

THE NATIVES OF SIBERIA.

BY HENRY LANSDELL, D.D., M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S.

THOSE who are accustomed to maps of Asiatic Russia tinted in a single color, and to imagine therefrom that the vast space is inhabited by one nationality only, will be surprised to learn that, ethnographically considered, there are about thirty peoples over whom the Czar reigns between the Caspian and the Pacific. They may be roughly divided into the inhabitants of the Tundra and the Steppe, the former spending their lives in the northern bogs, which are frozen during the winter, and thawed to the depth of a few inches only even in summer, whilst the latter live under a parching sun in a rainless region relieved only here and there by a fertile oasis. Such broad statements as these admit, of course, of modifications, but are sufficient to indicate why the river Irtysh may be considered a line of parting between the habitats respectively of the two classes of people.

The inhabitants of the Tundra live in Siberia proper, and are confined thereto, with the single exception of the Samoyedes, who extend beyond the northern slopes of the Urals, and push their way westward as far as Archangel. It was there in 1878 that I bought some of their productions. On the east their territory stretches as far as the Yenisei, and I passed through a portion of their southernmost land when approaching Tomsk. East of the Yenisei, in the most northerly promontory of Asia, the Yuraki, and further south the Tunguses, the latter wandering over a larger tract of country than any other, not in Siberia only but perhaps in the world, for their country stretches, with certain interruptions, from the Yenisei to the Sea of Okhotsk, a distance in a straight line of about 2000 miles, and in some parts to half as much in width. The breaks alluded to are the valleys of the Lena, which are occupied by the Yakutes.

The remaining tribes of northern Siberia are those dwelling north of the Sea of Okhotsk, such as the Yukagirs and the Chukchees, on the shores of the frozen ocean, with the Koriaks and Kamchadals, who inhabit the northern and southern parts respectively of the Kamchadale peninsula. In the eastern portion of Manchuria, about the lower waters of the

Amur River, we meet with different races of people from those yet mentioned, in the Goldi, Gilyaks, and, on the adjacent islands, the Aimos. To these indications as to locality of the principal Siberian tribes it only remains to notice that about the head waters of the Yenisei and Lena, that is to say, in the vicinity of Irkutsk, are found the Buriats, whilst west of them and stretching as far as the river Irtysh is the country of the Siberian Tatars.

Speaking generally of the tribes of Asiatic Russia, it will be anticipated that they differ widely from one another in appearance. When in the bazars of Turkistan, one meets with the tall, moderately stout Tajik, with white skin, abundant beard, long, arched, and slender nose, thin, straight lips, and good teeth, his forehead high and wide, arched, ample eyebrows, in fact, one of "nature's gentlemen," who needs only European education to lift him high in the anthropological scale. His neighbor, the Uzbek, is less pleasing in appearance, has a darker skin, and more of the "animal" about him.

Passing to the Kirghese, we have a type of mankind still less pleasing in European eyes than either of the foregoing. He bears unmistakable traces of his Mongolian nativity. The head, indeed, is not very large, but the cheek-bones stand out, though not sharply as those of the Mongols generally. The skin is bronzed and yellowish, the covered parts, however, being white, especially with the women. The forehead is low, flat, and wide, and the nose blunt and short. The mouth, too, is large and wide, the lips nearly always thick, and the teeth large, but of incomparable whiteness. The aspect of the face as a whole is wide, flat, and angular, whilst the ears are always large and standing out. The body is vigorous, hands and feet small, calf almost none, and the legs curved through continual riding.

The poorer specimens of humanity, however, in Asiatic Russia are to be found on the Tundra rather than in the Steppe. When steaming on the Obi I was struck with the diminutive stature of the Ostjaks, their dark hair and eyes, and flat features. This flatness of features was

quite outdone when, further east, I came to the Buriats, who have large skulls, square faces, and low and flat foreheads. Their cheek-bones are not only high, but wide apart, the nose flat, eyes elongated, and the skin swarthy and yellowish. But of all the types of the human race I met in Siberia there were none that struck me as so low as the tribes of the lower Amur, especially the Goldi and the Gilyaks.

The physiognomy of the Goldi is distinctly Mongolian. Some of the men wear felt hats purchased from the Chinese, but the women for the most part keep to the high conical hat, worn also by the Yakutes. The outer garment of man and woman is alike in form, save that on the skirt of the woman at the bottom is a row of coins or buttons. They make their baskets of birch-tree bark, and imitate some of the customs of the neighboring Manchu, amongst others that of shaving off the hair, with the exception of a tail which they wear on the top of the head. In fact, they resemble, if the expression may be allowed, debased Chinese, and so to some extent the "Celestials" regard them.

