

*Dr. Friedrich Parrot (1791- 1841) was the founder of scientific mountaineering, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Dorpat, and a Russian Imperial Councillor of State. Parrot was the first western explorer to climb and record an ascent of Mount Ararat as he attempted it three times in the fall of 1829. He was the only known person to meticulously document the Armenian St. Jacob Monastery near the foot of the Ahora Gorge before it was destroyed in 1840 by a mud flow. His detailed account titled Journey to Ararat, originally written in German and translated into English by W.D. Cooley in 1846, is extremely fascinating.*

## Chapter 1

# 1829 Estonian Friedrich Parrot, Ph.D.

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**Editor's Note:** On September 26, 1829, Johann Jacob Friedrich Wilhelm Parrot, being at that time a professor of natural philosophy of the Russian University of Tartu [now in Estonia], climbed to the top of Mt. Ararat (5165 meters) together with five other companions including H. Abovijan, who would later become a famous Armenian poet. Due to this event, and to the first ascent to the Eastern Summit of Elbrus (5624m) by Killar Hasirov in 1829, that year is also deemed to mark the beginning of Russian Alpinism. The St. Jacob monastery was located at an elevation of 6,394 feet and named Araxilvank according to H.F.B. Lynch on pages 184-188 of *Armenia Travels and Studies* and cited in a following chapter of this book. In his 1993 movie *The Incredible Discovery of Noah's Ark*, David Balsiger claimed that Parrot saw artifacts from Noah's Ark. However, Dr. Parrot never claimed these that he saw any artifacts and the movie segment arose from filmmaker David Balsiger's imagination. In 1966, the Archaeological Research Foundation (ARF) climber Alva Appel said he saw the location of the monastery in the Ahora Gorge. In 1983, the local Kurds told Doris Bowers and the Irwin team that the monastery foundations were still visible. The Irwin group attempted to go to the location but landslides narrowly missed them and they decided to turn back. In May 2006, Rex Geissler and Dr. David Graves were guided to the site and took the photo below. Parrot also visited the Armenian Echmiadzin Monastery where a cross-shaped relic is allegedly wood from Noah's Ark.

Dr. Parrot never claimed to see any traces of Noah's Ark although he wrote about the native Armenians, "They are all firmly persuaded that the Ark remains to this day on the top of Mount Ararat, and that in order to ensure its preservation no human being is allowed to approach it." In 1845, the German Dr. Herman von Abich named the Parrot glacier on the northwest side of the mountain after the first westerner to ascend Ararat. The following are the most interesting sections from Dr. Parrot's book and the text in brackets are notes from the editors to help correspond old location names with current location names, old words with modern-day words, etc.

### Preface to the English Edition of *Journey to Ararat*.

...The interest attaching to the first ascent of Mount Ararat is acknowledged by all; nor will it be likely to be diminished by the partial fall of that mountain in 1840 (of which an account is given in the Appendix), when the very monastery in which Parrot had resided, and the ancient village of Arghuri [Ahora], with the vineyards, traditionally believed to have been planted by Noah, were overwhelmed and totally destroyed by the ruins from above.

The result of the late Dr. Parrot's scientific investigations are here given complete, but the figures and formulas with which they were accompanied have been retrenched, so that this part of the work is reduced to one fourth of its original bulk...



...A Russian traveler, M. Autonomoff, is said to have ascended Ararat in 1834; and its summit was, we believe, nearly reached by Colonel Stoddart, who perished in Bokhara. [Abich wrote from Ahora in 1943, "Autonomoff told him that, being officer of Customs at Nakhitschevan, he felt irresistibly attracted by the sublimity of the silver-headed mountain. His special aim was the desire to know whether it is true that stars of the first magnitude are visible from very elevated mountains. It is well known among M. Autonomoff's friends that, the good man having lately followed the advice of the Vicar of Wakefield, his first son was baptized in water brought by the father from the top of Ararat." Freshfield, 214] There seems, therefore, to be no ground for questioning the veracity of Parrot, who, as a traveler as well as a philosopher, fully merited the eulogy pronounced on him by M. von Humboldt<sup>1</sup>, and was "constantly guided by the love of the truth."

#### Chapter 1:

...By the peace of Trukmanshai<sup>2</sup> the domain of Christendom was extended beyond the Araxes, and Mount Ararat became the extreme boundary of the Russian Empire on the side of Turkey and Persia. The Kurds, however, still

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<sup>1</sup> Asie Centrale, tom. ii., p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Between Russia and Persia, 10<sup>th</sup> of Feb., 1828.

continued their depredations on the north and south till the breaking out of the war between Russia and the Porte [Ottoman Empire]. The imperial eagle then soared over Ararat; the pashalik of Bayazed [Bayazit] was invested, and those restless hordes were overawed. The time was now come for the gratification of my long-suppressed aspiration after the mysterious mountain, and a fortunate conjuncture presented me with means conducive to the object I had in view.

...obliged me to limit the preparation for my journey to a supply of the most indispensable instruments, and to proceed upon the enterprise at my own expense, accompanied only by M. von Behaghel von Adlerskron, a mineralogist, and pupil of Professor Engelhardt, who was to assist also in taking levels with the barometer. So fully determined was I that nothing should divert me from my purpose, that the mere gratification of beholding the sacred mountain with the eye of a sincere Christian and inquiring traveler was enough to make me bid defiance to all the perils of a journey of 2,330 miles. Meanwhile I had received a pressing solicitation from two medical students of the University, M. Julius Hehn and M. Carl Schiemann, for permission to accompany me. They proposed to employ themselves in making collection, the former in botany, the latter in zoology, both contributing their proportion of the expenses.

But the most important addition to our party was suggested by M. Struve, who resolved to avail himself of this opportunity of serving at once the interests of astronomy and those of a young astronomer, and who accordingly proposed to the authorities that M. Vassili Fedorov, student of Philosophy in the Imperial Academy, but trained as an astronomer by Professor Struve, should be permitted to join the expedition, and that the cost of the necessary instruments, as well as his share of the expenses, should be defrayed out of the imperial treasury. We should thus be in a condition not only to determine the exact position of the places visited, but also to measure trigonometrically the height of Mount Ararat, and obtain an exact measure of time for experiments with the pendulum...

"The project has my full approval. Let a feldyäger<sup>3</sup> of tried fidelity be selected to accompany the expedition, and to remain in the service of the travelers till their return." Such were the gracious orders of the emperor. At the same time, an advance of 1600 silver rubles was made for the purchase of instruments, and to meet the expenses of the journey on the part of M. Fedorov. Two of the best chronometers were provided by the kind solicitude of Prince Lieven, Minister of Public Instruction—one being bought from the Admiralty, and the other lent by the Imperial Academy of Sciences for the purposes of the expedition; while the feldyäger, in the person of a young man named Schutz, of extraordinary activity and most obliging disposition, was placed under my direction, and the whole party recommended to the patronage and protection of Count Paskevich, of Erivan, commander-in-chief in the Trans-Caucasian provinces.

To what an extent the objects of my journey were promoted by these truly paternal attentions may be best appreciated from my entire narrative; yet I may be here allowed to mention the additional marks of his majesty's favour which we experienced on our return, namely, the full reimbursement of all expenses incurred during our absence; the order of St. Anne, of the second class, conferred upon myself; the presentation of the theodolite employed on the expedition to M. Fedorov, who had used it with so much assiduity and effect; together with the surplus of 300 silver rubles remaining in our hands; and, lastly, a ring set with brilliants to our feldyäger, in acknowledgment of his intrepidity and zeal...

So great had been the delay occasioned by procuring the instruments required for our journey, that our departure from Dorpat did not take place till the 30<sup>th</sup> of March<sup>4</sup>, at eight in the evening. Our physical apparatus consisted chiefly of a complete pendulum apparatus, a ten-inch azimuth compass, a dipping needle, three portable barometers, and a delicate balance, all manufactured by Brücker, mathematical instrument maker to the University...

...Now, too, for the first time, I felt thoroughly and vividly impressed with the idea that I had really started on my journey to Ararat. Notwithstanding this, I felt that I ought to devote a few days of the time still at my disposal to a short but interesting detour, which would lead me into the Kalmuk steppe, to the eastward of New Cherkask, for the purpose of collecting some information as to the mysterious course of the Manech, a river involving many important questions, connected with the relative levels of the Black and Caspian Seas, and in the vicinity of which, if it be true that there

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<sup>3</sup> The feldyäger is a courier, or military guide.

<sup>4</sup> Old style. The Julian reckoning is employed throughout the work. [The old style, which is still used in Russia, is now twelve days behind the new. The expedition started therefore, according to our reckoning, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April—ED.]

was once a communication between their waters, we might even still expect to discover some evident traces of this union, inasmuch as, from its low level, it must have been latest deserted by the waters...

The cattle being left to graze upon the steppe in summer, and to find their living where and how they can in the winter, the life of the Kalmuk is inactive. The migration from the winter to the summer pastures constitutes the only important event in his monotonous existence. This want of all social excitements for the mind, this uniformity in his intellectual and physical life, renders it in a great degree comprehensible how a people, endowed with so many estimable qualities of mind and body, should become the votaries of the idle and fantastic religious dogmas which prevail, at least, among the hordes occupying this quarter of the steppe<sup>5</sup>.

These Kalmuks profess the religion of Buddah, which had its origin in India, but, having been superseded by the doctrines of the Brahmins, found its way into Mongolia and Tibet. It is a sort of pantheism, not at all easy to comprehend: rejecting the principle of one Almighty Being, the creator of heaven and earth, it nevertheless asserts the essential identity of God with the material world, neither placed above it, nor existing before it, but proceeding with it out of immeasurable space...

#### Chapter 2:

...In Vladikavkas we had the honour of an interview with the Persian prince Khosref Mirza, one of 380 children and grandchildren of the male sex alone, descendants of the Kajar Fet Ali, the present Shah of Persia, who was the parent of eighty-six sons and fifty-three daughters as early as the year 1826, and regarding whose family instances can be adduced of its having been increased by twenty members in a single week. Vladikavkas is still, as formerly, highly important as a central military post, and forms a refuge for the reception of all those whose adventurous spirit may have exposed them to the treacherous attacks of the Cherkesses and Kabardins; for so great is the barbarity of the surrounding tribes, that the shortest excursion is attended with danger, unless under military protection, and is, therefore, strictly forbidden. A short time before our visit, ninety-five horses had been stolen from under the very walls of the fortress; and during the period of our short stay of a few days, we witnessed the unexpected spectacle of a large body of Ossets, who had placed themselves under the protection of Russia, driving off a flock of 600 sheep from the Chechenzes, by way of reprisal for the loss of 400 oxen; and this they did without waiting for support from the garrison, and led home their prize with every expression of exultation and delight, shouting, throwing their caps in the air, and discharging their firearms...

...ravages so far that it had carried off 3000 persons since the month of February...

The warm mineral springs are, without doubt, the most interesting objects of philosophical curiosity about Tiflis. They burst out in great number from between the strata of limestone at the foot of the Narikaléh, which lies near the southern end of the city, and are then collected by means of a brass pipe and conducted into stone basins, or into large cubical bathing-troughs kept in the vaults of the bathing-houses, which are sometimes of considerable extent...

The heat and aridity of the atmosphere begin to be oppressive as early as the month of May, and they continue to increase through June, July and August, till they become intolerable; so that, for three hours before, and six after midday, during these last two months, no one will willingly leave the house, in which, by dint of excluding the light of the sun, and sprinkling the apartments with water, some degree of coolness may be maintained. If Tiflis had the advantage of trees, the plan adopted in Bengal for cooling the dwellings might be introduced there. This plan consists in filling the open windows with green boughs, the evaporation from which will, as we are assured, reduce the temperature some ten or fourteen degrees. The Persian fans are, however, a very effective substitute for this: they are formed of some very light material, about a foot square, and so contrived as to be readily turned with the hand like a vane; this produces such a motion in the air that, when it is kept up for an hour or thereabouts, the increased evaporation from the skin will produce a very sensible, and, in irritable subjects, even a painful impression of cold.

There is one circumstance which, in my opinion, also contributes not a little to maintain a degree of coolness in the apartments of an Eastern house; that is, the peculiar roof, if we may be allowed to give this name to the uppermost floor or terrace of their houses. This is formed of a layer of earth and stiff clay, about two feet thick, quite even, but inclined by about two inches to one side, so that during a heavy shower of rain the water may not run off at all sides,

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<sup>5</sup> Zwick's Journey from Sarepta, 1827.

but be directed through a couple of openings in the parapet, which rises about a foot above the level of the roof. This bed of earth acts hydrometrically upon the atmosphere, imbibing the damps by night, which are again evaporated in the heat of the day, and, by a known law of physics, has a perceptible effect in cooling the air; whereas, under the usual European roof, which has been most unadvisedly introduced by foreigners into Tiflis, an actual reverberation of the heat takes place. These flat terraces are, moreover, usually overgrown with weed; it is said to be particularly the *Lepidium vesicarium* which is there met with<sup>6</sup>. This becomes scorched in summer, and then is set on fire to get rid of the dry stalks, so that the fire, which soon seizes on this inflammable vegetable matter, will often present the startling and beautiful spectacle of a wide body of flame sweeping over the city in the night.

#### Chapter 3:

...There is an active export of wine...They have no casks, but keep it in earthen jars and leathern bottles. These latter are made of the skins of goats, oxen, and buffaloes, turned inside out, clipped with the scissors, washed, and rubbed over with warm mineral tar, or as it is also called, naphtha. The openings are closed with a sort of wooden bung, except at the feet, where they are only tied up with a cord. The wine is drawn at one foot merely by opening or closing the noose. It is very strange and whimsical sight for the newcomer to see oxen and buffaloes full of wine lying in the wine-booth, or about the streets, with their legs stretched out. These skins, however, are very convenient for home use or for carriage; for they may be found of all sizes, some very small—the skins of young kids—holding only a few bottles; at the same time, these latter come very rarely into requisition...

The system adopted by the natives of Kakheti and Georgia, both in getting in and securing their corn, is also very peculiar. Of this, the greater portion is wheat, the amount of barley and millet being inconsiderable. Oats are never grown for the horses, which are fed altogether on barley; and even the German colonists [like Erna Weist later] in Georgia follow this practice, as they find the oats less productive, while the barley suits the horses quite as well...

A report soon reached us that from 3000 to 4000 Lesghi had collected in the mountains, about four hours<sup>7</sup> from Yenisseli, and were ready to make an incursion into the Georgian territory. I am much inclined to suspect that their numbers were greatly exaggerated; but were they only 1000 strong, the near approach of such neighbours was enough to put us on our guard. The garrison of our friend's house, if we exclude the inhabitants of the village, could muster no more than ten, supported by our own party, with seven muskets ready for service. It was night. In order to put the surrounding villages on the alert, one of our Georgians, with a truly stentorian voice, was ordered to give notice of the danger. This he did at some length and in several directions, receiving an almost immediate reply from Gremi, Almati, Sabué, and Shildi, which places passed the signal on, in like manner, to the remoter villages. The shouts resounded fearfully among the valleys, and might possibly have reached the ears of the Lesghi themselves, who, notwithstanding their reputation for courage, will rarely venture to attack an enemy, let him be ever so weak, unless they can come upon him unprepared...

#### Chapter 4:

...It was the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, in the evening that we took our departure from Tiflis; consequently, just five months after leaving Dorpat, and when half the time allotted to the completion of our enterprise had already elapsed. However great the annoyance I had suffered from this loss of time, in consequence of the restrictions necessarily imposed by it on the execution of my original design, it was something still that all had not been thrown away, as might easily have been the case, and that the cheering prospect yet remained of our actually reaching the wished-for goal.

