemba, mounted on his little black mule, went back to search for him. He went through all the villages we had traversed, but to no purpose; he returned without Arsalan. "The dog was a Chinese," said the Dchiahour; "he was not accustomed to the nomadic life; he was tired of running about the desert — no doubt he has got a place in a civilised country."

The loss of Arsalan saddened us a little at first. We were accustomed to see him bound before us on the prairies, play in the long grass, run after the grey squirrels, and startle the eagles from the plain. His continued gambols served to break the monotony of the journey, and the office of porter which he held was alone

sufficient to entitle him to our regrets. This consideration, however, was less important to us than it would have been some time before; for by degrees, as we became accustomed to the nomadic life, our fear of robbers had diminished. Arsalan, besides, had not been extremely vigilant in the performance of his function; for his long forced marches during the day made him sleep so soundly at night, that nothing could wake him. Indeed, even in the morning, when we were all up, and had folded the tents and loaded the camels, Arsalan was often still lying stretched out snoring on the grass, and we had to push him and kick him to get him up. On one occasion a vagabond dog made, unopposed, an incursion into our tent during the night, and devoured our stock of oatmeal, as well as a candle. We endeavoured, therefore, to soothe our grief by considerations of economy; by reflecting that Arsalan required every day a ration of flour at least as large as any of us, and that perhaps we were not rich enough to have constantly at our table a guest with such a very good appetite.

From the information we had received, we calculated that we ought to have arrived that day at the town of Chagan-Kouren; but the sun had already set, and we saw no signs of a town. At length, however, we perceived at a distance what looked like thick clouds of dust, which seemed to be advancing towards us; and, by degrees, there appeared the forms of numerous camels, led by Turkish traders, who were transporting to Pekin merchandise from the West; and our caravan looked small indeed by the side of this interminable line of camels, all laden with bales of goods enveloped in buffalo skins. We inquired of the conductor if we were still far from Chagan-Kouren, and he answered, with a mischievous smile,—

"You see here one end of our caravan — the other is not yet out of the town."

"Thank you," said we: "in that case we shall soon be there."

"Yes; you have at most fifteen *lis* to go" (about seven miles).

"How? fifteen *lis*? Did not you say that your camels had not yet left the town of Chagan-Kouren?"

"Yes; but perhaps you did not know that our caravan consists of ten thousand camels."

"If that be the case, we have no time to lose. Go in peace — a good journey to you:" and we hurried on.

The camel-driver had not deceived us. The caravan did, indeed,

appear interminable; and we went on till night, enclosed on our right by a chain of rocks, and on our left by this walking barrier of loaded camels, who all had at their necks small Thibetan bells, that made a tinkling music, and contrasted strikingly with the gloomy and taciturn physiognomy of the camel-drivers, half brutified by their five months' journey across the desert.

It was quite dark, and we were still on the road without knowing whither we were going, when we met a Chinese mounted on an ass, travelling at a rapid pace.

"Eldest brother," said we, "tell us, is Chagan-Kouren still far off?"

"Do you see those lights sparkling down there? They are those of the town. You have only three miles to go."

Three miles more, at night, in an unknown country, was much. There was no help for it. In the mean time the sky became blacker and blacker; there was no moon, not even a star, to light our march. It seemed to us that we were journeying amongst abysses and through chaos. We dismounted, in the hope of seeing a little better, and we went along slowly, feeling our way; but sometimes we drew back hastily, thinking we were running in among mountains, or against high walls, which seemed to start up suddenly before us. Soon we were dripping with perspiration, and compelled to mount our animals again, for their sight was surer than ours.

We arrived, at last, at Chagan-Kouren; but we were scarcely less in perplexity than before. We were in a great town, indeed, and there must be many inns in it; but where should we look for them? All doors were closed, and there was not a creature in the streets. The numerous dogs that ran barking after us were the only indications of our being in an inhabited place. At last, after we had traversed many silent and deserted streets, we heard great blows of a hammer resounding on an anvil, and, turning in that direction, soon saw a great light, a thick smoke, and sparks issuing into the street; and by these signs we perceived that we had made the discovery of a smith's forge. We presented ourselves at the door, and humbly begged our brothers the smiths to point out to us an inn. They answered, at first, by some jokes about the Tartars and their camels; and then a boy lit a torch at the forge, and went to seek a shelter for us.

We knocked and called for a long time at an inn, before any one

could be induced to appear. At last a man half opened a door, and began to parley with our guide; but, unfortunately, one of our camels, tormented by a dog that was biting his legs, took it into his head to utter a great cry. The innkeeper lifted up his head, cast a glance at our poor caravan, and immediately closed the door again.

Wherever we applied, we were received in much the same manner. Directly they found they would have camels to lodge, they said there was no room. These animals are, in fact, very troublesome in inns. Their large and whimsical figures often frighten the Chinese horses; and it is not uncommon, in entering an inn, to bargain that they shall not receive any Tartar caravans.

Wearied at seeing all his efforts in our favour of no avail, our guide at last wished us good night, and returned to his forge. We were exhausted with fatigue, hunger, and thirst, for we had now been a long time going backwards and forwards through the streets, in the profoundest darkness, without being able to discover a spot where we might get a little rest.

In this melancholy position we saw nothing else to do than to go and crouch with our animals in some corner, and wait with patience, and for the love of God, till morning. We had arrived at this conclusion, when we suddenly heard from a neighbouring enclosure the bleating of sheep, and determined to make one more attempt.

We knocked at the door, which was immediately opened. "Brother," said we, "is this an inn?"

"No; it is a sheepfold. Who are you?"

"We are travellers, who have lost our way. When we came into the town we found all the inns closed, and no one will receive us."

Whilst we were speaking thus an old man advanced, holding in his hand a kindled branch for a light. As soon as he cast his eyes on our camels and our costume, he cried, "*Mendou! Mendou!* My Lord Lamas, enter here! There is room enough for your cattle in the yard, and my house is large enough. You can stay here for some days."

We had met with a Tartar family, and we were saved. To set down our baggage, to tie up our animals, was the work of a moment; and then we went and sat down by a Mongol hearth, where tea and milk awaited us.

"Brother," said we, "it would be superfluous to ask if it is to Mongols that we owe this hospitality?"

"Yes, Lord Lamas," said the old man, "all this house is Mongol; though for a long time we have not dwelt beneath the tent. We have built ourselves a habitation here, that we may carry on our trade in sheep. Alas! we have insensibly become Chinese."

"Your manner of living has certainly undergone some change, but your hearts have remained Tartar. In all Chagan-Kouren we have not found a single Chinese inn that was open to us." Here the Tartar uttered a profound sigh, and shook his head sadly.

The conversation did not last long; for the head of the family, having observed our excessive fatigue, had unrolled a large felt carpet in a corner of the room, on which we stretched ourselves; and, making a pillow of our arms, were soon buried in a profound slumber. Probably we should have remained in the same position till the next day, if Samdadchiemba had not come to shake us, and warn us that supper was ready. We found two large bowls of milk, some loaves baked in the ashes, and some cutlets of boiled mutton. It was magnificent; and, after having made a most excellent meal, we exchanged a pinch of snuff with the family, and returned to the couch we had quitted.

It was broad daylight when we arose; and we then hastened to inform our host of our wish to cross the Yellow River, and to continue our route across the country of Ortous. We had had neither time nor strength to talk the evening before; but as soon as we had declared what our intention was, exclamations arose from all sides. "It is impossible to do that!" said the old Tartar. "The Yellow River overflowed its banks eight days ago, and the waters have not yet retired. The whole plain is inundated."

This news alarmed us. We knew that we should have some trouble in crossing, because of our camels; but we had never expected to find ourselves in the presence of the *Hoang-Ho* at the period of one of its great inundations. Besides, the rainy season was long past, and there had even been a general drought; so that the inundation was entirely unexpected, to the people of the country as well as to ourselves.

Immediately on hearing this vexatious news, we went out to see, with our own eyes, whether the accounts had been exaggerated; and we soon saw that they had not. The Yellow River had become like a vast sea, to which no limit could be perceived, but

merely here and there verdant islets, houses, and small villages, that seemed to float upon the water. We consulted several people as to what we should do; but opinions were not unanimous. Some thought it was absurd to attempt going further, for that even where the waters had retired, they had left such deep mud, that the camels would not be able to move a step without slipping, and that, moreover, hidden under this mud, were many precipices. Others took a somewhat more encouraging view of affairs; they assured us that we should find, for three days to come, boats, ready from station to station, capable of taking us and our luggage; and that the animals could easily follow in the water till they came to the bed of the river, where we should meet with a larger boat that could take them also.

It was necessary to take some resolution. Turning back was out of the question. We had said that, please God, we would get to Lha-Ssa, let the obstacles be what they might. To turn the river, by going in a northerly direction, would greatly lengthen our journey, and compel us also to pass the great desert of Gobi. To remain at Chagan-Kouren till the waters had retired, and till the ground had become hard and dry enough for the feet of our camels, would be the safest course; but this might detain us, perhaps, a month, and our purse was too slenderly furnished to admit of our remaining all that time at an inn with five animals. The only alternative then was to place ourselves under the care of Providence, and go on in spite of mud or whatever else there might be, and this at last we determined to do.

Chagan-Kouren (the *White Enclosure*) is a new, large, and handsome town, though it is not found on the maps of China, probably because it did not exist in the time of the old Jesuits, who made the map for the emperor Khang-Hi. The streets are broad, clean, and not noisy; the houses regular and even elegant, testifying to the wealth of the inhabitants. It has large squares, ornamented with magnificent trees, such as we have seen nothing like in any other town in China. The shops are neatly kept, and well stocked with Chinese as well as some European goods, which are sent over Russia; but its commerce is in some measure hindered by the proximity of the Blue Town, as the Tartars prefer going there from having known it a long time.

Samdadchiemba, who had been in an extremely bad humour, expressed himself well satisfied with our intention of going on.

When one undertakes a journey like ours," he observed, "one mustn't be afraid of the five elements. Those who are afraid of dying on the road should never set out — that's the rule." The Tartar shepherd made some objection to our project, but the Dchiahour did not leave us the trouble of answering. He not only triumphantly refuted the objection, but permitted himself some satirical observations on the good old man.

"Any body may see," said he, "that you're now no better than a Chinese. You think one can't travel without dry ground and a blue sky. That shows you are no Mongolman. We shall soon see you going to keep your sheep with a parasol and a fan."

No one ventured to argue any further with the Dchiahour, and the rest of the day was spent in making preparations to set out on the following morning.

In the fear of having to remain several days on the inundated plains without fuel, we made a provision of small rolls fried in mutton fat; and, as the road could not fail to be fatiguing and difficult, our beasts were allowed to have as much as they could eat of the very best fodder that could be procured. On the following morning we set out in good heart, trusting in God. The old Tartar, who had entertained us so cordially, wished also to escort us out of the town, and he pointed out to us a wreath of thick mist that seemed moving rapidly from west to east. It marked the course of the Yellow River.

"At the place where you see that mist," said the Tartar, "there is a great dyke that serves to keep the river in its bed when the flood is not very great. That dyke is now dry, and you must go along it to where you will see a little pagoda on your right; there you will find a boat that will take you to the other side of the river. Be sure you keep that pagoda in sight, and you will not lose your way." We thanked the good old man for all his attentions to us, and went on our way.

We were soon in the midst of fields covered with yellowish, stagnant water; before us nothing was to be seen but an immense marsh, intersected at intervals by small dykes, from which the water had now retired. All the labourers in the country had been forced to forsake other work and turn boatmen, and were now engaged in carrying people from place to place across these drowned lands. Our progress was excessively slow. Our camels could only advance by a series of slides; and to see their poor heads

turning incessantly from side to side, their limbs shivering, though dripping with sweat, you would have thought every moment they were going to faint.

When it was near noon we had only gained about a mile and a half in actual distance, though we had made such circuits and so many zigzags that we were exhausted with fatigue. We had now come to a village, and were soon surrounded by a crowd of miserable-looking, ragged people, who escorted us as far as a great piece of water, before which we were compelled to stop: it was a great lake, extending as far as the dyke, which we could now see rising above the river. A boatman presented himself to take us as far as the dyke, whence, he said, we could easily go on to the little pagoda, where we should find another boat. We asked what payment he would require for this service.

"Oh, a trifle," he said — "almost nothing: it's a great deal of toil to go through."

"That is true," we replied; "but speak more plainly; how many sapecks must we give you?"

"Oh, almost nothing, — we are all brothers, — you are travellers, — we understand one another; we ought, indeed, to take you for nothing, — it would be our duty; but look at us, — we are poor; look at our clothes, — our boat is all that we have. We must live. There are three miles of rowing, — three men, — baggage, — a mule, — the camels can be led through the water; — well, I'll tell you, as you are religious men, I will only ask you two thousand sapecks."

The price was enormous; and, without answering a word, we took our animals by the bridle, and turned round, affecting to be going back. But we had scarcely gone twenty paces, when the boatman overtook us. "My Lord Lamas," said he, "do you not wish to go across in my boat?"

"Yes," said we, dryly; "but you are too rich, perhaps, to undertake such hard work. Would you take five hundred sapecks? — if you would, we would go, — but then make haste, for it is getting late."

"Come, Lord Lamas," he replied, and took hold of our bridles, and we supposed that the bargain was concluded; but we had scarcely reached the water's edge, when he cried to one of his companions, "See here! — our fate is bad to-day; we must put up with a great deal for little profit. We are going to row almost

three miles, and at last we shall only have fifteen hundred sapecks to divide amongst eight of us."

"Fifteen hundred sapecks!" cried we; "what do you mean by that? — are you mocking us?" — and we turned back for the second time.

But now there came forward some *Mediators* — persons inevitable in all Chinese bargains — who undertook to settle the dispute; and it was finally arranged that we should give eight hundred sapecks — an enormous sum for us; but we had no other means of pursuing our journey, as the boatmen well knew. Our embarkation now went on with great activity, and we were soon moving across the surface of the lake, while a man mounted on one of the camels, and drawing the two others after him, followed along the furrow made by the boat, and another man kept constantly sounding the depth of the water. He was obliged to be very attentive to keep close to this furrow, on account of the many holes hidden under the surface; and we saw the camels advancing timidly, stretching out their long necks, and sometimes having nothing but the edges of their humps and their heads above the water. We were in great anxiety about them, for these animals cannot swim, and a single false step might make them disappear never to rise again. God be praised, however, we all got safely over to the dyke.

We made our way toilsomely enough, for about half an hour, along this dyke, till we arrived opposite the pagoda. It was too late to think of passing that night; but we wished to make our bargain at once, that we might know what we had to pay, though the boatmen would have preferred waiting till the morning. Fortunately for us there were two boats, or we should have been ruined.

The price at length agreed on was a thousand sapecks. The passage was not long, it is true, for the river had almost returned to its bed; but the current was very strong, and the camels had to be taken into the boat, so that, all things considered, it did not appear unreasonable.

When this affair was settled we began to consider how we were to pass the night. There were a few fishermen's huts made of branches, but we knew the Chinese too well to be very willing to place our goods entirely in their hands, or trust much to their probity; yet we looked around us in vain to discover a tolerably dry

spot to encamp on. Every place was covered by mud or stagnant water. At last we cast our eyes on a little idol's temple that lay about a hundred yards from the shore, and which it was possible to reach by a very narrow path. Before the door was a granite portico supported on three columns, and which you could reach by three flights of steps — in front, on the left, and on the right. We decided that that should be our sleeping apartment for the night; but Samdadchiemba had a scruple of conscience on the subject, and asked if it would not be monstrously superstitious to go and sleep on the steps of that *Miao* (temple).

We removed this scruple; and then he made philosophical reflections: — "Behold," he said, "here is a *Miao* that has been built by the country people in honour of the god of the river, yet when it rained in Thibet the god had not the power to preserve them from inundation. But to-day this *Miao* will serve to shelter two missionaries of Jehovah, and it is the only good purpose it will ever have served."

By the time we had established ourselves under the portico, he had so entirely got over the difficulties with his conscience about taking refuge in an idolatrous temple, that he was delighted beyond measure with the plan, and laughed incessantly. When we had arranged our baggage as well as we could in this singular encamping place, we walked out to recite our rosary on the banks of the Hoang-Ho: the moon was brilliant, and lighted this immense river as it rolled its yellow and tumultuous waters along between level shores. It is undoubtedly one of the finest rivers in the world; it takes its rise in the mountains of Thibet, and, after traversing the Koukou-Noor, enters China at the province of Kan-Sou; it then leaves it again to water the sandy plains, at the foot of the Alechan mountains, surrounds the country of Ortous, and after having watered China from south to north, and then from west to east, goes on to throw itself into the Yellow Sea. The waters are pure and beautiful at their source, and only assume their yellow tint after passing the Alechan and the Ortous. The river rises almost always to the level of the country through which it flows; and to this is to be attributed the disastrous inundations to which it is subject.* But these floods, which are so fatal to China, are of little

* The bed of the Hoang-Ho has suffered very remarkable variations. In ancient times its mouth is said to have been in lat. 39° north, at present it is in 34°.

consequence to the nomadic Tartars, who have only to strike their tents, and move off elsewhere. Mischievous as it is, however, we found it pleasant to walk at night on its solitary banks, and listen to the murmur of its majestic waves; but Samdadchiemba came to recall us to the prose of life by announcing that our supper was ready; and, after that, we stretched ourselves on our goat-skins, so as to form a triangle, with our baggage piled up in the middle, for we by no means trusted to the sanctity of the place to secure us from thieves, if there should be any in the neighbourhood. The little temple was, as we have said, dedicated to the divinity of the Yellow River, and there stood, on a pedestal of grey brick, an idol as hideous as they usually are in the Chinese pagodas. It had a broad flat face of a vinous colour, and two great prominent eyes, like hen's eggs, placed in their orbits point upwards. It had thick eyebrows, not horizontal, but so as to form an obtuse angle; a marine shell on its head, and it brandished a sword with a menacing air. On the right and left were two acolytes, who were putting out their tongues at him as if in mockery. Just as we were about going to sleep, we saw coming towards us a man who carried in his hand a little painted paper lantern. He opened the gate of the enclosure round the Miao, prostrated himself three times, burnt incense in the cassolets, and lit a small lamp at the foot of the idol. This person was not a Bonze, — his hair fell down in long plaits, and his blue dress showed him to be a man of the world. When he went away he told us that he had left the door of the temple open, and that we should do better to sleep inside than under the portico. We thanked him, but said we were very well where we were; and we then inquired who the idol was, and why he burned incense to it?

"It is the spirit of the Hoang-Ho, who inhabits this temple," he replied; "and I burn incense in order that my fishing may be fortunate."

"What nonsense you are talking!" cried the insolent Samdadchiemba. — "How does it happen, then, that the inundation has come, and that your *Pou-Sa* (idol) has been but lately covered with mud?"

At this unexpected apostrophe the Pagan suddenly took to his heels, and fled — a circumstance that surprised us very much at the time, but it was afterwards explained.

The Chinese government is obliged annually to expend enormous sums to keep the river within its bed. In the year 1799 it cost 1,682,000*l.*

We now stretched ourselves out once more, and endeavoured to sleep, — but not very successfully; for lying thus between the great sheets of water of the inundated country and the bed of the river, we suffered all night from a piercing chill that seemed to reach the very marrow of our bones. The sky was pure and serene, but in the morning, when we rose, we found the marshes covered by a thick coating of ice.

We promptly made our preparations for departure, but, in collecting our goods, we found that one handkerchief did not answer to the call, and we recollected that we had imprudently left it hanging on the railing. No one had been near us but the man who had burnt incense; and we might therefore not unreasonably conclude that he was the thief, and that this was the cause of his precipitate retreat.

We loaded our camels and repaired to the bank, foreseeing a day full of troubles and difficulties of all kinds. Camels have such a terror of water, that it is sometimes found impossible to get them into a boat. They are beaten till they are quite bruised — their noses torn—to no purpose. You might kill them without inducing them to advance a step. On this occasion, the kind of boat we were to cross in increased our perplexity. It was not broad and flat like those commonly used for a ferry, but had high sides, so that the animals had to leap over at the risk of breaking their legs.

The boatmen had already seized on our effects, to transport them into their abominable locomotive, but we stopped them, saying — "Wait a minute; let us see if we can pass the camels; if not, it is of no use to take the luggage."

"Where do your camels come from," was the reply, "that they don't know how to get into a boat?"

"It matters little where they come from: that large white camel is never willing to pass a river, even on a flat boat."

"Flat, or not flat — large or small, we'll make it come." — And he ran to his boat for a great spar.

"Lay hold of the string," said the fellow to his companion; "pinch the great brute's nose. We'll see if we can't manage to make him sit down in our house;"—and whilst the one in the boat pulled with all his might the cord attached to the nose of the poor camel, the other struck it hard on the hind legs with the spar. It was all in vain; the creature uttered piercing cries, and stretched

out its long neck, but did not move, though it had but a single step to make. As they went on, its limbs shook, the blood ran down from its nostrils, but it did not stir one inch; and we could endure such a spectacle no longer, though our embarrassment was extreme as to what we were to do.

"That's enough! It's of no use to beat the creature any more," we said; "you might break its legs without inducing it to enter your bad boat:" and the fellows sat down, for they too were tired; and the moment they left it to itself, the camel began to vomit, bringing up a vast quantity of half-chewed grass, which emitted a suffocating smell.

What could we do? Return to Chagan-Kouren, sell our camels, and buy some mules,—that was our first thought; but the boatmen suggested another plan. Two days' journey from the town, they said, there was another ferry, and there the boats were flat, and quite fit for camels. This appeared to us the better plan of the two, and we were about to adopt it, when the boatman exclaimed—"I must make one more trial!" with the tone of a man who has hit on a good idea; and then burst into a fit of laughter.

"Let us see what your plan is," said we; "but make haste about it; we have no time to lose, and we don't see anything to laugh at."

"Take the cord," said he to his companion, "and pull the camel gently as near as you can."

When the camel had got so near that its knees touched the boat, the man retired a few steps backward, and then suddenly rushed with all his weight at its hinder quarters. The sudden shock forced the camel to bend its legs; and when the operation was repeated a second time almost immediately, it had no way of avoiding a fall but that of stepping into the boat with its front legs; and the rest was comparatively easy; a few gentle pulls and pushes were sufficient. As soon as the great camel was fairly embarked, all was merriment; the same method was employed with the other camels, and the whole party was soon triumphantly afloat.

Before detaching the rope that held the boat to the shore, the boatman wished to make the camels lie down, for fear the movement of their great bulk might upset the boat. The operation was a droll one enough. As soon as ever he approached one of the camels, the creature, who seemed to have been keeping in reserve a mouthful of half-chewed grass, spit it all in his face; the boatman retaliated by spitting at the camel; and though he made it lie down, as soon as he turned away to attend to another, the first

camel got up again; then he had to come back to it; and there was a constant running backwards and forwards, and a reciprocal spitting kept up, in which the boatman certainly had the worst of it, for he was covered from head to foot with a disgusting greenish matter, without having at all succeeded in arranging the camels to his liking. Samdadchiemba, who had laughed till he cried, at length took pity on the unfortunate Charon: "Go." said he; "do you mind your boat, and leave me to attend to my beasts—every one to his trade;"—and we had hardly put off, before the camels were all lying quietly down one against the other.

At length, then, we were fairly afloat upon the Yellow River. We had four rowers, but they could hardly resist the violence of the current; and we had scarcely got half across, when one of the camels suddenly rose; and the boatman, with a frightful malediction, told us to take care of our cattle, if we did not wish that we should all be drowned. There was, in fact, for a time imminent danger, for the creature kept swaying about with the motion of the boat; but, fortunately, Samdadchiemba induced it to lie down again, and we got off with no more harm than the fright.

On disembarking we found the opposite shore covered with deep mud, and on asking the boatman when he thought we should get clear of the marshes, he said, "Why—it will soon be noon;—well, by the evening you will get to the banks of the little river, and to-morrow you will have dry ground."

With this sorry comfort we went on our way through one of the most detestable countries that a traveller could possibly encounter. The direction that we had to follow had been pointed out to us; but the inundation had obliterated every path, and we could only regulate our course by that of the sun, as far as the quagmires would permit us. Sometimes we made long circuits to reach places that seemed to be covered with grass, but when we came up to them we had before us only a vast extent of green stagnant water. Then we had to turn back and try again in all directions, without ever finding an end to our miseries. There was nothing but wading through mud and stagnant pools, and we dreaded every moment to fall into some deep hole.

Our beasts, terrified and exhausted, had no longer the strength or the courage to go on; and we had to use violence—to strike them continually—to rouse them to exertion, so that they uttered loud cries. Sometimes their legs would become entangled in the marshy

plants, and they could only go on by bounds and leaps, with the imminent danger of flinging ourselves and our baggage over into the deep mud pools. But all these risks only made us feel more completely how the providence of God watched over us. Whenever we did fall, it was always on a rather dry spot: if the camels had fallen in the mud they must have been suffocated.

In this frightful country we met three Chinese travellers;—they had made a little packet of their shoes and clothes, which they carried on their shoulders, while they toiled on painfully through the mud. We asked them where we could find a good road.

"You would have done better," they said, "to remain at Chagan-Kouren. Where do you think to get to with your camels?" and they regarded us with a compassionate expression, as if they thought we should never get to the end of our journey.

The sun was about to set when we perceived a Mongol habitation — and made towards it, in as straight a line as we could, without thinking any more of our difficulties; indeed we had very little choice, for turns and circuits only served to prolong our misery.

The Tartars were frightened at seeing us arrive thus covered with mud, and bathed in perspiration. They immediately served us tea with milk, and generously offered us their hospitality. Their little habitation, though built on a rather high hillock, had been half carried away by the waters; and we should have been puzzled to know why they had settled in such a miserable country, if they had not themselves informed us, that they had the care of the flocks belonging to the Chinese inhabitants of Chagan-Kouren. After having rested a short time, we asked about our route; and they told us that the small river was about two miles and a half off, and that after we had crossed it we should have dry ground. We then thanked the good Tartars, and continued our journey. In about half an hour we came to a vast extent of water, furrowed by numerous fishing boats. The name of Paga-Gol (Little River) might suit it in ordinary times; but now it rather resembled a sea. The banks, however, from their great elevation, were perfectly dry, and the remarkable beauty of the pasturage induced us to stop here several days to rest our animals, who, since our departure from Chagan-Kouren, had endured almost incredible fatigues; and we ourselves felt much in need of repose. As soon as we had fairly taken possession of our post,

we dug a ditch round our tent to drain off the water; and we used the earth thrown out, to stop up the chinks of our temporary habitation. We then, by the aid of the cushions and carpets which had formed our camels' saddles, made ourselves up thick soft litters; and, in short, we spared no pains to make ourselves regularly comfortable.

CHAP. VII.

Regulation of the Nomadic Life.—Aquatic and Migratory Birds.—Fishermen of the Paga-Gol Fishing Party.—Preparations for Departure.—Wounded Fisherman.—Passage of the Paga-Gol.—Dangers of the Route.—Devotion of Samdadchiemba.—Meeting with the first Minister of the King of the Ortous.—Encampment.

The peace and tranquillity that we now enjoyed in our encampment wonderfully restored our health after the fatigues we had endured in the marshes. The weather was magnificent, the temperature mild and moderate, the sky pure and serene; we had also fuel at discretion, excellent and abundant pastures, as well as the brackish water, and efflorescence of nitre, in which our camels delighted. All contributed to expand our hearts.

We had formed for ourselves a rule of life, not, perhaps, quite quite in harmony with those adopted in religious houses; but it was well enough suited to the wants of our little community.

Every morning, as soon as the sky began to brighten, and before the first rays of the sun shone on the canvas of our tent, we rose, without having any occasion for a bell; and after finishing our brief toilette, rolled up our goat-skins into a corner, put in order our cooking utensils, and then gave a little touch with the broom to our apartment; for we wished, as far as possible, to establish order and cleanliness in our household. Every thing in the world is relative; and the interior of our tent, which would have made a European laugh, excited the admiration of the Tartars who came sometimes to pay us a visit. The cleanliness of our wooden saucers—our well-scoured kettle—our clothes, which were not quite encrusted with grease — all contrasted with the disorder, dirt, and confusion of the Tartar abodes.

When we had set our room to rights, we said our prayers together; and then we dispersed, every one his own way, into the desert, to pursue his meditations on some holy theme. Oh! there

needed not, in the profound silence of these vast solitudes, a book to suggest to us a subject of prayer! The emptiness of earthly things — the majesty of God — the inexhaustible treasures of His providence — the brevity of life — the importance of labouring for a world to come — and a thousand other salutary thoughts, came of themselves, without effort on our parts. It is in the desert that the heart of man is free, and is not subjected to any kind of tyranny. Far from us were the hollow systems, the Utopias of imaginary happiness, which continually vanish as you seem to grasp them — the inexhaustible combinations of selfishness, the burning passions which in Europe clash and irritate each other perpetually. In the midst of our silent meadows, nothing disturbed our just appreciation of the things of this world as compared with those of eternity.

The exercise that followed this meditation was not, it must be confessed, of a spiritual character; but it was very necessary, and it had its charms. Each of us took a sack on his back, and went out in various directions in search of argols. Those who have never led the nomadic life will have some difficulty in comprehending how this kind of occupation can be susceptible of enjoyment. Yet, when you have the good fortune to find suddenly among the grass an argol remarkable for its size and dryness, you experience of those sudden pleasurable emotions that for the moment make you happy. It is much the same pleasure that the hunter has in finding tracks of the game he is pursuing, or the child in discovering a bird's nest.

When our sacks were full, we used to go with pride to empty them at the door of the tent; then we struck a light, built up our fire, and, while the water bubbled in the kettle, we kneaded our flour up into little cakes, and put them to bake amongst the ashes. The repast was simple, but it had an exquisite relish; for we had prepared it ourselves, and we had appetites that made sufficient seasoning. After breakfast, while Samdadchiemba was bringing back the animals from their pasture, we recited a portion of our Breviary. Towards noon we permitted ourselves a short but sound sleep, which was never interrupted by nightmare or painful dreams. This was necessary, as we sat up very late at night; for we could not give up the enjoyment of the beautiful moonlight shining on the waters. All day there was the deepest silence in the desert; but, as the shades of night came on, the scene

became animated, and even noisy. Aquatic birds arrived in countless troops, and soon millions of hoarse and screaming voices filled the air with their wild harmony. In listening to the angry cries and passionate accents of these creatures, as they disputed for the tufts of grass on which they wished to pass the night, one could not help thinking of a nation in the wild transports of civil war, in which each is endeavouring to snatch, by violence and clamour, some small portion of the goods of this life — itself brief as a passing night.

Tartary is peopled with these migratory birds; and, as we contemplated their innumerable battalions wheeling about in the air, and thought of the many countries they had traversed, we used to please ourselves by imagining that some among these myriads might have passed over the lovely soil of France, and have sought their food in the plains of Languedoc, or in the mountains of the Jura. Amongst these birds was one which I believe to be unknown to our naturalists. It is of about the size of a quail, of an ash colour, with black spots, its eyes of a brilliant black, and surrounded with a bright sky-blue rim. Its legs have no feathers, but are covered with long rough hair; and its feet are not like those of any other bird, but resemble those of the green lizard, and are covered with a shell so hard as to resist the sharpest knife. This singular creature, which seems to partake at once of the character of the bird, the quadruped, and the reptile, is called by the Chinese *Loung-Kio*, that is, Dragon's Foot. They generally arrive in great flocks from the north, especially when much snow has fallen, flying with astonishing rapidity, so that the movement of their wings is like a shower of hail. When caught they are extremely fierce; the hair on their legs bristles up if you approach them, and if you venture to caress them you are sure to receive some violent blows from their beak.

During the first night that we passed at our encampment on the *Paga-Gol*, we had noticed a strange sound, something like the roll of a drum, that appeared to come from the direction of the water. When day broke we went down to the river to try and discover the cause of it. We found on the shore a fisherman who was boiling his tea in a little kettle raised upon three stones; and he soon explained the riddle. It appeared that the fishermen were in the habit, during the night, of rowing about in all directions, and beating on hollow wooden boxes in order to frighten the fish and drive them

into the nets. The one whom we interrogated had passed the whole night in this toilsome occupation, and his red and swelled eyes and haggard features told that he had been long in want of sufficient sleep. He said the fishing season was very short, not more than three months; that the Paga-Gol would soon be frozen over, and that then there would be no longer any means of getting at the fish.

"You see, my Lord Lamas," said he, "that we have no time to lose. When I have drank my tea and eaten a bit of oatmeal, I shall get into my boat again, and go and raise my nets that I have put down over there to the west. Then I shall put the fish into the osier baskets that you see floating; then I shall look over my nets, and mend those that are broken; and after I have had a nap, as soon as the *old grandfather* (the sun) hides himself, I shall cast my nets again; and then I must row about the water and beat my wooden drum."

These details interested us; and, as our occupations at the moment were not very urgent, we asked the fisherman whether he would let us go with him when he raised his nets.

"Since," he replied, "personages such as you do not disdain to get into my poor boat, and to be present at my awkward and disagreeable fishing, I accept the benefit which you propose to me."

We sat down by the side of his fire while he took his meal, which was made in a very unceremonious manner. When the tea was sufficiently boiled, he took a handful of oatmeal, put it into his wooden bowl, stirred it about, and kneaded it a little with his hand, and then swallowed it without any further cookery. After having repeated this operation three or four times, the meal was finished, and we all got into the boat. We had a delightful row over water as smooth as glass, through troops of cormorants and wild geese, who just opened to us a passage as we passed. Here and there we saw, floating, bits of wood, to which the nets were attached, and, as they were drawn up, we saw the beautiful fish gleaming through the meshes. The fisherman only kept the fine ones; those that were of less than half a pound weight he threw back into the water. After having examined some of the nets he said, "My Lord Lamas, do not you eat fish? I will sell you some if you will buy it."

At this proposal the two poor French missionaries looked at each other without speaking; but it was easy to see that they

would have had no great objection to try the flavour of the fish had they not been restrained by a motive of prudence.

"How do you sell your fish?" said one of them.

"Eighty sapecks (4*d.*) a pound."

"Eighty sapecks! Why that is dearer than mutton!"

"Your words are true; but what is mutton compared with fish from the Hoang-Ho?"

"No matter, it is too dear for us; we have a long journey to go, and our purse is not well furnished: we must be saving."

The fisherman did not urge us further, but pushed his boat towards the place where were the nets not yet drawn.

"Why do you throw away so many fish?" we asked: "are they bad?"

"No; all the fish of the Yellow River are excellent; they are too little, that's all."

"Oh! then you expect to get them again when they are bigger?"

The fisherman began to laugh. "No," said he, "the river brings down plenty of new fish every year, big and little. We don't take the little ones, because we can't sell them well; but if you like them, my Lord Lamas, I will not throw them away."

We accepted the offer; and the smaller fry, as it was presented to us, was deposited in a basket.

When the fishing was over, we found ourselves in possession of a little store of very pretty fish, and after having washed a handkerchief very clean, and tying our fish up in it, directed our march triumphantly towards the tent.

"Where can you have been to, my spiritual fathers?" cried Samdadchiemba, as soon as he saw us approaching; "the tea has boiled and got cold, and then boiled again and got cold again."

"Empty out your tea," said we; "we shall not eat oatmeal to-day, — we have got some fresh fish. Make haste and bake some bread."

Our long absence had put Samdadchiemba out of humour; his brow was more wrinkled than usual, and his little black eyes were sparkling with spite. But no sooner did he catch sight of our handkerchief full of fish, than his brow smoothed, his whole face expanded, and he smilingly began to untie the strings of our sack of wheaten flour, which we only used on grand occasions, and was soon busy with his pastry, while we went down to a small lake that was close to the tent, to gut and clean the fish.

Presently he ran up to us. "What are you going to do?" said he; "you must not commit sin."

"What do you mean? Who is going to commit a sin?"

"Don't you see that some of those fish are moving still? You must let them die gently; it is a sin to kill any living thing."

"Go along to your bread, and let us alone. So you've still got your metempsychosic notions, — you believe that men are transformed into brutes, and brutes into men!"

The mouth of our Dchiahour distended into a long grin. "*Ho-lé!*" said he, striking his forehead; "what a hard head I've got! — I had quite forgot:" and, looking a little confused, he went back to his baking. The fish were fried in mutton-fat, and found exquisite.

In Tartary, and in the north of China, fishing only lasts till the beginning of winter, when all the waters freeze. The fish which has been kept in reservoirs is then taken out and exposed to the air, when it freezes, and can be packed up without inconvenience. During the long winters of the north of the empire, the rich Chinese can always by this means procure fresh fish; but they must take care not to lay in any greater stock than will last during the cold season, for at the first thaw it putrefies.

During our period of repose we were occupied with considering how we should pass the "Little River." A Chinese family had obtained from the king of Ortous the privilege of taking travellers across; but the price which they asked — 1000 sapecks (4*s.* 2*d.*) — appeared to us exorbitant. On the third day of our halt, we saw a fisherman coming towards our tent, who was dragging himself painfully along, leaning on a long stick. His pale, thin face expressed much suffering; and as soon as he was seated beside our fire, we said to him, "Brother, it appears that you are leading a life that is not happy."

"Ah!" replied he, "I am very unfortunate, but what can I do? I must submit to the laws of Heaven. Fifteen days ago I was going to visit a Mongol tent, and I was bitten in the leg by a furious dog. It has made a wound which is continually growing larger and more virulent. They tell me that you are from the sky of the west, and I am come to you. The men of the west say the Tartar Lamas have an unlimited power, — with a single word they can cure the most severe maladies."

"They have deceived you when they said we had any such

power:" and thence we took occasion to explain some of the great truths of our religion. But he was a Chinese, and, like the rest of his nation, caring little about religion, and our words only passed through his ears, — all his thoughts were absorbed by his wound.

We thought that we might perhaps relieve him by the application of the *Kou-Kouo* plant. This plant is originally from the Philippine Islands; its fruits are of an ashy brown colour, extremely hard and bitter. The manner of employing it is by steeping it in cold water, and it then forms an excellent medicament for wounds and contusions, and the water, taken inwardly, cools the blood and allays inflammation. This fruit plays an important part in Chinese medicine, and is sold by all druggists; it is also used, with great success, to treat the internal maladies of oxen and horses; and in the north of China we had often witnessed its salutary effects.

We dressed the wounds of the poor fisherman with one of these fruits pulverised, and mixed with cold water, and then gave him some clean linen to replace the disgusting rags that had served him for a bandage. When we had done all we could for him, we noticed on his face an expression of great embarrassment. His colour rose, he cast down his eyes, and he began phrases which he did not finish. "Brother" said we to him, "you have something on your mind."

"Holy personages," said he, "you see that I am poor, you have dressed my wound, you have made me a great vase of healing water; I do not know how much I should offer you for all that."

"If that is what troubles you," said we eagerly, "let peace return to your heart. In dressing your wound, we have but fulfilled a duty imposed on us by our religion. The remedies that we have prepared we freely give to you."

Our words seemed greatly to relieve him. He prostrated himself before us, and struck his forehead three times against the ground as a sign of gratitude, and before going away he asked us whether we intended to remain there any time longer.

We replied that we should be glad to go the next day, but that we could not agree with the ferryman on the price of the passage.

"I have a boat" said he, "and since you have dressed my wound, I will try to-morrow to take you across. If the boat belonged only to me I could promise to do so at once; but I have two partners, and I must consult them, as well as ask them about some dangerous parts of the river. Do not say anything more to the ferryman

about your passage, I will come back before night and let you know."

True to his word he returned accordingly, and informed us that his partners were not willing to take us for nothing, as they would have to lose a day's fishing, but that they would take us for four hundred sapecks (1*s.* 8*d*).

On the next day but one, the time appointed, we repaired at an early hour to the fisherman's hut, and in a few minutes our luggage was embarked, and we had entered the boat with our patient. It was agreed that a young man on horseback should lead the mule, and that Samdadchiemba should take charge of the three camels, but the animals had to make a long circuit to find a place where the river was fordable.

The passage was very pleasant at first, the water was smooth, and as the boat was light, a single man could manage it quite well with two oars, the handles of which were crossed before him. But our pleasure did not last long, for whilst we were amusing ourselves by listening to the harmonious dash of the oars as they struck the water in regular time, it was suddenly interrupted by a tumultuous noise, mingling with the long groans of our camels. We stopped, and turning our heads saw them struggling in the water without getting on a step. In the confusion we also distinguished the voice of the Dchiahour who was moving his arms wildly about as if to attract our attention. The boatman was not willing to row towards them, and so lose, as he said, the favourable track on which he had had the good fortune to hit; but as we insisted he did so.

Samdadchiemba was purple with passion, and as soon as we came up with him he began to abuse the boatman violently for having given him a guide who knew nothing of the way. "Did you want to have us all drowned?" said he. "Here we are surrounded by holes we don't know how deep." The animals in fact would neither advance nor go back. It was of no use to beat them, they remained quite motionless. The boatman in his turn launched abundance of curses at the head of his partner. "Since you don't know the way you ought to have said so," he added, "there's nothing now for it but to go back to the hut. You can tell you cousin to mount the horse, he will be a better guide than you."

But though to go ashore and get a new guide was certainly the best plan, it was not very easy to execute; the animals were terri-

fied in the midst of this vast expanse of water like a sea round them, and the young guide was quite confused. He beat the horse and turned and turned again the bit, but to no purpose. The horse reared, dashed up the water all round him, but that was all; he did not move a step, and the young man who did not appear to be a better horseman than he was a guide, ended by losing his balance and shooting down and disappearing in the water. He soon came up again, however, in a place where the water reached only to his shoulders. Samdadchiemba, seeing all this confusion, foamed with rage, and at length adroitly divesting himself of his clothes without getting down from his camel, he threw them to us in the boat, and then slipped down into the water, crying to the boatman, "take away your guide, I won't have any thing more to do with him," boldly set off through the water which reached to his neck, and drew the animals after him, for seeing the Dchiahour open the march, they had no objection to follow.

We were much affected at this instance of courage and self-devotion in our young neophyte, who, for our sakes, had made no hesitation at plunging into the water though the cold was very severe. We looked after him with anxiety, till we saw him almost ashore; and then the boatman assured us that we might make ourselves easy, for that he would find in the hut a man who knew the river well, and could avoid all the dangerous places.

We then resumed our passage, but we did not get on so well as the first time, for the boatman could not recover the right track, and we got entangled among the water plants, and after a time the water became so shallow that we were fairly forcing our way through the mud. At length the boatman stepped out into the water, and passing a rope round his loins began to pull with all his might, while we took long poles and pushed. But all our efforts united produced very slight results, and the boatman got in again and lay down quite discouraged.

"We will wait till the transports pass," he said, "and we can follow them."

We waited therefore—the man in profound dejection, and reproaching himself vehemently for having undertaken such a piece of work—and we on our side somewhat provoked with him. We would gladly have got into the water to pursue our journey; but besides the difficulty of carrying the baggage such an attempt would have been excessively dangerous, for the ground was so

irregular that although the water was sometimes too shallow for the lightest boat, it was here and there of a tremendous depth. When it was near noon we saw three boats crossing the river; they belonged to the family who had the monopoly of the ferry; and by great exertion we managed to put ourselves on their track. They stopped, however, as we came up, and we recognised the man with whom we had been in treaty concerning the price of the passage, and by the oblique and wrathful looks he launched at us, shaking his oar the while, we saw that he felt spiteful.

"*Turtle's eggs* that you are," cried he to our boatman—"how much are these men of the West to pay you for the passage? They must have given you a pretty handful of sapecks for you to dare thus to encroach on my rights. I shall have a word to say to you about it by and by."

"Don't you answer," said our man to us in a low tone—then raising his voice—"Hollo! conductor, you're all astray, you're talking nonsense. These Lamas don't give me a single sapeck. They have cured my leg with one of their Western remedies; and ought I not to show my gratitude to them? Oughtn't I for such a benefit as that just to take them across the Paga-Gol? Can I do less than lend them my boat?"

The ferryman grumbled something between his teeth, and seemed to feign belief in the account he had received; and the little altercation was followed by a profound silence on both sides.

Whilst our small boat followed quietly in the track of the large one, we perceived a horseman galloping towards us from the shore, and splashing up the water all round him. As soon as he was near enough to make us hear, he stopped abruptly.

"Quick! Quick!" he cried, "lose no time, row with all your might; the first minister of the King of Ortous is down there with his suite; he is waiting for your boats, row quickly."

He who spoke thus was a Tartar Mandarin; a blue ball surmounting his fur cap proclaimed his dignity. After having given these orders, he turned round, and giving a cut to his horse disappeared by the way he had come. As soon as he was gone loud murmurs broke out on all sides.

"Now we shall have a day of forced labour. It's mighty generous of the *Toudzelaktsi* (Mongol minister). We shall have to row all day and not earn a single sapeck, and may think ourselves well off too if we're not beaten by the stinking Tartar. Come

along, let's row and sweat — kill ourselves, we shall have the honour of carrying a *Toudzelaktsi.*"

And then bursts of scornful laughter were mingled with violent imprecations against the Mongol authorities.

Our man was rather more quiet than the rest, and he explained to us his cause of vexation.

"It is a very unfortunate day for me," he said. "We shall be obliged to take the *Toudzelaktsi*, perhaps, as far as Chagan-Kouren. I am alone — I am ill — and, what is more, we shall want the boat this evening to cast the nets."

We were extremely sorry for this accident, for we could not help thinking we had been the involuntary cause of the miseries which the poor fisherman was going to endure. We knew it was no trifle to have to render a service to a Chinese or Tartar Mandarin. Every thing must be done with all your might, and done quickly; no matter what may be the danger or difficulties, the Mandarin must always get what he requires. We resolved, therefore, to try whether we could get our sick boatman out of some of his difficulties.

"Brother," said we, "the Mandarin who is waiting for these boats is the minister of the king of this country. Be easy, we will try to manage the matter. As long as we are in your boat the satellites of this Mandarin will not meddle with you. Go along as slowly as you can, and stop sometimes."

While we were lingering the three other boats arrived at the place where the great man was waiting for them; and soon two Mandarins with blue balls came galloping towards us.

"What are you doing?" they cried — "why don't you come on?"

"Mongol brothers," said we, "pray your master to manage with the three boats which have already arrived. This man is sick. He has been rowing a long time — it would be cruelty to hinder him from taking a little rest."

"Be it according to your words, Lord Lamas," said the horsemen, and they returned to the shore.

We retained our course, but as slowly as we possibly could, in order to give time for every one to embark before we came up, and we soon saw the three boats coming back loaded with the Mandarins and their attendants. Their numerous horses were going in a troop in another direction, under the guidance of a boatman.

When we met the other boats, a voice called to us "Lord Lamas, are you at peace?" — and, by the red ball which decorated the cap of the speaker, and the richness of his embroidered dress, we recognized the minister."

"*Toudzelaktsi* of the Ortous," we said, "our navigation has been slow but fortunate — may peace accompany you also;" and after some necessary formulas of Tartar urbanity, we rowed on, and no one interfered with us.

CHAP. VIII.

Country of Ortous.—Barren and sandy Steppes.—Form of Mongol Tartar Government.—Nobility.—Slavery.—Election and Enthronisation of a Living Buddha.—Lama Studies.—Violent Storm.—Refuge in the Grottoes.—Meeting with a Tartar in a Cavern.

The sun was high when we rose, and, issuing from the tent, we took a view round us to make acquaintance with the new country, which the darkness of the night had hindered us from examining the evening before. It appeared bleak and sterile, but at least we were glad to see no more mud pools or marshes.

We had now left behind us the Yellow River and the inundated country, and had entered on the Land of Grass, if that name could be given to a country so barren as that of Ortous. Whichever way you turn you find nothing but rocky ravines, hills of mud, and plains encumbered with fine moveable sand, which the wind sweeps about in all directions. The only pasturage consists in a few thorny shrubs and thin heaths of a fetid odour. Here and there you find a little thin brittle grass, which sticks so closely to the ground, that the animals cannot browse it, without scraping up the sand at the same time, and the whole was so dry, that we soon began almost to regret the marshes that had grieved us so much on the banks of the Yellow River. There was not a brook or a spring where the traveller could quench his thirst, only from time to time we met with a pool or tank filled with muddy and fetid water.

The Lamas with whom we had been acquainted in the Blue Town, had warned us of what we should have to endure in this country from scarcity of water, and by their advice we had bought two pails, which proved very serviceable. Whenever we had the good fortune to meet with ponds or wells dug by the Tartars, we

filled our buckets, without minding the bad quality of the water, and always took care to use it as sparingly as possible, as if it were some rare and precious liquor. Careful as we were, however, we often had to go whole days without a drop to moisten our lips; and yet our personal privations were nothing, compared with the suffering of seeing our animals almost without water, when the scanty herbage that they got was nearly calcined by nitre. They grew visibly thinner every day; the aspect of our horse became quite pitiable; he went along, dropping his head quite to the ground, and seeming ready to faint at every step; and the camels seemed to balance themselves painfully on their long legs, while their lean humps hung down like empty bags. The flocks belonging to the Tartars of the Ortous are very different from those which browse among the fat pastures of Chakar, or Gechekten. The oxen, and horses especially, look miserable, for they require fresh pastures and abundant water, though sheep and camels can feed on plants impregnated with saltpetre. The Mongols of the Ortous, themselves, also look scarcely less miserable than their cattle. They live under tents, made of rags of felt or skins, so old and dirty, that it is scarcely possible to imagine them human dwellings. Whenever we happened to encamp near any of these we were sure to have a crowd of these wretched people coming to visit us, prostrating themselves at our feet, rolling on the ground, and bestowing on us the most magnificent titles to induce us to give them alms. We were not rich, but we could do no other than share with them a little of what the goodness of Providence had bestowed on us. A little tea, a handful of oatmeal, roasted millet, or perhaps some mutton fat, was all we had to offer; we were sorry to give so little, but we had not much to give. We missionaries are ourselves poor men, living on the alms of our brethren in Europe.

Without being acquainted with the kind of government, under which the Tartars live, it is not easy to understand why, in the midst of this vast wilderness, where water and pastures may be met with in abundance, men should condemn themselves to pass their lives in so poor and wretched a country as the Ortous. But although the Tartars are perpetually moving from one place to another, they are obliged to remain within the limits of their own kingdom, and in dependence on their own master, for slavery still exists among the Mongol tribes, although in a very mild form. Mongolia is divided into several sovereignties, the chiefs of which

are tributary to the Emperor of China, though their relations with him are rather uncertain and fluctuating. Sometimes it appears as if he had no right to displace any reigning chief or king; at others, as if his will were all-powerful; but in case of dispute the matter is, in fact, settled only by force.

In the several states, the families that are connected by any ties of kindred with the sovereign constitute a kind of nobility. They are called *Taitsi*, and are distinguished by wearing a blue ball on their caps, and it is from amongst them that the chiefs choose their ministers. These are only three in number, and are called *Toutze-lahtsi*, that is to say, "men who help," and, as a symbol of this dignity, they wear a red ball.

All Tartars who do not belong, within any degree, to the princely family, are in fact slaves — that is, they are absolutely dependent on the will of their masters, but there are between them none of the insolent distinctions that are commonly found in such a relation. Their mode of life is precisely the same, and if the slave enters the tent of the master, he never fails to offer him the customary courtesies of milk, tea, and pipes.

After some days' march we came to a small Lama convent, richly built, and in a picturesque and romantic situation, which we passed without stopping. But we had not gone more than a gun-shot distance before we heard a horse galloping behind us, and, turning our heads, perceived a Lama, who was coming eagerly towards us. "Brothers," he cried, "are you in such a hurry that you cannot rest yourselves for a day, and pay your adorations to our saint?"

"Yes! we are in a hurry; we are on a long journey towards the West."

"I knew by your faces you were not Mongols; I know you are from the West; but since you have a long journey to go, you would do well to prostrate yourselves before our Saint: that will bring you good fortune."

"We do not prostrate ourselves before any man; the true faith of the West is opposed to this practice."

"Our Saint is not a mere man; you do not think, perhaps, that in our small convent we have the happiness to possess a *Chaberon* — a living Buddha! Two years ago, he deigned to descend from the holy mountains of Thibet, and at present he is seven years old. In one of his former lives, he was the Grand Lama of a magnificent *Soume* (Lama convent) down there in the valley, but which was

destroyed, the books of prayer say, in the wars of Ching-Kis. But, as after a few years the Saint made his appearance again, we built him in haste a small Soumé. Come, brothers! Our holy one will raise his right hand above your heads, and happiness will accompany your steps."

"Men who are acquainted with the holy doctrines of the West, do not believe in the transmigrations of the Chaberons. We adore only the Creator of Heaven and Earth, whose name is Jehovah. We think that the child whom you have made your superior, has no power at all, and that men have nothing either to hope or to fear from him."

The Lama, after having listened to these words, stood a moment as if stupified; but by degrees his features became animated with passion, and launching at us a look full of wrath, he pulled the bridle of his horse, and turning his back on us, galloped off, muttering between his teeth some words which we did not take for a blessing.

These living Buddhas, in whose various transmigrations the Tartars have the firmest faith, are very numerous, and are always placed at the head of the principal convents. Sometimes a Chaberon begins his career modestly in a small temple, and surrounded by only a few disciples. By degrees, his reputation increases, and the temple becomes a place of pilgrimage; the neighbouring Lamas build their cells near it and bring it into fashion, and so it goes on from year to year, till it becomes perhaps the most famous in the country.

The election and enthronisation of the living Buddhas is curious enough. When a Grand Lama is *gone away*, that is to say, is dead, the matter is by no means made a subject of mourning in the convent. There are no tears or regrets, for every one knows that the Chaberon will soon reappear. The apparent death is only the commencement of a new existence, a new link added to a boundless and uninterrupted chain of successive lives—simply a palingenesia. Whilst the Saint is in the chrysalis state, his disciples are in the greatest anxiety, and the grand point is to discover the place where their master has returned to life. If a rainbow appears, they consider it as a sign sent to them from their Lama, to assist them in their researches. Every one then goes to prayers, and especially the convent which has been widowed of its Buddha is incessant in its fastings and orisons, and a troop of chosen Lamas set out to consult the Churtchun, or diviner of hidden things. They relate

to him the time, place, and circumstances under which the rainbow has appeared: and he then, after reciting some prayers, opens his books of divination, and at length pronounces his oracle; while the Tartars who have come to consult him, listen on their knees with the most profound devotion. Your Grand Lama, they say, has returned to life in Thibet—at such a place,—in such a family; and when the poor Mongols have heard the oracle, they return full of joy to their convent, to announce the happy news. Sometimes, according to the Mongols, the Chaberon announces himself, at an age when other infants cannot articulate a word; but whether his place of abode be found by means of the rainbow, or by this spontaneous revelation, it is always at a considerable distance, and in a country difficult of access. A grand procession is then made, headed by the king, or the greatest man in the country, to fetch the young Chaberon. The Mongols often go through incredible fatigue and hardships, traverse frightful deserts, and sometimes, after being plundered by robbers, stripped of every thing, and compelled to return, set out again with undiminished courage.

When the Chaberon is found, however, he is not saluted Grand Lama without a previous examination. They hold a solemn session, in which the living Buddha is subjected to a scrupulous examination. He is asked what is the name of the convent of which he was the Chaberon, how far off it is, how many Lamas there are in it, and so forth. After all these questions, they place before him books of prayer, articles of furniture, cups, tea-pots, &c., and he is required to point out those which he has made use of in his former state of existence. The child, who is seldom more than five or six years old, usually comes out victoriously from the trial, and points out without hesitation every thing that had formerly belonged to him. Doubtless, the simple Mongols are in this matter often the dupes of those who have an interest in making a Grand Lama of the baby; but though a purely human philosophy will, of course, reject all such facts, or place them to the account of fraud, we Catholic missionaries believe that the great liar who deceived our first parents, still pursues in this world his system of falsehood, and may sometimes speak to men by the mouth of an infant, with the view to maintain the faith of his worshippers.

