

town there flows a river of some size. There are a great many porcupines hereabouts, and very large ones too. When hunted with dogs, several of them will get together and huddle close, shooting their quills at the dogs, which get many a serious wound thereby.⁵

This town of Casem is at the head of a very great province, which is also called Casem. The people have a peculiar language. The peasants who keep cattle abide in the mountains, and have their dwellings in caves, which form fine and spacious houses for them, and are made with ease, as the hills are composed of earth.⁶

After leaving the town of Casem, you ride for three days without finding a single habitation, or anything to eat or drink, so that you have to carry with you everything that you require. At the end of those three days you reach a province called Badashan, about which we shall now tell you.⁷

NOTE 1.—The *Taicán* of Polo is the still existing TALIKAN in the province of Kataghan or Kunduz, but it bears the former name (*Tháikán*) in the old Arab geographies. Both names are used by Baber, who says it lay in the *Ulugh Bágh*, or Great Garden, a name perhaps acquired by the Plains of Talikan in happier days, but illustrating what Polo says of the next three days' march. The Castle of Talikan resisted Chinghiz for seven months, and met with the usual fate (1221). [In the *Travels of Sidi Ali*, son of Housaïn (*Jour. Asiat.*, October, 1826, p. 203), "Talikan, in the country of Badakhschan" is mentioned.—H. C.] Wood speaks of Talikan in 1838 as a poor place of some 300 or 400 houses, mere hovels; a recent account gives it 500 families. Market days are not usual in Upper India or Kabul, but are universal in Badakhshan and the Oxus provinces. The bazaars are only open on those days, and the people from the surrounding country then assemble to exchange goods, generally by barter. Wood chances to note: "A market was held at Talikan. . . . The thronged state of the roads leading into it soon apprised us that the day was no ordinary one." (*Abulf.* in *Büsching*, V. 352; *Sprenger*, p. 50; *P. de la Croix*, I. 63; *Baber*, 38, 130; *Burnes*, III. 8; *Wood*, 156; *Pandit Manphul's Report.*)

The distance of Talikan from Balkh is about 170 miles, which gives very short marches, if twelve days be the correct reading. Ramusio has *two* days, which is certainly wrong. XII. is easily miswritten for VII., which would be a just number.

NOTE 2.—In our day, as I learn from Pandit Manphul, the mines of rock salt are at Ak Bulák, near the Lataband Pass, and at Darúná, near the Kokcha, and these supply the whole of Badakhshan, as well as Kunduz and Chitrál. These sites are due *east* of Talikan, and are in Badakhshan. But there is a mine at *Chál*, S.E. or S.S.E. of Talikan and within the same province. There are also mines of rock-salt near the famous "stone bridge" in Kuláb, north of the Oxus, and again on the south