The distance from Tiflis to the foot of Ararat, that is, to the village of Arghuri on its northeastern declivity, is, including rising ground and turnings of the road, about 186 miles—154 to Echmiadzin, and 32 more to Arghuri. Though this is an estimate not founded upon actual measurement...

At about eight miles distance, reckoning from the summit of the Pambak, we found a temporary quarantine station, established as a protection against the plague, which prevailed in Erzerum [Erzurum]. As for us, who were proceeding from healthy into the infected territory, we had no interruption to submit to, but, on the contrary, were

<sup>6</sup> Rottiers, *Itinéraire*, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> An hour's journey is, for a footman, computed at nearly three, for a horseman at five miles.

received with every mark of attention by the officers of health, and provided with a complete quarantine tent to pass the night in...

On the west of Abaran-Pol stands a steep, high, and jagged peak, nearly isolated, though yet in connexion with the Pambak: this is Alaghés [Alagoz in Armenia], the best known and most remarkable mountain of that district. Its height above the plain of the Araxes is, according to the trigonometrical measurement of M. Fedorov, 10,744 feet; consequently, by our system of levels to the Black Sea, it rises 13,628 feet measured [in 2006 at 13,435 ft. = 4095m] above the surface of the latter... It is from Bash-Abaran, in the extreme distance towards the south, that the first view of Ararat is to be obtained on this side, when the atmosphere is clear. I had fancied before that I should get a sight of it as I descended from the Pambak, and I waited with impatience for the enchanting prospect; but the towering mass of Alaghés shut out that part of the horizon...

We were now obliged to avoid the villages on account of the plague by which they were, or might be visited, and passed the next night in the open air in front of Alaghés, at the foot of a solitary hill, protected only by our tent from the rain, which fell heavily in the night, and recruited by a warm supper of the provisions we had brought with us, and some birds that M. Schieman had killed. Our fire was made partly with some fuel, of which we had provided ourselves with a small quantity, and partly with materials procured with great difficulty from the deep gullies of the Abaran, for the entire of this neighbourhood is a naked waste...

From this we continued our route, into the valley of the Araxes, properly so called, a partially cultivated plain of 20 or 26 miles in breadth, enlivened with some Armenian and Tatar villages, but, above all, with religious houses of the Armenian clergy, among which is the far-famed monastery of Echmiadzin, with its dependant establishments and villages. This is the seat of the patriarch of the holy synod and dignitaries of the Armenian Church; the centre from which issue the radiations of its influence, and towards which the fruits of gratitude and veneration are so copiously reflected from every point of the earth in which its members exist, that the riches and splendour of this metropolitan residence might, under ordinary circumstances, speedily vie with those of the Roman papacy itself. But the sovereigns of Persia have never forgotten to avail themselves of the resources of this mine of wealth, on which they have practiced their extortions, either under cover of the law, or as prompted by accident and caprice.

To this the Armenians have hitherto submitted, probably because they have looked upon it as the price paid for the toleration of their worship in the presence of Islam. By submitting to this exaction, they secure to themselves the enjoyment of a far better lot than awaits their brethren in the Ottoman Turkish provinces of Asia Minor, where they are exposed to many restrictions in the exercise of their religion from which they are exempt under the Persian rule; restrictions so oppressive, that even their laity endeavour to avoid all cause of offence by conforming, as far as practicable, in their costume and mode of life, to Turkish laws and usages. Of this I was once an eyewitness myself: I saw one day, to my great surprise, some personages who had come on a visit to Echmiadzin, and whom, from the style and costliness of their entire dress, from the turban to the slippers, I should have taken for Turks of quality, but who, as I afterward learned, were Armenians from Bayazed, as far as I remember...

The Christian churches in Bayazed, Erzerum, and other Turkish cities are said to be without towers or bells, and the prohibition of the Koran against swine's flesh is so strictly enforced upon the Armenians, that the use of this valuable animal is altogether proscribed among them. The Persians have more tolerance: some hogs are always to be found in Echmiadzin, never, however, beyond the precincts of the monasteries. The Armenians in Erivan [Yerevan], and in their villages and religious settlements formed in Persia, are suffered to have regular churches, church processions, and church costume. The present Persian sardar (generalissimo of the army), Hussein Khan, is said to have encouraged the keeping of the Christian churches upon a respectable footing, and even to have attended their worship with every mark of reverence and devotion. Shah Abbas, upon his sudden entry into Echmiadzin, sword in hand, hung up a costly lamp in the church, which is shown there still. Upon the visit of Shah Sada, he never was known to enter the church without leaving his slippers at the door, and having a rich carpet spread for him, just as when he went to the mosque. It is not a little remarkable that Tavernier, who traveled in these countries 175 years before, should have noticed the same difference, which obtains at this day between the two sections of Islam—the followers of Omar and the followers of Ali—in reference to their treatment of Christians...

A large Armenian village of 500 families lies a few hundred paces from Echmiadzin, and is sometimes also called by this name, but correctly Vagarshabad. Not very much farther towards Ararat is the monastery of St. Gayanne, and a mile or little more, upon the way to Erivan, the small but pretty Shokhagat, as well as the monastery of St. Hripsime. Erivan is situated at the distance of thirteen miles eastward...the latter, Khorvirab, or the monastery of St. Gregory, is the most deserving of notice. The mighty Ararat lies thirty-five miles beyond Echmiadzin; while the Araxes, taking a course directly southward between both, but ten miles on the same side of Echmiadzin, sweeps along with a rapid current, and in a bed of clay-slate and limestone shingle, being about a stone's throw in breadth, and so shallow that it can be passed on horseback in safety.

It is here that the Araxes should receive the Abaran, or Karpichai, as laid down upon our maps, and as I really believed. Instead of this, the Abaran has no actual outfall, but is lost in the numerous canals that have been cut from it for watering the land and the daily use of the inhabitants, so that its original bed is generally dry, and the water all drawn off before it comes to the junction. I did not discover this fact till after I had left that neighbourhood, and therefore cannot aver it of my own knowledge, though I have it from good authority...

...Savage dogs, often of formidable size, dispute the passages with every defenseless stranger, who, in the Tatar quarters, especially if he be a Christian, is exposed to serious danger from his fellow-man, as we ourselves had afterward good reason to know upon many occasions...Even in the spring, when the earth is covered with her natural carpet of verdure, it is difficult to view the mass of dull-green houses and their enclosures as anything but a heap of rubbish.

If to all this we add the heat and drought suffered during the summer in this exposed valley, it will not be easy to comprehend why the founders of Echmiadzin, whatever might be the inducements it originally appeared to offer, had not rather selected one of the delicious, healthful, and no less fruitful sites to be found on the Gokchai [now called Lake Sevan], or in the valley of Lori. The reason given by Armenian writers for this preference is, that the Saviour, after his ascension, appeared to St. Gregory, the apostle of the Armenians, where the Cathedral now stands, and on the spot shown, within an enclosure of masonry cased with marble, and enjoined him to have a temple of the true and uncorrupted faith erected there, the outline of which was marked with a ray of light, by which it was traced as by a wand. Hence is derived the Armenian appellation of the monastery—Echmiadzin—the descent of the Only-begotten: the date of its foundation is referred to the end of the third century.

The Tatars call the place Uch-Kilissa, which means the three churches, and is a name given by them to many Christian monasteries; for instance, to one in Bayazed, which has as little claim to this denomination from its having three churches as that in Echmiadzin, though the contrary is often asserted, for neither of them has, properly speaking, more than one church. There is another church near Bayazed, at a small place in the neighbourhood, named Diadina [a village due west of Bayazed]; and if this, together with the fore-mentioned three churches dependant upon Echmiadzin, were to be reckoned, we should then have one too many. It would seem to me more reasonable to suppose that the appellation Uch-Kilissa has some reference to the Trinity, a tenet that may have struck the Mohammedans as constituting a wide distinction between the Christian faith and their own...

...Was I not at the foot of Ararat, the hallowed mountain of the Noah's Ark, where the soil, though parched and thirsty now, retains the most indubitable traces of those waters which were once commanded to subside from its cloud-capped summit, to leave a resting-place for all that survived of the human race? Did I not stand in the valley of the Araxes, upon the banks where Hannibal sought refuge after having paid the penalty of his superiority on the plains of Italy? Was I not almost within view of the ancient Artaxata, the rich and mighty capital of Armenia, where the Parthian Tiridates assumed the kingly crown which he had received from Rome, and where he sought to stifle the growth of the first thinly-scattered seeds of Christianity, till, but a little before his death, he himself received the boon of Christian instruction from Gregory "the Enlightener" [now "The Illuminator"]—a glorious atonement for the murder of the father of the king by the father of the saint? Was I not now before the walls of Echmiadzin, the ancient episcopal seat and palladium of the Armenians, where Christianity, ever since the first century of its propagation, has maintained a habitation, in despite of the uninterrupted persecution, insult, and degradation of its professors—in despite of the unceasing contests between Parthians, Romans, Persians, and Turks for the possession of the soil—nay, more, even in despite of the moral corruption in which its priesthood was sunk? Here that seed was cherished when it might have been choked up by the weeds of idolatry; and here, though crushed and distorted in its earlier growth, it was preserved for a more genial season by a sacrifice of blood and treasure which few other Christian nations would have made.

#### Chapter 5:

...[While waiting inside the walls of Echmiadzin,] I contented myself with a private letter from the Armenian archimandrite, Aruthion Alamdarian...

...The behaviour of the attendants, who were soon actively employed about us, was in keeping with the bearing of the masters; they received their orders, and obeyed; left their hard-soled slippers always at the door; and either retired to a respectful distance, or, when called on, moved softly over the floor, which was covered with a carpet, in their woolen socks. We seated ourselves round the bed of the sick monk, at regular distances one from the other, and found ourselves almost at a loss for matters of conversation, from the increased solemnity of tone now impressed upon our thoughts, until the question of the Archimandrite Manuel, whether Alamdarian had received me in Tiflis with the proper formalities, put an end to my constraint, and I replied, "No; without any state or ceremony, but with

unaffected ease and kindness of heart, as one friend should receive and treat another"...These promises were scrupulously fulfilled, and gave us an opportunity of vouching for the hospitality of the monks, of which Tavernier makes honourable mention. At his visit, a bullfight—of buffaloes—was given in honour of his guest by the patriarch, in which two of these animals were killed, and three others wounded. This is an entertainment which, with others, such as throwing of snowballs between the monks, young and old, exhibitions of rope-dancers and dancing bears, it is still permitted the otherwise so serious inmates of the monastery to indulge in at Shrovetide.

...The journal of Tavernier gave the description and drawing which Chardin had the opportunity of making in 1673.<sup>8</sup> The same traveler has also left us a view of the little monastery of Gayanne, about a gunshot from Echmiadzin, precisely resembling that which I have given, with this difference only, that it, as well as the other monasteries, is now enclosed within a circuit of walls, as a defense against any hostile attacks, which was not the case in Chardin's time.

First, the question about the relics is too exciting for the mind of a believer to allow him to consider with apathy the question whether the spear-head at Echmiadzin is genuine or spurious. Porter expresses his opinion in these words:

But with regard to the identity of the spearhead of Pilate's soldier, these ancient writers are not all agreed, for they give us notice of a weapon claiming that distinction being in two, if not in three places at the same time. In the eleventh century, they tell us, the real spear-head was dug up at Antioch, and after gaining a memorable battle before that city for the renowned Raymond of Tholouse, remained in the possession of that hero. Two hundred years after we hear of another spear-head, which had been for ages in the possession of the emperors of Constantinople, and was sold by Baldwin II, as the true weapon, to St. Louis, and so dispatched to France. But, to our further astonishment, though such a relic was actually sent, and seen at Paris, another author virtually denies the facts by asserting the presence of the holy spear at Constantinople after the period of its alleged journey to the West. Besides the testimony of graver writers on these mysterious subjects, Sir John Maundeville may not be a very improper authority to quote in the case of a legend; and in his right wonderful account of his Asiatic travels, between the years 1322 and 1371, he speaks of the holy spear being in France in his time in these words:

"A partie of the crowne of our Lord, wherewith he was crowned, and one of the nayles and the spere-head, and many other relikes, be in France, in the Kinges Chapelle. For a king of France boughte these relikes sometyme of the Jewes, to whom the Emperour Baldwin had leyde hem to wedde, for a grete summe of sylore." But he adds, in another page: "And the spere-schafte hathe the Emperor of Almayne; but the head is at Parys. And natheless the Emperor of Constantynople saythe that he hathe the spere-head; and I have oftentyme seen it, but it is grettere then that at Parys."

With respect to the spear-head that is preserved at Eitch-mai-adzen, I could gather little of the particulars of its descent from past times to the present, the persons who have it in charge being delicate of communicating on the subject with strangers; but, as Armenia used to be included by the emperors of Constantinople within the pale of their empire, it is not unlikely that, on the subversion of that state and capital by the Turks, the holy deposits of its temples would be dispatched to the safe-keeping of the remoter walls of Eitch-mai-adzen.

Second, the hand of St. James, enclosed in a hand of the natural shape, with an arm of silver gilt: the thumb and fore-finger are bent towards each other, and between them hangs a fragment of the Ark of Noah by a little chain: it is a small, dark-coloured, quadrangular piece of wood, in good preservation, and carved upon one surface. It came into the possession of a monk, whose legend I shall take another opportunity of giving, by a miracle, which was the cause of his being canonized.

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<sup>8</sup> Journal of the Travels of the Chevalier Chardin, etc., Lond., 1686, p. 258, plate 9.



Third, the hand of the apostle and “Enlightener” of the Armenians, St. Gregory. In this, as in the former case, there is nothing to be seen but the hand of metal, in which the relic is enclosed.

Fourth, the point of one of the fingers of St. Paul the apostle. This looks just like the finger of a mummy or dry corpse, and is encased in the middle of a little glory, with rays of gold and silver.

Fifth, a bit of the skull of the holy and martyred virgin Hripsime...

On the conclusion of divine worship we were conducted to the patriarch's, and introduced into a large but dreary-looking apartment in the upper story, containing no furniture but two rows of seats, placed opposite to each other, in the middle of the floor. Here we saw the patriarch upon a chair, set apart for him, at the upper end of the line, with the archbishops and archimandrites, right and left, below. We were invited to take our places on his right, which, considering the value here attached to outward demonstrations of respect, must be taken as an indication of the honour intended to be shown us. The young monk, already introduced to the reader, stood behind the patriarch's chair as interpreter. The holy prelate's name was Yeprem (Ephraim), and his title *Katholikos*, which is translated Patriarch only by Europeans; for it is a title implying no particular eminence, but given to the archbishops of some large and distant sees, as those of Jerusalem and Constantinople. He was ninety-three years old, a man of much experience, acquired by travel, which he extended even into India, and gained a high veneration for his virtues, among which, his integrity, disinterestedness, and Christian mildness were pre-eminent.

This high reputation, which had already reached us, gave me room to expect much gratification from this meeting; but in this my expectations were disappointed. The former political connexions of the monastery—its alternate dependance, now upon one, and now upon some other potentate, to whom, for the sake of the very existence of the establishment, it was necessary to observe a blind submission and elaborate deference, have, in the lapse of centuries, had the effect of destroying all candour and openness of character in the monks, and introducing mistrust, disingenuousness, and a selfish devotion to personal interests in its stead, so that it is impossible for a stranger to overpass those bounds of Oriental formality and cold politeness which are here so strictly drawn and observed. The conversation of the patriarch, consequently, was confined to indifferent subjects; and when I touched upon the ultimate object of my journey—Ararat, which should have found as much interest in his eyes as in mine—I received only apathetic and chilling replies, scarcely less discouraging than the few half-uttered remarks with which I was favoured by the rest of the ecclesiastics. This made the state of feeling into which I was unexpectedly thrown so intolerable, that the leave-taking, at which I received the blessing of the worthy old prelate, was the most agreeable part of the visit in a twofold point of view...

