

SKETCHES
OF
CENTRAL ASIA.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS

ON

MY TRAVELS, ADVENTURES,

AND ON THE

ETHNOLOGY OF CENTRAL ASIA.

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period was enrolled under the name of Sart, and they were so called in all Khokand. Also the above-named General Krijanovsky speaks of Tadjik and Sart as of two different races. As to this word Sart, the derivation of which is wholly unknown to me, it is a term of which the famous Mir Ali Shir, in the time of Sultan Husein Mirza Baïkera, makes use in a treaty on the Persian and Turkish language. The latter, he always calls the Sart tili (Sart language), and not the Tadjik tili. Sart is hence legally used for the Turkish appellation of Tadjik. Here and there Ėzbeqs busy themselves in making a distinction between Sart and Tadjik; but I cannot agree with this view, although I will not conceal the fact, that the Sarts seen in mass differ greatly in some physiognomical peculiarities from the Tadjiks. They are, for instance, more slender-built, have a longer face, and, moreover, a higher forehead than the Tadjiks; but it must also be mentioned as a qualification of the above, that they formed frequent alliances with the free Persian slaves of Central Asia, which the Tadjiks never or very seldom did.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LITERATURE IN CENTRAL ASIA.

TARTAR muse! Ėzbeg Melpomene! This will to many sound passing strange! That poetry should exist in the oldest spots of rudeness and barbarism—that persons in those regions where robbery, murder, and spoliation rage most, should busy themselves with literature, may to many seem strange; but yet such a notion would be incorrect. The East was at all times the seat of poetic enthusiasm, and the more the social relations retain the stamp of olden time, that is, the nearer civilisation is to its infancy, the more general is the inclination to poetry and fables, the more passionate the sound of forced hyperboles and enthusiasm.

That the dwellers in a Kirghis tent are more disposed to poetry than the members of a polished society in Paris and London, must surprise no one. Among us it is only over a certain age that poetry indicates herself more or less; there are only certain individuals that linger round the Castalian fountains. In Central Asia those bowed down by age, as well as youthful lovers, passionately affect poetry, the warrior equally

with the shepherd, the priest as well as the layman,—each one attempts the composition of poetry or devises tales; and if this attempt is probably not successful in every instance, still, nevertheless, the habit of even listening to the compositions of others may be said to be universal.

Since literature in the East is in close connection with religion, we must then divide the literary productions of Central Asia at the commencement into two parts.

1st. The Literature of Islam or the Settled Nations.

2nd. The Literature of the Nomadic or Wandering Tribes.

This distinction dates from that time when, with the entrance of Islam, foreign literary conceptions became universally diffused, which, without retaining at the present time any special national character, are in vogue among the different followers of Islam. Poetry, for this is the essence of that literature, is always the same now with Arabs, Turks, Persians, and Central Asiatics. Vainly would one seek there the stamp of a national mint; it is everywhere the same sprightly imagery of the poets; everywhere the same metaphors, parables; everywhere the stereotyped image of the rose and the nightingale, the thorn-resembling eyelashes, the fuming vapors of rising sighs, &c. Everywhere the same muse of which the learned M. de Khanikoff rightly says:—"That she comes forth free and wild, like those plants of strange forms to be met with in the calcined

soil of southern Asia, covered with thistles and thorns, incrustated with salt; they diffuse through a rugged bark, here and there, aromatic, beneficent odours, and wave upon their withered stems wreaths of flowers of elegant forms and brilliant colours."—*Asiatic Journal*, vol. v., p. 297. Of this literature, however, which is well known in western countries, through many translations and learned treatises, we shall say nothing. We rather pass over the religious literature of many eccentric devotees, who, in zealous ardour towards God and the prophets, have written volumes full of pompous expressions on the subject of their love and resignation. These last productions in the three Khanats are considered as the exclusive property of the Mollah and Ishan world. The people listen very patiently to their recitals, but are not enthusiastic, for the mystical current of thought in copious language is beyond the reach of their understanding. What we wish to say, then, of the literature of Central Asia is confined, to speak correctly, to the Popular Poetry. Here we do still find something original, here some types which deserve the real name of Turkestan, and with these we wish to make our readers acquainted. The most poetically attuned people are in the Khanat of Khiva. This part of Central Asia had at the beginning of the twelfth century acquired the reputation of a special eminence in music, tuneful voices, distinguished poets and poetesses; indeed, it is hardly fifty years ago that in the courts of the Kadjars, in Teheran, a

Khivite lute-player was in great honour. Bokhara, before the ascendancy of the Turkish element, had only a few great poets, such as Rudeki and Figani; but these must be rather classed in Persian literature. To return to Khiva, I must remark that as it always surprised myself when I heard a heavy-looking, coarsely-dressed *Æzbeq*, with wild, sun-burnt features, sing one or another soft minor air; so, also, with travellers in general, this feeling will be found to exist on their entry among Turkomans and Kirghis. These people esteem music and poetry as their highest pleasure. After a fortunate adventure the marauder, however tired and hungry he may be, will listen in the open street with real delight to the *bakhshi* (troubadour), who comes to meet him. Returning home from a foray, or other heroic deed, the young warriors are in the habit of amusing themselves throughout the night with poetry and music. In the desert, where man is either ignorant of the luxuries of life, or does without them, it is, nevertheless, that the *bakhshi* is very seldom wanting, and besides, that the latter are found in great numbers, going about to exercise their art. The nomads have the habit of amusing themselves with poetic games.

