

CHAPTER XXI.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF COBINAN AND THE THINGS THAT ARE
MADE THERE.

COBINAN is a large town.¹ The people worship Mahomet. There is much Iron and Steel and *Ondanique*, and they make steel mirrors of great size and beauty. They also prepare both *Tutia* (a thing very good for the eyes) and *Spodium*; and I will tell you the process.

They have a vein of a certain earth which has the required quality, and this they put into a great flaming furnace, whilst over the furnace there is an iron grating. The smoke and moisture, expelled from the earth of which I speak, adhere to the iron grating, and thus form *Tutia*, whilst the slag that is left after burning is the *Spodium*.²

NOTE I.—KUH-BANÁN is mentioned by Moqaddasi (A.D. 985) as one of the cities of Bardesír, the most northerly of the five circles into which he divides Kermán. (See Sprenger, *Post-und Reise-routen des Orients*, p. 77.) It is the subject of an article in the Geog. Dictionary of Yáqút, though it has been there mistranscribed into *Kubiyán* and *Kukiyán*. (See Leipzig ed. 1869, iv. p. 316, and Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. de la Perse*, p. 498.) And it is also indicated by Mr. Abbott (*J. R. G. S.* XXV. 25) as the name of a district of Kermán, lying some distance to the east of his route when somewhat less than half-way between Yezd and Kermán. It would thus, I apprehend, be on or near the route between Kermán and Tabbas; one which I believe has been traced by no modern traveller. We may be certain that there is now no place at Kuh-Banán deserving the title of *une cité grant*, nor is it easy to believe that there was in Polo's time; he applies such terms too profusely. The meaning of the name is perhaps "Hill of the Terebinths, or Wild Pistachioes," "a tree which grows abundantly in the recesses of bleak, stony, and desert mountains, e.g. about Shamákhí, about Shiraz, and in the deserts of Luristan and Lar." (*Kämpfer*, 409, 413.)

["It is strange that Marco Polo speaks of Kúbenán only on his return journey from Kermán; on the down journey he must have been told that Kúbenán was in close proximity; it is even probable that he passed there, as Persian travellers of those times, when going from Kermán to Yazd, and *vice versa*, always called at Kúbenán." (*Houtum-Schindler*, *l.c.* p. 490.) In all histories this name is written Kúbenán, not Kúhbenán; the pronunciation to-day is Kóbenán and Kobenún.—H. C.]

I had thought my identification of *Cobinan* original, but a communication from Mr. Abbott, and the opportunity which this procured me of seeing his MS. Report already referred to, showed that he had anticipated me many years ago. The following is an extract: "*Districts of Kerman* * * * *Kooh Benan*. This is a hilly district abounding in fruits, such as grapes, peaches, pomegranates, *sinjid* (sweet-willow), walnuts, melons. A great deal of madder and some asafetida is produced there. *This is no doubt the country alluded to by Marco Polo, under the name of Cobinam*, as producing iron, brass, and tutty, and which is still said to produce iron, copper, and tootea." There appear to be lead mines also in the district, as well as asbestos and sulphur. Mr. Abbott adds the names of nine villages, which he was not able to verify by com-