I was completely disappointed in the supposition I had entertained, that, in my ignorance of the Oriental languages, I might have recourse to my Latin. This total indifference to the study of the Greek and Roman classics, several of whose works are preserved in their library in the monastery, is no less to be deplored than wondered at... Their only literary occupation was the study of the history of their country, if it really can be deemed a literary employment for an Armenian monk to read the histories of his nation in the Armenian tongue, without the least idea of intelligent criticism, and to receive with blind submission all that their authors assert, either upon their own authority or that of worthless traditions, with all the errors and variations of careless transcribers, or, at least, to represent them to the people as positive and undoubted truths, whenever it suits their interest or hierarchical policy to do so...

On the evidence of these and other historians of less repute, the Armenians believe that the origin of their nation may be carried back to Haigh [Haik], a descendant of Japhet [son of Noah], who emigrated into the countries about Mount Ararat at the time of the building of the Tower of Babel, and became the founder of the kingdom of Armenia; whence the natives call themselves, not Armenians, but Haigh. The former name was given them by strangers, from an Armenian king, Aram, who is said to have gained himself a great name in war. It is from the four brothers of Haigh, who accompanied him in his migration, that the Georgian and Caucasian tribes are supposed, by the Armenians, to have sprung.

Next to the history of their early origin, the record of their conversion to the Christian faith is justly considered of the highest interest; and, besides, the way in which it is detailed by their writers is a subject of their firmest belief. The circumstances attending it are represented to have occurred in the following manner: An Armenian prince, of the name of Anagh, of the royal race of the Arsacidæ, suffered himself to be persuaded by a certain king of Persia to cut off Khosref, king of Armenia, by assassination, but soon afterward lost his own life. Khosref had an infant son who found protection in Rome, and was brought up at the imperial court: this was Tiridates, or, as he is called in Armenian, Tridat, who was subsequently so renowned. Anagh had a son of tender age, likewise, who was carried by his nurse into Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, to the Christians, who reared him in the Christian faith, and baptized him by the name of Gregory, or Gríghor, as it is written in Armenian.

Gregory, on growing up, felt himself strongly attached towards Tiridates, whom he sought out at Rome, and, without making himself known, served him with such zeal and fidelity as to secure his confidence. He attended him also when he returned with succours from Rome, to deliver his country from the Persian yoke, on which occasion the prince received his crown from the Emperor Diocletian, in the year 286. Armenia being still a pagan country, Tiridates went to offer up thanksgivings in the Temple of Diana for his success; and, in order to give additional splendour to the ceremony, required Gregory to decorate the head of the goddess with a wreath of roses and laurels; but Gregory refused, saying, “I bow down before the throne of heaven and earth, and not before any work of human hands.” By this refusal, as well as by disclosing, at the same time, who he was, he incurred the unrelenting anger of Tiridates, by

whom he was exposed to fourteen different kinds of the severest tortures, in Ardhashad. After this he was thrown into a pit with wild beasts, in which he continued for fourteen years, escaping death by constant prayer. The place of the ruined city is now marked by the large and widely-venerated monastery of St. Gregory—in Armenian, Khorvirab, or deep pit; where the scene of his sufferings is still pointed out, along with a stone in which are two depressions, supposed to have been formed by the elbows of the martyr, on which he supported himself in prayer.

The story goes on to say that, about this time (three hundred years after Christ), forty Christian maidens arrived, among whom were two of noble birth, Hrípsime, whose portrait had been sent him from Rome. Yet all his advances were repelled by the virtuous maiden. The sufferings and martyrdom of these holy virgins have an honourable memorial in the three religious houses of Gayanne, Hrípsime, and the pretty little Shokhayat, which stand near each other, at Echmiadzin. At the present day, however, these are not nunneries, but monasteries, and inhabited by monks, although that of Hrípsime is called a nunnery by Tavernier<sup>9</sup>; and even Morier speaks of five nunneries in the province of Erivan, of which nothing was known at the time of my visit to Echmiadzin—a fact confirmed by the Protestant missionary Zarembo<sup>10</sup>.

As a punishment for his hostility to the Christians, Tiridates, with the nobles of his kingdom, was visited from heaven with a heavy affliction; for, according to the legend, he was transformed into a hog (perhaps a figurative expression for some sever and disgusting disease), the consequence of which was repentance for his former courses, and an earnest desire for heavenly aid and consolation. He now discovered that Gregory was still alive, and had him taken out of the den and set at liberty; while Gregory, on his part, recalling to mind the heavy guilt incurred by his own father in the murder of the father of Tiridates, found a source of satisfaction and happiness in being able to convert the heart of the king, who was now relieved from his bodily affliction by the preaching of the Gospel. Gregory soon after baptized Tiridates and all his subjects in the Christian faith; built churches and religious houses; selected and ordained a priesthood; established schools; and did his utmost to enlighten the people, both by precept and example. Hence his appellation of Gregory the “Enlightener.”

For the rest, the history of Armenia presents but a melancholy picture to the friend of humanity. Rapacious neighbours, the enemies of Christianity, found a theatre for their unheard-of cruelties and oppressions in this beautiful land, the inhabitants of which were equally exposed to the outrages of Paganism and Islam. Still, this picture is not altogether destitute of its lights and brighter points of view; courage, piety, and faith shine forth in the characters of the noble Patriarch Joseph and the brave Prince Vartan in the fifth century, who in battle and in the moment of death were found ready to testify their devotion to a holy cause. Yet the people, when their nobles were sacrificed, saw themselves again a helpless prey to the enemies of their welfare and religion. The painful consequence of this was the farther degradation of the priesthood, and dissensions in the bosom of the Church, which exist to the present day. Thus there is an independent Catholicos at Sis, in Cilicia, and another, who has maintained himself in this dignity for 700 years, on the island of Akhthamar, in the Lake of Van, under whose control the Armenians of Constantinople even placed themselves in 1831, after the deposition of the patriarch whom they had received from Echmiadzin.

...To Varhabet, however, must be awarded the high praise—and it has never been withheld even by the orthodox of Echmiadzin—of having published many useful and edifying books in Armenia, correctly and beautifully printed, under his own inspection, and in his own printing establishment in Venice; a praise which the congregation of Mekhitarists continue to merit by their exertions to this day. Still it is to be deplored that these works, and especially the Holy Scriptures, are almost inaccessible to the majority of the people, in consequence of their ignorance of the written language, which differs not a little from the modern vulgar tongue, and also as the orthodox Armenian clergy in Echmiadzin concur with the Roman sectarians of Venice in the opinion that the publication of the Bible in the vulgar tongue is an inadmissible innovation...

This solitary fact is enough to explain what the Armenian requires before he can be divested of the oppressive coil of superstition and low selfishness in which a thousand years of suffering have bound him...Of this we need seek no

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<sup>9</sup> Les Six Voyages, etc., tom. i., p. 11. [The same traveler bears witness to the numerousness of Armenian nunneries in tom. i. (12mo, Paris, 1724), p. 446.]—ED.

<sup>10</sup> Magazine for the latest History of Evangelical Mission and Bible Societies (in German), 1831, Part III.

farther proofs than the mode in which their secular clergymen—called, in Armenian, *Ter*, spiritual master or priest—is appointed, to be convinced that the cure of souls, in its proper sense, on which the development of genuine piety in every Christian community must depend, can never be made matter of weighty consideration with them. Every laic, provided only he be chosen by the congregation, and have passed fourteen days in the prescribed fastings and ritual observances in a church, may get ordination from the bishop, and may read mass, baptize, confirm, marry, give extreme unction, and has authority, too, to forgive sins!

#### Chapter 6:

...With this accession, we started from the great monastery on the 10<sup>th</sup> (22d) of September, at 10 in the forenoon, bidding adieu to the patriarch, his twelve bishops and archbishops, more than forty archimandrites, and a host of deacons. We took our way southward by the neighbouring little monastery of St. Gayanne, and through two Armenian villages, in the direction of the Araxes, across a plain partly cultivated and partly uncultivated, but overgrown with grass and herbage—in fact, a steppe...our two Armenian friends presented a striking contrast with the rest, being in their holyday attire, completely armed, on active Persian horses, and showing the excitement of their spirits by racing, sham-fighting, and shouting...

At four o'clock we had got to the left bank of the Araxes, and had to seek a passage through its rapid stream, which is without either bridge or ferry for many leagues; nor has it even any approach from the plain to show the place where it is to be forded; and, to come at it, the traveler is obliged to leave the main track from Erivan and Nakhichevan, which runs almost parallel with the Araxes, from five to ten leagues distant from it...

The right bank of the Araxes is covered with a somewhat extensive growth of low bushes, through which openings are cut in various directions, merely, however, for footpaths or very narrow passages... At half past seven in the evening we reached a little stream which is known by the name of the Blackwater in Tatarian, Armenian, and Russian<sup>11</sup>; a name which it seems to deserve, as its channel is deep, blackened with moor-earth, and rendered still more striking by the reeds with which its banks are covered to the distance of some hundred paces, and which keeps the water in constant shadow. Several other Blackwaters are met with in the plain of the Araxes, between it and the Ararat, all of the same character, and abounding in fish. These are, perhaps, nothing more than small collateral branches of the Araxes, which make their appearance in the lowest points of the bottom of its wide basin, to return to it again under ground... We could not resist availing ourselves of this favourable moment to take a sketch of the mountain. While M. von Behaghel was occupied with his pencil, my attention was attracted by a number of cochineal insects...

...Our path—for there was no road, properly so called, to guide us—soon became stony and much steeper, so that the horses could hardly get forward with the wagon; and, seeing that large masses of rocks were scattered in every direction about us, we were obliged to admit that to advance any farther in this way was impossible. We had directed our course for the Armenian village of Arghuri, the only one upon Mount Ararat. It contains about 175 families, with a well-built church, a pastor of its own, and a village elder or chief of respectable condition. All the houses are of stone, and, agreeably to Eastern custom, have flat, level roofs, of mortar covered with clay, holes for the admission of air and light instead of windows, and courtyards enclosed with stone walls. The inhabitants live by the breeding of cattle and horses, and from their corn, which, however, is not raised in the immediate vicinity, on account of the stony nature of the ground. The richer class have vineyards adjoining the village.

But the real treasure of this settlement, its very life-spring, is the little rivulet which has its source in one of the glaciers of Ararat, and finds a passage downward, through the great chasm on its northeast side, to the village, which is situate on the level ground at its outlet. Besides this, there is another rill, of exceedingly fine drinking-water, which springs out of the rocky side of the same chasm a few hundred paces above the village. There it is caught in pipes and conducted into stone troughs for the use of the cattle when they return from the pastures, which are without a tree to shade them from the scorching sun, while a number of young persons are generally seen collected in the evening, with their pitchers, under the cool brow of the rock, drawing water.

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<sup>11</sup> This stream is generally denoted in maps by the Tatarian name Kara-su.—ED.

The temperature of the air about Arghuri is much more genial than in the valley of the Araxes...For this reason Arghuri is often visited by persons of quality from Erivan, who make it their residence during the hottest season of the year. Even the Persian generalissimo, Sardar Hussein Kkan, has gone so far as to build himself an elegant summer retreat upon the height opposite Arghuri, with numerous apartments for himself, his family, and the officers of his household, and with all the conveniences, which Asiatic luxury can require. He has also taken precautions for its security by surrounding it with a wall and towers. Since the cession of this territory to Russia, the beautiful edifice here spoken of has remained untenanted and neglected, and, unless it fall into the hands of some wealthy lord and admirer, must soon sink to ruin.

In a religious point of view, Arghuri has an especial claim on the veneration of every devout Armenian. This is the place, according to tradition, where Noah, after he came out of the Ark, and went down from the mountain with his sons and all the living things that were with him, had "built an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings upon the altar."—(Genesis, viii., 20). The exact spot is alleged to be where the church now stands; and it is of the vineyards of Arghuri that the Scriptures speak (Genesis, ix., 20) when it is said, "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard." It is a remarkable coincidence that the building of the church must be referred to an unascertained, but still very remote date, and also that the Armenian name of the village contains a distinct allusion to that occurrence: *arghanel*, in that language, means to set or plant, whence *argh*, he planted, and *urri*<sup>12</sup>, the vine; so that the tradition cannot be a modern fabrication, at all events.

It was near one of these hallowed vine plantations, but about three miles below Arghuri, that we were brought to a halt, at eleven in the forenoon, and obliged to deliberate upon measures for conveying our effects onward in some other way than in wagons, as hitherto. This could only be effected by having recourse to the villagers, and in this Providence seemed to favour us. The plague, which had committed great devastation in the environs of Erivan, and in the city itself, where it had never made its appearance during the period of the Persian rule, was now spreading with such rapidity, that most of those whom we met upon the highways were affected by it. This hospitable little village upon Ararat, even, had not been spared; and though the visitation had not been so awful there as in some other places, still there were yet several houses, here and there, with convalescents...

I rode forward with Abovian, our interpreter, pulled up in an open part of the street, and requested the village elder to be called. This person's name was Stepan Aga: he had obtained some consideration during the supremacy of the Persians, and, along with it, the honourable and heritable title of Melik, or, as it may be rendered, Governor. His outward bearing inspired me at once with confidence; still more, his instant and decided arrangements for our relief. He directed that a small herd of fifteen or twenty oxen that were feeding outside the village, should be despatched for our luggage, with ropes to secure it; and he set out with me himself to the place where I had left my companions and our effects...

While the peasants were left to proceed quietly to the village, Stepan Aga gave us a friendly invitation into his vineyard, and seemed highly gratified when he saw us retire from the heat of the sun under the cool shade of its foliage, and quench our burning thirst, to our hearts' content, with the delicious grapes just ripening on Father Noah's vines...

Bayazed, the capital of the Turkish Pashalik of the same name [Isaak Pasha Palace at the edge of Doğubayazit], only twenty miles south from Ararat, afforded many advantages which it would be impossible to obtain in a small village, and being still uninfected by the plague... At the time of my stay in Tiflis, besides the Seraskier of Erzerum and several other pashas, there was also the Pasha of Bayazed, Mehemet Bähälühl, detained as a state prisoner, but not in rigorous confinement, so that I had no difficulty in obtaining access to him, and forming an intimacy with him, the circumstances attending which induce me to take a short retrospect of my intercourse with him in that city.

...I waited for no presentation or introduction through any one, but stepped one evening, between five and six, into his residence as a perfect stranger. The attendants whom I encountered in the anteroom gave me to understand that he was engaged just then in prayer, but offered to announce me. This I declined, and sat down to wait. Presently two doors were thrown open, and I perceived a man in the third room kneeling upon a carpet, with his face towards

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<sup>12</sup> The common Armenians pronounce Arghuri, and the Tatars Akhuri. Most foreigners pronounce and write the word as the latter; but the old authors have it Arghuri.

one corner, in silent and earnest devotion, occasionally changing the kneeling posture for the upright. After an instant's delay, an attendant motioned to me, courteously, to enter: that was the pasha, and my presence would not disturb him. I hesitated, however, to do so, and remained where I was till he had finished.

