

Chapter XXVI: Progress of The Huns.--Part I.

Manners Of The Pastoral Nations.--Progress Of The Huns, From China To Europe.--Flight Of The Goths.--They Pass The Danube.--Gothic War.--Defeat And Death Of Valens.--Gratian Invests Theodosius With The Eastern Empire.--His Character And Success.--Peace And Settlement Of The Goths.

In the second year of the reign of Valentinian and Valens, on the morning of the twenty-first day of July, the greatest part of the Roman world was shaken by a violent and destructive earthquake. The impression was communicated to the waters; the shores of the Mediterranean were left dry, by the sudden retreat of the sea; great quantities of fish were caught with the hand; large vessels were stranded on the mud; and a curious spectator [1] amused his eye, or rather his fancy, by contemplating the various appearance of valleys and mountains, which had never, since the formation of the globe, been exposed to the sun. But the tide soon returned, with the weight of an immense and irresistible deluge, which was severely felt on the coasts of Sicily, of Dalmatia, of Greece, and of Egypt: large boats were transported, and lodged on the roofs of houses, or at the distance of two miles from the shore; the people, with their habitations, were swept away by the waters; and the city of Alexandria annually commemorated the fatal day, on which fifty thousand persons had lost their lives in the inundation. This calamity, the report of which was magnified from one province to another, astonished and terrified the subjects of Rome; and their affrighted

imagination enlarged the real extent of a momentary evil. They recollected the preceding earthquakes, which had subverted the cities of Palestine and Bithynia: they considered these alarming strokes as the prelude only of still more dreadful calamities, and their fearful vanity was disposed to confound the symptoms of a declining empire and a sinking world. [2] It was the fashion of the times to attribute every remarkable event to the particular will of the Deity; the alterations of nature were connected, by an invisible chain, with the moral and metaphysical opinions of the human mind; and the most sagacious divines could distinguish, according to the color of their respective prejudices, that the establishment of heresy tended to produce an earthquake; or that a deluge was the inevitable consequence of the progress of sin and error. Without presuming to discuss the truth or propriety of these lofty speculations, the historian may content himself with an observation, which seems to be justified by experience, that man has much more to fear from the passions of his fellow-creatures, than from the convulsions of the elements. [3] The mischievous effects of an earthquake, or deluge, a hurricane, or the eruption of a volcano, bear a very inconsiderable portion to the ordinary calamities of war, as they are now moderated by the prudence or humanity of the princes of Europe, who amuse their own leisure, and exercise the courage of their subjects, in the practice of the military art. But the laws and manners of modern nations protect the safety and freedom of the vanquished soldier; and the peaceful citizen has seldom reason to complain, that his life, or even his fortune, is exposed to the rage of war. In the disastrous period of the fall of the Roman empire, which may justly be dated from

the reign of Valens, the happiness and security of each individual were personally attacked; and the arts and labors of ages were rudely defaced by the Barbarians of Scythia and Germany. The invasion of the Huns precipitated on the provinces of the West the Gothic nation, which advanced, in less than forty years, from the Danube to the Atlantic, and opened a way, by the success of their arms, to the inroads of so many hostile tribes, more savage than themselves. The original principle of motion was concealed in the remote countries of the North; and the curious observation of the pastoral life of the Scythians, [4] or Tartars, [5] will illustrate the latent cause of these destructive emigrations.

[Footnote 1: Such is the bad taste of Ammianus, (xxvi. 10,) that it is not easy to distinguish his facts from his metaphors. Yet he positively affirms, that he saw the rotten carcass of a ship, ad Modon, in Peloponnesus.]

[Footnote 2: The earthquakes and inundations are variously described by Libanius, (Orat. de ulciscenda Juliani nece, c. x., in Fabricius, Bibl. Graec. tom. vii. p. 158, with a learned note of Olearius,) Zosimus, (l. iv. p. 221,) Sozomen, (l. vi. c. 2,) Cedrenus, (p. 310, 314,) and Jerom, (in Chron. p. 186, and tom. i. p. 250, in Vit. Hilarion.) Epidaurus must have been overwhelmed, had not the prudent citizens placed St. Hilarion, an Egyptian monk, on the beach. He made the sign of the Cross; the mountain-wave stopped, bowed, and returned.]