The Gilyaks rank several degrees lower in the scale of beauty, or rather the lack of it. They are diminutive, usually below rather than above five feet, their eyes are elongated, the skin tawny, and the hair black. They have not the open and clear physiognomy of the majority of the Tunguses, and their little eyes sparkle with a dull brilliance, to which must be added they have squat noses, thick lips, and prominent cheek-bones.

This variety of appearance in the natives of Asiatic Russia has, to some extent, its counterpart in their habitations, which are of two kinds, those belonging to the nomads, and those belonging to the settlers. The nomads of both the Tundra and the Steppe live in tents, but whereas the wanderer on the Steppe has a tent of felt supported on an elaborate framework of considerable dimensions, and sometimes lined even with silk, his northern congener dwells in winter in a tent of skins spread over a few poles meeting at the top, whilst in summer the skins are replaced by pliant sheets of birch-tree bark; or, again, the Goldi builds himself by the river-side a fishing box that would be regarded in England as a tolerable garden summer-house.

The winter houses of the Goldi and Gilyaks have more pretensions to comfort and convenience than might be expected from so uncultured a race. They are largely built of wood, have a flue running round three of the walls beneath a divan, whilst the light from without endeavors to struggle through window-frames stretched over with paper or fish-skin. Some of the houses near the river are built on posts, in order to be above the reach of floods, while both inside and around are tall racks for the drying and storing of fish, so that the scent of a Gilyak interior is anything but agreeable. The houses of the Yakutes tell to some extent of their Turkish origin, for they have an awning projecting in front, such as one sees in the houses of the Caucasus, but while in buildings of the Turks further south their windows are open to admit as much air as possible, the Yakutes block up the openings with sheets of ice, pouring around a little water, which quickly freezes, and whilst admitting light, keeps out the cold.

When we come to the houses of the settled population of Turkistan we have buildings of mud, whether for prince or peasant. I scarcely remember meeting with a private native dwelling-house of brick or stone throughout central Asia. Nor have they about their houses much wood, for it is expensive; but the rich glory in two stately carved wooden pillars, on which rests the canopy or awning that is erected in front of their palaces or mansions.

As regards the food of the aboriginals of Asiatic Russia, vegetarianism cannot be said to have made much headway among the nomads, whether in Siberia or Turkistan.

Deprived for so many months of the year by snow of the sight of anything green, when the Siberians kill a reindeer they carefully empty its stomach of the undigested moss the animal has eaten, and serve that up as a delicacy, but in winter they get little vegetable food besides. Even with nomads of the Steppe, what flour food they eat is taken chiefly in the form of gruel. It struck me as a strange contrast of dietary customs when the Archbishop of Vernoye informed me that they intended to send monks as missionaries of the Russian Church to the Buruti or Kara-Kirghese, for the Russian monks eat no meat, and the Buruti eat no bread,

so they proposed to cut the knot by planting a station on the shores of Lake Issik-Kul, where the holy men could feed on fish.

The Kirghese of the Steppe live in the summer almost entirely on milk, variously prepared, whilst the rich eat of mutton as their staple food, with the addition of beef, and occasionally camel's flesh. In the north, the Yakutes are fond of horse-flesh. A Yakute bride on her wedding day sets before her lord and master as the greatest of delicacies horse-flesh sausages, with a boiled horse's head, of which the brains are the most dainty morsel. The quantity too of horse-flesh they eat is appalling. Their adage says, that "to eat much meat, and grow fat upon it, is the highest destiny of man." I myself was not present at one of their orgies, but as far back as the days of Strahlenberg it was said that four Yakutes would eat a horse. Once more, the Gilyaks exist on a very different kind of food, for they are almost ichthyophagi, salmon being their principal diet. This fish comes up the Amur in such numbers that they can be tossed out with a pitchfork. Even the dogs go into the stream and catch for themselves, and salmon such as the finest seen in London may be purchased in the season among the Gilyaks for a penny each. The fish, cut up and dried, without further cooking, are eaten, a piece of similar size per day serving alike for the Gilyak and one of his dogs. I went to the lower Amur disposed to confide in the theory that fish diet, by reason of its phosphorus, was calculated to give brain power to students, but after seeing the miserable specimens of humanity in the Gilyaks who live on fish, my belief in this theory has been rudely shaken.

