

“The milk that remains after the butter has been made, they allow to get as sour as sour can be, and then boil it. In boiling, it curdles, and that curd they dry in the sun; and in this way it becomes as hard as iron-slag. And so it is stored in bags against the winter. In the winter time, when they have no milk, they put that sour curd, which they call *Griut*, into a skin, and pour warm water on it, and they shake it violently till the curd dissolves in the water, to which it gives an acid flavour; that water they drink in place of milk. But above all things they eschew drinking plain water.” From Pallas’s account of the modern practice, which is substantially the same, these cakes are also made from the leavings of distillation in making milk-arrack. The Kurút is frequently made of ewe-milk. Wood speaks of it as an indispensable article in the food of the people of Badakhshan, and under the same name it is a staple food of the Afghans. (*Rubr.* 229; *Samml.* I. 136; *Dahl*, u.s.; *Wood*, 311.)

[It is the *ch’ura* of the Tibetans. “In the Kokonor country and Tibet, this *krut* or *chura* is put in tea to soften, and then eaten either alone or mixed with parched barley meal (*tsamba*).” (*Rockhill*, *Rubruck*, p. 68, note.)—H. C.]

NOTE 6.—Compare with Marco’s account the report of the Mongols, which was brought by the spies of Mahomed, Sultan of Khwarizm, when invasion was first menaced by Chinghiz: “The army of Chinghiz is countless, as a swarm of ants or locusts. Their warriors are matchless in lion-like valour, in obedience, and endurance. They take no rest, and flight or retreat is unknown to them. On their expeditions they are accompanied by oxen, sheep, camels, and horses, and sweet or sour milk suffices them for food. Their horses scratch the earth with their hoofs and feed on the roots and grasses they dig up, so that they need neither straw nor oats. They themselves reckon nothing of the clean or the unclean in food, and eat the flesh of all animals, even of dogs, swine, and bears. They will open a horse’s vein, draw blood, and drink it. . . . In victory they leave neither small nor great alive; they cut up women great with child and cleave the fruit of the womb. If they come to a great river, as they know nothing of boats, they sew skins together, stitch up all their goods therein, tie the bundle to their horses’ tails, mount with a hard grip of the mane, and so swim over.” This passage is an absolute abridgment of many chapters of Carpini. Still more terse was the sketch of Mongol proceedings drawn by a fugitive from Bokhara after Chinghiz’s devastations there. It was set forth in one unconscious hexameter:

“*Ámdand u khandand u sokhtand u kushtand u burdand u raftand!*”

“They came and they sapped, they fired and they slew, trussed up their loot and were gone!”

Juwaini, the historian, after telling the story, adds: “The cream and essence of whatever is written in this volume might be represented in these few words.”

A Musulman author quoted by Hammer, Najmuddin of Rei, gives an awful picture of the Tartar devastations, “Such as had never been heard of, whether in the lands of unbelief or of Islam, and can only be likened to those which the Prophet announced as signs of the Last Day, when he said: ‘The Hour of Judgment shall not come until ye shall have fought with the Turks, men small of eye and ruddy of countenance, whose noses are flat, and their faces like hide-covered shields. Those shall be Days of Horror!’ ‘And what meanest thou by horror?’ said the Companions; and he replied, ‘SLAUGHTER! SLAUGHTER!’ This beheld the Prophet in vision 600 years ago. And could there well be worse slaughter than there was in Rei, where I, wretch that I am, was born and bred, and where the whole population of five hundred thousand souls was either butchered or dragged into slavery?”

Marco habitually suppresses or ignores the frightful brutalities of the Tartars, but these were somewhat less, no doubt, in Kúblái’s time.

The Hindustani poet Amir Khosru gives a picture of the Mongols more forcible than elegant, which Elliot has translated (III. 528).

This is Hayton’s account of the Parthian tactics of the Tartars: “They will run away, but always keeping their companies together; and it is very dangerous to