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A

GENERAL, HISTORICAL, AND TOPOGRAPHICAL

DESCRIPTION

OF

Mount Caucasus.

WITH A CATALOGUE OF PLANTS INDIGENOUS TO THE
COUNTRY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE WORKS OF
DR. REINEGGS AND MARSHAL BIEBERSTEIN,
BY CHARLES WILKINSON.

William Couling. 1817.

VOL. I.



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1807.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following work may claim an additional interest from the political changes that have occurred since it was put to the press. Hostilities have been renewed between Persia and Russia. Accounts state, that Prince Mahommed Mirza has carried his arms as far as the river Oxus, which separates the province of Korasan from the Great Bucharia. The cities of Cabul and Kandahar have already submitted to Feth Ali Shah; and many solemn embassies have been sent to the Emperor, to assure him of the allegiance of the country, to the confines of India. To the eastward, Abbas Mirza had entered the desert of Moghan*, at the head of a formidable force, and detached 40,000 men to invest Georgia. After taking the fort of Kalagail*, at the confluence of the rivers Aras and Kurr, they proceeded to the district of Bembek*, about four days' march from the capital. The Russian garrison were killed or taken prisoners; and a great quantity of artillery fell into the enemy's hands. Ahmed, who commanded this expedition, has been rewarded by the king of Persia with the government of Erivan*, lying near the mountains of Ararat. Whether the Russians have entirely lost the kingdom of Georgia, and it has been restored to any of the family of the late Zaar Herakleus, or whether the Persians have incorporated it with their empire, we are not informed.

The deputation of Mirza Rhyza Han, from Feth Ali to Bonaparte, and the present made to him, while at

* *Atlas*

Tilsit,

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Tilsit, of the Sultan's portrait, lead to the supposition of some political union; and as Feth Ali declared that he would not enter into any truce or peace with Russia, while his friend and ally the GREAT EMPEROR was at war with her, we may conjecture that the treaty of Tilsit has been, or will be, succeeded by another with the king of Persia. Perhaps the eruption of the Persians into Georgia was only a *ruse de guerre*, to embarrass the Emperor Alexander, by dividing his forces. The French envoy at the court of Persia will be authorised to settle the differences between the two courts, and to organize the preparations: we have already heard of 50,000 camels for the conveyance of provisions. The probability of these conjectures is strengthened by the great preponderance of the French party in the cabinet of Petersburg, and by the threat held out to England of a league between France, Russia, and Persia, to attack the East Indies.

This appears a most gigantic project on the part of France. Supposing an army to be collected in Lithuania, they have a distance of at least twelve or fourteen hundred miles to march, through the heart of Russia, before they can reach the confines of Persia. Should they embark at the ports of Astrachan* and Kislar*, they have to encounter all those contagious disorders which reign continually on the coast of the Caspian. The navigation of that sea is very dangerous; and the nearest Persian ports they could make are Farhabad or Ashreff, a passage of above 160 leagues. There are only two routes across the Caucasian mountains: one along the coast through the defiles of Derbend*; the other by Mosdok*. Here they would meet with inaccessible summits, tremendous precipices, impassable torrents,

* *Atlas* *

and

ADVERTISEMENT.

and impracticable forests. The nations who inhabit them are a ferocious race, and almost all highly inimical to Russia, owing to her frequent attempts to subdue them. In the campaign of 1796, in which Marshal Bieberstein was engaged, the Persians laid waste the provinces between the Aras and Kurr; and the Russians lost between 12 and 14,000 men by the insalubrity of the climate and the harassing warfare of the Lesghaes. And after being a few months in possession of Daghestan, the remains of their fine army were recalled by the late Emperor Paul, when he ascended the throne.

This gigantic plan, particularly as war is declared between the two powers, becomes of the greatest interest to Great-Britain; and the question, as to the practicability of it, demands the most serious consideration, as it manifests the possibility of an attack on our Indian possessions, from a quarter we should not have expected.

Of the various nations which are scattered over that immense tract of alpine country, Reineggs has furnished us with more particulars than any other traveller we are acquainted with.

N. B. Although the Marshal's catalogue of plants has already been made public, the translator has been induced to reprint it, as the work would otherwise have been incomplete.

In regard to the names of places, the orthography of them ~~are~~ *are* probably, the most correct, *by* having been copied from the Russian atlas.*

* Published in 1801.—

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

THE high character attached to the following work in Germany, is the principal motive which induced the translator to present it to the literary world. Professor Zach, the celebrated astronomer at Gotha, mentions it in the following terms: "It contains a rich treasure of new and important accounts and observations; collected from the papers of a man, who travelled five times through the Caucasian mountains."

