

which the Arabs also regard as a dainty. There is a kindred animal in Siberia, called *Alactaga*, and a kind of Kangaroo-rat (probably the same) is mentioned as very abundant on the Mongolian Steppe. There is also the *Zieselmaus* of Pallas, a Dormouse, I believe, which he says the Kalmaks, even of distinction, count a delicacy, especially cooked in sour milk. "They eat not only the flesh of all their different kinds of cattle, including horses and camels, but also that of many wild animals which other nations eschew, e.g. marmots and *zieselmice*, beavers, badgers, otters, and lynxes, leaving none untouched except the dog and weasel kind, and also (unless *very* hard pressed) the flesh of the fox and the wolf." (*Pallas, Samml. I. 128; also Rubr. 229-230.*)

[“In the Mongol biography of Chinghiz Khan (Mongol text of the *Yuan ch’ao pi shi*), mention is made of two kinds of animals (mice) used for food; the tarbagat (*Aritomys Bobac*) and *kuchugur*.” (*Palladius, l.c. p. 14.*) Regarding the marmots called *Sogur* by Rubruquis, Mr. Rockhill writes (p. 69): “Probably the *Mus citillus*, the *Suslik* of the Russians. . . . M. Grenard tells me that *Soghur*, more usually written *sour* in Turki, is the ordinary name of the marmot.”—H. C.]

NOTE 4.—“Their wives are chaste; nor does one ever hear any talk of their immodesty,” says Carpini;—no Boccaccian and Chaucerian stories.

NOTE 5.—“The Mongols are not prohibited from having a plurality of wives; the first manages the domestic concerns, and is the most respected.” (*Timk. II. 310.*) Naturally Polygamy is not so general among the Mongols as when Asia lay at their feet. The Buraets, who seem to retain the old Mongol customs in great completeness, are polygamists, and have as many wives as they choose. Polygamy is also very prevalent among the Yakuts, whose lineage seems to be Eastern Turk. (*Ritter, III. 125; Erman, II. 346.*)

Of the custom that entitled the son on succeeding to take such as he pleased of his deceased father’s wives, we have had some illustration (see *Prologue*, ch. xvii. note 2), and many instances will be found in Hammer’s or other Mongol Histories. The same custom seems to be ascribed by Herodotus to the Scyths (IV. 78). A number of citations regarding the practice are given by Quatremère. (*Q. R. p. 92.*) A modern Mongol writer in the *Mélanges Asiatiques* of the Petersburg Academy, states that the custom of taking a deceased brother’s wives is now obsolete, but that a proverb preserves its memory (II. 656). It is the custom of some Mahomedan nations, notably of the Afghans, and is one of those points that have been cited as a supposed proof of their Hebrew lineage.

“The Kalin is a present which the Bridegroom or his parents make to the parents of the Bride. All the Pagan nations of Siberia have this custom; they differ only in what constitutes the present, whether money or cattle.” (*Gmelin, I. 29; see also Erman, II. 348.*)

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## CHAPTER LIII.

### CONCERNING THE GOD OF THE TARTARS.

THIS is the fashion of their religion. [They say there is a Most High God of Heaven, whom they worship daily with thurible and incense, but they pray to Him