[Footnote 3: Dicaearchus, the Peripatetic, composed a formal treatise, to prove this obvious truth; which is not the most honorable to the human species. (Cicero, de Officiis, ii. 5.)]

[Footnote 4: The original Scythians of Herodotus (l. iv. c. 47--57, 99--101) were confined, by the Danube and the Palus Maeotis, within a square of 4000 stadia, (400 Roman miles.) See D'Anville (Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xxxv. p. 573--591.) Diodorus Siculus (tom. i. l. ii. p. 155, edit. Wesseling) has marked the gradual progress of the name and nation.]

[Footnote 5: The Tatars, or Tartars, were a primitive tribe, the rivals, and at length the subjects, of the Moguls. In the victorious armies of Zingis Khan, and his successors, the Tartars formed the vanguard; and the name, which first reached the ears of foreigners, was applied to the whole nation, (Freret, in the Hist. de l'Academie, tom. xviii. p. 60.) In speaking of all, or any of the northern shepherds of Europe, or Asia, I indifferently use the appellations of Scythians or Tartars. * Note: The Moguls, (Mongols,) according to M. Klaproth, are a tribe of the Tartar nation. Tableaux Hist. de l'Asie, p. 154.--M.]

The different characters that mark the civilized nations of the globe, may be ascribed to the use, and the abuse, of reason; which so variously shapes, and so artificially composes, the manners and opinions of a European, or a Chinese. But the operation of instinct is more sure and simple than that of reason: it is much easier to ascertain the appetites

of a quadruped than the speculations of a philosopher; and the savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of animals, preserve a stronger resemblance to themselves and to each other. The uniform stability of their manners is the natural consequence of the imperfection of their faculties. Reduced to a similar situation, their wants, their desires, their enjoyments, still continue the same: and the influence of food or climate, which, in a more improved state of society, is suspended, or subdued, by so many moral causes, most powerfully contributes to form, and to maintain, the national character of Barbarians. In every age, the immense plains of Scythia, or Tartary, have been inhabited by vagrant tribes of hunters and shepherds, whose indolence refuses to cultivate the earth, and whose restless spirit disdains the confinement of a sedentary life. In every age, the Scythians, and Tartars, have been renowned for their invincible courage and rapid conquests. The thrones of Asia have been repeatedly overturned by the shepherds of the North; and their arms have spread terror and devastation over the most fertile and warlike countries of Europe. [6] On this occasion, as well as on many others, the sober historian is forcibly awakened from a pleasing vision; and is compelled, with some reluctance, to confess, that the pastoral manners, which have been adorned with the fairest attributes of peace and innocence, are much better adapted to the fierce and cruel habits of a military life. To illustrate this observation, I shall now proceed to consider a nation of shepherds and of warriors, in the three important articles of, I. Their diet; II. Their habitations; and, III. Their exercises. The narratives of antiquity are justified by the experience of modern times; [7] and

the banks of the Borysthenes, of the Volga, or of the Selinga, will indifferently present the same uniform spectacle of similar and native manners. [8]

[Footnote 6: Imperium Asiae ter quaesivere: ipsi perpetuo ab alieno imperio, aut intacti aut invicti, mansere. Since the time of Justin, (ii. 2,) they have multiplied this account. Voltaire, in a few words, (tom. x. p. 64, Hist. Generale, c. 156,) has abridged the Tartar conquests. Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar, Has Scythia breathed the living cloud of war. Note *: Gray.--M.]

