

perance, &c. (*Kong Frederichs den andens Krønike*, Copenhagen, 1680, p. 302). B. A mermaid imparts supernatural powers to a human being. Thus in the beautiful story of "The Old Man of Cury" (in Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, 1871) the old man, instead of silver and gold, obtains the power of doing good to his neighbours by breaking the spells of witchcraft, chasing away diseases, and discovering thieves. John Reid, the Cromarty shipmaster, was more selfish,—his "wishes three" being that neither he nor any of his friends should perish by the sea, that he should be uninterruptedly successful in everything he undertook, and that the lady who scorned his love should scorn it no more. C. A mermaid has some one under her protection, and for wrong done to her ward exacts a terrible penalty. One of the best and most detailed examples of this class is the story of the "Mermaid's Vengeance" in Mr Hunt's book already quoted. D. A mermaid falls in love with a human being, lives with him as his lawful wife for a time, and then, some compact being unwittingly or intentionally broken by him, departs to her true home in the sea. Here, if its mermaid form be accepted, the typical legend is undoubtedly that of *Melusina*, which, being made the subject of a full-fledged romance by Jean d'Arras, became one of the most popular folk-books of Europe, appearing in Spanish, German, Dutch, and Bohemian versions. *Melusina*, whose name may be a far-off echo of the *Mylitta* (*Venus*) of the Phœnicians, was married to Raymond of Lusignan, and was long afterwards proudly recognized as one of their ancestors by the Luxembourg, Rohan, and Sassenay families, and even by the emperor Henry VII. Her story will be found in Baring Gould's *Myths of the Middle Ages*. E. A mermaid falls in love with a man, and entices him to go and live with her below the sea; or a merman wins the affection or captures the person of an earthborn maiden. This form of legend is very common, and has naturally been a favourite with poets. Macphail of Colonsay successfully rejects the allurements of the mermaid of Corrievrekin, and comes back after long years of trial to the maid of Colonsay.¹ The Danish ballads are especially full of the theme; as "Agnete and the Merman," an antecedent of Matthew Arnold's "Forsaken Merman"; the "Deceitful Merman, or Marstig's Daughter"; and the finely detailed story of Rosmer Hafmand (No. 49 in Grimm).

In relation to man the mermaid is usually of evil issue if not of evil intent. She has generally to be bribed or compelled to utter her prophecy or bestow her gifts, and whether as wife or paramour she brings disaster in her train. In itself her sea-life is often represented as one of endless delights, but at other times a mournful mystery and sadness broods over it. The fish-tail, which in popular fancy forms the characteristic feature of the mermaid, is really of secondary importance; for the true Teutonic mermaid—probably a remnant of the great cult of the Vanir—had no fish-tail;² and this symbolic appendage occurs in such remote mythological regions as to give no clue to historical connexion. The Tritons, and, in the later representations, the Sirens of classical antiquity, the Phœnician Dagon, and the Chaldean Oannes are all well-known examples; the Ottawas and other American Indians have their man-fish and woman-fish (Jones, *Traditions of the North American Indians*, 1830); and the Chinese tell stories not unlike our own about the sea-women of their southern seas (Dennis, *Folklore of China*, 1875).

Quasi-historical instances of the appearance or capture of

¹ See Leyden's "The Mermaid," in Sir Walter Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*.

² Karl Blind, "New Finds in Shetlandic and Welsh Folk-Lore," in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1882.

mermaids are common enough,³ and serve, with the frequent use of the figure on signboards and coats of arms, to show how thoroughly the myth had taken hold of the popular imagination.⁴ A mermaid captured at Bangor, on the shore of Belfast Lough, in the 6th century, was not only baptized, but admitted into some of the old calendars as a saint under the name of Murgan (*Notes and Queries*, Oct. 21, 1882); and Stowe (*Annales*, under date 1187) relates how a man-fish was kept for six months and more in the castle of Orford in Suffolk. As showing how legendary material may gather round a simple fact, the oft-told story of the sea-woman of Edam is particularly interesting. The oldest authority, Joh. Gerbrandus a Leydis, a Carmelite monk (ob. 1504), tells (*Annales*, &c., Frankfurt, 1620) how in 1403 a wild woman came through a breach in the dike into Purmerlake, and, being found by some Edam milkmaids, was ultimately taken to Haarlem and lived there many years. Nobody could understand her, but she learned to spin, and was wont to adore the cross. Ooka Scharlensis (*Chronijk van Friesland*, Leeuw., 1597) reasons that she was not a fish because she could spin, and she was not a woman because she could live in the sea; and thus in due course she got fairly established as a genuine mermaid. Vosmaer, who has carefully investigated the matter, enumerates forty writers who have repeated the story, and shows that the older ones speak only of a woman (see "Beschr. van de zoogen. Meermin der stad Haarlem," in *Verh. van de Holl. Maatsch. van K. en Wet.*, part 23, No. 1786). As for the stuffed mermaids which have figured from the days of Bartholomew Fair downwards, it is enough to mention that exhibited in the Turf Coffee-house, London, in 1822, and carefully drawn by Cruikshank (compare Chambers, *Book of Days*).

The best account of the mermaid-myth is in Baring Gould's *Myths of the Middle Ages*. See also, besides works already mentioned, Pontoppidan, who in his logically credulous way collects much matter to prove the existence of mermaids; Maillet, *Telliamed*, Hague, 1755; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, i. 404, and *Aldän. Heldenlieder*, 1811; Waldron's *Description and Train's Hist. and Stat. Acc. of the Isle of Man*; Folklore Society's *Record*, vol. ii.; Napier, *Hist. and Trad. Tales connected with the South of Scotland*; Sébillot, *Traditions de la Haute Bretagne*, 1882, and *Contes des Marins*, 1882. (H. A. W.)

