

## E. O'Donovan. The Merv oasis. Travels and adventures east of the Caspian during the years 1879-80-81 Five months' residence among the Tekes of Merv. Vol I & II.

<http://archive.org/details/russiancentralas02lansuoft>

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See also: «**Merv, a story of adventure and captivity**»

<http://archive.org/details/mervstoryofadven00odoniala>

*O'Donovan was officially a correspondent for Daily News, but probably an agent of the British Foreign Office. He was killed while staying with Hicks Pasha's army in Sudan in 1884.*

*Fluent in djagatai, good knowledge of Persian (although Colonel Steward writes that he is not).*

*O'Donovan was one of the very few visitors, (with de Blocqueville and Alikhanoff), who lived for long periods of time in Turkmen villages (4 months among Yomuds and 5 months among the Merv Tekes). He also stayed in other Turkmen tribes.*

*His report is a bit repetitive and would have gained to be shorter, but it is by far the best documented one, packed with interesting details on all aspects of Turkmen life.*

### Vol. I

Page 29 : Baku (Caucasus) from where O'Donovan sails to southern Trans-Caspia, already controlled by the Russian army. These shores of the Caspian are mainly populated by Yomud tribes.

He notes that the Zoroaster's creed is still alive in Baku.

*(Note: Islam reached the southern shores of the Caspian Sea quite late, mainly in its Shia version)*

Page 43: At Chatte at the junction of Atterek- & Sumbar Rivers («Chatte» means junction in Turkish). North-by-northeast of the city of Gorgân (Asterabad). Advanced station of the Russian army, in front of the Akhal Tekes.

At Tchikislar on the southeastern Caspian coast, near the mouth of Atterek river.

Page 45: Near Akhal Teke territory in the mountains up the Sumbar river, northeast of Chatte.

Page 48: The Atterek River forms part of the Persian-Russian frontier.

From the Atterek mouth to Chatte (Chat-l-Amtrak), following the river banks. First night stop at the Russian military post of Bouyun Bache (Atterek delta).

*(Note: the Russian strategy against the Tekes is cautious, based on the construction of a rail-road, well protected by fortified military posts)*

Page 49: Lots of wild sage (dyeing plant supplying a rather light-fast yellow dye). Mud, very heavy rains (October).

Page 51-56: Second stop in the Delta, upriver at Bent («bent» means a dam on the river,). The river is now canyon-like, very muddy. Desert on both sides of the river. River water saturated with salt. On the other bank are Persian hills. This route along the river is not practicable from November to February. The river is useless for water transit. Nor is it available for irrigation purposes (due to its very deep canyons).

*(Note: High water-hardness, brackish, muddy, unsuitable for dyeing with cochineal, probably rather high traces of Fe salts causing rather dull shades with Rubia tinctorum)*

Page 64: At Tcheliken Island and Krasnavodsk (means«Red water»). A large artificial military colony situated in a circus of hills opening towards South. The bay is sheltered from strong north-western winds and is a rare case of deep water port on the Caspian, thus chosen as starting point for the rail-road. Unfortunately no water fit for consumption: wells are brackish with traces of iron. Water needs to be distilled or shipped from Baku(!).

Page 69-71: At Krasnavodsk:

First founded as an emporium between Russian Central Asia, Khiva and Baku / Tiflis and the Black Sea ports. However the caravans on their way to- or from Khiva were so often prey of Turkmen attacks, especially by the Akhal Teke tribe, that the route was nearly worthless. Tekes roamed East and North of the Persian border, as far as Khiva and West, near to Chatte. Taking slaves whenever possible.

This situation explained the war being prepared: its objective was breaking the Teke's backbone and at least initially, establishing military posts on a route between Khiva (already conquered and a Russian protectorate) and the Caspian.

*(Note about Khiva: Russia took Khiva in Mai 1873 (General Von Kaufmann). Khiva is in Uzbekistan, Southeast of Aral Sea).*

A direct assault across the Kara Kum (Black desert) was out of the question, for lack of drinking water, of horse- and camel fodder and for the large force necessary to tame the Teke Turkmen. Besides, Teke's main

strength was well south of the initially projected direct line to Khiva. Secondary goal of the war: to render Russian currency mandatory.