[Footnote 7: The fourth book of Herodotus affords a curious though imperfect, portrait of the Scythians. Among the moderns, who describe the uniform scene, the Khan of Khowaresm, Abulghazi Bahadur, expresses his native feelings; and his genealogical history of the Tartars has been copiously illustrated by the French and English editors. Carpin, Ascelin, and Rubruquis (in the Hist. des Voyages, tom. vii.) represent the Moguls of the fourteenth century. To these guides I have added Gerbillon, and the other Jesuits, (Description de la China par du Halde, tom. iv.,) who accurately surveyed the Chinese Tartary; and that honest and intelligent traveller, Bell, of Antermony, (two volumes in 4to. Glasgow, 1763.) * Note: Of the various works published since the time of Gibbon, which throw light on the nomadic population of Central Asia, may be particularly remarked the Travels and Dissertations of Pallas; and above all, the very curious work of Bergman, *Nomadische Streifereyen*. Riga, 1805.--M.]

[Footnote 8: The Uzbecks are the most altered from their primitive manners; 1. By the profession of the Mahometan religion; and 2. By the possession of the cities and harvests of the great Bucharìa.]

I. The corn, or even the rice, which constitutes the ordinary and wholesome food of a civilized people, can be obtained only by the patient toil of the husbandman. Some of the happy savages, who dwell between the tropics, are plentifully nourished by the liberality of nature; but in the climates of the North, a nation of shepherds is reduced to their flocks and herds. The skilful practitioners of the medical art will determine (if they are able to determine) how far the temper of the human mind may be affected by the use of animal, or of vegetable, food; and whether the common association of carniverous and cruel deserves to be considered in any other light than that of an innocent, perhaps a salutary, prejudice of humanity. [9] Yet, if it be true, that the sentiment of compassion is imperceptibly weakened by the sight and practice of domestic cruelty, we may observe, that the horrid objects which are disguised by the arts of European refinement, are exhibited in their naked and most disgusting simplicity in the tent of a Tartarian shepherd. The ox, or the sheep, are slaughtered by the same hand from which they were accustomed to receive their daily food; and the bleeding limbs are served, with very little preparation, on the table of their unfeeling murderer. In the military profession, and especially in the conduct of a numerous army, the exclusive use of animal food appears to be productive of the most solid advantages. Corn

is a bulky and perishable commodity; and the large magazines, which are indispensably necessary for the subsistence of our troops, must be slowly transported by the labor of men or horses. But the flocks and herds, which accompany the march of the Tartars, afford a sure and increasing supply of flesh and milk: in the far greater part of the uncultivated waste, the vegetation of the grass is quick and luxuriant; and there are few places so extremely barren, that the hardy cattle of the North cannot find some tolerable pasture.

The supply is multiplied and prolonged by the undistinguishing appetite, and patient abstinence, of the Tartars. They indifferently feed on the flesh of those animals that have been killed for the table, or have died of disease. Horseflesh, which in every age and country has been proscribed by the civilized nations of Europe and Asia, they devour with peculiar greediness; and this singular taste facilitates the success of their military operations. The active cavalry of Scythia is always followed, in their most distant and rapid incursions, by an adequate number of spare horses, who may be occasionally used, either to redouble the speed, or to satisfy the hunger, of the Barbarians. Many are the resources of courage and poverty. When the forage round a camp of Tartars is almost consumed, they slaughter the greatest part of their cattle, and preserve the flesh, either smoked, or dried in the sun. On the sudden emergency of a hasty march, they provide themselves with a sufficient quantity of little balls of cheese, or rather of hard curd, which they occasionally dissolve in water; and this unsubstantial diet will support, for many days, the life, and even the spirits, of the

patient warrior. But this extraordinary abstinence, which the Stoic would approve, and the hermit might envy, is commonly succeeded by the most voracious indulgence of appetite. The wines of a happier climate are the most grateful present, or the most valuable commodity, that can be offered to the Tartars; and the only example of their industry seems to consist in the art of extracting from mare's milk a fermented liquor, which possesses a very strong power of intoxication. Like the animals of prey, the savages, both of the old and new world, experience the alternate vicissitudes of famine and plenty; and their stomach is inured to sustain, without much inconvenience, the opposite extremes of hunger and of intemperance.