The Gilyaks make another use of the salmon which I do not remember to have heard of in other countries, inasmuch as they employ the skin for garments. Hence the Chinese call them "Yupitatzé," or fish-skin strangers. The fish-skin is prepared from two kinds of salmon. They strip it off with dexterity, and by beating with a mallet remove the scales, and so render it supple. Clothes thus made, I need hardly say, are water-proof, but they have an objectionable smell to noses polite. I was fortunate enough to purchase on the Amur a fish-skin coat, which I believe in England is unique, for there is nothing like it in the British Museum. It is hand-



TATAR WOMAN.

somely embroidered on the back, the intermixture of colors being skilfully wrought in needle-work.

Fish-skin, however, is used only for summer clothing. In winter the Gilyak delights to clothe himself in the skins of his dogs, or of fox or wolf, as being next warmest. The tribes further west, as indeed do all the Siberian people, employ the skins of the reindeer and elk for winter clothing. Such immense numbers of the elk are killed that in some years one may buy in the town of Yeniseisk alone as many as ten thousand skins.

The Siberian Tatar adopts a costume that approaches the European, in that he wears a long cassock not unlike that of a Russian priest, whilst the Tatar women dress still more like Europeans, and wear a cap something like their Armenian sisters in the Caucasus. The Turkish stock generally throughout Turkistan robe themselves in loose dressing-gowns, or khalat, whence the Russians call them in derision "Khalatniks." The khalat are all of one shape, but they differ vastly in materials. The commonest are of cotton, some have a mixture of silk, others are wholly of silk of the gaudiest colors. Among more than a score of "changes of raiment" pre-



DR. LANSDALL IN SAMOYEDE COSTUME.

sented to me by the late Emir of Bokhara there were some of crimson satin embroidered with gold, others were of Indian cashmere, and one to envelop me from head to foot of pea-green velvet.

To speak of the male portion of the nomad populations of Asiatic Russia in respect to their occupation savors somewhat of a delusion, for the men are incorrigibly lazy, and leave the work to the women. The nomads are, for the most part, breeders of cattle. Some of the Kirghese are said to possess hundreds of camels, thousands of horses, and tens of thousands of sheep and goats, as will readily be understood when it is added that without reckoning the provinces of Akmollinsk and Semipalatinsk, there were in the remaining parts of Russian central Asia, in the early part of the Russian occupation, no less than 390,000 camels, 1,600,000 horses, 1,160,000 cattle, and 11,000,000 sheep, the total value of the whole being estimated at

about £10,000,000. The possessions of the Yakutes and certain branches of the Tunguse family, notably the Manyargs on the upper Amur, consist of horses, which serve to carry the scanty property of their owners, and which are sufficiently hardy to find their food in winter by scraping away the snow with their feet. Among the Koriaks, in the far northeast of Siberia, it is no uncommon thing to find a man the possessor of from four to five thousand reindeer; some are said to have up to 15,000. The Koriaks strongly object to sell a deer alive, but a pound of tobacco will purchase one slain. At Okhotsk the animal costs from twenty to thirty shillings, and on the Amur as much as £5.

Having spoken thus generally of the aboriginals of Asiatic Russia, let me describe some of them more particularly, and what I have seen among them. The number of the Samoyedes was estimated ten years ago at 5700. Some would classify them as Finns, but others treat them as a race apart. Their manner of dressing is sufficiently typical to give an idea of that of the other northern tribes. First is put on a pair of short trousers made of reindeer-skin, reaching down to the knees, and fitting tight. Then stockings of *peshki*, the skin of young fawns, with the hair inward. Next come the boots, called *poume leepte*, meaning boot-stockings, reaching almost to the thigh, the sole being made of old and hard reindeer hide, with the hair pointing forward, to diminish the possibility of slipping on the snow. I bought a "lady's pair," lined inside with the softest fur, and made of white reindeer-skin without, sewn with strips of darker skin, and ornamented in front with pieces of colored cloth.

