

CHAPTER XX.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

We have reached the end of our discussion, in which we have examined methodically and objectively the fragmentary remains which the cookery and the teeth of the ancient Anau-li have allowed to descend to our times. In considering each animal we have drawn our conclusions with all possible moderation in order that they may stand the test of future discoveries. We have kept a firm rein on our imagination, which might be easily excited by contact with the primitive remains of so remotely ancient a culture in a region which one is accustomed to look upon as the cradle of the human race. It was a saying of my honored teacher, Albert Gaudry, that the eye and the spirit of a poet were essential to the paleontologist. Perhaps, then, I may be permitted to review the history of the domesticated animals of ancient Anau and clothe them in the dress of a comparative representation of the breeding of animals at the present day in Central Asia.

The modern stock-raising of Transcaspia* is carried on principally in a nomadic manner, partly by natives who live as nomads throughout the whole year, and partly by those who also cultivate the soil, moving their herds on to the steppe only after the harvest.

In consequence of the hot climate the grass of the steppes begins to dry up in the second half of April, only the kolutschka, which is liked by the camels, and similar deep-rooted plants remaining. The dried steppe is exposed to fires, which often devastate immense areas. Besides this, the pasturing is often limited by the prevailing lack of water. Rivers are almost wholly wanting; even wells are rare, and then, for the most part, very deep and often yielding only bad water. In this respect the sand deserts are better off than the loess-steppes, since in the depressions between the dunes it is not unusual to find good water at a slight depth below the surface, especially in those places where the desert borders on the lower part of the oases. These places form the most desirable pasturage in midsummer and winter.

However, the grazing areas of Turkestan, taken in the aggregate, are so large that even at the present time stock-raising forms a very important part of the industry of the land. The official statistics estimate the number of animals on the first of January, 1903:

Horses.....	142,285	Sheep.....	2,948,118
Camels.....	217,049	Goats.....	318,360
Cattle.....	37,996	Asses.....	12,253

In all probability these figures are far below the truth. They give, however, a good picture of the relative abundance of the different animals.

By far the most important occupation is that of sheep-breeding, which is best adapted to the utilization of the scanty pasturage.

*Cf. Auhagen, Die Landwirtschaft in Transkaspien. Berlin, 1905.