[Footnote 9: Il est certain que les grands mangeurs de viande sont en general cruels et ferores plus que les autres hommes. Cette observation est de tous les lieux, et de tous les temps: la barbarie Angloise est connue, &c. Emile de Rousseau, tom. i. p. 274. Whatever we may think of the general observation, we shall not easily allow the truth of his example. The good-natured complaints of Plutarch, and the pathetic lamentations of Ovid, seduce our reason, by exciting our sensibility.]

II. In the ages of rustic and martial simplicity, a people of soldiers and husbandmen are dispersed over the face of an extensive and cultivated country; and some time must elapse before the warlike youth of Greece or Italy could be assembled under the same standard, either to defend their own confines, or to invade the territories of the adjacent tribes. The progress of manufactures and commerce insensibly collects

a large multitude within the walls of a city: but these citizens are no longer soldiers; and the arts which adorn and improve the state of civil society, corrupt the habits of the military life. The pastoral manners of the Scythians seem to unite the different advantages of simplicity and refinement. The individuals of the same tribe are constantly assembled, but they are assembled in a camp; and the native spirit of these dauntless shepherds is animated by mutual support and emulation. The houses of the Tartars are no more than small tents, of an oval form, which afford a cold and dirty habitation, for the promiscuous youth of both sexes. The palaces of the rich consist of wooden huts, of such a size that they may be conveniently fixed on large wagons, and drawn by a team perhaps of twenty or thirty oxen. The flocks and herds, after grazing all day in the adjacent pastures, retire, on the approach of night, within the protection of the camp. The necessity of preventing the most mischievous confusion, in such a perpetual concourse of men and animals, must gradually introduce, in the distribution, the order, and the guard, of the encampment, the rudiments of the military art. As soon as the forage of a certain district is consumed, the tribe, or rather army, of shepherds, makes a regular march to some fresh pastures; and thus acquires, in the ordinary occupations of the pastoral life, the practical knowledge of one of the most important and difficult operations of war. The choice of stations is regulated by the difference of the seasons: in the summer, the Tartars advance towards the North, and pitch their tents on the banks of a river, or, at least, in the neighborhood of a running stream. But in the winter, they return to the South, and shelter their camp, behind some convenient eminence, against

the winds, which are chilled in their passage over the bleak and icy regions of Siberia. These manners are admirably adapted to diffuse, among the wandering tribes, the spirit of emigration and conquest. The connection between the people and their territory is of so frail a texture, that it may be broken by the slightest accident. The camp, and not the soil, is the native country of the genuine Tartar. Within the precincts of that camp, his family, his companions, his property, are always included; and, in the most distant marches, he is still surrounded by the objects which are dear, or valuable, or familiar in his eyes. The thirst of rapine, the fear, or the resentment of injury, the impatience of servitude, have, in every age, been sufficient causes to urge the tribes of Scythia boldly to advance into some unknown countries, where they might hope to find a more plentiful subsistence or a less formidable enemy. The revolutions of the North have frequently determined the fate of the South; and in the conflict of hostile nations, the victor and the vanquished have alternately drove, and been driven, from the confines of China to those of Germany. [10] These great emigrations, which have been sometimes executed with almost incredible diligence, were rendered more easy by the peculiar nature of the climate. It is well known that the cold of Tartary is much more severe than in the midst of the temperate zone might reasonably be expected; this uncommon rigor is attributed to the height of the plains, which rise, especially towards the East, more than half a mile above the level of the sea; and to the quantity of saltpetre with which the soil is deeply impregnated. [11] In the winter season, the broad and rapid rivers, that discharge their waters into the Euxine, the Caspian, or the

Icy Sea, are strongly frozen; the fields are covered with a bed of snow; and the fugitive, or victorious, tribes may securely traverse, with their families, their wagons, and their cattle, the smooth and hard surface of an immense plain.

[Footnote 10: These Tartar emigrations have been discovered by M. de Guignes (*Histoire des Huns*, tom. i. ii.) a skilful and laborious interpreter of the Chinese language; who has thus laid open new and important scenes in the history of mankind.]

