

would make an end of speaking of the Great Khan, for I am

lamb in the flower or seed upon the top of the stalk, as we meet with the forms of bees, flies, and dogs in some others; he hath seen nothing that shall much wonder at it."

The plant about which these fables have gathered seems now to be referred to the fern genus *Cibotium*, formerly to *Aspidium*. The Eng. Cyclopædia says, "The Rhizoma of *Aspidium Baromez* presents a rude resemblance to an animal. It is covered with a silky down, and when cut into has a soft inside with a reddish, flesh-coloured appearance, sufficient to account for the origin of the fables with regard to its animal nature. It is not improbable that this fern dries up when the grass does, but of course the one has no dependence on the other."

The word *baromez* is said to mean *lamb* in Russian. The locality of the plant, according to the Cyclopædia, is "an elevated salt plain to the west of the Wolga." The Zavolha country to which Scaliger refers it is defined by one of Ramusio's authorities as being between the Caspian, Black Sea, Caucasus, and Wolga, whilst another places the tribe between the Wolga and the Jaik.

These indications enable us to explain the locus assigned by Odoric to this marvellous plant-animal. The Caspian mountains are of course Caucasus, or some part of it, whilst the kingdom of *Cadeli* is the country on the Ethil, Adil, or Herdil, *i.e.*, the Wolga. The *c* is constantly substituted for an aspirate by the Italian travellers (*e.g.*, Polo's Cormos for Hormuz), whilst the name Athil was sometimes applied to the country on the banks of the Wolga, or to the chief city there before the Tartar conquest, at one time the seat of a Chaldean bishop (on this point, see *Le Quien, Oriens Christianus*, ii, 1301). The "Caspian Hills" and the Wolga are at some little distance, but that distance does not subtend a great angle from China where Odoric heard the story!

The vegetable curiosity which is the subject of this note, is thus apostrophised by Dr. Darwin:—

"Cradled in snow, and fanned by Arctic air,
Shines, gentle BAROMETZ! thy golden hair;
Rooted in earth each cloven hoof descends,
And round and round her flexile neck she bends;
Crops the gray coral-moss, and hoary thyme,
Or laps with rosy tongue the melting rime.
Eyes with mute tenderness her distant dam,
Or seems to bleat, a *Vegetable Lamb*."

See *Loves of the Plants*, 1799, ii, 37-39, which has a plate. Erman, I see, thinks the whole story a mythical view of the cotton plant.

It may be noticed that the Chinese also have their barnacle stories in more than one shape, as related by Martini and Kircher.

(*Vulgar Errors*, i, 377, 366; *J. C. Scaligeri Exotericæ Exercitationes de Subtilitate*, etc., 1537, f. 248, v; *Eng. Cyc. Nat. Hist.*, sub. v. *Aspidium*; *Ramusio*, ii, 71, 76; *Kircher, Ch. Illust.*, 178; *Martini in Thévenot*, p. 81.)