MEROE, in classical geography (Strabo, xvii. 2, 2; Pliny, ii. 73, v. 10; Ptol., p. 201), was the metropolis of Æthiopia, situated on an island of the same name between the Nile and the Astaboras (Atbara). The "island" is only an inaccurate name for the fertile plain between the two rivers. This Meroe, first mentioned by Herodotus (ii. 29 sq.), succeeded an older Ethiopian kingdom of Napata lower down the Nile, originally subject to and civilized from Egypt, but which afterwards became independent and even sent forth an Ethiopian dynasty to reign in Egypt, to which the So and Tirhaka of the Bible belonged (see ETHIOPIA). The name of Meroe in the form Merawi is now given to Napata. The later Meroe retained its independence when Egypt fell under foreign sovereigns. Diodorus (iii. 6) describes it as entirely controlled by the priesthood till a native prince Ergamenes destroyed the sacerdotal caste in the time of Ptolemy II. Queen Candace (Acts viii. 27) was probably sovereign of Meroe; see Lepsius's *Letters Eng. tr.*, pp. 196, 206; and comp. Strabo, xvii. 1, 54 for

³ Compare the strange account of the quasi-human creatures found in the Nile given by Theophrastus, *Histories*, viii. 16, pp. 299-300 of Bekker's ed.

⁴ See the paper in *Jour. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, xxviii., 1882, by H. S. Cuming, who points out that mermaids or mermen occur in the arms of Earls Caledon, Howth, and Sandwich, Viscounts Boyne and Hood, Lord Lytton, and Scott of Abbotsford, as well as in those of th. Ellis, Byron, Phené, Skeffington, and other families. The English heralds represent the creatures with a single tail, the French and German heralds frequently with a double one.

Queen Candace in Augustus's time when the Romans under Petronius advanced to Napata. Meroe was visited by Greek merchants; and the astronomical expedition of Eratosthenes determined its latitude with great accuracy. An exploring party in the reign of Nero found that the country below Meroe, formerly the site of many towns, had become almost wholly waste (Pliny, vi. 29). From the 6th to the 14th century of our era the Christian (Jacobite) realm of Dongola occupied the place of the older kingdom. The ruins of Meroe and Napata were fully explored by Lepsius in 1844, and the monuments are pictured in his *Denkmäler*.

MERSEBURG, the chief town of a district of the same name in the Prussian province of Saxony, is situated on the river Saale, 10 miles to the south of Halle and 17 to the west of Leipsic. It consists of a quaint and irregularly built old town, with two extensive suburbs, and contains six churches and several schools and charitable institutions. The cathedral is an interesting old pile, with a Romanesque choir of the 11th, a transept of the 13th, and a Late Gothic nave of the 16th century. Among its numerous monuments is that of Rudolph of Swabia, who fell in 1080 in an encounter with his rival Henry IV. It contains two paintings by Lucas Cranach. Contiguous to the cathedral is the Gothic chateau, formerly the residence of the Saxon princes and the bishops of Merseburg. The town-house, the post-office, and the "ständehaus" for the meetings of the provincial estates are also noteworthy buildings. The industries of Merseburg consist of the manufacture of cardboard and coloured paper, dyeing, glue-boiling, machine-making, calico-printing, tanning, and brewing. Its population in 1880 was 15,205.

Merseburg (i.e., "march-town") is one of the oldest towns in Germany. From the 9th century down to 1007 it was the capital of a countship of its own name, and from 968 to 1543 it was the seat of a bishop. In the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries it was a favourite residence of the German emperors, and at this time its fairs enjoyed the importance afterwards inherited by those of Leipsic. The town was repeatedly visited by destructive conflagrations in the 14th to 17th centuries, and also suffered severely during the Thirty Years' War. From 1656 to 1788 it was the residence of the dukes of Saxe-Merseburg. The great victory gained by the emperor Henry I. over the Huns in 933 is believed to have been fought on the Keuschberg near Merseburg.

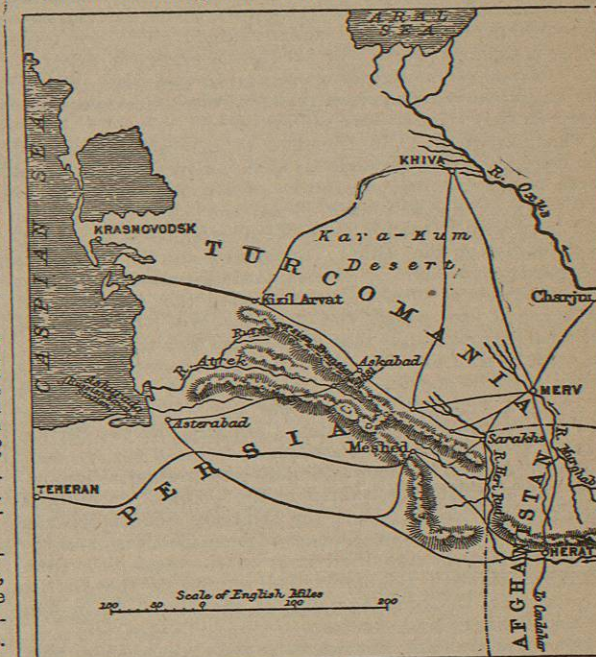
MERTHYR TYDFIL, or MERTHYR TYDVIL, a parliamentary borough and market-town of Glamorganshire, South Wales, is situated in a bleak and hilly region on the river Taff, and on several railway lines, 25 miles north-north-west of Cardiff and 30 east-north-east of Swansea. The town, which consists principally of the houses of workmen, is for the most part meanly and irregularly built, and at one time, on account of its defective sanitary arrangements, was frequently subject to epidemics of great severity. Within recent years great improvements have taken place, and the town now possesses both a plentiful supply of pure water and an excellent system of sewage. There are also some good streets with handsome shops, while in the suburbs there are a number of private residences and villas inhabited by the wealthier classes. Apart from its extensive iron and steel works, the town possesses no feature of interest. It is situated in the centre of the South Wales coal basin, and the rich coal-mines in the vicinity supply great facilities for the iron industries. At Merthyr Tydfil, which is said to have received its name from the martyrdom of a British saint Tydfil, there were smelting-works at a very early period, but none of any importance until 1755. From about forty years ago until 1875 the manufacture of bar iron developed with great rapidity, but since then the production of steel has largely taken its place. The borough returns two members to parliament. The population of the urban sanitary district in 1871 was 51,949, and in 1881 it was 48,857; the population of the