The Medes, Persians, and the Romans, considered Caucasus as being the rampart of the civilized world, against the irruptions of the barbarous hordes. This alpine range offers the most lively interest to historians of nature, and of the human race. Amongst the innumerable tribes which inhabit it, some are remains of those Asiatic swarms which so often passed and repassed these mountains: others are aboriginal tribes, whose antiquity extends to the first association of mankind. Their infinitely varied phraseology, cannot but retain much of the elementary principles of their primitive languages: their physiognomy itself recalls the most noble character of that great Japhetic race, of which the Persians, Greeks, Slavonians, Goths, Germans, and the Celts, are but branches of a later date.

Caucasus might be the original country of all the domestic animals, and of all the plants cultivated in Europe and in Asia; for all the climates of Europe are combined here. The charms and the horrors of nature are inter-

mixed: often a single hill separates spring from winter, as it does Europe from Asia.

On a subject so interesting, the reader will regret that Dr. Reineggs has not been more explicit and circumstantial. The first part of his work is deficient in that arrangement which the geography of a country, very superficially known, seems to require. No man appears to have been more competent to the undertaking. His knowledge of botany and mineralogy, his medical profession, his facility in acquiring the Asiatic languages, and, above all, his great friendship with the prince of Georgia, furnished him with ample means of thoroughly investigating Mount Caucasus. Perhaps, however, we may regret it the less, as Marshal Bieberstein, who has already favoured us with an account of the countries between the rivers Terek and Kurr, has since been commissioned to explore other parts of the Caucasian alps; a description of which he has promised to communicate. The German editor states, that the Doctor's MSS. were shamefully mutilated after his death; this will explain the cause of his accounts being so very imperfect.

As the reader may wish to know something of his author, the following biographical sketch is adjoined.

Dr. Reineggs' real name was Ehlich, and he was born in Nov. 1744, at Eisleben in the county of Mansfeld, in Saxony. From his earliest years the grand object of his wishes was a knowledge of the world, and to become a celebrated character. At the age of fourteen, he began to study surgery under his cousin; but showed no signs of future talents. In 1762 he went to Leipzig, and applied very closely to physic, for some years, under the direction of Professor Ruediger, and became his amanuensis. During his residence in Leipzig, he learnt the Latin and French languages, and employed himself in mineralogical researches. Suddenly the mysterious adventurer

venturer disappeared, even without taking leave of his friend. However, he soon wrote to him; and gave his address at Vienna.

About Michaelmas, 1768, he appeared again in Leipzig, very handsomely dressed, and well provided with money. But he observed the strictest *incognito*, and never went out in the day-time. After three days he set off post, without saying where he was going; and begged his friend to forward his trunks, under a fictitious direction, to Nürnberg. Scarcely at the age of four and twenty, he now bade an eternal farewell to his name, his family, and to his country. About the year 1770 he proceeded to Vienna; where, finding himself in very reduced circumstances, he engaged with Count Kohary, the director of the theatre, as an actor, with a stipend of 600 florins. He likewise attended the public lectures on physic, botany, and chemistry; and particularly the city hospital, which became the source of his future good fortune.

Among the patients was the coachman of the Dowager Princess Lichtenstein, who had a very bad hand. Reineggs undertook the cure, happily succeeded, and would accept of no remuneration. When the coachman returned to his place, he related the circumstance to his mistress, who said: "He must be a good man; bring him here, I wish to be acquainted with him." The Doctor soon presented himself, and, after enquiring into his situation, the princess promised him the same stipend for six years, if he would relinquish the theatre; and to procure him a doctor's diploma, provided he should conduct himself properly, and attend to his studies.

Our author now began to rise in reputation. He applied with great zeal to the sciences, and formed a plan of visiting the East; the seat of alchemy and of female

beauty, of which he was an impassioned amateur. To forward his views he attended the oriental academy, studied the languages, sought acquaintance with the Armenians, Greeks, Turks, and other Asiatics, who reside in that capital; and endeavoured to inform himself of their laws, customs, commerce, &c.; but particularly how a European traveller ought to regulate his conduct, and what situations he might be placed in.

Reineggs was visited one morning by his friend Count Kohary, who was all astonishment at finding him in rags, with a long beard, laden with chains, and digging in his garden. "You must think, Count," said he, "that I am out of my mind; but you are mistaken. You know my plan of visiting the East; I may be unfortunate, and be made a slave: this is my preparation!" Then showing his friend a basket full of stones; "I carry this," he continued, "once every day up and down stairs, and sleep on the floor; and to convince yourself, follow me." He took the basket, containing, at least, two cwt. of stones, on his shoulders, and walked up stairs to his room, where lay a coarse woollen mattress. "Here," said he, "I have slept this month past; I let my beard grow, that I may be habituated to it. Perhaps, some time or other, I may profit by this experience, and perhaps not; however, we must learn to submit to inconveniences. I have already learnt a great deal of the world, but there may be much more of which I have no idea. My state of probation will soon be over, and then I will pay you a visit."

