

CHAPTER XII.

YEFREMOFF, DANIBEG, AND OTHERS.

Supposing that there might exist in the libraries or archives in St. Petersburg some narratives of earlier Russian travellers in our regions of western and southern Tibet, I wrote, a few years ago, to General O. VON STUBENDORFF and asked him if he had heard of any such narratives. The General had the great kindness not only to make inquiries himself, but also to ask some of his geographical friends to do the same. In the following pages I relate the results as General Stubendorff has given them to me in his letters. From a geographical point of view the harvest is not rich, but the names and travels of these early Russians should not be forgotten. In a letter of January 1911, General Stubendorff tells me that he has found in the library of the Imp. Russian Geographical Society the narrative of JEFREMOFF'S travels.¹

The author is a good observer, but pays most of his attention to the customs and habitudes of the different peoples and tribes he comes across. The description of the route he has followed is very poor. In the portion dealing with the journey to Kashmir the names are so rare that one can only follow the principal features of the route.

After 8 years' captivity by the Kirgiz, Yefremoff succeeds in escaping, about 1781. He goes over Kokan to Margelan and Osh, and thence to Kashgar and Yarkand where he remains a whole month. Accompanying some merchants he continues to Tawat or Tibet (Leh). The road takes him amongst mountains and along precipices. The river streaming in these mountains is called Atak. There are no villages along the road. Fifteen days' marches before Tawat a mountain has to be crossed, where »the air is very heavy, the fog never disappears and men and horses become so short of breath, that they nearly suffocate. Thirty five days' marches

¹ *Rossijskago Unter-Offisera Jefremova, nijne Kolleshskago Assesora desjatiletnoje stranstvovanie i prikljutshenie v Bukhari, Khive, Persi i Indi i vosvrashstshenie attuda cheres Angliju v Rossiju; pisannoje im samim, v Sanktpeterburge, 1786 god.* (Ten years wanderings and adventures of the Russian Subaltern Yefremoff — now Assessor of College — in Bukhara, Khiva, Persia and India and his returning from there viâ England to Russia; written by himself in St. Petersburg, 1786 A. D.) I have not changed von Stubendorff's transcription of the Russian.