As people regard in company the happy finding of a rhyme or cadence as indispensable to education, the young nomad girl will also, say, give the preference to him who would answer her question in a verse with happy rhymes. The poetry of the *Æzbegs* consists

first of narratives, which either appeal to religious life or famous heroic deeds. The first are composed by the Mullah world, or by the more polished *bakhshis*, after Arabic or Persian sources, and adapted to native taste,—the last are genuine Tartar compositions, in which there are not wanting at times both glowing language and good metaphors. These tales of heroic exploits, which are similar to our romances, begin already to be of even greater extent, and are often recited or sung many evenings together, and although Islam plays here and there a conspicuous part, nevertheless those pieces are preferred in which home-heroes figure on well-known historic fields. Of these last-named compositions, one much esteemed in Central Asia may serve as a specimen. It bears as its title

“AHMED AND YUSUF,”

And is the history of two sons of heroes, who, after their country's fashion, even in early youth undertake a *tchapao* or *razzia* against heretical Iran, in which the leading motive is not so much the thirst for spoil as the chastisement of the unbelieving Shiites. Just at the beginning Yusuf harangues his heroes ready for the foray in the following fashion:—

“With the worthless fellow unite not, for he makes known the deepest secret. Speak no secret words in bad spots, for thy deep hidden mystery will become known. Better is the bare leaf than the faded rose. Better is dry earth than worthless grass. Better is a staff than

a stupid fellow-traveller. For he makes known the direction of thy route to the foe. Do not instruct the fool, because he will, nevertheless, reach the grave of misery unconsciously. When you enter at a good-for-nothing fellow's as a guest, he attacks you like the little cur, and makes his vice known. Would that I could give you the picture of a true hero! He draws his sword only for the destruction of the unbelievers. Do not march against the enemy with a coward, since he makes known the trodden track as well as his own path. Yusuf Beg says, 'Such a time is come. This home-land is for us no longer. Fools know not their own lair; they speak angrily, and make their evil speech known.' "

They march away. The report of their heroic deeds spreads far and wide, and naturally reaches their home-land. Here governed only petty princes, each of whom would take renowned warriors into his service. The usual career of warfare proceeds, and Yusuf takes the command, but only with the consent of his comrades.

They draw out afresh for an expedition against Guzel Shah, the Governor of Isfahan. The *Æzbegs* are overpowered by Persian cunning. Both princes are taken and dragged in chains to Iran. This misfortune rouses deep cries from the heart of Yusuf, and as he could not turn for sympathy to his captors, he pours forth his wail to the lofty hills that surround him, and exclaims:—

"Ye snow-bedecked, many coloured hills, what has befallen me; have you seen it? I am become the slave of these unbelievers; my tarrying behind, have you seen it? No one pities my tears, the hills only throb at my tears. With lashes around my head, how must I have stepped along the way; have you seen it? Heedless were my attendants. Ah! I weep tears of blood! How captured with Ahmed Beg came I here, have you seen it? I drink blood,—in this world too heavy is my sorrow! Walking on foot, unbelievers on steeds; have you seen it? Yusuf Beg says, 'I am inwardly consumed, my sorrow is endless. Dragged with these bound hands at a horse's pleasure, have you seen me?' "

He is then thrown into prison, where he finds a fellow-sufferer in the person of a Sunnite, who as enchanter and fortune-teller by profession, had drawn on himself the displeasure of the Persian monarch; and he also finds in the daughter of the gaoler, who had become enamoured of him, a kind friend. Up to this point the strifes, the mighty hero-deeds, the religious enthusiasm, are constantly detailed. From this point love also mingles in the strain. Yusuf Beg had left at home a sister and a lady love. The former vainly waiting his return, cries bitterly, and in tears calls on her maidens to loosen her hair; the latter, in his absence, maintains her passionate regard, and sends the trained cranes of the hero with a love-letter to him. It contains the following charge:—

"Oh, ye five cranes of Yusuf Beg! Rush out and draw near to N. Strengthen yourselves and fly away over the hills! Seeing Yusuf Beg, hasten back, that the hawk see not on the plains the tips of your wings. I am deprived of half my heart. Come back, asking him of his health! Hasten back! I was once the world-rose; flown hence is the nightingale of my grove! Should my lover be living, then brush with your lively wings early back. Should the red roses have become withered; should his life have reached its end; should my lover be dead, put on mourning, and weeping return! Calling on God, shake then your wings. With ardour look forth to the heaven; burst out for the town of Ürgendj. Break out and draw towards the town of N. Gain true intelligence, and come back. Oh, hear Gul Assl's cry! Carry to him my heart-sorrow! Oh, make a pilgrimage to his grave. Bring me a little dust, and hasten back."

The birds circle around the prison of their sorrowful master with plaintive chirping. He remarks them, and sends back to his home the following message:—

"Oh, ye cranes! Fly round me, right and left, in mazy sweep in air. Go back,—say my greeting to my people! Oh, ye cranes! right and left, looking round, go back,—say my greeting to my people! The crane flies and rests high in the air. Tired are his wings with the long way. Here in prison breaks out afresh my sorrow. Oh, greet, then, my kinsmen! Kharezm town is my home. There stays my friend,

my beloved, my well-wisher, my dear one, my tender one. Oh, greet her, my mother! my Kaaba! On the mountains of sorrow are pines high, high. Oh, pray for me all of you, young and old. Mournful autumn became my fate; before the life's blossoms had opened yet! Oh, greet for me my poor little sister! She from early morn waiting for me looks around. She is inwardly consumed by the torture of separation. Looking on the path in the morning with dishevelled hair, she cries: 'He is not come!' Her whole soul for me is waste and empty,—my love Gul Assl, for her I mourn. Oh, greet her! In one day, oh crane! thou wilt reach from here to Kharezm. On the way thither go over the seven mountains. Note this thou hast seen, Yusuf Beg; greet the cowardly Begs for me."