The title of the living Buddha having been confirmed, he is conducted in triumph to the Soumé of which he is to become Grand Lama; and as he passes along, the Tartars come in great

troops and prostrate themselves before him, and bring him offerings. As soon as he arrives at the Lama convent, he is placed on the altar, and kings, princes and Mandarins, every Tartar, from the highest to the lowest in the land, bows down before this child. There is no Tartar kingdom which does not possess one of these living Buddhas; but besides this superior, there is always another Grand Lama, chosen among the members of the royal family, with whom the real government of the convent rests. The famous maxim, "*Le roi règne et ne gouverne pas*," has been of old application among the Tartars.

Beneath these two sovereigns are several subaltern officers, charged with the details of the administration, besides scribes, who keep the accounts, and who are in general skilled in the Mongol, Thibetan, and Chinese languages. The rest of the inmates of the convent are divided into Lama-masters and Lama-disciples, or *Chabis*, of whom every Lama-master has one or more under his charge, and with whom he occupies a small house. The master instructs the Chabis in their prayers, and initiates them into the liturgy. The Chabis, in return, perform all domestic offices for the Lama-master, sweep his rooms, light his fire, and make his tea, as well as take care of his cattle and milk his cows.

The master then sets his pupil the lesson which he has to study, and this he may do at whatever time he likes, but if he does not know it at night, to repeat to the master, he is often subjected to severe punishment. In some cases, the Chabis, who have been too hardly treated, have made their escape, as our Dchiahour Samdadchiemba had done; but in general they submit patiently to whatever is inflicted on them, even to passing the night naked in the open air in winter time. We used to ask them sometimes if they could not learn their prayers without being beaten, but they always replied, very simply, that that was impossible: the prayers they knew best were always those they had received most blows for. "The Lamas who do not know how to pray," they said, "nor how to cast lots, nor how to cure diseases, are always those who have not been beaten enough by their masters."

Besides their private studies, the Chabis may attend public explanation of books of theology and medicine given in the Lama convents; but these lectures are generally very vague and insufficient for real instruction. But we shall have occasion to return to this subject in speaking of the Lama convents of Thibet.

The Thibetan books are alone considered canonical, and admitted into the reformed Buddhist worship; and the Mongol Lamas pass their lives in studying a foreign language, without troubling themselves at all about their own. There are a few convents where they recite prayers translated from the Thibetan into Mongol; but the Lamas, not unfrequently, do not so much as know the Mongol alphabet. If to the knowledge of the Thibetan and Mongol languages they add that of the Chinese and Mantchoo, they are considered to have almost passed the bounds of human knowledge.

As we advanced further into the country of the Ortous, it became more and more wild and dreary, and a tremendous storm which occurred brought us, in autumn, the cold of winter.

One day we were toiling painfully along through the dry and sandy desert; the perspiration was dripping from our foreheads, for the heat was suffocating, and we seemed almost crushed under the weight of the atmosphere, while our camels, with their necks stretched out, and their mouths half open, were seeking in vain for a cool breath. Towards noon the clouds began to gather and pile themselves up along the horizon, and fearing to be overtaken by the storm, we thought we would try and pitch the tent. But where? We looked round on all sides, we ascended the hills, in the hope of discovering some Tartar habitation, which might furnish us, in case of need, a little fuel; but it was in vain, — nothing but a dismal solitude met our eyes. From time to time we saw foxes retiring into their holes, and troops of yellow goats running to hide themselves in the gorges of the mountains. The clouds kept rising continually, and the wind began to blow in violent gusts, seeming sometimes to bring us the tempest, sometimes to drive it from us.

Whilst we were thus suspended between hope and fear, loud peals of thunder, and repeated flashes of lightning, that seemed to fire the heavens, came to warn us that we could do nothing but leave ourselves entirely in the hands of Providence. The icy wind of the North soon blew with such violence, that we were compelled to seek some shelter in a gorge that opened to the side of us, but we had not time to reach it before the tempest burst upon us. At first there fell rain in torrents, then hail, and then half-melted snow, that wetted us to the skin. We had alighted in the hope that walking might tend to keep us warm, but our legs sank into the deep, wet sand, so that it was impossible for us to go on;

and the only thing we could do was to crouch down by the side of our camels, and cling closely to them, to keep a little vital warmth in our bodies.

Whilst the storm was beating upon us in all its fury, we awaited with resignation whatever it might please Providence to appoint for us. To pitch the tent was impossible in the state of the canvas, wet as it was, and nearly frozen by the north wind; we could find no place for it either, for the water was pouring over the whole ground. In this painful situation, we looked at each other sorrowfully, for we felt the natural heat of the body every moment diminishing; our blood seemed to be about to freeze, and, persuaded that we should die during the night, we endeavoured to resign our lives to God.

One of the party, however, summoning all his strength and energy, climbed to a height that overlooked the neighbouring gorge, and at length discovered a path which, after a thousand windings, conducted to the bottom of the ravine, and following this for a short distance, he perceived, on the side of the mountain, large openings resembling doors. He ran eagerly to announce his discovery to his companions; his words seemed to revive them, and leaving the animals on the heights, we all descended eagerly into the ravine. On reaching the openings, we found they led not only to grottoes, formed by the hand of nature, but to large and handsome chambers, wrought by the skill and labour of man. Our first cry was an expression of thanksgiving for our rescue; we chose the largest and cleanest of the caverns for our asylum, and we passed at once from the extreme of wretchedness to the height of enjoyment. It was like an unexpected return from death to life.

From the solidity and elegance with which these subterranean habitations were constructed, we thought it probable that they had been inhabited by some Chinese families, who had come into the country to try to cultivate the soil; but disgusted, it was said, by its sterility, had renounced the attempt. Traces of cultivation that we perceived here and there confirmed our conjectures; and it is the practice of the Chinese who settle in Tartary, when they meet with mountains composed of very hard and solid materials, to dig grottoes in them. They are, in general, conveniently arranged on either side of the entrance, with windows that let in enough light to the interior; and the roof, the kang, the furnaces, are all covered with smooth, well-beaten plaster. These

grottos have the advantage of being warm in winter and cool in summer, but also the defect of wanting a fresh draught of air, — a want that sometimes renders them very unwholesome abodes. We had met with habitations of this kind before, but no where so well constructed as here in the Ortous.

We took possession then, as I have said, of one of these subterranean apartments, and we began to make a great fire in the stoves, by the aid of numerous bundles of hemp-stalks, which we had the good fortune to find in one of the chambers. Never during our whole journey had we had such a provision of fuel. In a short time our garments were completely dry. We were so happy to find ourselves in this beautiful hostelry which Providence had enabled us to discover, that we passed the greatest part of the night in revelling in the delicious sensation of warmth, and Samdadchiemba in delightedly frying little patties in mutton-grease. It was a fête, and we indulged ourselves with a little of our wheaten flour.

Our animals were no less happy than ourselves, for we found them stables cut out of the mountain, and, what was more, an excellent supply of forage, — a grotto full of oaten straw and millet-stalks. Had it not been for the tempest, in which we imagined we were to perish, our poor beasts would never have had such a feast. We sat for a long time, rejoicing in our preservation, and, at last, lay down on a well-warmed kang, that made us forget the terrible cold that we had endured during the tempest. The next day, while Samdadchiemba was collecting the remains of the hemp-stalks, and finishing the drying of our baggage, we went to visit the numerous subterranean apartments of the mountain. But we had gone but a little way, when we were greatly surprised to see whirling clouds of smoke issuing from the door and windows of a grotto near to ours. As we had thought we were alone, the sight of this smoke startled us very much. We went towards the opening, and, when we were near the threshold, we saw, in the interior, a great fire of hemp stalks, from which the flames were rising to the vaulted ceiling of the cavern ; and, looking more attentively, we distinguished a human form, moving through the thick smoke, and immediately after we heard a Tartar salutation.

"*Mendou !*" cried a sonorous voice, "come and seat yourselves by the side of the fire!" But we took care not to go any further; this cave of Cacus had too fantastic an appearance. We remained

silent and motionless until the occupant of this infernal-looking abode rose and advanced to the entrance. It was neither a demon nor a spectre, but an honest Mongol-Tartar, who, having been overtaken by the storm the evening before, had taken refuge in this grotto, where he had passed the night. After talking a little of the rain, the wind, and the hail, we invited him to share our breakfast with us, and conducted him to our dwelling; and then, whilst Samdadchiemba, assisted by our guest, was boiling the tea, we continued our researches. We traversed these silent and deserted dwellings with a curiosity mingled with a sort of awe. They were all constructed on the same model; and the Chinese characters engraven on the walls, and the fragments of porcelain vessels, confirmed us in the belief that they had been inhabited by Chinese; and some women's shoes that we found soon after, left no doubt on the point. As we advanced, we put to flight flocks of sparrows, which had been tempted to take up their abode in these grottoes by the grains of millet scattered all about in profusion. The sparrow is a cosmopolitan bird; he is found wherever man is found, and his character is everywhere the same, — lively, petulant, and quarrelsome; but in Tartary, Thibet, and China, he is perhaps more impudent even than in Europe, for his nest and his brood are always religiously respected, and he enters every house quite at his ease, and picks up whatever he can from the food of the family.

During breakfast, our conversation naturally fell on the Chinese who had made these habitations, and we asked the Tartar if he knew them.

"How! know them?" he cried, — "I knew them all — it is not two years since they left the country. But they had no business to be here, they were wicked; it was right to drive them out."

"Wicked!" said we, "what harm could they do in this miserable ravine?"

"Oh, the *Kitats* (Chinese) are cunning and deceitful! They appear good at first, but it does not last long. Twenty years ago, some families came to us to ask hospitality; as they were poor, we allowed them to cultivate the earth about here, on condition that every year after the harvest, they would pay a little oatmeal to the *Taitse* of the country. But, by degrees, there came other families, who also dug out grottoes to live in, and soon the gorge was full of them. At first they were mild and peaceable, and we lived to-

gether like brothers. — Tell me, my Lord Lamas, is it not well for men to live like brothers? — are they not all brothers ?"

"You have said a true word; but why did the Kitats go away?"

" They soon became wicked and deceitful; instead of contenting themselves with what had been given to them, they took possession of as much ground as they liked, and when they were rich, they would not any longer pay the oatmeal they had agreed for. Every year when we went to ask for it, they overwhelmed us with abuse and maledictions. But the worst was, that these wicked Kitats were thieves; they stole all the goats and sheep that wandered away from our flocks into the hollows among the mountains. One day the *Taitsi* assembled us Mongols, and said—'These Kitats take our land, steal our beasts, and curse us; and since they will no longer act like brothers, we must drive them out.' Everybody was pleased to hear these words; they deliberated, and it was agreed that we should go to the king, and beg him to make a decree that the Kitats should be driven out. The king said to us, Why did you suffer strangers to cultivate your lands?' and we prostrated ourselves, and remained silent. Then our king, who always acts with justice, wrote the decree, and put to it the red seal. The decree said, that the king would not permit the Kitats to live in the country, and that they must leave it before the first day of the eighth moon. Then three Taitsis mounted on horseback, and went to present the decree to the Kitats, and they said—'The king wishes us to go? It is well!' But afterwards we knew that they had resolved to disobey the king's orders, and remain in the country in spite of him; for when the first day of the eighth moon was come, they were still living quite quietly, and not making any preparation to go. Then the next day, all the Tartars mounted their horses, armed themselves with their lances, and drove the flocks on the lands that the Kitats had cultivated, and their harvest was all devoured, or trampled under foot. The Kitats cried out, and cursed the Mongols—but it was all over—and seeing there was no help for it, they collected the same day their furniture and their tools, and went and settled in the eastern part of the Ortous, at some distance from the Yellow River, near the Paga-Gol. Since you came by Chagan-Kouren, you must have seen some Kitats tilling patches of ground — Well, it is they who inhabited this gorge, and dug these grottoes."

When the Tartar had finished his story, he went out and fetched

a small bundle, which he had left in the cavern where he had passed the night.

"My Lord Lamas," he said, as he came in, "will you not come and rest yourselves at my dwelling. My tent is not far from here, it is behind that sandy hill that you see to the north. We have at most fifteen miles to go."

"Thank you," we replied, "the hospitality of the Mongols is well known to us, but we have a long journey to go, and we must not stop on the way.

"In a long journey," urged the Tartar, "a few days more or less will not matter; your animals will want rest, and you must have suffered much from the weather of yesterday. Go with me, and all will be well. In four days we shall have a feast, for my eldest son is going to be married. Come to his wedding; your presence will bring us good fortune."

But as we were inflexible in our resolution, the Tartar mounted his horse, and soon disappeared amid the sands of the desert.

Under any other circumstances, we should have accepted with pleasure the offer that had been made to us; but we were impatient to get out of this wretched country of Ortous, where we saw our cattle perishing, and where we had ourselves had so much to endure. A Mongol wedding was nothing new for us, for we had several times witnessed the ceremony. The Mongols marry very early, under the absolute authority of the parents, and the affair is settled without the slightest reference to the wishes of the persons principally concerned. The girl has no portion; on the contrary, it is the young man who must make the wedding gift to the family of his future wife; wedding gift, indeed, it can scarcely be called; it it simply the price of the wife, and this expression is constantly used in speaking of the transaction. "We have sold our daughter to such a family," they will say, and when the contract is being drawn up, they will bargain and haggle and raise or lower the price, just as they would in any other purchase. When it has been agreed how many horses, oxen, sheep, pounds of butter, pieces of stuff, skins of brandy, &c. they will give, the terms are written down before witnesses, and the girl becomes the property of her purchaser. A plurality of wives is not opposed either to the laws, the religious faith, or the customs of the country; but the first wife is always most respected, and remains mistress of the household. Perhaps, in the present state of the country, this prac-

tice so opposed to the true happiness of families, may present a kind of barrier to excessive corruption; for, as there are immense numbers of the Lamas on whom celibacy is imposed, many disorders would otherwise result from the multiplicity of young girls that would be left without support. Divorce is very frequent among the Tartars, and the husband is not required to assign any cause to justify his putting away his wife, but simply takes her back to her parents. As he forfeits of course, in such a case, the price he has paid, it sometimes happens that the parents are able to make a profit by the transaction, by selling the same article twice over. The women in Tartary are not kept in a kind of imprisonment as they are amongst most Asiatic nations; but they go and come as they please, take rides on horseback, and pay visits freely from tent to tent. They have nothing of the soft and languishing manners of the Chinese women; on the contrary, there is an appearance of vigour and independence about them, which harmonizes well with their active habits and nomadic life; and this effect is perhaps assisted by the simple, and somewhat masculine character of their dress—a long green or violet robe, confined at the waist by a girdle, a sort of jacket or waistcoat over it, and large leather boots. But they wear also on their hair and girdles ornaments of silver, coral, or beads; which we have not paid attention enough to these things to describe.

CHAP. IX.

Encampment in a fertile Valley.—Violence of the Cold.—Meeting with Pilgrims.—Barbarous and diabolical Ceremonies of Lamanism.—Dispersion and Reunion of the little Caravan.—Various kinds of Pilgrimages.—Prayer Mills.—Quarrel of two Lamas about their Prayers.—The Dobsoon-Noor, or Salt Lake.

The Tartar who had just taken leave of us, had informed us that we should find at a short distance from the grottoes, in a small valley, the finest pastures in the country of Ortous; and we decided to go in search of them immediately. It was near noon when we were once more on the march; the sky was pure, and the sunshine brilliant; but the biting cold of the atmosphere still reminded us of the storm of the preceding day. After marching about two hours through a sandy soil, deeply furrowed by the rains, we entered all

on a sudden a valley, whose fertile and smiling aspect formed a striking contrast with all that we had hitherto seen of the Ortous. An abundant stream flowed along the bottom, and the hills on either side rising in an amphitheatrical form, were covered with grass and shrubs.

Early as it was, we had no notion of going further, to leave such a station as this; especially as the north wind had become intolerably cold; and, from the interior of the tent, we could see all along the valley; so that, without going out, we could keep a watch over the beasts.

At sunset the violence of the wind had even increased, and the cold was felt in all its rigour: so that we judged it prudent to take some precautions. Whilst Samdadchiemba was collecting some large stones to keep firm the edges of the tent, we went out on the hill with hatchets, to get a store of wood for fuel; and, as soon as we had had tea, and our daily portion of porridge, we lay down and fell asleep. But our sleep did not last long; for we were soon awakened by the cold. "There's no bearing this," cried Samdadchiemba, "if we don't want to be frozen to death under our skins here, we had better get up, and make a great fire;" and we did get up immediately, and over our ordinary clothes we put on the sheepskin garments that we had bought at the Blue Town.

But our fire of roots and green branches was scarcely lit, before our eyes seemed to be almost put out by the thick pungent smoke which filled the tent. We ran to the door, but then the wind came in without the smoke getting out, and we were obliged to close it again. Samdadchiemba, in the meantime, was quite at his ease in the thick smoke that was suffocating us, and drawing burning tears from our eyes. He laughed at us most pitilessly when he saw us crouching down by the fire and hiding our faces in our hands. "My spiritual fathers" he said, "your eyes are large and bright, but they can't bear a little smoke. Mine are little and ugly, but they do me good service."

We could not however at all enjoy the jokes of our camel-driver, for we were suffering horribly; but we thought again with gratitude of the goodness of Providence in having the preceding night afforded us an asylum in the grottoes, for if this cold had surprised us before we had been able to dry our things, we and our garments would certainly have been frozen into an immoveable block.

We did not consider it prudent to set out again during such

severe cold, and quit an encampment where at least we had fuel and pasture for our animals, and towards noon, as the weather seemed a little milder, we profited by it to go out to the hill again to cut faggots. On the way we noticed that our animals had quitted their pastures, and were all standing together on the borders of the brook. We found they were tormented by thirst; the camels were licking the surface of the ice, and the horse and mule striking the bank with their hoofs; and we went towards them and broke with our hatchets a hole large enough to enable them to quench the thirst by which they were tormented.

In the evening the cold having returned in all its intensity, we adopted a plan which permitted us to sleep better than on the preceding night. We divided the time until morning into three watches, and each of us in turn was charged to keep up a great fire while the others slept, and by this method, though we still felt the cold a little, we could rest in peace without fear of having our canvas habitation burnt over our heads.

After two days of this terrible cold the wind gradually went down, and we thought we could pursue our journey; but it was not without great difficulty that we succeeded in striking our tent. The wet and sandy soil on which we had encamped, was so frozen that the nails adhered to it, as if they had been encrusted in the stone, and to get them out it was necessary to water them several times with boiling water; but at the moment of our departure the temperature was so mild that we were obliged to take off our sheep-skin coverings, and pack them up for another occasion. These rapid changes of temperature are very common in Tartary. Sometimes when it has been quite warm, the wind will get round to the north, snow will fall, and the most piercing cold set in, so that if one is not tolerably well hardened to atmospheric changes, one is liable to severe affections. In the north of Mongolia especially, it is not uncommon to find travellers frozen to death in the desert.

On the fifteenth day of the new moon we met numerous caravans, following, like ourselves, the direction from east to west. The way was covered with men, women, and children, mounted on camels or oxen, all going, as they said, to the Lama convent of *Rache-Churin*. When they asked whether our journey had the same goal, and heard our answer in the negative, their surprise was extreme; and this, and the number of pilgrims that we saw, piqued our curiosity. At the turning of the defile we met an old

Lama, who, having a heavy burden on his back, seemed to get along with extreme difficulty. "Brother," said we, "you are advanced in age; your black hairs are not so numerous as your white; you must be much fatigued. Place your burden on one of our camels, and you will journey more at your ease."

The old man prostrated himself in token of his gratitude, and we made one of our camels kneel down, while Samdadchiemba added the Lama's baggage to ours. As soon as the pilgrim was relieved of the load that had weighed upon him, his step became lighter, and a pleased expression spread over his features. "Brother," said we, "we know very little about the affairs of your country; but we are astonished to meet so many pilgrims in the desert."

"We are all going to Rache-Churin," he replied, in a tone of profound devotion.

"Some great solemnity, doubtless, calls you thither?"

"Yes; to-morrow is to be a great day. A Lama *Bokte* will display his power. He will kill himself, but will not die."

We understood in a moment the kind of solemnity which had put the Tartars in motion. A Lama was to open his belly, take out his entrails and place them before him, and then return, immediately, to his former state. This spectacle, atrocious and disgusting as it is, is very common in the Lama convents of Tartary. The *Bokte* who is to display his power, as the Mongols say, prepares himself for the act by long days of fasting and prayer; and during the whole time he must maintain the most absolute silence, and refrain from all communication with men.

When the appointed hour has arrived, the whole multitude of pilgrims repair to the great court of the Lama convent, where an altar is erected. At length the *Bokte* makes his appearance; he advances gravely amid the acclamations of the crowd, seats himself on the altar, and taking a cutlass from his girdle, places it between his knees, while the crowd of Lamas, ranged in a circle at his feet, commence the terrible invocations that prelude this frightful ceremony. By degrees, as they proceed in their recitation, the Bokte is seen to tremble in every limb, and gradually fall into strong convulsions. Then the song of the Lamas becomes wilder and more animated, and the recitation is exchanged for cries and howlings. Suddenly the Bokte flings away the scarf which he has worn, snatches off his girdle, and with the sacred cutlass rips him-

self entirely open. As the blood gushes out the multitude prostrate themselves before the horrible spectacle, and the sufferer is immediately interrogated concerning future events, and things concealed from human knowledge. His answers to all these questions are regarded as oracles.

As soon as the devout curiosity of the pilgrims is satisfied, the Lamas resume their recitations and prayers; and the Bokte, taking up in his right hand a quantity of his blood, carries it to his mouth, blows three times upon it, and casts it into the air with a loud cry. He then passes his hand rapidly over his stomach, and it *becomes as whole as it was before**, without the slightest trace being left of the diabolical operation, with the exception of an extreme lassitude. The Bokte then rolls his scarf again round his body, says a short prayer in a low voice, and all is over; every one disperses except a few of the most devout, who remain to contemplate and adore the bloody altar.

We cannot think that all facts of this nature are to be set down to the account of fraud; for, after all that we have seen and heard among idolatrous nations, we are persuaded that Satan plays an important part in them; and our opinion is confirmed by that of the best instructed Buddhists with whom we have conversed on the subject. Many of them have a horror of these spectacles, and the Lamas who have the power to perform this marvel are in general but little esteemed among their brethren. The good Lamas, it is said, have seldom any such power, and in well regulated convents such feats are not at all encouraged; but they offer an infallible means of attracting a crowd of ignorant and stupid admirers, and of enriching the convent by the numerous offerings brought on these occasions by the Tartars. Besides this opening of the stomach, other exploits of a similar character are exhibited. Pieces of iron are made red hot in the fire, and then licked by some of the Lamas with impunity; others will make incisions in the body, and a moment afterwards not a trace of them is to be seen. We knew a Lama who was said to be able to make a vase fill itself

* The perfect good faith with which this extraordinary story is told is too characteristic of the author to be omitted, whatever conclusion English readers may come to concerning it. Those who have witnessed the performances of celebrated conjurors in London and Paris, may probably think it admits of an easier explanation than that suggested by M. Huc for this and similar marvels, namely, the direct agency of the devil.—*Tr.*

spontaneously with water; but we never could induce him to make the trial in our presence. He said that as we had not the same faith, the attempt would not only be fruitless, but would even expose him to serious danger.

As the famous ceremony we have spoken of was attracting so great a number of pilgrims to Rache-Churin, it occurred to us that we might do well to go there also. "Who knows," we said, "but that God has merciful designs for these Mongols of Ortous; perhaps this people will see the power of the Lamas restrained or destroyed by the presence of the priests of Jesus Christ, and will renounce the lying worship of Buddha to embrace the faith of Christendom?" We resolved therefore to go to Rache-Churin, to mingle with the crowd, and, at the moment when the diabolical invocations were about to commence, we would come forward fearlessly, and authoritatively, in the name of Jesus Christ, and command the Bokte to refrain from the exercise of his infernal power. We could not disguise from ourselves the probable consequences of this step; we knew that we should certainly excite the hatred and fury of the adorers of Buddha; and that, possibly, a violent death might for us be the result of our efforts for the conversion of the Tartars; "but, no matter," we said, "we shall have courageously fulfilled our duty as missionaries. Let us use fearlessly the power given us from above, and leave to Providence the care of the future, which is not our business.

Such were our intentions and hopes; but the purposes of God are not always conformable to the designs of men, even when they appear most in harmony with them. On that very day there happened to us an accident which, in turning us from Rache-Churin, threw us into the most cruel perplexity. In the evening the old Lama who had been travelling with us begged us to let him have his baggage again. "Brother," said we, "shall we not journey together to Rache-Churin?"

"No, I must follow the path which you see winding towards the north, along the hills. Behind that mountain of sand, there is a place of trade. On festival days the Chinese merchants carry their wares thither and pitch their tents. I must go there to make some purchases, so that I cannot any longer follow your shadow."

"Shall we find corn to sell at this Chinese encampment?"

"Millet, oatmeal, wheat, beef and mutton, brick tea, all that one can desire."

Not having been able to make any provision since we left *Chagan-Kouren* we judged this a favourable opportunity; but in order not to fatigue our beasts of burden by long circuits across these stony hills, M. Gabet took the flour sacks on his camel, and galloped off towards the Chinese post; and, following the instructions of the old Lama, we agreed to meet in a certain valley at a short distance from the Lama convent.

After having proceeded for more than an hour along a very difficult road, intersected perpetually by ravines and mud holes, M. Gabet came to a small plain covered with thick heath. There it was that the Chinese traders had pitched their numerous tents, some of which served for shops, and others for dwellings. The encampment presented a very busy scene, and the missionary, after having filled his flour sacks and tied to his camel's hump two magnificent sheeps' livers, turned back and directed his course towards the *rendezvous* where he was to meet the caravan. But when he reached it he found not a creature there—not so much as a track imprinted on the sand. Imagining that perhaps some difficulty about the baggage had retarded the march, he determined to go to meet the caravan, along the route which it had been agreed to follow. But in vain he searched in all directions, and mounted all the little hills on the way — he could find no trace of it. He called and shouted, but there was no reply; he visited some spots where various roads crossed, and where the ground was marked by the feet of oxen, camels, sheep and horses, one over the other, so that no distinct track could be distinguished. As the ultimate goal of the journey however was the Lama convent of Rache-Churin, he now thought it best to go thither. He reached the edifice, which is built in a semicircular form, on a rather high hill, but he searched in vain throughout the neighbourhood. There were people enough now to inquire of, and the little caravan was one likely to be noticed — two loaded camels, a white horse, and a mule whose fine black skin almost every one who passed, admired. But no one whom he asked could give him any information; again he climbed to the summit of a hill and looked anxiously all around, but could see nothing of them. The sun set, and still no signs of the caravan. M. Gabet began to think that some accident must have happened, and resolved to set out again to try and meet it: he ascended heights, he plunged down into ravines, but all to no purpose. The night became dark, and

soon the convent of Rache-Churin had completely disappeared. He was alone in the desert without any chance of a shelter, without knowing the direction in which he was going. He did not dare either to advance or go back lest he should fall down some precipice; and at length he had to make up his mind to pass the night where he was, and content himself with this "*Impression de voyage*," by way of supper. He had provisions enough, but neither fire nor water; the feeling of hunger however was entirely absorbed in anxiety, and, kneeling on the sand, he made his evening prayer, and then lay down by the side of his camel, with the bridle round his arm, and his head resting upon a sack of flour. His sleep of course was not very sound or very long, for the cold naked earth is not a comfortable bed, especially for a man oppressed with anxious fears.

The caravan however was not lost. When first M. Gabet had separated from us, we had exactly followed the road pointed out, which was a good one, but after a time we entered on an immense steppe, where the track was entirely lost in a fine sand, continually blown about by the wind. I made a halt, fearing to lose our way, and told Samdadchiemba to go to a Tartar horseman whom I saw at some distance driving a herd of oxen, and ask him if we were on the way to Rache-Churin. But the Dchiahour declared he was well acquainted with the desert, that if we kept to the westward we could not go astray, and pointing to a distant track upon the mountain, said that was where the path again issued from the sand.

Relying on this information we turned our march in the same direction, and we soon came to a track sufficiently marked, but we met no one of whom we could inquire whether we were on the right road. Twilight succeeded to sunset, and darkness to twilight, and still we saw nothing of Rache-Churin.

We ought long before this to have met M. Gabet, and Samdadchiemba now maintained a profound silence, for he was aware we had lost our way. It was necessary to encamp before the sky should be completely black, and we pitched our tent near a well, and put our baggage in order. I then desired Samdadchiemba to mount one of the camels and make another attempt to discover our lost companion. The camel-driver was profoundly dejected, and obeyed without answering a word. He left the other camel tied to a stake, but the moment he found himself alone he began to utter loud and dismal cries, and soon got into a perfect fury, tearing

at the stake, stretching out his neck, and exerting himself to the utmost to tear away the piece of wood which was passed through his nose. At last he succeeded, and bursting the cord which confined him bounded away into the desert. The horse and the mule had also disappeared, for they were suffering both from hunger and thirst, and near the tent there was not a handful of grass or a drop of water to be had. The well near which we had encamped, we had found to be entirely dry.

Now, therefore, our little caravan, which for two months had kept together without ever separating, was completely dispersed, men and animals had disappeared, and I remained alone in the canvas mansion, a prey to the keenest apprehension. For a whole day I had neither eaten nor drank; but in such circumstances one feels neither hunger nor thirst: the mind is too much occupied to be conscious of the wants of the body; one is tortured by a thousand vain fancies, and one would be quite overwhelmed were it not for prayer, — that is the only lever capable of raising the crushing weight from the heart.

The hours passed away and no one came. From time to time I ascended one of the hills and called aloud, but received no answer. But when it was near midnight, the deep silence was at length broken by the plaintive cry of a camel, which seemed to advance rapidly. It was Samdadchiemba returning. He had brought no news of M. Gabet, but the unpleasing intelligence that we had completely mistaken the way, and that we were on the track of a Mongol encampment, and not that of *Rache-Churin*.

"At dawn of day," said the Dchiahour, "we must strike the tent and get back into the right road; there we shall find again our aged spiritual father."

But when I represented to him that if we went we must leave the tent and baggage, that the camel, the horse, and the mule were gone, and that as the well was dry there was not even the means of making a drop of tea, he fell down on the baggage quite overwhelmed and — was soon fast asleep.

Long before he was awake in the morning I was out on the hill, and having discovered where the horse and the mule were grazing, went and brought them back to the tent, just at sun-rise. He was still lying in the very same posture in which he had first lain down. "Samdadchiemba," I cried, "don't you mean to have any tea this morning?" and at the word *tea* he leaped up as if I had

touched a powerful spring, staring around him with wild eyes still heavy with sleep.

"Did my spiritual father say anything about tea, or did I dream it?" said he.

"I don't know what you dreamed," I replied, "but if you would like to have some tea, there is a tank of sweet water down in that valley where I have just found the horse and the mule."

Setting about his preparations with the utmost diligence Samdadchiemba soon had the water boiling, and seemed, in the enjoyment of his tea, to have entirely forgotten the dispersion of our caravan. I was obliged to remind him of it, and to desire him to go in search of the stray camel.

Half the day passed away; we saw, from time to time, a Tartar horseman, or some pilgrims coming back from the festival at *Rache-Churin*, but no one had seen a person answering to our description of M. Gabet. At length, on the summit of a hill, we descried M. Gabet himself! He had caught a sight of our blue tent and was hastening towards us at the utmost speed of his camel. After a few moments of eager animated conversation, in which every one asked questions and nobody answered, we ended by laughing with all our hearts at our misadventure. The caravan now began to reorganize itself; and before sun-set it was again complete; the runaway camel having been discovered by Samdadchiemba tied to the door of a *Yourte*, or Tartar tent. The Tartar had seen it running away and had caught it and tied it up, in the expectation that some one would come after it.

Far advanced as the day was, we determined to strike the tent, for the place where we were encamped was miserable beyond expression. We thought also that if we did nothing before nightfall but put ourselves in the right road, it would be a great advantage. As we sat taking our tea preparatory to our departure, the conversation naturally turned on our recent adventure. This was not the first time during the journey that the perverse and obstinate character of Samdadchiemba had brought us into difficulties. Mounted on his little mule he generally trotted at the head of our party, drawing the beasts of burden after him; and, as he declared himself well acquainted with the four cardinal points, as well as with the deserts of Mongolia, he could never be persuaded to ask his way of any one, and we were often made the victims of his presumption. We thought, therefore, to profit by the late ac-

cident and give him a lesson on this subject. "Samdadchiemba," we said, "listen with attention, for we have an important word to say to you. Although, in your youth, you may have travelled much in Mongolia, it does not follow that you should know every route: you ought not to trust to your guesses, but to consult oftener the Tartars you meet. If yesterday, for example, you had done so, we should have escaped many miseries." Samdadchiemba did not answer a single word, and we rose immediately to make our preparations for departure. As soon as we had put in order the various articles that had been heaped up pell-mell inside the tent, we remarked that the Dchiahour was not occupied, as usual, in saddling his camel. We went to see what he was doing, and were surprised to find him quietly seated on a large stone behind the tent. "Well," said we, "has it not been settled that we should go to-night? What are you doing there sitting on that stone?" Samdadchiemba made no reply; he did not even raise his eyes, but kept them constantly fixed on the ground. "Samdadchiemba, what's the matter? Why don't you saddle the camels?"

"Since you wish to go," he replied drily, "you can do as you please. For myself, I shall not go. I am a bad man, and without a conscience—what can you want with me?"

We were exceedingly surprised to hear such a speech from the mouth of the young neophyte, who had appeared to be attached to us. But we would not ask him to accompany us for fear of flattering the pride which was natural to his character; and having him in the end less tractable even than he had been before. We set to work therefore to do his business ourselves. We struck the tent and loaded one camel, Samdadchiemba remaining all the while seated upon his stone, and hiding his face in his hands, or rather perhaps looking between his fingers how we got on with the work he was accustomed to do. When he saw that things were going on as usual he rose without saying anything, saddled the other camel and then the mule, and mounting it set off as if nothing had happened. We smiled at each other, but took care not to irritate more a character which required to be treated with prudence and management.

We stopped at a place that was not very desirable, but it was much better than the desolate ravine we had quitted, and at least we were all assembled again, an immense enjoyment in a desert,

and of which we should have never known the value if we had not felt the pain of separation. We celebrated our reunion by a splendid banquet for which the wheaten flour and the sheep's livers were put under contributions, and this culinary luxury smoothed the wrinkled front of Samdadchiemba. He set to work with enthusiasm, and made us a supper of several courses.

At daybreak, on the following morning, we set out again, and soon saw, clearly defined against the yellow back-ground of a sandy mountain, some large buildings surrounded by an immense number of small white houses. This was the convent or Lamaserai of *Rache-Churin*. The three Buddhist temples that rise in the centre are of a majestic and elegant construction. In the avenue of the principal temple we remarked a square tower of colossal proportions, and with a monstrous dragon sculptured in granite, at each of the four corners. We traversed the convent from one end to the other, following the principal streets. The most profound and religious silence reigned throughout; now and then a Lama enveloped in his red scarf passed us gravely, just wishing us a good journey in a low voice. Towards the western extremity of the convent the mule ridden by Samdadchiemba suddenly reared, and then set off at a gallop, dragging the two laden camels after him in his disorderly flight. The animals we rode were equally frightened, and all this disorder arose from the presence of a young Lama who was lying extended at full length on the road. He was going through a religious exercise much practised by the Buddhists—that of going round the convent, prostrating himself at every step. Sometimes an immense number of devotees will be going through their act of devotion at the same time, one after the other, and they will include all the neighbouring buildings in their prostrations. It is not permitted to diverge in the smallest degree from the straight line to be followed; and should the devotee happen to do so he loses the benefit of all the exercises he has gone through. When the buildings are of great extent, a whole day will hardly suffice to make the tour with all the necessary prostrations; and the pilgrims who have a taste for this kind of devotion must begin at daybreak, and will not have done till after nightfall. The feat must be performed all at once without any interruption, even that of stopping for a few moments to take nourishment; and the prostrations must be perfect, that is to say, the body must be extended its whole length, and the forehead must touch the earth while the

arms are stretched out in front and the hands joined. Before rising also the pilgrim must describe a circle with two ram's horns which he holds in his hands. It is a sorrowful spectacle and the unfortunate people often have their faces and clothes covered with dust and sometimes with mud. The utmost severity of the weather does not present any obstacle to their courageous devotion, but they continue their prostrations through rain and snow and the most rigorous cold. Sometimes the additional penance is imposed of carrying an enormous weight of books on their backs; and you meet with men, women, and even children sinking under their excessive burdens. When they have finished their tour they are considered to have the same merit as if they had recited all the prayers contained in the books they have carried. Some content themselves with taking a walk round the convent, rolling all the while between their fingers the beads of their long chaplet, or giving a rotatory movement to a kind of *praying mill*, which turns with incredible rapidity. This instrument is called a *Chu-Kor*, that is, "turning prayer;" and it is common enough to see them fixed in the bed of a running stream, as they are then set in motion by the water, and go on praying night and day, to the special benefit of the person who has placed them there. The Tartars also suspend these convenient implements over their domestic hearths that they may be put in motion by the current of cool air from the opening of the tent, and so twirl for the peace and prosperity of the family.

Another machine which the Buddhists make use of to simplify their devotional activity is that of a large barrel turning on an axis. It is made of thick pasteboard, fabricated of innumerable sheets of paper pasted one on another, and upon which are written in Thibetan character the prayers most in fashion. Those who have not sufficient zeal or sufficient strength to place on their backs an immense load of books, and prostrate themselves at every step in the mud, adopt this easier method, and the devout can then eat, drink, and sleep at their ease, while the complaisant machine does all their praying for them.

One day when we happened to be passing one of these machines, we saw two Lamas engaged in a violent quarrel, and almost coming to blows all on account of their zeal for their prayers. One of them it appeared had come, and having set the barrel in motion for his own private account was retiring modestly to

his cell; when chancing to turn his head to enjoy the spectacle of its pious revolutions, he saw one of his brethren stop the wheel, and set it whirling again for himself. Indignant of course at this unwarrantable interference he ran back, and in his turn put a stop to his rival's piety, and they continued this kind of demonstration for some time, but at last losing patience they proceeded to menaces and then to cuffs, when an old Lama came out, and brought the difficulty to a peaceful termination by himself turning the prayer barrel for the benefit of both parties.

We made but a short stay at *Itache-Churin*, for as it had not been the will of God that we should reach it at the time favourable to our purpose, of announcing the true faith to the people of Ortous, we were eager to press forward to Thibet, the source of the immense superstition of which we saw here but a few insignificant streams. Shortly after leaving it we fell in with a track very well marked, and frequented by a great number of travellers, but commerce and not devotion was the spring that had set them in movement. They were going to the Dobsoon-Noor or Salt Lake, celebrated over all the west of Mongolia, which furnishes salt, not only to the neighbouring Tartars, but to several provinces of the Chinese empire.

A day's journey before the Dobsoon-Noor, the aspect of the country undergoes a great change: the soil loses its yellowish tint and becomes white, as if covered with new-fallen snow. The earth puffs up into little hillocks of a conical shapes, so perfect as to seem artificial. Sometimes they lie in groups one over another, like pears heaped up on a plate: they are of all sizes—some evidently freshly formed — others old, decayed, and falling to pieces. At the spot where these excrescences commence, you see rampant thorns without either leaves or flowers, but armed with long prickles which interlace their branches, so as to form something that has the appearance of a knitted cap over these excrescences. These thorns are never seen in any other spot; they sometimes appear very vigorous, and send forth long shoots, but on the old monticules they are dry, calcined, and as it were tattered.

In seeing the surface of the ground covered with these swellings, it is easy to imagine that grand chemical operations must be going on beneath it. Springs of water, generally so rare in the Ortous, here become frequent, though they are often excessively salt. But sometimes by the side of a brackish lagoon, there will gush forth

water deliciously sweet and cool, and these spots are usually marked for the benefit of travellers by long poles with little flags at the top. What is called the Dobsoon-Noor is less a lake than a vast reservoir of mineral salt mixed with nitrous efflorescence. The latter are of a faint white and friable between the fingers ; they are easily distinguishable from the salt, which is of a greyish tint, and with a shining and crystalline fracture. It is nearly ten miles in circumference, and here and there are *yourtes* inhabited by the Mongols, who are occupied with the salt trade ; they have also Chinese partners, for these men are sure to be found taking part in every kind of trade or industry. The manipulation to which the salt is subjected requires little labour or science. It consists of nothing more than picking up the pieces, laying them in heaps, and covering them with potter's clay, and when the salt has sufficiently purified itself, the Tartars carry it to the nearest Chinese market, and there exchange it for tea, tobacco, brandy, or other commodities to their taste. On the spot the salt has no value at all, for at every step you may pick up large pure pieces. We filled a sack with them for our own use and that of our camels, who regard it as a great dainty. We traversed the Dobsoon-Noor along its whole length from east to west ; but we had to use great caution as the soil was wet and almost shifting. The Tartars recommended us to follow with great care the path traced, and to keep away from the spots where we saw water bubbling up. They assured us that there existed near these spots abysses which they had sounded without ever finding the bottom, and that seemed to indicate that the *Noor* or lake really exists, though it is subterranean, and the saline surface that appears may be only a kind of crust or cover produced by the continual evaporation. The addition to the crust of various foreign substances, carried by the winds and rains, might well in the course of time have rendered it strong enough to bear the caravans that continually cross it.

This great magazine of salt appears to extend its influence over the whole country of the Ortous, for every where the water is brackish, the soil dry, and powdered with saline matter. This want of good pastures and fresh streams is very unfavourable to cattle, but the camel makes amends to the Tartars of the Ortous for the absence of the rest. It is the real treasure of the desert ; it can remain fifteen days or even a month without eating or

drinking, and however miserable the country, it always finds something to satisfy it, especially if the soil is impregnated with salt or nitre; plants that other animals will not touch, brambles or even dry wood, serve it for food. Yet little as it costs to keep, the camel is more useful than can be imagined out of the countries where Providence has placed it. Its ordinary burden is seven or eight hundredweight, and thus laden it can go forty miles a day. In many Tartar countries they are used to draw the coaches of the kings or princes, but this can only be on flat ground, for their fleshy feet would not permit them to ascend hills and draw a carriage after them.

Notwithstanding this softness of its foot, however, the camel can walk over the roughest roads, stones, sharp thorns, roots of trees, &c., without being hurt. But if obliged to walk too far, the real sole of its foot wears out, and the flesh is laid bare. The Tartars, under such circumstances, make it shoes with skeep-skin; but if after this, the journey is still much prolonged, the creature lies down, and must be abandoned.

There is nothing the camel dreads as much as a wet and marshy soil. When it places its foot on mud, and finds it slip, it begins to stagger like a drunken man, and often falls heavily on its side. Every year towards the spring, the camel loses its hair, and it all goes to the last fragment before the new comes on. For about twenty days, it is as naked as if it had been clean shaven, from head to tail: and then it is extremely sensitive to cold and rain. You may see it shiver all over, like a man exposed to cold without clothes. But, by degrees, the hair grows again; at first it is extremely fine and beautiful, and when it is once more long and thick, the camel can brave the severest frost. It delights then in marching against the north wind, or standing on the top of a hill to be beaten by the tempest, and breathe the freezing air. Naturalists have sometimes said, that camels cannot live in cold countries; but they could hardly have meant to speak of Tartar camels, whom the least heat exhausts, and who certainly could not bear the climate of Arabia.

The fur of an ordinary camel weighs about ten pounds; it is sometimes as fine as silk. That which the entire camel has under its neck and along its legs is rough, tufted, and black; but the hair in general is reddish or grey. The Tartars do not take any care of it, but suffer it, when it falls off, to be lost. In the places where

the camels feed, you see great bunches of it, like old rags, blowing about; and sometimes, in the hollows and corners of the hills, large quantities will be drifted by the wind. But it is never picked up, or only a small portion of it, to make a coarse sort of sacks and carpets.

The milk of the camel is excellent, both for butter and cheese: the flesh is tough, ill-tasted, and little esteemed by the Tartars. They make use, however, of the hump, which they cut in slices and take with their tea.

It is said that Heliogabalus had camel's flesh served at his banquets, and that he was especially partial to the foot. Of this latter dainty, which the Emperor had the glory of discovering, we cannot speak; but we can affirm, from our own experience, that the flesh of the camel is detestable.

CHAP. X.

Purchase of a Sheep.—Mongol Butcher.—Tartar Banquet.—Tartar Veterinary Surgeons.—Singular cure of a Cow.—Depth of the Wells of Ortous.—Manner of watering Animals.—Meeting with the King of Alechan.—Annual Embassy of the Tartar Sovereigns to Pekin.—Grand Ceremony at the Temple of Ancestors.—The Emperor distributes false Money to the Mongol Kings.—Inspection of our Maps.—Devil's Cistern.—Purification of the Water.—Lama Dog.—Curious Aspect of the Mountains.—Passage of the Yellow River.

The environs of the *Dobsoon-Noor* abound in flocks of sheep and goats, for these animals browse readily on the heaths and thorny shrubs, the sole vegetation of this barren steppe: and they are particularly fond of the nitrous efflorescence so abundant here. The country, miserable as it is, must be very favourable to them, as their flesh is largely consumed by the Tartars, and forms their chief article of subsistence. Bought on the spot, the price is extremely moderate; and having calculated that a pound of meat would cost us less than a pound of flour, we resolved to purchase a sheep.

Two days after, passing the *Dobsoon-Noor*, we entered a long narrow valley, in which some Mongol families had pitched their tents. The ground was covered with a thick aromatic grass, having a great resemblance to thyme. Our animals snatched a few mouthfuls by stealth as we rode, and seemed greatly to relish their new pasturage. We thought it, therefore, a good place to encamp.

Not far from a tent, a Lama was seated on a hillock, making cords of camel's hair.

"Brother," said we, in passing "the flock on the hill there is yonrs no doubt. Will you sell us a sheep?"

"Willingly, you shall have a capital one; and we shall not quarrel about the price. We men of prayers are not like shop-keepers."

He assigned us a place near his tent, and we made our animals kneel down. At the sound of the camel's moans, the family of the Lama flocked about us to assist in pitching our tent, and they would not allow us to put a hand to the work; every one seemed to take a pleasure in helping to unload our animals, put our little baggage in order, and do whatever was needful.

The young Lama who had received us so cordially, on unsaddling the horse and mule, observed that both the creatures were alittle raw on the back.

"Brother," said he, "this is a bad thing; you are taking a long journey; that must be set to rights or you will not be able to go on."

So saying, he promptly seized the knife that hung to his girdle, sharpened it rapidly on his boots, examined our saddles closely, and where the wood had worn sharp, pared it carefully on all sides till every uneveness had disappeared. He then put the pieces together again with great address and returned it to us, saying, "It is all right now, you may travel in peace."

He was then going in search of the sheep, but as it was now late we stopped him saying we should remain the whole of the next day in the valley.

The next day, before we were up, the Lama appeared at the door of our tent, and awakened us by a noisy laugh.

"Ah," said he, "one may see you are not going to set off to-day. The sun is high in the heavens and you are still asleep."

We rose immediately, and as soon as we were dressed, the Lama spoke of the sheep, and desired us "to come to the flock and choose for ourselves."

"No; go alone, and bring us any you choose; we have something to do. We Lamas of the West make it a rule to spend some time in prayer after rising."

"Oh, the beautiful custom!" cried the Lama, "Oh, the holy rules of the West!"

But his admiration did not make him lose sight of business. He leaped upon his horse and galloped off to his flock, which we saw grazing on the hill side.

We had not yet finished our devotions when we saw him return full-gallop with a sheep thrown across the saddle like a portmanteau. Almost before he reached the door of our tent, he was off his horse, and in the twinkling of an eye had the poor sheep, much astonished at the rapid ride he had just had, on his four feet again.

"Here's the sheep," said the Lama, "is it not a fine one. Will it suit you?"

"Capitally. How much money do you want for it?"

"An ounce; is that too much?"

The price seemed moderate, considering the size of the animal.

"Here is a little ingot of precisely the weight. Sit down a moment till we weigh it, that you may see it is actually an ounce."

At these words the Lama stepped back, and stretching out his hand towards us cried, "On high there is one heaven; beneath one earth; and Buddha is master of all things. It is his will that all men should be as brothers; you are from the West, I am of the East. Is that a reason why we should not act towards each other with candour and good faith? You did not bargain about my sheep; I take your silver without weighing it."

"An excellent way of acting; but since you will not weigh our silver, sit down a moment; we will drink a cup of tea, and then deliberate together about a little affair."

"I understand, neither you nor I ought *to procure the transmigration* of this living being. We must find a *black man* who knows how to kill sheep; is not that what you mean?" and without waiting our reply, he added, "There is one thing more; it is easy to guess that you are not very skilful in cutting up sheep and preparing the entrails."

"You have guessed rightly," we replied, smiling.

"Keep the sheep fastened up; trust to me for the rest; I will be back directly."

He jumped upon his horse once more and disappeared in a hollow of the valley.

As he had said, the Lama was not long before he re-appeared. He ran straight to his own tent, tied his horse to a post, unsaddled him, took off his bridle and dismissed him to the pasture with a

smart cut of the whip. He entered the tent for a moment, and came out followed by his whole family, that is, by his old mother and two young brothers. All four directed their steps towards our tent, equipped in a singular style. The Lama carried a large saucepan turned over his head like an enormous hat. His mother had at her back a basket filled with argols. The two young Mongols followed with an iron spoon and some other kitchen utensils. At this sight, Samdadchiemba stamped about for joy; he saw a whole day of poetry opening before him.

As soon as the kitchen arrangements were completed, the Lama desired us, out of politeness, to retire within the tent. He thought it probably derogatory to us to be present at the scene of slaughter; but that did not at all suit us, and we inquired whether there would be any impropriety in our sitting down on the turf at a respectful distance, with a promise of not meddling with any thing. After making some difficulty, it was observed that we were curious to witness their operations, and the point of etiquette was not insisted on.

The Lama seemed uneasy, and kept looking towards the north of the valley, as if examining something at a distance.

"Ah," said he, with an air of satisfaction, "there he comes at last!"

"Who is coming? of whom do you speak?"

"Hola! I had forgotten to tell you that I went down below there to fetch a *black man* very expert at killing sheep; there he is."

We jumped up directly, and saw something moving amongst the heath. We could not at first discern what it was, for although the object advanced rapidly, it appeared to grow hardly any bigger. At last a figure so singular, made its appearance, that we had a difficulty in restraining our laughter. This *black man* was about fifty years of age, and not more than three feet high. At the top of his head, which was shaped like a sugar-loaf, he wore a small tuft of ill-combed grey hair. A scanty grey beard hung in disorder from his chin, and two protuberances, one on his back and the other on his breast, gave the little butcher a perfect resemblance to the portraits of Æsop prefixed to some editions of "La Fontaine's Fables."

The powerful and sonorous voice of this "black man" contrasted singularly with his insignificant stunted figure. He did not lose much time in making compliments to the company. Darting

his little black eyes at the sheep which was fastened to one of the tent pins, "Is that the animal you want put in order," said he: and while feeling the tail to judge of the creature's fatness, he gave the leg a twitch, threw the sheep dexterously on its back, and tied the four legs together firmly. Then baring his right arm, he asked whether the operation was to be performed within or without the tent.

"Without."

"Good — without then;" and drawing from his girdle a large-handled knife, which long use had rendered sharp and narrow, he plunged it up to the hilt in the flanks of the sheep. He drew it out covered with blood; the animal was dead; dead at one stroke, without making the slightest movement; not a drop of blood gushed from the wound. We were astonished, and asked the little man how he had managed to kill the animal so adroitly and so quickly.

"We Tartars," said he, "do not kill in the same way as the Chinese. They make a cut in the neck, we go right to the heart; the animal suffers less, and all the blood remains neatly inside."

As soon as the "transmigration" was effected, no one had any further scruple. Samdadchiemba and the Lama immediately tucked up their sleeves and came to the help of the little butcher, and the animal was skinned with admirable celerity. In the mean time, the old Tartar woman had water boiling in the two saucepans; and taking possession of the entrails, washed them slightly, and then with the blood which she took from the inside of the sheep with a wooden spoon, she prepared some puddings, of which the everlasting oatmeal formed the basis.

"My Lord Lamas, shall I bone the sheep?" asked the little black man. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, he caused the carcase to be hung up, (he was not big enough to do it himself), and mounting on a large stone, he detached the flesh in a single piece, leaving only a well polished skeleton behind.

In the mean time the rest of the party were preparing a Tartar banquet, the young Lama presiding. As soon as we had all sat down in a circle on the turf, the old woman plunged both hands into the boiling pot, and brought out the intestines, the liver, heart, lights, milt, and bowels, stuffed with blood and oatmeal. The most remarkable feature in this gastronomical display was, that all the intestines were preserved entire, and arranged as they

were in the stomach of the animal. The old lady dished up the dinner, that is to say, she pitched the viands liberally into the middle of the circle on the grass, which served us at once for seat, table, dish and napkin. It is superfluous to add that our fingers were our only forks. Each person seized a fragment of the entrails, detached it from the mass by a dextrous twist, and devoured it without salt or seasoning of any kind.

With the best will in the world, we found it difficult to do honour to this Tartar ragout. First, we burnt our fingers in trying to clutch the smoking entrails. The rest of the guests in vain exhorted us not to let the dainties get cold; we were obliged to wait a little in order to spare our mouths. At last we tasted the puddings; a few mouthfuls were quite enough. Never was any thing so tasteless and insipid. Samdadchiemba, who had foreseen how little it would be to our taste, had subtracted from the common dish the liver and lights, and seasoned them with some salt crushed between two stones. We were thus enabled to make head against the rest of the company, who devoured the whole mass with astounding appetite.

When this was disposed of, the old lady served up the second course. She placed in the midst the large pot in which the puddings had been boiled, and immediately the guests, with mutual compliments, drew each from his bosom his wooden bowl, and filled it with the smoking nasty liquid, to which they gave the pompous name of sauce. Not to appear eccentric or contemptuous of the Tartar kitchen, we followed their example, and by a vehement effort succeeded in swallowing some of the mess which resembled half-chewed grass. The Tartars thought it delicious, and found no difficulty in disposing of this fearful compound: they did not give over till there was nothing more to devour; not an inch of pudding or a drop of sauce.

The feast being over, the little "black man" took his leave, receiving in payment for his services the four sheep's trotters. In addition to this *honorarium*, fixed by immemorial usage amongst the Mongols, we bestowed on him a handful of tea, that he might speak to his countrymen of the generosity of the Lamas of the West. Our neighbours retired with their cooking utensils. The Lama, however, would not leave us alone. After much talk of the East and the West, he took down the skeleton which still hung at the door of the tent, and amused us by reciting, in song, the

nomenclature of the bones, great and small, that composed the sheep's frame. His astonishment was great at perceiving that our science on this point was extremely limited.

All the Mongols know the number, name, and place of all the bones of an animal's frame, and never fracture one in cutting up a sheep or an ox. With the point of their large knives they go straight to the joint, which they sever with a speed and address truly astonishing. These frequent dissections, and the habit of living in the midst of their flocks and herds, render the Tartars extremely skilful in the cure of the maladies of animals. The remedies they employ are the simples they collect in the fields, and which they administer with a cow's horn, in the form of decoction. If the animal will not open his mouth, they make him swallow the liquid through the nostrils.

Internal remedies are not much in favour. The Tartars more frequently employ punctures and incisions in different parts of the body: and these operations are sometimes performed in a most singular fashion.

