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THE KIZIL IRMAK—THE ANCIENT HALYS.*

By LIEUT. MARCKER.

A SURVEY of the lower Kizil Irmak, the ancient Halys, was carried out in the autumn of 1893 by Lieut. Märcker, in company with Herrn von Pritwitz, von Flottwell, and Kannenberg. Of the 280 miles of the course of this stream below the latitude of Angora, only the section from Karghy to Daruchai had been previously laid down with accuracy, while the sections from Osmanjik to Haji Hamza and Duragan to Cheltek were based on the rough route-surveys of Chihachef and Ainsworth, and over 200 miles of the river's course were completely unknown. From Angora the travellers proceeded *viâ* Hassanoghlu to the junction of the Elmadaghchai with the Kizil Irmak over a gently undulating high plain, completely bare of trees. The cultivation of corn is being rapidly developed in this part of Anatolia, in consequence of the making of the railway: the tithes of the Vilayet of Angora brought in 20,000 Turkish pounds more in 1893 than in 1892, in spite of a moderate harvest. At Kalejik the travellers separated and began their surveys in two separate parties, intending to meet again about once a week, in order to connect their route-surveys. North of Kalejik the stream has cut itself a deep perpendicular-sided gorge six miles long, through dark volcanic rocks. Progress in this was possible only along a narrow goat-path. Here, and in eight other places, the travellers discovered rock-tombs, which are ascribed to Paphlagonian rulers, and of which only five groups were previously known. These burial-grounds are always in a prominent and commanding situation, which might be supposed to give the departed a wide view over the country. With the exception of one near Akjalan, which occurs high up in the mountains, they lie in the immediate neighbourhood of the river. In most cases the tombs are cut into an isolated rock, which thus plays the part of a monument. The height of the tomb above the alluvial soil is usually from 16 to 50 feet. They have all an antechamber, often with pillars, whence a low broad passage leads to the tomb proper, which contains one to four compartments. A closer examination of the numerous mountain valleys which debouch on the Kizil Irmak from the Kizdagh between Changri and Iskilib would probably disclose still more tombs of this kind.

Below Hamsale the stream flows through a plain two or three miles wide, which is little cultivated, since the soil contains salt. Below Tozluburun the stream is again hemmed in by a narrow pass, that of Ibik Boghaz. Downwards from this the country assumes a different character: the mountains, hitherto completely bare, acquire a slight covering of oak brushwood and stunted pine woods. At Karaveran the heights bore stately trees, and in the river-valley as far as Osmanjik, the vine was much grown for the preparation of raisins. Northwards from Karaveran the way is at first difficult, afterwards it passes by the hour over a series of long low uniform undulations. In Osmanjik a fine old stone bridge of fifteen arches, built by Bajezid II., leads across the stream. A causeway well suited to purposes of Turkish rule leads from Osmanjik to Haji Hamza along the left bank of the stream, and thence up the valley of the Devrezchai. Its only weak points are its thirteen bridges, now in a state of decay. Haji Hamza, a small town of two hundred houses, is surrounded by a wall dating from the earlier middle ages; its gardens are overflowing with abundance of the finest fruit. An hour's march below the town is the mouth of the large tributary, the Devrezchai. Its valley, from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles wide, shut in on the north and south by perpendicular

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walls of yellowish-red rock, grows rice, cotton, and vines. Below the village of Daruchai, further progress along the stream was stopped by a gorge $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, the traveller again reaching its banks only in the neighbourhood of the Cherkess village of Alchakh, since the stream makes a wide bend to the north. At Cheltek a good wooden bridge 340 paces long leads across the stream, and below it the river enters a gorge nearly two miles long, which Lieut. von Flottwell traversed by swimming. The section from Cheltek to Bafra, in which the stream crosses the coast range, is in parts very difficult, and had been previously unmapped. Idir is the southern limit of the cultivation of tobacco, which then takes the place of the vine. Here all the Greek villages lay on the heights, the Turkish in the valley, recalling the time of the persecution of the Christians; on the west coast the positions are reversed. The Greek peasants between Samsun and Sinope speak Turkish exclusively, and even among the rich Greek tobacco merchants there are only a few, of the older generation, who are acquainted with Greek. It is only within the last few years that the government has allowed the establishment of Greek schools. At the village of Assar the stream forces its way for the last time through an imposing gorge of rock, where three fine rock-tombs and extensive fortifications are to be seen. Beyond Cheltek the influence of the Black Sea makes itself felt in the form of fogs and increased cloudiness. Bafra, a town of 1900 houses, of which 400 are Greek and 200 Armenian, exports yearly about 7,700,000 pounds of tobacco. It is a rich town, and the Greek quarter contains a number of fine villas. North of Bafra the stream enters the lowland proper. In the environs of the town large meadows, separated by hedges of myrtle bushes, wild roses, and blackberries, extend, sprinkled over with fine oaks and walnut-trees, and enlivened by large herds of horses and cattle, as well as by thousands of wild swans, storks, etc. Further north the fields disappear, and their place is taken by a park-like country with thickets of dwarf oaks, which still further on changes into a broad swampy level with sedge and reeds, grazed over by huge herds of buffaloes. Close beside the stream an impenetrable forest belt of one to two hundred yards in width, resembling the African gallery forests, makes it impossible to follow its course to the mouth. In summer the stream is not navigable below the mouth of the Elmadaghchai even for small boats or rafts, on account of the many rapids. When the water is highest, large boats with corn are said at times to reach Bafra from Kaisarieh. A passage upwards seems impossible on account of the steep slope of the bed, and because towing-paths do not exist along the banks. It is thus not suited to afford a means of communication between the high plains of Central Asia Minor, with their wealth of corn and cattle, and the wood and tobacco producing north coast. In its lower course it actually forms an effectual barrier to intercourse between the districts lying east and west of it.

Between the mouth of the Elmadaghchai and the sea there are five bridges, one an hour's march above Kalejik (of stone), the others at Osmanjik (of stone), below Karghy (of wood), at Cheltek (wood), and at Bafra (wood). The last is destroyed almost every spring by the flood water, and is thus perpetually "in course of construction." There are, besides, six ferries within this stretch of 280 miles. The width of the streams varies in the height of summer between 55 and 330 yards, and the velocity is nowhere under $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet per second, or $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour. The whole district is fairly safe to travel in, the greatest danger arising from the savage shepherds' dogs, which fiercely attack all strangers, and against which only a good riding-whip avails. From Bafra the travellers proceeded through the thickly peopled, well-wooded coast range *viâ* Alacham to Sinope, and thence back to Angora by Duragan, the Kizdagh, Iskilib, and Changri.