The clothing of the lower limbs being completed, a more difficult feat remains in having to work one's way from the bottom to the top of the tunic, or *sovik*, which has an opening to put the head through, and is furnished with sleeves. Mine has a high straight collar, but in some cases the collar rises behind above the top of the head, like an inverted "sou'wester." The costume is completed by a cap of reindeer-skin, with strings on either side ornamented with pieces of cloth. One winter I wore my *poume leepte* in a bitterly cold night during a journey outside an English coach, to the surprise indeed of the country folk, but to my own great comfort.

I was presented at Archangel with a remarkably fine pair of reindeer antlers, brought by the Samoyedes, and measuring nearly four feet from the skull to the extremities, which are a yard apart. The brow-antlers are 13 inches long, and the bes-antlers, or those next above, 16 and 18 inches respectively, whilst the total measurement of antlers and branches is upward of 14 feet.

As elsewhere, brandy is a great curse in the land of the Samoyedes. I was given to understand when in Siberia that the Russian government forbids the sale of spirits to the northern natives, but traders smuggle them in, and I was told that it was often very difficult to trade with these people before giving a glass of vodka, having received which they are irrepressible in clamoring for more. Men may be sometimes seen in the towns who have brought in their Samoyede wares to barter for winter necessaries, and who are beguiled into exchanging the whole for spirits, and thereby reduce themselves to beggary.

When sober, however, the Samoyedes have at least one pleasing trait in their character, in that they are remarkably honest. The Tobolsk merchants, for instance, when they go north in the summer to purchase fish, take with them flour and salt, place them in their summer stations, and on returning leave unprotected what remains for the following year. Should a needy Samoyede pass by, he takes what he requires, but leaves in its place an I. O. U. in the form of a duplicate stick, duly notched, to signify that he is a debtor. Then, in the fishing season, he comes to his creditor, compares the duplicate stick he has kept with the one he left behind, and discharges his obligations. The intellectual development of the Samoyedes is exceedingly low. They do not, I believe, possess even so much as a copy of the gospels in their own tongue, though a commencement was made more than half a century ago to translate the gospel of St. Matthew. The same gospel was translated some years since into the language of the neighboring Ostjaks by a priest at Obdorsk, but was not published.

With the Ostjaks I made acquaintance during a voyage on the Obi. They came to the river's bank offering provisions at absurdly low prices—a pair of ducks, for instance, for 2½*d.*, ten brace of grouse for

1*s.*, a couple of pike, weighing, I suppose, twenty pounds, for 5*d.*, and at some of the villages difficult of access I heard that a young calf could be bought for 6*d.*

The Ostjaks are not yet generally supplied with fire-arms, but continue to shoot squirrels with a blunt arrow, taking care to hit the animal on the head, so as not to damage the fur. Their bows are six feet long, made of a slip of birch joined by fish glue to a piece of hard pine-wood. The arrows are four feet long, the head consisting of either a ball for striking small fur animals, or a spear-like weapon for larger game. I heard on the Obi of feats of archery which far outdo the traditional shot of William Tell. The captain told a fellow-passenger that on one occasion he saw an Ostjak mark an arrow in the middle with a piece of charcoal and discharge it in the air, whilst a second man, before it reached the ground, shot at the descending shaft and struck it on the mark.

South of the tract roamed over by the Ostjaks lies the territory of the Siberian Tatars. In driving from Tiumen to Tobolsk on the Irtysh I passed through the battle-fields which witnessed Russian victories over these people in the sixteenth century. The Tatars differ from the majority of the Siberians in that they have a history, and can point to great princes who made a name for themselves in the annals of the world. They are, in fact, remnants of those who, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, under Jenghiz-Khan and his descendants, overran northern Asia, and pushed their way to the banks of the Volga, whence they long proved formidable antagonists to Russia. At length came their disruption, after which the Russians subdued them piecemeal in Europe, and Yermak wrested from them their land between the Urals and the Irtysh. I found villages peopled exclusively by Tatars between Tiumen and Tobolsk, but Tatars were frequently seen also living among the Russians. Not that the two races blend, however, for one is Christian and the other Muhammadan. The traveller is reminded of this by noticing that the Tatars, when on a journey, carry with them their wooden basins, for the more exclusive of them will not drink from a vessel used by the Russians.