The birds depart, but the heroes languish yet long in prison. At last they are condemned to die. But the miraculous power of the Sunnee saints saves them. All the weapons employed become blunt. The Persian tyrant remarks it, and summons the heroes to his presence. As the chief condition of obtaining the wished-for freedom, Yusuf must improvise in opposition to the court fool, Kökche, and in the event of his overcoming the latter in poetic ability, then he is to be restored to his home in full liberty. Yusuf improvises in strikingly bold language. He sings not the praises of the tyrant, but his own, while he says,—

"My people is a fine people. Winters there are

continually summers, gardeners tend the gardens, the trees give their fruits. In white tents repose the aged, the youths hunt around them. In cordial companionship live the youths, spending time in delight and pleasure. Fast as the wind the steeds. In racing thy steeds lay behind them. High soaring to heaven is the flight of the birds. In scorn they carry off men. Should intelligence of me arrive in a day, in a day also an army can come. Out of six pounds of thick cord are the strings of their bows. Their princes rule in equity, partiality is far from them. Hear me, Guzel Shah, thou unbeliever, should I return to wage war on thee, then know that one wave of my arm kills 100,000 men. Of Isfahan are their swords. Their streets are united bazaars, their fields like beds of tulips. With deers, hares, falcons, the fields of my people are full. Their free inhabitants are like Hatem,* their leaders are like Behram and Rustem in the day of battle, heroes in the strife. I am a slave without power, the unbeliever regards not this; without fate the fly dies not; let not my tears flow in vain."

He conquers, goes laden with treasure to Ürgendj; and though he has to undergo some hard struggles on the road, arrives happily home, where his reception is described in many deeply-moving, highly poetical images. After an interview with his beloved and his sister they conduct him to Lalakhan, his mother, who

* The oriental emblem for generosity.

in consequence of mourning for him for several years, has almost lost her sight. They bring her the joyful intelligence, which she disbelieves at first, and says,—
 "My ardent desire has bent me low. Am I really to see thee, my dear child? Sunk in sorrow, I only sighed, with eyes tremulously searching for you. The whole world would I look through could I really find thee, my child. Shall I mourn like the nightingale? Shall I, like Mansur, succumb to sorrow? Shall I, like Djerdjis, weep tears of blood? Am I again to find thee, oh my dear child," &c.

Yusuf Beg is led to her. He bides apart, and when he hears the cry of his mother, his anguish bursts forth for their fatal separation in yet more sorrowful words. By the voice his mother recognises him. Overpowered by excessive joy, she yet welcomes him in the following words:—

"Oh, thou seven years' sufferer in prison! Oh, thou balsam of my wounded heart! My star of happiness brightens. Vanished is the night of misery! Oh, prince of my people and land! Thou Rustem, thou hero of the world! My Yusuf, my glorious son, my comfort, my life-power! Thou crown of happiness, thou highest grace of my life! Lalakhan has found her son, the All-powerful has shown mercy to her. Gone is all pain from my breast, all sorrow. Yusuf, my son, is come!"

Soon after this the marriage of the lovers takes place, his hero blood suffers not the adventure-seeking

chief to rest. He collects an army, of which all the people of Central Asia form part. It is to take vengeance on Guzel Shah. Fortune attends his arms. The Persian is conquered; his old fellow-sufferer, Kamber, freed. He goes home crowned with glory, and the conquered Guzel Shah must pay him the following tribute.

DEMANDS OF YUSUF FROM GUZEL SHAH.

"He shall give me the whole Kharads of the town, N., —40,000 silk stuffs embroidered with gold, and 40,000 khimhal (stronger silk stuffs) shall he send. His tolls and taxes he shall collect; 40,000 magnificent dresses shall he send; 40,000 chargers, with golden saddles; 40,000 male and female camels; 40,000 young slaves with golden girdles; 40,000 youths, with beautiful eyes, shall he send; 40,000 oxen (well bred) shall he send; 40,000 rhinoceri, bound in chains, shall he send; 40,000 reins, well shod, with gold nails, and 40,000 grey falcons shall he send; 40,000 whips shall he send, the nails of which shall be symmetrically arranged; lashes, worked in silver, the handles with golden spangles; 40,000 iron greys, 40,000 foxes, 40,000 noble steeds, with snake like tails, shall he send; 40,000 ambling nags, 40,000 roadsters, 40,000 peasants, as caravan guides, shall he send; these, with black locks falling down right and left, whose faces are covered with moles; 40,000 wonderfully beautiful maidens, with golden girdles, shall he send; 40,000

caps, 60,000 turbans, shall he send. Also, 70,000 sheep and double horned rams shall he send. Yusuf Beg says he shall have all ready quickly; 100,000 Russian thalers and 10 gold dishes shall he send."

This was, in short, the material of an *Æzbe*g romance, of which there is an innumerable quantity, and of domestic tales also; and these are considered the most valuable portion of their literature. Here and there, one finds an union of religion and valour. The Heroes are taken out of the Islam world, as, for instance, in the story of Zerkum Shah, where Ali conquers the last named heathen prince of Persia, in wonderful engagements, which border upon the imaginative, and may be compared to the poems of Ariosto and Bojardi; finally, he converts him to Islam. There are also numerous tales of Ebu Muslim, the old Field-Marshal of the Abassides, and, later, the independent ruler of Khorassan and Kharezm. The historical facts are pretty old, and yet each *Æzbe*g, in the great desert which separates his home from Persia, points out many a spot where the Arabian Field-Marshal encamped, fought, and enacted supernatural deeds of valour. Finally, there are also the epics, in which the old princes of the house of Shah Kharezmian are extolled. In these, as well as in those which tell of Mohamed Emin, Khan of Khiva, Mohamed Ali Khan of Khokand, we find many an image which indicates the natural feeling and pride of the *Æzbe*gs.

Then follow, also, on these compositions, which are

always of greater length, short poems, which tell of love, morality, heroism,—or contain special directions for handling of weapons, dressing of horses, and the duties of a good warrior. These are, for the greater part, productions of plain burghers, professional Bakhshis, people who are unacquainted with reading and writing, and leave their poetry to be written by others; or, finally, productions by women and young girls, who break out into poetic effusions from the fire kindled by passion. I brought with me a pretty collection, written on soiled paper, in a bad hand, bound in rough leather, which I found among the Turkomans at a Bakhshi's, who hid the "Opus Curiosum" in the broad leg of his boots; and it has really very strange things in it, sometimes not without beauty. We wish to produce some specimens, under the names of the writers; some of them appear to be anonymous. The first one, in the genuine Oriental style, mourns the transitory condition of humanity and the vanity of the world.