*(Note: The idea of a railroad to Khiva was quickly dropped, since exalted Russian military brass in St Petersburg started dreaming instead of a raid on British India, via the Tejen- or the Murgab Valleys. A direct railroad to the Akhal Teke stronghold first and later to these routes to British India and to Bokhara was built instead.)*

Page 79-83: a trip North of Krasnavodsk, towards the shores of the Kara Bogaz («black gulf») salt water lagoon: As in the Atterek River, water contains a high concentration of salts (sulfates). Traces of volcanic activity on the shores, some sulfur.

Page 86: A few years of Russian domination of eastern Caspian shores has already transformed the Yomud Turkmen into quite trustworthy allies. They fear the Akhal Teke Turkmen, who now treat them as enemies.

Page 97-98: In many of the (Yomud) settlements, even in the immediate vicinity of the Russian camps and along the Atterek and **Giurgen** Rivers (Running parallel to the Atterek, at a distance of about 30 miles), one still can find large numbers of captured Persian women in 1881. Many of them, have married among the Turkmen and have children.

*(Note: This could explain why Yomuds and Tekes frequently had caucasian features, were bearded etc.. while the Salor (perhaps more proud of their race) were generally described as having mongol physiognomies).*

It has always been the rule of the Turkmen, that in default of ransom or a possibility of exchange with captive tribesmen, their prisoners are never to be surrendered, he or she is rather massacred on the spot.

Page 106. Meeting Knives Merquem, a Yomud Turkmen and former Khan of a large village near Krasnavodsk, which was totally wiped out by Tekes, except himself and his son. He is the commander of 500 Yomud cavalry irregulars in the Russian army.

Page 115: The skull of the wild desert sheep, with its enormous curled horns is the usual Turkmen sepulchral ornament.

*(Note: the same horns as those prominent on Ersari & Beshir namazlik «prayer» rugs?)*

Page 128: Yomud Turkmen show remarkable capacity for self-government.

According to Yomuds, the Teke Turkmen were « a set of irreclaimable scamps passing their leisure time in making raids on their neighbors. When victorious they sometimes killed the entire male population and carried off women and children as slaves ».

Page 129: At Hasan Kouli, a typical Yomud village, on shore of a lagoon near the Caspian Sea and the delta of the Atterek River: About 800 yurts («kibitkas» or «aladjaks» or «evs» or «oys»). Most tribesmen make a living as fishermen.

*«...The djami (mosque), is of the most primitive kind: it is an oblong platform of beaten earth, 25 feet by 12, elevated some 15 inches above the surrounding surface, encompassed in a shallow trench, ... in no Turkoman village did I observe any covered structure devoted to religious worship...»*

Page 129-131: *«...Hassan-Kouli, which consists of eight- or nine hundred kibhitkas, termed aladjaks by the nomads of the more easterly plains, is almost exclusively a fishing station inhabited by Turcomans of the Jaffar Bay (or Bey) tribe.....Previous to the year 1859, Hassan-Kouli was a centre of piracy....along the wild unorganized Persian frontier, the subjects of His Majesty Nasr Eddin Shah have yet cause to fear the nomads of the borders.....female Persian captives have become quite naturalized among the Turcomans, and, for the most part do not wish to leave their children and newly adopted homes..... It is much to be wondered at, that during the long years previous to the occupation of Ashuradé Bay by the Russian flotilla, the Persian government took no measures to suppress the man-stealing traffic of the Yomud. A very insignificant naval force indeed, on the part of Russia, has been found quite adequate to the task... »*

Page 150-160: Marshes: Destitute Yomud villages between the Atterek and the Giurgen rivers. Too poor even to afford bullets for their antique muskets: They make iron-sulfur granules by heating Fe and S to fusion of the sulfur and letting it drop into water. Very inefficient ammunition, even for duck hunting.