The pasha now rose—a man of tall, slender make, in the costume of an Oriental satrap—advanced with a light and rapid, but firm step—a rare combination of unembarrassed and manly dignity—greeted me with a welcome in his own tongue, and with an expression of countenance so gracious and so free from affected politeness, that, in spite of my ignorance of his language, I could not doubt that I was a welcome visitor; so I entered with him into the closet where I had seen him at prayer... both myself and my enterprise were under the directions and patronage of the mighty Emperor Nicholas, for whom he expressed his sincere and heartfelt respect in the most unequivocal terms...

The attendants presented pipes and tobacco; the pipes having, according to Turkish fashion, a small clay head with a long tube. They were lighted with a bit of hot charcoal, and a little tray was used to protect the carpet. We afterward had coffee, without milk, served in beautiful small porcelain cups upon goblet-shaped silver salvers instead of saucers. I had sugar offered, with milk; but the pasha took his without any addition, as the Turks in general do. We passed a couple of hours in an agreeable conversation, and then separated, with a mutual desire to meet again. I often repeated my visits, both by myself and with my fellow-travellers, and always found in Mahemet Pasha the same characteristic qualities that had secured for him my respect and attachment at first. In this he stood in advantageous contrast to the other pashas whom I saw with him. He also favoured us with a visit, when he amused himself with viewing the stars through our telescope; but what seemed to give him most gratification were my pistols with percussion locks, the effect of which drew from him expressions of surprise and delight. He would not believe that they could be actually discharged without powder; so I put a little pellet into one, placed a cap upon the nipple, and desired him to make a trial; he had a candle fixed at some distance, and gave at once a proof of the strength of the priming and his own skill by extinguishing the candle.

...When I now expressed a hope that, in case my arrangements should so require, I might be able to make my excursions from Bayazed, that is, from the southern side, he told me that he perfectly approved of my plan, and relieved my mind of all anxiety as to danger from the natives by offering me a letter to his family in Bayazed, which would secure me every assistance that I should need.

With respect to the selection of my headquarters upon the mountain, my intelligent and anxious friend, Aruthion Alamdarian, had spoken to me in Tiflis of a little Armenian monastery that he had heard of upon the northern slope of Ararat, higher up than the village of Arghuri... The monastery of St. James, above Arghuri, which had been mentioned by Alamdarian, did really exist<sup>13</sup>, and large enough for our purposes, as the monks declared; and besides, it had luckily been spared by the plague, which had spread to the village. There could now be no farther doubt as to which I should choose: we started in the direction of St. James's.

The way thither leads through Arghuri, the distance being about a mile and a half, and so our little caravan halted under the outer walls of the monastery towards evening on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September. My first inquiry upon entering the courtyard was for the pastor: he stood before me, a venerable old man of tall stature, and a countenance expressive only of subdued passions, peace of mind, and dignified resignation. His head was gray, exempt from the obligation of tonsure since the downfall of the Persian sovereignty, and covered with the pointed capuchin cowl of blue Indian stuff; his beard was long; his eyes, deeply set and large, spoke only of chastened longings after a better world. This man, clad merely in a plain and worn gown of blue serge, with a pair of common slippers and woolen Persian socks—this was the Archimandrite of St. James's, Varthabed Karapet. In one hand he held his rosary; the other he laid across his breast as he returned my respectful salutation, replying to my application for the hospitality of the monastery with a hollow and weak voice, and in the Armenian language. After a preliminary survey of the shelter he had to afford us, we had our baggage unpacked and laid down, for the present, in the court, where it occupied a very respectable space. As soon as the peasants who had assisted us were dismissed, and before we proceeded to take up our quarters, I directed a skin of wine to be sought out—a reserve of genuine Kakhétian, and pledged the old man, with all hilarity, in

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<sup>13</sup> Yet we find allusion made in a recent work to the old doubts as to the existence of this place, which the traveler attempts to disprove by stating that it was pointed out to him from Diadina, on the south of Ararat, whereas it is situated on the northern side!—Vide *Lettres sur la Perse et la Turquie d'Asie*, par T.M. Tancoigne, 2 vols., Paris, 1819.

a glass: this example was followed by the rest of the party, and repeated till every drop was gone, and the place of the red Caucasian wine left to be supplied by the golden juice of Father Noah's vines. Our respected host showed no reluctance to join us in this flow of feeling; but the gentleness and quietude of his bearing was unchanged, as well here as at every hour and under every phase of our subsequent intercourse...

#### Chapter 7:

...we are likewise informed by Moses of Chorene, the first authority among Armenian writers, that an entire country bore this name, after an ancient Armenian king, Arai, the Fair, who lived 1750 years before Christ. He fell in a bloody battle with the Babylonians, on a plain in Armenia, called after him Arai-Arat [Origin of the the name Ararat], the Fall of Arai.

Before this event, the country bore the name of Amasia, from its sovereign Amassis, the sixth in descent from Japhet, who gave the name of Massis to the mountain. This is still the only name by which it is known to the Armenians; for, although it is called Ararat in the Armenian edition of the Old Testament, yet the people (for whom the Bible can be no authority as they never read it) have retained the name Massis, and know no other; so that an Armenian, though from the holy mountain himself, if asked about Ararat, would appear as ignorant as a European interrogated respecting Massis, as if it were a well-known mountain.

We may reasonably conclude that Ararat is an appellation unknown to the Turks, and Persians also: the former call it, as I have already noticed, Agridagh—in Arabic, the Steep Mountain<sup>14</sup>; and as the Arabic is a sort of universal language in that quarter of the world, this name is equally familiar to the Kurds, Persians, and even Armenians themselves. The name by which it is known to the Persians is, according to some authorities<sup>15</sup>, Kuhl Nuh, the Mountain of Noah: upon this I cannot decide, as I have had but few opportunities of conversing with Persians, who, however, have always understood the name Agridagh...

The summit of the Great Ararat lies in 39° 42' north latitude, and 61° 55' east longitude from Ferro; it has an elevation of 17,210 feet perpendicular [16,945 feet or 5165 meters], or more than three miles and a quarter above the sea, and 14,320 feet, or nearly two miles and three quarters above the plain of the Araxes...

...While the southwestern slope of both is lost in the hills of Bayazed and Diadina, which contain the sources of the Euphrates, the northwestern slope of the Great Ararat runs into a chain which borders the entire right bank of the Araxes, and to which many sharp, conical peaks give a very striking character. The west end of this chain wheels round the head waters of Araxes, touches Erzerum, giving to the left side of this river, as it had already done to the right, an ornamental barrier of mountains, many of which, especially in the vicinity of Kars, must be of majestic height; for these must be the hills which I saw covered with snow to a considerable depth, and for a length of twelve miles, in the month of October, at a time when nothing else but the summit of the Great Ararat retains it without melting. This I conceive to be the Saganlúg, a branch of Mount Taurus<sup>16</sup>, the witness of the heroic days of Kars, Assan-Kaléh, and Erzerum, as old Ararat was of those of Erivan and Bayazed.

The impression made by Ararat upon the mind of every one who has any sensibility for the stupendous works of the Creator is wonderful and over-powering, and many a traveler of genius and taste has employed both the powers of the pen and of the pencil in attempts to portray this impression...

The earliest views of Ararat are found in Chardin<sup>17</sup>, in his seventh and ninth plates: the former, taken from Erivan, is a complete failure in every respect; the latter, from Echmiadzin, is not amiss in the outlines, and, in fact, is much better than many modern ones. Tournefort's<sup>18</sup> drawing is executed with spirit, and so far exact that almost every line in his hasty sketch is a delineation of nature, but with the most grotesque exaggerations, like his descriptions, in

<sup>14</sup> The author is here decidedly mistaken. Agridagh is not Arabic, but Turkish; in this language, *Dagh* means mountain: the first portion of the name admits of no certain explanation.—ED

<sup>15</sup> Manual of Biblical Antiquities, by Rosenmüller, i., 259; and Chardin, *Journal du Voyage*, etc., London, 1686, p. 261.

<sup>16</sup> *Voyage en Orient*, par Fontanier, tom. i., *Turquie d'Asie*, Paris, 1829, p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Journal du Voyage du Chev. Chardin*. London, 1686; and the Parisian edition, by Langlés, 1811.

<sup>18</sup> *Rélation d'un Voyage du Levant*, Amsterdam, 1718, t. ii., p. 139.

which he was carried away by a lively fancy. Morier<sup>19</sup> made a drawing of both mountains from the eastern side, but is not true to nature in his representation of their forms, and seems rather to have been guided by the impression which his heated imagination received from the sight of these stupendous objects<sup>20</sup>. Besides, Little Ararat is, in his sketch, far too small—a mere rock in the shape of a thimble: there is too great a regularity in the outlines...

That lively and intelligent observer, Porter<sup>21</sup>, has likewise far overstepped the bounds of nature, as far as regards the abruptness of the declivities, in his otherwise very beautiful delineation of the two Ararats: his making Little Ararat run up into a needle-shaped point is very incorrect.

M. von Kotzebue<sup>22</sup> has accompanied his amusing Journal with a small number of very interesting engravings in aquatinta, among which there is one of Ararat. The main features of both mountains are not to be mistaken; but the slopes of both, in consequence of an optical deception, which affects most free, off-hand sketches of isolated hills, are quite too steep, and Little Ararat is shown proportionably too high: the belt of clouds about the mountain is well done, and characteristic.

Sir W. Ouseley<sup>23</sup> has given some remarks on Ararat, and three views, in his valuable and copious work, which contains a circumstantial narrative of his travels in 1810, 1811, and 1812. Of these views, I must pronounce that taken from the plain of Erivan the best graphic representation of the mountain which we have yet had, although it is only two inches square, and contains scarcely anything in detail: both mountains are presented to the eye in perfectly correct contour, and of their exact relative size...

As there is nothing so well calculated to convey a precise idea of the general impression produced by a mountain as a correct drawing, I have taken much pains to impart a character of perfect truth to the views presented to the public with this work. For this purpose, I have a long time made use of a very simple contrivance for taking outlines, which, though not new, is not employed by travelers, at least as often as it ought. It consists of a small frame of stiff pasteboard, about three inches long, and two and a half wide, divided on the inner edge into parallelograms by eight fine threads of dark silk, well varnished, so as both to fix the threads at the points where they cross, and to preserve them from damp. My portfolio is supplied with sheets of paper divided by penciled lines into precisely similar figures, but of larger size; and these lines, as well as the threads of the frame, are marked with corresponding numbers—those running lengthwise with Roman, and those running crosswise with Arabic numerals—that no confusion may arise. After placing myself in the proper point of view, I hold the frame in such a manner before my eye that it may just include the part of the landscape I wish to take; or, if it is very long, I divide it into two parts. At this moment I fix my eye upon some two points of the prospect which can be readily found again, and which coincide with two points where the threads cross each other, so that the exact position may be regained in case the hand should move, or it should be necessary to interrupt the operation. When I catch the objects within the frame, I proceed to trace their outlines upon the ruled paper, thread by thread, as it is very easy to judge of a half, a third, or quarter distance by the eye. In this way I mark out, not only the external contours, but likewise individual objects within the extent of the landscape, such as buildings, trees, rocks, rivers, etc., in their actual situations and proportions. This can be done with as much accuracy by this plan as by the camera obscura or camera lucida: perhaps there may be a little more time lost in moving the eye constantly from the object to the paper and back again, but it certainly avoids the encumbrance of a special stand or table, the carriage of which is generally so troublesome and expensive, that it may explain why most travelers prefer depending on the correctness of the eye in sketching a landscape. Very accurate drawings have this peculiar advantage among others, that any changes which have taken place upon a mountain in the lapse of time are

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<sup>19</sup> Travels in Persia, Armenia, Asia Minor, etc., in the years 1808 and 1809, by James Morier, Secretary of Embassy at the Court of Persia, London, 1813, p. 83, pl. 24; and A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, etc., 1818.

<sup>20</sup> This is the drawing given in "Lettres sur le Caucase et la Georgie, suivies d'une Relation d'un voyage en Perse, en 1812." Hamburg, 1816, p. 237.

<sup>21</sup> Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, etc., during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, by Sir Robert Kerr Porter, London, 1822, vol. ii., p. 613.

<sup>22</sup> Travels into Persia, with the Russian Embassy, Weimar, 1819.

<sup>23</sup> Travels in various Countries of the East, more particularly Persia, by Sir William Ouseley, Knt., Private Secretary to His Excellency Sir Gore Ouseley, Bart., His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at the Court of Persia, London, 1823.

readily discovered by them, such as the falling of rocks, the formation of clefts, changes in the boundary of snow, increase or decrease of the extent of forests, &c...

The drawing made from Syrbaghan is, in my opinion, preferable to both the others, for the many and exact particulars with which it presents us regarding both the mountains. In the foreground is seen our party, with the road through this Tatar village, which lies between the Araxes and Ararat; at the side are flat roofs, on which the inhabitants often sit smoking, eating melons, and spinning; in the village are the only trees to be found in that tract of country: they are, the eleagnus, tall willows, some low bushes, and high herbaceous plants. Next a broad plain of ten miles across; and beyond that, the two splendid mountains, with their chasms, clefts, rents, and gullies, great and small, such as are only met with on an extinct volcano.

The view from St. James's is supposed to be taken at the entrance of the chasm, consequently on the mountain itself; in fact, from the burial-ground of the monastery: it exhibits, first, the lonely building, with its neat church, the adjoining cells, and the garden, all within a stone enclosure; outside of this are plantations of apricot-trees, small Italian poplars, lofty walnut-trees, and narrow-leaved willows; next, behind these, the ravine, traversed by the little torrent; and farther still, at the extremity of the chasm, the majestic icy peak itself, with every distinctive characteristic as it then



Sketch of St. Jacob Monastery at Arghuri and Mount Ararat 1829  
Detailed sketch by Dr. Friedrich Parrot

was...

...This is to be accounted for by a very common optical illusion, which every mountain traveler would do well to divest himself of, if he would avoid falling into some troublesome mistakes.

Whenever we ascend a mountain, and have the slope immediately before us, we think the angle of acclivity much greater than it would be found to be by the plummet. It is not unusual to find the estimate in this case double of the reality. The solution of this lies in the perspective shortening of the distances. The idea thus formed in our imagination of the steepness of the declivity is imbodyed in the profile outline of the mountain, and hence the exaggerated forms of almost all rising grounds when sketched off-hand. Were they really so steep as they are shown in the drawings, there would not be very many of them climbed; for we must recollect that, though hills of an inclination of sixty degrees in drawings are not at all unusual, even among those classed with the accessible, still an acclivity of thirty-five or forty degrees is totally insurmountable, unless recourse be had to steps of ladders in the ascent, or the surface be composed of tolerably-sized angular stones, like stairs, not quite accidentally laid together.



On the 12<sup>th</sup> (24<sup>th</sup>) of September, at seven in the morning, I started on my way, attended by M. Schiemann. We took with us one of the Kossaks, and a peasant from Arghuri—a hunter, and directed our steps first to the ravine, and then along its left declivity, till we came to a spot where there were two small buildings of squared stone standing near each other, one of which was formerly a chapel, and the other erected over a well reputed holy place. The Armenians assign to this chapel, which they have named after St. Gregory, a very remote origin, and make pilgrimages to it from distant quarters. During our stay we often encountered Armenians from Bayazed at the religious ceremonies which they are in the habit of performing there, after which the visitors amuse themselves with discharges of firearms, and other demonstrations of joy, in a remote part of the valley.

