

the two descents, has given rise to many conjectures. Marsden pointed to *Rúdbár*, a name frequently applied in Persia to a district on a river, or intersected by streams—a suggestion all the happier that he was not aware of the fact that there *is* a district of RUDBAR exactly in the required position. The last syllable still requires explanation. I ventured formerly to suggest that it was the Arabic *Lass*, or, as Marco would certainly have written it, *Les*, a robber. Reobarles would then be RUDBAR-I-LASS, "Robber's River District." The appropriateness of the name Marco has amply illustrated; and it appeared to me to survive in that of one of the rivers of the plain, which is mentioned by both Abbott and Smith under the title of *Rúdkhánah-i-Duzdi*, or Robbery River, a name also applied to a village and old fort on the banks of the stream. This etymology was, however, condemned as an inadmissible combination of Persian and Arabic by two very high authorities both as travellers and scholars—Sir H. Rawlinson and Mr. Khanikoff. The *Les*, therefore, has still to be explained.*

[Major Sykes (*Geog. Journal*, 1902, p. 130) heard of robbers, some five miles from Mináb, and he adds: "However, nothing happened, and after crossing the Gardan-i-Pichal, we camped at Birinti, which is situated just above the junction of Rudkhána Duzdi, or 'River of Theft,' and forms part of the district of Rudán, in Fars."

"The Jíruft and Rúdbár plains belong to the germsír (hot region), dates, pistachios, and konars (apples of Paradise) abound in them. Reobarles is Rúdbár or Rúdbáris." (*Houtum-Schindler*, *l.c.* 1881, p. 495.)—H. C.]

We have referred to Marco's expressions regarding the great cold experienced on the pass which formed the first descent; and it is worthy of note that the title of "The Cold Mountains" is applied by Edrisi to these very mountains. Mr. Abbott's MS. Report also mentions in this direction, *Sardu*, said to be a cold country (as its name seems to express [see above,—H. C.]), which its population (Iliyáts) abandon in winter for the lower plains. It is but recently that the importance of this range of mountains has become known to us. Indeed the *existence* of the chain, as extending continuously from near Kashán, was first indicated by Khanikoff in 1862. More recently Major St. John has shown the magnitude of this range, which rises into summits of 15,000 feet in altitude, and after a course of 550 miles terminates in a group of volcanic hills some 50 miles S.E. of Bamm. Yet practically this chain is ignored on all our maps!

Marco's description of the "Plain of Formosa" does not apply, now at least, to the *whole* plain, for towards Bander Abbási it is barren. But to the eastward, about Míno, and therefore about Old Hormuz, it has not fallen off. Colonel Pelly writes: "The district of Míno is still for those regions singularly fertile. Pomegranates, oranges, pistachio-nuts, and various other fruits grow in profusion. The source of its fertility is of course the river, and you can walk for miles among lanes and cultivated ground, partially sheltered from the sun." And Lieutenant Kempthorne, in his notes on that coast, says of the same tract: "It is termed by the natives the Paradise of Persia. It is certainly most beautifully fertile, and abounds in orange-groves, and orchards containing apples, pears, peaches, and apricots; with vineyards producing a delicious grape, from which was at one time made a wine called *amber-rosolli*"—a name not easy to explain. 'Ambar-i-Rasúl, "The Prophet's Bouquet!" would be too bold a name even for Persia, though names more sacred are so profaned at Naples and on the Moselle. Sir H. Rawlinson suggests 'Ambar-'asali, "Honey Bouquet," as possible.

When Nearchus beached his fleet on the shore of *Harmozeia* at the mouth of the *Anamis* (the River of Míno), Arrian tells us he found the country a kindly one, and

* It is but fair to say that scholars so eminent as Professors Sprenger and Blochmann have considered the original suggestion lawful and probable. Indeed, Mr. Blochmann says in a letter: "After studying a language for years, one acquires a natural feeling for anything un-idiomatic; but I must confess I see nothing un-Persian in *rúdbár-i-duzd*, nor in *rúdbár-i-lass*. . . . How common *lass* is, you may see from one fact, that it occurs in children's reading-books." We must not take *Reobarles* in Marco's French as rhyming to (French) *Charles*; every syllable sounds. It is remarkable that *Läs*, as the name of a small State near our Sind frontier, is said to mean, "in the language of the country," *a level plain*. (*J. A. S. B.* VIII. 195.) It is not clear what is meant by the language of the country. The chief is a Brahui, the people are Lumri or Numri Bilúchis, who are, according to Tod, of Jat descent.