Page 156: In a poor «Karakchi» village «... ordinary nomads, who as a rule are pretty well off—as well-being goes in these parts of the world—that is to say, are well clothed. Seldom, in their villages at least, lacks adequate food, and the earthen floor of the aladjak is generally well furnished with carpets of no ordinary quality.....The mollah, or priest, in Mahometan countries invariably has his head shorn as bare as his lay brethren, but should he belong to an order of dervishes, he wears locks flowing upon his shoulders, and, with his egg-shell-shaped tiara, looks very like a ' pope,' as the Russian priest is termed...».

Page 157: *«...These Turcomans, I was told, belonged to the Ata-bai tribe, but they seemed a very distinct sub-division of it, for they were Ishmaelites even among Ishmaelites. Their brethren of the same clan seemed to have fallen foul of them, and one of my visitors informed me that, a couple of evenings previously, their neighbours, the Akh Ata-bais (White Ata Bai), had surreptitiously carried off the greater portion of the horses which they possessed....»*

Page 162: «... in front of us, at the edge of a dense forest, lay a village of the Ata-bai division of the Yamuds...who live, at least nominally, under Persian jurisdiction. »

(Note: O'Donovan uses the spelling Yamud for all clans which modern ruggies most often spell « Yomud ». A well known blogger has built a very personal and very false theory about the existence of two distinct Turkmen tribes: The Yomuds and the Yamuds. Who, in fact are one and the same tribal group, whether they live on Persian- or on Russian side of the Atterek River and whether they are Suni or Shia (a small minority according to O'Donovan)

Page 163: En route to Asterabad (Gorgàn) in Persia, crossing the Atterek- and Giurgen Rivers: Fertile area- Rice fields and bushes of wild pomegranate. Luxuriance.

The city is on the first slopes of the Demavend Mountains. Safe- and clear water used for irrigation. At Asterabad, O'Donovan meets the British consul, Mr Churchill.

Page 165-170 From Asterabad to Akh-kala ( «White fort»), between Asterabad and the Atterek River, Akh-kala is overlooking a ford on the Giurgen River. The city was once seat of a Qajar family branch which competed with the Qajar branch from Asterabad. The latter won, absorbed the population of Akh-kala and later conquered the throne of Persia. Dilapidated ramparts of unbaked bricks, except the base which is made of baked bricks. Three miles in circumference. Sufficient as a protection against Turkmen raids.

A 15 feet-broad stone causeway, build by Shah Abbas, leads westward to Kenar-Gez (Bandar e Torkeman?) the port of Asterabad. Rather cool guards at the gate. Part of the city is left as a jungle sttled by wild boars, foxes, jackals etc.

The citadel of all Persian cities is invariably built in the northeastern corner of the town.

All life is concentrated in the bazaar, everything else is dull and dreary (as in most oriental cities). Houses are windowless on the street side. Rubbish is left in the street. Appearance of the exterior is without importance.

Only the better class of Persian ladies veil themselves. Men politely look on the other side when talking to any unveiled, lower-class woman.

Page 171. Description of the bazaar. Mention of a dyers' quarter, the largest after the grocers' one. Mainly indigo dyers (suspended from housetop to housetop there are only blue and olive textiles). «...This is the quarter of the dyers, who seem to be, in point of number, the strongest after the hakhals, or grocers. They are to be seen working at their great indigo troughs, clad only in a dark-tinted waistband and skull-cap, their arms, up to the elbows, being of as dark a blue as the calico which hangs outside...».

Nearly every cooking utensil used in this part of Persia is of copper, tinned inside. While Atterek Turkmen already do favor cheaper Russian cast iron pots

(Note: Probable consequences on the brightness of red madder shades when used as (poorly cleaned) dyeing vessels. While traces of tin salt would be rather favorable to the brightness of the red shade, traces of iron salt (due to oxidation) would noticeably decrease the brightness, leading to more brownish red shades ).

Page 173-174: Most important manufacturing in Asterabad is that of felt-carpets and mats. Detail description of the process.

Page 178: Local Turkmen (Yomuds & Göklens) are allowed to enter Asterabad fully armed. Not so in Persian border towns in the Northeast, were Teke Turkmen are required to leave their weapons (except their knife) with the guards at the town gates.