One day, when we had pitched our tent by the side of a Tartar dwelling, a man brought his cow to the head of the family: the animal, he said, would not eat, and was pining away. The chief of the family examined the cow's mouth, and scratched her front teeth with his nail. "Ignorant fellow!" said he to the owner, "why did you wait so long? Your cow has not, at the utmost, more than a day to live. However, there is still one remedy, which I will try. If your cow dies, it is your own fault; if it is cured, call it by the grace of Hormousdha and my skill."

He then called some of his slaves, and ordered them to hold the creature firmly, while he performed the operation. He re-entered his tent, and soon came back with a large iron nail and a rude hammer. The nail he placed under the cow's belly, and then with a smart blow of the hammer drove it in up to the head. After this very original surgical operation he seized the tail with both hands, and ordered his assistants to let go. Immediately the poor beast which had been so roughly treated set off running, and dragged after her the veterinary Tartar, still clinging fast to her tail. In this manner they ran nearly half a mile. The Tartar at last abandoned his victim, and quietly returned. We could not recover from our surprise at this new method of cow-doctoring; but he assured us that there was no danger for the creature. He knew,

he said, by the stiffness of the tail, the good effect of the ferruginous medicine that he had administered.

Nothing can be more simple than the instruments made use of by the Tartars to effect a puncture or bleeding. Frequently they have nothing but an ordinary knife, or a little iron awl, worn at the girdle, and of which they make daily use to clean their pipes, and mend their saddles and leather boots.

The following day, after taking leave of the Tartar family which had shown us so much attention, we resumed our route. Towards the evening, about the hour of tent-pitching, we perceived at a distance a great number of flocks. Judging that the well we were in search of must be in that place, we quickened our steps, and met cattle already flocking from all sides, and waiting for the water. In seeing these flocks assembled round the well, the mouth of which was covered by a large stone, we recalled with pleasure the passage of Genesis, which records the journey of Jacob to Mesopotamia, to the tents of Laban, the son of Bethuel.

It is impossible to travel in Mongolia, in the midst of a pastoral and nomadic people, without mentally reverting to the times of the patriarch whose life was so closely assimilated to that of the Mongol tribes of the present day. But how painful become those resemblances, when we reflect that these poor people know not yet the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob!

Scarcely had we pitched our tent, and arranged our frugal meal, when we perceived some horsemen advancing at full gallop. They came to draw water for the numerous herds that had long awaited them; and the cattle, who had before kept apart, on seeing their herdsmen came running up, and grouped themselves round the well, impatient to quench their thirst.

This great assemblage of animals, so different in character, produced an agitation and tumult to which we had been little accustomed in the vast solitudes of the desert; and it was, perhaps, on account of its strangeness that this disorderly activity had so great a charm for us. We loved to see those untamed horses jostle and kick at each other, in their efforts to be first at the watering-place; and then, instead of drinking in peace, quarrel and bite, and at last abandon the water to chase each other across the plain. The scene was amusing and picturesque, especially when an enormous camel came to spread terror round the well, and banish the vulgar herd by his despotic presence.

The Mongol shepherds were four in number: and whilst two of them, armed with long staves, ran hither and thither trying to restore order among their unruly subjects, the two others drew water, in a manner that greatly excited our surprise.

The bucket made use of was remarkable enough. It was the entire skin of a goat, tied firmly together by the four feet, and having no other opening than the neck. A clumsy hoop kept the orifice distended, and a long strong cord of camel's hair was fastened to a piece of wood which crossed it. One end of the cord was fastened to the saddle of a horse mounted by a Tartar, and when this monstrous bucket was filled, the horseman urging the animal forward hoisted it to the mouth of the well, where another man received the water and emptied it into the troughs.

The well was of a formidable depth; the cord used to raise the bucket seemed to us more than 200 feet long, and instead of running over a pulley, it was simply passed over a large stone, in which the friction had wrought a considerable groove. Although the watering was carried on with great activity, it was almost night before all the herds were satisfied; and we then in our turn advanced to give our five animals their share of the common banquet. The Tartars had the complaisance to draw the water for us; without their help, it was probable we should never have succeeded, and been obliged to endure thirst by the side of an abundant well.

These Tartars appeared to us by no means so content with their lot as were those we had encountered in other parts of Mongolia. It was evident they suffered much in being compelled to pass their lives in a country so sterile, where pasturage was rare, and water still more so. Before returning to their habitation, which was situated behind a high mountain, these Tartars told us it would be necessary to set off the next day before dawn, as we should not find water nearer than the "Hundred Wells," from which we were fifteen leagues distant.

We set out, accordingly, before day-break across a country as usual sandy, sterile, and monotonous. Towards noon, we halted to take some food and make tea, with the water carried by one of our camels. Night was coming on, and we had not yet reached the "Hundred Wells." Our poor animals were worn out with thirst and fatigue: nevertheless, we were obliged to push on at whatever risk; to linger would have caused still greater miseries. At last we reached a well, and without troubling ourselves to

ascertain whether or no there were a hundred, we hastened to pitch our tent.

Our first care was to draw water for the horse and mule; but when we went to bring them to the drinking-place, they were not to be found. This accident made us forget in a moment the fatigues of the day. We had no fear of robbers; there is not, perhaps, a safer country in the world than that of the Ortous; but thirsty as the animals were, they would probably go on in search of water till they reached the banks of the Yellow River!

The night was intensely dark; nevertheless, we judged it necessary to go in pursuit of our cattle, while Samdadchiemba was preparing our supper. On we went, stopping at times to listen for the sound of the bells suspended to the neck of the horse; but in vain, not a sound broke the deep stillness of the desert. After a long fruitless search, the fear of losing ourselves in the darkness of the night in a country, of which we had not been able to examine the position by day, induced us to think of retracing our steps. But what was our consternation, when we perceived in the direction of our tent a great flame rising, mingled with thick whirlwinds of smoke. We doubted not for an instant, but that Samdadchiemba had gone also in search of the horses, and that in his absence, the tent had taken fire. Oh, what a moment was that for us! In the midst of the desert, 200 leagues distant from our missions, we must look helplessly on, while our poor tent, with all it contained, — our sole shelter against the inclemency of the air, — was consuming!

Sadly we turned our steps in the direction of our encampment; longing and yet afraid to ascertain the extent of a disaster, which would frustrate all our plans, and plunge us in distresses of all kinds. As we approached, we heard loud cries, and distinguished the voice of Samdadchiemba, calling, as we thought, for help. Thinking we might aid in saving something from the conflagration, we ran forwards, shouting in return, to warn the Dchiahour that we were coming to his assistance. At last we reached the encampment, and remained for some moment's stupified, on seeing Samdadchiemba tranquilly by the side of an immense brazier, calmly swallowing huge draughts of tea. The tent was intact, and all our animals lying about it. There had been no fire. The Dchiahour, after having found the horse and mule, had supposed, that if we had gone any distance we should have some difficulty in finding

the encampment again. He had, therefore, kindled a large fire to direct our march, and shouted for the same purpose. We had been so firmly persuaded of the reality of our misfortunes, that, on seeing our tent again, we seemed to pass at once from the depths of despair to the height of felicity. The night was already far advanced; we ate with an excellent appetite the soup prepared for us, and, throwing ourselves on our goat-skins, slept soundly till morning.

On awaking, we had no sooner cast a glance around our encampment, than we felt a cold shiver through all our limbs; we were surrounded on all sides by numerous and deep wells. We had indeed been told that the place bore the name of the "Hundred Wells," but had never supposed this denomination was to be understood literally. As we had pitched our tent during the night, we had not perceived the precipices around; and while in search of our animals, we had made without knowing it a thousand turnings and windings among these profound abysses: that we had escaped uninjured during the darkness of the night, we could not but attribute to the special protection of Providence.

Before leaving, we set up a little wooden cross on the edge of one of these wells, in testimony of our gratitude for the goodness of God.

Towards noon the next day, we perceived before us a multitude of people defiling through a narrow gorge formed by two steep mountains. A long train of camels laden with baggage followed, escorted by a crowd of richly dressed horsemen. We slackened our march to examine the caravan more nearly. Four cavaliers, forming a sort of advanced guard to the main body, galloped towards us. They were Mandarins; the blue globe surmounting their cap of ceremony was the sign of their dignity.

"Reverend Lamas, peace be with you," said they, "to what land are your steps directed?"

"We are from the heavens of the West, and we go towards the West. And you, Mongolian brothers, where are you going in such great numbers, and in such magnificent equipage?"

"We are from the kingdom of Alechan; our king is travelling to Pekin, to prostrate himself at the feet of the Son of Heaven."

The horsemen rose a little in their saddles to salute us, and then resumed their position at the head of the caravan.

After the advanced guard came a palanquin, carried by two

magnificent mules, harnessed one before and the other behind, between gilded shafts. The palanquin was square, ornamented with silken fringes, and the top and the four sides painted in figures of dragons, birds, and bouquets of flowers. The Tartar monarch was seated cross-legged; he looked about fifty years of age, and his physiognomy was extremely good.

As we passed, we cried out, "King of Alechan, may peace and happiness attend thy steps!"

"Men of prayers," he replied, "rest in peace!" and accompanied his words by a gesture full of amenity. An old Lama, with a long white beard, and mounted on a magnificent camel, led the first mule of the caravan. The grand marches of the Tartars are generally under the guidance of the oldest Lama in the country, as these people are persuaded that they have nothing to fear on the road, so long as they have at their head a representative of the divinity, or rather the divinity himself incarnate in the person of a Grand Lama.

Immediately after the king's equipage came a white camel of extraordinary size and beauty, led by a young Tartar on foot. This camel was not loaded, but from the tips of his ears and his two humps fluttered pieces of yellow taffety. This magnificent animal was no doubt destined for a present to the Emperor. The rest of the troop was composed of the numerous camels who carried the baggage — the tents, chests, pots, and the thousand and one utensils necessary to be carried on a journey in a country where there are no inns on the road.

The caravan had passed some time when we came to a well, and decided in consequence on pitching our tent. Whilst we were boiling our tea, three Tartars, one of whom was decorated with the red ball, and the other two with the blue, alighted at the door, and asked how long it was since the caravan of the King of Alechan had passed. We informed them that we had passed it some hours before, and that it would probably reach the Hundred Wells before nightfall.

"In that case," was the reply, "we shall stop here; that will be better than running the risk of falling down some precipice in reaching the Hundred Wells at night. We can easily overtake the caravan to-morrow morning."

Hereupon the Tartars promptly unsaddled their horses, and sent them to seek their fortune in the desert; and then, without

ceremony, came and sat down by our fire. These personages were *Taitsis* or nobles of Alechan. The one wearing the red ball was the king's minister, and the evening before they had stopped to visit one of their friends, a prince of the ORTOUS, and had been left behind by the rest of the caravan.

The minister seemed a man of a frank disposition and penetrating judgment; to the Mongol *bonhommie* he joined lively and elegant manners, acquired no doubt in his frequent journeys to Pekin.

He put many questions to us relative to the country the Tartars call the "Western Heaven." It is needless to say that their geographical knowledge is not very extensive; the West with them, simply means Thibet, and some surrounding countries of which they have heard from the Lamas, who have made the pilgrimage to *Lha-Ssa*. They firmly believe that there is nothing beyond Thibet. "The world ends there," say they, "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." In our turn we asked them many questions respecting the journeys of the Tartar sovereigns to Pekin.

"We go," said they, "to attend our king; it is only kings who have the happiness of prostrating themselves before the *Old Buddha* (the Emperor). They afterwards entered into long details respecting the ceremonies of the new year, and on the relation of the Chinese Emperor to the tributary kings.

These kings are bound to the payment of certain dues, which, under the gentle name of "offerings," are neither more nor less than imposts, which they are not at liberty to withhold. These "offerings" consist of camels, horses remarkable for their beauty, venison, deer, kids and bears, aromatic plants, pheasants, mushrooms, fish, &c. As they travel to Pekin in cold weather, these provisions are all frozen, and keep a long time even after they have reached their place of destination.

One of the "Banners" of Tchakar is especially charged to send yearly to Pekin an immense quantity of pheasant's eggs. We asked if these eggs were particularly delicious, since they were so highly esteemed at Pekin."

"They are not to be eaten" was the answer, "the Old Buddha, has another use for them."

"May we ask what that use is?"

The Tartar looked embarrassed, and coloured a little before he

answered: at last he said that these eggs were made use of as a cosmetic for the hair of the emperor's ladies. Europeans may consider this a somewhat disgusting kind of pommade, but every one knows that beauty and ugliness, cleanliness and dirt, are relative terms. Among the various nations who inhabit the earth, there is far from a general agreement on either of these points.

At Pekin the tributary kings are lodged each in a separate dwelling, with the persons of their suite in a quarter especially appointed for them. During their abode there, these monarchs have no direct communication with the emperor, no solemn audience, unless the ceremony of the first day of the year may be considered in that light, but according to the ritual which regulates the state proceedings of the Emperor of China, he is obliged every year, on the first day of the first moon, to visit the temple of his ancestors. Before the entrance of the temple there is a long avenue, and it is there that the tributary princes (who are sometimes assembled to the number of two hundred) pay their homage to the Son of Heaven. They are ranged on either side in triple lines, standing and in silence.

In the mean time the emperor sets out in great pomp from the Yellow City. During his passage the streets are silent and deserted, for, when the tyrant of Asia appears, all doors must be closed and the inhabitants must remain shut up and mute in their houses, under pain of death.

As soon as the emperor reaches the temple, the heralds who precede him shout "Let every man prostrate himself—behold the master of the earth."

Immediately the two hundred tributary princes respond unanimously "Ten thousand felicities," and prostrate themselves with their faces to the earth. The "Son of Heaven" then passes between their ranks to prostrate himself in his turn before the tablet of his ancestors, the princes remaining all the time stretched upon the ground, whence they do not rise till the emperor has repassed. And that is the whole result of the long and painful journeys undertaken from immense distances by these potentates. They have had the happiness to prostrate themselves before the emperor!

The minister of the king of Alechan told us that it was very difficult to catch sight of the emperor. One year when his master was ill he was obliged to take his place in this ceremony, and he

hoped to behold the "Old Buddha" as he passed; but he was deceived in his expectation. As simple representative of his sovereign, he was placed in the third line so that he could see nothing.

"Those in the front rank," said he, "can, if they manage with great skill and address, just see the yellow robe of the "Son of Heaven." But they must take heed how they raise their heads to satisfy their curiosity; this audacity would be regarded as a great crime, and severely punished.

All these Tartar princes are pensioned by the emperor; the sum they receive is trifling, but the political result is not so. These princes, in receiving this pay, consider themselves as slaves, or at least as servants to him who pays; and that the emperor consequently is entitled to their obedience.

Some of the great Mandarins have the charge of making these distributions, and the evil tongues of the empire do not fail to assert that they make it a profitable speculation at the expense of the poor Tartars.

The minister related to us for our edification, how in a certain year the tributary princes had received their pension in gilded copper instead of gold! Every one was aware of the cheat, but no one ventured to give publicity to a fraud, which must have compromised some of the highest dignitaries in the empire. Besides, as they are supposed to receive the distribution from the hands of the emperor himself, to complain would be to accuse in some sort "Old Buddha," the "Son of Heaven," of being a false coiner! The Tartar princes therefore received their copper ingots with the usual prostrations, and it was not till they returned to their own country that they ventured to say openly, not that they had been cheated, but that the Mandarins had been duped by the bankers of Pekin. The Tartar minister who told us this story, always gave us to understand that neither the emperor nor the Mandarins, nor the courtiers, had any share in the trick. We took care not to disturb this touching credulity; but for our own part we had not implicit faith in the probity of the governments of Pekin, and felt tolerably certain that the Celestial had picked the pockets of the poor Tartars.

The visit of these three Mandarins of Alechan was not only agreeable but useful to us. When they heard that we intended to pass through Alechan, they advised us not to think of it, as

the country, at all times sterile, had been rendered almost uninhabitable this year by the drought which had prevailed more or less throughout Tartary. They assured us that at least one third of the flocks had perished of hunger and thirst, and that the remainder were in a miserable condition. The drought, the consequent want of pasturage, and the losses among the flocks had caused great misery; that the country was ravaged by troops of brigands.

They assured us also that, being so few in number, it would not be prudent for us to enter the mountain land of Alechan, especially in the absence of the principal authorities; and in consequence of this information we took the resolution, not of retracing our steps, for which we had already advanced too far, but of changing our route a little.

The night was so far advanced when we went to rest, that we seemed scarcely to have enjoyed a few minutes' slumber when it was time to rise again; and the Tartars, quickly saddling their horses, and wishing us peace and happiness, set off at full speed to overtake the caravan. Before determining on our route, we consulted the excellent map of China published by M. Andreveau-Goujon, to see how we could avoid the miserable country of Alechan, without wandering too far from our ultimate object. We saw that it would be necessary to recross the Yellow River, pass again the Great Wall, and reach the Tartar city of Kou-kou-noor, through the Chinese province of Kan-Sou.

Formerly, such a project would have made us shudder. It would have been to us clear as the day that strangling for ourselves, and the persecution of all the Chinese missions, would have been the inevitable consequence of so foolhardy an attempt. But the season of fear was now passed for us. Our abode in several great towns — the necessity we had been under of transacting our own business — had rendered us more familiar with the habits and usages of the Chinese.

The language was no longer an embarrassment. We could speak the Tartar language, and were acquainted with the popular Chinese phrases — a knowledge difficult to acquire while resident in the missions, because the Christians, out of flattery to the missionaries, study to employ only the brief nomenclature that the latter have learned from books. In addition to these moral and intellectual advantages, our long journey had been of great service

to us physically. The rain, wind, and sun, had in the course of two months so tanned and hardened our European complexions, that our aspect had become very tolerably savage; and the fear of being recognised by the Chinese no longer affected us.

We told Samdadchiemba that after some days we should cease to travel in the "Land of Grass," and continue our route by the Chinese empire.

"It is good to travel in China," said the Dchiahour. "There are good inns there; one drinks good tea. When it rains, there is shelter; and at night one is not wakened by the cold north wind. But there are ten thousand routes in China: which shall we take?"

We showed him the map, pointing out all the places by which we should pass before arriving at Kou-kou-Noor; and we reduced to *lis* the distances from one town to another. Samdadchiemba looked at our little map with real enthusiasm. "Oh!" said he, "it is now that I sincerely regret not having studied while I was in my convent. If I had listened to my master, I should now be able to comprehend the world painted on that bit of paper. You can go everywhere with that, without asking your way; can you not?"

"Everywhere — even to your family."

"What? is my country written down there too?"

In saying these words he bent eagerly over the map, so as entirely to cover it with his large face. "Stand aside, that we may show you your country. Do you see that small space, beside the green line? That is the country of the Dchiahours, which the Chinese call the 'Three Valleys' (*San Tchouen*): your village must be here; we shall pass within two days' journey of your house."

"Is it possible?" cried he, striking his forehead. "How, not further than two days' journey? In that case I shall ask permission of my spiritual fathers to see my country again."

"What business can you have in the 'Three Valleys'?"

"I shall see what is going on there — I left it eighteen years ago. I shall see if my old mother is still alive. If she is, I will bring her within the Holy Church. As to my two brothers, I will not answer for them. Who knows whether they will have sense enough not to believe in the transmigrations of Buddha? Ah! that is excellent!" added he, after a short pause. "Now I will

go and make some tea, and we will talk about it while we are drinking."

Samdadchiemba was no longer with us. His thoughts had flown far away to his native land; and we were obliged to recall him to the realities of his present position. "Samdadchiemba, there is no need of tea; — instead of chatting, we must strike the tent, and reload the camels. The sun is pretty high, already; if we do not make a quick march, we shall never reach the 'Three Valleys.'"

"Words full of truth," cried he; and, rising briskly, began zealously to prepare for our departure.

After making half a day's march, we halted under the shelter of a rock to take our repast. As usual, we dined upon bread and water — and what bread and water! Dough half baked, and brackish water, obtained with great difficulty, and carried along with us.

Towards the end of our repast, whilst we were indulging ourselves with a pinch of snuff by way of desert, a Tartar mounted on a camel rode up to us, and, dismounting, sat down by our side. We presented our snuff boxes, and offered him a roll baked in the ashes; and, in a moment, he had devoured the bread, and inhaled three pinches of snuff. We questioned him about the road, and learned that by pursuing the same direction we should reach the Yellow River in two days.

This information was very pleasing to us; as it agreed perfectly with that of our map. We then asked if we were far from water.

"Yes; the wells are at a great distance," was the reply. "You will find a tank, if you stop to-day, but the water is scanty, and very bad; formerly there was an excellent well, but it has been abandoned, because a *tchutgour* (devil) has corrupted the water."

Before sunset we reached the tank indicated. As we could not hope to find better water further on, we pitched our tent here, thinking, that perhaps, after all, the water was not quite so diabolical as the Tartar had described it.

Whilst we kindled the fire, the Dchiahour went to draw some water, but came back in a few minutes, saying it was not drinkable; that it was a real poison. The stench of the muddy liquid was, in fact, unbearable; and, to increase our disgust, the surface was covered with something that looked like drops of oil. We had not the courage to taste it; the sight, and yet more the smell, was quite enough. Yet we must drink, or perish. We endeavoured,

therefore, to do as well as we could with this "tank of the devil," as the Tartars called it. We set to work to gather some roots which grew in abundance round about, and which were half-buried in the sand. Of these we made charcoal, which we crushed coarsely, and then filled our largest pot with the muddy stinking water, and placed it on the fire; when it was hot, we threw into it a quantity of our charcoal. Whilst we were occupied with this chemical operation, Samdadchiemba, crouched by the side of the pot, was asking every moment what sort of soup we expected to make with these detestable ingredients. We gave him a dissertation on the disinfecting qualities of charcoal; and he listened to our scientific harangue with patience, but evidently without conviction. He sat with his eyes fixed on our pot, but it was easy to see, by the sceptical expression of his face, that he had no faith in the conversion of the filthy liquid in the pot to a clear and limpid water.

At last after pouring off the water, we filtered it through a cloth bag. The water thus obtained was not exactly delicious, but it was drinkable; it had deposited its filth and ill smell. More than once in the course of our journey we had drunk some by no means so good.

Samdadchiemba was perfectly intoxicated with delight. If he had not been a Christian, assuredly he would have taken us for living Buddhas.

"The Lamas," said he, "pretend that their books of prayers contain every thing; and yet I am sure they would have died of thirst or been poisoned if they had been obliged to make their tea out of that tank; they would never have found the secret of making that water good."

Samdadchiemba now overwhelmed us with strange questions about matters of this nature. Apropos of the purification of the water which we had just accomplished, he asked, whether if he rubbed his face well with the charcoal, it would become as white as ours; and then looking at our hands, still black from the operation of pulverising the charcoal, he went off into fits of laughter.

It was dark before we had finished distilling; we then made tea in abundance, and passed the rest of the evening in drinking it. We contented ourselves, besides, with soaking a little oatmeal in our drink; for the raging thirst that devoured us had taken away all desire of eating. After thus deluging our insides, burnt up by our long day's march, we began to think of going to rest; but we

had scarcely lain down, when we were alarmed by a sudden and extraordinary noise. It was a dismal prolonged sound, that seemed gradually to approach our tent. We had heard the howling of wolves, the roaring of tigers and bears; but this sound resembled none of them. It was like the bellowing of a bull, mingled with some other sound so strange and unusual, that we could not resist a strong feeling of terror. We were the more surprised at this occurrence, because it was generally agreed that not a single fierce wild animal was to be found in the country of Ortous.

We were a good deal alarmed for the safety of the animals tethered round our tent, and a little for our own. As the noise continued, and seemed constantly approaching, we got up to try if we could not frighten the creature, whatever it might be, in our turn. All three, accordingly, began to shout with the whole force of our lungs. After a moment's silence the bellowings were heard again, but much further off. We conjectured, therefore, that our experiment had succeeded.

Presently, the cries coming nearer, we set fire to a great heap of brambles a few steps from the tent; but the fire, instead of frightening, seemed to allure the problematical animal. The brambles threw out an immense flame, by favour of which we could at last distinguish the form of a large quadruped of a red colour. It had not, however, the appearance of so much ferocity as its cries seemed to announce. We ventured to approach it, but it retreated before us. Samdadchiemba, whose eyes were very sharp, and accustomed, as he said, to look into the desert, assured us that it was a dog or a stray calf.

Our animals seemed as much disturbed by the object as ourselves; the horse and mule pricked up their ears, whilst the camels, with extended neck and staring eye, never lost sight for a moment of the spot whence the cries proceeded.

To ascertain with what we had to do, we made a gruel of a handful of oatmeal in a wooden bowl, and placed it at the entrance of the tent, and withdrew. Very soon we saw the animal advance slowly, stop, and then again advance. At last he came boldly up to the dish, and eagerly lapped up the supper we had prepared for him; and we then saw it was a dog of enormous size. After thoroughly cleaning the dish with his tongue, he lay down without hesitation at the door of the tent; and we followed his example, well pleased to have found a protector instead of an enemy.

By daylight we could examine, at our leisure, this animal which, after giving us such a hearty fright, had bestowed itself upon us with such entire confidence. Its size was extraordinary, but its extreme emaciation showed that it must have been wandering about a long time. A dislocated leg, which it dragged in walking, gave a sort of swing to its motion, which, when imperfectly seen, had something formidable. But when it made the air resound with its hollow savage bark, there was really something terrible in the creature. We never heard it without asking ourselves whether the object before our eyes really belonged to the canine race.

We set out, and the new Arsalan attended us with fidelity, generally preceding the caravan, as if to show us the way, with which he seemed well acquainted.

After two days' march we reached the foot of a chain of mountains, whose summits lost themselves in the clouds. We climbed them with good courage, hoping to find the Yellow River beyond them. This day's march was extremely fatiguing, especially for the camels, obliged, as they were, to tread continually upon sharp-pointed rocks. In a short time their spongy feet were covered with blood. For ourselves, we were almost insensible to the difficulties of the journey, so occupied were we in gazing on the strange fantastic aspect of the mountains.

In the ravines, and at the bottom of the precipices, we could perceive nothing but vast heaps of mica and stones laminated, broken, ground, almost pulverised. All these *debris* of slate and schist appeared to have been deposited by great floods, for they did not belong to these mountains, which are of granite. As we approached the summit the forms became more and more fantastic. Great masses of rock were rolled and heaped on each other, and looked as if cemented together. Everywhere the rocks are incrusted with shells and *debris* of plants resembling sea-weed; but what is most remarkable, these granite masses are cut, fretted, and worn in every direction. On all sides there were cavities and holes winding in a thousand forms, as if the whole summit of the mountain had been subjected to the slow devastating action of enormous worms. In some places the granite showed deeply hollowed impressions, as if it had served as a mould for these monsters, whose forms are distinctly preserved.

The sight of these phenomena suggested to us the probability that we were walking in the bed of a dried-up sea. Every thing

we saw induced us to believe that these mountains have been slowly worn by marine action. It was impossible to attribute all these effects to the rain, and still less to the inundations of the Yellow River, which, prodigious as they may have been, certainly never reached so great an elevation.

The geologists who assert that the Deluge was caused by depression, and not by depolarisation of the earth, might perhaps find on these mountains strong proofs in support of their system.

When we had at last ascended to the crest of the mountain, we beheld at our feet the Yellow River rolling majestically from south to north: it was nearly noon, and we hoped that very evening to pass it, and take up our lodging in the little town of *Chè-Tsiu-Dzé*, which we could already perceive on the declivity of a hill on the opposite shore.

It took us the whole evening to descend this steep mountain, choosing right and left the least rugged places. Before night we reached the banks of the river, and our passage was more easy than we had hoped for. In the first place, the Mongol Tartars who were in possession of the ferry-boat were not so hard upon our purse as the Chinese boatmen had been; and in the next, the animals entered it without the least hesitation. We were obliged, however, to abandon our lame dog. The Mongols would at no price admit him into their boat; they asserted that it was the rule for dogs to swim across, and that boats were only meant for men and animals which are unable to swim.

On the other side of the river we were in China, and bade adieu for some time to Tartary, the desert, and nomadic life.

The general aspect of Mongolia is wild and gloomy; never is the eye relieved by the charm and variety of a landscape. The monotony of the steppes is broken only by ravines, great fissures, and stony sterile hills. Towards the north, in the country of the Khalkas, nature appears more animated; the summits of the mountains are crowned by forests, and the rich pasturage of the plain is watered by numerous rivers; but during the long season of winter the earth is buried under a thick covering of snow. From the side of the Great Wall, Chinese industry glides like a serpent into the desert. Towns begin to rise on all sides; the "Land of Grass" is being gradually covered by crops, and the Mongol shepherds are by degrees driven back to the north by the encroachments of agriculture.

The sandy plains occupy perhaps the greater part of Mongolia: and in these not a tree is to be seen; short brittle grass makes its way with difficulty through the barren soil, and creeping thorns, and some scanty tufts of heath, form the only vegetation, the sole pasturage, of Gobi. Water is extremely scarce, being only found in deep wells dug for the use of the travellers who are obliged to cross this miserable region.

There are but two seasons in Mongolia, nine months winter, and three summer. The heat is sometimes stifling, but it lasts a very short time; the nights are almost always cold. In the Mongol countries cultivated by the Chinese all agricultural labours must be got through within three months. As soon as the ground is sufficiently thawed, it is ploughed or rather scratched on the surface, and the seed thrown in; the crops grow with astonishing rapidity: while waiting for their maturity, the husbandmen are incessantly occupied in clearing away the profusion of weeds that encumber the ground. Scarcely is the harvest gathered than the winter sets in with terrible severity. This is the threshing season: as the cold makes huge cracks in the earth, water is thrown over the threshing floor; it freezes immediately, and affords the labourers a smooth and perfectly clean surface for their operations.

The excessive cold of Mongolia is attributed to three causes: the great elevation of the ground, the nitrous substances with which it is strongly impregnated, and the general deficiency of cultivation. In the parts the Chinese have broken up the temperature has risen in a remarkable degree; the heat increases, so to speak, from year to year, as cultivation advances; certain cereals, which at first did not thrive on account of the cold, now ripen remarkably well.

Mongolia, on account of its vast solitudes, has become the abode of a great number of wild animals. At almost every step, hares, pheasants, eagles, yellow goats, grey squirrels, foxes, and wolves are encountered. It is remarkable that the wolves of Mongolia attack men in preference to beasts; they may sometimes be seen to run through countless flocks of sheep, without doing them the least harm, in order to attack the shepherd. In the neighbourhood of the Great Wall they frequently enter the Tartar-Chinese villages, go to the farms, disdaining the domestic animals they meet in the farm-yards, and proceed straight into the house in search of their victims, whom they seize by the neck, and strangle. There is

scarcely a village in Tartary that has not every year to deplore some misfortune of this nature.

The stag, the wild goat, the horse, the wild camel, the yak, the black and brown bear, the lynx, the ounce, and the tiger haunt the deserts of Mongolia. The Tartars never travel except well armed with bows, guns, and lances.

When we think of the horrible climate of Tartary, of the frozen gloomy aspect nature there wears, we might be tempted to think that the inhabitants of such savage countries must be of a harsh and fierce character; and their physiognomy, their air, even their costume, would appear to support the opinion. The Mongol has a flat face, high cheek bones, a short and retreating chin, the forehead slanting backwards, small obliquely cut eyes strongly tinged with bile, coarse black hair, scanty beards, and the skin dark brown, and extremely coarse. The Mongol is of moderate stature, but his large leather boots, and wide sheep-skin robe, give the person a short and squat appearance. To complete the portrait must be added a clumsy, heavy gait, and a harsh, shrieking language, bristling with terrible aspirations.

Yet, notwithstanding this harsh and savage exterior, the Mongol is full of gentleness and *bonhomie*; he passes suddenly from the wildest and most extravagant gaiety to a melancholy that has nothing repulsive. Timid to excess in general, when excited by fanaticism or the desire of vengeance he displays an impetuous courage that nothing can arrest; he is simple and credulous as a child, and is passionately fond of stories and marvellous recitals. To meet a travelling Lama he always reckons a piece of extreme good fortune.

The vices generally attributed to the Mongol Tartars are, aversion to labour, love of pillage, and rapine, cruelty, and debauchery; and we are inclined to believe that the portrait given of them by old writers was not exaggerated. But do the Mongols of the present day resemble their ancestors? We believe ourselves justified in affirming the contrary, at least in great part. We have always found them generous, frank, hospitable; inclined, it is true, like ill-brought-up children, to appropriate little objects of curiosity, but in no manner addicted to what may be called robbery. As for their aversion to labour and a sedentary life, they are much the same as they always were: it must also be admitted that their morals in some points are very lax; but their conduct, in this

respect, proceeds more from thoughtlessness than corruption, and we rarely find among them the hideous and brutal excesses to which the Chinese are so violently addicted.

The Mongols are strangers to every species of industry; their felt carpets, skins coarsely tanned, and some few articles of sewing and embroidery, are not worth mentioning; but, on the other hand, they possess, in high perfection, the qualities of a pastoral and nomadic people, in the prodigious development of the senses of sight, hearing, and smell. Many attempts have been made to convert the Mongols to Christianity, but hitherto they have all proved fruitless. In the time of Gengis-Khan and of his successors, Franciscan and Dominican missionaries were sent into Tartary, and the conversions effected by them were said to have been numerous. But it must be recollected that the Tartar ambassadors, when they wished to draw Christian princes into a league against the Mussulmans, were in the habit of asserting that their masters had been baptized, and converted to the true faith.

CHAP. XI.

THIBET.

Hotel of Justice and Mercy.—Province of Kan-Sou.—Agriculture.—Great Labour for the Irrigation of the Fields.—Manner of living at the Inns.—Confusion occasioned by our Camels.—Chinese Guard-house.—Mandarin Inspector of Public Works.—Inn of the Five Felicities.—Struggle against a Mandarin.—Immense Mountains of Sand.—Sinister Aspect of the Kao-Tan-Dzé.—A Glance at the Great Wall.—Tartars travelling in China.—Frightful Hurricane.—The Dchiahours.—Acquaintance with a living Buddha.—Hotel of the Temperate Climates.—Battle of an Innkeeper with his Wife.—Water Mills.—Arrival at Tang-Keou-Eul.

Two months had passed away since our departure from the Valley of the Black Waters, and during this time we had endured in the desert fatigues and privations of all kinds. Our health had not, indeed, suffered to any great extent; but we felt ourselves weaker than we had been, and we thought it would be necessary, for a time, to change our rude manner of living. In this point of view, a country inhabited by the Chinese could hardly fail to appear desirable, for, compared with Tartary, it offered us every comfort.

As soon as we had crossed the Hoang-Ho, we entered a little frontier town of China, called *Chè-Tsiu-Dzé*, which is only separated from the river by a sandy marsh. We took up our abode at the Hotel of *Justice and Mercy*, a large house newly built of wood, except a solid foundation of grey brick. The innkeeper received us with the eager courtesy which is usually displayed in establishments of this kind which the owner is endeavouring to bring into fashion; but the countenance of the host, it must be owned, did not afford him much assistance in his attempts to be agreeable. His eyes squinted horribly, and always seemed to be turned in the opposite direction to that in which they were really looking. But if the organ of sight performed its functions with difficulty, the tongue, by way of compensation, possessed the most marvellous elasticity. This innkeeper had been a soldier, and, in the way of his profession, seen and heard a great deal. He was well acquainted with the country, and connected with all sorts of people; and his loquacity was by no means on all occasions unwelcome, for he gave us a great deal of information concerning the places we should have to pass through on our way to the Kou-kou-Noor. This part of Tartary was well known to him, for, in the

military period of his life, he had been in the war against the Si-Fan. The day after our arrival, he brought us a large sheet of paper on which the names of the towns, villages, and hamlets were written in order; and he then gave us a topographical lecture, with such impetuosity, so many gestures, and in such a tremendously loud voice, that our heads were fairly turned. The time which was not taken up by these long conversations — half voluntary, half *obligato* — with the innkeeper, we devoted to visiting the town. *Chè-Tsiu-Dzé* is built on an angle formed by the Yellow River and the Alechan mountains. On the eastern side the Hoang-Ho is bordered by blackish hills, in which coal is found in abundance, and which is the principal source of wealth to the inhabitants. The suburbs of the town consist almost wholly of vast potteries, where are to be seen the immense urns that serve to hold the provision of water for Chinese families, large and admirably-constructed furnaces, and vases of all sizes and shapes, great numbers of which are sent to the province of Kan-Sou.

At *Chè-Tsiu-Dzé* provisions are abundant, various, and very moderate in price, and nowhere is it easier to live. At all hours of the day and night numerous ambulatory restaurateurs carry about dishes of all kinds, soups, ragouts of mutton and beef, vegetables, rice, pastry, vermicelli, &c. There are dinners for all appetites and all purses, from the luxurious and complicated banquet of the rich to the thin broth of the beggar. These restaurateurs are usually Mohammedans; but a blue cap is the only sign which distinguishes them from the Chinese.

We rested and refreshed ourselves for two days at the Hotel of Justice and Mercy, and then we set out again. The environs of Chè-Tsiu-Dzé are uncultivated, and consist mostly of sand and gravel brought down every year by the Yellow River; but by degrees, as you advance, the ground rises, and the soil improves. About an hour's march from the town we crossed the Great Wall, or rather we crossed some miserable-looking ruins which mark the site of that ancient rampart of China. The country soon became magnificent, and we could not but admire the agricultural talents of the Chinese nation. The province of Kan-Sou, which we were now passing through, is especially remarkable for its grand and ingenious works for the irrigation of the fields. Large canals formed from the Yellow River feed others of smaller dimensions, and these again supply little rills which flow through all the fields.

The most simple but effectual arrangements are made for meeting the inequalities of the ground, and perfect order prevails in the distribution of the water: no proprietor would venture to open the sluices of his small canals before the appointed day; but every one gets his land watered in his turn.

You see few villages, but many farms, large or small, separated from each other by fields. The houses are surrounded by large trees; but there are neither groves nor pleasure gardens, for all the land is devoted to corn. There is not even a small space reserved to deposit the sheaves after the harvest; but the corn is piled up on the tops of the houses, which have all flat roofs. On the days of irrigation the country gives a perfect idea of those famous inundations of the Nile of which the descriptions have become so classical. The inhabitants move about their fields in little skiffs, or in light carts on enormous wheels, and usually drawn by buffaloes. These irrigations, however, so valuable for the fecundity of the soil, are detestable for travellers; for the roads are filled with mud or overflowed, and you are obliged to walk on raised banks that run along the sides of the fields. It is the height of misery to have to lead a camel along one of these paths: we could not make a single step without fear of seeing our baggage upset into the mud; more than once we were thrown into the greatest embarrassment by accidents of this nature; and if they were not more numerous, our escape must be attributed to the skill of our camels in sliding through the mire,—a talent which they had acquired in the apprenticeship they had served in the marshes of the Ortous.

In the evening of our first day's journey we arrived at a little village named *Wang-Ho-Po*, where we expected to procure food with the same facility as at Chè-Tsiu-Dzé; but we were mistaken. The customs were no longer the same; we saw none of those agreeable restaurateurs, with their ambulatory shops crammed with ready-cooked provisions. The hawkers of forage were the only merchants who came to offer their services; we therefore began by giving their rations to our animals, and then we sallied forth into the village to discover the materials of a supper. On returning to our inn, we found we had to do our own cooking, for the landlord only furnished us with coals, water, and a kettle. Whilst we were peaceably occupied in consuming the products of our culinary industry, a great tumult arose in the court-yard; it was occasioned

by a caravan of camels, conducted by some Chinese merchants, who were going to the town of Ning-Hai. As we were also bound for this town, we made acquaintance with them; and they informed us that the roads were impracticable, and that our camels, clever as they were, would not be able to get on. They added, however, that they knew a cross road which was shorter and less dangerous, and they invited us to accompany them. As we were to set out during the night, we called the master of the inn, to settle our bill, and, according to Chinese custom, the discussion commenced by one party asking a great deal, and the other offering very little; then we disputed a long time, then we made mutual concessions, and at last we came to agreement. As we were taken for Tartars, however, it was deemed proper to ask us at least treble what we really owed, and consequently twice the usual amount of squabbling became necessary. We had to dispute energetically concerning ourselves, our animals, the stable, the room, the watering-place, the coals, the cattle, the lamp, — in short, for everything we had touched. The unlucky Tartar-like appearance that we had, procured us the opportunity of a great deal of practice in these discussions; for during our journey through the province of Kan-Sou, there hardly passed a single day in which we had not occasion to quarrel with an innkeeper. There is no great harm in these quarrels, however, for when they are over, you are generally better friends than before.

It was scarcely more than midnight when the Chinese traders were already on foot, and making, with infinite noise, their preparations for departure. We got up immediately; but it was in vain that we hurried as much as we could in saddling our animals,— our travelling companions were ready before us, and set off, promising, however, to go very slowly till our arrival. The night was dark, and it was impossible to see our guides; but by the aid of a little lantern we endeavoured to find their track, though without success, and we were forced to journey on by chance through watery plains which were entirely unknown to us; and we soon found ourselves so entangled among the inundated lands, that we dared advance no further, and we stopped on the edge of a field to wait for daylight.

As soon as morning dawned, we perceived, at a distance, a great walled town, and directed our course towards it; it was Ping-Lou-Hien, a town of the third order. Our arrival caused a terrible

disorder. The country is celebrated for the beauty of its mules, and a mule was tied to the door of almost every house in the long street, which we traversed from north to south. By degrees, as we advanced, all these animals were seized with terror at the sight of our camels; they reared, they rushed with impetuosity against the neighbouring shops; some broke away from their fastenings, and set off at a gallop, overthrowing, in their flight, the establishments of the small traders. The people came running from all quarters, shouting, swearing at the "stinking Tartars," cursing the camels, and increasing the tumult instead of appeasing it. We were excessively vexed to see that our presence had such disagreeable consequences, but what could we do? It was not in our power to render the mules less timid, or the camels less ugly. It was settled that one of us should run on, and warn every body of the arrival of our ill looking beasts; and this precaution diminished the evil, but did not entirely prevent it, and the confusion did not cease till we had passed completely through the town. We had intended to stop to breakfast; but we had not sufficiently gained the affections of the inhabitants to venture to make any stay. We had the courage to buy some provisions, but we paid a horrible price for them, for the moment was not favourable for our bargaining.

At some distance from the town we came to a guard-house, where we stopped for a short rest, and to take our morning meal. These guard-houses are very numerous in China, indeed, they ought, by law, to be found on all the great roads at every two miles' distance. They are built of wood or clay, quite in the Chinese taste, and whitewashed; and they are intended for a refuge for unfortunate travellers, who, during the night, have been overtaken by bad weather, and have not been able to reach an inn. They have only one large opening in front, and on each side of the hall, or barn, two little rooms, with doors and windows, but seldom any other furniture than a wooden bench, painted red. The outside of the building is decorated with coarse paintings, representing the gods of war — horsemen, and fabulous animals. On the walls inside are drawings of sabres, bows and arrows, lances, and all the weapons in use in China. A little way off to the right is a square tower, with five posts in a row to mark the five *lis*, which make the regular distance from one guard-house to another; and very often a large placard, raised on two poles, indicates to the

traveller the names of the nearest towns on the route. This one, for instance, stated that there was—

"To the North to Ping-Lou-Kien, five *lis*."

"To the South to Ning-Hai, forty-five *lis*."

In time of war these square towers serve for making signal fires; and the Chinese have a story that a certain emperor, yielding to the foolish solicitations of his wife, ordered that, during the night, signals of alarm should be made — the empress wishing to divert herself at the expense of the soldiers, and also to ascertain whether the fires would really summon troops to the capital. By degrees, as the signals reached the provinces, the governors sent off the military mandarins to Pekin; but learning, on their arrival, that the alarm had only been raised for the amusement and caprice of a woman, they went back full of indignation. Some time after there was really an irruption of Tartars, who advanced with rapidity to the very walls of the capital. But now no one in the provinces would pay any attention to the signal fires, as they supposed the alarm was only another joke of the empress; and the story adds that the Tartars entered the capital, and massacred the royal family. The profound peace which China has enjoyed so long has much diminished the importance of these fire stations, and when they go to decay they are seldom repaired.

When we had tied up the animals, we went into a room to take our needful refreshment, though the passers-by seemed surprised at our operations, and the elegant travellers did not fail to smile superior at the sight of the three Mongols who had made so little progress in civilisation.

Our halt was not long; for as the placard informed us officially that we were still forty-five *lis* from Ning-Hai, we thought we had no time to lose. We set off therefore along the bank of a magnificent canal, fed by the Yellow River, and destined to the irrigation of the country. Whilst the little caravan advanced slowly along the wet and slippery path, we saw advancing towards us a numerous troop of horsemen; and as they came up, the swarms of workmen, who were engaged in repairing the banks of the canal, prostrated themselves, and cried — "Peace and happiness to our Father and Mother!"

We understood then that the traveller was a high class mandarin, and, according to the demands of Chinese politeness, we ought to have alighted from our horses and prostrated ourselves too; but

we thought that, as Lamas of the west, we could dispense with this troublesome ceremony. We remained seated, therefore, and advanced gravely, and with confidence. At the sight of our camels, the horsemen kept at a respectful distance, all except the mandarin, who urged on his horse, and, coming up to us, saluted us with politeness, and asked us, in Mongol, news of our health and of our journey. But his steed manifested so much alarm at the sight of our camels, that he was obliged to cut short the conversation, and rejoin his cortége. He went away, however, quite triumphant at having found an occasion of speaking Mongol, and so giving the people of his suite a high opinion of his learning. This mandarin was apparently a Mantchoo Tartar, and he was now engaged in making an official visit of inspection to the canals of the province.

At length we came in sight of the lofty ramparts of Ning-Hai, and the numerous kiosks and pagodas, which might have been taken at a distance for great cedars; and the walls are of brick, and very old, though in good preservation. They are almost entirely covered with moss and lichen, which gives them a very venerable and imposing aspect. They are surrounded by marshes, where grow, in abundance, reeds, rushes, and water-lilies. The interior of the town is poor and miserable; the streets are dirty and crooked; the houses dilapidated, and blackened with smoke: it is evidently a town of great antiquity, as well as of great extent.

After having gone through about half of the main street, as we found we had still a league to get to the other end, we resolved to stop. We entered a large inn, and were followed by three individuals, who impudently demanded our passports. We saw immediately that they were sharpers, against whom it would be necessary to defend our purses.

"Who are you that presume to ask for our passports?" we said.

"We are officers of the Grand Tribunal. It is forbidden to traverse the town of Ning-Hai without a passport."

Instead of making him any answer, we called the innkeeper, and begged him to write on a piece of paper his name, and the title of his inn. Our demand seemed to surprise him much.

"What is the use of such a paper?" said he; "what would you do with it?"

"We shall want it directly; we mean to go to the Grand Tri-

bunal, and inform the mandarin that in your house three thieves came to plunder us."

At these words the three passport heroes took to their heels, and set off; the innkeeper loaded them with imprecations, and a curious crowd that had collected burst into a hearty laugh; but this little adventure stood us in good stead, and procured us many special attentions.

The next morning, when it was scarcely light, we were awakened by a frightful tumult that had suddenly arisen in the court-yard; and, in the midst of the uproar, we distinguished the words "camel" — "Tribunal" — and, "stinking Tartar."

We dressed ourselves quickly, and went to see the nature of this sudden *émeute*, in which it seemed we were in some way concerned. Our camels, it appeared, had during the night devoured two cart-loads of osiers which happened to be in the court-yard; the fragments still lay scattered about. The owners, strangers like ourselves at the inn, demanded payment for their goods, and nothing could be more just as far as they were concerned; but, as we had distinctly warned the innkeeper of the danger in which the osiers were placed, — that our camels would certainly break loose and devour them, — we thought he was bound to repair the damage resulting from his carelessness.

When we had sufficiently explained the nature of the affair to the public jury, which is always permanent in China, it gave its decision in our favour; namely, that all expenses should be paid by the innkeeper; but we generously did not insist on his giving us the value of the broken halter. Immediately after this final judgment had been pronounced, we made our preparations for departure, and set off. The southern part of the town was in a still more decayed state than that we had passed through the day before. Several quarters were entirely in ruins; and the only inhabitants we saw were a few hogs, which were routing about amidst the rubbish. In general, the people we saw in the town looked wretchedly poor, and were clothed in little else than dirty rags. Their faces looked pale and languid, as if they had scarcely the necessaries of life; yet Ning-Hai was probably, at one time, a rich and flourishing city; and it is still considered one of the towns of the first order of the province of Kan-Sou.

On leaving Ning-Hai we entered a magnificent road, bordered almost everywhere with willows and jujube trees; and at certain

distances we found small public-houses, where travellers can rest and refresh themselves at a small expense, on tea, hard eggs, beans fried in oil, cakes, and fruits preserved in sugar and salt. This day's journey was a real recreation for us; and our camels also, who had hitherto only travelled in the deserts of Tartary, appeared to be quite sensible of the blessings of civilisation; they turned their heads majestically from one side to the other, and seemed to be making remarks on all they saw, the men as well as the things. Yet they were not so absorbed by their observations on the manners and industry of China, as to neglect the marvellous productions of the soil. The willows often attracted their attention, and they never failed to nibble, as they went on, a few of the tender young sprouts. Sometimes, also, stretching out their long necks, they would snuff at the dainties displayed before the doors of the public-houses; but the owners of the merchandise were apt to enter a rather lively protest against this manifestation of their scientific curiosity.

Towards the end of the day, which had been quite a pleasant one, we arrived at Hia-Ho-Po, a large village without walls, and alighted at the hotel of the Five Felicities. We were still occupied in distributing forage to our animals, when a horseman, wearing a white ball on his hat, rode into the court-yard; and without getting off his horse, or making any of the customary salutations, he called for the innkeeper, and in an abrupt and haughty tone, said, "Let the place be properly swept and cleaned. Let these Tartars go and lodge elsewhere; the Grand Mandarin won't have camels in the inn."

We were not much surprised at the insolence of these expressions from the courier of a mandarin, but we were annoyed. We pretended not to hear him, and went on quietly with our occupation; and the innkeeper, seeing that we took no notice of the order to withdraw, advanced towards us, and, in a tone of politeness mingled with embarrassment, explained the state of affairs.

"Go and tell the White Ball," said we, "that you have received us into your house, and that we shall remain there. The mandarins have no right to take the place of travellers who have established themselves in a lawful manner."

The innkeeper had no need to take the trouble of reporting our words, for they had been pronounced in a tone quite loud enough

for the White Ball to hear them distinctly. He got down immediately from his horse, and addressing himself directly to us, said:—

"The Grand Mandarin is coming directly; he has a great number of attendants, and the inn is small; besides, how could the horses remain in this yard with your camels?"

"A man in the suite of a mandarin, and, moreover, a man decorated like you with a white ball, ought to know how to express himself, first, with politeness, and secondly, with justice. We have a right to remain here, and we will not be driven away. Our camels shall remain tied to the door of our room."

"The Grand Mandarin has given me orders to prepare him a lodging at the hotel of the Five Felicities."

"Very well, prepare his lodging; but don't meddle with our things. If you can't please yourself here, common sense dictates that you should go elsewhere."

"And the Grand Mandarin?"

"Tell the Grand Mandarin that there are here three Lamas of the West, who are quite willing to go back to Ning-Hai and appeal to the law. That they will go to Pekin if necessary; they know the road."

The White Ball mounted his horse, and disappeared; and the innkeeper then came to us, and begged us to stand firm in our resistance. "If you remain here," said he, "I shall be sure of a little profit; but, if the mandarin comes, he will turn my house topsy-turvy — he will make me work all night, and then he will set off in the morning without paying me. And then, if I were forced to send you away, would it not ruin the reputation of the Five Felicities? Who would come to an inn where they took travellers in to turn them out again?"

Whilst the host was thus exhorting us to courage, the mandarin's courier again appeared, got down from his horse, and made us a low bow; which we returned with the best grace possible. "My Lord Lamas," said he, "I have been all through Hia-Ho-Po, and there is no other suitable inn. Who would say you are bound to give us your place? — to speak thus would not be to speak in a manner conformable to reason. But you see, Lord Lamas, we are all travellers — we are far from our own families. Could we not manage the matter quietly, like brothers?"

"Oh! that indeed!" we said. "Men ought always to act like brothers; that is the true principle. When we are travelling, we

ought to know how to live with travellers; if every one will put up with a little inconvenience, every one at last will be at his ease."

"Excellent words! excellent words!" and the most profound bows recommenced on each side.

As soon as we had come to this amicable arrangement, we began to discuss, in the pleasantest manner, the method of disposing ourselves in the inn of the Five Felicities. It was agreed that we should keep the room where we were already installed, and that we should tie up our camels in the corner of the court, in such a manner that they should not frighten the mandarin's horses. The courier was to do as he pleased with the rest of the house.

Immediately after sunset, the procession began to arrive. The two great gates of the court-yard were solemnly opened, and there entered a coach drawn by three mules, escorted by a number of horsemen. In the coach was seated a man of about sixty years of age, with grey beard and moustache, and a red cap on his head; — this was the Grand Mandarin. At his entrance his eye had run with a sharp and rapid glance over the inn; and as soon as he caught sight of us, and moreover of our three camels at the end of the court, the muscles of his thin face became suddenly contracted. "What's that?" he cried, with a harsh, angry voice. "Who are these Tartars? where do these camels come from? Send the landlord to me." At this summons the innkeeper instantly vanished, and the White Ball stood a moment, as if petrified. His face became pale — then red — then olive-coloured. Nevertheless he took courage, advanced to the coach, bent one knee to the ground, and then rising, and approaching his lips to his master's ear, he spoke with him some time in a low voice. When the dialogue was over, the Mandarin expressed a wish to alight; and, after having waved his hand with a protecting air towards us, he retired like a mere mortal into the room that had been prepared for him.

The triumph that we had thus obtained, in a country the very entrance to which was forbidden us under pain of death, gave us great courage. These terrible mandarins, who had formerly caused us so much fear, ceased to be terrible now that we could approach them and look them in the face. We saw, in them, men full of pride and insolence, — pitiless tyrants to the weak, but cowards in the presence of men of a little energy; and from this time, we found ourselves in China as much at our ease as elsewhere.

After two more days' travelling we arrived at Chong-Wei, on

the banks of the Yellow River. The town is walled, and of a middling size; but its cleanliness and its air of prosperity contrast strikingly with the poverty and ugliness of Ning-Hai. To judge of it merely by the number of its shops, all seemingly well provided with customers, and by the great population that throngs its streets, it should be an important commercial town. Yet the Chinese of this country appear not to know how to manage boats, for there are none to be seen on this part of the river. This is a remarkable peculiarity, and it would confirm the idea that the people of this part of Kan-Sou are of Thibetan and Tartar origin; for the Chinese in general are known to be passionately addicted to river navigation. In leaving Chong-Wei we again crossed the Great Wall, here nothing more than a heap of loose stones piled one upon another, and we returned for some days to the kingdom of Alechan, in Tartary. More than once the Mongol Lamas had painted the Alechan mountains to us in frightful colours; but we can declare that the reality exceeded every description that had been given of it. The Alechan is a long chain of mountains composed of moving sand so fine that it will run through your fingers like water; and over the whole of these immense accumulations there is nowhere the least trace of vegetation. Their monotonous aspect is only varied by the traces of some small insects, which, in their capricious sports, have described a thousand arabesques upon the sand. Its extreme fineness makes it easy to follow the track even of an ant. We experienced the greatest difficulty in making our way across these mountains. At every step our camels plunged in up to their bellies; and the horses were still more embarrassed, as their hoofs took less hold of the sand than the camels' feet. For ourselves, walking on foot, we had to take the greatest care not to roll down into the waters of the Yellow River, which flowed at the foot of the mountains. Fortunately for us, the weather was very calm; if there had been a wind, we must have been buried alive under a sandy avalanche. These mountains appear to have been formed from the sand swept from the great desert of Gobi, — the Yellow River having arrested its progress, and preserved the province of Kan-Sou from destruction; and it is to this it owes the yellowish colour which has procured for it the name of Yellow River, or Hoang-Ho. Above Mount Alechan its waters are always pure and limpid.