Together with the Tatars may be mentioned the Bashkirs, whose land lies between the Volga and Ural rivers, and who

were subject to the Tatars of Kazan. When these latter were overcome by Russia, the Bashkirs tendered their submission to the new conquerors, but did not desist from making incursions into the territory of the Russians, who were then compelled to fortify their frontier settlements, and to make an uninterrupted line of earthworks from village to village. In 1574 the Bashkirs voluntarily petitioned for the construction of a Russian town in their country, and with the foundation of Ufa and Samara, Bashkiria became permanently attached to Russia. I travelled in this district from Samara to Orenburg and beyond into the Steppe so recently as the summer of 1885, and think of it chiefly in connection with *koumiss*, or fermented mare's milk. Not only did I visit a large establishment near Samara where patients are treated with this diet, but I met in Orenburg Dr. Carrick, who brought some Kirghese to the Health Exhibition in London, and who in the Bashkir country has a large herd of mares, whose milk he condenses (after the fashion of Swiss cows' milk) to serve for babies' food. He pointed out that next to the mother's milk this was best, since women's, mares', and asses' milk are almost alike, but all very different from cows' milk. The mares, he said, were milked several times during the day, the foals being with their mothers only by night. Of the milk thus obtained nine parts of the water is taken away by boiling *in vacuo*, the remainder being preserved, not with sugar (as in Swiss milk), but by glycerine. Then, by restoring the nine parts of water, milk can be made which can be fermented for making *koumiss*, or which serves for infants' food. The experiment has succeeded well in Russia, the medical faculty speaking very highly of the results of this food for babies.

The Bashkir women dress in a fashion midway between the Tatars and the inhabitants of central Asia. On the breast they love to wear a highly ornamented sort of bib, decorated with tinsel, jewelry, and coins, of which last also the Tatar women are fond as pendants to the hair. The Bashkirs wear their mantles resting on the top of the head instead of the shoulders, and nearly hiding the face therein, resembling the women of Bokhara, only that the latter are closely veiled.

I pass now from the tribes of western Siberia, who are being gradually influ-

enced by Russian civilization, to speak of those in the eastern portion of the country. I came in contact with the settled Buriats on the east and south of Lake Baikal. Many of them are employed in the Russian postal service, and are excellent drivers. I entered a Buriat house near the Mongolian frontier at Kiakhta, and was invited to drink tea. To have declined would have been considered highly impolite, but to see the tea served and to drink it was no small trial. Over the fire hung a large open iron pot containing a bubbling liquid covered with scum. In this was a ladle, which our fair hostess filled and refilled and emptied back into the pot. Then, scraping the scum away, she took a ladleful of the decoction, poured it into cups, and gave us to drink. It was brick-tea flavored with salt, and, I suppose, rye meal and mutton fat added, so that it will not seem matter for surprise if I say that after tasting it I had an accident, upset the beverage, and declined a second cup.

The Buriats in 1876 numbered 260,000 souls, the largest native population in Siberia, and the only one amongst whom English missionaries have been allowed to labor. In the first quarter of the present century three men went out to Selenghinsk and Verchne Udinsk, where they translated and printed the New Testament in the Buriat language. They had also a school, and tokens of success were not wanting; but the work was stopped by the Russian Synod, the members of which were jealous of foreign interference, and found an occasion for dismissing all foreign missionaries from the Russian dominions, under the pretext that the Synod wished to do all its own mission work for its own heathen. The Englishmen, therefore, about 1840, had to quit the country, leaving behind them, however, a sacred enclosure I visited in Selenghinsk, where lie the bodies of five members of their families, whose graves silently tell their own tale of British labor and Christian self-denial.

The Buriats appear to be not deficient in intellectual power, for the missionaries taught some of them Latin, and they had prepared an elementary work on geometry and trigonometry in the Buriat language. This language is a dialect of Mongol, with Manchu, Chinese, and Turkish corruptions. It abounds in nasal and guttural sounds. They employ the Manchu al-



BASHKIR MAIDEN.



BASHKIR MAIDEN.

phabet, written in vertical columns from the top to the bottom of the page, the lines running from left to right.

The religion of the Buriats is of three kinds, Shamanism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Shamanism appears to have been their old religion, and still holds sway over those who are farthest north, and so farthest from Buddhist influence. Buddhism, however, is the religion of the greater portion of the people, and was originally imported from Thibet. The lamas or priests are treated with great respect, and every Buddhist Buriat likes that one of his family should follow the priestly calling. Hence the lamas compose a sixth or more of the population. The lamas are forbidden the use of spirits and of tobacco, the former lest excess "should disorder the brain of the student of the divine oracles," and the latter because smoking "is conducive to indolence, and tends to waste leisure hours which ought to be devoted to pursuits affording instruction as well as amusement." The Christians of the Russian Church among the Buriats number several thousands. I know not how far the Russian missionaries have built upon the foundation laid by the English (they use, at all events, the New Testament translated by them), but when I was at Selenghinsk in 1879 I heard that

about forty men were engaged in nine districts in the Russian mission to the Buriats. A priest upon whom I called at Verchne Udinsk informed me that on the eastern side of Lake Baikal were baptized annually about three hundred Buriats, and on the western side more than one thousand, so that probably this people will be gradually absorbed into the Russian Church.