The author watches the return in triumph from holy places of Persian pilgrims.

Description of the minimalist, very codified grieving of Persians when a relative dies.

Page 180: Persians have no issue with representation of living creatures, including human ones, male and female.

Page 184: Persians would not eat boar, but would drink themselves into blind inebriation.

Page 188-215. To be closer to Russian lines, O'Donovan moves back toward Gumush tepe,

According to a Persian officer, Turkmen tribesmen are militarily much superior to Persians regulars.

Northwest of Asterabad the (very flat) plain is doted with a great number of mostly Yomud-, and some Göklen villages, of 40-50 yurts each. Numerous herds of cattle, tended by armed nomads on horseback, are continuously met with. Seasonal migration into Persian territory to gather or barter winter forage for their flocks.

Page 190: «...The character of these (Persian) villages is entirely different from that of the Turkoman «aouls» or «ovas» to be met with, five or six miles further-on in the open, and which, with rare exceptions, have no kind of defense around the groups of circular felt huts, or aladjaks, the inhabitants trusting entirely, in case of an attack, to their personal prowess on horseback. The Persian villages, on the contrary, are surrounded by loop-holed walls of mud, from twelve to fifteen feet high, strengthened with rude flanking towers and a fosse.....»

Page 193-194. Meeting a unit of the Persian army. Discussion with officers about the strength of the Akhal Tekes.

Page 197. Meeting a unit of Afghan cavalry: They are descendant of colonists settled on the frontier by Nadir Shah (The last strong Shah) and constitute the best unit of cavalry on the Northwest border (Shahsavans?).

*(Note: around 1875-1880, several others, less trustworthy units of border guards were stationed at Quchan (Kurds), Muhammadabad and Derguez (Turks).*

Page 199: «...As a rule, I found the present generation of Yamuds an honest, hospitable people, ready to do a great deal, even for a Kaffir and Ferenghi like myself. The older members, who had been influential slave-merchants, and whose worldly wealth had been drawn mainly from traffic in Persian captives, were content to fall-in with the new state of affairs, and allow a stranger to pass freely. »...

Page 202-223: Living at Gumush tepe, as guest in the yurt of a (middle class-) henchman of the tribe's Khan for more than four months. A village of Yomud fishermen, sheep-, horse- and camel breeders, former Caspian pirates and slave hunters, Gumush tepe is situated on Persian territory, on the southeastern Caspian shore, about two miles from the mouth of the Giurgen River. 600-800 kubitkas.

«...One of the very few permanent Turkoman settlements which exist along the Eastern Caspian shores...The resident population occupy themselves almost entirely in fishing, though no inconsiderable portion of their animal food is supplied by the vast flocks of sea-birds which are to be found in their immediate vicinity,...These craft, (fishing boats) now exclusively employed for fishing purposes, and, when I saw them, for the transport of wood, fuel, and forage to the Russian camp at Tchikislar, were formerly largely devoted to piracy, and to Turkoman descents upon the Persian coast. Some of their boats are two mast luggers, forty feet in length, carrying large lateen sails, called «kesboy ».

*(Note: The Caspian sea is an extremely windy area, the winds mostly are blowing from the North-West).*

Description of life in a «maritime» Yomud village:

«...The kubitka, which I was to share with Douri, was but poorly furnished, even for Turkoman hut. As usual, in the centre of the floor was the fire, the smoke from which escaped by the circular opening in the centre of the roof, or by the door, when owing to bad weather this central aperture was closed with its hood of felt. A small and battered brass samovar stood near the fire ; beyond it, on the side farthest from the doorway, the floor was carpeted with thick felt, upon which were laid, as seats for people of more than ordinary rank, smaller sheets of the same material, and of brighter colors..... Around the room, to the height of four feet, were horizontally piled a large number of stout tee-branches, sawn into convenient lengths, and intended for the winter supply of fuel. This wood was kept within proper limits by vertical stakes, stuck into the ground outside the heap, the top of which was used as a kind of rude shelf or counter upon which bolsters, quilts, and other sleeping appurtenances, were piled, these being, indeed, with the exception of the (felt-) carpets, large and small, and a rude horizontal stone corn-mill, the only articles of furniture which the house contained.....»