As we advanced, the mountains gradually declined to hills, the

sand diminished in quantity, and towards the end of the day we reached a village whose Chinese appellation signifies "Waters always flowing," and which was a real oasis of exquisite beauty. The houses were built of the living rock, and often painted white or red; and the numerous trees and rivulets flowing through the streets give it a most picturesque aspect. Exhausted with fatigue as we were, the pleasure of arriving at such a place as the "Waters always flowing" is indescribable, and we were in a position to estimate all its delights. But our poetical enjoyment only lasted till the time came for settling with the innkeeper. As all the provisions, and even the fodder for the animals, had to be fetched from Chong-Wei, they were so frightfully dear as to overthrow entirely our plans of economy. For ourselves and our beasts we had to pay almost eight francs. Had it not been for that, we should have grieved at quitting this charming village. But there is always some motive which aids men to detach themselves from the things of the world.

On leaving *Chong-Lieou-Chouy* (the always flowing waters), we took the road followed by the Chinese exiles, and which leads to Ili. The country was not so frightful as that we had traversed the day before, but it was very dreary. Gravel had taken the place of sand; but, except some tufts of hard, prickly grass, we found the soil entirely barren.

We passed through Kao-Tan-Dze, a most hideous village, the hovels composing which were of black earth. Provisions were still scarcer here than at the pretty one, and consequently still dearer. Even water has to be fetched from a distance of nearly thirty miles; and its price is so enormous, that though we bought a little for ourselves and our horses, our camels had to wait for better times and a less inhospitable soil.

Kao-Tan-Dze does not even enjoy the tranquillity which its poverty and solitariness would seem to assure it; for it is continually infested by robbers; and almost every house presents traces of fire and devastation. At the inn where we stopped, they asked us whether we wished to have the animals protected against robbers. This question of course astonished us not a little; and the people then entered into some explanations, and informed us that in this town there were two kinds of inns—those where they fought, and those where they did not fight,—and that the prices at the first were four times those of the second. This account made

us suspect what was the real state of affairs; but the thing was still not altogether clear.

"Don't you know," said they, as we hesitated, "that Kao-Tan-Dze, is continually attacked by robbers?"

"Yes, we know that."

"If you lodge at an inn where they do not fight,—if the robbers come, they will carry away your beasts, because no one has undertaken to defend them. If, on the contrary, you lodge at an inn where they fight, there's a great chance that you will keep them, unless, indeed, the robbers should be the strongest — that happens sometimes."

All this appeared very strange and very vexatious; but it was necessary to make up our minds; and, after mature consideration, we determined to take up our abode at an inn where they did fight; for it occurred to us that the people of Kao-Tan-Dze probably had an understanding with the brigands to share the profits to be made out of travellers, and that it was better to pay them a good sum at once than to abandon our animals to them, since their loss would probably be followed by our own destruction.

On entering the inn which had been pointed out to us, we noticed, that every thing was really on a war footing; there were guns, bows and arrows, and lances; and the presence of these weapons was not calculated to reassure us. We resolved, therefore, not to go to bed, but to keep watch during the night. What with its robbers and its excessive poverty, Kao-Tan-Dze in this martial attitude was a perfect puzzle to us. We could not help asking what could possibly induce people to inhabit a frightful sterile country, without water, far from any inhabited region, and, into the bargain, as it appeared, desolated by the attacks of hordes of robbers. What could they gain by it? What advantage could such a position present? But the problem for us remained insoluble. During the first watch of the night, however, we were talking a good deal with the innkeeper, who seemed to be a frank sort of person enough, and who told us a number of stories, all full of combats, fires, and murder.

"But why in the world," said we, at last, "don't you leave such a detestable country?"

"Oh!" he answered, "we are not free to do that. We people of Kao-Tan-Dze are all exiles. We have to remain here to furnish water to the mandarins and soldiers who conduct the exiles. We have to give it gratis to all government officers."

Here, then, the matter was explained; and we were inclined to think, too, that the people were not in connivance with the robbers; for it appeared they had among them a mandarin charged with their superintendence. For a moment we had hopes of finding some Christians in the town; but the innkeeper assured us that there were none. He said that those who had been exiled for the religion of the Lord of Heaven all went to Ili.

From the account given by the innkeeper we thought we might without danger venture to take a little rest. We went therefore to bed, and slept till dawn, without being at all disturbed by robbers.

The road to Ili, which we followed during a great part of the day, led us as far as the Great Wall; and as this has been often mentioned without a very accurate description being given of it, we will say a few words on the subject. The idea of raising a wall as a defence against enemies is of course not peculiar to China, — antiquity offers many examples of similar works, though none on so grand a scale. Its importance has been very differently estimated by different people — some rating it very highly, and others turning it into ridicule. Mr. Barrow, who visited it in 1793 with Lord Macartney, made the following calculation. He supposes that there are in England and Scotland 1,800,000 houses; and estimating each on an average to contain 2000 cubic feet of masonry, he maintains that they do not contain as large a quantity of materials as are employed in the Wall of China; and that these would suffice for a wall that should go twice round the globe. But it is evident that he has taken for the basis of his calculation the part of the Wall immediately to the north of Pekin, which is really fine and imposing; but it must not be supposed that this barrier is equally large and solid throughout its whole extent. We have had occasion to cross it at more than fifteen different points, and have often travelled for days together without ever losing sight of it; and, instead of the double battlemented stone wall which is seen at Pekin, it is sometimes a very humble-looking wall of clay; and we have even seen it reduced to its simplest expression, and composed only of stones piled up together. As for the foundations of which Mr. Barrow speaks, and which consist of large free-stones cemented with mortar, we have certainly nowhere seen a vestige of any thing of the kind; and it is reasonable to suppose that, as the Great Wall was built as a rampart against the incursions of the Tartar hordes, the environs of the capital would be fortified in a special manner. The man-

darins, also, who were charged with the execution of this work, would probably execute more conscientiously the part that was made under the eye of the emperor, and content themselves with raising the mere pretence of a wall on those distant points, which had besides little to fear from the Tartars, — such, for instance, as the frontiers of Ortous and the Alechan mountains.

The barrier of San-Yen-Tsin, which is found at some distance after passing the Wall, is celebrated for the great severity exercised at it with regard to the Tartars who wish to enter the empire. The village possesses only a single inn, kept by the chief of the soldiers who guard the frontier: as we entered we saw in the court-yard several groups of camels; a large Tartar caravan had arrived just before us, but there was plenty of room, for the inn was very large. But we had scarcely taken possession of our room when the master came to ask us for our passports. We replied that we had none; and at these words his face expanded with an expression of extreme satisfaction, and he declared that we could not go on without paying him a considerable sum of money. We declared that we had been at Pekin, and traversed China and Tartary from one end to the other, without having been ever asked for a passport, or spending for such a purpose a single sapeck. He however insisted; and, finding the discussion was extending to an inconvenient length, we at last declared that we would give him whatever he asked, — on one condition, namely, that he should give us a written declaration that he had required such a sum of us previously to allowing us to pass; and this we would show to the first mandarin we should meet, and ask him if it were conformable to the laws of the empire. This settled the business, — the landlord lowered his tone immediately, and said, "Since you have been at Pekin, it may be that the emperor has granted you particular privileges;" and he then added, in a low voice, and smiling, — "Do not tell the Tartars that I have let you pass gratis."

It is really pitiable to see these poor Mongols travelling in China: every one tries to cheat them, and every one succeeds; they meet at every step custom-house officers, — people who have to make roads and bridges and build pagodas, and who all recommend themselves to their generosity. Others pretend to give them advice, — to warn them against evil-disposed, wicked persons; they caress them, call them friends and brothers; and if all these methods do not prove effectual in loosening the Tartar's

purse-strings, they try that of intimidation: they talk to them of mandarins, laws, tribunals, prisons, tortures; they tell them they are going to be arrested, and, in short, treat them quite like children. The Mongols are easily imposed upon, as they are total strangers to the manners and customs of China. When they come to an inn, instead of lodging in the rooms, they pitch a tent in the middle of the court, and plant stakes all round it, to which they tie their camels. If they are not allowed to do this, and are forced to enter a room which they regard as a prison, they fix their tripod in the centre, place their kettle on it, and light a fire with argols, of which they never fail to bring a good store. It is in vain to tell them that there is a large kitchen in the inn where they can much more conveniently cook their provisions; they greatly prefer boiling their tea in the middle of the room, and when night comes on, unrolling their carpets and lying down round it. They take very good care not to lie down on the beds or the kang. The Tartars of the caravan who were lodging with us at the inn of San-Yen-Tsin, carried on all their little domestic operations in the open air; and the simplicity of these children of the desert was such, that they came to ask us seriously whether the innkeeper would charge them anything for lodging with him.

We continued our journey through the province of Kan-Sou directing our course towards the south-west. The country is intersected by hills and streams, and is generally fine and rich. The admirable variety of its products is due in some measure to a temperate climate and a fertile soil, and especially to the activity and skill of the cultivators. The principal produce is wheat, and excellent bread, like that of Europe, is made from it; rice is scarcely ever sown, and the little that is used is brought from the surrounding provinces. The goats and sheep are fine, and form, with bread, the chief subsistence of the inhabitants; and the numerous and seemingly inexhaustible mines of coal enable every one to procure a sufficiency of fuel; so that it appeared to us that in Kan-Sou every one had the means of getting an honest living. At two days' journey from San-Yen-Tsin we were assailed by a dangerous hurricane. It was about ten in the morning. We had just crossed a small mountain, and entered on a plain of vast extent, when suddenly we noticed a peculiar calm in the atmosphere; yet profoundly still as the air was, it was excessively cold. By degrees the sky assumed a whitish tint, although we could see no cloud; the wind began to blow from the west, and

soon with such violence that our animals could not advance further. The sky now became of a reddish colour, and the furious gusts of wind raised in the air immense columns of dust, sand, and fragments of plants, and then these columns were flung impetuously to the right, the left, and in all directions, and the darkness was so deep, that we could not even see the animals on which we were mounted. We got off our horses, but we could not move on a step, and wrapping up our faces, that we might not be blinded by the sand, we crouched down by the side of the cattle. We did not know where we were; in the uproar and confusion, the world seemed to be falling asunder, and the end of all things approaching. This lasted for an hour; and when the wind had abated a little, and we could see to a short distance round us, we found ourselves flung widely apart from each other. In the midst of the tempest we had called to each other in vain; it was impossible to hear a word. As soon as we could walk a few steps, we went towards a farm, to which we happened to be quite near, though we had not seen it before. The hurricane had torn down the great gate, so that it was easy to enter, and the house itself was soon opened to us, for Providence had enabled us to meet, in this our hour of distress, a family really remarkable for hospitality. As soon as we arrived, they heated water for us to wash; for we were in a frightful state, enveloped in dust from head to foot, and not only our clothes, but our very bodies, were impregnated with it. Had such a storm overtaken us on the Alechan mountains, we must all have been buried alive, and we should probably never have been heard of again. When we saw that the worst of the hurricane was over, we thought to set out again, but the good peasants would not consent to our leaving the farm. They told us that they could find means to lodge us during the night, and that our animals need not want either water or fodder. Their invitation appeared so sincerely and cordially given, and we were so much in need of rest, that we were glad to accept the offer. It is very easy to see that the people of Kan-Sou are not of pure Chinese origin, but that the Tartaro-Thibetan element greatly preponderates. You never find among them the affected politeness which distinguishes the Chinese, but they are remarkable for their frankness and hospitality. In their language, too, there are many Tartar and Thibetan phrases, and modes of construction; as, for instance, they do not say, like the Chinese,

"Open the window," "Shut the door," but "The window open," "The door shut," &c., like all the Mongols. Their favourite articles of food—milk, curds, butter, &c.—are much disliked by the Chinese, but they differ from them above all things in matters of religion. The Chinese are usually sceptical and indifferent; but in Kan-Sou the Lama colleges or convents are numerous and flourishing, and the worship is a reformed Buddhism. The Chinese have indeed plenty of pagodas, and idols of all kinds in their houses, but all their religion consists in outward representations; whilst in Kan-Sou, on the contrary, the people pray much and often; and it is prayer which forms the most marked distinction between the religious and irreligious man.

After having thoroughly rested from our fatigues, we set out at an early hour on the following morning. Everywhere traces of the ravages of the evening before met our eyes; there were trees broken or torn up by the roots, houses stripped of their roofs, and fields of their vegetable covering. Before the close of day, we arrived at Choang-Long, a rather flourishing commercial town. We went to lodge at the "Hotel of Social Relations," and found the landlord very amiable, but very satirical,—evidently a pure Chinese. To give us a proof of his penetration, he asked at once whether we were not English (*Ing-Kie-Li*), the marine devils who were making war at Canton.

"We are not English," we replied; "nor are we devils of any sort — land or sea."

"Don't you know," said a man who was lounging about, addressing the landlord, "that all those marine devils have blue eyes and red hair?"

"Besides," said we, "if we were marine monsters, how could we live on shore, and go on horseback?"

"Yes, that's true, that's true," said he; "the Ing-Kie-Li never dare to quit the sea; as soon as ever they come on shore, they tremble and die like fish."

Just at nightfall there arose in the inn a great bustle, occasioned by the arrival of a living Buddha with a numerous suite. He was returning from Thibet, his native country, and was going to the great Lama convent in the country of Khalkas, not far from the Russian frontier. As he entered the inn, a great multitude of zealous Buddhists, who were in waiting to receive him, prostrated themselves with their faces to the ground. The Grand

Lama then entered the apartment prepared for him; and, when it became quite dark, the crowd retired.

As soon as the inn was quiet, this singular personage, apparently felt inclined to indulge his curiosity; and he travelled all over the house, going into every room, and speaking to every body, though without sitting down or stopping anywhere. As we expected, he came also into our room. We were waiting for him, and we had seated ourselves gravely on the kang, and purposely did not rise to receive him, but merely made him a slight salutation. He appeared much surprised, but not disconcerted; and he stopped a long time in the middle of the room, and looked at us one after the other. We remained profoundly silent, making use meanwhile of the same freedom, and examining him also from head to foot. He was about fifty years of age, of middling height, and very plump; and was dressed in a long robe of yellow silk, with red velvet boots with very high soles. The expression of his countenance was extremely good-natured; and yet, when we looked attentively at it, there appeared something in it strange, haggard, and almost terrific. He addressed us at length in the Mongol language, which he spoke with great facility. At first the conversation turned on the common-place matters on which travellers usually address one another—the road, their health, the weather, the state of their cattle, &c.; but seeing that he was inclined to prolong his visit, we invited him to sit down beside us on the kang. He hesitated a moment, imagining, no doubt, that in his situation it was not proper that he should place himself on a level with simple mortals like us; but, as he had evidently a great desire to gossip, he made up his mind to sit down. Perhaps he was the more willing to do so, because his dignity would, at all events, have been compromised, if he had remained longer standing while we were seated. A Breviary that lay beside us on the table attracted his attention, and he asked our permission to examine it. This being given, he took it in his two hands, admired the binding and the gilt edges, and, opening it, turned over the leaves for a long time. He then carried it solemnly to his brow, saying—"It is your book of prayer; we must always honour and reverence prayer." He added afterwards—"Your religion and ours are like that;" and he laid the two forefingers of his hands one against the other.

"You are right," said we; "your faith and ours are in a position of hostility: the object of our journey and of our endeavours is—

we do not conceal it — to substitute our prayers for those which are in use among you."

"I know it," said he, smiling; "I have known it for a long time." Then he took up the Breviary again, and asked us to explain the engravings. When we came to that of the Crucifixion, he shook his head in token of compassion, and carried his joined hands to his forehead. He then took the Breviary again, and once more carrying it to his brow, rose, and saluting us with much affability, left the room—we attending him to the door.

When we were left alone after this strange visit, we sought to guess what thoughts must have been passing in the mind of the living Buddha while he was with us; what impression he had received, when we had afforded him a glimpse of our holy religion. Sometimes we thought they must have been very strange; — and then, again, that perhaps he had felt nothing at all; — that he was merely, perhaps, an ordinary man, who was profiting mechanically by his position without ever reflecting upon it at all, and without attaching any importance to his pretended divinity. Our minds were so full of this singular personage, that we desired to see him once more before setting out again; and, as we were to start at a very early hour the next morning, we resolved to return his visit before going to bed. We found him in his room, seated on large thick cushions, covered with superb tiger skins; he had before him, on a little lackered table, a silver tea-pot, and a cup made of a precious green stone placed on a richly wrought gold saucer. He appeared to be exceedingly tired of his own company, and was delighted with our visit.

For fear he might take it into his head to leave us standing in his presence, we took seats beside him, without any ceremony, directly we went in. The people of his suite, who were in a neighbouring chamber, were excessively shocked at this familiarity, and uttered a slight murmur of disapprobation; but the Buddha smiled archly at us, and then, ringing a little silver bell, he ordered a young Lama who entered to serve us with tea and milk. "I have often seen your countrymen," said he. "My convent does not lie far from your country. The Russians sometimes cross the frontier, but they do not come as far as you have done."

"We are not Russians," said we. "Our country is a long way from them."

This answer seemed to surprise him. "From what country are you, then?"

"We are from the sky of the West."

"Ah! then you are from *Peling*" (the Thibet word for Hindostan),—"from the Eastern Ganges,—and the town you inhabit is called *Galgata*" (Calcutta).

The Buddha could, of course, only class us among the nations he knew; and in considering us first as Russians, and then as English, he afforded a proof that he was not entirely ignorant. We could not make him understand precisely who we were: "But, after all," said he, "what does it matter from what country you are, since all men are brothers? As long, however, as you remain in China, you must be prudent, and not tell everybody who you are. The Chinese are suspicious and wicked, and they might injure you." He then spoke to us of the route to Thibet, and of the terrible journey we should have to make to get to it;—seeming to doubt whether we were strong enough for such an undertaking. The words and the manner of this Grand Lama were full of affability, but we could not accustom ourselves to the strange look of his eyes. Had it not been for this peculiarity, which after all, perhaps, depended on certain prejudices on our part, we should have thought him very amiable.

We had found on examination that our horse and mule had both large tumours on their flanks, caused by the friction of the saddle, and we therefore determined to make some stay at this place in order to try and cure them. As we wished, however, to find ourselves another abode, we set off on a tour of inspection through all the inns in the town, and at last determined to stop at the "Hotel of Temperate Climates." Since our entrance into the province of Kan-Sou, in which the native district of our Dchiahour, Samdadchiemba, is situated, he had never ceased to talk of it; and, though he was very little sentimental, we easily believed that he might wish to see his family again. We therefore, as soon as we were settled in our new inn, allowed him a holiday of eight days (four of which would be consumed in the journey) to visit his home; and, that he might make his appearance in a triumphal manner, we lent him a camel, and put five ounces of silver into his pocket. Until his return, we had to take the care of our cattle ourselves, and to take them to water morning and evening, at a great distance from the hotel; besides buying our own provisions, and doing our own cooking. The landlord was one of those good-natured fellows who are always glad to render you a service, but who make themselves

so excessively troublesome that one only forgives them by thinking of their good intentions. He would come every moment into our room to give us his advice about our housekeeping; and, after having arranged everything according to his own fancy, he would come up to the fire, take the lid off the kettle, and put in his finger to taste our ragout, adding salt or ginger as he thought proper, to my great wrath, as the cookery was entrusted to me. Then he would take the tongs and pull all the fire to pieces, and arrange it in what he considered the best manner, to the great indignation of M. Gabet, who was intrusted with the business of making the fire.

But it was when night came on that he considered himself as truly indispensable, to lengthen or shorten the wick of our lamp, and make it burn properly. He really seemed, sometimes, to be asking himself how we could possibly have got on above thirty years in the world without his assistance. Among all the attentions that he paid us, however, there was one for which we were really obliged to him; — this was the operation of warming our bed; for the mode of performing it was so singular, and so peculiar to the country, that we were never able to acquire it properly.

The *Kang*, the sort of large flat stove upon which we slept, was not entirely made of stone as in the north of China, but partly of moveable planks placed one beside the other, so that they join perfectly. When it is desired to heat the kang, the planks are taken away, and a quantity of dry and pulverised horse-dung is spread over the interior, and some lighted charcoal thrown upon it. The planks are then replaced, and the fire gradually communicates to the dung, which once kindled does not go out again. The heat and smoke, having no outlet, soon warm the planks, and produce an agreeable temperature, which lasts the whole night, from the slow combustion of the dung. But there is a great art in putting exactly the right quantity, and in arranging the lighted coals so that the combustion may go on simultaneously at several different points, and all the planks may be heated at once. We were ashamed of not being able to perform this office for ourselves, and determined one day to try to do it. But we failed signally. One of us had very nearly been burnt alive, while the other was shivering all night; and, what was worse, though the fire on one side had never caught, on the other the planks were burnt. The master of the "Temperate Climates" was very angry, and with good reason; and, in order that we might not play him such an

awkward trick again, he locked up the closet where the fuel was kept, and declared he would prepare our couch for us himself every evening.

These multiplied cares of housekeeping, with the recitation of our Breviary, prevented our feeling any weariness during our stay at Ho-Kiao-Y. The time passed quickly, and on the eighth day, as it had been agreed, Samdadchiemba reappeared. He was not alone, but was accompanied by a little fellow, who it was easy to see was his brother. After presenting themselves to us, they instantly disappeared again, and we supposed that they had gone to pay their respects to the landlord; but it was not so. They came back again, and, entering in a solemn manner, Samdadchiemba said to his brother, "Babdcho, prostrate yourself before our masters, and make them the offering from our poor family." The young Dchiahour saluted us three times in the oriental fashion, and then presented to us two large dishes, one filled with fine nuts, and the other with three large loaves, which were shaped like those of our own country. To prove to Samdadchiemba how sensible we were of his attention, we immediately began to eat them, and made a delicious repast. We had not tasted such bread since we had left France.

We were surprised to observe that Samdadchiemba, who had gone away very well dressed, had come back with his costume reduced to its lowest terms. We asked him how this happened; and he then spoke to us of the state of wretchedness in which he had found his family. His father had been long dead, and his aged mother was blind. He had two brothers — the one whom he had brought with him, and another who was the sole support of the family, whom he maintained by cultivating a little plot of ground and keeping sheep for hire. After this account it was easy to guess what Samdadchiemba had done with his clothes. He had left them all with his poor mother, not excepting even his travelling blanket. We thought we ought to propose to him to remain and devote himself to the care of his family; but he said, "How could I have the cruelty to do such a thing? Of what use could I be to them? I know no trade, nor even how to till the earth. I should but devour the little that remains to them." We did not think this very generous on his part; but, as we knew his character, we were not surprised, and we did not urge him further, for we were quite of his opinion, that he was really not good for

much, and that his family would probably not be much better off for his help. We did what we could for the relief of these unfortunate people, by giving a considerable alms to the brother; and then made our preparations for continuing our route.

During this eight days' rest, our cattle had recovered sufficiently to attempt the painful road we should have to traverse. But the rugged path by which we had to climb the mountain of Ping-Keou presented difficulties which our camels found almost insurmountable; and we were continually obliged, as we went on, to utter loud cries to warn muleteers who might be advancing towards us on this narrow and dangerous road, where two animals could not pass abreast, that they might have time to turn aside their mules, lest they should be terrified by the sight of our camels, and rush down the precipice.

We had set out before daylight, and we scarcely got to the top by mid-day. Here we found a small inn, where an infusion of roasted beans was sold to us instead of tea; but we made an excellent repast, for we had also some nuts, a slice of the famous bread (which we had been using very sparingly), and — a great appetite.

When we had passed the mountain, we came to a village whose Chinese appellation signifies the Old Duck; and what struck us most in this place, was that the art of knitting, which we had imagined unknown in China, was here carried on very busily; and, moreover, not by women, but by men. Their work appeared to be very clumsy; the stockings they made were like sacks; and their gloves had no separation for the fingers. It looked very odd, too, to see moustachioed fellows sitting before their doors, spinning, knitting, and gossiping, like so many old women. On the second day after leaving the "Old Duck," we came to Ning-Pey-Hien, a town of the third order, and stopped at a hostelry outside the western gate, to take our morning meal. Many travellers were already assembled in a dry large kitchen, and occupied the tables ranged along the walls. In the centre were some immense stoves, where the innkeeper, his wife, and children, were actively engaged in preparing the dishes demanded by the guests. But, whilst the whole company was thus busied, some in the preparation, and others in the consumption, of the viands, a loud cry was heard. It was from the hostess, who gave utterance thus to the pain she felt from a heavy blow of a shovel which her husband had just bestowed on

her head. All the travellers started up, the woman ran screaming into a corner, and the innkeeper explained to the company that he had done quite right to correct this insolent and disobedient wife, who took no care of his house, and whose neglect would ruin the reputation of the inn. But before he had got to the end of his speech, the hostess commenced an animated reply from the corner where she was crouching. She declared that her husband was a lazy fellow, who did nothing but drink and smoke, while leaving her to attend to the customers, and that he would spend her week's earnings in the course of a day or two in liquor and tobacco. During this scene the audience remained quite calm and imperturbable, giving no sign of approbation, or the contrary, to either of the belligerent parties. The woman then issued from her corner, as if to present a kind of challenge to her lord and master. "Since I am a wicked woman," said she, "you had better kill me! Come, kill me!" and she planted herself right before the wrathful landlord. He did not kill her, but he gave her a tremendous box of the ears, which sent her back, uttering doleful howlings, to her corner. The pit now seemed to find the piece rather amusing, for it burst into a loud laugh; but the matter soon became serious enough; for after a good deal more of bitter abuse from one side, and fierce menaces from the other, the innkeeper tucked up his garments under his girdle, and rolled his long plaits of hair round his head: it was the signal that he was preparing for a *coup-de-main*. "Very well," said he, "since you tell me to kill you, I will;" and with these words he snatched the tongs from one of the stoves, and rushed with fury at his wife. The company ran towards them, with loud exclamations; some neighbours came running in; but they did not succeed in separating the combatants till the hostess had her hair torn down and her face all bleeding. Then a man of rather advanced age, who spoke like one having authority in the house, said, in a grave tone, "What's this? What's this? A husband and wife, and in presence of their children, in presence of a crowd of travellers?" And these words, repeated three or four times over, seemingly produced a great effect; for a few minutes afterwards, the company were going on gaily with their dinner, the hostess was again frying cakes, and the landlord smoking a pipe as if nothing had happened. In settling our bill before setting off again, we found that the landlord had charged us fifty sapecks for the privilege of tying our cattle up in the yard during

our meal. Samdadchiemba was excessively indignant at this. "Do you think," said he, "that we don't know the rules of inns? Did any body ever hear of paying for just tying up beasts to a log of wood? I say landlord — how much do you charge for that play that you and your wife acted just now?" It was a palpable hit; and the shout of laughter from the whole company settled the matter in our favour.

The road which leads to *Si-Ning-Fou* is in general good and well kept; it winds through a fertile, well cultivated country, scattered over, in a picturesque manner, with groups of trees, hills, and numerous rivulets. The principal growth is tobacco. We noticed, also, on our way, many water-mills of very simple construction, which can be worked with a very small quantity of water, as it is made to fall on the wheel like a cascade from a height of at least twenty feet. On the last day before arriving at *Si-Ning-Fou*, we had to traverse a very dangerous path along the edge of a rocky precipice, with a tumultuous torrent boiling at our feet; a single false step must have been our destruction, and we trembled, especially for our camels, heavy and awkward as they are on a rugged road. Thank God, however, we arrived in perfect safety at Si-Ning. This is an immense town, but thinly peopled, and in many parts falling to ruin, as its commerce has been intercepted by Tan-Keou-Eul, a little town on the frontier of Kan-Sou and Thibet. We betook ourselves to one of the inns called "Houses of Repose," where alone such travellers as Tartars and Thibetans are received. In these establishments you are lodged and boarded gratuitously, but the owner has a right to a per centage on all the commercial transactions of his guests, who are mostly traders: for the privilege of keeping such a house, he pays annually a certain sum to the government; but he has an understanding with the merchants of the town, and gets his profit from them as well as from the Tartars. As we were not traders, he could, of course, gain no advantage in this way from us; and we therefore paid him our expenses at the ordinary rate of inns in this country.

CHAP. XII.

Account of the Road to Thibet.—Caravan of Khalkas.—Tartar Son of the King of Kou-kou-Noor.—Sandara the Bearded.—Study of the Thibetan Language.—Knavish Character of Sandara.—Samdadchiemba is pillaged by Robbers.—Frightful Tumult at Tang-Keou-Eul.—The Long-Haired Tartars.—Mussulmans in China.—Religious Ceremonies presided over by the Mufti.—Independence of the Mussulmans.—Festival of New Year's Day.—Our Tent at the Pawnbroker's.—Departure for the Lamaserai of Kounboom.—Arrival at Night.—Loan of a Habitation.—Singular Custom.—Old Akayé.—The Chinese Lama.—Pilgrims to Kounboom.—The celebrated Feast of Flowers.

It was about four months after leaving the valley of the Black Waters, that we reached Tang-Keou-Eul, the bustling little frontier town before mentioned. It was a real Tower of Babel. There were Oriental Thibetans, Long-haired Tartars, Eleuths, Kolos, Chinese, Tartars of the Blue Sea, Mussulmans, descendants of the ancient migrations from Turkestan,—all marching about the streets with long sabres, and affecting the most ferocious independence of aspect. It was impossible to go out without witnessing some battle. We settled ourselves at a "House of Repose"; but then the question arose — what were we to do next? So far we had followed pretty well the Itinerary that we had traced for ourselves; but by what means were we to penetrate to Lha-Ssa, the capital of Thibet? We learned that *almost every year* caravans left Tang-Keou-Eul for this destination, and in the end reached it; but a terrible account was given to us of the road. A journey of four months had to be made across countries entirely uninhabited, and where travellers were often frozen to death or buried under the snow. During the summer, it was said many were drowned; for it was necessary to cross great rivers without bridge or boat; and, besides this, these deserts were ravaged by hordes of robbers, who plundered those who fell into their hands even of their clothes, and left them naked and starving in the wilderness. We suspected these accounts of exaggeration, but we found them alarmingly uniform; and we met also with some vouchers for these tragical histories in the persons of some Mongol-Tartars, who had escaped the year before from an attack made on a great caravan, and of which they were the only survivors.

We resolved, nevertheless, to keep to our original plan. It should not be said that Catholic missionaries would encounter less peril for their faith than traders for a little lucre; but we determined not to hasten our departure, but to wait for a good opportunity.

We had not, however, been above six days at Tang-Keou-Eul, when a small caravan of Khalkas Tartars, stopped at our "House of Repose." It had just arrived from the frontiers of Russia, and was going to Lha-Ssa to pay homage to a young child, said to be the famous Guison-Tamba newly transmigrated. When these men heard that we were waiting for an opportunity to go to Thibet, they appeared at the height of joy; — their little troop would be increased by three pilgrims, and, in case of war with the Kolos, three combatants. Our beards and mustachios gave them apparently a high idea of our valour, and they bestowed on us immediately the title of *Batouron* (braves). All this was very agreeable, but we wished to consider the matter maturely before setting out with them on such a journey. The caravan, though it filled the large court-yard, only counted eight men; the rest consisted of camels, horses, tents, luggage, and cooking utensils. These eight men, it is true, were by their own account most terrible fellows; and they displayed to us a large assortment of guns, lances, bows and arrows, &c., which they carried, — not to mention a piece of artillery — a cannon about as thick as a man's arm — mounted, in default of a carriage, between the two humps of a camel. This was expected to produce a marvellous effect; but this warlike array did not tend to reassure us; and, for our own parts, we counted only moderately on the moral influence of our long beards.

It was necessary to come to a decision; the Tartars urged us strongly to join them; and of some disinterested persons to whom we applied for advice, some assured us it was an excellent opportunity, and we should by all means profit by it; others that it would be excessively imprudent to do so, and that so small a troop would be inevitably *devoured* by the Kolos. We had better, as we were not hurried, wait for the Thibetan embassy. But the embassy had only just arrived at Pekin, and might not return for eight months; such a delay as that would be ruinous to us. How with our slender resources were we to defray the expenses of so long a stay, with five beasts, at an inn. At length, having

thoroughly considered the question, we made up our minds. "We are in the hands of God," we said; "let us go."

We announced our resolution to the Tartars, and it was received with enthusiasm; and the master of the hotel was immediately charged to buy us flour for four months.

"Why for four months?" asked our new associates.

"We are told that the journey will last at least three; and it is well to provide for four in case of accidents."

"Oh!" said they, "the Thibet embassy takes that time to be sure; but we Tartars travel in a different manner. We gallop all the way, and we don't take more than six weeks."

These words occasioned a sudden change in our resolution: it was impossible for us to keep up with such a caravan at that: we should have been dead at the end of a few days; and our cattle, worn as they were with the fatigues of four months, could never have supported such a journey. The Tartars had with them forty camels, and might kill twenty with impunity; but with our three they agreed it would be impossible to get on, and they advised us to buy a dozen; but though the advice was good enough in itself, it was not worth much to us, for a dozen good camels would have cost three ounces of silver, and we had very little more than two.

These eight Tartars belonged to a royal family; and the evening before their departure they received a visit from the son of the king of the Kou-kou-Noor, who happened to be at Tang-Keou-Eul; and as the room which we occupied was the cleanest in the house, it was chosen for the interview. We were surprised by the elegant appearance and graceful manners of the young prince, who it was easy to see had not passed his whole life in a Mongol tent. He was handsomely dressed in a robe of sky-blue cloth, over which he had a violet-coloured jacket, richly embroidered with black velvet. His left ear was ornamented, in the Thibetan fashion, with a gold ear-ring, from which hung several jewels; his countenance was mild and pleasing, and the exquisite cleanliness of his whole dress as well as the fairness of his complexion had but little in them of this Tartar. As this princely visit was a grand event, we ordered Samdadchiemba to prepare some refreshments, — that is to say, a great jug of boiled milk and tea, of which his royal highness deigned to accept a cup, and the rest was then distributed to his suite, who were waiting in the *antechamber*, — videlicet, in the midst of the snow in the yard.

The conversation turned on the journey to Thibet, and the prince promised the Tartars an escort during their passage through his states. "Beyond that," he added, "I can answer for nothing; all must depend on your good or bad destiny." He told us that we had done quite right to wait for the Thibet embassy, as with it we could travel more easily and more safely.

The next day the Tartars set off, and we could not see them go without a feeling of regret that we were not in their company; but we soon banished these vain regrets, and began to consider how we could make the best use of the intermediate time. It was settled that we should go on diligently with our study of the Thibet language and the Buddhist books, and look out for a master who might assist us.

About forty miles from Tang-Keou-Eul, in the country of Si-Fan, or eastern Thibet, there was, we found, a famous Lamaserai, inhabited by nearly 4000 Lamas, and it was agreed that M. Gabet should make an excursion thither, and try to engage a Lama to teach us. After an absence of five days he returned accompanied by a Lama of about thirty years of age, whom we regarded as quite a treasure. He had passed ten years in a convent of Lha-Ssa, spoke and wrote pure Thibetan with ease and fluency, and was well acquainted with the Buddhist books, besides being familiar with the Mongol-Chinese, &c., — in short, he was quite a distinguished philologist. He was by birth a Dchiahour, and a cousin-german to Samdadchiemba; and to his name of Sandara was commonly added the appellation of the Bearded, on account of the remarkable length of that appendage. As he seemed to set about his task with great zeal and devotion, we rejoiced that we had not, by accompanying the Tartars, lost so favourable an opportunity of making ourselves better acquainted with the language and religion of these celebrated countries.

We set to work with the utmost ardour. Our first task was to compose in Mongol two dialogues, in which we introduced all the most customary expressions. Sandara then translated them for us carefully into Thibetan. Every morning he wrote a page under our eyes, giving us almost a grammatical account of every phrase; this was our lesson for the day, and we wrote it out several times, in order to accustom ourselves to the Thibetan writing. Afterwards we sung it, according to the method practised in the Lamaserais, until it was well fixed in our memory; and in the evening

our master made us repeat the dialogue which he had written for us in the morning, correcting whatever was faulty in our pronunciation. Sometimes during the day, by way of recreation, he gave us very interesting details concerning Thibet, and the Lama convents he had visited. We could not listen to him without a strong feeling of admiration for his talents; we had never heard any one express himself with so much ease and spirit, and the simplest and commonest things assumed a picturesque charm in his description; while, when he wished to make any one adopt his opinions, his eloquence was most persuasive.

After having surmounted our first difficulties, we endeavoured to give our studies a religious turn, and got Sandara to translate to us, in the sacred style, the most important Catholic prayers, — the Lord's prayer, the commandments, &c.; and we took this opportunity of explaining to him the truths of the Christian religion. He seemed at first much struck with the new doctrine, so different from the vague and incoherent teachings of Buddhism. He soon began to attach so much importance to the study of the Christian religion, that he completely abandoned the Lama books that he had brought with him, and set to learning our prayers with an ardour that filled us with joy. From time to time during the day he interrupted his occupations to make the sign of the cross; and he performed this religious act in a manner so grave and respectful, that we never doubted his being a Christian at heart. We entertained the warmest hopes of him, and pleased ourselves with thinking of him as a future apostle, who would one day labour with success at the conversion of the Buddhists.

Whilst we were all thus entirely absorbed in important studies, Samdadchiemba, who had no vocation towards things intellectual, was passing his time in loitering about the streets of Tang-Keou-Eul, drinking tea. But as we did not at all approve of his leading such an idle life, we determined to give him something to do in his capacity of camel driver. We ordered him, therefore, to take the three camels to feed in a certain valley of the Kou-kou-Noor, which is famous for the abundance and excellence of its pastures; a Tartar promising us meanwhile to receive him into his tent. This was all well; but by this time all the fine qualities that we thought we had discovered in Sandara had vanished like a dream, and we found that this young Lama, who had appeared so pure, was a regular roué, whose only real object was to get out of us as

many sapecks as possible. When he thought he had rendered himself necessary to us, he threw away the mask, and exposed all the detestable peculiarities of his character. He showed himself self-conceited, haughty, and outrageously insolent. The civil and engaging manners which he had had at first were entirely changed, and he behaved to us with a rudeness that a pedagogue would hardly have used towards a child. If, for instance, we asked an explanation of any thing a second time, he would say, "What !— you call yourselves learned men, and want a thing explained three times over ! Why, if I were to tell a mule a thing three times, he would recollect it I think."

It would have been easy, no doubt, for us to put an end to this impertinence by dismissing him, and more than once we had a mind to do so ; but, on consideration, we thought it better to submit to this humiliation, for his talents were indisputable, and he might be of use to us. His excessive rudeness might, indeed, contribute to our progress ; for we were quite sure he would never pass over any of our faults, but that, on the contrary, we should be reproved in a manner to make us remember it. This mode of proceeding, though painful enough to our pride, was far more really advantageous to us than that adopted by the Chinese Christians, who, in the excess of their politeness and devotion, always go into ecstasies at every thing their "spiritual father" says, and even take to imitating his vicious mode of expressing himself ; the consequence of which is, that the spiritual father is greatly disappointed when he comes afterwards to hold intercourse with those who are not sure to admire his pronunciation. On such occasions one might be tempted to regret not having had Sandara the Bearded, for a master. For these reasons we resolved to put up with his abuse, and get all the profit we could from his lessons, and, moreover, to shut our eyes to certain little knaveries of his, — such as his having a secret understanding with the people who supplied to us our daily provisions.

One day, a short time after the departure of Samdadchiemba, he made his appearance again quite unexpectedly. His voice was hollow — his face pale and haggard, for he had eaten nothing for a day and a half. He had been pillaged by robbers, who had carried away his store of flour, butter, and tea. Seeing but one camel in the court, we thought the robbers had stolen the cattle also ; but

he said he had confided them to the care of the Tartar family, who had afforded him hospitality. At this story, Sandara knitted his brows, saying, "Samdadchiemba, you are my younger brother, so I have a right to ask you some questions;" — and accordingly he commenced a cross-examination, with all the skill and cunning of a practised lawyer. He made his "younger brother" enter into the most minute details, and then applied himself to entrapping him into various contradictions; and when he had finished, added, maliciously, — "I have asked you a few questions, but it was out of mere curiosity. I don't care at all about the matter. It is not I who will have to make up the loss."

We sent out the young Dchiahour to get some dinner at a neighbouring eating-house, as he was very hungry; and then Sandara returned to the subject. "They won't persuade me," said he, "that my brother has been really robbed; the robbers of this country manage matters differently. Most likely Samdadchiemba, when he got among the Tartars, wanted to play the generous, and distributed his provisions right and left to make himself friends. What did it cost him?" But the probity of Samdadchiemba was well enough known to us to make us despise these malicious insinuations.

Sandara was jealous of the confidence we reposed in his cousin; and he wished to make us believe that he was sincerely attached to our interests, and, by that means, to remove any suspicions we might entertain concerning his own small modes of pillage. Samdadchiemba, on his side, seemed to have no suspicion of the treachery of his cousin: we gave him some more provisions, and he set out again for the Kou-kou-Noor.

The next day the town of Tang-Keou-Eul was the scene of terrible confusion. Bands of robbers had appeared in the neighbourhood, and had carried off two thousand oxen belonging to the Long-Haired Tartars, who come every year to Tang-Keou-Eul to sell skins, butter, and a kind of wild tea that grows in their country. Whilst they are occupied with their trading transactions, their numerous flocks and herds graze in some vast meadows a little way off the town, and which are dependent on the Chinese authorities. It was quite unexampled, we were told, for the robbers to approach so near the frontiers of the empire; and their recent audacity, as well as the violent demeanour of the Long-Haired on the occasion, threw the whole place into com-

motion. They rushed, with drawn sabres, to the Chinese tribunals, demanding justice and vengeance with loud cries. The mandarin who presided there took fright, and immediately sent off two hundred Chinese soldiers; but the Long-Haired, knowing that men on foot could never overtake the thieves, who were excellent horsemen, themselves galloped off in pursuit. But they came back the next day, and in the utmost rage, for they had seen nothing; but they had been compelled to return, for they had not thought to take provisions with them, and there was nothing in the desert by which they could support life. The Chinese soldiers had been more provident, for they had taken with them — whatever more warlike stores and ammunition they might have had — sufficient store of victuals, and a "*batterie de cuisine.*"

As they were not at all anxious to go and fight for oxen that did not belong to them, they only made a little military excursion, and then stopping on the bank of a river, had passed several days in eating, drinking, and amusing themselves, as if no such thing as a robber had existed in the world. When they had consumed their provisions, they came quietly back to Tang-Keou-Eul, declaring that they had traversed the desert without being able to find any trace of the robbers; and that once, just as they had been on the point of seizing them, the villains had made use of magical means, and had suddenly disappeared from their sight.

It is not impossible that some of the Chinese soldiers may have believed this story, for robbers are generally supposed to be more or less of sorcerers; the mandarins are certainly not deceived; but provided the persons robbed can be brought to be content with the story, that is all they care about. For several days the Long-Haired remained furious. They traversed the streets uttering a thousand imprecations, and brandishing their swords, so that every one who could, took good care to keep out of their way. The aspect of these men, even when they are in good humour, is formidable enough. They are dressed in sheep-skin robes, which, when left to themselves, are long enough to reach the feet, but they are usually worn tucked up under their girdles, so as to make their bodies appear of a monstrous bulk; their legs are half naked, as their large leather boots do not reach above the calf; and their black, greasy, matted hair hangs down on their shoulders, and sometimes half over their faces. The right arm is always bare, being drawn out of the sleeve; the hand grasps the hilt of the long

broad sword, which is passed through their girdles; and their sonorous voices and rapid energetic movements correspond well with this fierce appearance. Some of them are very rich, and they display their wealth in jewels on the scabbard of their swords, or in tiger skins to border their robes.

As these men are brave and ferociously independent, and they give, in a great measure, the tone to society at Tang-Keou-Eul; for every one who wishes to acquire a reputation for valour, mimics their demeanour; the result is, that the male population of the town might be taken for an immense gang of robbers. In the middle of winter, though the cold is very severe, they go with arms and legs bare, for it would be thought a mark of pusillanimity to cover them. *A good brave*, they say, should be afraid of nothing, — neither of man nor of the elements. In this town even the Chinese lose the extreme urbanity and polite forms of their language, and involuntarily exhibit signs of the influence of the Long-Haired, who, on their part, converse among themselves much as one might suppose the tigers in the woods might do. On our first entrance into the town we met one of these men, who had been down to the banks of the river to water his horse: Samdadchiemba saluted him courteously, saying, in the Tartar language, "Brother, are you at peace?" But the Long-Haired turned abruptly round, and roared out, with the voice of a stentor, "What's that to you whether I am at peace or at war, and what business have you to call a man you don't know your brother?" Samdadchiemba was somewhat confounded, but he did not fail to admire the pride of the Long-Haired one.

The want of cleanliness among the numerous population renders the town of Tang-Keou-Eul, a very unwholesome residence. There is a constant sickening odour of butter and grease; and certain quarters, where the poorest of the people live, are almost insupportable from their foul smell. Those who have no home in which to take shelter sleep about the nooks and corners of the streets on heaps of straw which have gradually become almost changed into dunghills. Crippled children, impotent old men, sick people of all kinds, are stretched out on them; and sometimes even dead bodies, which no one will take the trouble to bury. When they are in a complete state of putrefaction, perhaps some one will drag them out into the middle of the street, and then they are carried away by the public authorities. This miserable poverty

gives birth to a generation of little thieves and sharpers, whose address and audacity would leave Robert Macaire far behind ; and their numbers are so great, that the government has given up in despair all attempts to meddle with them. Every one here must look after his own goods and watch over his own sapecks. The class of operatives above alluded to carry on their occupation, by preference, in the houses of repose and hotels, and they usually present themselves with small articles of merchandise, boots, skins, brick tea, &c., which they offer to strangers, and thus find opportunities of carrying off whatever they can lay their hands on. They have, too, an astonishingly skilful method of counting out sapecks, so as to make them disappear without its being possible to conceive how. Two of them made their appearance one day in our room, and, after some haggling, we concluded a bargain for a pair of boots ; but when the merchants retired, we found that our sapecks were a hundred and fifty short, and that two immense bars of iron, which we had placed in the court-yard to tie our horses to, had been carried off.

The house in which we were lodging was, as we have said, kept by Mussulmans, and one day a Mufti arrived from the chief town of Kan-Sou, to preside, we were told, at a religious ceremony, the object of which they would not explain to us. Sandara the Bearded said, the Mufti came to show the Mussulmans how to cheat in trade.

For two days all the principal professors of this faith who were at the place, assembled in a large hall near our room, where they remained quite silent, with their heads bent down on their knees. As soon as the Mufti appeared, they all began to utter sobs and groans, and after they had had a good cry, the Mufti recited some Arab prayers with terrific volubility; then they cried a bit again, and then every one retired. This lachrymose ceremony was repeated three times a day ; and on the morning of the third, they all went into the court-yard, and ranged themselves round the Mufti, who was seated on a stool covered with a handsomered carpet. The master of the house then led up to him a magnificent sheep, decorated with flowers and ribbons. A knife was presented to him on a silver plate, and, gravely approaching the victim, he plunged it up to the handle in its neck. Immediately cries and groans burst forth on all sides. The sheep was promptly skinned, cut up, and sent to cook in the kitchen, and

the ceremony was concluded by a grand gala at which the Muft[i] presided.

We have often asked ourselves how it happened that, whilst the Mussulmen in China walk erect, and compel the Chinese to respect their faith, the Christians are constantly oppressed, and living merely at the pleasure of the tribunals. It is certainly not because the religion of Mahomet is most in harmony with Chinese manners; on the contrary, the Christians can, without failing in their duty, live in intimacy with Pagans,—interchange presents with them—celebrate the new year and other festivals with them, all which would be forbidden by the despotic and exclusive spirit of Mahometanism. But if the Christians are oppressed in China, it is greatly to be attributed to the isolation in which they live. When one of them is dragged before the tribunal, the others all hide themselves, instead of coming to his assistance and repressing by their boldness the insolence of the Mandarins. At present, especially, when the new imperial decrees are favourable to Christianity—if the Christians were to rise at once at all points of the empire, enter energetically into possession of their rights, giving publicity to their worship, and performing their service fearlessly in the face of the sun, probably no one would attempt to interfere with them. In China, as every where else, we are only free when we will to be so, and this will results only from the spirit of association.

We were now approaching the first day of the Chinese year, and already preparations were every where making for its celebration. The sentences written on red paper, which decorate the fronts of the houses, were renewed; the shops were filled with purchasers, and a more than ordinary activity reigned in all quarters of the town, while the children, who every where like to anticipate days of festival and rejoicing, began to let off crackers. The last days of the old year are usually for the Chinese days of violence and irritation. It is at this epoch that every one sets his accounts in order, and goes to dun his debtors; and as there is no Chinese who is not at the same time a debtor and a creditor, it follows that every body is running after somebody, and himself being pursued by somebody else. This man who comes making such a noise to induce his neighbour to pay what he owes, goes home and finds his house turned topsy turvy by a creditor of his own. Vociferations, abuse, even cuffs are being exchanged in all

quarters. On the last day the confusion is at its height; so many people are anxious to raise money by any means, that the avenues to the pawnbrokers' are choked up. Clothes, bedding, cooking utensils, furniture of every kind, is carried thither, and those who have emptied their houses begin to cast about for other resources. They run to their relations and friends, and borrow things which they say they are going to return immediately, but the moment they get hold of them away they go to the pawnbroker.

This sort of anarchical state lasts till midnight, and then all is suddenly calm, for no one is permitted any longer to claim a debt, or even to make the least allusion to it. There are no words heard but those of peace and benevolence, the whole world fraternises; and those who but a few minutes before were on the point apparently of cutting each other's throats, exchange only expressions of politeness and cordiality. In other respects the new year is celebrated much as it is in Europe, that is, by the interchange of visits of ceremony and pure etiquette; and conjurors, tumblers, the theatre, squibs, and fireworks form also important features in the festival. After a few days the shops are opened again, and all things resume their accustomed aspect.

Sandara had been absent during the rejoicings for the new year, as his presence had been required in his convent, and we had such a delightful quiet time while he was away, that we could not see him return without a feeling of fright, like that of schoolboys, at the sight of a severe master. Sandara, however, was amiable and charming beyond expression, and he not only wished us a happy new year, but poured out a profusion of the most sentimental phrases of fraternal affection. After talking this nonsense for a while, he said that since we had decided to wait for the Thibet Embassy—he would invite us to pass the time at his Lamaserai; and he pointed out, with his accustomed eloquence, all the advantages which such a residence afforded for men of study and prayer. The proposal was particularly welcome to us, but we took good care not to express ourselves enthusiastically on the subject, but replied coldly, "Well, let us try. We will go and see." The next day was devoted to preparations for the journey, and on announcing our intended departure to the master of the house, we asked him to give us back our tent, which he had borrowed as he said, for a few days, in order to make a pleasure excursion with some friends to the Land of Grass. He replied, that he would

send it to us directly, but that one of the friends had got it. We waited, but in vain; and night came on without our seeing any signs of our tent. At length we were told that the person who had it was not at home, but that it would be sent after us to the Lamaserai. Saudara, however, could no longer restrain his impatience at these excuses.

"One may see very well," said he, "that you are not men of this world. Don't you perceive clearly enough that your tent has gone to the pawnbroker's?"

"The pawnbroker's! It is surely not possible!"

"I think it's more than probable. The *Hœi-Hœi* (Mussulman) has been in want of money to pay his debts at the end of the twelfth moon, and he was a lucky fellow to have you in his house. He borrowed your tent to pawn it, and not for a pleasure party, and now he has no money to get it out again."

We sent for the landlord, and Sandara made him a speech declaring his opinion on the point, and ending with a blow of his fist on the table that made our three wooden bowls jump up into the air. He threatened, if the tent were not sent back before we had finished our tea, to get legal redress. "He would see whether a Lama Dchiahour was going to be cheated by a Turk."

The landlord had nothing to reply, and we felt sure that Sandara was right in his conjecture; very soon afterwards we heard a great bustle in the court-yard, and found that the people were collecting saddles, bedding, old chandeliers, kitchen utensils, and a variety of articles to send to the pawnbroker's, in order to procure the release of our tent; and before we went to bed we had it snugly secured at the top of the cart which we had hired to transport our baggage to the Lamaserai.

We set off at dawn of day, across a country, partly occupied by nomadic Si-Fan and their flocks, partly by Chinese, who in Eastern Tartary are insensibly advancing on the desert, building houses, and cultivating small portions of the Land of Grass. The only incident of our journey was the upsetting and breaking of our cart in crossing a little river on the ice. In France we should have wanted a blacksmith and a wheelwright to repair the damage, but fortunately our Chinese Phaeton was a genius who could get out of any difficulty with a stone, a bit of wood, and an end of rope; and we escaped with no more harm than a little loss of time.

At a short distance from the Lamaserai, we met four Lamas,

friends of Sandara, coming to meet us. Their religious costume, the red scarf in which they were wrapped, their yellow cap in the form of a mitre, their grave modest manners and low voices, made a great impression on us. They seemed to waft towards us a breath of the cenobitical religious life. It was more than nine o'clock in the evening when we reached the first houses of the Lamaserai: and, in order not to disturb the profound silence that reigned around, the Lamas stopped our driver, and filled with straw the bells that were hung to the horses' collars. We proceeded slowly, and without uttering a word, through the calm and deserted streets of the Great Lama city. The moon had already set; but the sky was so pure, the stars so brilliant, that we could easily distinguish the numerous small houses of the Lamas, scattered over the side of the mountain: and the grand and singular forms of the Buddhist temples, which rose into the air like gigantic phantoms. What struck us most was, the solemn and majestic silence that reigned in all quarters of the Lamaserai; interrupted only by the occasional bark of a dog, who was a bad sleeper: and by the hollow and melancholy sound of a marine shell, which marked at intervals the watches of the night.

We reached at length the small habitation of Sandara; and, as it was too late to seek another, our pedagogue gave it up to us, and went to get a lodging with one of his neighbours. The Lamas we had met did not leave us till they had prepared us a repast of tea and milk, a large dish of mutton, fresh butter, and most delicious little rolls. We supped with an excellent appetite, and our hearts seemed filled with a peace for which we could scarcely account.

During the night we tried in vain to sleep — sleep would not come. This country of Amdo, a country unknown in Europe, — this great Lamaserai of Kounboum, so renowned amongst the Buddhists, — these conventual manners, — the Lama's cell in which we were lying, — all seemed to float through our brains like the vague impalpable forms of a dream. We passed the night in forming plans, and as soon as day dawned we were on foot. All was still profoundly silent while we made our morning prayer not without a sensation of joy and pride that we had been permitted thus to invoke the true God in this famous Lamaserai, consecrated to an impious and lying worship. It seemed to us as if we were about to conquer the vast realms of Buddhism to the faith of Jesus Christ.

Sandara soon made his appearance, and served us with milk, tea, dried grapes, and cakes fried in butter, and whilst we were occupied with breakfast he opened a little closet, and took from it a wooden trencher, neatly varnished, and ornamented with flowers and gilding on a red ground. After having dusted it with his red scarf, he spread over it a sheet of rose-coloured paper, placed on it four fine pears symmetrically arranged, and covered them with an oval silk handkerchief, called a Khata. It was with this present, he said, we were to go and borrow a house.