parliamentary borough, which includes the parish of Aberdare and parts of the parishes of Llanwonno and Merthyr Tydfil and of Vainor (Brecon), and has an area of 29,954 acres, was in the same years 97,020 and 91,347.

MERV, MERU, or MAOUR,¹ a district of Central Asia, situated on the border-land of Iran and Turan.

The oasis of Merv lies in the midst of a desert, in about 37° 30' N. lat. and 62° E. long. It is about 250 miles from Herat, 170 from Charjuï on the Oxus, 360 from Khiva, and 175 from Gawars, the nearest point in the newly acquired (1881) Russian territory of Akhal.

The great chain of mountains which, under the name of Paropamisus and Hindu-Kush, extends across the Asiatic continent from the Caspian to China, and forms the line of ethnic demarcation between the Turanian and Indo-Germanic races, is interrupted at a single point; that point is on the same longitude with Merv. Through or near the



Neighbourhood of Merv.

trouée or gap which nature has created flow northward in parallel courses the rivers Heri-rud (Tejend) and Murghab, until they lose themselves in the desert of Kara-kum—that large expanse of waste, known also as Turcomania, which spreads at the northern foot of the mountains, and stretches from the lower Oxus to the Caspian.

Whether as a satrapy of Darius and subsequently as a province of Alexander, whether as the home of the Parthian race, whether as a bulwark against the destructive waves of Mongol invasion, or later as the glacis of Persian Khorasan, the valleys of those rivers—the district of Merv

¹ Merv is the modern Persian name. The river *Margus*, now the Murghab, on which was built the ancient city, is derived from *Margu*, the name of the province as recorded in the Behistan inscriptions of Darius. Spiegel connects the name *Margu* with old Bactrian *merogho*, bird, in allusion to the numerous swarms of birds that gather there. So, too, the river name Murghab means bird-water. The district appears to have been known in the 5th century as Mar-i-rud, so that the river was then the Marv. The name *Merv* for the district occurs in the Armenian geography ascribed to Moses of Khorene, written probably in the 7th century (ed. Patkanoff). Maour is the Uzbek name, and of comparatively recent date.

—have ever been important outposts on the borders of Iran. In bye-gone epochs their banks have, under powerful rulers, been studded with populous and flourishing cities, which bore the name of "Sovereign of the Universe" (*Merv Shah-i-jehan*), and vied for fame with "Balkh, the Mother of cities"; of late times, with weakness or absence of government, those same banks have become choked with fallen battlements and ruins, the home of the snake and the jackal.

Merv has soared to prosperity or fallen to decay according to her political status at the moment, and history, which repeats itself, may yet have to sing her praises in the future as it has done in the past. All that human life in the desert requires is there,—water in abundance, and a soil unsurpassed for fertility. Good government is alone wanting to turn those natural gifts to full account.

The present inhabitants of the district are Turcomans of the Tekke tribe, who, like the other tribes inhabiting Turcomania, enjoyed until the approach of the Russians virtual independence, and acknowledged allegiance to no one,—a pastoral people who eked out a miserable existence by the trade of passing caravans, and in bad times pillaged the neighbouring and equally barbarous states, to whose reprisals they were in turn subjected.

From the year 1869, the date of the establishment of the Russian military settlement at Krasnovodsk on the east shore of the Caspian, the wave of Russian conquest has gradually swept eastwards along the northern frontier of Persia until it has for the moment stopped at the outermost border of the Akhal Turcoman country, which was incorporated in 1881 by Russia as the result of the defeat of that tribe at Geok Tepe. Among the districts still farther east, to which the Russians give the name of Eastern Turcomania, is that of the Merv Tekke Turcomans, kinsmen of the Akhal Tekkes, the most recent of Russia's subjects. The district of the Merv Tekkes may be taken to be that, included between the lower Murghab below Yulutan, where the river enters the plain, and the Persian frontier from Sarakhs to Gawars.

A reference to the map will show the strategical importance of this district, situated at the point of meeting of two lines, of which one is the strategic line of Russian advance on Herat from Krasnovodsk to Sarakhs, and the other the strategic line of advance on the same place from Tashkend through Bokhara. The capital of the district is, moreover, the crossing-point of the Herat-Khiva and Meshed-Bokhara trade routes.

Consequently this district, a solitary oasis in a vast desert, guarantees to its possessor the command of an important avenue between north and south, and, in the event of its falling into Russian hands, will give that power in addition a valuable link in the chain of connexion between her recent acquisitions on the Persian frontier and those in Turkestan, the forging of which has been persistently advocated by Russian writers for years past. One of these, Colonel Veniukoff, frankly admits that it is the political results—"the consolidation of friendly relations with the Turcomans"—and not commercial interests merely, that are primarily looked to, and openly states that the forward movement in Central Asia "cannot end otherwise than by the annexation to Russia of the whole of Turan."