[Footnote 11: A plain in the Chinese Tartary, only eighty leagues from the great wall, was found by the missionaries to be three thousand geometrical paces above the level of the sea. Montesquieu, who has used, and abused, the relations of travellers, deduces the revolutions of Asia from this important circumstance, that heat and cold, weakness and strength, touch each other without any temperate zone, (*Esprit des Loix*, l. xvii. c. 3.)]

III. The pastoral life, compared with the labors of agriculture and manufactures, is undoubtedly a life of idleness; and as the most honorable shepherds of the Tartar race devote on their captives the domestic management of the cattle, their own leisure is seldom disturbed by any servile and assiduous cares. But this leisure, instead of being devoted to the soft enjoyments of love and harmony, is use fully spent in the violent and sanguinary exercise of the chase. The plains of Tartary are filled with a strong and serviceable breed of horses, which

are easily trained for the purposes of war and hunting. The Scythians of every age have been celebrated as bold and skilful riders; and constant practice had seated them so firmly on horseback, that they were supposed by strangers to perform the ordinary duties of civil life, to eat, to drink, and even to sleep, without dismounting from their steeds. They excel in the dexterous management of the lance; the long Tartar bow is drawn with a nervous arm; and the weighty arrow is directed to its object with unerring aim and irresistible force. These arrows are often pointed against the harmless animals of the desert, which increase and multiply in the absence of their most formidable enemy; the hare, the goat, the roebuck, the fallow-deer, the stag, the elk, and the antelope. The vigor and patience, both of the men and horses, are continually exercised by the fatigues of the chase; and the plentiful supply of game contributes to the subsistence, and even luxury, of a Tartar camp. But the exploits of the hunters of Scythia are not confined to the destruction of timid or innoxious beasts; they boldly encounter the angry wild boar, when he turns against his pursuers, excite the sluggish courage of the bear, and provoke the fury of the tiger, as he slumbers in the thicket. Where there is danger, there may be glory; and the mode of hunting, which opens the fairest field to the exertions of valor, may justly be considered as the image, and as the school, of war. The general hunting matches, the pride and delight of the Tartar princes, compose an instructive exercise for their numerous cavalry. A circle is drawn, of many miles in circumference, to encompass the game of an extensive district; and the troops that form the circle regularly advance towards a common centre; where the captive animals, surrounded

on every side, are abandoned to the darts of the hunters. In this march, which frequently continues many days, the cavalry are obliged to climb the hills, to swim the rivers, and to wind through the valleys, without interrupting the prescribed order of their gradual progress. They acquire the habit of directing their eye, and their steps, to a remote object; of preserving their intervals of suspending or accelerating their pace, according to the motions of the troops on their right and left; and of watching and repeating the signals of their leaders. Their leaders study, in this practical school, the most important lesson of the military art; the prompt and accurate judgment of ground, of distance, and of time. To employ against a human enemy the same patience and valor, the same skill and discipline, is the only alteration which is required in real war; and the amusements of the chase serve as a prelude to the conquest of an empire. [12]

[Footnote 12: Petit de la Croix (*Vie de Gengiscan*, l. iii. c. 6) represents the full glory and extent of the Mogul chase. The Jesuits Gerbillon and Verbiest followed the emperor Khamhi when he hunted in Tartary, Duhalde, (*Description de la Chine*, tom. iv. p. 81, 290, &c., folio edit.) His grandson, Kienlong, who unites the Tartar discipline with the laws and learning of China, describes (*Eloge de Moukden*, p. 273--285) as a poet the pleasures which he had often enjoyed as a sportsman.]

The political society of the ancient Germans has the appearance of a voluntary alliance of independent warriors. The tribes of Scythia,