From the country of the Buriats I drove to the Amur, on whose banks I came in contact with those semi-Chinese races that interested me more than any I saw in Siberia, namely, the Gilyaks and Goldi. The Gilyak country extends over the northern half of the island of Sakhalin, and about three hundred and fifty miles up the stream, southward from Nikolaefsk, at the mouth of the Amur. I visited two of their "villages"—that is, if a collection of half a dozen houses can be so called—at Mukhul and Tyr, and I met a former "elder" of the "white village." I asked him concerning the number of the Gilyaks, to which, replying for his own locality, he said, "We have sixty men and more women, but the children we have not counted." The Gilyaks tie up the hair in a thick tail, but do not, like the Manchu and Goldi, shave it, hence they were called by the Chinese "Long-hairs."

Their diseases, in common with the Goldi, are rheumatism, ophthalmia (caused by hunting in the snow), and syphilis, the last having been introduced by Manchu merchants. Insanity is rare among them. Their women have few children. Six is thought a very large family. I was amused to see their method of suspending babies from the roof, strapped in a wooden cradle very much like a butcher's tray, and unable to move hand or foot. The habits of the Gilyaks are exceedingly dirty. They are said never to wash. A telegraph engineer told me that he one day gave a Gilyak a piece of soap, which he put in his mouth, and, after chewing it to a lather, pronounced it very good. The Goldi are said to be slightly on the increase, but the Gilyaks, from the time the Russians first knew them, have been dying out.

Women occupy a low position among the Gilyaks and Goldi, who are polygamists. Betrothal dates from childhood. The father chooses the bride for his infant son, a rich man paying from £5 to £20 for a girl five years old. At Nikolaefsk there happened to come into a shop where I was a Gilyak girl, with her mother and father, of whom I ventured to ask if his daughter were matrimonially disposed of. He replied at first that he did not approve of mixed marriages between Gilyaks and Russians (as he supposed me to be), but when I pressed him further he said he had sold her, and that dearly. At Mukhul the price of a wife was given me from £10 to £50, whilst I heard elsewhere as the selling price for a bride from eight to ten dogs, a sledge, and two cases of brandy, though, if she have "a good nose," she fetches rather more. The bride-elect is brought to the house of her future father-in-law, and when the girl is twelve or thirteen and the boy eighteen, they are married.

The Russian missionaries do not allow polygamy among their converts, so that if a native who has many wives desires to be baptized, he is compelled to elect one, and be properly married to her. On hearing this I naturally asked what became of the rest, and was told that they were returned to their respective fathers at half-price!

The Gilyaks know almost nothing of affairs outside their own little world. Those with whom I endeavored to exchange a few ideas, through one of them

who spoke a little Russian, seemed a people the lowest in intellect of any. I have met one father I spoke to not knowing his daughter's age, nor even his own, for he said they kept no account. It was difficult to convey to their minds any but the simplest ideas, and they have no written signs.

Before the Russian occupation the Gilyaks were dependent on the Manchu for their merchandise. Hence their adoption to some extent of Chinese customs and materials of dress. Now, however, the Gilyaks come to the Russian towns, especially to Nikolaefsk, where they not only sell their fish, but begin to purchase Russian articles.

