

drawn by great dogs. For the steppe is covered with ice, and the feet of men or the shoes of horses would slip, whereas the dogs having claws their paws don't slip upon the ice. The only travellers across this wilderness are rich merchants, each of whom owns about 100 of these vehicles, which are loaded with meat, drink, and firewood. In fact, on this route there are neither trees nor stones, nor human dwellings. The guide of the travellers is a dog who has often made the journey before! The price of such a beast is sometimes as high as 1000 dinárs or thereabouts. He is yoked to the vehicle by the neck, and three other dogs are harnessed along with him. He is the chief, and all the other dogs with their carts follow his guidance and stop when he stops. The master of this animal never ill-uses him nor scolds him, and at feeding-time the dogs are always served before the men. If this be not attended to, the chief of the dogs will get sulky and run off, leaving the master to perdition" (II. 399-400).

[Mr. Parker writes (*China Review*, xiv. p. 359), that dog-sledges appear to have been known to the Chinese, for in a Chinese poem occurs the line: "Over the thick snow in a dog-cart."—H. C.]

The bigness attributed to the dogs by Polo, Ibn Batuta, and Rubruquis, is an imagination founded on the work ascribed to them. Mr. Kennan says they are simply half-domesticated Arctic wolves. Erman calls them the height of European spaniels (qu. setters?), but much slenderer and leaner in the flanks. A good draught-dog, according to Wrangell, should be 2 feet high and 3 feet in length. The number of dogs attached to a sledge is usually greater than the old travellers represent,—none of whom, however, had *seen* the thing.

Wrangell's account curiously illustrates what Ibn Batuta says of the Old Dog who guides: "The best-trained and most intelligent dog is often yoked in front. . . . He often displays extraordinary sagacity and influence over the other dogs, e.g. in keeping them from breaking after game. In such a case he will sometimes turn and bark in the opposite direction; . . . and in crossing a naked and boundless *taundra* in darkness or snow-drift he will guess his way to a hut that he has never visited but once before" (I. 159). Kennan also says: "They are guided and controlled entirely by the voice and by a lead-dog, who is especially trained for the purpose." The like is related of the Esquimaux dogs. (*Kennan's Tent Life in Siberia*, pp. 163-164; *Wood's Mammalia*, p. 266.)

NOTE 4.—On the *Erculin* and *Ercolin* of the G. T., written Arculin in next chapter, *Arcolino* of Ramusio, *Herculini* of Pipino, no light is thrown by the Italian or other editors. One supposes of course some animal of the ermine or squirrel kinds affording valuable fur, but I can find no similar name of any such animal. It may be the Argali or Siberian Wild Sheep, which Rubruquis mentions: "I saw another kind of beast which is called *Arcali*; its body is just like a ram's, and its horns spiral like a ram's also, only they are so big that I could scarcely lift a pair of them with one hand. They make huge drinking-vessels out of these" (p. 230). [See I. p. 177.]

Vair, so often mentioned in mediæval works, appears to have been a name appropriate to the fur as prepared rather than to the animal. This appears to have been the Siberian squirrel called in French *petit-gris*, the back of which is of a fine grey and the belly of a brilliant white. In the *Vair* (which is perhaps only *varius* or variegated) the backs and bellies were joined in a kind of checquer; whence the heraldic checquer called by the same name. There were two kinds, *menu-vair* corrupted into *minever*, and *gros-vair*, but I cannot learn clearly on what the distinction rested. (See *Douet d'Arcq*, p. xxxv.) Upwards of 2000 *ventres de menuvair* were sometimes consumed in one complete suit of robes (*ib.* xxxii.).

The traps used by the Siberian tribes to take these valuable animals are described by Erman (I. 452), only in the English translation the description is totally incomprehensible; also in Wrangell, I. 151.

NOTE 5.—The country chiefly described in this chapter is probably that which the Russians, and also the Arabian Geographers, used to term *Yugria*, apparently the