ALLAH YAR.

1. To build castles in this world is a fruitless thing; finally, all will become ruin, and building is really not worth the trouble.
2. Day and night, for each poor wanderer to labour and strain himself, is really not worth the trouble.
3. Friends! For idle good in this empty world,

to mourn and lament oneself, is really not worth the trouble.

4. To do homage to passion out of ostentation, to torment the poor and the sick, is really not worth the trouble.

5. To destroy the lands of Islam, and to draw the sword to annihilate, is really not worth the trouble.

6. With taxes, duties, with hundredfold griefs and sorrows to vex Molla Khodja,—nay, the whole world, is really not worth the trouble.

7. As you cannot, Allah Yar, stand the brunt of the world, why plague yourself going up and down it? it is really not worth the trouble.

REVNAK.

1. I went to my love one evening, on foot, treading softly. In sweet sleep lay the dear one. I embraced her softly, softly.

2. I took a kiss from her lips and refreshed my soul by it. I embraced her tender limbs, and kissed her once more,—softly, softly.

3. I said, give me a kiss, then. What, are you not ashamed, said she? Return whence you came, quickly,—treading softly, softly.

4. I was obstinate, and would not go. She seized my arm and pushed me out. At last, I saw no other chance, and sneaked off,—softly, softly.

5. I departed; could not endure separation, and

came back. Oh, merciless one, I implore thee, give me a kiss,—softly, softly.

6. Too genial to suit European taste.

7. Revnak says, as the whole world is full of jokes and sport, so let no one blame me, and read this softly, softly.

MESHREF,

1. My soul blazes in flame, yet my mistress comes not. What said I,—Mistress! The beloved of my heart comes not.

2. I am inwardly consumed for the love of this cypress-like beauty. She is so cruel. Into her thoughts I enter not.

3. I see in dreams her ringlets, and rise deeply saddened at noon. From this lock of her hair my heart separates not.

4. Medjnun and Leila, take a lesson from me in love; my charming dear one heeds me not.

5. The life of foolish Meshref seems coming to its end, and the sad flirt heeds me not.

FUZULI.

1. Hold fast to the leading strings of modesty, for nothing is lovelier than modesty. Immodesty, mark this well, advances neither in this nor that world.

2. Oh! bird of my heart, flutter not in the air, but light on the hand of a king. The too high-flying hawk is never employed in the chase.

3. Desire treasure only from God; he has many storehouses. Should a drop only fall to thee for portion, this is amply sufficient: it ends not.

4. He, on whom the bird of happiness has rested, flies high, even without wings. He, on whom a dark lot has fallen, can scarcely raise his own hand.

5. Be always humble: strive to obtain a contrite spirit. He who suffers gold-hunger can never be satisfied.

6. You, Fuzuli, live in this world only for friendship. Winter lives in unfriendly hearts; never can it be summer there.

NESIMI.

1. *Saturday.* I met my cypress-like charmer, and she made me distracted.

2. *Sunday.* I was frantie, and a wanderer, and fell down senseless. I saw her face, and thought it was the shining moon.

3. *Monday.* At last I told her my heart-secret. Her eyes are like the narcissus, her cheeks resemble roses, her eyebrows are like a bow.

4. *Tuesday.* I became a huntsman, and went over the country (walked), yet I myself became the chased, and fell a sacrifice to the ever coy one.

5. *Wednesday.* My beauty walked in the fields; the nightingale saw her face and uttered wild cries.

6. *Thursday.* I said to my loved one: Hearken,

then, to my advice: hide thy secret still from both good and bad.

7. *Friday.* At last Nesimi saw her beauty, and drank to satiety of the sherbet of her rosy lips.

These, although through the poetic beauty of our European tastes they may not prove quite agreeable, give yet sufficient evidence that the inhabitants of Central Asia, apart from the roughness of their social relations, despite their incessant wars and forays, are not unskilled in the expression of traits of poetic feeling and tender love. The higher classes, though they do not look on the popular poetry with contempt, still wish to show traces of refined taste, a higher education, and enjoy the works of the elder Persian poets, or the books of Nevai, who stepped forward as the first of the Tchagatay poets in that kind of accomplishment, by which all the rest of the poets of the Islamitish polite world acquired renown. Nevai is a scholar of the celebrated Sheikh Abdurrahman Djami, during many years minister, field marshal, and governor of many provinces. He is of rare genius in poetry, and of great fertility; for he has produced more than thirty-two distinct works on poetry, history, morals, logic; and though his works are thoroughly Persian in spirit, and not pervaded with the spirit of Central Asia, yet the merit of having refined and ennobled the Turkish dialect of Central Asia cannot be taken from him.

Here I give a few specimens.

NEVAI.

1. Oh! heart, come, let us seek out a love; the cypress-growing one, the silver-cheeked one, let us seek.

2. As the darling of our eyes has looked for another friend, we also have eyes; therefore, another let us seek.

3. She greets the glance of men only with the dust of death. Why stand longing here? Another beauty let us seek.

4. Should I not find another like thee, who destroyest all the world, then a lowly, modest, but tender one, I will seek.

5. We will hasten through field and plain for the loved one; we will search garden and meadows. Her will we seek.

6. As the wish is good, it shall not remain unfulfilled. Among small and great, through all as far as possible, we wish to seek.

7. Oh! Nevai, from this passion you will never get freed. Come, therefore, before the meeting. Patience and perseverance let us seek.

NEVAI.

1. Absent from the loved one, the heart is like a land without a king. A land without a king is like a body without a soul.

2. Oh! Mussulman, what service is a body without

a soul! It is like black earth, which has no sweet smelling roses.