This *Khata*, or "scarf of happiness," plays so important a part in Thibetan manners, that it is well perhaps to say a few words about it. It is usually a piece of bluish-white silk fringed at the two ends; but as it is an article indispensable to rich and poor, it of course varies greatly in freshness and value. No one ever travels without a stock of *khatas*; if you go to pay a visit of ceremony, to ask a service, or return thanks for one, you always begin by displaying a khata to the person whom you wish to honour. If two friends have not seen each other for a long time, and have met by accident, their first care is to offer each other a khata; when you write a letter you enclose a khata in it: in short, the importance attached, by the Thibetans, the Si-Fan, and all the nations who inhabit the country to the west of the Blue Sea, to this ceremony of the khata, is scarcely credible. They form a most considerable article of commerce for the Chinese at Tang-Keou-Eul; and the Thibetan Embassies, when they pass through the town, carry away a prodigious quantity of them. As soon as we had done breakfast, we went out to borrow a lodging, preceded by Sandara the Bearded, bearing solemnly in his two hands the famous dish of four pears. This proceeding appeared to us so odd that we felt ashamed of it, and thought all eyes must be fixed upon us. But the Lamas whom we met went silently on their way, without turning their heads or paying the slightest attention to us. The little *Chabis*, merry and mischievous as school-boys always are, were the only persons who appeared to know or care what we were doing.

At length we entered a small house, the master of which was in the yard, busied in spreading out horse-dung to dry in the sun; but seeing us, he wrapped himself in his scarf, and went into his cell. We followed him with Sandara, who offered the khata and the plate of pears, and accompanied them with an harangue in the

Oriental Thibetan language, of which we did not understand a word. During this time we kept ourselves modestly retired, like unfortunate men who were not even capable of asking a favour for ourselves. The Lama made us sit down on a carpet, offered us milk-tea, and said to us in the Mongol language, "that he was happy that strangers from the far West, should have deigned to cast their eyes on his poor habitation. Had we been speaking French, we might have responded by some equivalent compliment; but in Mongol, we could only say, that we were indeed from far off; but, that one found in some measure a country wherever one met with such hospitality as his. After drinking a cup of tea, and talking a minute or two of France, Rome, the Pope, and the Cardinals, we rose to visit the dwelling assigned to our use. For poor wanderers like us it was superb. There was a vast chamber with a great kang, a separate kitchen with stoves, a kettle, and some utensils: and even a stable for our horse and mule. We were overjoyed, and only regretted not having at our disposal another khata, wherewith to express our gratitude to the excellent Lama. How powerful is the empire of religion over the heart of man, even when that religion is false and ignorant of the true object of worship! What a difference between these Lamas, so hospitable, generous, and fraternal, in their treatment of strangers, and the Chinese, that nation of traders, with their dry and covetous heart, selling to the traveller even a glass of cold water. The reception which we had met with in the Lamaserai of Kounboum, involuntarily carried our thoughts back to the convents raised by the hospitality of our religious ancestors, which were formerly so many hostelries, where travellers and the poor could always find needful refreshment for the body, and consolation for the soul.

We took possession of our house the same day; and the neighbouring Lamas helped us to move our baggage, carrying the things for us on their shoulders, as if it were a real pleasure to them to give their assistance. They swept out our rooms, lighted the fire under the kang, and set the stable ready for the reception of our animals; and when all was done, the master of the house, according to a rule of hospitality among them, prepared a feast for us. It is thought that, on a moving day, one cannot have time to attend to cookery.

A brief description of our mansion may, perhaps, not be quite uninteresting. Immediately after the entrance, came an oblong

court-yard, surrounded by stables, conveniently distributed. To the left of the door was a corridor, which led straight to a second square court, the four sides of which were formed by Lama's cells. The side opposite to the corridor in the first court, was occupied by the abode of the master of the house, called Akayé, that is to say, "Aged brother." He was turned of sixty, had a tall figure, but was extremely thin and withered, so that his face looked only like a collection of bones, covered by wrinkled skin; and when he left bare his arms, blackened as they were by the sun, you might have taken them for the branches of an old vine. He walked very upright, but with a rather unsteady, jerking step, as if he were moved by machinery. In eight-and-thirty years, during which he had been employed in the administration of the temporal affairs of the convent, he had amassed a moderate competence; but it had all been lost again in loans that had never been repaid, or in various ways, and he had nothing but this house, which he had built in the days of his prosperity. He had not been able to find a purchaser for it, and it is against the rules to let it, as the Lamaserai admits of no medium between the sale and the gratuitous loan of a house. To complete his misfortunes, the poor old Akayé could not profit by the distributions which are sometimes made to the Lamas who have attained a certain rank, for having been occupied only with things temporal, he had never gone through the course of study, and could neither read nor write.

To the right of Akayé's habitation, there dwelt a Lama, of Chinese birth, said to be extremely rich, and to keep a treasure of silver ingots in his cell. He was wretchedly dressed, lived parsimoniously, and had a habit of turning his head perpetually from one side to the other, like a man who fears being robbed. We used to hear him every evening disputing with his pupil — a good-hearted but mischievous little fellow — whom he accused of using too much butter in the housekeeping, making the tea too strong, or putting too large a wick into the lamp. Opposite to that of the the Chinese Lama was our lodging, and by the side of us lived a young Lama of about twenty-four, a stout young man, whose heavy-looking face accused him strongly of making too large a consumption of butter in his little cell, and whom we could never look at without thinking of La Fontaine's rat, who, out of devotion, had retired from the world into a Dutch cheese.

The side opposite Akayé's house was composed of a row of little kitchens, belonging to the four *families*, as they are called in the Lamaserai. Notwithstanding this union of several families in a single habitation, every thing was perfectly quiet and orderly; visits are seldom interchanged, and every one attends to his own business, without minding other people's. Though we lived in one house, we seldom saw each other, for, as it was the middle of winter, the cold was very severe, and only when the sunshine came into the court did the four families issue from their cells and crouch on their felt carpets to warm themselves; the Chinese Lama, with his sharp eyes, hastily patching his clothes with some old rags, while old Akayé scratched his arms, and muttered a form of prayer, and the student of medicine sung out his lesson of therapeutics. As for ourselves, we had on our knees the book of Thibetan dialogues, but we were more occupied in observing the other families than in attending to it.

The situation of the Lamaserai of Kounboum is enchanting. Imagine a mountain intersected by a broad, deep ravine, whence spring up large trees, filled with a numerous population of ravens, magpies, and yellow-beaked crows. On either side the ravine, and up the sides of the mountain, rise, in ampitheatrical form, the white dwellings of the Lamas, each with its little terrace and wall of enclosure, adorned only by cleanliness, while here and there tower far above them the Buddhist temples, with their gilt roofs glittering with a thousand colours, and surrounded by elegant peristyles. The houses of the superiors are distinguished by pennants, floating above small hexagonal turrets, and on all sides the eye is struck by mystical sentences, in the Thibetan character, in red and black, on the doors, on the walls, on the stones, on pieces of linen fixed, like flags, on masts reared above the houses. Almost at every step you meet with conical niches, in which incense and odoriferous wood are burning; and through the streets of the Lamaserai circulates the population of Lamas, in their red and yellow dresses, grave in their deportment, and, although under no obligation to silence, speaking little, and that little in a low voice. It is only, however, at the commencement and the close of the public prayers and the schools that many of them are to be met with in the streets, for during the rest of the day they generally keep their cells, unless when they are seen descending, by winding paths, to the bottom of the ravine to fetch water.

This Lamaserai enjoys such a great reputation, that the worshippers of Buddha make pilgrimages to it from all parts of Tartary and Thibet, and at the festivals the confluence of strangers is immense. There are four grand fêtes in the year, but the most famous is that which occurs on the fifteenth day of the first moon, and which is called the Feast of Flowers. It was the sixth of the first moon when we took up our abode at Kounboum, and already numerous caravans of pilgrims were arriving by all the roads leading to it, and every one was talking of the fête. The flowers this year, it was said, would be enchanting; the council of the Fine Arts had examined them, and declared them superior to all that had been seen in preceding years. Of course we were very eager for information concerning these marvellous flowers and a festival so entirely unknown to us, and we were greatly surprised at the details communicated to us.

The *Flowers* of the fifteenth of the first month consist of certain representations, secular and religious, in which all Asiatic nations appear in their appropriate costume, and in which the characters, dresses, landscapes, and decorations are all made out of *fresh butter!* Three months are employed in preparation for this singular spectacle. Twenty Lamas, chosen from among the first artists that can be found, are employed all day in working at the butter, plunging their hands continually in water, lest the heat of their fingers should injure the work; and as this is during the most rigorous cold of winter, they have much to suffer.

They begin by mixing and kneading the butter well in water, to make it firm; and when the material has been sufficiently prepared, every one devotes himself to the part which has been confided to him. All work under the direction of a chief, who has furnished the design for the flowers of the year, and who presides over its execution. When the modellers have finished their work, they give it over to another company of artists, who undertake the colouring, but still under the direction of the same chief.

On the evening before the fête the concourse of strangers was immense. Kounboum was no longer the calm and silent retreat, where all breathed the gravity and earnestness of a religious life,—but a worldly city, full of tumult and agitation. In all quarters we heard the piercing cries of camels, and the lowing of the long-haired oxen, which had brought the pilgrims. On the higher parts of the mountain rose numerous tents, where were encamped those

who had not been able to find a lodging in the houses of the Lamas, and during the whole of the fourteenth an immense number of pilgrims were engaged in performing a pilgrimage round the Lamaserai, in which the pilgrim is required to prostrate himself at every step! Among these zealous Buddhists were a great number of Mongol Tartars, who came from a great distance, and who were remarkable for their heavy, stupid look, as well as for the scrupulous accomplishment of the ordinances of this kind of devotion. The Long-haired ones were there also, not looking at all more engaging than at Tang-Keou-Eul, walking proudly as usual, and with the right arm bare, their long swords and guns slung in their belts. The most numerous of all, however, were the *Si-Fan*, whose faces expressed neither the rudeness of the long-haired, nor the simple good faith of the Tartars, but they performed their pilgrimage with a sort of nonchalance, as if they would say "We understand all that sort of thing, we belong to the parish."

Among the crowd of pilgrims, we were surprised to find some Chinese, with chaplets in their hands, making all the customary prostrations. They were, as Sandara the Bearded informed us, dealers in khatas, who did not believe in Buddha, but who performed all these ceremonies to get custom and sell their wares better. Whether this were truth or calumny we had no means of ascertaining; but as far as we knew, it perfectly harmonised with the Chinese character. On the fifteenth, the pilgrims making the tour of the Lamaserai were not so numerous as on the preceding days, for curiosity carried most of them in the direction where the preparations for the feast of flowers were going on. In the evening we all went out, leaving nobody but old Akayé to keep house for us. The *flowers* were placed in the open air before the Buddhist temples, on light scaffoldings of various designs, interspersed with innumerable vases of red and yellow copper, and the whole most beautifully and tastefully illuminated. The flowers really astonished us; we should never have imagined that in the midst of these deserts, and among a half civilised people, there could have been found artists of such merit. They were bas-reliefs, in colossal proportions, representing various subjects taken from the history of Buddhism. The figures were animated, the attitudes natural, the costumes easy and graceful, and at the first glance you could distinguish the kind and quality of texture meant to be re-

presented. The furs, especially, were admirable. The skins of the sheep, tiger, wolf, and other animals were so well executed, that one was tempted to touch them with the hand, to assure one's self that they were not real. In all the reliefs it was easy to recognise Buddha, for his noble and majestic face belonged quite to the Caucasian type, and this agrees with the Buddhist traditions, which always point to the sky of the West as his place of birth. The complexion was fair, and delicately tinged with red, the eyes and nose large, the hair long, waving, and soft to the touch. The other personages showed the Mongol type, with the various Thibetan-Chinese and Tartar varieties, all clearly distinguishable. We saw also some heads of Hindoos and negroes, all equally well represented, and the latter especially greatly exciting the curiosity of the spectators. These grand reliefs were framed in by decorations with animals, birds, and flowers, all of course in butter, and exquisite in their form and colour.

In the street leading from one temple to another, we found, at intervals, reliefs in miniature, representing battles, hunts, scenes of nomadic life, and views of the principal Lamaserais of Thibet and Tartary. The work which excited most enthusiasm among the spectators, though we could not ourselves feel much inspired by it, was a sort of puppet theatre, erected before the principal temple, and in which the *dramatis personæ*, scenery, and decorations, were all of butter. The whole performance consisted of two processions of Lamas, coming out of two little doors, remaining for a few moments on the stage, and then going back again.

As we did not find this very interesting, we soon went away to examine some groups of devils, as grotesque mostly as those of Callot; and while we were so engaged, we suddenly heard a grand burst of trumpets and marine shells. The Grand Lama, we were told, was just issuing from his sanctuary, to visit the flowers. We asked nothing better, for we had a great curiosity to see him, and he soon reached the spot where we were standing. This living Buddha was about forty years of age, of ordinary figure, commonplace physiognomy, and swarthy complexion; and if he noticed the fine face of the first Buddha, as here represented, he must certainly have thought he had strangely degenerated from his original type. He was on foot, surrounded by the principal dignitaries of the Lamaserai, and preceded by a crowd of Lamas, who cleared the way for him with great whips. If we were but

little struck with the person of the Grand Lama, we were much so with his dress, which was precisely that of a bishop, for he had on his head a yellow mitre, a long staff in the form of a crozier in his right hand, and on his shoulders a mantle of violet-coloured taffeta, fastened in front with a clasp, and exactly resembling a cope. We had, indeed, subsequently often occasion to remark the analogies between the Catholic and Buddhist costume and ceremonial.

The spectators appeared to pay but little attention to their living Buddha — being much more occupied with the Buddhas in fresh butter, which were certainly much prettier. The only ones who showed any signs of devotion were the Tartars, who joined their hands and bowed their heads in token of respect, and even seemed afflicted that the crowd in the streets prevented their prostrating themselves.

The Grand Lama, when he had finished his tour, returned to his sanctuary; and this was the signal for the people abandoning themselves to the wildest transports of joy. They sang till they were fairly out of breath; they danced; they pushed each other about; they tumbled head over heels; and shouted till one might have thought they had all gone crazy. As, in the midst of this disorder, it would have been easy for the butter decorations to have been destroyed, the Lamas were armed with lighted torches to keep off the mob, which was roaring around them like a tempestuous sea.

We returned home at a late hour, and by sunrise there was no longer a trace of the grand Feast of Flowers. All had disappeared; — the bas-reliefs had been demolished, and the enormous quantity of butter thrown down into the ravine, to serve as food for the crows. These grand works that had cost so much time, so much labour, and one may say so much genius, had served but for the spectacle of a single night. With the flowers the pilgrims also had disappeared. We saw them, in the morning, slowly climbing the sides of the mountain, to return each to his own wild country. They walked in silence, with their heads cast down; for the mind of man can, in this world, support so little joy, that the day after a gay festival is commonly one of bitterness and melancholy.

CHAP. XIII.

RELATIONS BETWEEN BUDDHISM AND CATHOLICISM.

Tsong-Kaba.—The Tree of Ten Thousand Images.—Lamanesque Instruction.—Faculty of Prayer.—Police of the Lamaserai.—Offerings of the Pilgrims.—Lama Industry.—Favourable disposition of the Lamas towards Christianity.—Singular practice for the assistance of Travellers.—Nocturnal Prayers.—Departure for the Lamaserai of Tchorgartan.

It is known that in the fourteenth century, in the time of the dominion of the Mongol emperors, there existed frequent relations between the Europeans and the people of central Asia. We have already spoken of the embassies which the victorious Tartars sent to Rome, France, and England; and there is no doubt that these barbarians were struck by the pomp and splendour of the ceremonies of the Catholic worship, and they carried back to their deserts profound impressions of them. It is known, also, that at the same period monks of different orders undertook long journies to introduce Christianity into Tartary. It was shortly after this period that Tsong-Kaba, the great Buddhist reformer, born a shepherd in the country south of the Kou-kou-Noor, introduced into the Buddhist worship the changes concerning which he is said to have received instruction from a wonderful stranger from the West, who had a large nose and brilliant eyes; and, setting aside many marvels with which the legend is accompanied, it seems by no means improbable, that this high-nosed stranger from the West may have been one of the Catholic missionaries from Europe. During our stay at Kounboum we several times heard remarks upon the singularity of our cast of features; and it was said, without hesitation, that we resembled the master of Tsong-Kaba. It may be supposed that a premature death did not permit the Catholic to complete the religious instruction of his disciple, who in the sequel only applied himself to reforming the Buddhist liturgy. We shall afterwards have occasion to enquire whether the numerous relations existing between Buddhism and Catholicism are likely to prove an obstacle, or an advantage, to the propagation of the true faith in Tartary and Thibet. It is to a legend concerning Tsong-Kaba that the Lamaserai of Kounboum owes its name.

It signifies "Ten Thousand Images;" and it is said that when the mother of the reformer, in devoting him to a religious life, according to custom cut off his hair and threw it away, a tree sprang up from it, which bore on every one of its leaves a Thibetan character. This tree is still to be seen at the foot of the mountain on which the principal Buddhist temple stands, in a large square enclosure formed by four brick walls. Within this stands the wonderful tree, which appears of great antiquity; and though now not more than eight feet high, three men could hardly embrace its trunk. The wood is of a reddish colour, and exquisite odour, very much resembling cinnamon. We were told that during the summer, towards the eighth moon, it produces superb large red flowers; but what most excited our astonishment was that every leaf was really, as we had been before told it was, distinctly marked with a Thibetan character, sometimes lighter, sometimes darker than the leaf, but quite plain. After the most minute investigation, we could discover no traces of fraud on the part of the Lamas; and though, doubtless, people will smile at our ignorance, that will matter little if they do not suspect the veracity of our account.

The celebrity of the Lamaserai of Kounboum, due at first to the renown of Tsong-Kaba, is maintained at present by its good discipline, and the superiority of its instruction. The Lamas are regarded as students during their whole lives, for religious science is considered inexhaustible. They are distributed into four classes or faculties, according to the nature of the studies to which they apply themselves. 1st. The faculty of *mysticism*, which embraces the rules of a contemplative life, and the examples contained in the lives of the Buddhist saints. 2ndly, The faculty of liturgy, or the study of religious ceremonies, with the explanation of all that belongs to the Lamanesque worship. 3rdly, The faculty of medicine, having for its object the four hundred and forty maladies of the human body, besides medical botany, and pharmacy. 4thly, The faculty of prayer; which, being the most esteemed, and the best remunerated, attracts the greatest number of students.

The voluminous works which serve as the basis of the instruction in prayer, are divided into thirteen classes, which are like so many degrees in the hierarchy. The place which each student occupies in the school and the choir, is assigned to him according to the theological books which he has studied, and you often find in the lowest classes old Lamas proclaiming thus their idleness or

incapacity, while there are young people who have reached the summit of the hierarchy. To obtain degrees in the Faculty of Prayer, all that is required is that the student shall recite perfectly the appointed books.

When he thinks himself sufficiently prepared he announces the fact to the Grand Lama of Prayer, by presenting to him a magnificent *khata*, a plate of dried grapes, and some ounces of silver—according to the importance of the degree that he thinks to obtain; some presents are also to be made to the Examining Lamas, though of course the judges are said to be incorruptible: but at Kounboum, as elsewhere, a few presents are found of service to carry you honourably through an examination.

Before the principal temple of Kounboum is a vast court paved with broad flag stones, and surrounded by twisted columns, loaded with coloured sculptures. It is in this enclosure that the Lamas of the Faculty of Prayer assemble for their classes, to which they are called by the conch. The professors alone are under shelter, being mounted on a sort of pavilion; the student Lamas all crouch down on the flags, and remain exposed alike to the rain and sun in summer, and the piercing winds and snows of winter: and after some of them have recited the appointed lesson, the professors give what is called an explanation, but it is an explanation no less vague and incomprehensible than the text. No one makes any difficulty about it, however, and indeed it is their opinion that the sublimity of a doctrine is in a direct ratio with its obscurity and impenetrability. After this the lesson is ordinarily concluded by a thesis, held by appointment by one of the students, and every one is at liberty to interrogate him upon any subject that comes into his head — and preposterous enough these subjects are sometimes, reminding one strongly of the famous discussions in the schools of the middle ages, when they used to dispute furiously *de omni re scibili*.

At Kounboum it is the rule that the victor in the argument shall mount on the shoulders of the vanquished, and be carried by him in triumph out of the school. One day we met our friend Sandara the Bearded coming back in this manner, with a face more expanded and radiant than usual, and we learned that he had been the hero of the thesis, having vanquished his opponent on the important question of "Why fowls and other birds are without one of the vital functions common to all other animals?" I mention

this, in order to give an idea of the sublime character of the Lamaresque studies. During the lessons one of the Lamas, armed with an iron crow-bar, is occupied with maintaining order among the students; and there is a class of Lamas, wearing a grey dress and a black mitre, who perambulate the streets, carrying a large whip for the admonition of the thoughtless. The smallest theft is punished by expulsion from the Lamaserai, after the culprit has been branded with a hot iron on the forehead and cheeks.

The Buddhist convents, though resembling in many respects Christian monasteries, yet differ essentially from them. The Lamas are subjected it is true to the same discipline, but one cannot say that they live in community. You find among them all the gradations of wealth and poverty to be met with in any worldly city. We have often seen Lamas covered with rags, begging at the doors of their rich brothers, for a handful of barley meal. Every three months a distribution of flour is made among the Lamas, but varying greatly in quantity, according to their rank in the hierarchy. The pilgrims also make them voluntary offerings, both of tea and silver. They announce to the Superior that it is their intention to offer to the Lamas a general or a particular tea; the general, is for any one who chooses to come; the particular, for any one of the four Faculties which the pilgrim may select.

On the day fixed for the offering of a general tea, the presiding Lama, after morning prayers, gives the signal for the assembly to keep their places, and immediately about forty young *Chabis* rush off to the kitchen, and re-appear directly afterwards, with large pitchers of tea and milk, and as they advance the Lamas draw from their bosoms their little wooden bowls, which are then filled to the brim. As they silently quaff their tea, every one draws his scarf round the bowl, as a sort of apology for the impropriety of performing an act so worldly, and so little in harmony with the sanctity of the place. The tea is usually prepared in sufficient quantity to go round twice, and is stronger or weaker, according to the generosity of the pilgrim donor. Some add a slice of fresh butter for each Lama to the tea, and those who wish to be quite magnificent give also wheaten flour cakes. When the feast is over, the Lama-president proclaims solemnly the name of the pious pilgrim, who has procured for himself the great merit of regaling the holy family of the Lamas; and immediately the pilgrim, who is almost always present, prostrates himself with his face to the

ground; while the Lamas set up a psalm in his honour, and then make a procession round their benefactor, who does not, however, rise from his prostrate position, till every one is gone. Offerings of this kind, though they profit but little to each individual Lama, are rather expensive to the pilgrim; for even a simple tea, when the tea party amounts to 4,000, cannot be given for less than fifty ounces of silver (20*l.*). The offerings of silver are still more expensive for the tea must be given all the same. In that case the presiding Lama announces after morning prayers that such a pilgrim has offered so many ounces of silver, which, exactly divided, give such a quotient. There is no time fixed for these offerings, but they are most numerous at the four grand festivals, when there is the greatest concourse of pilgrims. After the Feast of Flowers, the king of Souniot, who was present, offered, before his return to Tartary, 600 ounces of silver, and a general tea with an accompaniment of cakes and butter for eight days together. Sometimes when the offering is made by a very distinguished personage, the living Buddha is present at the ceremony, and then fifty ounces of silver are offered to him in a basket, ornamented with flowers and ribbons, and accompanied by a piece of red or yellow silk, a mitre, a khata of the costliest kind, and a pair of boots. The pilgrim prostates himself at the foot of the altar, on which the Buddha is seated, and deposits the basket at his feet. The chabi receives it, and presents the pilgrim in return with a khata in the name of the living Buddha — whose part on the occasion is to preserve the impassibility proper to a divinity. But besides the distributions and offerings, the Lamas have other means of increasing their worldly wealth: some of them keep cows, and sell milk and butter to their brethren; some undertake the furnishing of general teas, when they are required; others become tailors, bootmakers, dyers, &c., and others, again, keep shops, and sell things which they have bought wholesale at Tang-Keou-Eul, or Si-Ning-Fou.

Besides these industrial Lamas, there are many who seek for profit in occupations somewhat more consonant to the spirit of a religious life; and occupy themselves in printing or transcribing books. The printing is all stereotype, by means of blocks of wood, for moveable types are not in use. The Thibetan books are like large packs of cards; that is, the leaves are all separate, and placed, without sewing, between two boards tied with yellow ribbons. The

manuscripts are magnificent, enriched with fanciful designs, and the characters most elegantly formed.

Sandara the Bearded followed none of these occupations, but one peculiar to himself, namely, that of serving as *cicerone* to strangers, and by means of his suppleness of character and persuasive tongue, he generally ended by making himself their man of business. We learned afterwards that he had been obliged to leave Lha-Ssa, on account of some knavery, and that for three years he had been going about the provinces of Sse-Chouan and Kan-Sou, in the quality of teller of stories and actor. We were not at all surprised at this intelligence, for we had often thought that when Sandara was off his guard, he had quite the manners of a player.

When the Feast of Flowers was fairly over we resumed zealously our study of Thibetan, and Sandara came every morning to assist us. Our task was the composition of an abridgment of the sacred history, from the Creation to the preaching of the Apostles. This work we put into the form of a dialogue between a Lama of Buddha, and a Lama of Jehovah, and we now soon found out that the dispositions he had manifested at Tang-Keou-Eul, his signs of the cross, and his inclination towards the Christian doctrine had been all pure acting. Religious feelings had no hold on his covetous and worldly heart. From his long residence in China he had brought back a habit of incredulity, which he was very fond of parading. In his eyes no religion was anything better than a branch of industry, invented by certain clever fellows, to impose upon the fools. Virtue was but an idle word, and the man of merit was the one who best knew how to take advantage of others. After a time we found that we had begun to make something of a sensation in the Lamaserai; people began to talk of the Lamas of Jehovah, and of the new doctrine which they taught; they noticed that we never prostrated ourselves before Buddha, that we prayed three times a day, that our prayers were not those of Thibet, and that we had a language between us that no one else undertood. This was enough to pique public curiosity; every day we had visitors, and the conversation always took a religious turn. Among all the Lamas we found no other of the sceptical cast of mind of Sandara; on the contrary, they all appeared sincerely religious, full of good faith, and earnestly desirous to know the truth. We took care to banish from the instruction we gave them every thing that

might breathe the spirit of contention or dispute,—and gave them merely a simple and concise exposition of our religion, leaving it to them to draw from what we told them conclusions unfavourable to Buddhism. Proper names and dates we found made much more impression on them than the most logical reasonings; when they knew the names of Jesus of Jerusalem, and Pontius Pilate, and the date of 4000 years after the creation of the world, they seemed no longer to doubt of the mystery of the redemption. From our experience we are convinced that it is by the way of instruction, and not that of controversy, that we can most successfully labour for the conversion of infidels. Polemics may reduce an adversary to silence,—irritate, humble, but never convince him. When Jesus Christ sent his Apostles he said, "Go and *teach* all people;" he did not say go and argue with them. In our own day, two philosophical schools who recognise for chiefs, the one Descartes, the other Lamennais, have disputed much whether Paganism is an error or a crime; it appears to us that it is neither, but simply the effect of ignorance. The mind of the Pagan is enveloped in darkness, and we have but to bring light into it, for it to become day. What he needs is instruction.

The eagerness of the Lamas to visit us, and the good disposition they manifested towards Christianity, appeared to give great offence to Sandara; he would give us our lesson in the driest and most laconic manner, and then shut himself up the rest of the day in a sullen and insolent silence. If we asked him humbly the Thibetan names for anything, or the explanation of any phrase in the dialogue, he would not even deign to answer. In this extremity, we had recourse to our neighbour the young student of medicine, who was always eager to oblige us, and who, though he was not very learned, was very useful; and, in return for his services, we complied with all our hearts with his request, that we should instruct him in the Christian religion. He received with much respect the truths we announced to him, but his timid and irresolute character prevented him from renouncing Buddhism. He wished to be a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time, and in his prayers he used to invoke by turns, Tsong-Kaba, and Jehovah; and he carried his simplicity so far, as to invite us to take part in his religious exercises.

One day he proposed to us to join in a certain act of devotion which he was going to undertake, he said, for the sake of travellers

all over the world. We said we did not understand him, and begged he would give us some explanation.

"You know," he said, "travellers often find themselves on toilsome and difficult roads; sometimes they are holy Lamas on a pilgrimage, who cannot go on because they are exhausted by fatigue; in that case, we come to their assistance, and send them horses."

"Oh!" we cried, "that is a beautiful practice and quite according to the principles of Christian charity; but consider that it is not possible for poor travellers like us to take part in this excellent work. We have but one horse and a mule, and we must let them rest, that they may be able to undertake the journey to Thibet."

"Tsong-Kaba!" cried the Lama, and burst into a shout of laughter, that seemed as if it would never end.

"What are you laughing at?" said we. "You know we have only a horse and a mule"—and then, having a little recovered from his hilarity, he explained that the horses that were sent after travellers were not real, but only *paper* horses. It was now our turn to laugh at this odd mode of Buddhist charity; but we preserved our gravity, for we made it a rule never to turn the practices of the Lamas into ridicule. Our friend now retired for a moment to his cell, and presently re-appeared, bringing with him some pieces of paper, on each of which was a representation of a horse saddled and bridled, and going at full gallop.

"Those," said he, "are the kind of horses we send to the travellers. To-morrow we will climb a high mountain, fourteen miles off, and we will pass the day in saying prayers, and sending off the horses."

"What means do you employ to send them to travellers?" we asked.

"Oh! a very simple method; after having said the prayers, we take a packet of the horses, and fling them into the air; the wind carries them away, and by the power of Buddha they are changed into real horses, which offer themselves to the travellers."

We stated sincerely to our dear neighbour, our views concerning this practice, and the motives which prevented our taking part in it, and he seemed to approve of all that we said; but that did not hinder him from passing the night in fabricating a prodigious number of the paper horses; and, at break of day, he set off, with

some of his brethren, full of devotion for the poor travellers. They carried with them a tent, a kettle, and some provisions. During all the morning there was an outrageous wind, which did not go down till the middle of the day; and then the sky became dark and heavy, and snow began to fall in large flakes. Towards night the poor Lama returned, numbed with cold, and exhausted with fatigue ; and we invited him to rest in our cell, and got him some milk-tea, and rolls fried in butter.

" This has been a terrible day," said he ; " the wind has been bad enough here, but it has been nothing to what it was at the top of that mountain. Our tent, our kettle, everything was carried away in the hurricane, and we were obliged to lie flat down on the ground not to be carried away ourselves."

" It must have been very vexatious," said we, " to lose your tent and your kettle."

" Yes ! it was a misfortune," he replied ; " but then the weather was very favourable for sending horses to travellers. When we saw it was going to snow, we sent them all off at once, and the wind carried them to all the four quarters of the world. If we had waited longer, the snow would have wetted them, and they would have remained sticking to the side of the mountain." And so, all things considered, the poor fellow was not at all dissatisfied with his day's work.

The twenty-fifth of the moon is the day appointed for this curious act of devotion, but it is left to the piety of each individual ; the twenty-eighth, however, is fixed for another, in which all the Lamas take part. Our medical friend had said to us the day before, — " perhaps we shall disturb your rest to-night; " — but thinking he only alluded to the nocturnal prayers which are not uncommon, we paid little attention to what he said ; and went to bed at our usual time. But we did not remain long asleep. At first we half thought we were dreaming, but we gradually became conscious of a confused noise of a multitude of voices, and we soon distinguished the chant of one of the Lama prayers.

We got up immediately, dressed ourselves, and went out into the court-yard, and found it illuminated by the reflection of a pale light, that seemed to come from above. Old Akayé was crouched in a corner, counting his beads, and we enquired of him the meaning of this strange noise. "If you wish to know," he said, "go up to the top of your house." A ladder was standing in readiness against the

wall, and we immediately ascended to the terrace, whence we beheld a singular spectacle. The terraces of all the houses were illuminated by red lanterns, suspended to long poles; and the whole congregation of Lamas, in their mitres and mantles of ceremony, were seated on the tops of their houses, chanting prayers in a slow and monotonous voice. On our terrace we found the medical Lama, the Chinese, and his chabi, all entirely absorbed in the ceremony; we did not therefore attempt to disturb them, but contented ourselves with looking and listening. The innumerable lanterns, with their strange red lights; the edifices of the Lamaserai vaguely seen by the tremulous glow; the 4000 voices ascending into the air, and accompanied, from time to time, by the sound of trumpets and marine shells, altogether formed a strange and exciting spectacle. After gazing at it for a while, we went down again into the court, and found old Akayé still in the same place; and, to our enquiry, he gave the following explanation: "These nocturnal prayers had been established to drive away demons by which the country had formerly been desolated. They had caused all kinds of maladies among the cattle; corrupted the cows' milk; disturbed the Lamas in their cells; and even carried their audacity so far, as to force themselves into the choir at the hour of prayer; their presence being ascertained by the confusion they created in the psalmody. During the night these devils used to assemble at the bottom of the ravine, and frighten every body out of their wits by cries and groans so strange, that no one could imitate them. A learned Lama then contrived this plan of the nocturnal prayers, and since then, the demons have entirely vanished; or, if from time to time, one makes his appearance, he is not able to do any harm."

"Did you ever see any, Akayé?" said we.

"Oh no! never!" he replied, "and I am sure that you have not either."

"How do you know that?"

"Because the demons only appear to the bad Lamas; the good can never see them."

At this moment the songs of the Lamas suddenly stopped, and the drums, trumpets, and shells sounded three times, then the 4000 Lamas together uttered a frightful cry like the howling of a multitude of wild beasts, and then the ceremony was over: the lanterns were extinguished, and soon all was darkness and silence. We wished old Akayé good night, and retired again to our beds.

We had now been three months at Kounboum, enjoying the sympathy of the Buddhist brethren, and the goodwill of the authorities, but we had, nevertheless, been living in flagrant opposition to a positive law of the Lamaserai, which ordained, that those who wished to make a long stay, should put on the sacred vestments of a Lama, that is to say, the red robes, the little dalmatic without sleeves, and the yellow mitre. Accordingly the Grand Lama sent to us one morning one of his attendants, to invite us to a more strict observance of the statutes. We replied, that not being of the religion of Buddha we could not adopt this habit without outraging our faith, but that not wishing to occasion any disorder, we were quite willing to retire from the Lamaserai, if a dispensation could not be granted us on this subject. After the lapse of several days the Lama government sent back to say that the law was inflexible, and that they were grieved to find that our *holy* and *sublime* religion did not permit us to conform to it. They added, that they should see with pleasure that we had established ourselves in the neighbourhood, and they invited us to take up our abode at Tchogortan, where we might wear what dress we pleased.

We had often heard of this little Lamaserai — which is like a country house for the faculty of medicine, and is distant about half an hour's ride from Kounboum. The Grand Lamas, and the students of the medical section generally go there, towards the end of every summer, to gather medicinal plants on the neighbouring mountains, but during the rest of the year it remains nearly deserted, or inhabited, perhaps, by a few solitary Lamas who have dug their cells in the steepest rocks they can find.

The proposal that we should leave Kounboum could not have come at a more convenient time, for spring was coming on, and Samdadchiemba had just arrived with the three camels from pasture. We bought, therefore, a khata and a dish of dried grapes, and went to pay a visit of ceremony to the Lama who administered the affairs of Tchogortan. He received us with affability, and gave orders to prepare for us, immediately, a suitable habitation; and then, after giving a splendid farewell banquet to the medical Lama, the Chinese, and old Akayé, we loaded our camels with our baggage and set off gaily towards the little Lamaserai.

CHAP. XIV.

Appearance of the Lamaserai of Tchogortan.—Contemplative Lamas.—Cow-herd Lamas.—The Book of the forty-two points of Instruction.—The Black Tents.—Morals of Si-Fan.—Long-haired Oxen.—Valuable discoveries in the Vegetable Kingdom.—Camels' hair Ropes.—Visitors to Tchogortan.—Classification of Argols.—History of Robbers.—Pyramid of Peace.—Faculty of Medicine at Tchogortan.—Thibetan Physicians.—Departure for the Blue Sea.

THE country between Kounboom and Tchogortan appears to be well supplied with pastures, but, from the cold of the climate, vegetation is very late. Although we were now in the month of May, there was scarcely enough grass to give a yellowish tint to the valley.

When we reached the Lamaserai, a Lama, with a plump red face, came to meet us, and conduct us to the habitation that had been prepared for us. It was a large apartment, which, only the evening before, had served as a lodging for some young calves, too weak yet to follow their mothers to the mountains. Great efforts had been made to cleanse it, but it still bore very evident traces of its late tenants; although it was, nevertheless, the best lodging the Lamaserai could afford us.

The aspect of Tchogortan is very picturesque, especially in summer. The habitations of the Lamas, at the foot of a high mountain, rising almost perpendicularly above them, are shaded by trees, centuries old, whose thick branches serve for a retreat to numerous kites and crows. A few yards below the houses there flows an abundant stream, intersected by numerous dams, constructed by the Lamas to turn their prayer mills. At the bottom of the valley, and on the neighbouring mills, appeared the black tents of the Si-Fan, and some flocks of goats. The mountain wall itself serves as a habitation to a few contemplative anchorites, who have built their eyries, like eagles' nests, on the highest and most inaccessible spots; some have hollowed them out of the face of the rock, others have stuck a little wooden cell, like a swallow's nest, to its side, and some pieces of wood fastened to the rock serve for a ladder, by which they ascend to their singular habitations.

One of these Buddhist hermits has entirely renounced the world,

and voluntarily deprived himself of all means of communication with his fellow creatures; and a sack, suspended to a long cord, serves to convey to him the alms of the Lamas and shepherds of the country.

We have often held intercourse with *contemplative* Lamas, but we have never been able to ascertain what it was that they contemplated up there in their niches. They could not themselves give a very good account of it; they had, they said, embraced that kind of life, because they had read in their books that Lamas of great sanctity had lived in that way. They were not at all morose, but simple peaceable men, who passed most of their time in prayer, and when they were tired of it, sought a harmless recreation in sleep.

Besides five contemplatives, there were at this time a few Lamas residing below, to whom the care of the deserted houses of the Lamaserai had been confided. They did not, like their brethren, take up life by its refined and mystic side, but were, on the contrary, completely plunged in the positive realities of the world. They were herdsmen. In the large house in which we were installed there were two Lamas, who passed their lives in taking care of twenty oxen, milking cows, making butter and cheese, and looking after the young calves. Prayer and contemplation they seemed to trouble themselves but little about. Now and then they would utter an exclamation, in which the name of Tsong-Kaba was heard, but it was always something about the beasts, when the cows would not be milked, or the young calves were troublesome in gambolling over the valley. Our arrival afforded a sort of interruption to the monotony of their pastoral life; and they used to come and visit us in our chamber, and pass in review our little travelling library, with the timid and respectful curiosity often manifested by simple and illiterate people for the works of intelligence. If they happened to find us writing — their flocks, their dairy, all was forgotten; they would stand for hours motionless, with their eyes fixed upon our pens running along the paper, and forming characters, the strangeness and smallness of which always threw them into extacies.

The little lamaserai of Tchogortan pleased us beyond our hopes, and we never cast one regret towards Kounboum; indeed we felt ourselves free and emancipated, for we were no longer under the ferule of Sandara the Bearded — that hard and pitiless master,

who, besides giving us lessons in the Thibet language, seemed to have imposed on himself the duty of teaching us patience and humility. Our departure from Kounboum had offered a favourable opportunity for getting rid of him, and we thought we had now made progress enough to be able to do without official aid, and walk alone. Our hours of study we devoted to the revision and analysis of our dialogues, and the translation of a little Thibetan work, called "The forty-two points of Instruction offered by Buddha," of which we possessed a magnificent edition, in four languages — namely, Thibetan, Chinese, Mongol, and Mantchoo. When the Thibetan presented any difficulty we had only to consult the three other languages with which we were familiar. We had not been long at Tchogortan, however, before we found that it would not do for us to devote all our leisure to study; we must give a part of it to the cares of a pastoral life. We had remarked that our cattle every evening came home hungry, — and that, instead of getting fat, they grew leaner from day to day. The truth was that Samdadchiemba gave himself no trouble to conduct them where they might find something to browse. After having driven them for a few minutes before him, he left them upon some barren hill, and then went to sleep in the sun, or loitered about the black tents, gossipping and drinking tea. It was of no use to remonstrate with him, and we saw no other way to remedy the evil than to become shepherds ourselves.

It was impossible, too, to remain exclusively men of letters, when every thing around invited us to conform to the habits of pastoral nations. The Si-Fan, or Oriental Thibetans, are nomadic, like the Mongol-Tartars, and pass their lives wholly in the care of their flocks. They do not lodge, like other Mongols, in *Yourtas*, covered with felt, but in large tents of black linen, of an hexagonal form, without any woodwork inside to support them. The side angles of the base are attached to the ground by nails, and the top supported by cords, which, at a certain distance from the tent, rest first on horizontal poles, and then, descending, are fastened to rings fixed in the earth. With this whimsical arrangement of poles and cords, the whole affair resembles a monstrous black spider, lying quite still on its high, thin legs, with its swelled abdomen resting on the ground. These black tents are by no means so good as the Mongol yourtas, nor so warm or solid as even the travelling tents, and a violent wind easily blows them down.

In some respects, the Si-Fan appear more advanced than the other Mongols, and they seem to manifest some slight indications of an approach to the manners of sedentary nations. When they have chosen a spot for an encampment, they raise round it a wall four or five feet high. Inside their tents they build stoves, which are both solid and tasteful, but they do not on that account attach themselves any more to the soil; the slightest whim is sufficient to induce them to decamp and destroy all their masonry. They carry with them, however, the principal stones, which may be considered as part of their furniture. Their flocks and herds consist of sheep, goats, and long-haired oxen; they do not keep so many horses as most of the Mongol-Tartars, but what they have are stronger as well as more elegantly made.

This long-haired ox is called Yak by the Thibetans, and *bos grunniens* by European naturalists, from its cry, which is, in fact, very much like the grunt of a pig, but louder and more prolonged. It is short and thick set, and not so large as a common ox; its hair is long, fine, and shining, and that on the belly hanging down quite to the ground; its feet are thin, and much like those of goats, and it likes to climb mountains and hang over precipices. The flesh is excellent, the milk of the cow delicious, and the butter made from it above all praise. Malte-Brun gives a different opinion; but as we have had rather better opportunities of becoming acquainted with its flavour than the learned geographer, we consider that ours is most to be relied on. The cows are so petulant and difficult to milk, that it is impossible to keep them still; and not a drop is to be had from them without giving them their calves to lick during the operation.

The nomadic Si-Fan are easily distinguished from the Mongols by their more expressive physiognomy, and their greater energy of character; their faces are not so flat, and their manners have an ease and vivacity which contrast strongly with the heaviness of the Tartars. Their encampments resound with noisy songs, merry games, and shouts of laughter; but with these dispositions to gaiety and pleasure, they are of a warlike character and indomitable courage; and though their names are on the list of tributary nations, they obstinately refuse both tribute and obedience to the Emperor of China; indeed, they manifest the most profound contempt for Chinese authority. Some of them carry their predatory incursions to the very frontiers of the empire, and the Mandarins

do not dare to interfere with them. They are good horsemen, though, in this respect, they do not equal the Tartars. But, besides attending to their flocks, they practise some kinds of industrial occupations, and turn to account the wool of the sheep and the long hair of their oxen, weaving from them a coarse kind of cloth, which they use for tents and clothing. When they assemble round their great cauldron full of milk-tea, they give themselves up freely to their gossipping humour, and their taste for stories about Lamas and robbers; one need only set them going, and one is sure of seeing them display an apparently exhaustless repertory of anecdotes, local traditions, and legends.

One day, while our camels were tranquilly browsing on some thorny shrubs at the bottom of the valley, we went to seek a shelter from the north wind in a small tent, whence issued a thick smoke. We found inside it an old man lying on his hands and knees, blowing a pile of argols, which he had just placed on the hearth. We seated ourselves on a yak's skin, and the old man crossed his legs, and stretched out his hand to us. We gave him our bowls, which he filled with milk-tea, saying, "Drink in peace." Then he looked at us, one after another, with an expression of anxiety.

"Aha! brother," said we, "it is the first time that we have come to seat ourselves in your tent."

"I am old," he replied; "my legs cannot support me, otherwise I should have been to Tchogortan, to offer you my khata. From what I have heard the shepherds of the black tents say, you are from the sky of the west."

"Yes;" our country is far from here."

"Are you from the kingdom of Samba, or that of Poba?"

"Neither one nor the other; we are from the kingdom of the French."

"Ah! you are of the Framba; I have never heard of that. It is so large that West; the kingdoms there are so numerous. But at bottom it makes no difference; we are all of the same family, are we not?"

"Yes, certainly; all men are brothers, whatever their kingdom is."

"What you say is founded on reason; but nevertheless there are on the earth three great families, and we are all of the great Thibetan family."

"Aha! — do you know whence come these three families?"

"This is what I have heard the Lamas say, who have studied the things of antiquity. At the beginning, there was on the earth only a single man; he had neither house nor tent, for at that time the winter was not cold, and the summer not hot; the wind did not blow so violently, and there fell neither snow nor rain; the tea grew of itself on the mountains, and the flocks had nothing to fear from beasts of prey. This man had three children, who lived a long time with him, nourishing themselves on milk and fruits. After having attained to a great age, this man died. The three children deliberated what they should do with the body of their father, and they could not agree about it; one wished to put him in a coffin, the other wanted to burn him, the third thought it would be best to expose the body on the summit of a mountain. They resolved then to divide it into three parts; the eldest had the body and arms,—he was the ancestor of the great Chinese family,—and that is why his descendants have become celebrated in arts and industry, and are remarkable for their tricks and stratagems. The second son had the breast; he was the father of the Thibetan family, — and they are full of heart and courage, and do not fear death. From the third, who had the inferior parts of the body, are descended the Tartars, who are simple and timid, without head or heart, and who know nothing but how to keep themselves firm in their saddles."

By way of return for this interesting chronicle, we related to the old man the story of the first man, the deluge, and of Noah and his three sons. He was at first very much pleased with the coincidence of the three families; but when he heard us say that the Chinese, the Tartars, and the Thibetans were all the children of Shem, he listened with his mouth open, and from time to time shook his head.

The time had passed quickly away during this archæological discussion, and we now, after saluting the old man, returned to our camels, drove them home, tied them up to the door, and then went into our little kitchen to prepare our supper.

Our culinary department was now incomparably better supplied than it had been at Kounboum. Milk, curds, butter, cheese, we had at discretion, and we had also made the grand discovery of a hunter in the neighbourhood. A few days after our arrival he had entered our chamber, and drawing from a sack which he carried a magnificent hare, he enquired, whether we had any ob-

[redacted] it, as the Buddhist Lamas were forbidden to do so; and, on our replying that we were at perfect liberty to eat hare if we pleased, he offered to bring us one every day, saying, that the hills were swarming with them. We would not, however, receive it gratuitously, as he had intended, but it was settled that we should pay him for each hare forty sapecks, that is about two-pence, which he regarded as a generous remuneration. At this rate it was cheaper for us to live on hare than on our insipid oatmeal. One day he brought us a kid; our chimney smoked from it for days together, and Samdadchiemba was the whole time in a delightful humour. In order, however, not to become altogether too carnivorous in our diet, we sought for some kind of esculent vegetables, and found, in great quantity, a root resembling the dandelion. We also boiled the young stalks of fern, which are very much like asparagus, and the nettle, which is a good substitute for spinach. In summer, when these plants were no longer fit for culinary purposes, we used to find strawberries on the mountains, and white champignons in the valleys.

In the beginning of July there fell very heavy rains, and when these were over, the country clothed itself, as if by magic, with flowers and verdure. For our camels, too, this was a moment of Palingenesia. Their hair had all fallen off in bunches like old rags, and, for a few days, they were quite naked, and perfectly hideous. But now the hair began to appear again, and in another fortnight they were clothed in their new attire, and really handsome.

The old hair furnished us with a new and useful occupation. An old Lama, who was a skilful rope maker, had suggested to us that we might make with it a store of cords for our baggage; and after some lessons from him we set to work. In a short time we could manage it very well, and every morning, when we went to visit our cattle at their pasture, we used to take a bundle of camels' hair, and work as we went along.

Samdadcheimba was rather scandalised at our proceedings: "My spiritual fathers," said he, "how can men of your quality degrade themselves so far as to make ropes. Would it not be more suitable to buy them?" This was a good opportunity to give him a gentle reprimand that he had not offered to help us; and after having pointed out to him that we were by no means in a position to play the *Grand Seigneur*, but must be as economical as we possibly

could, we cited to him the example of St. Paul, who had not thought he derogated from his dignity in labouring with his own hands, in order not to be a burden on the faithful. As soon as ever he heard that the Apostle Paul had been at the same time a currier, he got over his laziness, and began to work at the ropes with great zeal. What was then our surprise to find that he understood the business extremely well, and was very skilful at it. Of course he was immediately placed in the position to which his talents entitled him, and appointed to be superintendant general of our rope-making establishment.

The fine season now brought to Tchogortan a great number of people from Kounboum, who came to enjoy the country air, and rest from their studies; and our apartment became a favourite resort, to which some visitors were drawn by curiosity, and others from the wish to hear us speak of the holy doctrine of Jehovah. How joyful we were when we heard them utter with respect, the holy names of Jesus and Mary, and repeat, with devotion, the prayers we had taught them. May God send to these poor wandering sheep pastors, who may be able to lead them definitively to the fold.

Among the Lamas there were a great number of Mongol-Tartars, who came and pitched tents in the valley, along the brooks, and on the most picturesque hills, and remained for some days, revelling in the delights of the wandering life, and forgetting for the moment the constraint of the Lamaserai. They ran and frolicked about the meadows like children, and exercised themselves in wrestling, and in the various games which reminded them of their native country. Even the tent they seemed to regard as too settled a habitation, unless they changed its place three or four times a day; and they would often take their kitchen utensils and some pails of water, and go up and boil their tea on the top of a mountain, only coming down again at nightfall.

But though the inhabitants of Tchogortan appeared to be in the enjoyment of such peace, they were perpetually tormented by the fear of robbers, who, from time to time, they said, made incursions into the country, carried away cattle, and caused devastation wherever they went.

In 1842 there had been a terrible invasion of these wild brigands, and they had burned the images of Buddha, and broken through the dams which enabled the Lamas to turn their prayer mills. The Lamas of Kounboum had rushed to the assistance of

their brethren; but they came too late, and found in the valley only smoking ruins.

Since that event the shepherds of Tchogortan had organised a patrol armed with lances and guns; and though this precaution would certainly not intimidate the robbers, it had the advantage of inspiring some feeling of security among the inhabitants. In the autumn of this year there were some alarming rumours of the kind, which induced the shepherds to drive away all their flocks from the pastures, so that we were left with only a few Lamas who had to keep watch over the Lamaserai; and our cattle at all events profited by what seemed to be a false alarm, for they could graze wherever they liked without fear of rivals. It was not long, however, before the scene once more became animated, for the Lamas of the faculty of medicine arrived from Kounboum, and not only filled all the disposable habitations, but even required tents to be pitched under the great trees. Every morning they used to disperse over the mountain, and they returned in the evening loaded with roots, branches, and plants of every kind for the general pharmacy of Kounboum. These plants are afterwards dried, pulverised, and enveloped in small pieces of red paper, inscribed with Thibetan characters, and they are purchased by pilgrims at an enormous price.

At length, towards the end of the month of September, we heard news that the Thibetan embassy had arrived at Tang-Keou-Eul, and was to stop there but a few days. It was necessary, therefore, that without loss of time we should set about our preparations for this long-looked-for journey to the capital of Thibet. Among other stores we bought a good quantity of garlic, which we were recommended to take as a remedy to the pernicious and even poisonous exhalations proceeding from a certain mountain that we should have to pass.

We also got another camel; for, though ours were in magnificent order, three were not sufficient for such an enterprise as this; and we hired a young Lama, whom we had known at Kounboum, in the quality of assistant camel-driver,—a nomination by which Samdadchiemba's fatigues were lessened as well as his social position rendered more dignified.

After exchanging a great number of khatas with our friends and acquaintances, we set out on our march towards the Blue Sea, where we were to wait the passing of the Thibetan embassy,—the

new subaltern camel-driver walking on foot, and leading the four camels, tied one to the tail of the other; Samdadchiemba the superior officer, mounted on his mule, following; and we two missionaries bringing up the rear.

CHAP. XV.

Aspect of the Kou-kou-Noor.—Description and March of the Grand Caravan.—Passage of the Pouhain-Gol.—Adventures of the Altère Lama.—Our sub-Camel-driver.—Mongols of Tsaidam.—Pestilential Vapours of Bourhan-Bota.—Ascent of Mount Chuga.—Men and Animals killed by the Frost.—Meeting with Robbers.—Fire in the Desert.—Young Chaberon of the Kingdom of Khartchin.—Cultivated Plains of Pampou.—Mountain of the Remission of Sins.—Arrival.

The Blue Lake or sea, called by the Mongols the Kou-kou-Noor*, is an immense reservoir of water more than four hundred miles in circumference. The name of sea is applicable to it, not only on account of its extent, but because its waters are bitter and salt like those of the ocean, and it is subject to the periodical ebb and flow of tide. The marine odour which it exhales is perceptible far off in the desert. Towards the western part there is a little rocky island inhabited by twenty contemplative Lamas, who have built there a Buddhist temple, and some habitations where they pass their days in the most profound retirement, far from the anxieties of the world. It is impossible to pay them a visit, for there is not a boat on the whole expanse of waters—at least we never saw one, and the Mongols assured us that no one among their tribes occupied himself with navigation. During the severest cold of winter, however, when the waters are covered by a solid crust of ice, the shepherds of the neighbourhood go on pilgrimages to the island, and carry to the contemplative Lamas their modest offerings of tea, and butter, and Tsamba, receiving in exchange blessings on their flocks and pastures. The tribes in the neighbourhood of the Kou-kou-Noor are divided into twenty-nine banners, commanded by princes tributary to the Emperor of China; and every alternate year they make a journey to Pekin to carry thither skins and the

* According to popular tradition in Thibet, this vast body of water once occupied what is now the site of the city of Lha-Ssa, and found its way by a subterranean course to its present bed.

gold dust which they get from the sands of their rivers. The vast plains bordering on the Blue Lake are extremely fertile, though entirely without trees. The grass grows in them to a prodigious height, and the ground is watered by numerous rivulets which afford cattle ample means of quenching their thirst. The Mongols, therefore, like to pitch their tents amidst these magnificent pastures; and though they are constantly harassed in them by robbers, they content themselves with frequently shifting their place, and, when they cannot escape from their enemies, accept the combat with great readiness. The necessity in which they are continually placed, of defending their goods and their lives, has rendered them bold and intrepid; they are always ready for battle at any hour of the day or night; and they keep watch over their flocks on horseback, with their guns slung to their shoulders, their lances in rest, and their long swords in their belts. What a difference between these vigorous, armed, mustachioed shepherds, and the languishing swains of Virgil, always playing the flute or adorning their hats with ribbons!

The robbers who keep them thus perpetually on the alert are hordes of Si-Fan, or oriental Thibetans, who inhabit the sides of the mountains of Bayen-Kharat, towards the sources of the Yellow River. They are known in the country under the generic name of Kolos; and they have their retreat in gorges of the mountains defended by roaring torrents and frightful precipices, to which it is impossible to penetrate without a guide, and they never issue from these fastnesses but for purposes of pillage and devastation. Their religion is Buddhist; but they have a special divinity whom they call the deity of robbery, and their Lamas are occupied in prayer and sacrifice for the success of their expedition. It is said that they have the revolting custom of eating the hearts of their prisoners, with a view of maintaining their courage; but there is no monstrous practice which the other Mongols do not attribute to them. They are divided into various tribes, and it is only among these that we have ever heard the name of Kalmuck, which figures so conspicuously in our geography books. Possibly the Kalmucks were at one time more important; but the notions of the travellers of the thirteenth century, who say so much of them, were extremely vague and uncertain.