distinguished by the modern appellation of Hords, assume the form of a numerous and increasing family; which, in the course of successive generations, has been propagated from the same original stock. The meanest, and most ignorant, of the Tartars, preserve, with conscious pride, the inestimable treasure of their genealogy; and whatever distinctions of rank may have been introduced, by the unequal distribution of pastoral wealth, they mutually respect themselves, and each other, as the descendants of the first founder of the tribe. The custom, which still prevails, of adopting the bravest and most faithful of the captives, may countenance the very probable suspicion, that this extensive consanguinity is, in a great measure, legal and fictitious. But the useful prejudice, which has obtained the sanction of time and opinion, produces the effects of truth; the haughty Barbarians yield a cheerful and voluntary obedience to the head of their blood; and their chief, or mursa, as the representative of their great father, exercises the authority of a judge in peace, and of a leader in war. In the original state of the pastoral world, each of the mursas (if we may continue to use a modern appellation) acted as the independent chief of a large and separate family; and the limits of their peculiar territories were gradually fixed by superior force, or mutual consent. But the constant operation of various and permanent causes contributed to unite the vagrant Hords into national communities, under the command of a supreme head. The weak were desirous of support, and the strong were ambitious of dominion; the power, which is the result of union, oppressed and collected the divided force of the adjacent tribes; and, as the vanquished were freely admitted to share the advantages of

victory, the most valiant chiefs hastened to range themselves and their followers under the formidable standard of a confederate nation. The most successful of the Tartar princes assumed the military command, to which he was entitled by the superiority, either of merit or of power. He was raised to the throne by the acclamations of his equals; and the title of Khan expresses, in the language of the North of Asia, the full extent of the regal dignity. The right of hereditary succession was long confined to the blood of the founder of the monarchy; and at this moment all the Khans, who reign from Crimea to the wall of China, are the lineal descendants of the renowned Zingis. [13] But, as it is the indispensable duty of a Tartar sovereign to lead his warlike subjects into the field, the claims of an infant are often disregarded; and some royal kinsman, distinguished by his age and valor, is intrusted with the sword and sceptre of his predecessor. Two distinct and regular taxes are levied on the tribes, to support the dignity of the national monarch, and of their peculiar chief; and each of those contributions amounts to the tithe, both of their property, and of their spoil. A Tartar sovereign enjoys the tenth part of the wealth of his people; and as his own domestic riches of flocks and herds increase in a much larger proportion, he is able plentifully to maintain the rustic splendor of his court, to reward the most deserving, or the most favored of his followers, and to obtain, from the gentle influence of corruption, the obedience which might be sometimes refused to the stern mandates of authority. The manners of his subjects, accustomed, like himself, to blood and rapine, might excuse, in their eyes, such partial acts of tyranny, as would excite the horror of a civilized people; but the power

of a despot has never been acknowledged in the deserts of Scythia. The immediate jurisdiction of the khan is confined within the limits of his own tribe; and the exercise of his royal prerogative has been moderated by the ancient institution of a national council. The Coroulai, [14] or Diet, of the Tartars, was regularly held in the spring and autumn, in the midst of a plain; where the princes of the reigning family, and the mursas of the respective tribes, may conveniently assemble on horseback, with their martial and numerous trains; and the ambitious monarch, who reviewed the strength, must consult the inclination of an armed people. The rudiments of a feudal government may be discovered in the constitution of the Scythian or Tartar nations; but the perpetual conflict of those hostile nations has sometimes terminated in the establishment of a powerful and despotic empire. The victor, enriched by the tribute, and fortified by the arms of dependent kings, has spread his conquests over Europe or Asia: the successful shepherds of the North have submitted to the confinement of arts, of laws, and of cities; and the introduction of luxury, after destroying the freedom of the people, has undermined the foundations of the throne. [15]

[Footnote 13: See the second volume of the Genealogical History of the Tartars; and the list of the Khans, at the end of the life of Geng's, or Zingis. Under the reign of Timur, or Tamerlane, one of his subjects, a descendant of Zingis, still bore the regal appellation of Khan and the conqueror of Asia contented himself with the title of Emir or Sultan. Abulghazi, part v. c. 4. D'Herbelot, Bibliotheque Orientale, p. 878.]

[Footnote 14: See the Diets of the ancient Huns, (De Guignes, tom. ii. p. 26,) and a curious description of those of Zingis, (Vie de Gengiscan, l. i. c. 6, l. iv. c. 11.) Such assemblies are frequently mentioned in the Persian history of Timur; though they served only to countenance the resolutions of their master.]