3. Black earth, that has no sweet smelling roses, is like a dark night, that has no bright moonbeams.

4. A dark night, that has no bright moon, is like darkness without a life-source.

5. A darkness, that has no life-source, is like a hell, which has no paradise-plains.

6. Oh! Nevai, as the loved give so much pain, it is certain that absence has its pangs, and the return no aid.

His Tchihardivan is beautiful, in which he celebrates the various ages of men, as also his adaptation of the well-known romances, Ferhad and Shirin, Medjnoun and Leila, Yusuf and Zuleikha, &c. Also his versification of some stories out of the 1,001 Nights, among which Prince Seif-ul-Muluk is the most successful. The following will serve as a specimen of the latter.

How Seif-ul-Muluk sets out from the town of Tchih, and journeys to the sea.

1. Come, tale-teller, let us hear the story of the adverse fate that befel the king's son?

2. The tale-teller replied, "That is hard to do; for the sword of sorrow cleaves the breast."

3. The prince had everything prepared for his departure, and first enquired about the town of Katine.

4. Satisfactory information was soon received; all his effects brought to the ship.

5. The whole crew were on board, the officers stood prepared, and the army equipped.

6. Then the prince betook himself on board, and confided his person to the "god's device" (the ship).

7. The pilots led the way, followed by an endless host of ships.

8. There sat the prince in sweet reverie, with smiling lips and a heart free from sorrow.

9. Six months he went across the sea, with pilot carefully watching his way.

10. Soon, Fate made him feel the sting of envy, and maliciously opposed him.

11. The sea became moved and girded on the blood-thirsty sword.

12. She opened herself, and the deluge wildly burst forth,—a deluge on all sides of streams of fire.

13. Every moment she showed a fresh scene of horror—every instant makes a thousand souls tremble.

14. Wildly swelled the waves, and threatened with mighty floods: with blood-thirsty jaws rush and roar the waters of the sea.

15. Then dark fearful winds arise—the horizon veils itself in pitchy darkness, and from the surface of the sea there sounds forth wild lamentation.

16. The day, bright with the sun, becomes a pitch-dark night. What a fearful day! It is the image of the day of judgment.

17. Wherever thou lookest no man is visible, not even the hand before the eyes,—all, and over all, is water.

18. The salt waves toss and roll incessantly, and raise the ships with keels upward.

19. Ever does the mighty sea rage and roar and mount with fury from the deep abyss.

20. Wild cries of creatures break out together, you would think it was the day of Resurrection.

21. In frightful hurly-burly one ship runs into the other; they split, and sink to the bottom of the sea.

22. The yards break, the planks fall in pieces, no possibility of escape.

23. Those hundred ships, said the tale-teller; that crew, those possessions,

24. All was wrecked on the sea coast, not a trace remained behind on the surface of the waters."

Wide as the territory of Turkestan-Proper extends, so far does the literature of which we have tried to give a slight sketch in the foregoing pages. And the further we betake ourselves from the frontiers into the desert, so in like manner does Islam become weaker, and here commences the change from Mohamedan civilisation into the old Shamanism. Among the Kirghis, notwithstanding the greater part of them profess Islam, one meets here and there with a tale which was generated in the Khanats; this, however, is looked upon as an exotic plant, and never preferred to the native. The popular poetry that one finds among them forms the point of transition from the currents of ideas of one society into another. Indeed, only two days' distance from the borders of

the Yaxartes, or northward from the Sea of Aral, may a bakhshi prosper, provided he can give in the best fashion tales or narratives of a purely Kirghis character. The poetry of the wild inhabitants of the steppe is more strange and odd than pretty. Here and there a happy image occurs, at other times there are only broken exclamations and solitary verses without the smallest connection. Since each person is a poet, a tale cannot long preserve its originality, either they add something new to it or cast the whole off, and few people can keep themselves from annexing to their songs the momentary influence of their fantasy. Of the love-lays of the Kirghis, Lewschine has introduced a short poem, not without charm, in his book, p. 380:—

"Dost thou see this snow? The body of my loved one is whiter still."

"Dost thou see the dropping blood of the slain lamb? Her cheeks are redder still."

"Dost thou see the trunk of this burnt tree? Her hair is blacker still."

"Dost thou know with what the mollahs of our Khan write? Her eyebrows are blacker than their ink."

"Dost thou see these glowing embers? Her eyes are brighter still."

Another specimen which follows this consists of detached sentences without any connection.

"The hawk has pounced on the ducks—on a flight of ducks—on a great flight!"

"I am very ill, and hardly ever think of eating," or "yonder is a tall pine-tree, the mist has fallen over it."

"Yesterday she allowed me to enter her house. Formerly she would come herself and caress me."

These more or less may be found among all purely popular tales of oriental people. There is even a trace of them in Hungarian, as for example,—

"Three apples and a half, I invited thee, and thou camest not," or "the crane flies high, singing beautifully, my loved one is angry, for she will not speak to me," &c.

A considerable number of tales or narratives of hero deeds exists among nomadic tribes, partly in verse, partly in prose. In these the spirit of the literature of the Turkish tribes of South Siberia is more prominent than that of their Central Asiatic neighbours; and I have heard many compositions of Kirghis Bakhshis, which I find with little variation and dialectic differences faithfully conveyed in the more recent work,—*"Proofs of the Popular Literature of the Turkish tribes of South Siberia,"* by Dr. Radloff.

It leaves no doubt that as the learned A. Schiffner, in the myths and tales of Dr. Radloff's collection, finds traces of a Buddhist influence, so many of the *irtegi* (tales) of the modern Kirghis have reached them from the further south, beyond Djungaria; for Islam, coming from the south-west, could take no firm root over the Yaxartes, and now that the mighty waves of

Russian power roll down from the north, will certainly prevail no further. This kind of literature belonging rather to the Turks of South Siberia, we shall conclude our present sketch by a tale of the Kirghis, which belongs to this little horde, according to European opinion, but according to inland appellation, to Mangishlak Kazagi, *i.e.*, a Kirghis of Mangishlak. It is from the book of Bronislas Zaleski, who, as a Polish exile, dwelt nine years in the desert, and on his return, 1865, published under the title of *"La Vie des Steppes Kirghizes."* Paris. Fol. 1865.