In 1773, having received a pecuniary present from his benefactress, he repaired to Tyrnau in Hungary, took a doctor's degree, and returned to Vienna to make his fortune as a practitioner. However, finding no success equal to his wishes, he proceeded to Venice with Count Stuart, where he met his old friend Kohary. The latter,

latter, to retrieve his affairs, had also determined to go to Turkey, and endeavoured to persuade the Doctor to accompany him, but in vain.

In 1776 Reineggs landed at Smyrna. After visiting the antiquities, and enjoying for some time the social intercourse of that opulent city, he sailed for Constantinople. His good conduct there procured him the English protection, and by that the esteem of the whole diplomatic corps. He now devoted his time to the Arabic and Turkish languages; and had forgotten the romantic Count, (who thought and dreamt of nothing but oriental bliss,) when one morning his servant informed the Doctor of his master's arrival. This was a thunder-stroke to Reineggs, who considered the Count as little better than a madman, and used every argument to induce him to return to Europe. The attempt was fruitless, for Kohary swore that he would live and die with him. Finding that nothing would avail, the Doctor, with great regret, took leave of his friend Ahmet Effendi, who provided him with letters to the different governors, and every thing necessary for the journey; and moreover presented him with a horse richly caparisoned, and 3,000 florins in money (about 300*l*.)

In October, 1777, our travellers left Constantinople with a caravan for 'Tocat, where they arrived after a journey of three and twenty days; and, as winter was setting in, the Doctor determined to remain until the spring. Whenever a Turk sees a European, he imagines that he must be a physician. Hence our author was visited every morning by numerous invalids, and, as he attended to their complaints, he soon gained the love of the whole city; but particularly the friendship of the Muphti, Kadi, and Vaivode, so that they were seldom separated. At last, after some violent disputes, (which are not worth the detail), the Doctor and the Count were obliged

obliged to part. The latter, finding that medicine was so much in repute amongst the Asiatics, had persuaded Reineggs to let him visit a lady in her harem, and try his skill. Thinking that her disorder was the cramp in the matrix, he ordered a strong dose of assafœtida pills, which almost killed her. Having lodged Kohary in the house of the Muphti, the Doctor returned post to Constantinople; where the joy of meeting again his friend Ahmet would have induced him to postpone his journey to Persia, if the plague had not obliged him to return without delay.

On the road he became acquainted with a Georgian ambassador, who had been sent to the Porte by the Zaar Herakleus, and was on his return to Teflis. At last he arrived at Erzerum, the capital of Armenia Major. He then visited Uitsch-Mihasin, or the Three Churches, where he remained some days at the country-seat of the Chalif of Armenian Christians. At Teflis he was received with very great honours. A mutual friendship between him and the Zaar soon arose. Reineggs yielded to his earnest request of passing some years in Georgia, and the Zaar provided him with a sumptuous establishment. A casual circumstance soon united them in closer bonds.

The Zaar's eldest son had been attacked with a violent fever, and restored by the Doctor's skill. As a remuneration the Zaar sent him a thousand piastres in specie, with the richest stuffs and pelisses to an equal amount. And from that period, whenever Reineggs appeared publicly at court, or at the prince's table, the seat next to his son was always allotted to him. He afterwards translated into Persian, Sonnenfel's "*Principles of Police*;" which the Zaar himself translated into the Georgian language, and had printed at the press our author procured from Venice at a great expence. And as the prince considered that no one was so capable as
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the Doctor of enforcing those principles, he presented him with a tract of country containing 500 families, with the exclusive privilege of introducing them throughout Georgia.

According to his journal, it appears that he left Teflis on the 10th of July, 1781. He assigns no particular reasons for not having remained longer in Georgia, where he was so highly honoured, and where he was so much richer and happier than he could ever expect to be in Russia. After a very dangerous journey of twenty-five days, he arrived at the Russian fortress of Mosdok. He there became acquainted with General Fabrizian; who, finding him an intelligent and useful man, took him to Petersburg. He was well received, but obliged to observe the greatest secrecy. Professor Pallas is the only person with whom he became acquainted; and to whom he communicated a brief description of the state of Georgia, which the Professor has published. In the course of the above year he was appointed negociator, and sent back to Georgia; where he completed the Subjection-Act, by which the kingdom of Georgia came under the sceptre of Russia. This act was signed at Fort Georgievskaja, on the 24th of July, O. S. (4th of August,) 1783.

During that period it is supposed that he investigated the Caucasian mountains more accurately, and had the intention of penetrating as far as Tibet, if possible. But whether he accomplished his object is not known, nor the exact time of his return to Russia. Probably it was in 1784. The following anecdote sufficiently characterizes him as a linguist.