[Footnote 15: Montesquieu labors to explain a difference, which has not existed, between the liberty of the Arabs, and the perpetual slavery of the Tartars. (Esprit des Loix, l. xvii. c. 5, l. xviii. c. 19, &c.)]

The memory of past events cannot long be preserved in the frequent and remote emigrations of illiterate Barbarians. The modern Tartars are ignorant of the conquests of their ancestors; [16] and our knowledge of the history of the Scythians is derived from their intercourse with the learned and civilized nations of the South, the Greeks, the Persians, and the Chinese. The Greeks, who navigated the Euxine, and planted their colonies along the sea-coast, made the gradual and imperfect discovery of Scythia; from the Danube, and the confines of Thrace, as far as the frozen Maeotis, the seat of eternal winter, and Mount Caucasus, which, in the language of poetry, was described as the utmost boundary of the earth. They celebrated, with simple credulity, the virtues of the pastoral life: [17] they entertained a more rational apprehension of the strength and numbers of the warlike Barbarians, [18] who contemptuously baffled the immense armament of Darius, the son of Hystaspes. [19] The Persian monarchs had extended their western conquests to the banks of the Danube, and the limits of European Scythia. The eastern provinces of

their empire were exposed to the Scythians of Asia; the wild inhabitants of the plains beyond the Oxus and the Jaxartes, two mighty rivers, which direct their course towards the Caspian Sea. The long and memorable quarrel of Iran and Touran is still the theme of history or romance: the famous, perhaps the fabulous, valor of the Persian heroes, Rustan and Asfendiar, was signalized, in the defence of their country, against the Afrasiabs of the North; [20] and the invincible spirit of the same Barbarians resisted, on the same ground, the victorious arms of Cyrus and Alexander. [21] In the eyes of the Greeks and Persians, the real geography of Scythia was bounded, on the East, by the mountains of Imaus, or Caf; and their distant prospect of the extreme and inaccessible parts of Asia was clouded by ignorance, or perplexed by fiction. But those inaccessible regions are the ancient residence of a powerful and civilized nation, [22] which ascends, by a probable tradition, above forty centuries; [23] and which is able to verify a series of near two thousand years, by the perpetual testimony of accurate and contemporary historians. [24] The annals of China [25] illustrate the state and revolutions of the pastoral tribes, which may still be distinguished by the vague appellation of Scythians, or Tartars; the vassals, the enemies, and sometimes the conquerors, of a great empire; whose policy has uniformly opposed the blind and impetuous valor of the Barbarians of the North. From the mouth of the Danube to the Sea of Japan, the whole longitude of Scythia is about one hundred and ten degrees, which, in that parallel, are equal to more than five thousand miles. The latitude of these extensive deserts cannot be so easily, or so accurately, measured; but, from the fortieth degree, which

touches the wall of China, we may securely advance above a thousand miles to the northward, till our progress is stopped by the excessive cold of Siberia. In that dreary climate, instead of the animated picture of a Tartar camp, the smoke that issues from the earth, or rather from the snow, betrays the subterraneous dwellings of the Tongouses, and the Samoides: the want of horses and oxen is imperfectly supplied by the use of reindeer, and of large dogs; and the conquerors of the earth insensibly degenerate into a race of deformed and diminutive savages, who tremble at the sound of arms. [26]

[Footnote 16: Abulghasi Khan, in the two first parts of his Genealogical History, relates the miserable tales and traditions of the Uzbek Tartars concerning the times which preceded the reign of Zingis. * Note: The differences between the various pastoral tribes and nations comprehended by the ancients under the vague name of Scythians, and by Gibbon under inst of Tartars, have received some, and still, perhaps, may receive more, light from the comparisons of their dialects and languages by modern scholars.--M]

[Footnote 17: In the thirteenth book of the Iliad, Jupiter turns away his eyes from the bloody fields of Troy, to the plains of Thrace and Scythia. He would not, by changing the prospect, behold a more peaceful or innocent scene.]

[Footnote 18: Thucydides, l. ii. c. 97.]