THE TALE OF KUGAUL.*

Man is, in Heaven, helpless without God; on earth, powerless without a horse.

There was once a Kirghis, named Buruzgay. He had great numbers of sheep and horses, and nothing was wanting to him if God had not denied him children. He was alone, consequently, in an advanced state of life. He said not his daily prayer (*namaz*), nor kept the enjoined feasts. One day, the sorrow of his childless condition overcame him, and he determined to go to the Holy places, in the hope that his prayers might obtain for him a son. He forged for himself shoes of iron, and took a staff of iron in his hand, and so betook himself on his way. He travelled

* I adopt the orthography of the original, although Kugaul (hunter) Barzagai (master lion) instead of Buruzgay would be preferable.

and travelled ten years long, and probably more. So long, so long did he travel, until his iron shoes were quite worn out, and only the handle of his iron staff remained. At last, he fell down on the ground, prostrate. Great were his sufferings, for he could neither raise himself up nor die.

Lo! before him appeared a holy man, who perceived him lying on the earth, had compassion on him, bent over him and enquired what ailed him. Buruzgay could not utter a word. The holy man fell on his knees, recited his prayer, (namaz) and prayed the Almighty to loosen the tongue of the unhappy man. Hardly had he done this, when Buruzgay began to feel his strength revive. He related his history, and on what grounds he had abandoned his aoul. The holy man withdrew a short distance, and continued in prayer until God said to him, "Thou art well pleasing in my sight. I will accomplish thy wish. But why dost thou interest thyself in Buruzgay? He pays no impost, he says no prayer (namaz), he observes no fast. How shall I have compassion on him?" "Lord," said the holy man, "in time to come he will serve Thee devoutly, and will repeat his prayers; only do not reject my intreaties. Grant my prayer and take me for an hostage." Then God said, "Depart, faithful servant, thy prayers are granted. Enquire of Buruzgay what is his desire. Will he have forty sons and forty daughters, or only one son and one daughter especially approved by me."

The holy man returned to Buruzgay. He found him quite restored, and on his knees; and he cried aloud with joy, "Oh, God, I have not lied to Thee: Buruzgay, before my return, had begun to perform his duty." He then told Buruzgay the words of God. "What shall I do with forty sons and forty daughters? If the Almighty hear my prayers, he will give me one son and one daughter." The holy man blessed him, and conveyed back to the Lord his reply. Buruzgay found his iron shoes as though unworn, and betook himself to his aoul. Approaching it, he appeared to recognize his steppe and flocks. He viewed all with heartfelt joy. Slowly and slowly regaining his recollection, he perceived that nothing had changed since his departure. He approached a shepherd, to enquire of him as to the owner of the herds. The shepherds did not recognise him, he had so fallen away, and become so changed through fasting and hardships, and his clothes were worn out. "What is our master to thee," enquired the shepherds, "go thy way." They went their way to their flocks. Buruzgay waited until their return, and questioned them afresh. The shepherds drove him away as a poor beggar (baygouche), without wishing to speak to him, till at last he uttered his name. They immediately looked at him attentively, recognised him, and told him that his wife, whom he had left in the family way, was near her confinement, and they were expecting guests in the aoul. Then, without waiting for his

reply, the shepherds ran off swifter than an arrow, and coming to Buruzgay's wife, demanded the *suy-undji*, (the customary gift for good news). They received it, and informed the wife of the arrival of her husband. She was highly delighted, and immediately afterwards Buruzgay entered. A few days after his arrival, his wife was delivered of two fine, strong children,—twins. One was a son, the other was a daughter. Buruzgay was beside himself with joy, and he kept constantly meditating on what names he should give these children, with whom God had rejoiced his old age. Whilst he was buried in thought, his former intercessor with Heaven, the holy man, came to him, and said, "Thou wilt name thy son Kugaul, and thy daughter Khanisbeg. And Buruzgay hearkened to the holy man, who immediately left him.

The children grew, and were beautiful. Four years passed away. The twins began to learn shooting, with little bows prepared for them. Kugaul easily learned to shoot, and ten years passed away. At this time, it came to pass that a mighty Sultan gave a feast (*Toy*). During the banquet, he gave notice that he wished a lofty mast to be erected, with a piece of gold on the summit, and that whoever could pierce with his arrow the gold piece, should be the husband of his daughter. A host of competitors presented themselves. The mast was very high; they shot in turns; none could pierce the gold piece, and the renowned archers of the Steppe missed their aim. At

length, the last guest at the banquet missed also. The Sultan cried out, "are these all the young people that there are in the Steppe? Have none stayed away who will let fly an arrow for the hand of the Sultan's daughter?" "Only one remains," they replied, "Kugaul, son of Buruzgay; but he is only a little boy ten years old." "That matters nothing," said the Sultan, "bring him here immediately." They went into the *aoul* to seek him. He appeared on a broken-winded horse, in old clothes, with a bow at his back. He had plenty of beautiful clothes, and good horses, for his father was rich, and denied him nothing, but he wished, before the rich, to appear poor and humble. When the Sultan's wife saw him riding forward, she cried out immediately, "This shall be my son-in-law, and none other among those present." Arrived at the mast, Kugaul would not immediately draw his bow.