The fountain, which springs out of a rock at this spot, affords a clear, drinkable water, of a pure natural taste, and is therefore an object deserving of general estimation; for there cannot be many perennial springs upon Mount Ararat, as I have proved to my vexation, since in all my excursions upon it I never either found or heard of any other. It is possible that it may have originally induced some devout monk to establish himself in that locality, whose reputed sanctity procured for the spring also the reputation of miraculous virtues, until, in the course of centuries and the storm of political event, the peaceful inhabitant was frightened away, and the miraculous spring alone remained as the object of universal veneration among the Armenians, wherever they may be scattered round the world.

The tradition respecting the wondrous virtue of the water is this, that the flights of locusts which occasionally traverse the country on this side, and beyond Caucasus, in countless numbers, and as a kind of field-plague, often laying waste an entire province in a single day, cannot be expelled otherwise than by means of a certain bird, which I have never been able to see, but infer, from the description given of it, to be a kind of thrush, though the Russians settled in this country call it a starling. Not very large, it is dark-coloured, yellowish-white on the breast and back, and is said to resort in flocks to the Araxes when the mulberries are ripe—though why they do so is not well explained—and to do much damage by destroying the mulberries. Its Armenian name is Tarm; it is also called Tetägush (*gush*, in the Tatar language, means *bird*, and *tut* is the Armenian for *mulberry*); the Tatars call it Gasyrtshakh. Should it make its appearance in a tract infested by the locusts, then the fields are soon saved, for it pursues the locusts with implacable enmity. With the view of enticing this serviceable bird, the water of the holy well is brought into requisition, and for this purpose it is sufficient just to fill a pitcher or a bottle with it, and to set it down in the neighbourhood of the locusts, taking care, however, not to let the vessel touch the ground anywhere on the way, for in that case the water immediately disappears; but if set in the open air and in the proper place, it never fails to attract to the spot a flock of the Tetägush, which soon rid the district of the devouring plague. Not merely the common people and Armenians, but some even of the educated classes, and not of the Armenian creed, have sought to convince me of the truth of this story, and related as a proof that, a few years before, the country round Kislyar, on the northern side of Caucasus, being attacked by locusts, was saved through the virtue of a bottle of water fetched in the greatest haste from the holy well, and which immediately brought together a flock of the birds. At Ararat and in Tiflis every one knew that the water was brought, and as to the success attending the use of it, that might be easily learned in Kislyar, where the bottle, with some of the miraculous water, was still lying in the church!

From the chapel we ascended the grassy eminence which forms the right side of the chasm, and had to suffer much from the heat, insomuch that our Kossak, who would much rather have galloped for three days together through the steppe, seated on horseback, than climb over the rocks for two hours, declared that he was ready to sink with fatigue, and it was necessary to send him back. About six o'clock in the evening, as we, too, were completely tired, and had approached close to the region of snow, we sought out a place for our night's lodging among the fragments of rock. We had attained a height of 12,360 feet; our bed was the hard rock, and the cold, icy head of the mountain our only stove. In the sheltered places around still lay some fresh snow; the temperature of the air was at the freezing point. M. Schiemann and myself had prepared ourselves tolerably well for this contingency, and our joy at the enterprise also helped to warm us, but our athletic yäger Sahák (Isaac), from Arghuri, was quite dispirited with the cold, for he had nothing but his summer clothing; his neck and legs from the knee to the sandal were quite naked, and the only covering for his head was an old cloth tied round it. I had neglected, at first starting, to give any attention to his wardrobe; it was, therefore, my duty to help him as far as I could, and as we had ourselves no spare clothing, I wrapped his nakedness in some sheets of gray paper which I had brought with me for the purpose of drying plants: this answered him very well.

As soon as the darkness of night began to give way to the dawn, we continued our journey towards the eastern side of the mountain, and soon found ourselves on a slope, which continues all the way down from the very summit. It may be seen in the drawing of the Convent of St. James, on the left, behind the roundish and grassy projecting hills; it is formed altogether of sharp, angular ridges of rocks, stretching downward, and having considerable chasms between them, in which the icy covering of the summit disappears, while forming glaciers of great extent. Several of these rocky ridges and chasms filled with ice lay between us and the side of the mountain which we were striving to reach: we got successfully over the first ridge, as well as the beautiful glacier immediately succeeding it. When we arrived on the top of the second ridge, Sahák too lost the courage to proceed farther: his limbs, frozen the preceding night, had not yet recovered their natural glow, and the icy region towards which he saw us rushing in breathless haste seemed to him to hold out little hope of warmth and comfort; so, of our attendants, the one was obliged to stay behind from the heat, the other from the frost. M. Schiemann alone, though quite uninitiated in hardships of this kind, yet never lost the heart and spirit to stay at my side; but, with youthful vigour and manly endurance, he shared in all the fatigues and dangers,

which soon accumulated to an extraordinary extent. Before the eyes of the tarrying yäger, we crossed over the second glacier which lay open before us, and ascended the third ridge; taking an oblique direction upward, we reached, at the back of it, and at an elevation of 13,954 feet, the lower edge of the ice, which continues without interruption from this point to the summit.

Now, then, the business was to mount this steep, covered with eternal winter. To do so in a direct line was a thing impossible for two human beings, although the inclination did not quite amount to thirty degrees. We therefore determined to go obliquely upward on the slope till we gained a long, craggy ridge, which stretches a great way up towards the summit, and slight indications of which may be seen on the left side of the mountain, in the sketch made from St. James's, as well as in that from Syrbaghan. This we succeeded in accomplishing, by cutting with our staffs regular hollows in the ice, on which lay a thin coat of newly-fallen snow, too weak to give our footsteps the requisite firmness. In this way we at last got upon the ridge, and went along it favoured by a deeper drift of the fresh snow, directly towards the summit.

Although it might have cost us great exertions, yet it is probable that on this occasion we could have reached, contrary to all expectations, the lofty aim of our wishes; but our day's labour had been seven; and as it was three o'clock in the afternoon, it was time for us to consider where we should find a resting-place for the coming night. We had reached nearly the farthest end of the rocky ridge, and an elevation of 15,400 feet above the sea, or about the elevation of the summit of Mont Blanc, and yet the head of Ararat, distinctly marked out, rose to a considerable height above us. I do not believe that there existed any insuperable obstacle to our farther advance upward; but the few hours of daylight which still remained to us for climbing to the summit would have been more than expended in accomplishing this object, and there, on the top, we should not have found a rock to shelter us during the night, to say nothing of our scanty supply of food, which had not been calculated for so protracted an excursion.

Satisfied with the result, and with having ascertained that the mountain was by no means wholly inaccessible on this side, and having made our barometrical observations, we turned about, and immediately fell into a danger which we never dreamed of in ascending; for, while the footing is generally less sure in descending a mountain than in ascending it, at the same time it is extremely difficult to restrain one's self and to tread with the requisite caution when looking from above upon such a uniform surface of ice and snow as spread from beneath our feet to the distance of two thirds of a mile without interruption, and on which, if we happened to slip and fall, there was nothing to prevent our rapidly shooting downward, except the angular fragments of rock which bounded the region of ice. The danger here lies more in want of habit than in real difficulty. The active spirit of my young friend, now engaged in his first mountain journey, and whose strength and courage were well able to cope with harder trials, was yet unable to withstand this: treading incautiously, he fell; but, as he was about twenty paces behind me, I had time to strike my staff before me in the ice as deep as it would go, to plant my foot firmly on my excellent many-pointed ice-shoe, and, while my right hand grasped the staff, to catch M. Schiemann with my left as he was sliding by. My position was good, and resisted the impetus of his fall; but the tie of the ice-shoe, although so strong that it appeared to be of a piece with the sole, gave way with the strain; the straps were cut through as if with a knife, and, unable to support the double weight on the bare sole, I also fell. M. Schiemann, rolling against two stones, came to a stoppage, with little injury, sooner than myself; the distance over which I was hurried almost consciously was little short of a quarter of a mile, and ended in the debris of lava not far from the border of the glacier.

In this disaster the tube of my barometer was broken to pieces, my chronometer was opened and sprinkled with my blood, the other things which I had in my pockets were flung out by the centrifugal motion as I rolled down, but I was not myself seriously hurt. As soon as we had recovered from our first fright and had thanked God for our preservation, we looked about for the most important of our scattered articles, and then resumed our journey down. We crossed a small glacier by cutting steps in it, and soon after, from the top of the ridge beyond it, we heard with joy the voice of our worthy Sahák, who had had the sagacity to look for and await our return in this spot. In his company we had at least the satisfaction of passing the night in the region of grass, to the dry heaps of which, being always chilly, he set fire, in order to warm himself. On the third day, about ten o'clock in the morning, we reached our dear monastery, where we refreshed ourselves with juicy peaches and a good breakfast, but took special care not to let a syllable escape us, while among the Armenians, respecting our unlucky falls, as they would not have failed to discover therein the divine punishment of our rash attempt to arrive at the summit, access to which, from the time of Noah, has been forbidden to mortals by a divine decree; for all the Armenians are firmly persuaded that Noah's Ark remains to this very day on the top of Ararat, and that, in order to ensure its preservation, no human being is allowed to approach it.

The chief authority for the latter tenet is afforded by the Armenian chronicles, in the interesting legend of the monk named Jacob, who was afterward patriarch of Nisibis, and is supposed to have been a contemporary and relative of Saint Gregory. This monk, in order to put an end to the disputes respecting the credibility of the Holy Scriptures—that is to say, as far as the history of Noah is concerned, resolved to convince himself, by personal inspection, of the actual existence of the Noah's Ark on the summit of Ararat. On the side of the mountain, however, he fell asleep several times through fatigue, and always found, on awaking, that he had, during his slumbers, unconsciously gone down as much as he had been able to ascend with his waking efforts. At length God, taking compassion on his unwearied but fruitless efforts, and to satisfy the curiosity of mankind, he sent him a piece of Noah's vessel, as it lay on the mountain—the same piece which is preserved as a peculiarly holy relic in the Cathedral of Echmiadzin. This story,

sanctioned by the Church, converts the popular assumption of the Armenians respecting the impossibility of ascending Ararat into an article of faith, to which they cling the more affectionately, inasmuch as it relieves them of a great labor; and an Armenian will not abjure this erroneous belief, even after he shall have been placed on the top of Ararat, of which more hereafter.

A pasha of Bayazed, the father and predecessor of the present Mohammed Bähälühl, who cannot be supposed to have been influenced by the religious prejudices of the Armenians, contributed, by his failure in an attempt to ascend Ararat, to confirm the belief in the impossibility of such an achievement. The pasha set in earnest about the attainment of his object, and he also offered a reward to any one who would carry his plan into execution; yet he ascended no higher than within about 2400 feet of the limits of the ice, or as far as one can go on an active Persian, habituated to warmth and comfort, is not the man to achieve a feat of this kind.

The learned world, too, is not without an authority to prove the impossibility of ascending Ararat. I do not allude to the numerous travelers who, either from want of time, of curiosity, or of means, or deterred by the common opinion of the people, have never made any attempt to reach the summit, and, filled with amazement at the truly impressive aspect of the mountain, have felt disposed to enhance still farther the sentiment of grandeur by the idea of utter inaccessibility, but I speak of Tournefort, to whom Morier particularly refers in his second journey, where he says, "No one appears to have reached the summit of Ararat since the flood; and the steep sides of its snowy head appear to me, moreover, sufficient to frustrate all attempts of that kind. When even Tournefort, that persevering and courageous traveler, could not succeed in it, how could we expect the timid and superstitious inhabitant of these countries to be more fortunate."<sup>24</sup> But it is only necessary to read what Tournefort says of his expedition to Mount Ararat, and his description of his attempt to ascend it, in order to be convinced that he cared less about reaching the summit of the mountain than "to acquire," as he himself naïvely expresses it, "the reputation of a martyr of botany." "We assured our guides," he says, "that we would not go beyond a patch of snow which we pointed out to them, and which seemed no bigger than a cake; but when we came to it, we found that there was more of it than would suffice to satisfy our appetites, for the patch in question was above thirty paces in diameter. Each ate as much or as little of it as he pleased, and, by common consent, it was resolved to go no farther. We then descended with admirable vigour, delighted at having accomplished our vow, and at having nothing more to do but to return to the convent."<sup>25</sup> Tournefort also writes, "This mountain, which lies between the south and south-southeast of the Three Churches, is one of the most dismal and disagreeable sights on the face of the earth."

#### Chapter 8:

My subsequent expedition up Mount Ararat consisted of myself, M. von Behaghel, M. Schiemann, the Deacon Abovian, four Armenian peasants from Arghuri, three Russian soldiers of the 41<sup>st</sup> Yäger regiment, and a driver for the four oxen. A chief person in the expedition was the village elder already mentioned, Stepan Melik of Arghuri, who had himself asked permission to join it, and who, as it soon became evident, was eminently fitted to guide its steps. I readily followed the advice of this experienced man to try the ascent of the summit this time from the northwest side of the mountain, where the way, though considerably longer than on the eastern declivity, is in general much less precipitous. After we had gone two thirds of a mile on the left slope of the valley, we ascended, and went straight across the northern side in a westerly direction, without meeting with much difficulty, as the ground presented few inequalities, and there were paths fit for use, which led over them. At first we found the ground covered with withered grass, and but few plants with verdure undecayed. We then came into a tract covered with volcanic sand and a pumice-like shingle, probably that of which Tournefort (p. 149), somewhat hyperbolically, says, "It must be allowed that the eyes are much deceived in measuring a mountain from the base to the summit, and particularly when one has to

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<sup>24</sup> It ought to be observed, that although Morier speaks emphatically of the supposed impossibility of ascending Ararat, yet he did not quite despair of succeeding in the attempt himself. He says (Second Journey, p. 344), "During the long time that we were in the neighbourhood of Mount Ararat, although we made frequent preparations for attempting to ascend it, yet we were always impeded by some reason or other. We were encamped before it at the very best season for such an undertaking, namely, during the month of August, and saw it at the time that it has least snow upon it."—ED.

<sup>25</sup> Relation d'un Voyage du Levant, Amst., 1718, tom. ii., p. 149.

pass over sands as annoying as the African deserts. What an amusement for people with nothing but water in their stomachs to sink up to the ankle in sand!"

While we kept advancing continually in an eastern direction over this, in my opinion, not very difficult tract, and at the same time gradually got higher, we came suddenly on the stony region, which forms a broad zone round the mountain immediately below the limits of the perpetual snow, and consists wholly of angular fragments of dark-coloured volcanic rock, which, scattered in wild disorder, sometimes present the appearance of a rude wall, sometimes that of a craggy ridge, and are at times heaped together in a narrow chasm or the valley of a glacier. Here we found at our service a little path, beaten probably by the small herds of cattle, which in the summer, when the herbage fails below, are obliged to seek their food on the remotest elevated parts of the mountain. This path led to a considerable plain, nearly horizontal, and well covered with grass, which, like a carpeted step, interrupts the stony tract on the northwest side of the mountain. M. von Behaghel, M. Schiemann, and myself had each of us brought a saddle-horse from the monastery, and at first we made use of them; but on arriving at the precipitous stony tract, which we reached about eleven o'clock, we perceived the necessity of sending them back with the Kossaks who accompanied us for this purpose, as they did not seem capable of enduring the hardship of traveling over such rough ground; yet I saw with astonishment the little Persian pony of Stepan carry its tall master with unwearied strength and activity over the most difficult and dangerous places, and climb, without a slip, incredibly steep acclivities.

