

maunds, or 3200 Khurāsānī *maunds*, are produced. Half belongs to the Government, half to the cultivators, and a *sīr* sells for ten rupees; but the price sometimes varies a little. It is the established custom to weigh the flowers, and give them to the manufacturers, who take them home and extract the saffron from them, and upon giving the extract, which amounts to about one-fourth weight of the flower, to the public officers, they receive in return an equal weight of salt, in lieu of money wages."

The ancient Chinese attribute saffron not only to Kashmir, but also to Sasanian Persia. The *Čou šu*¹ enumerates *yü-kin* among the products of Po-se (Persia); so does the *Sui šu*.² In fact, *Crocus* occurs in Persia spontaneously, and its cultivation must date from an early period. Aeschylus alludes to the saffron-yellow footgear of King Darius.³ Saffron is mentioned in Pahlavi literature (above, p.193). The plant is well attested for Derbend, Ispahan, and Transoxania in the tenth century by Istaxri and Edrisi.⁴ Yāqūt mentions saffron as the principal production of Rud-Derawer in the province Jebal, the ancient Media, whence it was largely exported.⁵ Abu Mansur describes it under the Arabic name *zafarān*.⁶ The Armenian consumers esteem most highly the saffron of Khorasan, which, however, is marketed in such small quantities that the Persians themselves must fill the demand with exportations from the Caucasus.⁷ According to SCHLIMMER,⁸ part of the Persian saffron comes from Baku in Russia, another part is cultivated in Persia in the district of Kain, but in quantity insufficient to fill the demand. In two places,—Rudzabar (identical with the above Rud-Derawer), a mountainous tract near Hamadan, and Mount Derbend, where saffron cultivation had been indicated by previous writers,—he was unable to find a trace of it.

It is most probable that it was from Persia that the saffron-plant was propagated to Kashmir. A reminiscence of this event is preserved in the Sanskrit term *vāhlīka*, a synonyme of "saffron," which means "originating from the Pahlava."⁹ The Buddhists have a legend to the

¹ Ch. 50, p. 6.

² Ch. 83, p. 7 b; also *Wei šu*, Ch. 102, p. 5 b.

³ HEHN, Kulturpflanzen, p. 264.

⁴ A. JAUBERT, Géographie, pp. 168, 192.

⁵ B. DE MEYNARD, Dictionnaire géogr. de la Perse, p. 267. See also G. FER-RAND, Textes relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient, Vol. II, pp. 618, 622.

⁶ ACHUNDOW, Abu Mansur, p. 76.

⁷ E. SEIDEL, Mechithar, p. 151. CHARDIN (Voyages en Perse, Vol. II, p. 14) even says that the saffron of Persia is the best of the world.

⁸ Terminologie, p. 165.

⁹ Cf. *T'oung Pao*, 1916, p. 459.