[Footnote 19: See the fourth book of Herodotus. When Darius advanced into the Moldavian desert, between the Danube and the Niester, the king of the Scythians sent him a mouse, a frog, a bird, and five arrows; a tremendous allegory!]

[Footnote 20: These wars and heroes may be found under their respective titles, in the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of D'Herbelot. They have been celebrated in an epic poem of sixty thousand rhymed couplets, by Ferdusi, the Homer of Persia. See the history of Nadir Shah, p. 145, 165. The public must lament that Mr. Jones has suspended the pursuit of Oriental learning. Note: Ferdusi is yet imperfectly known to European readers. An abstract of the whole poem has been published by Goerres in German, under the title "*das Heldenbuch des Iran.*" In English, an abstract with poetical translations, by Mr. Atkinson, has appeared, under the auspices of the Oriental Fund. But to translate a poet a man must be a poet. The best account of the poem is in an article by Von Hammer in the *Vienna Jahrbucher*, 1820: or perhaps in a masterly article in *Cochrane's Foreign Quarterly Review*, No. 1, 1835. A splendid and critical edition of the whole work has been published by a very learned English Orientalist, Captain Macan, at the expense of the king of Oude. As to the number of 60,000 couplets, Captain Macan (Preface, p. 39) states that he never saw a MS. containing more than 56,685, including doubtful and spurious passages and episodes.--M. * Note: The later studies of Sir W. Jones were more in unison with the wishes of the public, thus expressed by Gibbon.--M.]

[Footnote 21: The Caspian Sea, with its rivers and adjacent tribes, are laboriously illustrated in the *Examen Critique des Historiens d'Alexandre*, which compares the true geography, and the errors produced by the vanity or ignorance of the Greeks.]

[Footnote 22: The original seat of the nation appears to have been in the Northwest of China, in the provinces of Chensi and Chansi. Under the two first dynasties, the principal town was still a movable camp; the villages were thinly scattered; more land was employed in pasture than in tillage; the exercise of hunting was ordained to clear the country from wild beasts; Petcheli (where Pekin stands) was a desert, and the Southern provinces were peopled with Indian savages. The dynasty of the Han (before Christ 206) gave the empire its actual form and extent.]

[Footnote 23: The aera of the Chinese monarchy has been variously fixed from 2952 to 2132 years before Christ; and the year 2637 has been chosen for the lawful epoch, by the authority of the present emperor. The difference arises from the uncertain duration of the two first dynasties; and the vacant space that lies beyond them, as far as the real, or fabulous, times of Fohi, or Hoangti. Sematsien dates his authentic chronology from the year 841; the thirty-six eclipses of Confucius (thirty-one of which have been verified) were observed between the years 722 and 480 before Christ. The historical period of China does not ascend above the Greek Olympiads.]

[Footnote 24: After several ages of anarchy and despotism, the dynasty

of the Han (before Christ 206) was the aera of the revival of learning. The fragments of ancient literature were restored; the characters were improved and fixed; and the future preservation of books was secured by the useful inventions of ink, paper, and the art of printing. Ninety-seven years before Christ, Sematsien published the first history of China. His labors were illustrated, and continued, by a series of one hundred and eighty historians. The substance of their works is still extant; and the most considerable of them are now deposited in the king of France's library.]

[Footnote 25: China has been illustrated by the labors of the French; of the missionaries at Pekin, and Messrs. Freret and De Guignes at Paris. The substance of the three preceding notes is extracted from the Chou-king, with the preface and notes of M. de Guignes, Paris, 1770. The Tong-Kien-Kang-Mou, translated by P. de Mailla, under the name of Hist. Generale de la Chine, tom. i. p. xlix.--cc.; the Memoires sur la Chine, Paris, 1776, &c., tom. i. p. 1--323; tom. ii. p. 5--364; the Histoire des Huns, tom. i. p. 4--131, tom. v. p. 345--362; and the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. x. p. 377--402; tom. xv. p. 495--564; tom. xviii. p. 178--295; xxxvi. p. 164--238.]

[Footnote 26: See the Histoire Generale des Voyages, tom. xviii., and the Genealogical History, vol. ii. p. 620--664.]