The plain which we had reached is called, in Tatar, Kip-Ghioll [Kıp Göl or Kıp Yayla], that is, Kip-spring, in consequence of a canal or drain projected here by the Persian government, the object of which was to collect the snow-water of Ararat, and conduct it to a rivulet, near which stood at that time, on the road to Bayazed, the village Gorgan, which is now deserted and fallen to ruins, in consequence of the gradual drying up—from what cause is not known—of the water of this rivulet. It did us all good to be able to rest a little, after an uninterrupted ascent of five hours, on a spot, which reminded us of animated nature. While our cattle found a hearty meal in the half-green herbage, we recruited our strength with a simple but invigorating repast, to which we were enabled to add soup, since the tract around us, being resorted to in summer for pasture, was thickly strewn with dry dung, which made excellent fuel. Directly over this plain, which has an elevation of 11,500 feet above the sea, the slope of Ararat rises very steeply, yet the ascent is here easy, the ground being sprinkled with soil, and not without herbage; but, on mounting a little higher, the desolate stony region recommences, not again to disappear till at the margin of the perpetual ice.

In this way we arrived, not far from Kip-Ghioll, at a glacier of considerable extent [now called Parrot Glacier], but which will soon be concealed from the eyes of the traveler if the mountain continues to cover it, as at present, with lava, sand, and fragments of rock, for even now the ice can be seen only at the deep cracks, and involuntarily reminds us of the remarkable iceberg, covered with luxurious grassy vegetation, which Eschholz discovered in Kotzebue Sound, within Behring's Straits<sup>26</sup>. This glacier did not appear to me to be a continuation of the icy head of Ararat, but to stand by itself, unless its connexion with the ice above be concealed under a very thick layer of stones; on which point, having been obliged to content myself with a distant inspection, I am not prepared to offer any conjecture. The lowest commencement of an extended snowbank, immediately derived from the snowy region of Ararat, I found at an elevation of 12,540 feet above the sea.

About six o'clock in the evening, as we had reached a height of 13,070 feet, and were at no great distance from the borders of the snow, I felt myself compelled to determine on fixing our night's quarters among some large and conveniently-placed masses of rock, since, as difficulties were increasing around us, it would hardly be possible to carry our slender supply of firewood higher up. The strong and patient oxen had carried their burdens up to this spot with incredible exertion, and many a crossing back and forward had they to make on the face of the acclivity, in order to follow us. Even Melik's horse had overcome all the obstacles presented by the rugged nature of the ground, and had borne his master to this great elevation. It was now the common lot of these poor animals, when freed from their loads, to be turned loose in a desert, where there was nothing to satisfy their hunger but the few herbs scattered over these heights, and to quench their thirst nothing but the hard snow of the neighbouring glacier: in truth, I pitied them. A little fire was made, but the air was cool, and the ground not warm.

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<sup>26</sup> Voyage of Discovery in the South Sea and Behring's Straits, by Otto von Kotzebue, 1821, vol. i., p. 146.

Sleep refused to visit me on this occasion, and in my heart I felt more of anxiety than of hope for the attainment of our object. I know not what it was that filled me with this gloomy presentiment; perhaps it was but the language of bodily indisposition; for the injuries, superficial as they were, which I had received on that occasion, had pained me the whole way up: the fever might have somewhat weakened me; and, in short, although in the course of the day's journey I was never last, and caused no delay, yet I felt that I wanted the strength and spirit which were required, in order that, on the following day, in ascending the difficult icy region, I might be able to expedite as I had always been used to do, the attainment of our object, by taking the greatest share of the labour on myself.

In the mean time, the night passed over, and at half past seven in the morning we resumed our march, the thermometer being four degrees below the freezing point. In about two hours we had reached the limits, properly so called, of the perpetual ice and snow, that is to say, not the place where the snow, favoured by the coolness of a valley or other circumstances, remains at the lowest elevation, but where, extending continuously on a uniform slope, it is checked only by the warmth of the region below it. I found those limits to be at the height of 14,240 feet above the level of the sea. The way up to that point from our night quarters was rendered extremely fatiguing by the steepness of some of the rocky tracts, which were passable only, because, consisting of masses of rock piled one upon the other, they offered angles and edges for the hands and feet; but on that very account they threw impediments in the way of carrying up the great cross: in vain we tried to let two men bear the long beam [carrying a cross to represent Jesus Christ and Christianity]; for on ground where the choice of each step was confined to some particular spot, every movement of the one carrier embarrassed and endangered the other; and besides, the beam, being ten feet long [The remains may explain the discovery of wood on Ararat], was every moment knocking against something in the sharp turnings of our crooked path. Such, however, was the devout zeal of one of the Armenian peasants, that, at the moment when the necessity of leaving the cross behind us seemed inevitable, he heaved the long beam on his shoulders, drew the end of his frock from behind over it, holding this down with both hands, in such a way, too, as to save the cotton with the holy oil; and now, like an athlete, with astonishing dexterity he bore his load over the tortuous and rugged path.

For an instant we halted at the foot of the pyramid of snow, which before our eyes was projected with wondrous grandeur on the clear blue sky: we chose out such matters as could be dispensed with, and left them behind a rock; then serious and in silence, and not without a devout shuddering, we set foot upon that region which certainly, since Noah's time, no human being had ever trodden. At first the progress was easy, because the acclivity was not very steep, and besides, it was covered with a layer of fresh snow, on which it was easy to walk; the few cracks in the ice, also which occurred, were of no great breadth, and could be easily stepped over. But this joy did not last long; for, after we had advanced about 200 paces, the steepness increased to such a degree that we were no longer able to tread securely on the snow, but, in order to save ourselves from sliding down on the ice beneath it, we were obliged to have recourse to that measure, for the employment of which I had taken care to equip myself and my companions, namely, the cutting of steps. Although that which is called ice on such mountains is in reality snow converted into a glacier, that is to say, permeated with water and again frozen, in which state it is far from possessing the solidity of true ice, yet, like this, it does not yield to the pressure of the foot, and requires, where the slope is very rapid, the cutting of steps. For this purpose some of us had brought little axes, some billhooks, while others, again, made use of the ice-staff. The general rule in the ascent was, that the leader should only cut the ice just enough to allow himself to mount, and that each as he followed should enlarge the step; and thus, while the labour of the foremost was lightened, a good path was prepared for the descent, wherein much firmer footing is required than in ascending.

Through this proceeding, dictated off-hand by necessity and frequent experience, and which, moreover, could not be dispensed with for a single step, as well as through manifold hinderances of a new sort which obstructed the carrying up of the cross, our progress suffered so much delay, that, though in the stony region, which was by no means easily traversed, we had been able to gain about 1000 feet of elevation in the hour, we could now hardly ascend 600 feet in the same time. It was necessary for us to turn a bold projection of the slope above us, and, having come to it, we found on it, and straight across the direction in which we were proceeding, a deep crack in the ice, about five feet wide, and of such length that we could not distinctly see whether it was possible to go round it. To our consolation, however, the drifted snow had in one place filled up the crevice tolerably well, so that with mutual assistance we got safely over, a feat rendered somewhat difficult by the circumstance that the edge of the ice which we wanted to reach was a good deal higher than that on which we were standing.

As soon as we had got over this little trouble, and had ascended a very moderate slope, we found ourselves on a nearly horizontal plain of snow, which forms a principal step on this side of Ararat, and may be easily recognized in all my sketches of the mountain as an almost horizontal interruption of the slope, next to the summit on the right hand side [called the Western Plateau]. This height was the scope of our exertions this time; for we had, to judge from appearances, worked for three hours, and there arose, to our sorrow, a strong, humid wind, which, as it gave us reason to expect a snowstorm, damped our courage, and took from us all hope of reaching the summit. I made up my mind to erect the cross that we had brought with us on this height, and for that purpose sought out a spot visible from the monastery, or at least from Erivan, and such we found on going little more than half a mile towards the east, without ascending much. While some of us were employed in cutting a hole about two feet deep in the ice with bills and poles, others joined together the timbers of the cross with two strong screws, and over the joint, fastened in like manner with screws, the leaden plate, weighing twenty-seven pounds. The cross was then raised up, every one

lending a hand to the work, and with pieces of ice and snow was fixed firmly in the hole. It faces Erivan, and has behind it in that direction the steep snows of the summit, so that, being itself black, it will be strongly relieved, and must be visible with a good telescope. On the leaden plate is the following inscription:

NICOLAO PAULI FILIO  
 TOTIUS RUTHENLE AUTOCRATORE  
 JUBENTE  
 HOC ASYLUM SACROSANCTUM  
 ARMATA MANU VINDICAVIT  
 FIDEI CHRISTIANÆ  
 JOANNES FREDERICI FILIUS  
 PASKEWITSCH AB ERIVAN  
 ANNO DOMINI MDCCCXXVI.

Loosley Translated:

Nicolao for a little while Godson just as many RUTHENLE AUTOCRATORE JUBENTE this ASYLUM SACROSANCTUM the armed hand faithful CHRISTIANÆ Joannes Frederici son Paskewitsch from Erivan in the year 1826

I now suspended my barometer from the cross in order to determine our elevation above the sea, which I found to be 16,028 feet (our leveling to the shore of the Black Sea being included in the calculation), or about 350 feet more than the summit of Mont Blanc. Impelled by a common feeling, we turned once more towards the summit, and I could not refrain from asking myself whether in reality we should now resign the hope of reaching it. But the watch, which told us that it was midday; the sky, where clouds were gathering; and our inadequate means for spending a night on the icy pinnacle, all plainly said "no" to the thought of advancing; and the declaration of the sturdy guide, Stepan Melik, "Time alone is wanting; for the rest, we are nearly on the top," completely soothed the downcast spirits of all but myself, whose only consolation was the hope of another and more successful attempt.

The steps by which we had mounted aided us also in our descent, and without any accident beyond a transient giddiness which attacked M. von Behaghel, we reached, before night had fully set in, the place where we had rested at noon on the way up, the Kip-Ghioll, a charming spot to the weary, where we also found Melik's horse, the oxen, and the drivers, for they had sagaciously determined on descending from the inhospitable rocks and glaciers, among which we had left them, and rather to wait for us here. We also were glad to warm ourselves at a brisk fire, for we had hardly left the snowy region in our descent when the whole tract over which we passed nearly down to Kip-Ghioll was visited by a heavy fall of moist snow which disappeared the next day. Having taken our evening repast, we each of us sought, under the large rocks scattered in great numbers over this plain, shelter and lodging for the night, and the following day, the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, about ten in the morning, we reached St. James's.

I have not yet made the reader acquainted with our domestic arrangements and mode of life in the monastery, which nevertheless, though extremely simple, may be not uninteresting to future travelers. Close to the right bank of the Arghuri rivulet, about twenty-five feet above the stream, between the rocky and grassy slopes in the lower part of the great chasm, which even here has still a depth of from 600 to 800 feet, lies the little monastery of St. James, at an elevation of 6350 feet above the sea [note that Dr. Parrot's measurements were not as accurate as today so this may be slightly off, as well as the mud torrent that destroyed the monastery in 1840 may have pushed the debris further down the valley]. It consists of a little church built in the form of a cross, with a cupola like a truncated cone in the middle, and entirely constructed, even to the very roof, with hewn stone of hard lava. But the principal entrance is so hidden by the dwellings built against the church, that even in broad daylight it is difficult to work one's way, without knocking against some corner, through the narrow and crooked passage leading from the northern side and across a dark portico to the door on the western side of the temple. Abutting on the church on the eastern side is a long chamber provided with a fireplace, which we at first used as our common bed and sitting room, but afterward made it our kitchen, for a much larger room was soon found for the former purposes, drier also, and having two openings for the admission of light. It adjoined the cell of the archimandrite, who, after he had become a little acquainted with us, made no difficulty about removing a few corn-sacks lying there, and leaving the place wholly at our disposal.

Our furniture consisted of the blankets, pelisses, cloaks, and chests brought with us. Our dinner table was a singular piece of basket-work, of split wood interwoven, not quite so high as an ordinary stool: it was too tottering for a work-table, so we preferred writing on the knee, or lying on our baggage, or, in case of nice work, on one of the stands of our instruments. Whoever did not like to eat standing, might seat himself on a big stone which lay there at his service. All these dwellings round the church are made with thick clay walls, and are covered in common with a perfectly flat roof of strong plaster, under which, in the middle of each apartment, is a prop; the wooden support of the ceiling in our room answered well for the hooks whereon we hung our clothes. This room was too narrow and too dark for the numerous and important instruments which we had with us: they were more suitably placed in a pretty tent of sailcloth and white woolen, which was pitched in the middle of the court, where the instruments were arranged

according to their respective uses, and where I, for the purpose of watching them, had established my night quarters. A great projecting corner stone of a partition wall in the court, and close to the tent, appeared to M. Fedorov to be a good basis for the observation with the theodolite; and, to make it more convenient, he dug a little trench round it, in which he stood. With the permission of the archimandrite, a little corner of the wall, which confined the field of view, was removed, and the arrangement of the observatory was thereby completed.

To provide for our subsistence and necessities was not the least of our cares. We *savans* [learned persons or scholars] were five in number; there was one young priest, one feldyäger, six Kossaks, and four soldiers, in all seventeen men; and we had with us eleven horses, of which five were our own. We had brought with us two Kossaks from Tiflis, and four others were assigned to us in Erivan on the order of the military chief, who also allowed us the four privates of the 41<sup>st</sup> Yäger regiment. In order to look after provisions and to make some purchases, I had already dispatched the feldyäger, M. Schultz, from Echmiadzin to Erivan, with the necessary papers and money, and while I was engaged in my first expedition on the mountain, he, having completely executed his commissions, arrived at St. James. One of the soldiers was an experienced cook, and in that way rendered us essential service during the whole time of our stay at Ararat. Another, somewhat advanced in years, was well adapted for distributing the rations; he it was who formally reported to me, morning and evening, according to military usage, whatever had occurred. The fodder for the horses consisted partly of barley—for oats are never cultivated in this country, but the horse feeds well and without any detriment on simple unprepared barley—and partly of hay, the procuring of which gave us some trouble, because at this time of the year, and particularly after a dry summer, it is sure to be scarce.

Our own subsistence was provided for in the following manner: there was no want of mutton, for a sheep might be bought in Arghuri whenever it was necessary. We also received two sheep as presents, one on the day of our arrival, by way of welcome, from our worthy archimandrite, another, somewhat later, from Stepan Melik; but far better flavoured and more nutritive was the flesh of wild hogs, subsequently shot by our Kossaks among the reeds on the Blackwater, and a large portion of which was then salted, a great crock which happened to be in the monastery serving us for that purpose. M. Schiemann did not fail also to supply our table, whenever an opportunity was offered, with game, and dried fish was brought to us for purchase, particularly an extremely well-flavoured kind of salmon-trout from the Gokchai. Eggs, milk, and pullets were to be had in Arghuri; but as, at first, I laid a strict interdict on that place, because the plague had been raging there, and a few persons were still to be found in it only just recovered, these dealings were all carried on with great caution: the people who came from the village were not allowed to stay in St. James's longer than was necessary; the purchased sheep were sprinkled over with chloride of lime, as well as the woolen sacks in which the barley for the horses was brought to us from places in the neighbourhood.

The archimandrite obligingly supplied us with some cream, for which we daily provided him with tea and wine. We got from Erivan our stock of groats, lentils, dried apricots, kishmish, or raisins without stones, rice, onions, salt, pepper, sugar, tea, and rum; the last two, however, at a high price, the sugar costing two or three rubles a pound. There was a little luxury, also, which I allowed only to myself, namely, a cup of strong coffee after dinner, when I was at home. Now and then we had a basketful of grapes and other fruit; the goatskin bottle gave us wine of Erivan, so that we wanted nothing but pure, good drinking water in the immediate vicinity of the monastery, for the water of the Arghuri brook was always muddy, and consequently fit only for the cattle and for cooking; it was quite useless for washing; it contained such a quantity of earthy particles, and our people were therefore obliged, when the washing took place, to go down about half a mile towards Arghuri, to a place where numerous fine springs issued from the rocks, from which we had brought to us also our daily supply for drinking.