"You are many," said he; "I am alone, and young; and if I were to hit successfully, I might, perhaps, not then receive the hand of the Sultan's daughter. The Sultan assured him that he would give him his daughter, but only on the condition that he should shoot successfully. Kugaul prepared to pierce the gold piece. He took aim, bent his bow so powerfully, that his lean, miserable horse, sank beneath him. He struck him with his whip until he rose. Kugaul took aim again, stretched the cord afresh. This time the horse only bent the knee. The arrow went off and pierced

the centre of the golden piece. Kugaul, exhausted with the effort, dismounted, unsaddled his horse, lay down on the ground, and, reclining his head on the saddle, fell asleep. He slept there three days long in his miserable attire, little as he was on a poor saddle. The Sultan had fully intended not to give his daughter to such a wretched-looking being. In vain Kugaul awaited the messengers. No one came, and he thought of some means by which he could obtain his bride. Suddenly a woman appeared before him from the Sultan's household, and explained to him fully the position of circumstances. Kugaul said to her, "Return to the Sultan, and tell him that I give him until mid-day to-morrow for consideration. If he does not then give me his daughter, and forty laden camels, and forty carpets, I will kill him and exterminate his whole family." The woman took a fancy to Kugaul, imagining him to be a great warrior (*batyr*), returned quickly to the aoul of the Sultan, gave the Sultana an account of the meeting, who rushed to her husband, saying, that Kugaul would become a great hero (*batyr*), and if he should not keep his word, he would draw on himself a disgrace darker than the earth. The Sultan's wife spoke many similar speeches, until at last her husband resolved to marry his daughter, and he gave Kugaul notice to that effect. Kugaul now attired himself in splendid robes, mounted a magnificent courser, and presented himself to the Sultan. The marriage was celebrated, and after the accustomed wedding

feast (toy) Kugaul conducted his young wife home, and returned to his father's aoul. Forty camels, laden with costly objects, and covered with forty carpets followed him. This was the dower of the bride. When he reached home, Kugaul's wife lowered her veil, according to the custom of the Kirghis. But when they were in the presence of his father and mother, Kugaul lifted it for the first time. Hardly had his parents seen her countenance, when they presented her gifts of horses and cattle. Then, because they had not guessed her favourite colours for animals, the daughter-in-law did not fall at their knees to thank them. The old Buruzgay was angry at this, and cried out, enraged, "What an animal is this maiden! We have given her a host of presents and she will not humble herself before us, nor give us even the usual salute (*selam*)."

She replied, "What are your presents to me? I do not require them. You have not given me the very best. Behind the house there is a chesnut mare, she sinks knee-deep in the sand; she alone suits me. For she will produce a stallion, which will save my Kugaul from many misfortunes, and become a true warrior's steed. Give me this mare, she is the most valuable, and I prefer her to all." "My daughter-in-law is, though young, prudent enough," said Buruzgay. This pleased him, he became reconciled to her, gave her the mare, and the young bride fell at the feet of her parents, and gave the usual greeting. A beautiful tent was erected near the old

people, and the newly-married dwelt therein, and the wife of Kugaul ordered her servants to attend to the chesnut mare as the apple of their eye. They then dug a deep recess, covered it with grass, and there the mare was protected and well fed. During the night a fire was lighted around. Forty days passed and the mare brought forth a colt, a little bay stallion. The servants ran immediately to apprise the lady, and demanded a reward for the joyful intelligence. "Wait another forty days," she answered; "take great care of the stallion, give him plenty to eat and drink." The servants obeyed, and when the appointed time was passed they returned to their mistress, who informed them that from that moment they were all free, and could go where they wished. As for the young colt, a silk noose of forty fathoms was prepared,—they fed him on pure barley, milk, and kishmish (a kind of dry raisin), and he grew up with Kugaul. It happened at this time that the Khan (chief of the Kirghis) came on a visit to the old Buruzgay, and when he saw Khanisbeg and the wife of Kugaul they pleased him so much that he fell senseless to the ground. They brought him back to life, and prepared food for all. They all set to work to cut meat for mishbarmak (a Kirghis dish). The Khan did the same, but whilst his hands were occupied his eyes admired the beautiful women. He became inflamed with a mighty passion, and could not turn his looks away from her face. So absorbed

was he that he did not even remark, that instead of cutting meat he had cut his own finger, and did not discover this for some minutes. Aware of it, he became so ashamed that he could cut nothing,* and not to displease his host he made belief as though he were tasting the dishes. He took leave quickly, and returned home with a concealed longing in his heart. Hardly had he reached it when he gathered his friends and relatives together, and consulted with them on the means he should take to remove Kugaul, and become possessed of his wife and his sister. Every body said that he could not kill him, for he was far too great a hero.

But they devised another plan; they resolved to send Kugaul against a hostile horde with the command to bring the Khan, who was there ruling, alive or dead. This idea pleased the love-lorn Khan. People assured him that the envoy could not return under ten years, and it was indeed very probable that he might perish. They sent for Kugaul immediately, and gave him the instructions. He returned home to his aoul and related to his wife the commands he had received. "Not on this account does he send thee," replied she, "I know the feelings of his heart. When he was here he was seized with a passionate longing for me and thy sister; he will have us and send thee

* This same episode occurs in the romance of Yusuf and Zuleikha, where Zuleikha's friends at the banquet are so astonished at the beauty of Yusuf that instead of paring the pomegranates before them they cut off the skin with their fingers.

point of returning, when, on the opposite side, he discovered the aouls of the Khan. Hither he directed his course; flew over the tents and flocks, and saw everything. No one guessed that the bird was Kugaul's horse, only the wife of the hero (Batyr) had a presentiment that some one was coming to her, and nigh at hand, which idea she communicated to her sister. The bird returned to Kugaul, related what he had seen, that the Khan had carried off his wife and sister, taken his flocks, compelled his father to collect tezek (a fuel made of manure), his mother to tend the sheep. The horse began to weep afresh. Kugaul prayed God to come to his assistance, so that he might punish his insulting foe. He then commanded the horse to convey him forthwith to his mother. He departed, and soon found her in the steppe, occupied in tending the sheep. He threw himself into her arms. "Why dost thou thus embrace me?" said the good old woman; "can it be that thou art my son?" "If I am not thy son, am I not worth as much as he?" "Oh, no; none in the steppe is worth as much as my son." "Have you no news of him?" "I do not know where he is. The Khan has despatched him against a hostile people; since that time I have never heard talk of him. Only, to-day it appears to me that I heard the noise of his horse's wings; but I do not know whether it was reality or a trick of Satan." "And is it long since thy Kugaul departed?" "Yes, yes; a long, long, very long time." "But I am Kugaul himself. Dost thou not recognise