Whether by design or by the force of circumstances, the recommendations of those writers have been translated into facts, and Russia with her advanced post at Askabad is now within 400 miles of Herat, which Sir Henry Rawlinson designates as the key of India. The occupation of the Merv Tekke country would bring Russia to within 250 miles of Herat. From Askabad she is in connexion with the Caspian by a good line of communication, part of which from the sea to Kizil Arvat) is by rail; and hence facilities

are offered for bringing up not only the resources of the Caucasus but of the whole of European Russia. While Russian troops are within 400 miles of Herat, the British troops at Quetta are more than 500 miles from Herat.¹

These remarks serve to explain the very natural suspicion with which Great Britain has regarded the occupation one after another of important strategical points along that route by which alone Russia can strike at India,—the same line by which Napoleon meditated a Russo-French invasion in the early part of this century.

In the matter of Merv and the neighbouring Turcoman districts diplomacy has not been idle. As early as 1869, when an interchange of opinions was taking place between the Russian and British Governments with respect to the demarcation of a neutral zone between the two empires, Great Britain objected to the Russian proposal that this zone should be Afghanistan, "because of the near approach to India that would be thereby afforded to Russian troops from the direction of the Kara-kum, the home of the Turcomans, of which Merv is the central point." In the following year a Russian diplomatist remarked to the British ambassador at St Petersburg, when discussing the Afghan frontier, that great care would be required in tracing a line from Khoja Saleh on the Oxus to the south, as Merv and the country of the Turcomans were becoming "commercially important." About the same time Russia intimated that, if the amir of Afghanistan claimed to exercise sovereignty over the Tekkes, his pretensions could not be recognized. After the Russian campaign against Khiva in 1873, and the subsequent operations against the Turcomans, the English foreign secretary early in 1874 called attention "to the fears expressed by the amir of Afghanistan as to the complications in which he might become involved with Russia were the result of a Russian expedition against Merv to be to drive the Turcomans to take refuge in the province of Badkhees in Herat." In reply to this communication Prince Gortschakoff repeated the assurance that the imperial Government "had no intention of sending any expedition against the Turcomans, or of occupying Merv." In 1875 the operations of General Lomakin on the northern frontier of Persia led to representations being made by the British ambassador at the court of St Petersburg. To these Russia replied that the czar had no intention of extending his frontiers on the side of Bokhara or on the side of Krasnovodsk. Notwithstanding the oft-repeated assurances to the contrary, large annexations have been since made in Turcomania by the Russians, and these proceedings, clearly indicating the persistent prosecution of a concerted plan, have naturally tended to disturb the harmonious relations which should subsist between the two great civilizing powers of the East.

Settlements and Inhabited Centres.—Of towns or even villages, fixed centres of habitation, there are none, according to Mr O'Donovan, the latest European traveller to Merv. The present political and military capital of Merv is Koushid Khan Kala, a fort which serves rather as a place of refuge against sudden attacks than as a habitation. It is situated on the east bank of the most westerly branch of the Murghab, about 25 miles below the dam at Porsa Kala. In form it is oblong, measuring 1½ miles long by ¾ mile broad, is constructed entirely of earth, revetted on the exterior slope with sun-dried brick; the ramparts are 40 feet high, and are 60 feet at the base. The fort is built in a loop of the river, which protects it on two sides; between it and the river is an "obah," or nomad village of huts and tents, some thousand in number, disposed in rows, but there is no town or settlement.

Twenty-five miles east of Koushid Khan Kala lie the ruins of the Greek city of Antiochia Margiana, showing traces of a high civilization. According to Strabo (xi. 2) the Merv oasis at this period was surrounded with a wall measuring 1500 stadia (185 miles). Mr O'Donovan found the trace of the fort of Iskander to have been quadrangular, with a length of side of 900 yards. This was probably the fort built by Alexander, about 328 B.C., on his return from

¹ Concurrently with the consolidation of her position in Turcomania, Russia has of late been showing less military activity on the side of her Turkestan district. It is probable that her recent explorations at the sources of the Oxus have demonstrated the impracticability of directing any offensive movement against India from that side. Hence the line of strategical advance has been shifted from Tashkend to Tiflis.

Sogdiana after the capture of Bessus. The city was destroyed in 666 A.D. by the Arabs, who built a new one, afterwards known as Sultan Sanjar, about 1000 yards away, and occupying an area, according to Mr O'Donovan, of about 600 yards square. The towers are still extant, and inside can be seen the ruins of a most elaborate tomb, in which the supposed bones of Sultan Sanjar are enshrined. It has always been a place of pilgrimage for the faithful. Not far to the south-west lies the site of the last city of Merv, that which existed up to a hundred years ago, when it was laid waste by the Bokharians. It bears the name of its gallant defender Bairam Ali.

These three ruins are all that remain of that which flourished of yore as "sovereign of the universe."

At the time of the visit of Burnes, Abbott, Shakespear, and T aylour Thomson, about the fourth decade of the century, Merv was under the jurisdiction of Khiva, and the administrative centre was at Porsa Kala, where the dam is situated. This place is now also a waste of mud ruins, uninhabited.

Rivers.—The Heri-rud (or Tejend, as the river is named below Sarakhs) runs a course of some 280 miles within Afghan borders. On reaching the Persian frontier it turns north and forces a channel through the mountain chain near Sarakhs. Beyond Sarakhs the river is Turcoman on both banks, runs close to the Khelat mountains, and in the latitude of Askabad loses itself in the marshes formed by the spring floods. It is probably the Ochus of ancient geography, which watered Nissa, once the capital of Parthia, and joined the Oxus just before the latter river disembogued into the Caspian (Rennell's *Herodotus*). The Tejend is fordable at all points below Sarakhs except in the early spring after the melting of the snows. On the road from Meshed to Merv the river is sluggish, 50 yards wide and 4 feet deep in February. The river-bed is sunk 12 to 15 feet below the level of the surrounding country, and has immense quantities of drift wood on its banks; trees and luxuriant herbage clothe the immediate borders. At midsummer the river runs nearly dry, and does not reach Sarakhs. The Kashaf-rud, which flows near Meshed, is one of its chief affluents.