We had sojourned by the Kou-kou-Noor nearly a month, and had been compelled, five or six times, to decamp and follow the

Tartar tribes, who, at the least alarm of robbers, changed their place,—though they never went far,—when, towards the end of October, the Thibetan embassy arrived. We joined this immense troop, which was now further increased by the addition of several Mongol caravans, wishing like ourselves to profit by this excellent opportunity of making the journey to Lha-Ssa. We stopped on the road the following day, that we might see this vast multitude of travellers defile before us; and we made the following estimate of their numbers:—There were fifteen thousand long-haired oxen, twelve hundred horses, about the same number of camels, and two thousand men—Thibetans and Tartars—some going on foot, and directing the disorderly march of the cattle; others mounted on horses, camels, and oxen, and fully armed. The ambassador travelled in a litter borne by two mules, and escorted by three hundred Chinese soldiers furnished by the province of Kan-Sou, and two hundred brave Tartars, charged by the princes of the Kou-kou-Noor to protect the holy embassy of the Talé Lama as far as the frontiers of Thibet.

The Kan-Sou soldiers acquitted themselves of their duty like true Chinese. For fear of any disagreeable rencounter, they kept themselves prudently at the rear of the caravan, and there sung, smoked, and amused themselves, quite at their ease, without disturbing their minds at all about the brigands. They had also another motive for never putting themselves in motion till the rest of the caravan had passed:—they could pick up many stray articles which had been unintentionally left behind at the different encampments; and, with this view, they never failed to examine them carefully. Very different was the behaviour of the Tartars. They might be seen continually galloping in advance, and at the flanks of the caravan,—up the hills, and down into the deepest ravines, to see if there were any robbers lying in ambuscade.

The movements of the caravan were usually made—at least at the beginning of the journey—with tolerable precision. We set off two or three hours before sunrise, that we might be able to rest at noon, and let the cattle feed during the rest of the day. The signal for the *reveil* was the firing of a cannon; and, as soon as it was heard, every one got up, fires were made in all the tents, and while some loaded the beasts of burden, others made the water boil and prepared the buttered tea,—some bowls full of which were hastily swallowed, some handsful of Tsamba devoured, and then

every one struck his tent, and a second cannon-shot gave the signal for departure. Some experienced horsemen placed themselves at the head of the caravan, to direct its march. They were followed by long files of camels, and these by the oxen, in herds of two or three hundred, under the guidance of particular drivers; and the plaintive cries of the camels, the neighing of the horses, the grunting of the oxen, the sharp whistle of the numerous drivers, and the innumerable bells suspended to the necks of the yaks and camels—all this produced a strange confused concert, which, far from fatiguing, seemed to give us all courage and energy. The caravan, stopping every day in plains, in valleys, on the sides of mountains, appeared, with its multitude of tents, to raise by enchantment towns and villages, all to vanish on the morrow. The solemn and silent desert was, in a moment, alive with a vast and noisy population; and these countless flocks and herds — these men, by turns shepherds and warriors — reminded us of the march of the Israelites in search of the promised land.

On leaving the shores of the Blue Sea our course was directed towards the west, with a slight inclination to the south; and the first days were all poetry. The weather was glorious — the road beautiful and easy — the water limpid — the pastures fat and abundant. During the nights, indeed, we felt the cold a little: but we had but to put on some more skins, and we began to ask ourselves what there was terrible in the famous journey through Thibet. It seemed that it was impossible to travel in a more convenient or more agreeable manner. Alas! the enchantment was not of long duration.

Six days after our departure we had to cross the Pouhain-Gol, a river which rises at the foot of the Nan-Chan mountains, and falls into the Blue Sea. It is not very deep, but it is divided into twelve branches, very near one another, and we had the misfortune to arrive at the first long before daylight; — the water was frozen, but not deeply enough to serve as a bridge. The horses reached the water first, and they were frightened, and would not go on; and, by stopping on the banks, they gave the oxen time to come up. Soon the whole caravan was assembled on a single spot; and it would be impossible to describe the confusion which reigned in this prodigious crowd, still enveloped in the darkness of night. At length some of the riders urged on their horses, who broke the ice in several places, and then the whole caravan entered, pell-mell,

into the river. The animals ran violently against each other, and dashed up the water on all sides; the ice cracked — the men vociferated — it was a frightful tumult. After crossing the first arm of the river, it was necessary to go through the same scene at the second, then at the third, and so on. When day dawned the holy embassy was still splashing in the water, and it was not till after excessive physical and moral fatigue that we at last left the twelve branches of the Pouhain-Gol behind us, and found ourselves once more on dry ground.

We began, now, to consider the journey detestable; but every one else seemed to be quite exulting. They said that the passage of the Pouhain-Gol had been made admirably. A single man had had his legs broken, and two oxen had been drowned. As to things lost or stolen in the confusion, no account was taken of them. When the caravan resumed its march, it presented a truly risible aspect. Men and animals were all encumbered, more or less, with ice; the horses were greatly troubled with their tails, which stuck out stiff, heavy, and motionless, like pieces of lead. The camels had the long hair of their legs loaded with splendid icicles, which rattled against each other with a harmonious sound; yet it was evident these pretty ornaments were little to their taste, for they endeavoured from time to time to rid themselves of them, by striking their feet violently against the ground. The long-haired oxen were real caricatures,—walking with their legs widely apart, and bearing an enormous load of stalactites, which hung down beneath their bellies quite to the ground. The monstrous beasts looked exactly as if they were preserved in sugar candy.

During the first days of our march we had found ourselves somewhat isolated in the midst of this vast multitude; we were without friends or acquaintances, but we soon made some, for there is nothing like travelling together for making men intimate. Our chief companions were four Lamas, whose story excited in us a strong interest. They had become disciples of a Grand Lama, named Altère, who had proposed to himself to build in the environs of Lha-Ssa a Buddhist temple that should exceed in magnificence all that had hitherto been seen. With a view to this object, they had been with him on a grand begging tour through the whole of central Asia, and up quite to the confines of Russia. They had collected immense sums in pious offerings, but as a great part of these consisted in flocks and herds, they had afterwards gone to Pekin to get them changed into gold and silver; and

in order to carry these treasures safely through the dangerous country of the Kolos, they had gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of the Thibetan embassy. But while they were at Si-Ning-Fou, there arrived one day a courier extraordinary from the emperor, bearing despatches, in which the great mandarin of the town was enjoined to seize on the Altère Lama, on a charge of having committed sundry swindling tricks, and forged letters of recommendation from the Talé Lama, who had given orders to the ambassador to take possession of the treasures which had been collected in some measure under the influence of his name. The four unfortunate disciples were now taking to Lha-Ssa fifty-eight magnificent camels which had belonged to their master, but of which the Thibetan government would now dispose. They were constantly occupied in talking of their fallen master, but their sentiments towards him seemed to suffer extraordinary variations. Sometimes they seemed to regard him as a saint, and sometimes as a thief. One day they would pronounce his name with veneration, carrying their joined hands to their forehead; and sometimes they would curse him, and spit in the air, by way of showing their contempt. They were very good fellows, however, and their stories of the various adventures they had met with on this long tour lightened for us many a weary part of the road. One chief cause of annoyance to us was the character of our sub-camel-driver, Charadchambeul. At first he had appeared to us quite a saint; but we had too soon occasion to discover that he was in reality a little devil. The following adventure opened our eyes to his true character. The day after the passage of the Pouhain-Gol, having continued our march during a great part of the night, we remarked on one of our camels two large bundles, carefully wrapped up, which we had not before noticed. We thought that perhaps some traveller, not having been able to stow them himself, had begged him to take charge of them; and so we went peaceably on, without thinking more of the matter. But when we had encamped, there still were the packages; and we noticed that our Lama again wrapped them up mysteriously in a piece of felt, and hid them at the back of the tent. Thereupon we demanded an explanation; and he then came up to us, and said in a low voice, as if he feared being heard, that during the night Buddha had done him a favour, and made him find a good thing on the road. Then he added, smiling maliciously,

that this good thing would sell at Lha-Ssa for full ten ounces of silver. These words made us knit our brows, and demand to see it; and Charadchambeul, after first carefully closing the door of the tent, displayed, rather reluctantly, what he pretended he had found. It was two great copper jars, containing a kind of brandy which is made in the province of Kan-Sou, and is here sold at a great price. On both jars there were Thibetan characters, which indicated the name of the proprietor. We tried to suppose that Charadchambeul had really picked them up, and had not absolutely stolen them during the night; but he himself seemed quite satisfied with declaring that Buddha had made him a present of them, and that all he had to do was to hide them carefully, that the owner might not find him out. To reason concerning morality and justice with a fellow of this sort, was evidently to lose time and pains; we therefore contented ourselves with declaring that as the jars belonged neither to him nor to us, we would not receive them in our tent, nor suffer them to be placed among our baggage during the journey, since we had not any wish to make our first appearance at Lha-Ssa in the character of thieves; adding, that if he did not himself inform the proprietor, we should do so for him. This seemed to make some impression; and in order to determine him, we advised him to carry his *treasure trove* to the ambassador, who would probably notice his probity, and either reward him immediately, or do something for him when he got to Lha-Ssa. After long and violent disputing, he agreed to do this. But he came back furious. The ambassador had said to him, — "You are a good Lama: a Lama who has justice in his heart is agreeable to the mind:" and there the matter had ended. From this time, he seemed to have conceived an implacable hatred against us. He neglected his work, he wasted our provisions, he overwhelmed us with abuse and maledictions, and, what was worse, he vented his rage on our poor animals, and beat them most cruelly. But here, in the midst of the desert, it was impossible to send him away; and all we could do was to arm ourselves with patience, and endeavour not to irritate any further his fierce and ungovernable character.

On the 15th of November we quitted the magnificent plains of the Kou-kou-Noor, and entered the country of the Tsaidam Mongols, after crossing the river of the same name. Here the landscape underwent a great change, and became wild and gloomy, and

the dry and stony soil bore nothing but brambles impregnated with saltpetre. The people, too, have a morose manner, as if they had been affected by the physical character of their country: they speak very little, and that in so rude and guttural a tone that other Mongols have difficulty in comprehending them. In this arid soil salt and borax abound; there is nothing more to be done than to dig a hole two or three feet deep, and the salt collects in it, and crystallises and purifies of itself. The borax is also collected in little reservoirs, which are soon entirely filled.

We rested two days in this country in order to collect all the strength possible for the ascent of the dreaded Bourhan-Bota — our long-haired oxen and camels enjoying themselves on the nitre and salt, and we feasting on Tsamba and some goats which we got from the herdsmen in exchange for brick tea; and then setting out about three o'clock in the morning, we arrived at nine at the foot of the mountain. The caravan stopped for a moment, and we gazed with anxiety upward at the steep and rough paths, on which we perceived with anxiety a light vapour resting, which was said to be the noxious gas before mentioned. We adopted the precautionary measure, recommended by tradition, of chewing some cloves of garlic, and then commenced the ascent.

In a short time the horses appeared to be incapable of bearing their riders; — every one slackened his pace, all faces turned pale, the heart beat faintly, the limbs refused their office; — many lay down, then got up again, made a few steps, then lay down again, and in this deplorable manner toiled up the side of the famous Bourhan-Bota.

Heavens, what misery it was! With exhausted strength, brain reeling, limbs feeling as if they were ready to fall off, and a deadly sickness at the stomach, still to exert oneself so far, as not only to drag on one's own frame, but also, by repeated blows, to force on the reluctant animals, who were every moment trying to lie down. A part of our troop stopped in a deep hollow of the mountain, where it was said the pestilential vapour was less thick; the rest exerted their utmost energies to reach the top, where, at last, the lungs could play freely, relieved from the murderous carbonic acid gas that had so long oppressed them. To descend on the other side was mere play, for there the air was pure and easily respirable. The people told us that when there was a strong wind, the pernicious effect was little felt; but that it was very

dangerous in calm weather, for then, being heavier than the atmospheric air, it remains near the surface of the ground, instead of being in some measure dispersed. We had noticed indeed, in our ascent, that, on horseback, our breathing was rather less difficult than on foot. The presence of this gas of course made it scarcely possible to light a fire; the argols gave out much smoke, but would not burn with any flame. We can give no adequate account of the origin of this exhalation; but for those who seek for explanations in names, we may say, that Bourhan is a synonyme for Buddha, and that Bourhan-Bota signifies Buddha's Kitchen.

During the night there fell a great quantity of snow; and those who had stopped midway informed us that they had finished the ascent much more easily, as the snow had dispersed the vapour.

The passage of the Bourhan-Bota, however, had been only a kind of apprenticeship, for some days afterwards another mountain, the Chuga, put our strength and courage to the proof. As the march was expected to be long and toilsome, the signal gun was fired a little after midnight; and we then made some tea with melted snow, took a good meal of Tsamba seasoned with chopped garlic, and set out.

The sky was clear, and a resplendent moon shone on the carpet of snow by which the face of the country was entirely hidden. The mountain was not very steep on the side we were ascending, so that we hoped to reach the top by morning dawn; but the sky soon became overcast, and the wind began to blow with constantly increasing violence, while the snow was so deep on the sides of the mountain that it was up to the bellies of the cattle, and many of them fell into holes from which it was found impossible to withdraw them, so that they were left to perish. The gale was so icy and cutting that it almost took away our breath; and, wrapped up as we were in furs, we feared being frozen to death. In order to avoid the whirlwinds of snow that the wind lashed in our faces, we followed the example of some other travellers, and mounted our horses backwards, leaving them to go as they would; but when we had crossed the mountain, and could open our eyes, we saw many a frozen face, and found that M. Gabet had to deplore the temporary death of his nose and ears.

The caravan stopped at the foot of Mount Chuga, and every one then endeavoured to find a shelter somewhere in the labyrinth of gorges. Fainting with hunger, numbed with cold, as we were, we had not, like the Alpine traveller, a hospitable convent wherein to

find shelter and warmth, but we had to pitch our tent in the snow, and to go on a long search for a few fragments of argols, which just made fire enough to melt some large lumps of ice that we cut with a hatchet from a frozen pond. There was no possibility of boiling a kettle; we could only knead a little Tsamba in lukewarm water, and swallow it hastily, lest it should freeze in our fingers; and then rolling ourselves in skins, we crouched down in the corner of the tent, and awaited the signal gun that was to bid us resume the course of our "impressions de voyage."

In this picturesque encampment we left the Tartar soldiers who had escorted us since our departure from the Kou-kou-Noor; and now, both Chinese and Tartars being fairly gone, the embassy had only their own valour to rely upon. Although the two thousand men composing the caravan were completely armed, it must be confessed that the warlike appearance of the troop was singularly modified since the passage of the Bourhan-Bota. There was no more singing, no more laughing; the moustaches that had curled so fiercely at the moment of departure were now humbly hidden in the sheep-skins in which every one was muffled up to the eyes; the warriors had packed their arms together, and laid them on the beasts of burden; in fact, the danger of having our throats cut by robbers was little thought of, we were so much afraid of dying of cold.

It was at Mount Chuga that our miseries began in good earnest. The fury of the wind, the cold, and the snow, augmented every day. The deserts of Thibet are, beyond all contradiction, the most frightful that can be imagined; vegetation diminished at every step, and the cold was intense. Death hovered from that moment over our poor caravan. The want of pasture and water was fatal to our cattle. Day after day we were obliged to abandon some which were unable to drag themselves farther. The aspect of the road presaged a dismal future, and for some days we had been apparently travelling in a vast cemetery. The quantity of human bones and the carcases of animals met with at every step, seemed to tell us that, in the midst of this savage nature, the caravans that had preceded ours had not met a better fate.

To crown our misfortunes M. Gabet fell sick. He ought to have had rest, strengthening drinks, and nourishing food; and we had nothing to give him but barley meal and tea made of snow water. Weak as he was, he was obliged to mount his horse every

day, and struggle with that climate of iron. And we had still two months' journey before us, and that in the depth of winter!

Early in December we reached the Bayen-Kharat, a famous chain of mountains, extending from south-east to north-west between the rivers Hoang-Ho and Kin-Cha-Kiang. The mountain we had to ascend was covered from the base to the summit by a thick layer of snow; and before beginning the ascent, the principal members of the caravan held a council to determine whether it should be attempted immediately or put off till the morrow. After the custom of all the councils in the world, ours was split into two parties; and to settle the matter, recourse was had to the Lamas, who had a reputation in the art of divining. This expedient, however, failed signally, for some of the diviners asserted that this day would be calm, but that on the morrow there would be a furious wind; and others assured us of precisely the contrary. The caravan became forthwith divided between the party of movement and that of resistance,—the progressives and the stationaries. In our quality of French citizens we ranged ourselves on the side of the former; that is to say, we were for marching directly, and finishing as soon as possible with this unlucky mountain; — the weather was calm now, but there was no saying what the morrow would be,—and we began therefore the ascent, sometimes on horseback and sometimes on foot. In the latter case we had to cling to the tails of our animals as they preceded us. M. Gabet suffered horribly; but God in his infinite goodness gave us strength to accomplish our task.

The next day the stationary party began their march, and also crossed the mountain without accident. We had had the civility to wait for them, and together we entered a valley where the temperature was not excessively severe, and the goodness of the pasturage induced the caravan to rest for a day. A deep lake furnished us with abundance of water by cutting holes in the ice. Fuel was not wanting; for the embassies and pilgrims, after passing the Bayen-Kharat, usually halt in this place, and there, consequently, a great quantity of argols is to be found. Large fires were constantly kept up, and we burnt all we found without scruple, and without fear of injuring our successors. Our fifteen thousand long-haired oxen were charged to supply the deficiency.

Leaving the great valley of *Bayen-Kharat*, we pitched our tents on the borders of the *Mouroui-Oussou* (winding water); lower

down it is called Kin-Cha-Kiang (river of gold sand); when it reaches the province of Sse-Tchonan, it is the famous Yang-Dze-Kiang, or Blue River. At the moment of crossing the Mourui-Oussou, a singular spectacle presented itself. While yet in our encampment, we had observed at a distance some black shapeless objects ranged in file across the great river. No change either in form or distinctness was apparent as we advanced, nor was it till we were quite close that we recognised in them a troop of wild oxen. There were more than fifty of them encrusted in the ice. No doubt they had tried to swim across at the moment of congelation, and had been unable to disengage themselves. Their beautiful heads, surmounted by huge horns, were still above the surface; but their bodies were held fast in the ice, which was so transparent that the position of the imprudent beasts was easily distinguishable; they looked as if still swimming, but the eagles and ravens had pecked out their eyes.

Wild oxen are frequently met with in the deserts of anterior Thibet. They go in herds, and during the summer descend into the valleys in search of water; but in winter they remain on the heights, and content themselves with eating the snow, and some herbs of excessive hardness. These animals are enormously large, their hair is long and black, and they are especially remarkable for the size and superb form of their horns. They are said to be extremely fierce. If any are discovered at a distance from the herd, the chase may be ventured; but the hunters should be numerous, that the shots may be sure to take effect; otherwise, if the creature be not killed, there is great danger of his turning upon his pursuers, and tearing them to pieces. One day we saw one of them amusing himself by licking some saltpetre in a little enclosure surrounded by rocks. Eight men, armed with matchlocks, detached themselves from the caravan, and posted themselves in ambuscade. Eight shots were fired at once; the brute raised his head, looked with flaming eyes towards the spot whence the shots proceeded, and then set off at full speed, bellowing frightfully. It was asserted that he was wounded, but that, terrified at the sight of the caravan, he did not venture to attack the hunters.

By the time we were approaching the most elevated point of central Asia, a terrible wind had set in from the north, which lasted fifteen days, and increased the rigour of the cold to a degree that threatened us with great misfortunes. The sky was still clear, but

the cold was so terrible that even at mid-day the influence of the sun was scarcely perceptible. Even during the day, and of course still more during the night, we were under the continual apprehension of being frozen to death. I may mention one circumstance that will give an idea of the extremity of the cold. Every morning before setting off, the caravan used to take a meal, and then not again till we encamped; but as the Tsamba was a kind of food so little agreeable, that it was difficult to take enough of it at once to support us during the day, we used to soak in tea two or three balls of it to keep in reserve for the day's journey. We wrapped up this boiling paste in very warm linen, and placed it on our breasts; and over this we had our clothing, namely a garment of sheep-skin, then a waistcoat of lamb's-skin, then a short garment of fox's skin, and over all a great woollen coat. Now during this fortnight we constantly found the balls of Tsamba frozen, and when we drew them from our bosoms, they were so hard that we almost broke our teeth in attempting to eat them. The cattle suffered terribly, especially the mules and horses which are not so strong as the oxen. We had to dress them in felt carpets, and tie camels' skin round their heads; and in any other circumstances their appearance would certainly have excited our hilarity, but now we were in no humour for laughing, for, notwithstanding all precautions, the cattle of the caravan was decimated by death. The numerous frozen rivers that we had to pass occasioned us much trouble, especially with the camels, which are so awkward that we were obliged to trace a path for them by strewing sand on the ice, and breaking the top of it with our hatchets: even then we had to lead them very carefully, one after the other; and if one of them chanced to make a false step, and fall, it was scarcely possible to get it up again. First we had to relieve them of their baggage, and then to drag them on their sides to the river bank, or spread carpets for them, and tug at them with all our might, but very often to no purpose; they would not make the slightest effort to rise, and they had at last to be abandoned; for it was impossible, in this frightful country, to stay waiting on the whims of a camel. All these hardships threw many of the travellers into deep dejection. To the mortality of the animals was now added that of men, on whom the cold seized, and who were left to perish on the road. One day, when the exhaustion of our beasts of burden had compelled us to slacken our march, we perceived a traveller seated

by the way-side, on a large stone. His head was bent down, his arms pressed against his sides, and he remained motionless as a statue. We called him several times, but he made no answer, and we thought he had not heard us. What madness, we said, to stop on the road in this way in such weather. This unfortunate man will certainly die of cold. We called him again; but as he still did not answer, we alighted and went towards him. His face had the appearance of wax, his eyes were half open and glassy, and he had icicles suspended to his nostrils and the corners of his mouth. He just turned his eyes towards us with a terrible vacant expression; but he was quite frozen, and had been forsaken by his companions. It appeared so cruel to leave him thus, without an effort to save him, that we determined to take him with us; and we lifted him from the ground, and, after wrapping him up, we placed him on Samdadchiemba's mule. As soon as we had pitched the tent, we went to seek out the companions of the unfortunate man; and they prostrated themselves before us, saying we had excellent hearts, but that we had given ourselves trouble in vain; their comrade, they said, was lost, for the cold had reached his heart. We returned to our tent to see what we could do for him, but he was already dead. More than forty men perished thus in the desert. When they could no longer eat or speak, or support themselves on their horses, they were left on the road, although still alive, a small bag of oatmeal and a little wooden bowl being placed beside them as a last mark of interest in their fate. When every one else had passed by, the crows and vultures were seen to wheel round them in the air, and probably they began to tear the unfortunate men before they were fairly dead.

The state of M. Gabet's health became every day more alarming. His extreme weakness made it impossible for him to walk, so that he could not procure himself a little warmth by exercise: his hands, his feet, and his face were frozen, and he could no longer keep himself on his horse; and the only thing we could do was to wrap him well up, tie him, at his whole length, on a camel, and then put all our trust in Providence.

One day, when we were thus sadly journeying through the windings of a valley, oppressed with many sad thoughts, we suddenly perceived two horsemen on the top of a neighbouring hill. We were just then in company with a party of Thibetan merchants, who, like ourselves, had allowed the great body of the

caravan to pass them, for fear of fatiguing their cattle by a too hasty march. "Tsong-kaba!" cried they; "there are men on horseback." And they had scarcely pronounced the words, when we saw a great number of others appearing at various points, and advancing precipitately towards us. We could not but be startled. "Who were these men? — what could they be doing in this uninhabited country? — what did they want?" We could not but suppose they were robbers; and their appearance, on a nearer view, did not contradict the supposition. They had guns slung to their shoulders, two swords in their belts, black hair falling in masses on their necks, flaming eyes, and wolf-skins for caps on their heads. Their number was twenty-seven, probably all practised warriors, and we were but eighteen. Both parties alighted, and a bold Thibetan of our band advanced to speak to the chief of the robbers, whom we knew by two small red flags which floated behind his saddle.

"Who is that man?" he asked, pointing to M. Gabet, who, being tied to the camel, had kept his place.

"It is a Grand Lama of the West," replied the Thibetan; "the power of his prayers is infinite."

The Kolo carried his hands joined to his forehead, and looked attentively at M. Gabet, who, with his frozen face and whimsical wrappages, did not look unlike one of the terrible idols sometimes seen in Pagan temples. After gazing a moment at the famous Lama of the West, the Kolo addressed some words in a low voice to the Thibet merchant, and then, making a sign to his companions, they leaped on their horses, galloped off, and soon disappeared behind the mountains.

"Let us go no farther," said the Thibetan; "let us pitch our tents here. The Kolos are robbers, but they have noble and generous hearts: when they see that we remain fearlessly in their hands, they will not attack us. Besides," he added, "they dread greatly the power of the Lamas of the West." And, at his advice, we encamped accordingly.

Scarcely were the tents pitched, when the Kolos reappeared on the crest of the hill, and galloped towards us with their accustomed rapidity. Their chief alone entered the camp, however; the rest remained waiting at a little distance. The Kolo addressed himself to the Thibetan with whom he had spoken before.

"I come," he said, "to ask you the explanation of a thing which

I do not comprehend. You know that we encamp behind that mountain, and you dare to pitch your tents here quite near to us. How many men are you in your band?"

"We are only eighteen, and you, if I do not mistake, are seven-and-twenty: but brave men never take flight."

"You mean to fight, then?"

"If we had not several sick men in our camp, I should say yes, for I have already tried my strength with the Kolo."

"You! when did you fight with the Kolo? At what time? What is your name?"

"Five years ago, in the affair of the *Chanak-Kampo* (ambassador): here is a memorial of it."

And uncovering his right arm, he showed the mark of a deep sabre-cut. The brigand began to laugh, and again asked the name of the merchant.

"My name is Rala-Chembé," replied the Thibetan; "you ought to know that name."

"Yes! all the Kolos know it, it is the name of a brave man;" and, as he spoke, he leaped from his horse, drew a sword from his girdle, and presented it to the Thibetan, adding, "Take this sword, it is the best I have; we have often fought together, but in future, when we meet, let us treat each other as brothers."

The Thibetan received the offering of the robber chief, and presented him, in return, with a superb bow and quiver, which he had bought at Pekin. The Kolos, who had been looking on, seeing their master thus fraternising with the chief of the caravan, dismounted, tied their horses two and two, and came to drink a social bowl of tea with the poor travellers, who now first began to breathe freely. They were all extremely amiable, and, in the course of conversation, made enquiries of us after the Khalkas-Tartars, who, they said, had killed three of their men the year before, — an injury not yet avenged. They told us also that they were great friends of the Talé Lama, and irreconcilable enemies of the Emperor of China, and that for these reasons they never failed to pillage the embassy to Pekin, for the emperor was unworthy to receive presents from the Talé Lama; but that they *mostly* respected the return embassy, because it was fitting that the Talé Lama should receive presents from the emperor. After having done due honour to our tea and tsamba, our guests retired, wishing us a good journey; but all these fraternal manifestations did not

prevent our sleeping with one eye open. Nevertheless we were not disturbed, and the next day we went on our way in peace. Among all the pilgrims who have made the journey, there are few perhaps who have seen these redoubtable robbers so nearly without receiving the slightest injury from them.

We had escaped a great danger, but another, still more formidable, was preparing for us, in the ascent of the vast chain of the Tant-La mountains. According to our companions' accounts, all the sick people were sure to die on that plateau, and even the healthy would go through a severe trial. On M. Gabet, sentence of certain death was passed; and when, after six painful and toilsome days, we reached this magnificent table-land, the highest on the globe, so far was he from dying, that his health and strength had evidently begun to return. We had seen nothing comparable for grandeur to the gigantic spectacle of mountain scenery stretched out before us here; and enormous eagles hovered above the caravan, which every day, alas! left them a tribute of the bodies of some of its number: but the only victim death demanded of our party was our little black mule, which we abandoned with regret, indeed, but with resignation; for the unexpected blessing which Providence had bestowed on us, in the restoration of M. Gabet, made us soon forget our past sufferings.

It was only a day or two after that, while we were taking our tea in the morning, a cry was suddenly raised of "the Kolos! the Kolos!" but soon, to our great relief, the advancing party proved to be not robbers, but herdsmen of the country, who were coming to sell us butter and fresh meat. Their saddles and horses were perfect butchers' shops, being hung round with as many quarters of mutton and kid as could possibly find room on them. As these were frozen, they could easily be kept, and we bought eight legs of mutton, the very sight of which seemed to restore strength to our stomachs and vigour to our limbs. We passed the whole remainder of the day in cooking, for we were now in an inhabited country, and could find abundance of argols, and Samdadchiemba had just drawn from the kettle a leg of mutton for this inappreciable supper, trying it with his thumb-nail, to see whether it were done, when we heard on all sides the cry of "fire! fire!" With one bound we were out of the tent, and saw that fire had indeed caught the dry grass in the middle of our encampment, and was threatening destruction to our canvass dwellings. All the travellers came running

with their felt carpets to smother the flames, or, at least, to prevent their gaining the tents. This they happily effected, but the fire, driven in on all sides, at length forced itself an outlet, and escaped into the desert, spreading into the vast pastures, and devouring them with terrible rapidity. We thought there was now little more to fear, but the cry of "Save the camels!" awakened us to a sense of our inexperience of fires in the desert. We flew to the succour of our own animals, which appeared far enough off; but the fire was there almost as soon as we were. We were almost immediately surrounded by flames, and in vain did we push and strike the stupid camels to force them to fly; they remained motionless, merely turning ther heads, and looking at us phlegmatically, as if to ask us what right we had to disturb their feeding. But the fire now caught their long, thick hair, and we had to throw ourselves upon them, with the felt carpets, to extinguish it; we saved three, though they were singed, but the fourth was reduced to a deplorable state. The extent of pasture consumed by the flames was about half a league in length by a quarter in breadth, and the Thibetans kept continually expressing their joy that we had been able to prevent its spreading further, — a joy that we fully partook when we understood the extent of the danger with which we had been menaced. We were told, that if the fire had continued much longer, it would have reached the black tents, and that the herdsmen would certainly have pursued and murdered us all, if, by our imprudence, the pastures that form their only resource had been destroyed.

The first considerable Thibetan station which you meet with in going to Lha-Ssa is called Na-Ptchu, a sort of village, composed partly of clay houses, but also, in a great measure, of black tents. The inhabitants, though they remain at the place, do not cultivate the ground, but, like the nomadic tribes, are occupied solely with the care of their flocks.

The caravans going to Lha-Ssa are obliged to make a stay of some days at this village, in order to organise a new system of transport, for the difficulties of the terribly rugged, rocky way do not permit camels to proceed further. Our first care was, therefore, to endeavour to sell ours, but their appearance was so deplorable, that we had great difficulty in finding a purchaser. At length, however, we met with a sort of veterinary doctor, who probably knew of some remedy for their condition, to whom we sold the

three for fifteen ounces of silver, throwing the poor burnt one into the bargain. Our next business was to dismiss our sub camel-driver, though not without paying him liberally for his services, and then, after laying in a stock of butter, tsamba, and mutton, we started for Lha-Ssa, from which we were only distant fifteen days' journey. We had for travelling companions some Mongols of the kingdom of Khartchin, who were going on a pilgrimage to the "Eternal Sanctuary," and who had with them their grand Chaberon, a living Buddha, who was the superior of their convent. He was a young man of eighteen, of agreeable and distinguished manners, with a countenance all openness and candour, which contrasted strangely with the part he was made to play.

At the age of five he had been declared Buddha, and Grand Lama of the Buddhists of Khartchin. He was going to pass some years in one of the convents of Lha-Ssa, in order to acquire the knowledge suitable to his dignity, and a brother of the King of Khartchin, and several Lamas of rank were charged to accompany him and serve him on the road. This title of living Buddha appeared to be a real burden to the poor young man; it was evident that he would willingly laugh and play tricks like any other lad of his age; on the road he would have liked to set his horse prancing, better than to jog on gravely between his two cavaliers of honour, who never left his side, and when we encamped, instead of remaining always seated upon cushions at the back of his tent, aping one of the idols of the Lamaserais, he would gladly have set off for a run into the desert, or taken part in the various labours of the nomadic life; but no amusement of that kind was permitted him. His business was to play Buddha, without troubling himself with any of the cares of ordinary mortals.

He used to like to come and gossip sometimes in our tent, for there, at least, he was free to lay aside his dignity, and confess himself belonging to the human species; and he was very curious to hear what we had to tell him concerning men and things in Europe. He questioned us with great simplicity concerning our religion, which he seemed to consider very beautiful, but when we asked him whether it was not better to be a worshipper of Jehovah than a Chaberon, he said he knew nothing about it. He did not like us to ask him about his former life, and his continual incarnations; he used to blush at such questions, and at last told us that we gave him pain by speaking of these things. The poor young

fellow was evidently entangled in a religious labyrinth of wich he comprehended nothing.

As we advanced towards Lha-Ssa we perceived that we were getting into a more and more inhabited country; the numerous pilgrims, the caravans, the frequent inscriptions on stones by the road side, contributed much to lighten the weariness of the road. The Thibetans we met were now no longer exclusively nomadic, cultivated fields appeared, and houses took the place of black tents. On the fifteenth day after our departure, we arrived at Pampou (erroneously set down in maps as Panctou), which, on account of its proximity to Lha-Ssa, is regarded by pilgrims as the vestibule of the holy city. It is a beautiful plain, watered by a large river, the waters of which, distributed into many canals, spread fertility through the country. There is no village in it, properly so called, but extensive farms are seen in all directions, the houses with terraced tops, and surmounted by little turrets, whence float streamers of various colours, covered with Thibetan inscriptions. After three months' travelling through those terrible deserts, where no living thing was to be met with, but robbers and wild beasts, the plains of Pampou appeared to us the most beautiful country in the world. This long and painful journey had brought us so near the savage state, that we were in extacy with every thing that belonged to civilisation. The houses, the agricultural implements, even a simple furrow attracted our attention. But what struck us most was the prodigious elevation of temperature which we noticed in the cultivated country. Although we were still in the month of January, the river and the canals were merely bordered by a light covering of ice, and we met no one clothed in furs.

At Pampou our caravan was obliged again to exchange its cattle, substituting asses for the long-haired oxen, which seldom go further; and the difficulty of finding a sufficient number detained us two days. We tried to make use of this time for putting our toilettes into a little order. Our hair and beards were so ragged, our faces so blackened by the smoke of our tent, so thin and so cracked by the cold, that we really quite pitied ourselves when we looked in the glass. As for our costume, it was in perfect harmony with our personal appearance.

The inhabitants of Pampou appear to live quite at their ease, and to be very gay and free from care. Every evening you see men, women, and children assembled before the farms, dancing and

enjoying themselves; and when the rural dance is over, the master of the farm regales the whole party with a kind of acid drink, made from fermented barley. After two days' search, the required number of asses was found, and we set off. We were now only separated from Lha-Ssa by a mountain; but it was one extremely steep and difficult of assent. The Thibetans and Mongols, however, climb it with great devotion; as they believe that those who have the happiness to arrive at its summit, receive a complete remission of their sins; and, certainly, if the mountain have not the power to remit sins, it has that of imposing a pretty severe penance. We had set off an hour after midnight, and we did not arrive till ten o'clock in the morning; having being compelled, on account of the steep and rocky character of the paths, which makes it nearly impossible for a horse to keep his footing, to walk almost the whole way.

The sun was just about to set, when, issuing from a defile at the foot of the mountain, we saw lying before us the renowned Lha-Ssa, the metropolis of the Buddhist world, encircled by a multitude of grand old trees, which form with their foliage a girdle of verdure around it; its white houses, with their terraces and turrets; its numerous temples, with their gilded roofs; and high above all, the majestic palace of the Talé Lama.

At the entrance of the town, some Mongols with whom we had made acquaintance on the roads had come to meet us, and invite us to alight at a lodging which they had prepared for us. It was the 13th of January 1846; just eighteen months after we had quitted the valley of the Black Waters.

CHAP. XVI.

Lodging in a Thibetan House.—Aspect of Lha-Ssa.—Palace of the Talé Lama.—Portrait of the Thibetans.—Monstrous Dress of the Women.—Industrial and Agricultural productions of Thibet.—Gold and Silver Mines.—Strangers resident in Lha-Ssa.—The Pebouns.—The Katchis.—The Chinese.—Relations between Thibet and China.—Form of Government.—Grand Lama of Djachi, —Loumbo.—Brotherhood of the Khelaus.—Tragic death of three Talé Lamas.—Revolt of the Lamaserai of Sera.

After an eighteen months' struggle with sufferings and contradictions without number, we had at last reached the end of our journey, but not of our miseries; for, after physical suffering from

cold and hunger, we had to undergo those arising from moral causes; but, we trusted that he who had protected us from the intemperance of the seasons in the desert, would also bestow his divine assistance against the malice of men in the capital of Buddhism.

The day following that of our arrival at Lha-Ssa, we took a guide, and traversed the different quarters of the town, in quest of a lodging. The houses of Lha-Ssa are generally large, several stories high, and terminated by a terrace, slightly inclined, to facilitate the running off of the water; they are white-washed all over, with the exception of some borders and the door and window-frames, which are painted red or yellow. The reformed Buddhists are particularly fond of these two colours; they are in some sort sacred in their eyes, and are called Lamanesque colours. The houses of Lha-Ssa are painted every year, and have, consequently, an admirable appearance of freshness; but the inside is far from being in harmony with the out. The rooms are smoky, dirty, and foul-smelling, and generally encumbered with all sorts of utensils, in most disgusting disorder. Thibetan houses are so many whited sepulchres, true images of all false religions, which veil corruption and falsehood by certain number of dogmatic truths, and some principles of morality.

After a long search we found a small lodging in a large house containing already fifty lodgers. Our humble abode was in the upper story, ascended by twenty-six stairs, unfurnished with any kind of balustrade, and so steep and narrow, that to avoid the risk of breaking our necks, every time we mounted them, it was necessary to make use of both hands and feet. Our apartment was composed of one large square room and a small corridor; the former lighted by a narrow window, garnished with three thick wooden bars, and a round skylight. The latter hole served a variety of purposes; it admitted the light, the wind, the rain, and the snow; and also afforded egress to the smoke from our hearth. In order to protect themselves in some measure from the winter's cold, the Thibetans place in the middle of their chambers a basin of baked clay, in which argol may be burnt. As this kind of fuel gives more smoke than heat, the advantage of a hole in the roof is obvious; and this inestimable aperture in our chamber enabled us to make a little fire without being quite stifled. It is true this good had its attendant evil in admitting at times, the rain and

snow upon our backs, but when we have led a nomadic life for some time we cease to be disturbed by trifles.

The furniture consisted of two goat skins, stretched on either side of our fire basin, two saddles, our travelling tent, some pairs of old boots, a couple of battered trunks, three torn robes, suspended from nails, our night wraps rolled up together, and a large stock of argols piled up in a corner. We were thus at once quite on the level of Thibetan civilisation. The corridor, which contained a magnificent stove of brick work, was our kitchen and pantry; here we installed Samdadchiemba, who, resigning his office of camel driver, took on himself the functions of cook, maître d'hotel, and groom. Our two white horses were lodged in a nook in the court-yard, reposing from the fatigues of their hard and glorious campaign; the poor beasts were in so deplorable a state of extenuation that we could not think of offering them for sale, till they had recovered some appearance of flesh between the skin and bone.

As soon as we had organised our household, we began to make acquaintance with Lha-Ssa and its inhabitants. Lha-Ssa is not more than two leagues in circumference, and is not shut within ramparts like the Chinese towns. In the suburbs the number of gardens planted with large trees afford a magnificent girdle of verdure to the town. The principal streets are very wide, straight, and tolerably clean; the suburbs most disgustingly filthy. In the latter there is a quarter where the houses are entirely built of ox and rams' horns; these bizarre edifices have not an unpleasant aspect, and are of great solidity. The ox horns being smooth and white, and those of the sheep, black and rough, form a multitude of singular combinations; the interstices are filled up with mortar; these houses are never whitened, — the Thibetans have the good taste to leave them in their savage and fantastic beauty, without attempting to improve them.

The palace of the Talé Lama well deserves the celebrity it enjoys. Towards the northern part of the town, at a small distance from it, there rises a rocky mountain of no great elevation, and conical in form; bearing the name of Buddha-La, that is, the Divine Mountain, and on this grand site the adorers of the Talé Buddha have reared a palace to their living and incarnate divinity. This palace consists of a cluster of temples, varying in size and beauty; the centre temple has an elevation of four stories; the dome

is entirely covered with plates of gold, and it is surrounded by a peristyle of which the columns are likewise gilded. Here the Talé Lama has fixed his residence, and from the height of his sanctuary can contemplate, on days of high solemnities, his countless worshippers, thronging the plain and prostrating themselves at the base of the Sacred Mountain. The secondary palaces grouped around, accommodate a crowd of Lamas whose continued occupation is to serve and wait on the living Buddha. Two fine avenues, bordered with magnificent trees, lead from Lha-Ssa to this temple, and there may be seen a multitude of pilgrims unrolling between their fingers the long Buddhist rosaries, and the Lamas of the court splendidly dressed, and mounted on horses richly caparisoned. There is continual motion in the vicinity of the Buddha-La, but the multitude is generally silent and serious.

In the town, the aspect of the population is very different; they throng, they shout, and every individual engages with ardour in the pursuits of commerce. Trade and devotion together render Lha-Ssa a kind of general rendezvous for the Eastern Asiatics; the variety of physiognomies, costumes, and idioms in its streets is astonishing. The fixed population is composed of Thibetans, Pebouns, Katchis, and Chinese.

The features of the Thibetans are Mongol, their statue middling, and to the agility and suppleness of the Chinese, they add the strength and vigour of the Tartars. In character they are frank and generous; brave in war, and as religious, although less credulous, than the Tartars. Cleanliness is not held in much honour among them; but they are, nevertheless, very fond of finery.

The Thibetans do not shave the head, the hair is usually left to float over the shoulders; but within the last few years, some of the Lha-Ssa *élégants* have adopted the Chinese mode of braiding the hair, and adorning the braid with jewels of gold set with precious stones and coral beads. The ordinary head-dress is a blue toque, with a wide rim of black velvet, surmounted with a red knot; on fête days they wear a large red hat, something like the Basque cap, but larger and ornamented with long fringes and tufts. A wide robe, fastened at the side by four hooks, and girt round the middle by a red sash, completes the simple but not unbecoming costume of the Thibetan. They generally suspend to the girdle a bag of yellow taffety to hold the indispensable wooden bowl, and two small

purses richly embroidered, which contain nothing at all, and are only carried as a decoration.

The dress of the women closely resembles that of the men; over the robe they wear a short tunic striped in various colours; and the hair is worn in two braids at full length. The women of the lower class wear a small yellow cap, in form like the French cap of liberty; but the great ladies, an elegant coronet of fine pearls.

The Thibetan women adopt a custom, or rather submit to a regulation certainly unique in the world. Before going out of their houses, they rub their faces with a sort of black sticky varnish, a good deal like conserve of grapes. As the object is to render themselves hideous, they daub their faces with this disgusting cosmetic, till they scarcely resemble human creatures. The following was, we are told, the origin of this monstrous practice.

About 200 years ago, the Nomekhan or Lama king of Anterior Thibet, was a man of the austerest character. At that period, the Thibetan women were not more in the habit of trying to make themselves look ugly than the women of other countries; on the contrary, they were extravagantly addicted to dress and luxury. By degrees, the contagion spread even to the holy family of the Lamas; and the Buddhist convents relaxed their discipline, in a manner that threatened a complete dissolution. In order to arrest the progress of this alarming libertinism, the Nomekhan published an edict, forbidding women to appear in public unless disfigured in the fashion above mentioned; the severest punishments and the heaviest displeasure of Buddha were threatened to the refractory. It must have required no ordinary courage to publish such an edict; but that the women obeyed it was still more extraordinary. Tradition makes no mention of the slightest revolt on their part. The fair Thibetans vie with each other in making themselves frightful, and she who is most offensively besmeared passes for the most pious; the custom appears to be considered as a dogma to be accepted. In the country the law is most rigorously observed; but at Lha-Ssa, women are to be met with who venture to appear with their faces as nature made them; but those who permit themselves this license are considered as women of bad reputation, and they never fail to hide themselves when they catch sight of an agent of the police.

One circumstance which favours the belief that there is less corruption in Thibet than in most Pagan countries is, that the women enjoy much more liberty. Instead of vegetating imprisoned in

their houses, they lead an active and industrious life, and besides their household cares, a great deal of the lesser trade is in their hands. They hawk about various kinds of merchandise, and keep nearly all the retail shops, and in the country they take a large share in agricultural labours.

The men, although less active and industrious than the women, are not idle. Their especial occupation is spinning and weaving wool; the stuffs which they fabricate bear the name of *Pou-Lou;* they are narrow, but very solid, and vary in texture from great coarseness to the softness of velvet; their merinos are the finest that can be imagined. According to a rule of reformed Buddhism all the Lamas must be clothed in red Pou-Lou; and, in addition to the home consumption, large quantities are exported to China and Tartary. The coarser kind is sold at a very low price; but the superior qualities are enormously dear. The perfumed sticks so celebrated in China under the name of Tsan-Ihang, perfume of Thibet, form an important article of commerce to the inhabitants of Lha-Ssa. They are composed of the powder of various aromatic plants, mingled with musk and gold-dust, made into a violet-coloured paste, and afterwards rolled into sticks of four or five feet long. They are burnt in the convents, and before idols in the interior of the houses. When once kindled, these sticks consume slowly without ever going out, and they diffuse a most delicious odour. The Thibetan merchants who attend the yearly embassy to Pekin carry with them large quantities, which they sell at exorbitant prices.

The Thibetans have no porcelain, but their potteries are nevertheless of great excellence. The wooden bowls which every one carries, are made of the root of certain trees which grow on the mountains of Thibet. They are of a simple but elegant form, and have no other decoration than a slight coating of varnish, which does not hide either the natural colour or the veins of the wood. Some of these bowls may be purchased for a few pence, and some are valued at a hundred ounces of silver, nearly 1000 francs; but, if we are asked in what consists this vast difference of value, we must frankly confess we were never able to find out; to us they all seemed as nearly as possible alike. The Thibetans say, that the bowls of the first quality have the virtue of neutralising poisons.

Some days after our arrival at Lha-Ssa, we had occasion to purchase a couple of these bowls. A Thibetan woman, with her

face richly daubed, was in the shop; and judging from our exotic appearance that we might be foreigners of distinction, she took out of a drawer two little boxes, each of which contained a bowl, in two or three envelopes of silky paper. We asked the price: fifty ounces of silver each! At these tremendous words our ears began to sing, and every object in the shop appeared to be spinning round. Our whole fortune then would barely suffice to purchase four wooden bowls. When we had a little recovered from the shock we replaced the precious articles with respect, and looked about for their humbler brethren. We purchased a couple for an ounce of silver, which appeared to us absolutely the same as the specimens valued at 500 francs each; and when we showed our bargain to our landlord on our return home, we had the satisfaction of hearing that we had paid just double their worth.

Thibet, almost covered as it is with mountains, and furrowed with impetuous torrents, offers but little cultivable land. It is only in the valleys that there is any hope of harvest. The Thibetans grow but little wheat and still less rice. The principal grain is *Tsing-Kou* or black barley, from which the *tsamba* the principal aliment of the whole population, rich or poor is made.

Lha-Ssa is abundantly provided with sheep, horses, and oxen; there is plenty of excellent fish, and the pork is particularly fine; it is dear, however, and out of the reach of the lower classes. In general the Thibetans are very poorly fed. The usual repast is composed of buttered tea and *tsamba*, coarsely kneaded with the fingers. The rich often fare no better, and it is really pitiable to see them preparing such miserable food in a bowl that has sometimes cost 100 ounces of silver. Meat when they have any, is taken at irregular times, as people elsewhere may eat fruit or some slight articles of pastry, out of mere *gormandise*. Cooked or raw it is eaten with equal appetite, and without any kind of seasoning. They have, however, the good taste not to eat without drinking; and the bowl is filled from time to time with a slightly acid liquor made from fermented barley, which is not disagreeable.

Thibet, so poor in agricultural and manufactured productions, is rich in metals; and gold and silver is so easily obtained that the humblest shepherds are acquainted with the art of purifying the precious metals. They may be sometimes seen at the bottom of the ravines, or in the fissures of the mountains, crouching over a fire of goat's dung, purifying in crucibles the gold dust gathered

while leading their flocks to pasture. The result of this abundance of metals is that specie is of little value, and in consequence all commodities remain at a high price. The currency of the Thibetans consists of silver only: the pieces are a little larger but not so thick as a franc piece. On one side they bear an inscription in Thibetan, Parsee, or other Indian characters; on the reverse a crown of eight small round flowers. For the convenience of commerce, these pieces of silver are broken, and the number of flowers remaining on the fragment determines the value.

The whole piece is called *Tchan-Ka.* The *Tché-Ptché* is one half, and consequently has only four flowers; the *Cho-Kan* has five, and the *Kogan* three.

In great commercial transactions ingots of silver are made use of, weighed in a Roman scale, graduated on the decimal system.

The Thibetans on ordinary occasions count on their chaplets; shopkeepers often make use of the Chinese Souan-pan (reckoning board), but the learned employ the Arabic ciphers which appear very ancient in Thibet. We have seen Lamanesque manuscripts containing tables and astronomical calculations in these ciphers. There is a slight difference with those in use amongst us; the most notable is the 5 which is reversed, thus ϛ.

From the details given on the productions of Thibet, it will be seen that it is at once the poorest and the richest country in the world; rich in gold and silver, poor in all that makes the well-being of the masses. The gold and silver collected by the people is absorbed by the great, and, especially, by the Lama colleges, immense reservoirs, into which flow by a thousand channels all the riches of these vast countries. The Lamas, already in possession of a large portion of the wealth by the voluntary gifts of the faithful, sometimes augment their fortune by usurious proceedings at which even Chinese roguery is scandalised. The results of this accumulation of money in the coffers of the privileged classes, and the high price of the necessaries of life is, that a large part of the population is continually plunged in frightful poverty.

We ought to add, to the credit of the Thibetans, that they are generally compassionate and charitable, and rarely dismiss a supplicant—of whom there are but too many unrelieved.

Among the foreigners who constitute part of the fixed population of Lha-Ssa, the Pebouns are the most numerous. They are Indians from Bontan, small in statue, but vigorous and full of

life and spirit; their colour is deep olive brown, their eyes small, black, and keen; and on their foreheads they wear a deep red mark, which is renewed every morning.

The Pebouns are the only workers in metal in Thibet; and in their quarter must be sought the smiths, braziers, tinmen, plumbers, goldsmiths, as well as the physicians and chymists. Their shops and laboraties are half under ground; and over the doors of their houses they place a painting, representing a red globe, with a white crescent beneath, evidently the sun and moon, but why so placed we forgot to inquire.

The Pebouns fabricate vases of gold and silver, and ornaments of all kind for the use of the Lama convents, which would not disgrace European artists. It is they also who furnish the beautiful gilt plates for the temple, which resist so well the inclemency of the seasons, preserving unimpaired their first freshness and brilliancy. The Pebouns are also the dyers of Lha-Ssa; their colours are durable as well as vivid; the stuffs wear out but never discolour. They are only permitted to dye the *pou-lou*; stuffs from foreign countries must be used as they are brought to the country. These people are extremely jovial and child-like in temper, like children laughing and frolicing in their hours of relaxation, and singing continually over their work. Their religion is Indian Buddhism; but they show great respect nevertheless for the reform of Tsong-Kaba, and never fail on days of grand solemnity to prostrate themselves at the feet of the Buddha-La and offer their adorations to the Talé Lama.

After the Pebouns, the Katchi, or Musselmen of Cashmere, are the most important part of the foreign element in Lha-Ssa. Their turbans, their stately deportment, their physiognomy full of intelligence and majesty, the cleanliness and richness of their clothes, are all in striking contrast with the inferior races among whom they are mingled. They have at Lha-Ssa a governor, on whom they immediately depend, and whose authority is recognised by the Thibetan government; he is at the same time chief of the Musselman religion, and is respected by his compatriots as their Pasha and Mufti. Many centuries ago, these Katchi abandoned their native Cashmere, to escape the exactions of a certain pasha, whose despotism had become intolerable; they still keep up some relations with the country of their fathers, but have apparently little desire to renounce that of their adoption. The governor told us

that the Pelins of Calcutta (the English) were now masters of Cashmere.

"The Pelins," said he, "are the most artful people in the world. By degrees, they obtain possession of every country in India, but rather by deceit than open force. Instead of overturning the native authorities, they insinuate themselves into their favour, and try to make common cause with them. So at Cashmere, this is what they say: 'The world is Allah's, this land is the Pasha's, and the Company govern it.'"

The Katchi are the richest merchants of Lha-Ssa; they are, besides, brokers, and dealers in gold and silver, and are the only persons permitted to pass the frontiers to visit the English possessions. They bring from Calcutta, ribbons, lace, knives, scissors, and other articles of cutlery, and some cotton goods; the silks and cloths found in their warehouses come from Pekin: the cloths are Russian, and are consequently much cheaper than those they could procure at Calcutta. The first Katchi who came to Lha-Ssa, took Thibetan wives, but they now intermarry only among themselves. As they do not prostrate themselves before the Talé Lama, nor pray in the Lama temples, the people of Lha-Ssa call the Katchi impious, but as they are rich and powerful, the same people give way to them in the streets, and put out their tongues as they pass *in token of respect.* A respectful salutation in Thibet consists in uncovering the head, lolling out the tongue, and scratching the right ear at the same time.

The Chinese to be met with at Lha-Ssa, are, for the most part, soldiers, or employed in th courts of justice; and the Chinese military force in Thibet is very inconsiderable. From Sse-Tchouen to Lha-Ssa they have a few stations destined to protect the Emperor's couriers; and in the city of Lha-Ssa, a garrison of a few hundred men, whose presence adds some dignity to the position of the Chinese ambassadors, and contributes to their safety. On the frontiers they guard, conjointly with the troops of Thibet, the mountains which divide Thibet from the English out-posts. There are no Chinese in any other part of Thibet, for their entrance even is strictly prohibited.

The Thibetans fear the Chinese, the Katchi despise them, and the Pebouns laugh at them. Among the numerous classes of strangers who dwell in, or only pass through Lha-Ssa, there were none whom we resembled, or to whom we seemed to belong; and

from the first day of our arrival, we became objects of the most lively curiosity. Sometimes we were taken for two Muftis, just arrived from Cashmere, sometimes for Bramhins; some said we were Lamas from the North of Tartary, others, that we were Pekin merchants in disguise. When it was discovered that we belonged to none of these categories, the name of White Azaras was bestowed upon us. The denomination was picturesque enough, but before accepting it we desired to know something about the people called *Azaras*. We learned, that the Azaras were a great tribe of India, who were among the most fervent adorers of Buddha known, and that they came frequently on pilgrimage to Lha-Ssa. Now, as we were neither Thibetans, Katchi, Pebouns, Tartars, nor Chinese, it followed we must be Azaras. There was only one little difficulty in the way of this conclusion; the Azaras who had preceded us in Lha-Ssa, had black faces, but that was got over by settling that we were a white variety.