«...I may here add that, with the exception of very recently married ladies, no Turkoman woman makes even a pretense of veiling her features.....The further one advances to the eastward the less the value of money is understood, and the more plentifully do the ladies decorate themselves with it. At Gumush tepe it was principally the young girls and newly married women who affected much personal adornment...»

«...The wives of chiefs and of the richer villagers wear on all occasions the full quantity of clothing and ornaments, with the exception of the hat. This is then replaced by a large red handkerchief, tied turban-wise around the head, one end falling along the back....Fully two hours before sunrise they were awake and about, and, by the light of the smoky astatki (petrol) lamps, the women were to be seen grinding, by the rude hand-mill, the corn required for the morning's repast, while the men got ready their luggers ....to proceed on their day's fishing, to convey loads of hay and other commodities to the Russian camp, or to seek firewood or timber for building purposes at Kenar Gez....» ,

«...A Turkoman's toilet is simplicity itself. I give Dourdi's as an example. Having donned the «kusgun» which served him during the night as a coverlet, he swept the carpet on which he had been sleeping with his huge sheepskin hat, which he then proceeded to dust by banging it lustily with the heavy iron tongues. Then, taking a piece of fat from the pot upon the hearth, he greased his boots with it, finishing up by washing his hands, using as soap the wood ashes from the fire....».

«...Before the sun rises he partakes of some hot half-baked griddled bread, which has an intensely clayey taste and odor. This is washed down by weak black tea, and he thinks himself fortunate if he can now and then procure a piece of sugar wherewith to sweeten this draught. While the Turkomans of the Caspian littoral and a hundred miles inland use only black tea, their more Eastern brethren constantly consume green (tea)...».

«...Should he be at home, his midday meal consists of pilaf, made of rice if he be in funds, or of brownish oatmeal if otherwise. The only usual accompaniment to this is a little grease or butter, boiled through the mass, or, as is more generally the case, some dried salt fish. Sometimes on fete days, dried plums and raisins are mixed with the pilaf...»

«...The evening meal, partaken of a little after sunset, is the best of the day, and for it is secured a small portion of mutton to accompany the pilaf, or a couple of wild ducks caught or shot by some male member of the family....»

«...There was one thing about Turkestan which I could never understand, viz. the absence of flesh diet to an extent that seemed unreasonable, considering the vast flocks and herds possessed by the inhabitants....»

«...One rarely sees milk used in its crude state among the Turkomans, as they seem to deem it unhealthy when so consumed. It is first boiled, and, when lukewarm, fermented. The resulting product is, when fresh, slightly sour, and becomes exceedingly so after the lapse of twenty-four hours. This is known to the Yamuds by the name of «yaghourt» ; it is called by the Tekes «gatthuk». It enters largely into (their) dietary, and in hot

weather is exceedingly refreshing and wholesome..... The «panir», or cheese, is simply yaghourt from which the serum has been drawn off, and which is allowed to strain and become more or less solidified in small bags suspended from the roof, a little salt being added to preserve it....»

«....The fuel used by these maritime (Yomud) Turkomans is generally wood brought from the neighboring Persian coast, supplemented to a great extent by the dried dung of camels....The «kalioun», or water-pipe, is almost always ignited by means of a dried ball of horse's dung as large as a small-sized apple. The first pulls from the pipe, as can be easily imagined, possess a very peculiar flavor....At night, the interiors of the kikitkas are lighted by means of rude earth lamps...»

«...One of the most disagreeable features of a Turkoman hut is the ever-present smoke, which is produced by the combined combustion of green wood, cuttings from fir planking, and camel's dung. »

(Note: The «fir» may indeed be a fir, but most likely is a stately tree of the Juniperus family, Juniperus excelsa polycarpus, very common in the region, which bears quite some resemblance with the « trees» frequently woven on Yomud rugs.)