The Murghab takes its rise in the northern slopes of the Paropamisus, and runs parallel to the Heri-rud at a distance of 70 miles from it. On this river lies the plain or oasis of Merv, irrigated by means of an elaborate system of dams and canals cut from the main river. Beyond the limits of the oasis the Murghab "hides its streams in the sand," like the Tejend. The river at Porsa Kala (near the principal dam) is 80 yards wide, at Koushid Khan Kala 30 to 40 yards wide. In summer it is much swollen by the melting of the snows, and its stream is then barely fordable. The water is yellow in colour from suspended matter.

Formerly a great deal of the country, now a waste, between the two rivers was also cultivated by the agency of water derived from canals cut from the Tejend. These canals extended to Kucha Kum in the desert, rendering the journey between the two rivers much easier than in the present day. From the Murghab was also cut, among others, the Kara-i-ab canal, which ran for a distance of 40 miles towards the Tejend. Recent explorers affirm that there is no reason why these canals should not be again filled from those rivers, when the intervening country, "an argillaceous expanse" (O'Donovan), would become culturable.

Communication.—Merv is surrounded on all sides by desert. On the north, west, and east this desert is sandy and arid; water is exceedingly scarce, the wells being sometimes 60 or 70 miles apart, and easily choked. To the south of Merv, between the rivers Murghab and Tejend, there are traces of past cultivation, of irrigating canals, and of considerable settlements. Between the Tejend and Askabad the road lies through a populous well-cultivated country (Persian territory) by way of Kahka and Lutfabad.

There are no roads in Merv,—nothing but mere tracks. Many wide and deep irrigating canals have to be crossed; bridges are few and bad. The inhabitants cross by inflated skins.

The following tracks lead to the Persian frontier from Merv:—(1) *via* Mahmud or Chungul to Lutfabad—eight days on camels; (2) *via* Shahidli to Meshed—120 miles; (3) *via* Shahidli to Fort Cherkeskhi and Meshed,—for 85 miles between the Murghab and Tejend there is scarcely any water; (4) *via* Sarakhs to Meshed, 9 or 10 marches for camels, and, according to Petrusevitch, without water between Merv and Sarakhs—120 miles.

To the Afghan frontier lead (1) the track *via* Sarakhs and up the Heri-rud to Herat—fit for a coach, according to Sir Charles MacGregor and Mr Lessar; and (2) a practicable track, used by Abbott and Shakespear, up the Murghab and Kushk rivers.

To the Oxus in Bokharian territory lead several tracks, the chief of which is that to Charjui—nine marches for camels. Water is scarce.

To Khiva by the direct track is 360 miles. Water is scarce. **Population.**—The Turcomans, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson and others, are descendants of the Ghúz or Komani, a race of Turks who migrated westward from their homes in the Altai before the Christian era, and penetrated even to the Danube. From subsequent intermixture with Persian and Caucasian peoples, they exhibit variations from the true Tartar type. According to Baron de Bode the Turcoman closely resembles both in appearance and in speech the Nogai Tartar and the Tartar of Kasan on the Volga.

They are an independent race, as wild and free as their native desert, brave and very impatient of control—"Wild warriors in stormy freedom bred" (Moore). They have a very evil reputation for brigandage and murder, so much so that the Bokharians and Khivans have a proverb—"If you meet a viper and a Mervi, commence by killing the Mervi and then despatch the viper." Of late years a change for the better has taken place, and recent travellers among them state that the Mervis show an inclination to lead a more settled life and to establish an elementary form of government (Medjliss), and that it is no longer accounted an honour among them to kill their neighbours. Opium smoking and arrack drinking are apparently widespread vices (O'Donovan); at the same time they are described as clever and intelligent.

The Merv Tekkes (like the Akhal Tekkes) are classed in two great divisions—the Toktamish and the Otamish. Each of these divisions consists of two clans, and each clan is subdivided into families. The two clans of the Toktamish are called Beg and Wakil; those of the Otamish, Suchmuz and Bukshi. The clans of Beg and Wakil are the most powerful, and occupy that part of the oasis which lies on the right or east bank of the Murghab. The Suchmuz and Bukshi have their tents on the left or west bank.

There is no machinery of government, and no taxes are levied. Whatever government there be is of a patriarchal nature. Each family has a *kethkoda* (patriarch), who represents the family in matters of policy, but can only act in accordance with the wishes of the clan. The *aksakals*, or grey beards, are also useful in settling intertribal disputes, but they are tolerated only so long as they do not act in opposition to the tribesmen. For external affairs and in time of war the *kethkodas* exercise a certain amount of power. The authority of *kethkodas* and *aksakals* is, however, overridden by the laws of custom or usage (*deb*) and the less respected laws of religion. The injunctions of *deb* are paramount. It sanctions the *alaman*, or plundering raid, and in general regulates the Turcoman's daily life; its prescriptions are more binding than those of the Koran.

The Tekkes marry young. The father purchases for his twelve-year-old son a child-wife for 500 to 2000 krans (£20 to £80). A young widow of twenty-five is much more valuable, but a woman over forty is not worth the price of a camel. On the conclusion of the bargain, the priest reads a prayer from the Koran, and the marriage becomes valid.

The dress of the men consists of a long tunic of coarse crimson silk reaching below the knees, with a white sash through which is stuck a dagger; an outer robe of brown camel-hair cloth, a huge sheepskin hat, trousers and slippers or amber-coloured knee-boots, complete the costume. The women are exceedingly fond of trinkets, rings, and amulets, which accompany their movements with a sound as it were of bells. Their dress consists of the same red silk robe as the men wear, with a sash round the waist, and high-heeled boots, red or yellow.

The religion is Suni Mohammedan; their language Jagatai or Oriental Turk.