me?" The old woman looked at him more attentively, and she did not recognise him, and said: "No, thou art not Kugaul; but if thou art his companion, or if thou knowest anything of him, then speak. But do not deceive me—do not torment me." "I am Kugaul," cried the son. "It was my horse that flew over thy head this day." But the old woman was still incredulous. He asked her if Kugaul had no birth-mark, and she replied, that he had a black spot on his shoulder, big as a hand. He then asked his mother to rub his shoulder (a common habit among the Kirghis). "But," the old woman replied, "the sheep will run about in all directions, and the Khan will beat me; for he often beats me. Go, then, and let me manage my flocks." But he insisted and pressed, and said, that if they wished to beat her, he would protect her. At last the old woman consented. She took off the khalat (upper garment) and the shirt, and proceeded to rub his shoulders. She perceived the black spot large as a man's hand, threw herself on the neck of the young man, and cried out, "Thou art Kugaul, thou art my Kugaul;" and she wept for joy. "Did you not, then, recognise me, mother?" said Kugaul. "Is it, then, so long a time that I have been? And you, my poor dear mother, how altered you are! You have grown old and grey, and your eyes are red with tears." And he embraced her, weeping. "I knew not my child," replied his mother; "how long you have been absent! But the Khan has attacked our aoul, carried off thy wife and

sister, and all our effects, and reduced thy father and myself to be his slaves. I have been constantly expecting thee; but I have lost all memory: I cannot tell how long a time has passed. I know only that it is a long time, a very long time, that thou hast left us." "Be tranquil, mother," said Kugaul; "the evil days are terminating, and all begins anew to go right. God will aid me. Return to the aoul; hasten to get in thy sheep, without paying attention that it is yet early. If any one inquires about me, say that I am not far off; but not a word more." He took leave of her, and went his way. The old woman returned to the aoul, but she did not walk as usual,—she ran; she, who could hardly before catch a lamb, now chased three or four at once,—so much had her strength improved. The Khan remarked it, and said to those around him: "That old wife of Buruzgay must have received intelligence of her son." He approached her, and questioned her about her son. "He is here,—he is come," replied the old mother. "You will not be able henceforth to make me suffer any more." She spoke boldly; for her interview with her son had filled her heart with joy and hope. The Khan turned pale with fright, and soon he perceived Kugaul, who, mounted on his celebrated steed, advanced to him. Kugaul stopped at some distance, then spoke, without descending from his horse. "You have deceived me, you wished to get rid of me, to carry off my wife and sister. I thought that you acted loyally with me, and

went out at thy bidding as a true man. But thou art only a hound, a perjured miscreant, a robber. We must reckon. But what shall I gain by thy solitary death. They would say, that Kugaul, the Batyr, has only killed the Khan. Gather, then, thy army together." And the Khan begged of him to grant him three days to assemble his people. Kugaul consented, and departed. The Khan sent his orders into all the aouls of his horde, and drew together a large armament of his people around him. Kugaul prayed meanwhile to God. At the day appointed he came, and said: "You are my Khan; I will not shoot first at you,—you begin." The Khan shot: missed his aim. "I will not yet shoot at thee," said Kugaul; "gather together thy best marksmen, and command them to shoot against me; if they do not hit me, then I will shoot." The best marksmen of the Khan stepped out of the ranks, and shot. Each shot an arrow at Kugaul, but his horse transformed himself into an eagle, then into a lark; protected him against all the shots, by raising himself up in the clouds—and against all the arrows, by crouching down in the grass of the steppe. They could not hit him. Three days Kugaul permitted them thus to shoot against him. On the fourth, he said to the Khan: "Well, since you are my master, you have shot against me,—you and your servants, for three days. Now comes my turn." "Do what you like," said the Khan. Kugaul placed the best hunter, and then two archers, and the Khan himself in a line behind them.

He placed himself opposite to them, and, turning to his horse, said: "My true steed, rest firm now, and change not thy position, in order that I may, with a single arrow, kill all four." The horse stayed still as a stone. Kugaul drew the string with all his might: the arrow went through huntsman, archers, and the Khan himself. When the people saw that the Khan was dead, they ran away on all sides. Kugaul followed them. He reached, on horseback, now this one, then that one, from the height of the clouds; and all that he struck, died. At last he gave over his work of extermination. He returned to his aoul, found there his parents, his wife, and sister, and seized on the possessions of the Khan. Among the women and children that the servants brought in, there was the daughter of the Khan. Kugaul took her for his second wife. He married his sister, Khanisbek, to a very rich Khan of a neighbouring tribe, and he himself became also Khan.

So ends the story. The old people say (added Mourzakay) that all this is the exact truth, and that all the events happened in the steppes. I did not see them; but we must believe what the old people tell us.

CHAPTER XIX.

RIVALRY BETWEEN RUSSIA AND ENGLAND IN CENTRAL ASIA.

It is three years ago since, in the closing chapter of my Travels in Central Asia, I expressed my surprise and dissatisfaction at the indifference of Englishmen towards Russian progress in those regions. I then indicated not only the exact course of Russian procedure on the Yaxartes, but also its steadily approaching influence on British India. Abstaining purposely from all far-reaching political reflections, I was as brief and concise as possible, and could hardly have believed that the unassuming remarks of a European, just returned home from Asia, would be found worthy of closer consideration. Nevertheless, these few lines were discussed and dwelt upon by almost every organ of the English and Indian press, from the *Times* to the *Bengal Hirkaru*. Only a very small proportion of those various journals attached itself in any measure to my ideas; the most of them, on the contrary, rejected my good counsel; and without directly ridiculing my judgment, raised from all sides a loud-sounding Hosannah over the happy change in English poli-