« ...The fire is scarcely ever allowed to go out, and the Turkomans will assure the guest, by way of reconciling him to the nuisance, that it is admirable as a means for keeping flies out of the kikitka...».

Playing chess. The Turkoman passion.

Page 208: Hint at the frequent job division among the Turkmen «....The third son (of an important Jaffar-bay Yomud leader of Gumush Tepe, a youth of fourteen or fifteen, superintended the grazing of his father's flocks and herds....»

Page 215-225: New trip to Tchikislar, but O' Donovan still being persona non grata for the Russian authorities, must return to Gumush tepe.

(Note: A mentioned «camel shrubs» might be Salsola kali or saltwort, which alkaline ashes can be used after dyeing of wool to facilitate its rinsing and its return to a neutral pH) or Saxaoul (Haloxylon persicum) common south- and east of the Caspian.)

«....we saw a cavalcade of Turkoman women, dressed in bright scarlet robes, and riding in curtained horse-litters, making the best of their way westwards, in the midst of their tribesmen and friends....».

(Note: Vambéry lived in the same village disguised as a wandering dervish. The tribe's tradition remembers his visit. Not sure whether he really went much further East though.)

Page 225: Clear allusion to an ensi: « ...a visitor draws aside the carpet which hangs curtain-wise before the door (of the kikitka)»...

Page 226: Lots of salutations and formalities when a visitor enters the yurt, none when he leaves, not even a nod.

One removes one slippers when entering, or at least when stepping on the carpeted part. One remains covered as a mark of respect. One never removes the small skull-cap, day or night.

Page 228-231: description of the interesting rules of hospitality.

Page 229: «..The Yamuds, that is, those of any social standing, are very particular in guarding against the theft of anything belonging to a recipient of their hospitality, and are ready to resent any such outrage in the swiftest and severest manner....»

Page 229. Horses and covers: «...The horses, as I have said, are tethered in the open air, close to the kikitkas of their owners. They are protected against the heat of the sun by day, and the severity of the cold at night, by being swathed in an enormous sheet of felt, nearly an inch thick, which covers them from ears to tail, and meets underneath the belly. This is tied round two or three times with a broad girth, and will enable the animal to withstand any kind of weather. The horses themselves prefer this mode of being kept warm, and I found it impossible to induce my Turkoman steeds to enter a stable. They thus stood close to my residence, and my own personal charger was covered with a very expensive felt rug....»

Page 234: «... for a Turkoman of any pretensions whatever, never occupies himself with menial labour, and, indeed, seldom exerts himself in any way, except in a foray against his neighbors' cattle, or in a hostile expedition into Persia.....»

Page 235: «...the oblong cane basket which serves as a cradle for young children is supported at one end by the double camel-hair rope which descends from the centre of the dome, the other being attached to the top of the lattice work forming the inside of the wall.....it is no bad exemplification of the estimation in which the Teke Turkomans of the interior were held by these Yomuds, that mothers menaced unruly children with the threat that if they did not behave themselves the Tekes would be sent for directly....»

Page 237-239: «...another kikitka, of unusually large dimension... was the mosque, attended by the more select portion of the community, and it was the only instance I had seen of a covered building used for religious purposes by the Turkomans. In the intervals between the hours of prayer this edifice was utilized as a «medressé», or college....», «...the old gentleman who acted as muezzin took his stand before the door, and his melancholy, musical, long-drawn cry might be heard floating across the silent plain, calling the faithful to their devotions, a summons which, I regret to say, was seldom answered save by a dozen or fifteen of the older and more respectable inhabitants..... These Turkomans are all rigid Sunnites, and cherish the due orthodox detestation of the cursed Shiia sect, of which their neighbours the Persians are members. They do

not, in fact, regard the latter as Muslims at all, and have a much greater regard for the Jews and Christians...»

Page 245: Carpets: « ...The carpets which they (the Yomuds) make are retained for their own use..», «...the slow rate at which they are produced and the high price which would necessarily be asked for them, would effectually extinguish any attempt at commerce in such articles...».