All these doubts about our origin were amusing enough at first, but they became subsequently very embarrassing. Some evil disposed persons took upon them to say, that we must be Russians or English; and finished by coming pretty generally to the conclusion that we were English. It was said that we were Pelins of Calcutta: that we had come to examine the strength of Thibet, to draw charts, and ascertain the best means of seizing upon the country. National prejudice apart, it was very annoying to be mistaken for subjects of her Britanic majesty; for such a *quid pro quo* was calculated to render us very unpopular, if not to endanger our lives, as the Thibetans have taken it into their heads, we know not very well why, that the English are an aggressive people, and are to be mistrusted accordingly.

To cut short all idle talk at our expense, we took the resolution of conforming, forthwith, to the regulation which requires all foreigners desirous of dwelling at Lha-Ssa to present themselves to the authorities. We repaired then to the chief of police, and made the declaration that we were from the West, from a great kingdom called France, and that we had come to Thibet to preach the Christian religion, of which we were ministers.

The personage to whom we made this declaration was dry and impassible as a true bureaucrat. He took, phlegmatically, his bamboo pen from behind his ear, and began to write what we had said, without making any remark whatever, only repeating, from

time to time, between his teeth, "France," "Christian religion," like a man who did not know very well what we had been talking about. When he had finished, he dried the bamboo pen on his hair, and replaced it behind his ear, saying, "*Yak pozé* — That is well." "*Témou chu* — Rest in peace," we replied; and, after politely putting out our tongues, withdrew, well satisfied at having set ourselves right with the police. After this occurrence, we walked the streets of Lha-Ssa with a more assured step, and without paying any attention to the remarks we heard continually buzzing round us. The legal position we had just acquired gave us dignity in our own eyes, and raised our courage. What happiness, to find ourselves, at last, on a hospitable soil, and breathing a free air, after having lived so long in China, always under constraint, always without the pale of the law, always pre-occupied with the thought how best to trick the government of his Celestial Majesty!

The indifference with which our declaration was received by the authorities of Thibet, did not in the least surprise us. The Thibetans do not profess the Chinese principle of exclusion with regard to foreign nations. Every one is at liberty to come and go at his pleasure in Lha-Ssa; if he chooses to apply himself to commerce, no one thinks of putting any obstacle in the way. If the Chinese are prohibited from selling in Thibet, the objection, most likely, originated with the government of Pekin, who, to be consistent in its narrow and suspicious policy, interdicts its subjects from penetrating into neighbouring countries. It is probable that the English would be no more unwelcome than others on the frontiers of Thibet, if their invading march in Hindostan had not inspired a legitimate terror in the Talé Lama.*

After the Talé Lama, whom the Thibetans call sometimes also by the name *Kian-Ngan-Remboutchi* (sovereign treasure), the Nomekhan occupies the first rank. The Chinese give this personage the name of *Tsan-Wang* (King of Thibet). He is appointed by the Talé Lama, and must be selected from the class of *Lama-Chaberons*. He holds this rank for life, and can only be deposed by a *coup d'état*. All the affairs of government are transacted by the Nomekhan and four ministers, called *Kalons*. These Kalons are

* Talé Lama, not Dalai Lama. The Mongol word Talé signifies *sea*, and is given to the Grand Lama of Thibet, because that personage is supposed to be a sea of wisdom and power.

named by the Talé Lama, from a list furnished by the Nomekhan; they do not belong to the priestly class, and are at liberty to marry; their term of power is unlimited. If the Nomekhan finds them unworthy of their office, he addresses a memorial to the Talé Lama, who supersedes them if he thinks proper. The subaltern functionaries are appointed by the *Kalons*, generally from the class of Lamas.

The provinces are divided into principalities, which are governed by Lamas (Houtouktou). These little ecclesiastical sovereigns receive investiture from the Talé Lama. In general, their humour is somewhat martial; and war to the knife, accompanied by pillage and incendiarism, is of not unfrequent occurrence between neighbouring principalities.

The most powerful of these minor sovereigns is the *Bandchan Remboutchi:* he resides at Djachi-Loumbo, the capital of Further Thibet, eight days' march from Lha-Ssa. His partisans assert that his spiritual power is as great as that of the Talé Lama; the temporal power of the latter, however, is admitted to be greater.

The present Bandchan-Remboutchi is about sixty years of age; his person is said to be noble and majestic, and astonishingly vigorous for his age. The Lamas, who occupy themselves with genealogical studies, assert that the Bandchan, after numberless incarnations in Hindostan, made his last in Further Thibet. Whatever his origin, this able Lama has contrived to acquire astonishing celebrity and influence. The Thibetans and Tartars call him the great holy one, and never pronounce his name but with clasped hands, and eyes raised to heaven. They assert that his knowledge is universal, and that he speaks all the languages in the world, without having ever studied them. It is impossible to form a conjecture of the enormous sums that flow into the coffers of this holy personage from the offerings of the pilgrims visiting *Djachi-Loumbo.* In return for their ingots of gold and silver, the Bandchan distributes to his adorers rags of his old clothes, morsels of paper on which are printed sentences in Mongol or Thibetan, statuettes of baked earth, and red pills of unfailing efficacy against all manner of diseases.

All persons, without exception of rank or sex, who make the pilgrimage to Djachi-Loumbo, enrol themselves in the brotherhood of the *Kelans*, an institution of the Bandchan Remboutchi, and which may one day become the instrument of some grave event.

The following are some of the prophecies in circulation on this subject: —

That the next incarnation of the Bandchan Remboutchi will take place in the country lying between the Celestial Mountains and the Altai chains. That during the time he remains unrevealed the religion of Buddha will fall to decay, and survive only in the breasts of the *Kelans*. That the Chinese will, for a time, overrun Thibet; and a general rising of the Thibetans will result in the slaughter, in a single day, of every Chinese in the country; that a year after this massacre, the Emperor of China will send a prodigious army into Thibet; a fearful re-action will take place, the rivers will run blood, and the Chinese will again become masters of Thibet, but their triumph will not be of long duration. It is then that the Bandchan will manifest his power: he will appeal to the holy brotherhood of the Kelans; those already dead will be restored to life, and will join their brethren in the vast plain of *Thien-Chan-Pé-Lou*. There the Bandchan will distribute arrows and guns, and transform this multitude into a formidable army, of which he himself will take the command. Thibet will be reconquered, then China, then Tartary, then the vast empire of the Oros. These events are spoken of generally as certain and indubitable, and the Chinese residents in Lha-Ssa seem to put as much faith in the prophecy as the Thibetans, although they have the good sense to evince little disturbance, as it is not likely to be fulfilled in their lifetime. As for the Bandchan, it is said he is preparing with ardour, notwithstanding his advanced age, for the revolution of which he is to be the soul; every instant of the day not absorbed by his high functions as living Buddha, he makes use of to familiarise himself with his future office of generalissimo of the Kelans. He keeps large troops of horses for his future cavalry, and packs of enormous dogs which unite superior intelligence to prodigious strength, and which are destined to play an important part in the grand army of the Kelans.

These wild and extravagant ideas have so penetrated the mass of the people, especially those who are enrolled in the brotherhood of the Kelans, that they may very well some day occasion a revolution in Thibet. It is never in vain that a people thus busy themselves with the future. After the death of the Grand Lama of Djachi-Loumbo, an audacious adventurer has only to betake himself to the country indicated as the scene of the new incarna-

tion, boldly proclaim himself Bandchan Remboutchi, and make an appeal to the Kelans, and in all probability that would be quite sufficient to stir up the fanatic population.

One actual and immediate result of this Kelan brotherhood is to give an importance to the *Bandchan Remboutchi*, which seems almost to threaten the supremacy of the Talé Lama,—a result the easier to attain that the sovereign of Lha-Ssa is a child of nine years old, and that his three predecessors died by violent deaths before they reached their majority, fixed by the law at twenty years.

The unheard-of phenomena of three Talé Lamas successively perishing in the flower of their age, plunged the population of Lha-Ssa into a gloomy consternation. Sinister reports began to circulate, and the words crime and assassination were uttered. It was said that the first Talé Lama had been strangled, the second crushed to death by the ceiling of his bed-chamber, the third poisoned, together with his numerous kindred established at Lha-Ssa. The chief Lama of Kaldan, who was devoted to the Talé Lama, met with the same fate, and the public voice designated the Nomekhan as the author of all these crimes.

The Nomekhan of Yang-Tou-Sse, in whose family that dignity was hereditary, had been invested with an authority second only to that of the Talé Lama, when very young. It is said that he had very soon manifested an immoderate love of domination, and made use of his own wealth and the influence of his relations to surround himself with a body of clients entirely devoted to him. More especially he sought to make partisans among the Lamas, and took under his immediate protection the famous convent of Sera, situated about half a league from Lha-Ssa, and containing more than fifteen thousand Lamas. He granted them immense privileges, and the Lamas, in return, cried him up as a saint of the first order. Supported by so powerful a party, the Nomekhan no longer set any bounds to his ambitious projects, and it was then that he caused the three young Talé Lamas to be murdered; at least, so it was said when we were at Lha-Ssa.

It was no easy task to overthrow a personage whose power was so firmly supported. The Kalons could not engage openly in a struggle with the Nomekhan with any chance of success; they therefore dissimulated, and laboured in secret for the ruin of this detestable ruler. The assembly of Houtouktou elected a new Talé Lama, or rather designated the infant into whose body the

soul of the living Buddha had transmigrated. He was enthroned on the summit of Buddha-La; and the Nomekhan, with all the other dignitaries, went to prostrate themselves at his feet, and adore him devoutly, but no doubt promising himself *in petto* to make him "transmigrate" a fourth time if he found it expedient.

The Kalons took measures secretly in concert with the Bandchan Rembouteki of Djachi-Loumbo; and it was agreed between them that, to put a stop to the infamous machinations of the Nomekhan, they must oppose to him the irresistible power of the Emperor of China. A memorial was therefore drawn up and signed by the Bandchan and the four Kalons, and secretly despatched to Pekin by the embassy of 1844.

This memorial was received with all possible favour at Pekin, and it was there determined to send forthwith to Lha-Ssa an ambassador of energy and prudence, capable of opposing the authority of the Nomekhan. The emperor cast his eyes on the Mandarin Ki-Chan, and to him was committed the conduct of this difficult affair.

It will not perhaps be superfluous here to give some details concerning this Ki-Chan, a very celebrated personage in China, and one who played a very important part in the affair of the English at Canton. Ki-Chan is a Mantchoo-Tartar by birth, and began his career as a clerk in one of the six grand tribunals of Pekin. His rare capacity soon manifested itself, and while still very young he passed rapidly through the different degrees of the magistracy. At the age of twenty-two he was governor of the province of Ho-Nan; at twenty-five he was viceroy; but he was degraded from this dignity for not having foreseen and put a stop to an inundation of the Yellow River, which had caused great devastation in the province entrusted to him. His disgrace, however, did not last long; he was soon reinstated, and sent as viceroy successively into the provinces of *Chan-Tong*, of *Ssc-Tchouen*, and *Pe-Tche-Ly*. He was decorated with the red ball, the peacock-plume, and the yellow tunic, with the title of *Heou-Ié* (prince imperial.) At last he was named *Tchoung-Tang*, the highest dignity to which a Mandarin can ever attain. There are only eight *Tchoung-Tangs* in the empire,—four Mantchoos, and four Chinese,—who together compose the privy council of the emperor, and have the right of corresponding directly with him.

Towards the end of the year 1839 Ki-Chan was sent to Canton

as viceroy of the province and imperial commissioner, with full power to treat with the English, and re-establish the peace which had been disturbed by the unwise and violent measures of Lin, his predecessor. A decisive proof of the superiority of Ki-Chan's capacity was, his recognition of the immense superiority of the Europeans over the Chinese on his arrival at Canton, and his immediate conviction that war between them was impossible. He directly entered into negotiations with Mr. Elliot the English plenipotentiary, and peace was concluded with the cession of the little island of Hong-Kong. To cement the good understanding between the Chinese Emperor and Queen Victoria, Ki-Chan gave a splendid fête to the English authorities, at which M. de Rosamel, commander of the corvette the Danaïde, then just arrived in the roads of Macao, had the honour to be present. Every one was charmed with the graceful manner and amiability of the imperial commissioner. But before many days had passed after the conclusion of the peace, the intrigues of Lin, the former imperial commissioner at Pekin, succeeded so far as to procure the cassation of the treaty by the emperor. Ki-Chan was accused of having allowed himself to be bribed by English gold, and of having sold to the "Sea Devils" the territory of the Celestial empire. The emperor sent him a thundering letter, declaring him worthy of death, and ordering him to repair forthwith to Pekin. The poor commissioner did not lose his head as every one expected; the emperor in his paternal goodness granted him his life, and contented himself with degrading Ki-Chan from all his dignities, taking away his decorations, confiscating his property, razing his house, selling his wives by auction, and exiling him to the extremity of Tartary.

However, the numerous and influential friends whom Ki-Chan had at court did not abandon him in his misfortunes. They laboured with courage and perseverance to restore him to the good graces of the emperor. In 1844 he was re-called from exile, and sent to Lha-Ssa to manage the busines of the Nomekhan. He set off decorated with the blue ball instead of the red, which he had borne before his fall; his peacock's feather was restored, but the privilege of wearing the yellow tunic was still denied him. His friends raised a contribution among themselves, and built him a magnificent house at Pekin. The post of Kin-Tchai in the midst of the mountains of Thibet was still considered as a place of exile; but it was a step towards a complete and glorious rehabilitation.

Immediately on his arrival at Lha-Ssa, Ki-Chan concerted with

the Bandchan and the four Kalons, and caused the Nomekhan to be arrested. All the persons attached to the service of the accused were interrogated; and, in order to induce them to declare the truth, long needles of bamboo were forced under their nails.

"*By this means, truth was separated from error*," as the Chinese say, "and the conduct of the Nomekhan *manifested to the light of day*."

The Nomekhan confessed, without being put to the torture, that he had deprived the Talé Lama of three lives, and caused him to transmigrate by violence. All this took place with closed doors, and in the profoundest secresy. Three months afterwards, the capital of Thibet was plunged in terrible consternation. On the great gates of the Nomekhan's palace, and in the principal streets of the town, an imperial edict, written in the Chinese, Tartar, and Thibetan languages, on yellow paper bordered with winged dragons, was placarded. After some lofty reflections on the duties of sovereigns, great and small,—after exhorting all monarchs, princes, magistrates and peoples, within the four seas, to walk in the paths of justice and virtue, under pain of incurring the wrath of Heaven and the indignation of the Great Khan,—the emperor enumerated the crimes of the Nomekhan, and condemned him to perpetual exile on the shores of the Sakhalien-Oula, at the extremity of Mantchouria. At the end was the customary formula, "Let every one tremble and obey!!!"

The inhabitants of Lha-Ssa, unaccustomed to see such placards on the walls of their town, crowded eagerly round. The news of the condemnation of the Nomekhan spread with rapidity; numerous groups were formed, by whom the matter was discussed with great animation, but in a low voice; but the agitation among the Thibetans was not so much caused by the fall of the Nomekhan as by the intervention of the Chinese, which they looked upon as an insult.

As soon as the affair became known at the convent of Sera, the insurrection was spontaneous and general. Fifteen thousand Lamas, all devoted to the cause of the Nomekhan, armed themselves in haste with lances, guns, and sticks, or any thing they could lay hands on, and marched upon Lha-Ssa. The thick clouds of dust they raised in their disorderly advance announced their approach to the inhabitants.

"The Lamas of Sera! Here come the Lamas of Sera!" re-

sounded at once throughout the town, and carried terror to every bosom. The Lamas fell like an avalanche upon the house of the Chinese ambassador, and the doors flew in splinters, amidst cries of "Death to Ki-Chan! — Death to the Chinese!" But they found no one on whom to wreak their vengeance. The ambassador, warned in time, had concealed himself in the house of one of the Kalons, and his suite had dispersed in various directions. The multitude of Lamas then divided; one body betook itself to the palace of the Nomekhan, the other to the house of the Kalon, and demanded, with loud outcries, the Chinese ambassador. A long and furious struggle ensued in which one of the four ministers was torn to pieces, and the other three received wounds more or less dangerous.

Whilst they were fighting for the possession of Ki-Chan, the most numerous troop of Lamas had dashed in the doors of the Nomekhan's prison, and would have carried him in triumph to their convent at Sera; but he warmly opposed this project, and used all his influence to calm the exultation of the Lamas. He told them that their revolt would aggravate instead of ameliorating his position.

"I am the victim of a conspiracy," said he; "I will go to Pekin; I will enlighten the emperor, and return triumphant. At present we have only to obey the imperial decree. I go as I am commanded, and do you retire in peace to your convent."

These words did not change the resolution of the Lamas; but, as night was approaching, they returned tumultuously to Sera, promising themselves to organise their plans better on the morrow.

When the day broke, the Lamas began to stir throughout their immense convent, and prepared to invade Lha-Ssa anew; but, to their consternation, they perceived in the plain around the convent numerous tents, and a multitude of soldiers, Thibetan and Chinese, armed to the teeth, barring their passage. At this sight their courage forsook them; the conch shells sounded, and these extempore soldiers threw down their arms, re-entered their cells, took their books under their arms, and repaired tranquilly to the choir to recite the morning prayers.

Some days after, the Nomekhan, strongly escorted, took the road to Ssc-Tchouen, and went like a lamb to the place of exile appointed him. They could never comprehend at Lha-Ssa, that one who had not shrunk from the murder of three Talé Lamas should have been unwilling to profit by the insurrection of the

Lamas of Sera. It is certain that at a word from him all the Chinese in Lha-Ssa would have been massacred; but the Nomekhan was not made for the part he played; he had the vile energy of an assassin, but not the audacity of a rebel.

Ki-Chan, intoxicated with his triumph, wished to have exerted his authority over the Thibetans, the accomplices of the Nomekhan. This pretension was not at all agreeable to the Kalons, who declared that to them alone belonged the right of judging men who were in no way dependent on China, and against whom they had not invoked the protection of the emperor. Ki-Chan did not insist on the point; but, that he might not appear to defer to the Thibetan authorities, he replied officially, that he abandoned to them these assassins of low degree, because it was beneath the dignity of the representative of the Great Emperor to mix himself up with their chastisement.

A new Nomekhan was put in the place of the exiled one. The Chaberon of Ran-Tchan, a young man of eighteen, has been chosen for this important charge; but the Talé Lama and the Nomekhan being both minors at the time of our arrival at Lha-Ssa, the regency was confided to the first Kalon, whose chief anxiety it is to raise defences against the encroachment of the Chinese ambassador, and who is equally active in seeking to profit by the weakness of the Thibetan government.

CHAP. XVII.

Visit of five Police Spies.—Interview with the Regent.—Ki-Chan forces us to submit to an Interrogation.—Supper at the Expense of the Government.—A Night's Imprisonment in the House of the Regent.—Confidences of the Governor of Katchi.—Domiciliary Visit.—Our Effects sealed up.—Sinico-Thibetan Tribunal.—Questions respecting our Maps.—Homage rendered to Christianity and the French Name.—The Regent lets one of his Houses to us.—Erection of a Chapel.—Preaching the Gospel.—Conversion of a Chinese Physician.—Conferences on Religion with the Regent.—Recreation with a Microscope.—Conversation with Ki-Chan.—Religious Character of the Thibetans.—Celebrated Formula of the Buddhists.—Buddhist Pantheism.—Election of the Talé Lama.—Small-Pox at Lha-Ssa.—Sepultures in use in Thibet.

As soon as we had presented ourselves to the Thibetan authorities, to declare our object in visiting Lha-Ssa, we profited by the semi-

official position thus obtained to enter upon our work as missionaries. We were seated one day by our humble hearth, conversing on religious subjects with a Lama well versed in Buddhist science, when a handsomely-dressed Chinese unexpectedly presented himself to us. He said he was a merchant, and expressed an eager desire to purchase some of our goods. We answered that we had nothing to sell.

"How nothing to sell?"

"Nothing, unless it be two old saddles, of which we have no longer any need."

"Good, good; that is precisely what I want:" and while examining our poor merchandise, he put a thousand questions to us about our country and the places we had visited before arriving at Lha-Ssa. Soon after, a second Chinese made his appearance, then a third, and finally two Lamas, wrapped in magnificent silk shawls. All these visitors wanted to buy something; they overloaded us with questions, at the same time scrutinising every corner of the room. It was in vain we asserted that we were no merchants,—they persisted. In default of silks, draperies, or hardware, they would put up with our saddles; they turned them over and over, sometimes finding them superb, and sometimes mere rubbish: at last, after long hesitation, they went away, promising to return.

The visit of these five individuals was calculated to give us some uneasiness: there had been nothing natural in their manner of speaking and acting; although they came separately, it was evident there was an understanding between them; their wish to purchase was visibly a pretext, and the probability was that they were either sharpers or police spies.

Our dinner-hour being come meantime, we sat down to table; that is to say, we remained crouched round the fire, and took off the lid of the pot, in which a magnificent slice of beef had been stewing for some hours. Samdadchiemba, our major-domo, fished it out of the broth with a large wooden spatula, then, seizing it in his nails, pitched it on a board, and divided it into three portions: each took his own, and, with the aid of some rolls baked in the ashes, we took our meal quietly, without troubling ourselves about either sharpers or *mouchards*. We were just rinsing out our bowls with buttered tea, when the two Lamas made their appearance.

"The Regent," said they, "desires to see you at his palace."

"Very good; does he too want to buy our old saddles?"

"There is no question of saddles or merchandise. Rise directly, and follow us."

Accordingly we put on our best robes, decked our heads with our majestic fox-skin caps, and announced ourselves ready.

"And that young man?" pointing to Samdadchiemba, who looked at them with any thing but an agreeable expression.

"That is our servant; he will take care of the house during our absence."

"No; he must come too: the Regent wishes to see all three."

Samdadchiemba made his toilette by shaking his sheep-skin robe, and sticking a little black toque, in a saucy fashion, over his ear; and we set off all together, after padlocking our door. In five or six minutes we reached the palace of the first Kalon, Regent of Thibet; and after crossing a large court, in which were assembled a number of Lamas and Chinese, who began to whisper together when we appeared, we were made to halt before a gilded door, the folding leaves of which stood half open; our guide passed through a little corridor to the left, and a minute after the door was thrown open. At the further end of a simply-furnished apartment, we perceived a personage seated cross-legged on a large cushion covered with a tiger-skin. This was the Regent. He signed to us to approach. We advanced and saluted him, by putting our caps under our arms; and a bench, covered with a red carpet, was placed for us, on which we seated ourselves. During this time the gilded door was shut, and there remained in the hall only seven individuals, who placed themselves behind the Regent, — four Lamas, of grave and modest demeanour; two Chinese, whose looks were full of cunning and malice; and a person whose large beard, turban, and grave aspect announced a Mussulman. The Regent was a man about fifty; his large, open countenance, the whiteness of which was remarkable, had a majestic, truly royal expression; and his black eyes, shaded by very long eyelashes, were full of gentleness and intelligence. He was dressed in a yellow robe, lined with marten-fur; a diamond ear-ring was suspended to his left ear; and his long hair, black as ebony, was gathered at the top of his head by three little gold combs. His large red cap, encircled with pearls, and surmounted by a red coral ball, lay on a green cushion by his side.

When we had taken our seats, the Regent looked at us for a long time with close attention, inclining his head first on one side and

then on the other, and smiling in a manner half derisive, half good-natured. This species of pantomime seemed so comical to us, that, at last, we could not help laughing.

"Good," said we to each other, in a low voice, in French; this gentleman looks a good fellow enough; we shall do very well."

"Ah!" said the Regent, in an affable tone; "what language is that? I do not understand you."

"We speak the language of our country."

"Repeat aloud what you said just now."

"We said, this gentleman is a good fellow."

"Do any of you understand this language?" said the Regent, turning to his suite.

All bowed their heads together, and answered that they did not.

You see no one understands your language: translate your words into Thibetan."

"We said that there was much goodness in the countenance of the first Kalon."

"Ah! you think I am good; on the contrary, I am very bad,—am I not very bad?" said he to his courtiers. They smiled, and made no answer.

"You are right," continued the Regent; "I am good; for it is the duty of a Kalon to be so: I ought to be good to my people and to strangers."

He then made a long speech, of which we understood very little. When he had finished, we told him that we were not sufficiently familiar with the Thibetan language to comprehend his entire meaning; and the Regent made a sign to one of the Chinese, who translated his harangue, of which this is the substance: "We had been summoned without the slightest intention of molesting us. The contradictory reports that had been circulated concerning us since our arrival at Lha-Ssa, had determined the Regent to interrogate us himself. Did we come from Calcutta?"

"No; from a country called France."

"You are no doubt Pelings (English)?"

"No; we are French."

"Do you know how to write?"

"Better than to speak."

The Regent said something to a Lama, who disappeared, and came back, a minute after, with paper, ink, and a bamboo pen.

"Here is paper," said the Regent; "write something."

"In what language? — Thibetan?"

"No; in the character of your country."

One of us took the paper on his knee, and wrote, "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?"

"Ah! those are the characters of your country: I never saw any like them: and what is the meaning?"

We wrote the translation in Thibetan, Tartar, and Chinese, and passed the paper to him.

"I have not been deceived; you are men of great knowledge; you can write in all languages, and you express thoughts as profound as those in the book of prayers." Then he repeated slowly, shaking his head, "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?"

Whilst the Regent and his suite were going into ecstasies about our wonderful learning, we heard on a sudden the cries of the multitude, and the sonorous sound of the Chinese tamtam in the court-yard.

"Here is the ambassador from Pekin," said the Regent; "he is coming to examine you himself. Speak to him frankly, and reckon upon my protection; it is I who govern the country." So saying, he left the room by a private door, followed by his suite, and left us alone in the midst of this species of judgment-hall.

The idea of falling into the hands of the Chinese made at first a very disagreeable impression; especially when we recalled to mind the horrible persecutions to which, at various epochs, the Christian missions in China had been subjected; but we soon recovered ourselves in reflecting that alone as we were in the midst of Thibet, we could not compromise any one else.

"Samdadchiemba," said we to our young neophyte, "it is now we must show that we are brave men and Christians. We know not how this affair may end. If we are well-treated, let us thank the good God; if ill, let us thank him still, for we shall suffer for the faith. If they put us to death, martyrdom will be a noble crown to our fatigues. After only eighteen months' course to reach heaven, is to make a profitable journey. What do you say, Samdadchiemba?"

"I? I have never been afraid of death; and, if I am asked if I am a Christian, you shall see if I tremble!"

These excellent dispositions of Samdadchiemba filled our hearts with joy, and completely dissipated the unpleasant impression that

our adventure had made on us. We thought first of arranging our answers to the questions that would probably be addressed to us; but we rejected these suggestions of human prudence, and resolved to hold strictly to the words of our Lord to his disciples :—"When men bring you into the synagogues, and before the magistrates and the powers, be not troubled in what manner ye shall answer," &c. &c. It was only agreed that we should salute the mandarin in the French manner, and should not kneel in his presence. We thought that having the honour to be missionaries, Christians, and Frenchmen, we were entitled to stand upright before any Chinese whatever.

After we had waited a short time, a young Chinese very elegantly dressed, and of very gracious manners, came to announce that we were expected by Ki-Chan, the grand ambassador of the great Emperor of China. We followed this pleasing messenger, and were ushered into a hall adorned in the Chinese fashion, where Ki-Chan was seated on a dais about three feet high, covered with red cloth. Below him stood a small table of black japan, on which was placed an inkstand, some sheets of paper, and a silver vase filled with snuff. Below the dais were four secretaries, two to the right, and two to the left; the rest of the hall was occupied by a considerable number of Chinese and Thibetans, who had assumed their handsomest attire to be present at the scene.

Ki-Chan, although he must be full sixty years of age, appeared to us full of strength and vigour. His countenance is undeniably the most noble, gracious, and spiritual we ever met with among the Chinese. As soon as we had uncovered, and made our salutations in the best manner we could—"Enough, enough," said he; "follow your own customs. I have been told you speak correctly the language of Pekin: I wish to have some talk with you."

"We shall commit many faults in speaking, but your great wisdom will supply the defects of our words."

"Ah! that is pure Pekinese! You French have a great capacity for all the sciences — you are French, are you not?"

"Yes, we are French."

"Oh, I know the French; there were many formerly at Pekin; I have seen some of them."

"You must also have seen some at Canton, when you were imperial commissioner."

This recollection made our judge knit his brows; — he took a large pinch from his vase, and snuffed it up rather savagely. —

"True, I saw many Europeans at Canton. You are of the religion of the Lord of Heaven?"

"Yes, we are preachers of that religion.

"I know, I know; and you came here to preach it, no doubt?"

"We have no other object."

"Have you passed through many countries?"

"We have traversed China, the whole of Tartary, and we are now in the capital of Thibet."

"In whose house did you lodge when you were in China?"

"We do not answer questions of that kind."

"And if I command you?"

"We cannot obey you."

Here the judge struck the table sharply with his fist. — "You know," said we, "that Christians know not fear; why then seek to frighten us?"

"Where did you learn Chinese?"

"In China."

"In what part?"

"A little everywhere."

"And Tartar,—can you speak that?—Where did you learn it?"

"In Mongolia, in the Land of Grass."

After some other insignificant questions, Ki-Chan observed we must be fatigued, and desired us to be seated. Changing tone and manner abruptly, he then addressed Samdadchiemba, who, with his hand on his hip, stood behind us.

"And thou," said he, in a dry, stern voice; "whence art thou?"

"I am from Ki-Tou-Sse."

"Where is that? Who knows where Ki-Tou-Sse is?"

"It is in San-Tchonen."

"Ah! thou art of San-Tchonen in the province of Kan-Sou! Child of the Central Nation, on thy knees!"

Samdadchiemba turned pale, and his arms slipped modestly down by his side.

"On thy knees!" repeated the mandarin, in a loud tone.

Samdadchiemba fell on his knees, saying, "On my knees, standing, or sitting, it is all alike to me; a man of trouble and fatigue like me is not accustomed to take his ease."

"Ah! thou art from Kan-Sou," said the judge, taking a number of pinches of snuff; "thou art a child of the Central Nation. In that case thou wilt have to do with me. Child of the Central

Nation, answer to thy father and mother, and take heed how thou scatterest lies. Where didst thou meet these foreigners? How camest thou attached to their service?"

With a good deal of self-possession, Samdadchiemba gave him the history of his life at length, which appeared to interest his audience; then he related how he had met us in Tartary, and what had been the motives that induced him to follow us. Our young neophyte spoke with dignity, and, above all, with a prudence we had hardly expected from him.

"Why hast thou embraced the religion of the Lord of Heaven? Knowest thou not that the Great Emperor has forbidden it?"

"The *most little one* * has embraced that religion because it is the only true one. How could I believe that the Great Emperor proscribes a religion which commands me to do well, and to avoid doing evil?"

"The religion of the Lord of Heaven is holy; I know it. But why hast thou entered the service of these foreigners? Knowest thou not that it is forbidden by the laws?"

"Can an ignorant man know who is a foreigner, and who is not? These men have done me nothing but good; — they have always exhorted me to the practice of virtue; — why should I not follow them?"

"What salary do they give you?"

"If I follow them it is to save my soul, and not to gain money. My masters never let me want for rice or clothes; — that is enough for me."

"Art thou married?"

"Having been a Lama before embracing the religion of the Lord of Heaven, I have never been married."

The judge then addressed, laughing, an indecorous question to Samdadchiemba, who cast down his eyes, and made no reply. One of us then rose, and said to Ki-Chan, "Our religion not only forbids impure actions, but even to speak or to think of them; it is not even permitted to listen to immodest words."

These words, calmly and gravely pronounced, brought a slight tinge of red to the cheek of his Excellency the ambassador of China.

"I know; I know the religion of the Lord of Heaven is holy. I have read His books of doctrine. He who faithfully observes their teaching would be an irreproachable man." He then made a sign

* Sicia-ti, an expression made use of by the Chinese when they speak of themselves in the presence of their superiors.

to Samdadchiemba to rise, and, turning to us, said, "It is already night — you must be fatigued; it is time to take the evening repast. Go; to-morrow, if I have need of you, I will send to you."

The ambassador was perfectly in the right; and the various emotions we had undergone in the course of the evening by no means stood in the place of supper.

On leaving the Sinico-Thibetan prætorian hall we were accosted by a venerable Lama, who gave us to understand that the first Kalon expected us. We crossed the court, lighted up by some red lanterns; — to the right was a perilous kind of staircase, which we ascended, clinging, as we did so, to the robe of our conductor; then crossing a long terrace, illuminated only by the stars of heaven, we were introduced to the apartment of the Regent. It was lofty, of vast dimensions, and splendidly lit up with butter. The walls, the ceiling, and even the floor, were covered with gilding and dazzling colours. The Regent was alone; he made us sit down by him on a rich carpet, and tried to express by his words, and yet more by his gestures, how much he was interested in us. We comprehended moreover very clearly that he had no intention of starving us. Our pantomime was interrupted by the arrival of a personage who left his slippers at the door; this was the governor of the Cashmerian Mussulmans. After saluting the company by carrying his hand to his head, and pronouncing the formula "*Salamalek*," he took his place, leaning against a column in the midst of the hall. He spoke the Chinese language very well, and the Regent had sent for him to serve as interpreter.

Immediately after his arrival, a servant placed a table before us, and supper was served up. We shall say nothing here of the *cuisine* of the Regent; in the first place, because we were too hungry to pay much attention to the quality of the dishes; and in the second, because our thoughts were more occupied by politics than gastronomy. We perceived, however, that Samdadchiemba was not present, and inquired what had become of him. "He is with my servants," said the Regent; "be under no uneasiness on his account; he shall want for nothing."

During and after the repast, there was much said about France, and the various countries we had traversed; and the Regent made us admire the pictures that decorated his apartment, and asked if we could produce such?

"We do not know how to paint: study and preaching the doctrine of Jehovah are the only subjects that occupy us."

"Oh! do not say you cannot paint; I know the men of your country are very skilful in that art."

"Those who make it their business; but the ministers of religion do not meddle with it."

"Although you do not apply yourselves to that art especially, you are certainly not ignorant of it;—you can make maps, no doubt?"

"No, we have never made any."

"What! in all your travels you have never drawn a single map?"

"Never."

"Oh, that is impossible."

The persistence of the Regent on this point made us thoughtful. We expressed some astonishment at his questions.

"I see," said he, "that you are upright men; I will speak frankly to you. You know that the Chinese are suspicious; since you have lived so long in China you must know that as well as I do; they are persuaded that you are travelling through these kingdoms in order to draw maps, and explore the country. If you have made any geographical charts, you may confess it to me without fear; reckon on my protection."

The Regent was evidently afraid of an invasion; he thought perhaps that we were preparing the way for a formidable army, ready to make a swoop upon Thibet; but we tried to dissipate his fears and to assure him of the pacific disposition of the French government. We acknowledged, however, that among our effects there were certainly a good many maps, and moreover one of Thibet. At these words, the Regent's countenance suddenly darkened: we hastened to add, that all our maps were printed, and that we were certainly not the authors of them. We took occasion to speak of the geographical knowledge of Europeans; and they were much astonished to hear that amongst us, children of ten and twelve had an exact and complete idea of all the kingdoms of the earth.

The conversation was carried on far into the night. At last the Regent rose, and asked us whether we did not need repose; and we answered that we only waited his permission to return to our dwelling.

"I have given orders to prepare a chamber for you in my palace," said he; "you will return home to-morrow."

We would have excused ourselves, thanking the Regent for his kindness, but quickly perceived that we were not at liberty to decline what we had been simple enough to take for politeness on his part,—in fact, that we were prisoners. We saluted the Regent somewhat coldly, and followed a servant to what we might well call our prison, since we were not permitted to go any where else.

Two couches had been prepared for us, incomparably superior to our own; nevertheless we regretted the poor pallets on which we had so long enjoyed a free and independent slumber. Lamas and servants soon came in crowds to look at us. Those who had gone to bed got up again, and in a short time doors were heard to open and shut, and the hasty footsteps of a curious multitude resounded through the vast palace, lately so calm and silent. Our visitors pressed round, and examined us with insupportable avidity. There was neither sympathy nor ill-will in the host of eyes that were turned on us, but simply a stupid wonder. It is evident that we were nothing more, for them, than a zoological curiosity.

When we judged that our troublesome friends had stared and whispered a reasonable time, we gave them to understand that we were going to bed, and would be much obliged to them to retire. Everybody made an inclination of the head, and some put out their tongues, but no one stirred. It was evident they wanted to see us prepare for bed. This desire seemed somewhat out of place; nevertheless, we were desirous of tolerating their curiosity to a certain extent. We therefore knelt down, made the sign of the cross, and began to recite aloud the prayer for the evening. The whispering ceased immediately, and the company maintained a religious silence. When the prayer was over we again invited our visitors to depart; and, by way of giving efficacy to our words, blew out the lights. The public, plunged all of a sudden into profound darkness, took it in good part, laughed, and stumbled out; and we immediately shut the door and lay down.

The strangeness of our position — alone in the states of the Talé Lama, in the capital of Thibet, in the very palace of the Regent — prevented us from enjoying a very profound sleep. As soon as the first rays of light appeared, the door of our cell was softly opened, and the governor of the Katchi appeared. He sat down between our two couches, asked us in a kindly tone how we had passed the

night, and offered us a little basket of cakes made in his family, and dried fruits from Ladak. This attention touched us profoundly—it was as if we had met with a sincere and devoted friend. The governor of the Katchi was about thirty-two years of age; his countenance was noble and majestic, and wore an expression of goodness and candour calculated to inspire confidence. He had come to inform us of the course of proceeding that would be taken with us on the coming day.

"In the morning your house will be visited, your effects sealed up and brought to the tribunal, where they will be examined in the presence of the Regent, the Chinese ambassador, and yourselves. If you have no autograph maps in your possession, you will not be molested; if you have, you had better tell me at once, and we will try to arrange the affair. I am very intimate with the Regent" (a fact we had remarked the evening before, during the supper), "and it was he himself who sent me to tell you this." He added, lowering his voice, that all this disturbance was caused by the Chinese, against the will of the Thibetan government.

We assured the governor that we had no autograph maps, and gave him an exact account of the contents of our trunks. The countenance of the Mussulman cleared up.

"Among the things you have mentioned there is nothing to compromise you. Maps are looked on with great suspicion in this country, especially since the affair of an Englishman named Moorcroft, who introduced himself at Lha-Ssa, where he passed for a Cashmerian. After living there twelve years, he went away; but he was assassinated on the route to Ladak. Among his effects were found a numerous collection of maps and drawings, that he had made during his abode at Lha-Ssa. If you do not make maps, it is well. I will report what you have said to the Regent."

We had remained in bed during the governor's long visit; but, as soon as he was gone, we rose and attacked the breakfast sent us by the Regent. It consisted of rolls stuffed with brown sugar and hashed meat, and a pot of tea richly buttered. We preferred the cakes and dried fruits brought us by the governor.

Three Lama officers of the court now came to signify that they were about to examine our effects; and we accordingly took our way homewards, attended by a numerous escort. On the road between the Regent's palace and our domicile, we remarked a considerable agitation. People were sweeping the streets, carrying

away the heaps of filth, and decorating the fronts of the houses with long streamers of *pou-lou*, yellow and red. We were considering for whom all these demonstrations of honour and respect were intended, when we heard loud acclamations behind us. We turned, and recognised the Regent, mounted on a magnificent white horse, and surrounded by a numerous suite. We reached our lodging almost at the same moment; and, removing the padlock from the door, we requested that he would do the French missionaries the honour to enter their abode.

The Regent sat down in the middle of the room, upon a gilded seat that had been brought from the palace, and asked whether he saw all our possessions. "All; neither more nor less. Here are all our resources for seizing upon Thibet."

"There is some malice in your words," said the Regent; "I never took you for such formidable people. What is that?" — pointing to a crucifix suspended against the wall.

"Ah! if you knew that object well, you would not say we were little formidable. It is with that that we purpose to render ourselves masters of China, Thibet, and Tartary." The Regent laughed. He saw nothing but a pleasantry in these words, so true and so serious.

A scribe sitting at the feet of the Regent took an inventory of our trunks, our rags, and our kitchen utensils. A lighted lamp was brought, and the Regent, taking a seal from a small bag suspended from his neck, affixed it to all our baggage. Nothing was spared — not even our tent-pins or old boots; all were smeared with red wax, and solemnly marked with the seal of Thibet.

When this ceremony was over, the Regent warned us that we must appear before the tribunal. Porters were sent for,—that is, a Lama of the police went into the street and summoned, in the name of the law, the passers by—men, women, and children—to enter the house and take part in a governmental labour. At Lha-Ssa the system of *corvée* is flourishing in full perfection; but the Thibetans submit to it readily and with the best grace in the world.

Our apartment being completely emptied, the procession set forth. First came a Thibetan on horseback, sabre in hand, and with a matchlock by his side; then the porters between two files of Lama satellites; the Regent on his white horse, and surrounded by his guard of honour, followed our baggage; and lastly, marched

the two poor French missionaries, to whom a multitude of curious spectators formed an escort more numerous than agreeable.

When we arrived at the tribunal, the Chinese ambassador, surrounded by his staff, was already at his post. The Regent said to him, "You wish to examine the effects of these foreigners; here they are. These men are neither so rich nor so powerful as you assert." There was evident vexation in the Regent's tone; and at bottom he might well be annoyed at being thus compelled to play the part of gendarme.

"Have you only those two trunks?" asked Ki-Chan: "what is there in them?"

"Here are the keys; open them, and examine for yourself."

Ki-Chan coloured, and drew back: his Chinese delicacy seemed offended. "Are the trunks mine? Have I any right to open them? If afterwards you should miss anything, what would you say?"

"Fear nothing; our religion forbids us to judge rashly of our neighbour."

"Open your trunks yourself; I wish to know what is in them; it is my duty. But you alone have the right of touching what belongs to you."

We took off the seal of the Talé Lama, and the two trunks that everybody had been long devouring with their eyes, were at last laid open. We took out the contents, one after another, and displayed them on a large table. First appeared some volumes in French and Latin; then some Tartar and Chinese books, church linen, and ornaments, sacred vases, rosaries, crosses, medals, and a magnificent collection of lithographs. Everybody was lost in admiration at the sight of this little European museum. They stared, jogged each other with the elbow, and clucked with their tongues in sign of approbation. No one had ever seen any thing so wonderful or so beautiful. Every shining white object was silver, every thing that shone yellow was gold. Every countenance expanded, and it seemed to be quite forgotten what dangerous people we were. The Thibetans put out their tongues and scratched their ears; the Chinese made us the most sentimental reverences. The bag of medals made all eyes turn in their sockets. They hoped, probably, that we should make a public distribution of these brilliant pieces of gold on leaving the hall of judgment.

The Regent and Ki-Chan, whose minds were more elevated than

those of the vulgar, and who certainly did not covet our treasure, did not the less forget their part of judges. The sight of our beautiful coloured plates quite transported them. The Regent, with his hands clasped, and his mouth half open, kept his eyes fixed on them; whilst Ki-Chan, playing the connoisseur, made a speech to demonstrate to the audience that the French were the most distinguished artists in the world.

"Formerly," said he, "I knew at Pekin a French missionary who drew portraits, the resemblance of which frightened one. He kept the paper hidden in the sleeve of his robe, caught the features by stealth, and in the smoking of a pipe it was done."

Ki-Chan then asked if we had no watches, telescopes, magic lanterns, &c. We opened a little box that no one had yet remarked, and which contained a microscope. We adjusted the various parts, and all eyes were fixed on this singular machine of *pure gold*, and which, without doubt, could show them some astonishing things. Ki-Chan was the only person present who knew what a microscope was. He gave an explanation of it to the public with an air of vast pretension and vanity, and then requested us to place some animalcule on the object glass. We looked slyly at his Excellency, and then quietly unscrewing the several pieces, replaced them in the box. "We understood," said we, "that we were brought hither to submit to a sentence, and not to play off a comedy."

"What sentence is there to be pronounced?" asked he, drawing himself up with vivacity. "We examined your effects, that we might know what you really were, that is all."

"And the maps,—you do not speak of them."

"Yes, yes, the maps; that is the important point: where are they?"

"Here they are; and we opened our three maps,—a map of the world, another on Mercator's projection, and one of the Chinese empire. The apparition of these maps seemed like a thunderbolt for the Regent. The poor man changed colour three or four times in a minute, as if we had produced our death warrant.

"We are fortunate to have met you in this country," said we, addressing Ki-Chan. "If you had not been here, we should have found it impossible to convince the Thibetan authorities that we have not ourselves drawn these maps. But for a man of education

like you, and one so well acquainted with European manners, it is easy to see that they are not our work."

Ki-Chan was extremely gratified by this compliment. "It is evident, at the first glance," said he, "that they are not; they were printed in the kingdom of France. You do not see that; but I have been accustomed to see objects from the West?"

These words produced a magic effect on the Regent; his features relaxed; he looked at us with eyes brilliant with pleasure, and made a gracious inclination of the head, as much as to say "It is well you are honest men."

It was impossible now to avoid giving a lecture on geography; and to gratify the Regent and Ki-Chan, we pointed out on Mercator's map, China, Tartary, and all the other countries on the globe. The Regent seemed stupified when he saw the distance between our country and Lha-Ssa. He looked at us with surprise; then, raising the thumb of the right hand, said, "You are men like that," which, in the figurative language of the Thibetans, signifies, "You are superlative men." After identifying the principal places in Thibet, the Regent asked us where was Calcutta. We pointed it out.

"And where is Lha-Ssa?"

"Here."

The eyes and fingers of the Regent travelled from Lha-Ssa to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to Lha-Ssa. "The Pelins of Calcutta are very near our frontiers," said he with a grimace, and shaking his head. "But it does not matter," added he, a few minutes after,—"the Himalaya mountains are between."

The geography lesson being over, the maps were restored to their cases, and we passed to the subject of religion. Ki-Chan was at home here. When Viceroy of Pe-Tche-Ly, he had persecuted the Christians sufficiently to be perfectly familiar with all that relates to the Catholic worship, and he did not fail to parade his knowledge. He explained the use of the images, the sacred vases, the ornaments, and assured the audience that the box of holy oil contained an excellent medicine for dying persons. During these explanations, the Regent was absent and thoughtful; his eyes were constantly turned towards a pair of pincers, terminated by two large lips, which seemed to affect his imagination strongly; his eyes interrogated ours, and seemed to ask if that was not some strange instrument of torture. He was not satisfied till we showed him some consecrated wafers we had in

a box; then only he comprehended the proper use of this strange machine.

The good-natured Regent looked quite radiant and triumphant when, after all, there appeared nothing among our effects to compromise us. "You see," said he to the ambassador, "these men are ministers of the Lord of Heaven, and honest men; what would you have of them? Let them go in peace!"

These flattering words were received in the hall with a murmur of approbation; and we responded, from the bottom of our hearts, "Deo gratias!"

Our baggage was again shouldered by the people pressed into the service, and we returned to our home with much greater briskness than when we had quitted it. The news of our acquittal quickly spread through the town; the people flocked from all sides to salute us, and the French name was in every mouth. From that moment the White Azaras were completely forgotten.

When we had rewarded and dismissed our porters, we had time to reflect on two very important circumstances; one that we had not dined, and the other that our two steeds were no longer in their stalls. While we were considering how to remedy this double inconvenience, our good friend, the governor of the Katchi, came once more to our assistance. The worthy man had foreseen that our visit to the court would not have permitted us to boil our pot, and now came, followed by two servants, carrying a basket filled with provisions.

"And our horses — can you give us any news of them; they are not in the court."

"I was going to speak of them; they have been since yesterday in the Regent's stables. They have not suffered either hunger or thirst during your absence. I have heard you wish to sell them; is it true?

"Quite true, the animals ruin us: but they are so thin; who will buy them?"

"The Regent wishes to buy them."

"The Regent?"

"Yes; you need not laugh, it is not a jest. How much do you want for them?"

"Oh! whatever you please."

"Very well; your horses are bought."

At these words the governor unfolded a small parcel that he

carried under his arm, and placed on the floor two ingots of silver, weighing ten ounces each: "There is the price of your two horses."

We thought our poor, lean, broken-down animals were not worth as much, and said so; but it was impossible to change his determination; everything had been agreed on and concluded beforehand. The Regent pretended that our horses, although meagre, were of an excellent breed, since they had not sunk under the fatigue of so long a journey. Besides, they had an especial value in his eyes, because they had traversed so many different countries, and because they had grazed in the pasturages of Kounboum, the country of Tsong Kaba.

Twenty ounces of silver in our scanty purse was no small addition; we had wherewithal to be generous, and we laid one of the ingots on the knees of Samdadchiemba: "That is for you; you may new clothe yourself from head to foot."

He thanked us coldly and awkwardly; but the muscles of his face relaxed, his nostrils dilated, his large mouth smiled involuntarily. At last he could contain his joy no longer; and he got up, and flung his ingot two or three times up into the air, crying, "Oh, this is a famous day!"

And Samdadchiemba was right; the day that had begun so gloomily, had turned out fortunate beyond our hopes. We had now an honourable position at Lha-Ssa, and we were about to be permitted to propagate the Gospel.

The next morning we went to the Regent to express our gratitude for all the marks of interest he had shown us. He received us kindly and cordially; and told us, in confidence, that the Chinese were jealous of our abode in Lha-Ssa, but that we might reckon upon his protection, and should not be molested.

"You are very ill-lodged," said he; "your room seemed to me small, dirty, and inconvenient: strangers like you, who have come from such a distance, should be well treated in Lha-Ssa. In your country of France do they treat strangers well?"

"Admirably well! Oh, if you could come among us, you would see how our emperor would receive you!"

"Strangers are guests; you must leave the dwelling you have chosen. I have given orders to prepare a suitable one, in a house belonging to me."

We accepted, with gratitude, so kind an offer. To be lodged

gratis was not a thing to be disdained in our present position; and so distinguished a mark of favour from the Regent could not fail to give us great influence with the inhabitants of Lha-Ssa, and facilitate our apostolic labours.

On leaving the palace, we went immediately to look at the house assigned to us; it was superb, — enchanting! We commenced operations that very evening, and installed ourselves forthwith in our new abode.

Our first care was to erect a chapel in our house. We chose the largest and handsomest room, and decorated it to the best of our ability. What a consolation for us to display the sign of our redemption in the very capital of Buddhism, and to proclaim the word of life to a population that had dwelt for so many ages within the shadow of death! This little chapel was very poor, but for us it was the hundred-fold reward that God has promised to those who renounce all for his service.

All the world of Lha-Ssa came to visit the chapel of the French Lamas: many contented themselves with asking some explanation of the images they saw, and put off to another opportunity their instruction in the divine truths of the Gospel; but others appeared to attach more importance to what they heard, visited us assiduously, read with attention the abstract of the Christian doctrine we had composed in the Lama convent of Kounboum, and begged us to teach them some *true prayers.*

The secretaries of the Chinese ambassador, Ki-Chan, visited us frequently to discuss the "great doctrine of the West." One of them, to whom we lent several works on the subject written in Mantchoo-Tartar, owned that he was convinced of the truth of Christianity, though he had not the courage to embrace it so long as he was attached to the embassy; he would wait till he was at liberty to return to his own country. God grant that this disposition of mind may have lasted!

A physician, a native of the province of Yun-Nan, showed more generosity. This young man, since his arrival at Lha-Ssa, had led a life so strange, that every one called him the Chinese hermit. He never went out but to see his patients, and rarely visited any but the poor. The rich he constantly refused to attend, unless when compelled by his necessities, for he never accepted a fee from the poor. The time not occupied in tending the sick he consecrated to study, passing the greater part of the night at his

books. He never ate meat, took but one repast in the day, and that of oatmeal. That the life he led was one of hardship and privation no one could doubt who saw him; his face was pale and thin in the extreme, and, although not more than thirty years old at the utmost, his hair was almost entirely white.

One day he came to see us while we were reciting the Breviary in our chapel; he stopped for some time at the door, listening gravely and in silence. A large coloured image, representing the crucifixion, had excited his attention; and as soon as we had finished our prayer, he asked abruptly, and without observing any of the usual forms of polite salutation, for some explanation concerning it. When we had complied with his demand, he crossed his arms on his breast, and, without saying a single word, remained motionless, with his eyes fixed on the crucifix. He kept this position nearly half-an-hour; at last the tears came into his eyes, he stretched out his arms towards the Christ, fell on his knees, and, touching the ground with his forehead three times, exclaimed, "That is the only *Buddha* whom men should adore!" Then, turning to us, he made a profound bow, saying, "You are my masters; take me for your disciple."

This man's behaviour made a deep impression on us; we could not help believing that a powerful movement of grace was operating on his heart. We made a brief exposition of the principal points of Christian doctrine: and to all we said, he simply replied, with a faith truly astonishing, "I believe." We offered him a little crucifix of gilt copper, which he received with profound reverence, and immediately suspended from his neck; and he then asked to be instructed in some prayer proper to be recited before the cross. We said that we would lend him some books in the Chinese language, in which he would find explanations of the doctrine, and numerous formularies of prayers.

"That is well, my masters; but I wish to know some short, easy prayer that I can repeat often and everywhere." We taught him to say, "Jesus, Saviour of the world, have pity on me!" Lest he should forget these words, he wrote them immediately on a slip of paper, which he put into the purse that hung from his girdle, and went away, assuring us that this day would never be effaced from his memory.

This young physician was not only zealous in receiving the truths of the Christian religion, but he made no attempt whatever

to conceal his faith. He wore his crucifix in the streets, and, when he met us, invariably saluted us with the formula, "Jesus, Saviour of the world, have pity on me!"

Whilst we were scattering the seed of the Gospel among the population of Lha-Ssa, we did not neglect to carry it into the palace of the Regent, with whom we had become, we might almost say, intimate. Nearly every evening, when his business for the day was over, he used to invite us to partake of his repast, to which were always added some Chinese dishes for our especial benefit, and our conversation was frequently prolonged till the night was far advanced.

The Regent was a man of remarkable capacity. Born in a humble station, he had risen by his own merit to his present elevated position. His life had always been an active and laborious one; and he had traversed the whole of Thibet, either as holding the chief command in war, or in negotiating peace with neighbouring states, or overlooking the conduct of the *Houtouktous* placed at the head of the different governments. A life so busy had, however, not prevented him from acquiring a profound knowledge of the Lamanesque books; and it was generally admitted that in this respect he surpassed the Lamas most celebrated for their learning. The Regent was fond of conversing on religious subjects, and at the beginning of our intercourse he made use of these remarkable words:—

"Then all your long journeys have been undertaken solely for a religious purpose? You are right, for religion is the most important business of man: I see that the French and the Thibetans think alike on this subject. We are not like the Chinese, who care nothing about the affairs of the soul. But your religion is not the same as ours: it is important to know which is the true one. We will examine both with attention and sincerity; if yours is the best, we will adopt it,—how can we refuse? If, on the contrary, ours appears so, I think you will be reasonable enough to adopt it."

These dispositions appeared to us as good as we could desire for the moment. We began our studies by an investigation of Christianity; we reviewed, in succession, all its truths, dogmatical and moral; and, to our great astonishment, the Regent did not appear surprised at any thing.

"Your religion is like our own," he observed repeatedly: "the truths are the same; we only differ in the explanation. Among

all that you have seen and heard in Thibet and Tartary, no doubt there has been much to find fault with; but you must not forget that these errors and superstitions have been introduced by ignorant Lamas, and are rejected by well-informed Buddhists."

He would only admit the existence of two points of difference, — on the origin of the world, and the transmigration of souls. The belief of the Regent, however, although in appearance approaching Catholic truth, resolved itself finally into a vast Pantheism: but he asserted that we must arrive at last at the same conclusions, and laboured hard to convince us of that inevitable result.