At first we were ill off for the most important article of daily subsistence—bread. The Armenians make use of a kind of bread, which, whatever may be its good qualities in other respects, wants the flavour and the strength requisite for the European palate and stomach. The *losh*, as they call it, is a thin cake an ell long [unit of measure that varies based on country – Dr. Parrot appears to use the length of about 18 inches], half an ell wide, and about as thick as the blade of a knife, rolled out of weakly-fermented dough; being spread on a leathern cushion, it is pressed against the inside of the heated oven, to which it adheres; in two or three minutes it is baked through, and here and there burned a little; it is then torn off to make way for another. The oven used for baking this bread is of a peculiar kind: a pit in the chamber or porch of the dwelling, wide at the bottom, narrow above, well coated with fine plaster, and heated with wood; such is the oven, which has, at least, this advantage, that it takes up no room, being covered over when not in use. This *losh* is the bread universally used among the Armenians, and it serves for many purposes...

Our Kossaks contrived to attain their desired object [European bread] without any tedious deliberation. Close to the monastery was a steep bank of clay mixed with sand; in this they made a horizontal excavation for an oven; a stone that fitted the opening served for the door; a hollow within it, well coated with plaster, was the trough in which the dough was kneaded, and left for two days to ferment; another leveled and smoothed place in the same bank did duty as the table; and so these brave fellows succeeded in making, not only for themselves, but for us also, extremely well-tasted and wholesome bread of good rye meal.

For the fire in our own apartment, which during the latter part of our residence here we felt it necessary to light every day, we made use of dry dung, which the inhabitants of these countries collect and lay by for fuel just as we do wood; for this purpose the dry masses are piled up into a pyramidal heap or clamp, as may be seen in our sketch of St. James, within a slight enclosure before the outer wall; and it is extraordinary how easily the fuel kindles, and what a heat it throws out, without the least disagreeable odour.

As soon as I had recovered a little, I applied myself to the magnetical observations—a branch of inquiry diligently prosecuted of late years by scientific travelers, and justly so, as it conducts to a nearer acquaintance with the earth in respect to the important element of its magnetic power. The instruments used for this purpose differ, however, from the compass, or magnetic needle, as it is ordinarily arranged, and are constructed chiefly with a view to determine, with the greatest possible exactness, the position of the needle, moveable with perfect freedom in all directions. But, since it is difficult to arrange a needle so that it can take all positions with equal facility, it is usual to employ two needles: the one suspended horizontally, and in this plane pointing with the utmost facility of motion towards the north and south magnetic poles; the other capable also of taking a north and south position, but moving with the greatest facility up and down, like a very delicate balance. These observations I found it impossible to make within the monastery, but chose for the purpose two open spots outside, in order to get rid of the influence of iron, which, by attracting the needle, might affect its position; for although in the monastery, as far as it was visible, there was hardly half a pound of iron, yet we had with us a considerable quantity, or at least enough to exercise, when so near, an influence on the magnetic needle.

While I was thus employed, MM. Von Behaghel and Schiemann set off on an interesting excursion to the great salt-mines of Kulpe [the great salt mines described by Dr. Parrot are still working and are at the modern-day town of Tuzluca between Igdir and Kars] up the Araxes 60 miles from Ararat and not far from the bounds of the Turkish pashalik of Erzerum. There, beneath a mountain several hundred feet high, is found, with strata of gypsum intermixed, a deposit of fine rock salt, of such depth and magnitude that, although it has been worked for ages by the inhabitants [and continues in commercial production today], and not always in the most considerate or economical manner, yet there is not the slightest symptom of its exhaustion.

#### Chapter 9:

Summary – Third Attempt to reach the Summit—Kip-Ghioll reached on Horseback—Night near the Snow-line—Difficulty of the Ascent—The Summit gained—Its Form described—Supposed Resting-place of the Ark—Prospect from the Summit—The Cross erected—Altitude measured—Descent—Sunset on the Mountain—The Author's Account questioned—Sworn Depositions of his Companions—Stepan Aga's Statement—The Armenian Peasants—Testimony of the Russian Soldiers—Concluding Remarks.

In the mean time the sky cleared up, the wind lulled, the air was pure; on the mountain, too, there seemed to be more repose, and the thundering sound of falling ice and rocks was heard less frequently; in short, everything appeared to intimate that, notwithstanding the advanced season of the year, a decidedly favourable change had taken place in the weather, and I hesitated not to seize this opportunity for my third attempt to ascend the summit; for enterprises of this kind, whatever be the circumspection necessary on engaging in them, must be executed without delay when the favourable moment arrives. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of September (7<sup>th</sup> of October), in the afternoon, I sent to ask Stepan if he would join the party, but received from him an answer declining the invitation; he came, indeed, himself to St. James, but said that he still felt too sore from the toils of the preceding excursion to be able to make another attempt so soon. Yet he engaged to send me four active peasants, as I desired, and also three-oxen with a driver, for hire. The following day, early in the morning, five peasants, instead of four, came to St. James to take part in the expedition. Well, the fifth came of his own accord, but I welcomed him, and to these I added two of our soldiers. The deacon also accompanied us on the occasion, and M. Hehn followed us with the intention of studying the vegetation in the higher parts of the mountain, but not of going beyond the limits of the snow.

The experience acquired in my former ascent had taught me that everything depended on spending the night as close as possible to the limits of perpetual snow, so as to be able to reach the summit and to return again the following day, and that, to that end, the loads of the cattle and of the men must be confined to what was absolutely indispensable. I had therefore three oxen only laden with some warm clothing, the requisite supply of food, and a small quantity of firewood. I took also a small cross, made of bars two inches in diameter, but cut of oak, and so put together that the longer piece might serve as a staff to the man who carried it. We directed our course to the same side as before, and, in order to spare our strength as much as possible, Abovian and myself rode this time, as far as the rocky nature of the ground allowed us, to the vicinity of the grassy plain, Kip-Ghioll; we did not, however, leave our horses there as Stepan had done, but sent them back with a Kossak, who attended us for that purpose: from this place M. Hehn also returned.

It was not quite noon when we reached this point. We took our breakfast, and after resting about an hour and a half, we set forward in an oblique course upward, deviating a little from our former track: the oxen, however, could not follow us so fast; one of them, in particular, seemed much weaker than the others: and as it threatened to cause us no little delay, we deemed it advisable to make ourselves independent of such aid. We halted, therefore, at the base of a towering pile of stones, over which the poor animals could hardly have climbed; we then freed them from their loads, which we distributed fairly among the party, so that each man carried his share of covering and fuel, and this done, we sent back the oxen with their keeper.

About half past five o'clock we were close to the lower border of the snow, and had attained a height considerably above that of our former night quarters: the elevation of this point above the sea was 13,800 feet. The large masses of



rock here scattered about determined us in selecting this spot for our night's lodging. A fire was soon kindled, and something warm got ready for the stomach. For me, this repast consisted in onion soup, the use of which I can recommend to mountain travelers in such circumstances as extremely warm and reviving, and better than animal food or meat soups, because these require for their digestion more strength, which they restore, indeed, but not so quickly as to allow you to feel any benefit from them within the usually circumscribed period of exertion. Abovian was unluckily prevented from sharing in this excellent meal, a Church holyday compelling him to fast strictly. And was there fasting, too, with such exertions and toils? Yes, in truth, without ceremony or pretence, and without having told me beforehand, or else I might have provided for him some permitted restorative, as an infusion or tea of bruised pepper, with which he might, without violating the rules of the Church, have sought to renew his strength. The other Armenians, too, observed strictly the prescribed fast, and were satisfied therefore with the bread which we had brought with us, and with the brandy distributed among them and the soldiers by myself in certain portions—for the use of this stimulant requires much caution where there is a great demand on the physical energies, as in ascending a high mountain, or else it produces an effect the very opposite of that expected, namely, a sensation of weariness, and an inclination to sleep—and the people were too reasonable and discreet to wish for more brandy than I thought it expedient to give them.

It was a delicious evening which I spent here, my eyes at one time set on my good-humoured companions, at another on the clear sky, on which the summit of the mountain was projected with wondrous grandeur, and again on the gray night, spreading in the distance and in the depth beneath me. Thus I became resigned to the single feeling of peace, tenderness, love, thankfulness, submission—the silent evoking of the past, the indulgent glimpse of the future; in short, that indescribable delightful sensation which never fails to affect travelers at great heights and under agreeable circumstances; and so, favoured by a temperature of 40° Fahr.—no slight warmth for the atmosphere at our elevation—I lay down to rest under a projecting rock of lava, while my companions still remained for a long time chatting round the fire.

At the first dawn we roused ourselves up, and at about half past six proceeded on our march. The last tracts of rocky fragments were crossed in about half an hour, and we once more trod on the limits of perpetual snow nearly in the same place as before, having first lightened ourselves by depositing near some heaps of stones such articles as we could dispense with. But the snowy region had undergone a great, and, for us, by no means favourable change. The newly-fallen snow, which had been of some use to us in our former attempt, had since melted from the increased heat of the weather, and was now changed into glacier ice, so that, notwithstanding the moderate steepness of the acclivity, it would be necessary to cut steps from below. This made our progress a laborious affair, and demanded the full exertion of our strength from the first starting. We were obliged to leave one of the peasants behind at the place where we spent the night, as he complained of illness; two others, tired in ascending the glacier, stopped at first only to rest, but afterward went back to the same station. The rest of us, without allowing ourselves to be detained an instant by these accidents, pushed on unremittingly to our object, rather excited than discouraged by the difficulties in our way. We soon after came again to the great crack which marks the upper edge of the icy slope just ascended, and about ten o'clock we found ourselves exactly in the place where we had arrived on the former occasion at noon, that is to say, on the great plain of snow, which forms the first step downward from the icy head of Ararat [Western Plateau]. We saw from a distance of about half a mile the cross erected on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, but it looked so uncommonly small, perhaps owing to its black colour, that I could not help doubting whether I should be able to make it out, and to recognize it with an ordinary telescope from the plain of the Araxes.

In the direction of the summit we had before us an acclivity shorter but steeper than that just passed over, and between it and the farthest pinnacle there seemed to intervene only a gentle swelling of the ground. After a short rest, we ascended, with the aid of hewn steps, the next slope. Near the summit was a flattish depression, covered in like manner with perpetual ice, with a second and somewhat lower summit, distant apparently from that on which I stood above half a mile, but in reality only 397 yards, or less than a quarter of a mile [Western and Eastern Summits]. This saddle-shaped depression may be easily recognized from the plain of the Araxes with the naked eye, but from that quarter it is seen foreshortened; and as the less elevation stands foremost, while the greater one is behind, the former appears to be as high as, or even higher than the latter, which from many points cannot be seen at all. M. Fedorov

ascertained by his angular measurements, made in a northeasterly direction from the plain of the Araxes, that the summit in front is seven feet lower than that behind or farther west; to me, looking from the latter, the difference appeared much more considerable.

The gentle depression between the two eminences presents a plain of snow moderately inclined towards the south, over which it would be easy to go from the one to the other, and which may be supposed to be the very spot on which Noah's Ark rested, if the summit itself be assumed as the scene of that event, for there is no want of the requisite space, inasmuch as the Ark, according to Genesis, vi., 15, three hundred ells long and fifty wide, would not have occupied a tenth part of the surface of this depression. Kerr Porter, however, makes<sup>27</sup> on this subject a subtle comment favourable to the opinion that the resting-place of the Ark was not on the summit of the mountain, but on some lower part of it; because in Genesis, viii., 5, it is said, "On the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains came forth;" but in vi., 16, it is stated that the window of the Ark was above; consequently, Noah could have seen only what was higher than the ship, which was therefore lower down than the tops of the mountains: on these grounds Kerr Porter is inclined to look upon the wide valley between the Great and Little Ararat as the place where the Ark rested. In this reasoning, however, he takes the above quoted texts of Holy Writ in a sense different from the literal one; for it is nowhere said that Noah saw the mountains coming forth, but it is simply stated that after the Ark had rested, the waters subsided, so that already on the first day of the tenth month the mountains began to come forth; then, "after forty days Noah opened the window which he had made in the Ark and let fly a raven;" and again, after three weeks, "Noah took off the cover of the ark, and saw that the ground was dry," respecting which he might have formed as good a judgment, or even a better, from the more elevated point than from the lower.

Should any one now inquire respecting the possibility of remains of the Ark still existing on Ararat, it may be replied that there is nothing in that possibility incompatible with the laws of nature, if it only be assumed that immediately after the Flood the summit of that mountain began to be covered with perpetual ice and snow, an assumption which cannot be reasonably objected to; and when it is considered that on great mountains accumulated coverings of ice and snow exceeding 100 feet in thickness are by no means unusual, it is obvious that on the top of Ararat there may be easily a sufficient depth of ice to cover the Ark, which was only thirty ells high [thirty ells is about 45 feet high and some areas of the Ararat ice cap have been measured near 300 feet deep].

From the summit I had a very extensive prospect, in which, however, owing to the great distances, only the chief masses could be plainly distinguished. The valley of the Araxes was covered in its whole length by a grayish cloud of vapour, through which Erivan and Sardarabad appeared only as dark spots no bigger than my hand. In the south, the hills behind which Bayazed lay were more distinctly visible. In the north-northwest, the serrated head of Alaghés rose majestically, covered in every hollow with large masses of snow—a truly inaccessible crown of rocks. Immediately in the neighbourhood of Ararat, particularly towards the southeast, and on the west at a greater distance, were a number of smaller mountains, for the most part having conical summits, with hollows in the middle, apparently at one time volcanoes. Then towards the east-southeast was the Little Ararat, the head of which no longer appeared as the simple termination of a cone, as it seemed from the plain, but like the section of a truncated quadrangular pyramid, having at its angles and in the middle a number of rocky elevations of various heights. One thing surprised me not a little, and that was to see a large portion of Lake Gokchai, its surface of beautiful dark blue glimmering distinctly in the northeast, behind the high mountains which enclose the lake immediately on the south, and are so elevated that I never should have thought it possible to catch a glimpse, looking over them from the top of Ararat, of the waters which they imbosom.

Having thus surveyed the prospect around, I turned to look after my companions, and missed the faithful Abovian: he was gone, I was told, "to set up the cross." That was what I intended to do myself, and had selected in my mind the round area in the middle, where it would have stood most securely, and in the worthiest place. But Abovian, influenced by pious zeal, had taken the business in hand, and had looked out a site for the cross on the northeastern edge of the summit, because, as he justly remarked, if it stood in the middle it would not be visible from the plain, being scarcely five feet high. In order to gain his point, that the cross should be visible not only from the plain, but also from Arghuri and St. James's, he ventured, at the risk of his life, so far on the steep slope of the margin that he stood full thirty feet

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<sup>27</sup> Travels in Georgia, Persia, and Armenia, etc., Lond., 1821, vol., i., p. 183.

lower than the middle of the summit, and consequently had at first escaped my notice. There I saw him hard at work, cutting a hole in the ice to fix the cross in. It was evident that this spot was highly unfavourable for the permanent support of the cross, inasmuch as, from the great inclination of the surface, it was more liable to fluctuations in the ice, and to a progress downward in the mass, to say nothing of sudden falls or *avalanches*—movements which continually take place in the glacier ice of all mountains—and that, in a few years, perhaps, the only memorial of our having been on the summit would disappear from it. Nevertheless, I was ultimately swayed by the reflection that this mark would probably have a long time to wait for the coming of another traveler; and that, on the other hand, it would be no less honourable for us if a signal, visible for the present, at least, from the plain, were to bear witness to the feat which we had been so fortunate as to achieve; but what particularly decided me to leave the cross in this place was, that I hoped to see it made use of as a mark in M. Fedorov's trigonometrical measurement of the mountain.

