

fruits are abundant, and ripen a month earlier than those at Faizabad, the capital of that country. The Varsach or Mashhad river is Marco's "*Flum auques grant.*" Wood (247) calls it "the largest stream we had yet forded in Badakhshan."

It is very notable that in Ramusio, in Pipino, and in one passage of the G. Text, the name is written *Scasem*, which has led some to suppose the *Ish-Kāshm* of Wood to be meant. That place is much too far east—in fact, beyond the city which forms the subject of the next chapter. The apparent hesitation, however, between the forms *Casem* and *Scasem* suggests that the Kishm of our note may formerly have been termed S'kāshm or Ish-Kāshm, a form frequent in the Oxus Valley, e.g. *Ish-Kimish*, *Ish-Kāshm*, *Ishtrakh*, *Ishpingao*. General Cunningham judiciously suggests (*Ladak*, 34) that this form is merely a vocal corruption of the initial S before a consonant, a combination which always troubles the Musulman in India, and converts every Mr. Smith or Mr. Sparks into Ismit or Ispak Sahib.

[There does not seem to me any difficulty about this note: "Shibarkhan (Afghan Turkistan), Balkh, Kunduz, Khanabad, Talikan, Kishm, Badakhshan." I am tempted to look for Dogana at Khanabad.—H. C.]

NOTE 5.—The belief that the porcupine *projected* its quills at its assailants was an ancient and persistent one—"cum intendit cutem missiles," says Pliny (VIII. 35, and see also *Aelian. de Nat. An.* I. 31), and is held by the Chinese as it was held by the ancients, but is universally rejected by modern zoologists. The huddling and coiling appears to be a true characteristic, for the porcupine always tries to shield its head.

NOTE 6.—The description of Kishm as a "very great" province is an example of a bad habit of Marco's, which recurs in the next chapter. What he says of the cave-dwellings may be illustrated by Burnes's account of the excavations at Bamian, in a neighbouring district. These "still form the residence of the greater part of the population. . . . The hills at Bamian are formed of indurated clay and pebbles, which renders this excavation a matter of little difficulty." Similar occupied excavations are noticed by Moorcroft at Heibak and other places towards Khulm.

Curiously, Pandit Manphul says of the districts about the Kokcha: "Both their hills and plains are productive, the former *being mostly composed of earth, having very little of rocky substance.*"

NOTE 7.—The capital of Badakhshan is now Faizabad, on the right bank of the Kokcha, founded, according to Manphul, by Yarbeg, the first Mír of the present dynasty. When this family was displaced for a time, by Murad Beg of Kunduz, about 1829, the place was abandoned for years, but is now re-occupied. The ancient capital of Badakhshan stood in the Dasht (or Plain) of Baharak, one of the most extensive pieces of level in Badakhshan, in which the rivers Vardoj, Zardeo, and Sarghalan unite with the Kokcha, and was apparently termed *Jauzgún*. This was probably the city called Badakhshan by our traveller.* As far as I can estimate, by the help of Wood and the map I have compiled, this will be from 100 to 110 miles distant from Talikan, and will therefore suit fairly with the six marches that Marco lays down.

Wood, in 1838, found the whole country between Talikan and Faizabad nearly as depopulated as Marco found that between Kishm and Badakhshan. The modern depopulation was due—in part, at least—to the recent oppressions and *razzias* of the Uzbeks of Kunduz. On their decline, between 1840 and 1850, the family of the native Mírs was reinstated, and these now rule at Faizabad, under an acknowledgment, since 1859, of Afghan supremacy.

* Wilford, in the end of the 18th century, speaks of Faizabad as "the new capital of Badakhshan, built near the site of the old one." The Chinese map (*vide J. R. G. S.* vol. xlii.) represents the city of *Badakhshan* to the east of Faizabad. Faiz Bakhsh, in an unpublished paper, mentions a tradition that the Lady Zobeidah, dear to English children, the daughter of Al-Mansúr and wife of Ar-Rashid, delighted to pass the spring at Jauzgún, and built a palace there, "the ruins of which are still visible."