Dr. Ræneggs now began to appear publicly in Petersburg in his Persian costume, and excited a great deal of attention. Though it is no uncommon thing for subjects of Russia to appear at court in their national dress,
yet

the Doctor, as a *Persian*, became the object of general observation. A troop of inquisitive courtiers were making their remarks on his dress, the object of his mission, &c. but no one addressed him, as they imagined that the Persian could converse in no language but his own. After some pause, the Doctor delivered his sentiments on some particular object in the *Russian* language. Every person was astonished that a Persian should speak such good Russ. But to be convinced that he could no longer understand them, they began to express their admiration in *French*. The Doctor soon proved that he was no stranger to that language; yet was so guarded, that they could not imagine what countryman he was. At last the conversation commenced in *German*. Rein-eggs did not leave them long in the dark, but solved the riddle by declaring, to their utter astonishment, that he was no Persian, but a native of Germany. For his public services he received a respectable pension, was made a College-Assessor, and afterwards attached to the imperial college of physicians, in the quality of counsellor.

In 1789 he accompanied Prince Potemkin to Moldavia, to negociate a peace between the Russians and Turks, and returned in 1790. In the course of his travels he had accustomed himself so much to opium, that he was in the habit of taking ten grains or more daily. For four years before his death, he was subject to violent bleedings at the nose almost every day, particularly in the months of December and January. This he attributed to opium. One cold morning, as he entered the post-office, which was uncommonly heated, and full of noxious effluvia from the number of persons collected together, he was seized with apoplexy. A surgeon, who was called in at the moment, incautiously bled him; which probably hastened his end, as he had long been debilitated through frequent loss of blood from the nose,

He

He died in March, 1793, in his 49th year; much too early for his numerous friends and admirers to enjoy the fruits of that fund of information, which he had collected during a laborious life, and many years spent in travelling.

The following letter, addressed to Professor Hacquet in Laybach, will give the reader an idea of the Doctor's travels. The valuable information, which he must have derived from them, appears to be totally lost to the world.

Teflis, Jan. 21, 1780.

“How melancholy is my situation, that I have so long been deprived of news from Europe; and how disconsolate I am at not having received one word from you, my dearest friend, for upwards of twelve months! I should accuse myself of this neglect, if the numerous occupations of a country, where I have lived this last year and a half, had not obliged me to daily labour, and rendered me unfit for thinking of corresponding. In the meantime, accept the present as an earnest of other information you may expect. A friend, who sets off to-morrow for Smyrna, is the only opportunity I have met with for these last twelve months: therefore I will not lose it, but will give you a short description of my tour.

“I wrote to you from Bagdad in 1778. I hoped shortly to have seen Persia; but Kerim Khan died, and the kingdom became a scene of the most dreadful commotions. My friend, Haroun el Reschid, was murdered. By crossing Media to Armenia Major, I escaped the hands of the Osmans, who would not listen to peace after the death of Kerim. I visited Nineveh and its antiquities; Arbela's beautiful and immeasurable plain; the fruitful fields of Media; the naphtha-dropping mountains
of

of the Assyrian frontier; and keeping along the banks of the Euphrates, arrived at the source of that celebrated river in the mountains of Armenia Major. It rises from innumerable holes in a blackish kind of rock; the water near the springs is so intensely cold, that neither men nor cattle can drink of it: three minutes suffice to kill a bird plunged into it up to the neck. I immersed my hand for five minutes, and, after suffering inexpressible pain, could scarcely restore it to its natural warmth in twenty-four hours.

“ From thence I went to Erzerum, and seeing every thing worthy of attention, as well as the city of Artze, which Tournefort sought for in vain, I proceeded through Kars to Uitsch-Mihasin. During eleven days I investigated the Araratian mountains, and was disposed to descend the Araxes through Aderbigana to the Caspian, and get into Persia. However, it did not please the Director of my destiny that I should see that kingdom.

“ Ibrahim, prince of Karabagh, lay ill of a fever. It was hardly known that I was a physician, before I was called on to attend him. Thanks to the *cantharidibus*, which are quite unknown in the East, the prince recovered, and I was laden with presents. Of raw silk only I received a thousand pounds. The great friendship between Ibrahim and the Zaar Herakleus soon made me known in Georgia, and by a solemn embassy the Zaar invited me to Teflis. I arrived in that city, (which Tournefort very erroneously thinks was *Acrostopolis*,) and was received with great distinction. I found the Zaar a most worthy man: I loved him; and our friendship became so mutual, that I was allowed to call him *father*. Yet fate had determined that our union should be closer. His eldest son was dangerously ill. The little knowledge of my European praxis restored him,
and