(Note: As can be inferred from the case of O'Donovan's host, (a middle class Yomud who apparently did not own any pile carpet), only Turkmen families able to afford indigo- dyed wool and red- and yellow natural dyes, may have performed any significant rug weaving. The lower class was perhaps mostly using only cheaper felt mats to cover the soil of the kibitka.)

Page 247: Alum & decoction of pomegranate rinds used for tanning sheep skins.

(Note: Also used to make a dullish yellow on wool and to fix other natural yellows as a less efficient alternative to alum mordant)

Page 248-250. Three consecutive months of residence at Gumush Tepe. Details about « currency » and measures. Mention of Geok tepe the large adobe fortress being hastily completed by the Akhal Teke.

(Note: Geok Tepe («Blue mountain») Akhal Teke fortress, 28 miles northwest of Ashgabat, today on the trans-Caspian railway. From December 1880 till January 1881, 6000 Russian laid siege and stormed the city on January 12. Heavy Teke casualties among the defenders and the 40 000 fleeing civilians (see Vol II ).

Page 254-264: Trip to Tchikislar by sea (lugger). Unlike the Atterek River, the Giurgen River has a clear way of access to the Caspian Sea.

The Authorization to join the Russian army refused again. Return to Gumush Tepe.

Strong and durable storms, including snow and hail, tornado-like. «.The snow-fall must have been excessively heavy, for it was fully six inches deep out in the open....».

( Note, rains are more frequent than expected from such a region. Yomud felt yurts obviously were quite water-proof ).

Page 265-271. Return to Asterabad to talk with the British consul on how to persuade the Russians to let O'Donovan join their army. He travels together with a British spy, clearly identified as such by O'Donovan..

(Note: The fact that he knows about his real job, suggests that O'Donovan too may have been an envoy of the Foreign office and not a mere journalist. His taking with equanimity both his rather boring life at Gumush tepe and his dangerous journey confirms it too, IMHO.)

Page 273-276. Trip North of Asterabad to Akh kala again. About 30 miles up the Giurgen. The only bridge fording the lower Giurgen river.

Page 278: Bad relations between Persians and Turkomans. Again, even soldiers of the Persian army judge themselves vastly inferior.

Page 281-283 Downriver between Giurgen and Atterek rivers. Huge Yomud camel herds, waiting for a transfer to Russian troops. Back to Gumush Tepe again.

Page 286: Threatening message to the author, from Russian authorities, via a Turkmen messenger. O'Donovan dismisses it as apocryphal.

Page 288: East and upriver of the Yomud Turkmen area, in a more hilly and much more forested area, (also described by Burnes) live rather unruly Göklan Turkmen. At the time of O'Donovan's stay, a sizable Persian army is trying to «persuade» them to pay their long-due taxes. «...During the preceding four years the turbulent Göklan Turcomans had paid no taxes to the Persian Government, and, without being in a state of actual insurrection, simply declined to pay any.....Mustapha Khan, the energetic Governor of Asterabad, resolved that the money should be forthcoming.....He marched with his troops to the spot.....An interview with the principal Turcoman chiefs was eminently unsatisfactory.....the Turkomans passed their nights in galloping round the entrenched camp discharging their long muskets at the defenders.....Three messengers from Asterabad were intercepted and killed....»

Page 290: «....halted on the river brink, making preparations to cross. On the opposite side were the kibitkas of a village, the immediate surroundings of Il Geldi Khan, the chief of the district, for he had again changed his position since I last saw it. The passage of the river was characteristic of nomad life....»

Page 293: «....Remarking these serious effects of winter storms, it has more than once struck me that it is odd these Turcomans seem to learn but little from experience. Year after year, during succeeding ages, the snow-fraught «tenkis» sweeps over the Steppes, bringing death in its train. Where ancient earthworks exist they are taken advantage-of as shelter ; but it never enters into the heads of the shepherds to construct anything similar....»

Page 294: Travel to Teheran, via Enzeli & Resht (Enzeli : a Persian Port on the Caspian Sea). Goal: meeting the Russian ambassador and solicit again permission to join the Russian column.