The numbers of Merv Tekkes on the Murghab and Tejend are variously estimated, but may be stated approximately at 40,000 tents, including 5000 tents of the Salor tribe. These 40,000 tents represent a population of 200,000 to 250,000 souls. The Salors and Sariks at Yulutan and Panjdeh, higher up the Murghab, are given at 11,000 tents, or some 60,000 souls.

Products, Arts, and Manufactures.—The country in all times has been renowned throughout the East for its fertility. Strabo tells us "that it was not uncommon to meet with a vine whose stock could hardly be clasped by two men with outstretched arms, while

clusters of grapes might be gathered two cubits in length." The Arab traveller Ibn Haukal, writing in the 10th century, remarks that "the fruits of Merv are finer than those of any other place, and one cannot see in any other city such palaces with groves and streams and gardens." A local proverb says, "Sow a grain to reap a hundred." All cereals and many fruits grow in great abundance.

The Turcomans possess a famous breed of horses,—not prepossessing in appearance, being somewhat leggy and long in the back and neck, but capable of accomplishing long distances—50 or 60 miles—for several days in succession, and with very little food. Their great peculiarity appears to be their hairlessness; the coat is very fine, the mane and tail very scanty. This breed of horses, as well as the wealth of the Merv Tekkes in camels and flocks, is fast disappearing.

The Turcomans are noted as excellent workers in silver and as armourers, and their carpets are superior to Persian. They also make felts and a rough cloth of sheep's wool.

One of the chief occupations of the male sex is the repair of the dams and the clearing of the canals, upon the efficiency of which their existence is dependent. The services of a large number of workmen are always held in readiness for the purpose. In 1878 the unusual mass of water in the Murghab carried away the dam, and the drying up of some of the canals nearly led to a failure of the crops.

Climate.—The position of Merv, in the midst of sandy deserts in the heart of Asia, makes the climate in the heat of summer most oppressive. The least wind raises clouds of fine sand and dust, which fill the air, render it so opaque as to obscure the noonday sun, and make respiration difficult. In winter the climate is very fine. Snow falls rarely, and melts at once.

History.—The name Merv, or some similar form, occurs at a very early period in the history of the Aryan race. Under Mouru we find it mentioned with Bakhdi (Balkh) in the geography of the Zend Avesta (*Vendidad*, fargand i., ed. Spiegel), which dates probably from a period anterior to the conquest of Bactria by the Assyrians, and therefore at least one thousand two hundred years before the Christian era. Under the name of Margu it occurs in the cuneiform inscriptions of Darius Hystaspis, where it is referred to as forming part of one of the satrapies of the ancient Persian empire (*Inscriptions Behistuni*, ed. Kossowicz). It afterwards became a province (*Maryavarh*) of the Greco-Syrian, Parthian, and Persian kingdoms. On the Margus—the Eparus of Arrian and now the Murghab—stood the capital of the district, Antiochia Margiana, so called after Antiochus Soter, who rebuilt the city founded by Alexander the Great. About the 5th century, during the dynasty of the Sassanids, Merv was the seat of a Christian archbishopric of the Nestorian Church. In the middle of the 7th century the flood of Arab conquest swept over the mountains of Persia to the deserts of Central Asia. Merv was occupied 666 A.D. by the lieutenants of the caliph Othman, and was constituted the capital of Khorasan. From this city as their base the Arabs, under Kut-ibe bin Muslim, early in the 8th century brought under subjection Balkh, Bokhara, Ferghana, and Kashgaria, and penetrated into China as far as the province of Kan-su. In the latter part of the 8th century Merv became obnoxious to Islam as the centre of heretical propaganda preached by Mokannah (Haschem ben Hakem), the "veiled prophet of Khorasan," who claimed to be the incarnation of the Deity. In 874 Arab rule in Central Asia came to an end. During their dominion Merv, like Samarkand and Bokhara, became one of the great schools of science, and the celebrated historian Yakut studied in its libraries. About 1037 the Seljukian Turks crossed the Oxus from the north and raised Toghrul Beg, grandson of Seljuk, to the throne of Persia, founding the Seljukian dynasty, with its capital at Nishapur. A younger brother of Toghrul, Daoud, took possession of Merv and Herat. Toghrul was succeeded by the renowned Alp Arslan (the great lion), whose sway was so vast that, according to tradition, no fewer than twelve hundred kings, princes, and sons of kings and princes did homage before his throne. Alp Arslan was buried at Merv. It was about this time that Merv reached the zenith of her glory. During the reign of Sultan Sanjar of the same house, towards the middle of the 11th century, Merv was overrun by the Turcomans of Ghuz, and the country was reduced to a state of misery and desolation. These Turcomans, the ancestors of the present tribes of Turcomania, were probably introduced into the country by the Seljukian Turks as military colonists. They formed the van of their armies, and rendered efficient service so long as the dynasty lasted, and afterwards took part in the wars of Tamerlane.

In 1221 Merv opened its gates to Toulai, son of Jenghiz, khan of the Mongols, on which occasion the inhabitants, to the number of 700,000, are said to have been butchered. From this time forward Merv, which had been the chief city of Khorasan, and was popularly supposed to contain a million inhabitants, commenced to languish in obscurity. In the early part of the 14th century Merv was again the seat of a Christian archbishopric of the Eastern Church. On the death of the grandson of Jenghiz Khan

Merv became included in the possessions of Toghluk Timur Khan (Tamerlane), in 1380. In 1505 the decayed city was occupied by the Uzbeks, who five years later were expelled by Ismail Khan, the founder of the Saffavian dynasty of Persia. Merv thenceforward remained in the hands of Persia until 1787, when it was attacked and captured by the emir of Bokhara. Seven years later the Bokharians razed the city to the ground, broke down the dams, and converted the district into a waste. About 1790 the Sarik Turcomans pitched their tents there. When Sir Alexander Burnes traversed the country in 1832, the Khivans were the rulers of Merv, the normal population being subject to them. About this time the Tekke Turcomans, then living at Orakzala on the Heri-rud, were forced to migrate northward in consequence of the pressure from behind of the Persians. The Khivans contested the advance of the Tekkes, but ultimately, about the year 1856, the latter became the sovereign power in the country, and have ever since resisted all attempts at reconquest.