I let the deacon, therefore, have his own way, and proceeded myself to observe the barometer which I had set up in the middle of the summit. The mercury in it stood no higher than 15 inches  $\frac{3}{4}$  line, Parisian measure, at a temperature of  $6\frac{2}{3}^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit's scale below the freezing point. This observation, compared with that which M. Fedorov was good enough to make contemporaneously in St. James's, gives the summit an elevation of 10,876 feet above the monastery; adding, therefore, the observed elevation of the latter place, Ararat has a vertical height above the level of the sea of 17,210 feet [16,945 feet as measured today].

There were six of us on the summit, namely, besides myself, Khachatur Abovian, deacon in Echmiadzin, son of an Armenian residing in Kanakir, near Erivan; Alexei Sdrovenko, of the 41<sup>st</sup> Yäger regiment; Matvei Chalpanof, of the same regiment; Ovannes Aivassian, a native of Arghuri; and Murat Pogossian, of the same place.

The deacon, though only twenty years of age, and accustomed to a quiet monastic life, never for an instant shrank from the exertions called for by the undertaking, and showed throughout abundant proofs of his spirit and steadiness, as well as the enthusiasm that animated him for the success of the enterprise. His devout zeal, which excited him in Echmiadzin to follow us, led him also in safety, notwithstanding the manifold hindrance of his monastic costume, consisting of three long and full robes, over the rugged heaps of shattered rocks, and the precipitous glaciers of Ararat; made him, when on the summit, give all his attention to the cross, without thinking of rest, and from this spot, so dear to him, to carry down to the monastery a large piece of ice, the water from which he kept in a bottle as peculiarly holy.

Alexei Sdrovenko, a stout warrior, distinguished for the part he took in the fierce engagements of our Trans-Caucasian army with the enemies of Christianity, was a simple, true-hearted man, without guile or vulgarity, modest and quiet in deportment. During this last excursion, as well as on the preceding occasion, he took part, with manly resolution and endurance, in every labour and danger.

Matvei Chalpanof was a youthful hero, of amiable, unassuming manners; free, like his comrade, from servile flattery, he had a proper sense of the respect due to rank, felt deeply every kindness offered to him, and quite devoted himself in lending me the assistance which I required in the descent. He, too, seemed to have in his heart some conception of the high import of the object aimed at, and this he manifested in a way peculiar enough, but suited to his rank and station; for in ascending the summit he had under his cloak, not, as I supposed, some clothing as warm and comfortable as possible, but his dress uniform, arranged and decorated in the best style, as if he were going to parade.

Ovannes Aivassian, a young man twenty-six years of age, of extraordinary bodily strength and activity, fine, tall stature and agreeable countenance, was on this occasion the individual who underwent the greatest fatigue, inasmuch as he offered more frequently, and for a longer time than any of us, to be the foremost of the file.

Murat Pogossian, thirty years old, differing, in his small stature and round features, from the general physical characteristics of his countrymen, was that unbidden guest who came of his own accord with the others to St. James's to attach himself to the expedition, which gained, nevertheless, little from his presence, so far, at least, as bodily labour was concerned; for, although he held out to the last, and never was a burden to us, yet he strove as much as possible to lighten his own task, and was always the last in the line, so that he could use the large steps already cut for him in the ice, and every now and then sat down to rest till we had made some farther progress in the work. But, notwithstanding this, he was a welcome companion to the party on account of his gayety and high spirits. He was a sort of droll, who, while his comrades were working for him, kept them in good humour by his jokes and smart sayings.

After staying on the summit about three quarters of an hour, we began to think of returning, and by way of preparation took each a morsel of bread, while at the same time, from the small quantity of wine brought with us, we gladly poured a libation to the Patriarch Noah. We then went, one after the other, rapidly down the steep, by means of the deep steps cut in the ice during the ascent; yet the descent was still extremely fatiguing, and to me, in particular, caused much pain in the knees; nevertheless, we hastened on, as the sun was already low, and before we reached the snow-plain of the great cross, it had sunk below the horizon. It was a magnificent spectacle to observe the dark shadow thrown on the plain by the mountains beneath us to the west, then the deep darkness which encompassed all the valleys, and gradually rose higher and higher on Ararat, while now only its icy head was illumined by the rays of the sunken orb; but they soon shot above that also, and our path downward would have been involved in perilous darkness had not the luminary of night arisen in the opposite quarter of the heavens to throw a clear and lovely light on our footsteps.

About half past six in the evening we reached our place of bivouac, where a cheerful fire was made with the wood that remained, a small supper cooked, and the night, as bright and warm as the preceding one, spent agreeably. There

also we found our attendants whom we had left behind, together with our things. The next day, about six in the morning, we set off, and about half past eight reach Kip-Ghioll, where the beasts of burden were waiting for us, and about noon on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September we joyfully entered St. James's, as the Patriarch Noah, "with his sons, and with his wives, and with his sons' wives," had, 4000 years before, descended from Ararat. On the day after our return, in our Sabbath devotions, we bore to the Lord the offering of our thanks, perhaps not far from the very spot where Noah "built an altar to the Lord, and offered thereon burnt offerings." The evening of our return was celebrated by the discharge of some rockets, which we owed to the kindness of M. von Dunant, captain of artillery in Erivan.

I hope that the reader, confiding in the veracity which, in my opinion, is the first duty of every one who puts a statement on record, will have followed the preceding narrative without mistrust, and have rested in the belief that I was actually on the summit of Ararat. It is therefore reluctantly, but not without sufficient grounds, that I come to the decision to add here a few words in respect to the possibility of my practicing any mystification on the public. It must be taken into consideration that many years may elapse before another attempt be made to ascend Mount Ararat, or, what would be worse for me, that circumstances, which are not always under the control of travelers, may defeat such an attempt; then it might easily come to pass that the old preconceived opinions respecting the impossibility of ascending Mount Ararat would revive, and along with them, doubts (at least with some people) respecting the truth of my narrative—doubts which, besides, already live in the breasts of many Armenians strongly attached to the tenets of their creed, and openly expressed by them while I was still in their country, though not by way of personal attack on me.

In the mean time, so overpowering was my sense of good fortune in having attained the so ardently desired object, so firm was my reliance on that confidence which the educated public had reposed in me and the narrative of my earlier travels, that no thought nor apprehension of the contrary entered my mind, and any measure taken to counteract suspicion would have appeared to me to partake of ingratitude and injustice. I was, therefore, the more pained and taken by surprise, when, a full year after the termination of this journey, a man belonging to the educated European public—a man of merit in his way—one who, on account of his long residence in those countries, possesses undoubted claims to confidence in his local knowledge—I was grieved and surprised, I say, to find that this man was the first to cast a stone against me, and in a published commentary to insist on the impossibility of the fact asserted by me. I have done what the honour of my name demanded. The well-known and highly valued "Tiflis Chronicle" contains, in numbers 11 and 22 of the year 1831, the hostile comments and the answer to them, and there the affair seems to have ended; yet, being roused by this prelude, and desirous to contribute as far as lay in my power to the confirmation of the truth, I called for (and trust that I shall be excused for so doing) the sworn depositions of the persons who accompanied me to the top of Ararat. These depositions respecting our whole proceedings on that occasion, the originals of which were transmitted to me through the kindness of Prince Lieven, the [Russian] minister of public instruction I here take the liberty of giving, translated word for word...

"As to the place where M. Parrot resided with his expedition, I have the honour to state, that during the whole time the headquarters of the expedition were in the Armenian monastery named Surb Hagob (St. Jacob or James), not far from the village of Arghuri, in which, nevertheless, they did reside. The plague was not in Arghuri at the time the expedition to Ararat was in the neighbourhood, but had ceased a little before. The preceding statement I have made sincerely, and in conformity with the truth, and in confirmation of it I now sign my name. Inasmuch as Melik Stepan Aga, inhabitant of Arghuri, does not know how to write, I have signed for him at his request."

MAKERDICH KHIALLOR.

LITVINO, Lieut.-superintendent of Police.

POIO, Government Secretary.

The following are "Depositions 3 & 4 on Oath, taken on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 1831, from Murat Pogossian and Ovannes Aivassian, by the Armenian priest Ter Sakar, in presence of the Lieutenant-superintendent of Police, Litvino."

"In the year 1831, the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, Murat Pogossian and Ovannes Aivassian, inhabitants of the village of Arghuri, in the district of Surmalinsk, being interrogated on oath in the presence of the police of Erivan, deposed as follows:

The first named: I am thirty years of age, and go every year to confession and to the holy sacrament: I am unable to read or write. In the year 1829, as well as I remember, there came to the monastery Surb Hagob (St. James), not far from Mount Ararat and the village of Arghuri, the professor named Parrot. This person, on the third or fourth day after his arrival in the monastery, set off with Melik Stepan Aga, the elder of Arghuri, to ascend Mount Ararat. On the evening of the third day they returned from their excursion to the village whence they had started, and I learned that M. Parrot had erected a cross on the mountain, yet not on the highest part of it. Three days

afterward, as well as I can remember, I went, with six other people, at the command of Melik Stepan Aga, to accompany M. Parrot, by the same track which he had already explored, once more to the top of the mountain. We spent the first night not far from the snow; the second day four of the Arghuri people were so fatigued as to be obliged to stay behind; but myself and Ovannes Aivassian, an inhabitant of our village, went on with M. Parrot, and by his account we went nine hours. M. Parrot erected a cross, and fixed on it a plate with an inscription which I did not understand. This cross was set up towards the right from the village; that erected before was towards the left, as I have been told. During our return from Ararat the weather was fine and sky clear. M. Parrot gave each of us a ducat for our trouble, but those who stayed behind received each a silver ruble. We were not on the very summit, and could not get there, because farther on there is no snow lying, but only ice; and besides, the steepness of the slope allows no farther progress. The extreme cold did not permit us to spend the night on the top of the mountain.”

“The deposition of Ovannes Aivassian is simply confirmatory of his comrade’s, and they are both signed in the same manner as that of Melik Stepan Aga.”

#### Chapter 10:

It is not easy to determine the limits of arborescent vegetation on Ararat, since the checks of climate are there not more powerful than the local hindrances of every kind, which prevent the increase of trees on the mountain. Tall walnut-trees, apricots, willows, and Italian poplars (these last, however, of diminished size) can still grow well at the height of 6000 feet above the sea, provided they find soil and moisture, as is seen at St. James’s. That birches, also, though no longer straight and tall, are yet not overpowered by the climate at the height of 7800 feet, is proved by the wood at the foot of Little Ararat. This observation also coincides in a remarkable manner with the limits of the birch on Caucasus, at 6700 feet above the sea...

#### Chapter 11:

While I was staying behind in the monastery with the Deacon Abovian and M. Hehn, I received from the former, for the first time, positive information respecting the name of our place of residence. In Echmiadzin, the little monastery on the declivity of Ararat was always named St. James; to my great astonishment, however, the old Archimandrite Karapet explained to me, a few days after our arrival, that it was called St. Gregory, and that St. James was the name of the little chapel, built about two thousand feet higher, upon the edge of the great glen, but at that time deserted—the same which I have described more circumstantially in my account of my first excursion to the summit, and near which are the holy wells, etc. Although it struck me as remarkable that there should be here a second monastery named after St. Gregory—for in the plain of the Araxes stands the great head monastery of St. Gregory, or Khorvirab, where the martyr suffered—yet I could not help supposing that the aged inhabitant of the monastery in question, an archimandrite of his rank, ought to know best how his benefice was named, and consequently, in some letters and papers which I wrote, describing the place of my abode, I called the monastery St. Gregory on Ararat.

It was at the period already mentioned, towards the close of my residence there, that the deacon informed me that, in looking about for inscriptions in compliance with my wish, he had found in the interior of the little monastery chapel a stone in the wall with the following inscription in Armenian: “From the grace of God, I, Mekhitar, and my wife, Tamar, bequeath all our money to this monastery of St. James, and in return, the holy brethren promise, in memory of us and of our posterity, to make mention of us four times a year in the mass.” To this was added 737 for the year, in Armenian characters; for the Armenians, from the most ancient times, employed till very recently certain letters of their alphabet as ciphers. This date shows that the above-mentioned monument was executed in the year 737 of the Armenian era, which begins with one of the greater reforms of the Church, 551 years after the commencement of the Christian era, and consequently must be referred to the year A.D. 1288 It follows that in Echmiadzin they were correctly informed respecting the name of the monastery, and that our worthy old man, in the course of his meditations, had completely lost sight of the reality.

The day before I intended following M. Fedorov in the plain of the Araxes, there arose all at once an unusual bustle in our quiet monastery. I found the archimandrite, his two servants, a few peasants from the neighbourhood, the deacon, and the two soldiers who remained behind with me, all collected together with anxiety and curiosity in their looks: nor was it long before I shared their feelings; for I saw five wolves descend as if they dropped down the steep slopes of Ararat, and fifty yards from the wall of the monastery drive off a calf from the small herd of cattle; but, as men pursued them with loud cries, they soon made an end of the affair by tearing up the carcass of the poor animal, and leaving it in this condition for the rightful owner, they continued their course unmolested to the plain.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, in the forenoon, I set off from St. James’s, in company with the deacon and one Kossak, to make an excursion in the plain of the Araxes. Immediately behind Arghuri we turned to the right, that is, eastward, through numerous vineyards and plantations of apricots, among which were also some pshat or eleagnus trees, and soon after we left the domain of the volcanic ruins, which lie spread over the entire slope of Ararat, from the limits of perpetual snow to St. James’s, and below Arghuri. The soil now consisted of loamy earth mixed with small pebbles

and gravel. In this soil the Arghuri rivulet has cut itself a deep bed, yet we found it at this time of the year quite dry, for even at St. James's it had hardly water enough for our horses; and yet in spring it often swells to such a degree as to fill the water-way, six fathoms wide and three deep, completely. It then rolls down large masses of rock one over the other, and not unfrequently rushes on so suddenly, that animals which happen to be in the bed of the stream have no time to save themselves, and every year the old archimandrite loses some calves from his small herd this way.

As soon as we reach the foot, properly so called, of Ararat, and arrive in the plain which is intersected by the stream already described, called the Karasu (Blackwater), we find on the ground, which is but scantily covered with vegetation, fragments of lava from Ararat, which are smaller, and of a more porous, lighter nature the lower down we go. The farther we advance into the plain, the finer does this gravel become, until at last it resembles coarse but exceedingly light sand. On the Blackwater, even, it is hard to find a single stone. This great uniformity in the distribution of the stony masses over the declivity of Ararat, in proportion to their size and weight, must have had a special ground. Above, in the vicinity of the snow-limits, the masses of the densest, hardest lava, from which the mineralogist's hammer can with difficulty break off a piece, are nearly of the size of a house. Lower down the same kind of rock occurs in smaller pieces, six or eight feet in diameter; and at St. James's these are intermingled with lavas of a lighter kind, and in fragments of less size. Below Arghuri there is only gravel to be found, of a light, pumice-like character, which passes through many gradations into mere sand. All this is not the work of accident. It has evidently been brought about by a mechanical force, acting according to determinate laws; and what was this force but the floods, which 4000 years ago were poured forth, when "the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and all the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered;" and from earlier, "the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were opened..."