The Thibetan language, essentially religious and mystical, expresses all ideas relative to the soul and the Divinity with much clearness and precision. Unfortunately we were not sufficiently familiar with this language, and were therefore obliged, in our discussions with the Regent, to have recourse to the Cashmerian governor to interpret for us; and as he was not very skilful in rendering metaphysical ideas into Chinese, we had often much difficulty to understand one another.

One day the Regent said to us, "Truth is clear in itself; but if it be wrapped up in obscure words, it is not understood. We shall not argue to any purpose till you can speak the Thibetan language well."

No one was more persuaded of the justice of this observation than ourselves; and we replied, that that knowledge was a main object with us, and that we studied Thibetan every day.

"If you like," said he, "I will render that study more easy to you."

At the same time he called a servant, and said something we did not understand; and, immediately after, a young man elegantly dressed entered the room, and saluted us with much grace.

"This is my nephew," said the Regent; "I give him to you both as pupil and master; he shall pass the whole day with you, to give you ample opportunity of exercising yourselves in speaking Thibetan; in return, you will give him some lessons in Mantchoo and Chinese."

We accepted this proposal with gratitude, and made by this means a rapid progress.

The Regent was fond of talking about France; and put a multitude of questions respecting our manners, our habits, and the productions of our country. He was transported with all we told him

of our steam-boats, railroads, aeronauts, gas-lighting, telegraphs, daguerreotypes, and industrial productions; and conceived the highest idea of the greatness and power of France.

One day, when we had been speaking of astronomical instruments, the Regent asked if he might examine the strange machine that we kept in a box; he meant the microscope. As we were then in a much more amiable humour than on the day when our effects had been examined, we hastened to satisfy his curiosity. While adjusting the marvellous instrument, we endeavoured to give our audience some notion of the science of optics; but perceiving that our theory excited very little enthusiasm, we came at once to experiment. The company were requested to furnish a certain insect, much more easily found here than a butterfly. A noble Lama, secretary to his excellency the Regent, had only to pass his hand under his silken robe to capture the animal alluded to, and instantly presented us with an exceedingly robust specimen. It was immediately seized in the flank; but the Lama promptly objected, under the pretext that our experiment would cause the death of a living creature.

"Be not alarmed," was the reply; "the animal is only held by the epidermis; besides, it appears vigorous enough to come off victorious in the conflict."

The Regent ordered the Lama to be silent, and allow us to go on with the experiment.

"Tsong-Kaba!" cried the Regent, when invited to apply his eye to the glass; "the creature is as big as a rat!"

After looking at it a few moments, he hid his face with his hands, saying it was too horrible to look at. He tried to dissuade the bystanders from inspecting the object; but herein his influence failed signally. Every one present approached the microscope in his turn, and every one started from it with cries of horror. The Lama secretary, perceiving that his interesting protegé did not move, made a protestation in its favour. We removed the pincers, and let it fall into the hand of its proprietor. Alas! the poor victim was motionless. The Regent said to his secretary, laughing, "I think your animal is indisposed; you had better give it some medicine, or it will not recover."

As the spectators objected to further experiments on living creatures, we now exhibited our little collection of microscopic objects. Our audience were delighted, and nothing was talked of but the

prodigious capacity of the French. The Regent observed, "Your railroads and aerial ships no longer surprise me so much; men who could invent a machine like that, are capable of any thing."

The Regent was so prepossessed in favour of our country, that he expressed a wish to study the French language. One evening we brought him a French alphabet, of which every letter had the pronunciation written beneath in the Thibetan character. He cast his eyes over it; and as we were about to give some explanation, he said that it was unnecessary, as what we had written was very clear.

The next day, when we paid our visit, he asked the name of our emperor.

"Our emperor is called Louis Philippe."

"Louis Philippe? Good!"

He then took his style, and began to write. A moment after he presented us a piece of paper, on which was written, in very well-formed characters, Louy Filipe.

During the short period of our prosperity at Lha-Ssa, we were on pretty familiar terms with the Chinese ambassador Ki-Chan. He sent for us two or three times to talk politics; or, according to the Chinese expression, to *talk idle words;* and we were surprised to find him so well-informed about the affairs of Europe. He spoke much of the English, and of Queen Victoria.

"She must be a woman of great capacity," said he; but her husband plays a very ridiculous part; he is not allowed to interfere in any thing. She has had a magnificent garden planted with fruit-trees and flowers of all sorts, and there he is shut up, and passes his life in walking about. It is said that there are other countries in Europe where women govern — is that true? Are their husbands also shut up in gardens? Is that the custom in France also?"

"No; in France the women are in the gardens, and the men transact the business."

"That is all right; otherwise, nothing but disorder can result."

Ki-Chan next asked news of Lord Palmerston, and if he was still at the head of Foreign Affairs.

"And Ilu?* What is become of him — do you know?"

"He has been recalled; your fall occasioned his also."

* The Chinese name of Mr. Elliot, English plenipotentiary at Canton at the beginning of the Anglo-Chinese war.

"Ilu had an excellent heart, but he could not take a resolution. Was he banished, or put to death?"

"Neither; in Europe these matters are not managed so summarily as at Pekin."

"That is true. Your mandarins are more fortunate than ours; your government is better than ours. Our emperor cannot know every thing; yet he is the judge of every thing, and no one dares find fault with any of his actions. Our emperor says, 'That is white;' and we prostrate ourselves, and say, 'Yes, it is white.' He shows us afterwards the same object, and says, 'That is black;' and we prostrate ourselves again, and answer, 'Yes it is black.'"

"But supposing you were to say that an object cannot be black and white at the same time?"

"The emperor would perhaps say to one who had that courage, 'You are right;' but, at the same time, he would have him strangled or beheaded. Oh, we have not, like you, an *assembly of all the chiefs* (Tchoung-Teou-Y)—it was thus that Ki-Chan designated our Chamber of Deputies. If your emperor would act in a manner contrary to justice, your Tchoung-Teou-Y are there to stop him."

Ki-Chan then related to us the strange manner in which the great affair of the English in 1839 was transacted. The emperor had convoked the eight Tchoung-Tang who compose his privy-council, and spoken of the events that had taken place in the south. He said that the adventurers of the western seas had shown themselves rebellious and insolent; that they must be severely chastised as an example to others who might be tempted to imitate them. After having thus manifested his opinion, the emperor asked the opinion of his council. The four Mantchoo-Tchoung-Tang prostrated themselves, and said, "*Tché, tché, tché, Tchon-Dze-Ti, Fan Fou*"—Yes, yes, yes; that is the command of the master." The four Chinese Tchoung-Tang prostrated themselves in their turn, and said likewise, "Ché, ché, ché, Hoang-Chang-Ti, Tien Ngen — Yes, yes, yes; it is the celestial beneficence of the emperor." After that, nothing more was to be said, and the council was dismissed.

This anecdote is perfectly authentic, for Ki-Chan is one of the eight Tchoung-Tang of the empire. He added, that he himself was convinced that the Chinese were incapable of contending with the Europeans, unless they made a great change in their arms, and

shook off their old habits; but that he would take care to say nothing of the sort to the emperor, as it would certainly be useless, and would probably cost him his life.

Our relations with the Chinese ambassador, the Regent, and the Cashmerian governor, contributed not a little to procure us the confidence and respect of the people of Lha-Ssa. In seeing the number of those who sought from us instruction in our holy religion daily increase, we felt our courage rise ; but it was to us a never-failing subject of grief,t hat we could not offer the Thibetans the glorious spectacle of the gorgeous and touching festivals of the Catholic church. It seemed to us that the beauty of the Catholic ceremonies must act powerfully on a people so fond of all that relates to external worship. The Thibetans, as we have before said, are eminently religious. There exists at Lha Ssa a touching custom, which we were in some sort jealous of finding among infidels. In the evening, as soon as the light declines, the Thibetan men, women, and children cease from all business, and assemble in the principal parts of the city, and in the public squares. As soon as the groups are formed, every one sits down on the ground, and begins slowly to chant his prayers in an under tone, and the religious concert produces an immense and solemn harmony throughout the city, powerfully affecting to the soul! The first time we heard it we could not help making a sorrowful comparison between this Pagan town, where all prayed in common, with the cities of Europe where people would blush to make the sign of the cross in public.

The prayer chanted in these evening meetings varies according to the season of the year: that which they recite to the rosary is always the same, and is only composed of six syllables — *Om mani, padmé houm.* This formula, called briefly the *mani*, is not only heard from every mouth, but is every where written in the streets, in the interior of the houses, on every flag and streamer floating over the buildings, printed in the Landza, Tartar, and Thibetan characters. Certain rich and zealous Buddhists even entertain, at their own expense, companies of Lamas for the propagation of the *mani* ; and these strange missionaries, chisel and hammer in hand, traverse field, mountain, and desert, to engrave the sacred formula on the stones and rocks they encounter in their path.

According to the celebrated Orientialist Klaproth, *Om mani, padmé houm*, is nothing but a Thibetan transcription of a Sanscrit formula introduced into Thibet from India, and which has, in that language, a complete and indubitable sense not to be found in the

idiom of Thibet. *Om* is with the Hindus the mystic name of the divinity, with which all prayers commence. This mystic particle is also equivalent to the interjection Oh, and expresses a profound religious conviction; it is, in some sort, the formula of an act of faith. *Mani* signifies jewel, precious thing; *padma*, the lotus (*padmé* is the vocative case of that word); *houm*, is equivalent to our Amen. The literal sense of this phrase is then: —

Om mani padmé houm!
O the jewel in the lotus! Amen!

The Lamas assert that the doctrine contained in these marvellous words is immense, and that the whole life of man is insufficient to measure its depth and extent. We were curious to know what the Regent thought on this subject. This was his explanation: Animated beings are divided into six classes,—angels, demons, men, quadrupeds, flying creatures, and reptiles. These six classes correspond to the six syllables of the formula, Om mani padmé houm. All animated beings revolve by continual transmigration, and according to their merits or demirits, in these six classes, until they have attained the height of perfection, when they are absorbed and lost in the grand essence of Buddha,—that is to say, in the eternal and universal soul whence emanate all other souls, and to which all others, after their temporary evolutions, will reunite and become one. Animated beings have, according to the class they belong to, particular means of sanctification for ascending to a superior class, obtaining perfection, and of final absorption in the divine essence. Men who recite very often and very devoutly, Om mani, &c. avoid falling after death into any other of the six classes, and are immediately absorbed in the soul of Buddha. The jewel being the emblem of perfection, and the lotus that of Buddha, these words may perhaps be taken to express the desire of acquiring perfection, in order to be reunited to Buddha; and the symbolic formula, "*O the jewel in the lotus! Amen*," may be paraphrased, "O that I may attain perfection, and be absorbed in Buddha! Amen."

According to the explanation of the Regent, the *mani* may be, in some sort, the *résumé* of a vast Pantheism, the base of all Buddhist belief. The educated Lamas say that Buddha is the one necessary being, independent, the principal and end of all things. The earth, the stars, man, all that exists, is a partial and temporary mani-

festation of Buddha. All has been created by Buddha, in the sense that all proceeds from him, as the light from the sun. All beings emanating from Buddha have had a beginning, and will have an end; but, as they proceeded *necessarily* from the universal essence, they will be re-absorbed also *necessarily*. Thus, as Buddha is eternal, his manifestations are also eternal; but in this sense,—that manifestations always have been and always will be, although taken separately, — all have had a beginning, and will have an end.

Without troubling themselves to reconcile this belief with what has just been stated, the Buddhists admit an unlimited number of divine incarnations. These living Buddhas compose the numerous class of the *Chaberons*, of whom we have before spoken. The most celebrated are the Talé Lama, at Lha-Ssa; the Bandchan Remboutchi, at Djachi-Loumbo; the Guison-Tamba, at Grand-Kouren; the Tchang-Kia-Fo, at Pekin; and the Sa-Dcha-Fo, in the country of the Ssamba, at the foot of the Himalaya mountains. The latter has, it is said, a somewhat singular mission. He is engaged, night and day, in prayer that snow may fall continually on the summit of these mountains; because, according to a Thibetan tradition, there exists behind that lofty chain a savage and cruel people, who are only awaiting the melting of the snows to come and massacre all the Thibetan tribes, and seize upon their country.

Although all the Chaberons are alike living Buddhas, there is, nevertheless, a hierarchy among them, of which the Talé Lama occupies the summit. When the Talé Lama is dead,— or, to speak Bhuddhically, when he has laid aside his mortal clothing,—a successor is elected in the following manner:—Prayers and fasts are ordained in all the Lama convents; pilgrims throng around Buddha-La, and the *City of Spirits;* rosaries are in every hand; the sacred formula of *mani* resounds day and night in every quarter of the town; and incense is burnt in profusion. Those who imagine they have the Talé Lama in their family, give notice to the authorities of Lha-Ssa; and, before electing one, three Chaberons, authentically recognized as such, must have been discovered. They are then brought to Lha-Ssa, and the Houtouktous of the Lama estate assemble in conclave, shut themselves up in the temple of Buddha-La, and pass six days in fasting and prayer. On the seventh day they take an urn of gold, containing three gold fish, on which are graven the names of the three little candidates for the functions of the divinity of Buddha-La. The urn is shaken, the chief of the

Houtouktous draws out a fish, and the baby whose name is inscribed is immediately proclaimed Talé Lama. He is paraded in great pomp through the streets of the City of Spirits, while everybody falls prostrate before him, and he is then installed in his sanctuary. The two Chaberons in swaddling clothes who have drawn blanks are dismissed to their respective families, with a present of five hundred ounces of silver.

It is not very difficult for the devout or curious to obtain a sight of the Talé Lama; but we were prevented by a provoking circumstance. The Regent had just promised to take us to Buddha-La, when the small-pox broke out at Lha-Ssa. It was said to have been brought from Pekin by the great caravan which had arrived a few days before. Now, we had made part of that caravan; and it was asked whether it would not be better to postpone our visit, than to expose the Talé Lama to the risk of catching the small-pox? The observation was too reasonable to be objected to.

The fear of the small-pox among the Thibetans is inconceivable. They speak of it with a terror amounting to stupefaction, as the greatest scourge of humanity; and, as soon as the disorder has appeared in a house, the inhabitants, willingly or unwillingly, must remove to the tops of the mountains, or to the desert. No one dares hold any communication with these unhappy victims, who soon perish miserably of hunger and exposure, or become the prey of wild beasts. We had spoken to the Regent of the precious discovery of vaccination; and the hope that we might one day introduce the practice into Thibet had had a considerable share in the sympathy and protection he had shown us. The missionary who shall have the happiness of conferring this inestimable benefit on the Thibetans, will obtain an influence capable of disputing that of the Talé-Lama himself; and its introduction may be, perhaps, the signal for the fall of Lamanism. Cutaneous disorders are very numerous in Lha-Ssa; the cause of which is, no doubt, the excessive uncleanliness of the people — those of the lower class especially. Cases of hydrophobia are not seldom met with; and it is only a wonder that this horrible malady is not more frequent, when we think of the frightful number of famished dogs roaming about the streets of Lha-Ssa. The Chinese say that the three great productions of the capital of Thibet are Lamas, women, and dogs.

The cause of this multitude is the use the Thibetans make of dogs in the disposal of their dead. Four different kinds of sepul-

ture are in use; — combustion; immersion in the rivers and lakes; exposure on the summits of mountains; and the fourth, the most esteemed, is to cut the corpse in pieces, and give it to the dogs. The poor have the dogs of the suburbs for their mausoleum; but for persons of distinction a little more ceremony is used. There are convents where they keep, *ad hoc*, sacred dogs; and it is to them the bodies of the rich Thibetans are carried.

CHAP. XVIII.

Moorcroft, the English Traveller.—Means of Communication of Lha-Ssa with Europe.—Discussion with the Chinese Ambassador.—Dispute of the Regent with Ki-Chan.—Our Expulsion from Lha-Ssa.—Report of Ki-Chan to the Emperor of China.—New Year.—Fêtes and Rejoicings.—Buddhist Convents of Oui.—Khaldan.—Prebourg.—Sera.—Farewell to the Regent.—Separation from Samdadchiemba.—Ly, the Pacificator of Kingdoms. Triple Allocution of the Chinese Ambassador.—Picturesque Farewell of Ly-Kono-Ngan and his Wife.—Departure for Canton.—Passage of the River in a leathern Boat.

We have already mentioned the Englishman, Moorcroft, in speaking of the excessive fear which the Thibetan government appeared to entertain of maps, and of those who made them. One day the governor of the Cashmerians brought to us a countryman of his, named Nisan, who had been long in the service of Moorcroft, during his abode in Lha-Ssa. From him we learned many particulars respecting his former master; and, as the adventures of this traveller appear to us too singular to be passed over in silence, we will here give a short notice of them.

Moorcroft arrived at Lha-Ssa, from Ladak, in the year 1826. He wore the Mussulman costume, and spoke their language with such facility that the Cashmerians of Lha-Ssa took him for a countryman. He hired a house in the city, where he lived for twelve years with his servant Nisan, whom he had brought with him from Ladak, and who also believed his master to be a Cashmerian. Moorcroft bought goats, and a herd of yaks, the care of which he entrusted to some Thibetan shepherds who dwelt in the gorges of the mountains in the neighbourhood of Lha-Ssa. Under pretext of visiting his herds, he traversed the country freely, and profited by these excursions to make drawings and maps. It is said that, having no knowledge of the Thibetan language, he avoided direct

relations with the people; and at last, after a twelve years abode at Lha-Ssa, Moorcroft left it for Ladak. On his way thither, however, he was assailed by a band of robbers, and assassinated. The murderers were pursued and arrested by the Thibetan government, and some of the Englishman's effects were recovered; among which were a collection of drawings and maps. It was only at that time, and by the sight of these articles, that the fact of his being an Englishman was discovered.

Before parting with his servant, Moorcroft had given him a letter which he desired him to show to the inhabitants of Calcutta, if he ever went thither, saying it would make his fortune. But the seizure of Moorcroft's effects made so much noise in Thibet, that Nisan, fearing to be compromised, destroyed the paper, which was no doubt a letter of recommendation.

These facts were related to us by the Regent, the governor, and several inhabitants of Lha-Ssa; before coming to Lha-Ssa we had never heard the name of Moorcroft. According to the "Universal Geography" of Ritter, Moorcroft had made a previous journey of two months in 1812; and he was afterwards commissioned by the Indian Company to buy Turkestan horses to improve the native breeds of India. For this object he undertook a second journey in the November of 1819; and got as far as Ladak, where he remained two years. In October 1822 he left that city for Cashmere, and on the 25th of August 1825 died at Andkou, on the road from Herat to Balk. The death of Moorcroft at the date and place given by Ritter, was announced by his travelling companion Mr. Tribeck, in a letter dated from Balk the 6th of September 1825, and addressed to Captain Wade, resident at Loudiana.

We must confess that we know not how to reconcile accounts so opposite. If Moorcroft had never been in Lha-Ssa, how is it that he was so well known there, and his abode spoken of in a manner so precise? What interest could the Thibetans have in forging such an account? On the other hand, how reconcile that abode with Mr. Tribeck's letter announcing his death, at the very time when according to the other account he was on his way to Lha-Ssa?

Without pretending to reconcile these contradictions, we may here mention a fact that concerns us personally, and which may have perhaps some analogy with the affair of Moorcroft. Some time after our arrival at Macao we read an article in the "Bengal

Catholic Herald," a journal printed at Calcutta, giving an account of the death of two Fathers of the Mission in Mongolian Tartary (namely, M. Gabet and myself); how we had been tied to tails of horses and dragged to death, &c.

Whilst our decease was announced in terms so positive, we were on the point of entering Canton in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits. But if by chance we had perished in the mountains of Thibet, no doubt the world would have remained convinced that we had been dragged to death at the tails of wild horses in Mongolia. Probably it would never have been believed that we had reached the capital of Thibet, and if subsequently our abode in that city had been spoken of to some European traveller, it would have been as difficult to reconcile these accounts as those relating to Moorcroft.

We had been now a month in Lha-Ssa, and already its numerous inhabitants were accustomed to speak with respect and admiration of the holy doctrine of Jehovah, and of the great kingdom of France.

The tranquillity we enjoyed, the distinguished protection accorded by the government, the sympathy of the people,—all gave us the hope that, with the aid of God we might lay, in the very capital of Buddhism, the foundation of a mission whose influence would soon extend to the nomadic tribes of Mongolia. As soon as we imagined our position secure in Lha-Ssa, we began to think of re-establishing communications with Europe. The way of the desert was impracticable; and even supposing it infested neither by robbers nor wild beasts, the length of the passage made us shudder. The route by India seemed the only one possible. From Lha-Ssa to the first English station it was not more than a month's march; and by establishing a correspondant beyond the Himalayas, and another at Calcutta, communication with France became, if not prompt or easy, at least practicable. As this plan could not be executed without the concurrence of the government, we communicated it to the Regent, who entered into our views; and it was agreed that when the fine season commenced, M. Gabet should undertake the journey to Calcutta with a Thibetan escort as far as Boutan. Such were our plans for the establishment of a mission at Lha-Ssa; but, at this very moment, the enemy of all good was at work to drive us from a country which he seems to have chosen for the seat of his empire.

We had heard sinister reports of the secret efforts made by the Chinese ambassador for our expulsion from Lha-Ssa, and we were not surprised, for from the beginning we had foreseen that any obstacles thrown in our path would be the work of the Chinese mandarins. Christianity and the French name excited too warm a sympathy among the people of Lha-Ssa not to awaken the jealousy of the Chinese. An agent of the court of Pekin could not think without chagrin of the popularity enjoyed by foreigners in Thibet, and of the influence they might one day acquire in a country which China is so much interested in keeping under her dominion. It was therefore resolved that the ministers of God should be driven from Lha-Ssa.

One day Ki-Chan sent for us, and, after much cajolery, finished by saying that Thibet was much too poor and too cold a country for us, and that we ought to think of returning to France; and he said this with a sort of assured off-hand manner, as if he thought there was not the least objection to be made. We asked him if, in speaking thus, he meant to give us a piece of advice or an order?

"Both," said he, coldly.

"In that case we must thank you for the interest you take in our welfare by informing us that the country is poor and miserable. But you must be aware that men like us do not seek the conveniences and pleasures of life; if we did we should have remained in France; there is no country in the world to compare with ours. For the command implied in your words, this is our answer;—admitted into Thibet by the authorities of the country, we recognise no right in you or any one else to disturb us or drive us from it."

"What! You are foreigners, and you pretend to remain here at your own pleasure?"

"Yes, we are foreigners; but we know that the laws of Thibet do not resemble those of China. The Pebouns, the Katchi, the Mongols are foreigners also, yet they are allowed to live here in peace. What is the meaning, then, of this pretension to exclude the French from a country open to all nations? If all foreigners must leave Lha-Ssa, why do you remain? Does not your very title of Kin-Tchai (ambassador) say clearly that you yourself are a foreigner?"

At these words Ki-Chan leaped from his crimson cushions. "I, I a foreigner? I who bear the authority of the Great Emperor,

who only some months ago judged and sent into exile the Nomekhan himself?"

"We are acquainted with that affair. But there is this difference between the Nomekhan and us;—he is a native of Kan-Sou, a province of the Chinese empire; we are natives of France, a country with which your Grand Emperor has nothing to do; the Nomekhan had murdered three Talé Lamas, and we have done no wrong to any one. Have we any other end than that of making known the true God, and teaching men how to save their souls?"

"Yes; I know you are honest men; but, after all, the religion you preach has been declared bad, and is prohibited by our Great Emperor."

"To that we can only say that the religion of the Lord of Heaven does not need the sanction of your emperor to be a holy religion, nor do we need his commission to preach it in Thibet."

The ambassador did not think proper to continue the discussion, but dismissed us dryly, assuring us that he would find means to make us leave Thibet.

A struggle of several days' duration ensued between the Thibetan government and Ki-Chan. The Regent, adopting the Buddhist opinion which makes a cosmopolite of the man dedicated to religion, maintained that, as such, we could not be considered as foreigners. Ki-Chan, the better to maintain his pretensions, took up his position as defender of the interests of the Talé Lama. Sent to Lha-Ssa to protect the living Buddha, it was his duty to remove every person or thing that might be inimical to him. Our avowed object was to substitute our belief for Buddhism, and to convert, if possible, man, woman, and child in Thibet. What would become of the Talé Lama if he were forsaken by his adorers?

The Regent did not share the apprehensions with which the Chinese ambassador sought to inspire him, and maintained that our presence was in no way hurtful to the Thibetan government. "If our doctrine were false, the Thibetans would not embrace it; if true, what was there to fear? since the truth could not be prejudicial to man."

Ki-Chan reproached the Regent with neglecting the interests of the Talé Lama; and the Regent, on his side, accused the Chinese with profiting by the minority of the sovereign to tyrannise over the

Thibetan government. The quarrel grew more bitter every day, and matters came to such a pass, that prudence compelled us to resolve on yielding to circumstances, and no longer maintaining a resistance which might compromise the Regent our protector, and even become, perhaps, the cause of serious dissensions between China and Thibet. If, on our account, a rupture between the courts of Pekin and Lha-Ssa should unhappily ensue, we should become odious to the Thibetans, and the future introduction of Christianity into these countries would encounter the greatest difficulty in consequence. We decided, then, that it would be better to bow the head, and accept our persecution with resignation. Our conduct would at least prove to the Thibetans that we had come among them with pacific intentions, and had no intention of establishing ourselves in the country by violence.

Having adopted this resolution, we went to the palace of the Regent, who, hearing that we had decided upon quitting Lha-Ssa, looked sorry and embarrassed. He told us that it was his warmest wish to assure us of a free and tranquil abode in Thibet, but that alone, and deprived of the support of his sovereign, he was too feeble to repress the tyranny of the Chinese, who, profiting by the infancy of the Talé Lama, arrogated to themselves rights before unheard of in the country. We thanked the Regent for his kind intentions, and left him to go to the Chinese ambassador.

We told Ki-Chan, that, having no means of protecting ourselves, we had decided on leaving Lha-Ssa, protesting, however, against this violation of our rights.

"Yes," said Ki-Chan, "it is the best thing you can do: you must set out directly; it will be well for you, for me, for the Thibetans, and every body."

He then informed us that the necessary preparations were already made, and the mandarins and escort to accompany us appointed. We were to set off in eight days, and take the route leading to the frontiers of China. The latter arrangement excited at once our indignation and surprise: we could not conceive how any one could have the cruelty to condemn us to an eight months journey, when, by directing our course towards India, twenty-five days would take us to the first European post, whence we should easily find means to repair to Calcutta. But Ki-Chan was deaf to our representations on this subject; he refused even to grant us a delay of a few days, till the wounds caused by the cold of the desert

should be healed; and to our threat of denouncing his arbitrary conduct to our own government, he replied, that he cared nothing about what the French government might think or do, and that he looked to nothing but the will of his own emperor. "If my master," said he, "knew that I had allowed two Europeans to preach Christianity freely in Thibet, I should be lost; this time it would be impossible for me to escape death."

The next day Ki-Chan sent for us to communicate the report he had drawn up on our affairs, and which was to be addressed to the emperor; and now, having obtained his object, he resumed his amiable and caressing manner towards us. His report was insignificant enough; he said neither good nor harm of us, and gave simply a dry nomenclature of the countries we had traversed since leaving Macao.

"Does this report please you?" asked he; "have you any fault to find?"

I replied, that I had an important observation to make — important not to ourselves, but to him; and requested him to dismiss his suite.

"These are my servants, they belong to my house; fear nothing."

"Oh, we have no fear for ourselves; the danger is for you."

"For me? — No matter, my people may hear all."

"If it is your pleasure, you may relate to them what I have to say; but I cannot speak in their presence."

"Mandarins cannot converse privately with foreigners; it is forbidden by law."

"In that case, I have no more to say. Send the report as it is; but if harm result, you have only yourself to blame."

The ambassador became thoughtful, took pinch after pinch of snuff, and at last desired his suite to leave us alone with him. When every body had left the room, I resumed —

"You will now learn why I would speak to you in secret, and may judge whether or no we are dangerous men; we who fear to injure even our persecutors."

Ki-Chan turned pale and looked disconcerted. "Explain yourself," said he; "let your words be white and clear."

"In your report, you make me leave Macao with my brother Joseph Gabet; but I did not enter China till four years after."

"Oh, if that is all, it is easily corrected."

"Very easily. This report is for the emperor you say."

"Certainly."

"In that case you must tell the emperor the truth, and the whole truth."

"Yes, yes, the whole truth; I will correct the report." At what period did you enter China?"

"In the twentieth year of Tao-Kouang" (1840).

Ki-Chan took his pen, and wrote the year in the margin. "What moon?"

"Second moon."

Ki-Chan laid down his pen, and looked at me fixedly.

"Yes, I entered the Chinese empire in the twentieth year of Tao-Kouang, in the second moon. I crossed the province of Canton, of which you were then viceroy. Why do you not write that, since you must tell the emperor the whole truth?"

The brow of Ki-Chan contracted.

"Do you now comprehend why we wished to speak to you in private?"

"Yes, I know the Christians are not wicked. Does any one here know of this affair?"

"No one."

Ki-Chan took up his report, tore it, and composed a new one in a very different style from the first; the precise dates of our entry into China were not given, but a pompous eulogy was passed on our learning and sanctity. The poor man had the simplicity to believe that we attached great importance to the opinion the Emperor of China might have of us.

During our abode in Lha-Ssa we have had occasion to remark that the Thibetans are very bad chronologists, not only with respect to historical dates, but even in their manner of computing the day of the month. Their almanac is a desperate mass of confusion, resulting solely from the superstitious notions of the Buddhists with regard to lucky and unlucky days; all those esteemed unlucky, that occur in the course of the month, they cut out, and do not reckon at all. Thus, for instance, if the fifteenth be a day of ill omen, they count the fourteenth twice over, and then pass to the sixteenth. Sometimes several ill-boding days will occur one after the other, and then they adopt the simple plan of retrenching the whole number till they come to a lucky day, — the Thibetans finding no sort of inconvenience in this practice!

The renewal of the year is for the Thibetans, as for all other people, an epoch of fêtes and rejoicing. The latter days of the twelfth moon are devoted to preparations for the new year; when they lay in stocks of tea, butter, tsamba, barley-wine, and some quarters of beef and mutton. Their best clothes are taken from the presses; for once, the dust is wiped off the furniture; they sweep, clean, and furbish up; and seek, in short, to introduce something like order and cleanliness into their houses. As this happens but once a year, every household assumes a new aspect; the domestic altars are especial objects of attention; the old idols are repainted; and pyramids, flowers, and various ornaments destined for the decoration of the little sanctuaries wherein are lodged the Buddhas of the family, are fabricated of fresh butter.

The first Louk-So, or rite of that festival, begins at midnight; and every one is on the watch for the mystic and solemn hour which is to close the old and open the new year. We were fast asleep, when we were suddenly awakened by cries of joy resounding in all parts of the town. Bells, cymbals, conch-shells, tambourines, and all the instruments of Thibetan music, struck up at once, and saluted the new year with the most hideous charivari imaginable. We were for a moment tempted to rise, but the cold was so sharp that we came to the conclusion that it would be more advisable to remain under our thick woollen coverings, and only take part mentally in the public felicity. Some hearty thumps at our door, given with an energy that threatened to make it fly in splinters, told us, however, that we must renounce that pleasant project. After some hesitation, we were obliged to rise from our warm couch, dress, and open the door. Some Thibetans of our acquaintance invaded our chamber, to invite us to the feast of the new year. They all carried in their hands a pot of baked earth, in which floated, in boiling water, dumplings made of honey and wheaten flour. One of our visitors presented a long silver needle terminating in a hook, and invited us to fish in his vase. We tried at first to excuse ourselves, alleging that we were not in the habit of eating during the night; but our visitors pressed us so much, and lolled out their tongues with so good a grace, that to resign ourselves to the Louk-So was unavoidable. Each of us, therefore, transfixed his dumpling, and tried its flavour between his teeth. We looked at each other with a grimace; but it was a question of politeness, and swallow we must. If we could only have got off by

this first act of devotion! But the Louk-So was inexorable; the numerous friends we had in Lha-Ssa succeeded each other almost without interruption; and, like it or not, we were obliged to crunch Thibetan sweetmeats till day-break.

The second Louk-So consists also in making visits, but with a new ceremonial. As soon as day breaks, the Thibetans traverse the streets, carrying in one hand a pot of buttered tea, and in the other a large gilt and varnished dish filled with tsamba flour, heaped up in a pyramid, and surmounted by three ears of barley. As soon as any one enters a house to wish its owner a happy new year, he first prostrates himself three times before the domestic altar, and after burning some leaves of the cedar, or some aromatic tree in a large copper perfuming-pan, he offers his friends tea, and presents his dish, from which every one takes a pinch of tsamba; and the people of the house then reciprocate the courtesy to their visitors.

The Thibetans do not confine their new year rejoicings to feasting; dancing and music play a large part in them. Groups of children—their green robes hung with a multitude of little bells—roam about the streets, and go from house to house, giving concerts that are not unpleasing. The song, of a gentle and melancholy character, is varied at intervals by a burden full of fire and spirit. While they are singing the strophe, the little choristers mark the time by a slow and regular movement of the body, resembling the motion of a pendulum; but when it changes to the burden, they beat their feet, in cadence, vigorously on the ground. The noise of the bells and of their iron-bound shoes make a kind of savage accompaniment, rather agreeable to the ear, especially when heard from a certain distance. When these young dilettanti have finished their concert, it is customary for those to whom they have sung to distribute among them cakes fried in nut oil, and small balls of butter.

In the principal squares, and before the public buildings, troops of actors and jugglers are to be seen, amusing the people from morning till night. The Thibetans have not, like the Chinese, a stock of theatrical pieces; but their actors are all continually on the stage together, dancing, singing, or showing feats of strength and dexterity. The ballet is the department in which they most excel, and they waltz, bound, and pirouette with surprising agility. Their costume consists of a toque surmounted by long plumes of

pheasant's feathers; of a black mask adorned with a prodigiously long white beard; white pantaloons, and a green tunic down to the knee, and girt round the loins by a yellow girdle. To this tunic are fastened, at certain distances, long strings, to the ends of which hang large tufts of white wool. When the actor balances himself, in time, to the music, these tufts accompany the movements of the body with much grace; and when he begins to twirl, they extend horizontally, like the spokes of a wheel, round his person, and seem to accelerate the rapidity of his pirouettes. They have at Lha-Ssa a kind of gymnastic exercise, called the *dance of spirits*. A long cord, made of leathern thongs firmly plaited together, is fastened to the summit of the Buddha-La, and descends to the foot of the mountain. The *spirit dancers* pass up and down this cord with an agility that can only be compared to that of cats and monkeys. Sometimes, when they have reached the summit, they extend their arms, as if going to swim, and fly down the cord with the rapidity of an arrow. The inhabitants of the province of Ssang are reputed the most skilful in this kind of exercise.

The strangest thing we saw at Lha-Ssa, during the new year fêtes, was what the Thibetans call the *Lha-Ssa-Morou*,—that is to say, the invasion of the town and its environs by innumerable bands of Lamas. The Lha-Ssa-Morou begins the third day of the first moon. All the convents of the province of Oui throw open their gates, and by every road leading to the capital, the Lamas come in tumultuous throngs, on foot, on horseback, on asses, on yaks, laden with their books of prayer and their kitchen utensils. The city is soon choked up with these avalanches of Lamas from the surrounding mountains. Those who cannot find a lodging in private houses or public buildings, pitch their travelling tents and make encampments in the squares and streets. The Lha-Ssa-Morou lasts six whole days; during which time the tribunals are closed, and the ordinary course of justice is suspended; the ministers and public functionaries lose, in some sort, their authority; and the whole power of the government is abandoned to this formidable army of Buddhist ecclesiastics. The disorder and confusion that prevails in the town are indescribable. The Lamas roam in tumultuous bands through the streets, uttering frightful outcries, chanting prayers, jostling each other, quarrelling, and sometimes coming to regular and bloody battles.

Although the Lamas exhibit little reserve or modesty on these occasions, it is not, however, to be supposed that profane diversion is their object in thus coming to Lha-Ssa; on the contrary, the grand motive of the journey is devotion! They come to implore the benediction of the Talé Lama, and make a pilgrimage to the celebrated convent Morou, in the centre of the town: hence the name Lha-Ssa-Morou, given to these six days of fête.

The convent of Moron is remarkable for the luxury and wealth displayed in its temples; while the order and cleanliness that reigns there, make it the model and the rule of the other convents in the province. To the west of the principal temples, lies a vast garden, surrounded by a peristyle. Here are the workshops of the typographers: and numerous workmen belonging to the convent are daily occupied in printing Buddhist books. The method of proceeding resembles the Chinese, which is too well known to make it necessary to repeat it here. The Lamas, who repair annually to the fête of *Lha-Ssa-Morou*, profit by the opportunity to make their purchases of books.

The evening before our departure, one of the secretaries of the Regent entered our abode, and presented us in his name with two large ingots of silver. This kindness of the first Kalon touched us extremely; but we did not think it right to accept the money. In the evening when we went to the palace to bid him farewell, we took the ingots with us, and deposited them on a little table before him, protesting at the same time that this proceeding was no sign of dissatisfaction on our part; that on the contrary, we should always remember with gratitude the kind treatment we had received from the Thibetan government, during our short stay in Lha-Ssa; that we were persuaded that if it had depended on him, we should always have enjoyed a tranquil and honourable abode in Thibet, but that as to the money we could not receive it without injury to our conscience as missionaries, and to the honour of our nation. The Regent was not at all offended with our proceeding. He said that he understood our repugnance, and would not insist on our accepting the money, but that he should be glad to offer us something at parting. Then pointing to a dictionary in four languages which he had often seen us turn over with interest, he asked if it would be agreeable to us to accept that. We thought ourselves at liberty to receive that present, without compromising in any way the dignity of our

character, and then expressed to the Regent the pleasure it would give us, if he would condescend to accept as a souvenir of France, the microscope which had so greatly excited his curiosity. Our offer was graciously received.

At the moment of parting, the Regent rose, and addressed us in the words: —

"You are going, but who can know the things to come. You are men of astonishing courage, since you have come here. I know that you have in your hearts a great and holy resolution. I think that you will never forget it; I shall always remember it, — you understand me, circumstances do not permit me to say more."

"We comprehend all the import of your words," was our reply, "and supplicate our God to fulfil, one day, the hope they express."

We separated with swelling hearts from this man, who had shown us so much kindness, and on whom we had founded the hope of making known, by God's help, the truths of Christianity to the poor people of Thibet.

On returning to our habitations, we found the Cashmerian governor waiting for us; he had brought some provisions for our journey; excellent dried fruits from Ladak, and cakes of wheaten flour, butter, and eggs. He passed the evening with us, and assisted in packing. As he had a journey to Calcutta in contemplation, we gave him a letter for the French minister at Calcutta, in which we gave a succinct narrative of our proceedings in Thibet, and of the circumstances that had necessitated our departure thence. We thought that if it were the will of God that we should lose our lives in the midst of the mountains of Thibet, that our friends in France should at least be informed of our fate.

On the same evening, Samdadchiemba came to bid us farewell. Since the day when the Chinese ambassador had decreed our departure from Thibet our dear neophyte had been taken from us. It is needless to say how hard a trial this had been to us, but as Samdadchiemba, as a native Kan-Sou, was a Chinese subject, neither we, nor the Regent, could enter any protest against this proceeding. Although our influence with the Ki-Chan was not very great, we obtained from him a promise that our convert should be permitted to return in peace to his family, and we have since heard that he kept his word. The Regent had shown him the utmost kindness; after his separation from us he had taken care that Samdadchiemba should want for nothing, and had even

given him a considerable sum of money to enable him to return home; and, with what we were able to give him in addition, Samdadchiemba might be considered master of a little fortune. We advised him to fulfil the duties imposed by filial piety towards his old mother, to instruct her in the true faith, and impart to her, in her last moments, the benefits of baptismal regeneration, and when he had closed her eyes, to return, and end his days in some Christian community.

To say the truth, Samdadchiemba was not amiable; his disposition harsh, rude, and sometimes insolent, rendered him, at times, no very agreeable travelling companion; but he had withal, a capacity of attachment and natural integrity, that compensated in our eyes for the perversity of his temper. The long and painful journey we had made together, the many hardships endured in common, had so to speak interfused his existence with ours, and rendered the parting more painful than we could have imagined.

On the day fixed for our departure, two Chinese soldiers came to us very early in the morning to say that Ta-Lao-Yé, Ly-Kono-Ngau, that is to say, His Excellency Ly, Pacificator of Kingdoms, expected us to breakfast. This personage was the Mandarin whom Ki-Chan had appointed to accompany us to China. We obeyed the summons, and, as the train was to be organised at his house, we sent our baggage there. Ly belonged to the hierarchy of military Mandarins; he had attained the dignity of Tou-Sse, with the command of the troops which guard the frontiers bordering the English possessions; was decorated with the blue ball, and enjoyed the privilege of wearing seven tails of sable to his cap. Ly-Kono-Ngau was not more than forty-five years old, but he looked seventy, for he had scarcely any teeth, his few hairs were quite grey, his dim and glassy eyes could scarcely endure a bright light, his face was flabby and wrinkled, his hands withered looking, and his legs, on which he could scarcely support himself, were swollen; everything about him indicated a man worn out by excess. We thought, at first, that he owed his premature old age to an immoderate use of opium, but we learnt, from his own mouth and in our very first interview, that it was brandy which had reduced him to this state. Having asked and obtained leave to retire from the public service, he was going to repair, if he could, his shattered health, by sound and severe regimen, in the bosom of his family.

For a military Mandarin, *Ly* was a well-informed man; his knowledge of Chinese literature, and his powers of observation, rendered his conversation piquant, and full of interest. His speech was slow, and even drawling, yet he knew well how to give a picturesque and dramatic air to his narrations. He was fond of philosophic and religious topics, and entertained magnificent projects of improvement, when free and tranquil in the bosom of his family. He would have nothing to do, he said, but play at chess with his friends, and go to the play. He believed neither in the Bonzes, nor in Lamas; as to the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, he did not know very well what that was, and he must be well acquainted with it before embracing it. He affected aristocratic manners, and an exquisite politeness; but unhappily he forgot himself at times, and betrayed his very plebeian origin too plainly. It is almost unnecessary to add, that his excellency the Pacificator of Kingdoms was a passionate lover of ingots; but for that it would have been difficult to recognise in him the Chinese and the Mandarin. He gave us a breakfast, which appeared all the more luxurious to us from our having been accustomed of late to live pretty much like savages. We had been so long obliged to eat with our fingers that we had almost forgotten how to use Chinese chop sticks. Before setting off, Ly-Kono-Ngau warned us that it would be his duty to go, attended by his soldiers, to the palace of the ambassador, to take leave, and asked us to accompany him.

On entering the apartment where Ki-Chan was seated, the fifteen soldiers who were to form our escort, ranged themselves in file, after prostrating themselves, and striking the ground three times with their foreheads. The Pacificator of Kingdoms did the like; but the poor man would have been quite unable to rise again without our assistance. We saluted him in our usual manner by putting our caps under our arm.

Addressing us first in a hypocritical and affected tone, Ki-Chan said, that if he had not permitted us to take the route of India, it was because the laws of the empire opposed it, otherwise, old as he was, he would have accompanied us thither himself; that the road we were going was by no means so bad as it had been represented; that we should have people to wait upon and prepare a lodging for us every night, &c. When we should reach the province of Sse-Tchouen, his, Ki-Chan's, responsibility would cease,

and the viceroy Pao would take care of us. And he concluded, "May the star of felicity guide you on your journey from the beginning to the end." We replied in like strain, by wishing Ki-Chan a speedy restoration to the dignities he had lost with the addition of new ones.

"Oh! my star is bad! my star is bad!" cried Ki-Chan, taking pinch after pinch of snuff from his silver vase. He then addressed the Pacificator of Kingdoms in a grave and solemn tone.

"Ly-Kono-Ngau, since the great Emperor permits you to return to your family — you ought to go. You will have two travelling companions; that ought to be a subject of joy to you, for the road is long and tedious. Live with them in harmony, and take care not to make their hearts sad by word or action. I have another important thing to say, as you have served the empire during twelve years on the frontiers of Gorkha, I have given orders to the purveyor to send you five hundred ounces of silver: it is a present from the great Emperor." At these words Ly-Kono-Ngau, finding all at once an unaccustomed suppleness in his legs, threw himself on his knees.

"The celestial benefits of the great Emperor," said he, "have always surrounded me; but, wretched servant that I am — how can I, without blushing, receive a favour so signal? I warmly supplicate the ambassador to permit me to hide my face, and to withdraw myself from this unmerited grace!"

To which Ki-Chan replied: "Does not the great Emperor know and approve thy disinterestedness? What are a few ounces of silver? Thou wilt take it to drink a cup of tea with my friends; but take heed of the brandy! if thou wilt live some years longer. I say this because a father and mother ought to give good advice to their children."

Ly-Kono-Ngau knocked his head three times against the ground, and then rising, resumed his place by our side.

Lastly, Ki-Chan harangued the soldiers, and changed his manner for the third time. It was rough, abrupt, verging at times on irritation. "You soldiers ——" at these words the fifteen heroes, as if moved by a common spring, fell all together on their knees, and remained in that posture all the time of his harangue — "let us see, how many are there of you? Fifteen, I think;" and he counted them with his finger. "You fifteen soldiers, you are going back to your province — your service is finished. You

will escort, as far as Ssa-Tchouen, your Tou Sse and these two strangers. Serve them faithfully, and be respectful and obedient. Do you understand these words clearly?"

"Yes; we understand."

"When you pass through the villages of the Poba (Thibetans), woe be to you if you oppress the people! In the relays, beware how you rob and pillage. Do you understand these words?"

"Yes; we understand."

"Do not injure the flocks; respect the fields that are sown; do not set fire to the forests. Let there be peace between you; — do not curse and abuse each other. Do you understand?"

"Yes; we understand."

"Whoever behaves ill, let him not hope to escape chastisement. His sin will be inquired into carefully, and punished with severity. Do you understand clearly?"

"Yes; we understand."

"Since you understand, obey, then, and tremble!" After this brief, but energetic peroration, the fifteen soldiers knocked their heads three times against the ground, and rose.

At the moment we were quitting the residence of the ambassador, Ki-Chan took us aside. "In a short time," said he, "I shall leave Thibet, and return to China.* Not to be too much encumbered with baggage at my departure, I have sent two great chests by this opportunity: — they are covered with long-haired ox-skins. I recommend these chests to your care. When you stop at the post-houses at night, let them be brought into the place where you are to pass the night. At Tching-Tou-Fou, the capital of Sse-Tchouen, you will deliver them to the viceroy, Pao-Tchoung-Tang. Watch carefully over your effects, for there are many thieves on the road you are going."

We assured Ki-Chan that we would remember his charge, and rejoined Ly-Kono-Ngau, who was waiting for us at the threshold. It was curious enough that the ambassador should confide his treasure to us, whilst he had at his service a Mandarin who was called upon by his position to render him this service. But the jealousy with which Ki-Chan regarded foreigners did not go so far as to make him neglect his own interest; and he thought it, no doubt, safer to entrust his chests to a missionary than to a Chinese, even

* Ki-Chan is now viceroy of the province of Sse-Tchouen.

though he were a Mandarin. This mark of confidence gave us pleasure ; — it was a homage rendered to the probity of Christians, at the same time that it was a bitter satire on the Chinese character.

Just before we mounted our horses to set off, a Thibetan woman, of robust proportions, and very well dressed, presented herself before us. It was the wife of Ly-Kono-Ngau. He had married her six years before, and was now going to leave her for ever. As the loving couple would probably never see each other again, it was natural that some words of farewell should be spoken on so heart-breaking an occasion. The parting took place in public, and in the following manner :

" We are going, now," said the husband. " As for thee, stop where thou art, and sit in peace in thy chamber."

" Go, then," said the wife ; " go gently, and take care of thy swollen legs ; " and then she passed her hand before her eyes, to impress the bystanders with the belief that she was crying.

" There now," said the Pacificator of Kingdoms, turning to us, " these Thibetan women are curious creatures ! I leave her a house solidly built, and a quantity of furniture almost new, and she thinks proper to cry ! Is she not satisfied with that ?"

And after these adieux, so full of sentiment and tenderness, he mounted his horse, and the party filed off through the streets of Lha-Ssa, taking care to choose those least encumbered with Lamas.

Outside of the town, a number of the inhabitants, with whom we had been on terms of friendship, and many of whom appeared sincerely disposed to embrace our holy religion, had assembled to salute us once more. Amongst them was the young physician, still wearing on his breast the cross that we had given him. We alighted from our horses to give them some parting words of consolation, to exhort them to abandon courageously the superstitious worship of Buddha, and adore the God of the Christians, confiding always in his infinite goodness and mercy. It was cruel to part with our dear catechumens, to whom we had only indicated the path of salvation, without being able to direct their first steps. Alas ! we could now do nothing more than pray for them.

As we were remounting, we perceived a horseman approaching us full gallop : it was the Governor of the Cashmerians, who had resolved to accompany us as far as the river Bo-Tchou. We were extremely touched by this mark of attention ; but it did not sur-

prise us on the part of a friend so sincere and devoted, and who had given us so many marks of attachment during our stay in Lha-Ssa.

On the banks of the Bo-Tchou we found a Thibetan escort, organised by the Regent, to conduct us to the frontiers of China; it was composed of seven men and a Grand Lama, bearing the title of *Dhéba*, or governor of a canton. With the Chinese escort, we formed a caravan of twenty-six horsemen, without including the drivers of the cattle that carried our baggage.

Two large ferry-boats were waiting to receive the men and horses; the latter leaped in at once, and ranged themselves tranquilly side by side; it was evident that it was not the first time they had gone through the business. The men followed, with the exception of the Dhéba, Ly-Kono-Ngau, and ourselves. We comprehended that we were to pass the river in a more aristocratic fashion, but how, we did not see, as there was nothing like a boat in sight. "How are we to get over?" was our next question.

"There is the boat coming," was the reply; and on looking in the direction indicated, we saw a boat and a man advancing across the fields, but, contrary to the usual practice, it was the man who carried the boat, and not the boat the man. As soon as he reached the river-side, he quietly deposited his burden, and pushed it into the water with the greatest ease! Either the boat must be extraordinarily light, or the man excessively strong. We looked at the man, — there was nothing unusual in him; we examined the boat, and the problem was solved,—it was composed simply of ox-hides, solidly sewn together, and kept in shape by some light triangles of bamboo.

After taking an affectionate leave of the Governor, we entered the boat, and very nearly capsized it in so doing. Our companions had forgotten to warn us that the foot was to be placed on the bamboo only. When we had all embarked, the boatman began to urge his vessel forward with a long pole, and, in the twinkling of an eye, we were on shore on the other side. The man then took his boat again on his back, and made off.

These leathern boats are unfortunately liable to rot if they remain long in the water; and, directly after they have been used, they must be turned bottom upwards to dry; but, perhaps a strong varnish would make them to bear a longer navigation.

When we had remounted our horses, we cast a long last look on

the city of Lha-Ssa, still visible in the distance ; and said in the depths of our hearts, " God's will be done ! " It was the 15th of March 1846.

We arrived in safety at Ta-Tsien-Lou, on the frontiers of China, after a three months' journey, the principal incident of which was the death of Ly-Kono-Ngau. He was found nearly dead in his bed one morning, apparently of water on the chest ; and yielded his last breath almost immediately. We regretted deeply not to have been with him during his last moments of consciousness ; and we can only hope that he may have experienced the infinite mercy of God. This event left the caravan without a chief ; and, we passed at once from a monarchy to a democratic republic ; but, perceiving that our Thibetans and Chinese were by no means ripe for so perfect a form of government, and that anarchy was threatening us on all sides, we determined, for the sake of the public interest, and the safety of the caravan, to seize on the dictatorship ; and, accordingly, we issued a decree that all should be ready to resume our journey on the following day. At the first station we reached, however, that of Lithang, where there was a Chinese garrison, we laid down our usurped authority, and demanded one more regularly constituted. We were told at first, that no one of the four Mandarins there present, could go with us, and that we should go on quietly as we were, as far as the frontier ; but we frankly warned them, that if they persisted in our retaining the command, they need not be surprised if we returned to Lha-Ssa ; and, thereupon they took the case into consideration, and said we should have an answer in the evening. At supper time, one of the four Mandarins presented himself in the costume of ceremony ; and, after the customary compliments, he announced to us that he had been appointed to command our escort as far as the frontiers of China ; that never, in his most ambitious dreams had he imagined he should attain to such an honour as that of conducting people like us ; and that he was quite ashamed to have on the first day to ask a favour. This was, that we would be good enough to repose for two days at Lithang, in order to recruit our strength, which must be exhausted by so long and painful a journey. We understood very well, that the meaning of all this was, that he wanted two days to finish some business of his own ; and we replied, that we saw his heart was full of solicitude on our account, and that we would stay the two days, according to his request.

The town of Lithang is built on the side of a hill, which rises from a vast but sterile plain, and, though seen from afar, it has an imposing aspect, from the buildings of the two great Lama convents being richly gilt and painted ; its streets are narrow, crooked, dirty, and so steep that it is often difficult to keep your feet in them. Here, and in other places, as we approached the frontiers of China, we noticed a considerable change in the character of the people; instead of the pride and rough simplicity of Thibet, they manifested much of the polite cunning and covetousness of the Chinese, and their language was much mixed with Chinese expressions. At the moment when we left the town, the Chinese garrison happened to be under arms, and they paid military honours to Ly-Kono-Ngau, exactly as if he had been alive, and when the coffin passed, the soldiers all bent the knee and cried out that the "poor garrison of Lithang, wished him *health and prosperity !*"

As we crossed the last mountain, the climate of Thibet bade us a cold farewell, and almost buried us in a heavy storm of snow, which accompanied us to the Chinese town of Ta-Tsien-Lou, where it was exchanged for a pouring rain. We rested at this place a short time, during which we had to quarrel several times a day with the principal Mandarin, who would not consent to forward us on our route by palanquin ; but at length, thanks to the perseverance and energy of our demands, they were granted. Our Thibetan escort left us at this place, taking with them a letter of thanks from us to the Regent, for the good treatment we had received at Lha-Ssa, and on the journey. We could not part without emotion from these faithful companions, and at the moment of departure the Lama *Delamchang* (musician, a sort of confidant of the Regent) told us, that he had been charged to remind us of the promise we had made him to return some day to Lha-Ssa. We promised that we would, for we did not then foresee what obstacles would prevent our return to Thibet. The next day we entered the palanquin, and were borne, at the public expense, to the capital of the province of Sse-Tchouen, where, by order of the emperor, we were to undergo a solemn trial before the Mandarins of the Celestial Empire.

Ultimately, traversing China, we reached Macao in the beginning of October. Our long and toilsome journey was concluded, and we could at length, after so many hardships, enjoy a little peace

and repose. During the two succeeding years, we employed our leisure moments in revising the notes we had made on the road; and hence these "Recollections," which we address to our brethren in Europe, — hoping that their charity will find interest in the trials and fatigues of the Missionaries. Our re-entrance into China, to return to our mission in Mongol-Tartary, compels us to leave unfinished the work we had begun. We should have to speak of our relations with the Mandarins and the Chinese tribunals, to cast a glance at the provinces of the empire we had traversed, and compare them with those we had occasion to visit during our former travels in the celestial empire. We will endeavour to fill up this hiatus, in the hours of recreation which we may find in the intervals of our labours for the holy ministry; and perhaps then we shall be in a position to furnish some exact information concerning a country, of which at no epoch more incorrect ideas have prevailed than at the present day.

There is, indeed, no want of books concerning "China and the Chinese," — but, the zeal of a writer is not of itself sufficient to make him acquainted with countries where he has never set his foot; and to write travels in China, after a few walks about the factories of Canton and the environs of Macao, is to expose oneself to speak of many things with a very insufficient amount of knowledge.

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