Authorities.—Besides the standard travels of Wolff, Ferrier, Vambery, Burnes, Abbott, Mouravieff, and others, the following works and papers of more recent date may be consulted with advantage:—Sir H. Rawlinson's *England and Russia in the East*; O'Donovan's correspondence with the *Daily News*, 1880-81; O'Donovan's "Merv," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*; Col. Stewart's "Country of the Tekke Turcomans," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*; with excellent map; "The New Russo-Persian Frontier, 1881," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*; Girard de Rialle, *Mémoire sur l'Asie Centrale*; Sir H. Rawlinson, "Road to Merv," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*; Col. Baker's *Clouds in the East*; Captain Napier's "Reports," *Jour. Roy. Geog. Soc.*; Hutton's *Central Asia*; Marvin's *Merv*; Col. Futo's *Steppe Campaigns*; Sir Charles MacGregor's *Journey through Khorasan*; Boulger's *England and Russia in Central Asia*; Captain Butler's *Communications to the Public Press*; Lessar's "Journeys," *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*; O'Donovan's *Merv Oasis*; Papers on the Turcomans, &c., by Col. Petrushevitch, *Proc. Imp. Russ. Geog. Soc.*; Caucasus section; Col. Gudekoff's *Journey from Tashkend to Persia*, 1880; Captain Kuropatkin's *Turcomania*, 1880; Col. Venikoff's *Progress of Russia in Central Asia*, 1877, and other papers by the same author; Col. Kostenko's "Turkestan," *Jour. R. U. S. Inst.*; Schuyler's *Turkistan*; correspondence on Central Asia presented to parliament, &c. (F. C. H. C.)

MÉRYON, CHARLES (1821-1868). The name of Méryon is associated with that spirited revival of etching in France which took place in the middle of the 19th century,—say from 1850 to 1865,—but it is rather by the individuality of his own achievements, and the strength of his artistic nature, than by the influence he exercised that Méryon best deserves fame. No doubt his work encouraged others to employ the same medium of expression, and so great was his own perfection of *technique* that he may well have been made a model; but, after all, the medium he selected, and in which he excelled, was but the accident of his art; he was driven to it in part by stress of circumstances—by colour blindness; and, even with colour blindness, his extraordinary certainty of hand and his delicate perception of light, aided by his potent imagination, would have made him a great draughtsman not alone upon the copper.

Charles Méryon was born in Paris in 1821. His father was an English physician, his mother a French dancer. It was to his mother's care that Méryon's childhood was confided. She was supplied with money, and she gave the boy passionate affection, if not a wise training. But she died when he was still very young, and Méryon in due time entered the French navy, and in the corvette "Le Rhin" made the voyage round the world. He was already a draughtsman, for on the coast of New Zealand he made pencil drawings which he was able to employ, years afterwards, as studies for etchings of the landscape of those regions. The artistic instinct developed, and, while he was yet a lieutenant, Méryon left the navy. Finding that he was colour-blind, Méryon determined to devote himself to etching. He entered the work-room of one Bléry, from whom he learnt something of technical matters, and to whom he always remained grateful. Méryon was by this time poor. It is said that he might have had assistance from his kindred, but he was too proud to ask it. And thus he was reduced to the need of executing for the sake of daily bread much work that was wholly mechanical and irksome. Resolutely, though unwillingly, he became the hack of his art, doing frequently, from the day when he was first a master of it to the day when insanity disabled him, many dull commissions which paid ill, but paid better than his original works. Among learner's work, done for his own advantage, are to be counted some studies after the

Dutch etchers such as Zeeman and Adrian van de Velde. Having proved himself a surprising copyist, he proceeded to labour of his own, and began that series of etchings which are the greatest embodiments of his greatest conceptions—the series called "Eaux-fortes sur Paris." These plates, executed from 1850 to 1854, are never to be met with as a set; they were never expressly published as a set. But they none the less constituted in Méryon's mind an harmonious series. For him their likenesses and their contrasts were alike studied; they had a beginning and an end; and their differences were lost in their unity.

Besides the twenty-two etchings "sur Paris" characterized below, Méryon did seventy-two etchings of one sort and another,—ninety-four in all being catalogued in Wedmore's *Méryon and Méryon's Paris*; but these include the works of his apprenticeship and of his decline, adroit copies in which his best success was in the sinking of his own individuality, and dull and worthless portraits chiefly of forgotten celebrities. Yet among the seventy-two prints outside his professed series there are at least a dozen that will aid his fame. Three or four beautiful etchings of Paris do not belong to the series at all. Two or three etchings, again, are devoted to the illustration of Bourges, a city in which the old wooden houses were as attractive to him for their own sakes as were the stone-built monuments of Paris. But generally it was when Paris engaged him that he succeeded the most. He would have done more work, however,—though he could hardly have done better work,—if the material difficulties of his life had not pressed upon him and shortened his days. He was a bachelor, unhappy in love, and yet, it is related, almost as constantly occupied with love as with work. The depth of his imagination and the surprising mastery which he achieved almost from the beginning in the technicalities of his craft were appreciated only by a few artists, critics, and connoisseurs, and he could not sell his etchings, or could sell them only for about 10d. a piece. The fact that his own original work was of incalculably greater value than his best copies of his most celebrated forerunners had not yet impressed itself upon anybody. Disappointment told upon him, and, frugal as was his way of life, poverty must have told on him. He became subject to hallucinations. Enemies, he said, waited for him at the corners of the streets; his few friends robbed him or owed him that which they would never pay. A very few years after the completion of his Paris series, he was lodged in the madhouse of Charenton. Its order and care restored him for a while to health, and he came out and did a little more work, but at bottom he was exhausted. In 1867 he returned to his asylum, and died there in 1868. In the middle years of his life, just before he was placed under confinement, he was much associated with Bracquemond and with Flameng,—skilled practitioners of etching, while he was himself an undeniable genius,—and the best of the portraits we have of him is that one by Bracquemond under which the sitter wrote that it represented "the sombre Méryon with the grotesque visage." And it did.

