

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.

SIB—SIB

SIBBALD, SIR ROBERT (1641-1712), may be considered as the most eminent representative of science and medicine in Scotland towards the close of the 17th century. He was born near Leslie in Fifeshire in 1641. Educated at Edinburgh, Leyden, and Paris, he settled as a physician in Edinburgh and soon rose to eminence. His career is one of marked initiative: he was the first professor of medicine in the university of Edinburgh, and the first president of the college of physicians, and, along with Sir Andrew Balfour, founded the botanic garden. He was also geographer-royal, and his numerous and miscellaneous writings deal effectively with historical and antiquarian as well as botanical and medical subjects. He died in 1712.

Amongst Sibbald's historical and antiquarian works may be mentioned *A History of Fife and Kinross* (Edinburgh, 1710, and Cupar, 1803), which is still indispensable to the student of local history and antiquities; *An Account of the Scottish Atlas* (folio, Edinburgh, 1683); *Vindiciæ Scotiæ Illustratæ* (folio, Edinburgh, 1710); and *Description of the Isles of Orkney and Shetland* (folio, Edinburgh, 1711 and 1845). See also his *Autobiography* (Edinburgh, 1833), to which is prefixed an account of his MSS.

Plate I.

Name and extension.

SIBERIA (Russ. *Sibir*, a word of unknown origin, probably Permian) in the 16th century indicated the chief settlement of the Tatar khan Kutchum,—Isker on the Irtysh. Subsequently the name was extended so as to include the whole of the gradually increasing Russian dominions in Asia, and in the first half of the 19th century it was applied to the immense region stretching from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Chinese frontier and the Kirghiz steppes. This region, however varied in its separate parts, constituted a geographical whole having its own characteristic physical features. The division into Western and Eastern Siberia which naturally came into general use had also a geographical meaning. In 1856, after the annexation of the Amur and Usuri regions, Eastern Siberia was extended so as to include the Russian dominions on the Pacific, although these latter in reality belong climatically and physically to a quite separate region,—that of the North Pacific littoral; and, as the Russian dominions extended into the Kirghiz steppes, these last were also reckoned to Siberia, although mostly belonging in their physical features to another geographical domain,—the Aral-Caspian depression. Later on these steppes were transferred

to the "Orenburg region," or to the "steppe region"; but, on the other hand, some districts which really belong to Western Siberia were included under this new denomination. What is now called "Siberia" has thus lost its geographical unity. There still remains, however, for the geographer a vast tract of northern Asia which might be included under this general name, as representing some special features characteristic of the region. It would be limited by the Ural Mountains on the west, by the Arctic and North Pacific Oceans on the north and east respectively, and on the south by a line broadly corresponding to the 50th degree of latitude, running from the sources of the river Ural to the Tarbagatai range (thus separating the steppes of the Irtysh basin from those of the Aral and Balkash basins), thence along the Chinese frontier as far as the south-east corner of Transbaikalia, whence it might be drawn to the Great Khingan, and along it to the upper Zeya (tributary of the Amur) and Udskoi Ostrog on the Sea of Okhotsk. This wide area would be naturally subdivided into Western Siberia (basins of the Ob and Irtysh) and Eastern Siberia (the remainder of the region). Western Siberia would include the governments of Tobolsk and Tomsk, as well as the parts of Perm situated to the east of the Ural Mountains, and those northern parts of Semipalatinsk which belong to the basins of the Irtysh and the Tobol¹; while Eastern Siberia would include the governments of Yeniseisk and Irkutsk, the provinces of Yakutsk and Transbaikalia, together with the north-western part of the province of Amur and the northern parts of the Maritime Province. In fact, the north-western parts of Manchuria situated between the Argun and the Great Khingan, as well as the upper parts of the Selenga and the Yenisei (Shishkit) belonging to Mongolia, are so intimately connected with Eastern Siberia as regards their physical features that it is difficult for the geographer to separate them.

Since the inclusion of Uralsk, Turgai, Akmolinsk, and Semipalatinsk within the governor-generalship of the steppes, the present administrative subdivisions stand as follows:—

¹ This natural subdivision has been adopted by P. Semenov in his valuable sketch of Western Siberia in *Picturesque Russia* (*Jivopisnaya Rossiya*), vol. xi.