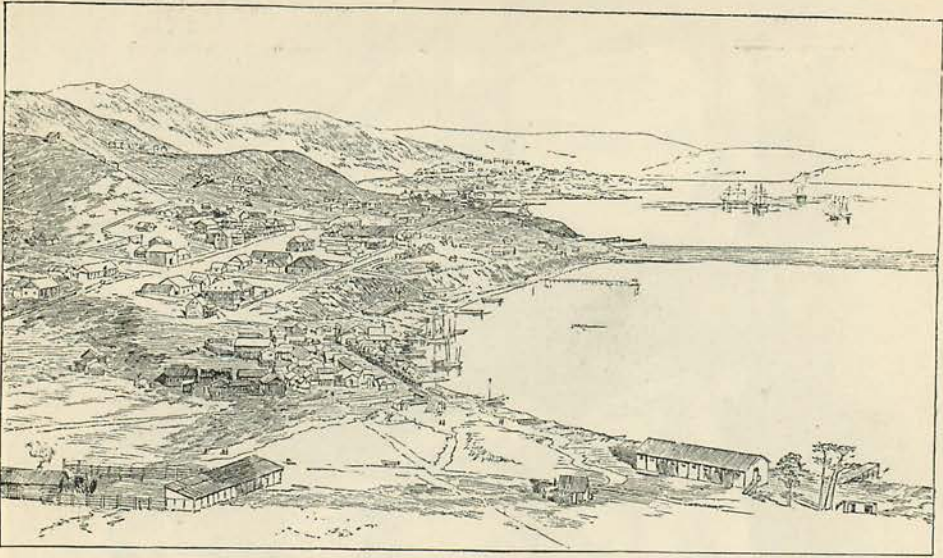
Dogs are their means of locomotion in winter; a team, I learned, may consist of any odd number from seven to seventeen, a good leader being worth fifty shillings, and an ordinary dog from eight to ten shillings. The sledge is made of boards, five or six feet long, and eighteen inches wide. A team of nine dogs draws a man and two hundred pounds of luggage an entire day, each dog receiving a piece of fish a foot long and about two inches square. Nikolaefsk, when founded in 1853, was the seat of the Governor of the province. It had an arsenal, machine shops, and a dock-yard, in which eight hundred men were employed. But its glory has now departed, for the residence of the Governor was changed to Vladivostock, eight hundred miles to the south. The dock-yard is closed, and the population of the place has greatly decreased, though it is still the biggest town of which the Gilyaks have any conception.

The neighboring Goldi do not usually come so far north. Their habitat extends southward from that of the Gilyaks up the Amur to the mouth of the Sungari, and also up to the head waters of the Usuri. A Russian missionary I met laboring among them estimated their number as about six thousand. This priest gave me a photograph of a group of Goldi Christians wearing ear and nose rings, and embroidered garments of fish-skin. I set great store by the picture, for it is a rarity. The natives have not yet become vain enough of their faces to overcome their repugnance to being photographed. This group had been taken for the priest who baptized them.

He told me that formerly natives when willing were baptized wholesale, though



GROUP OF GOLDI CHRISTIANS.



VLADIVOSTOCK.

they understood nothing of what was being done, but in his own case he required them to know certain prayers. At the time of my visit this missionary and his brother were engaged on a translation of the gospels into Goldi, and they had already done the Russian liturgy. In fact, this protodiakonoff, or archdeacon, Peter Alexander, struck me as one of the most industrious of priests I have met in Russia, and told me that in twenty-three years, up to 1878, he had baptized 2000 natives. The amount of instruction that one or two men could give to so many adherents is no doubt quite inadequate to the need, but these facts point to the gradual absorption of the Siberian races into the Russian Church, and their improvement by Russian civilization.

Not many miles south of the tract inhabited by the Goldi is the town of Vladivostock, which derives its lordly name from its supposed "command of the East."

The town overlooks an inlet of the Bay of Peter the Great, and behind the harbor called the "Bay of the Golden Horn" rises a lofty hill. The depth of water within the harbor is from thirty to sixty feet, and in summer the place is visited by ships of many nations, including Chinese junks with their clumsy sails. I am under the impression that in winter the Goldi visit Vladivostock, but during my journey thither in summer I do not remember meeting any south of the head waters of the Usuri, their places being taken by Manchu, Chinese, and Manzas. Many of these last are descendants of exiles sent hither by the Chinese government, as other malefactors were sent to Kuldja, farther west. The mention, however, of Kuldja brings me to the Ili Valley, where Russia has had beneath her sway a considerable variety of races, but which can be better described in my next paper on "The Children of the Steppe."

A PETITION.

BY T. B. ALDRICH.

TO spring belongs the violet, and the blown
 Spice of the roses let the summer own.
 Grant me this favor, Muse—all else withhold—
 That I may not write verses when I'm old.

And yet I pray you, Muse, delay the time!
 Be not too ready to deny me rhyme;
 And when the hour comes, as it must, dear Muse,
 I beg you very gently break the news.