There are twenty-two pieces in the Eaux-fortes sur Paris. Some of them are insignificant. That is because ten out of the twenty-two were destined as headpiece, tailpiece, or running commentary on some more important plate. But each has its value, and certain of the smaller pieces throw great light on the aim of the entire set. Thus, one little plate—not a picture at all—is devoted to the record of verses made by Méryon, the purpose of which is to lament the life of Paris. The misery and poverty of the town Méryon had to illustrate, as well as its splendour. The art of Méryon is completely misconceived when his etchings are spoken of as views of Paris. They are often "views," but they are so just so far as is compatible with their being likewise the visions of a poet and the compositions of an artist. It was an epic of Paris that Méryon determined to make, coloured strongly by his personal sentiment, and affected here and there by the occurrences of the moment,—in more than one case, for instance, he hurried with particular affection to etch his impression

of some old-world building which was on the point of destruction. Nearly every etching in the series is an instance of technical skill, but even the technical skill is exercised most happily in those etchings which have the advantage of impressive subjects, and which the collector willingly cherishes for their mysterious suggestiveness or for their pure beauty. Of these, the Abside de Notre Dame is the general favourite; it is commonly held to be Méryon's masterpiece. Light and shade play wonderfully over the great fabric of the church, seen over the spaces of the river. As a draughtsman of architecture, Méryon was complete; his sympathy with its various styles was broad, and his work on its various styles unbiassed and of equal perfection—a point in which it is curious to contrast him with Turner, who, in drawing Gothic, often drew it with want of appreciation. It is evident that architecture must enter largely into any representation of a city, however much such representation may be a vision, and however little a chronicle. Besides, the architectural portion even of Méryon's labour is but indirectly imaginative; to the imagination he has given freer play in his dealings with the figure, whether the people of the street or of the river or the people who, when he is most frankly or even wildly symbolical, crowd the sky. Generally speaking, his figures are, as regards draughtsmanship, "landscape-painter's figures." They are drawn more with an eye to grace than to correctness. But they are not "landscape-painter's figures" at all when what we are concerned with is not the method of their representation but the purpose of their introduction. They are seen then to be in exceptional accord with the sentiment of the scene. Sometimes, as in the case of La Morgue, it is they who tell the story of the picture. Sometimes, as in the case of La Rue des Mauvais Garçons,—with the two passing women bent together in secret converse,—they at least suggest it. And sometimes, as in L'Arche du Pont Notre Dame, it is their expressive gesture and eager action that give vitality and animation to the scene. Dealing perfectly with architecture, and perfectly, as far as concerned his peculiar purpose, with humanity in his art, Méryon was little called upon by the character of his subjects to deal with Nature. He drew trees but badly, never representing foliage happily, either in detail or in mass. But to render the characteristics of the city, it was necessary that he should know how to pourtray a certain kind of water—river-water, mostly sluggish—and a certain kind of sky—the grey obscured and lower sky that broods over a world of roof and chimney. This water and this sky Méryon is thoroughly master of; he notes with observant affection their changes in all lights.

Méryon's excellent draughtsmanship, and his keen appreciation of light, shade, and tone, were, of course, helps to his becoming a great etcher. But a living authority, himself an eminent etcher, and admiring Méryon thoroughly, has called Méryon by preference a great original engraver,—so little of Méryon's work accords with Mr Haden's view of etching. Méryon was anything but a brilliant sketcher; and, if an artist's success in etching is to be gauged chiefly by the rapidity with which he records an impression, Méryon's success was not great. There can be no doubt that his work was laborious and deliberate, instead of swift and impulsive, and that of some other virtues of the etcher—"selection" and "abstraction" as Mr Hamerton has defined them—he shows small trace. But a genius like Méryon is a law unto himself, or rather in his practice of his art he makes the laws by which that art and he are to be judged. He was a great etcher, and by his most elaborate labour he seemed somehow to ensure the more completely for his picture that virtue of unity of impression which, it may well be admitted, oftener belongs to rapid than to deliberate work. In Méryon's etchings the hand-work never seems to be in arrear of the thought. As long as the hand-work must continue, the thought and passion are retained. Méryon knows the secrets of his craft as well as did the older masters of it; but he turns them to his own purposes. He is unexcelled in strength and in precision, nor is he often rivalled in delicacy. These qualities, and others more distinctly technical, which it would take too long to insist on here, students find in his etchings. But the incommunicable charm of Méryon's prints and their lasting fascination are due to the fact that, behind all technical qualities, and as their very source and spring, there lies the potent imagination of the artist, poetical and vivid, directing him what to see in his subject, and how to see it. (F. WE.)

MESCHERYAKS, or MESCHERS, a people inhabiting eastern Russia. Nestor regarded them as Finns, and even now part of the Mordvinians (of Finnish origin) call themselves Meschers. Klaproth, on the other hand, supposed they were a mixture of Finns and Turks, and the Hungarian traveller Reguli discovered that the Tartarized Meschers of the Obi closely resembled Hungarians. They formerly occupied the basin of the Oka (where the town Meschersk, now Meschovsk, has maintained their name) and of the Surâ, extending north-east to the Volga. After the conquest of the Kazan empire by Russia, part of