Page 298-312: Asterabad to Gez, the port of Asterabad, fully run-down because the Persian authorities did not want it to be too tempting a target for the Russians!

A south caspian specialty: white truffles.

*(Note: The author, who is never too particular about what he eats, even redoubtable Turkmen «haute cuisine», would not eat these white truffles because «too much flavored with garlic and onions»! Ooh Albion!)*

Considerable amount of cotton is shipped from Gez, coming from Meshed and other Persian places. Also walnut «loupe» is exported to Russia and Europe. Walnuts grow to huge size in this area.

*(Note: It is to be expected that, in this area, the brown shades were often made with the Juglon dye extracted from green walnut hulls.)*

Huge fisheries and fish-salting plants (1400 workers). Fish is exported to Russia and to central Persia.

Page 314: Crossing the Piri Bazaar lagoon and going up-river.

*(Note: Northern, eastern and western shores of Caspian are quite bare. The South shore is covered with reed.)*

Page 316-318: Jungle vegetation on river shore.

At Piri Bazaar («old man's bazaar»): Last point where the river is navigable. From Piri Bazaar, one reaches Resht in about one hour on horseback. Silk worms are raised in this area.

At Resht: Unhealthy climate, warm, humid.

Page 320-337: En route to Teheran:

*(Note: Just south of Resht one finds the lowest part of the coastal Elbourz mountain range. The road goes through the Sefid River Valley, then over the Kharzon pass. After reaching the plain at Masrah, one rides southeast, by way of Qasvin, to Teheran, along the southern slopes of the range.)*

The Roman army, under Marcus Antonius, followed the same route.

Page 325. Description of a Kurd encampment. Peculiar Kurd tents with vertical reed walls, about 150 cm high, connected by four treads of spun camel hair. Roof is made of woven camel hair, fixed on 200 cm poles, thus missing to meet the reed wall by about 50cm, which allows for air and light. According to O'Donovan, the tents are more homely and neat than typical Turkmen kibitkas. Kind hospitality.

The author watches a Kurd tribe moving. They own fewer horses than the Turkmen. Cows are used as beast of burden. The men do not have the same wild appearance than Turkmen horsemen.

Page 330: «Kanots», galleries reaching underground watercourses. The main source of irrigation around Qasvin & Teheran.

Page 338-364: At Teheran: Poorly built fortification «à la Vauban».

O'Donovan discusses the differences between European-trained soldiers & traditional Persian military.

A description of the Bazaar: No carpet shop to be seen. In Teheran!!

O'Donovan obtains from the Persian authorities a safe conduct to the northeastern border of Persia.

Page 365-388: Meeting with his servant and his personal belonging in Shahrood (Shah's river), 400 km East of Teheran and 100 km southeast of Asterabad. Repetitive. Nothing new mentioned.

*(Note: page 391, again a visit to a bazaar, in Shahrood. Conspicuous absence of rugs again, confirming that in cities/ regions of Persia during the Qajar period, the rugs were still mostly a domestic affair and that their trade was limited and reserved to an elite. Steward (also around 1882) does mention a merchant bringing expensive rugs to Meshed and selling them directly to the local prince. One can assume that carpets were still a confidential, luxury business and that the vast majority was still not woven for sale.)*

Page 392-393: In the caravanserai the traveller is supposed to bring along his bedding (a carpet), light, cooking hardware etc. There is not the smallest article of furniture, even in rooms for upper class travelers. Food can be bought from the guardian though. Murderous Persian bugs are a local specialty (apparently injecting a lethal virus)

Page 416: Some hints at the author's adventurous life.

*(Note: He has been near- or in trouble most of his life. In Spain during the civil war with the Carlistes, in Kars during the rout of the Turkish army at Aladja Dagh, in America (during the civil war?).*

*He will get killed in 1884 in a battle against the Mahdi in Sudan.)*

Page 437. Near Quchan, a border town close to Akhal Teke Turkmen territory, less than 10 miles from Ashkabad (or rather the ruins of it) and close to the source of the Atterek river.

Northern Persians have a good opinion of Russians. Mainly because they are fighting the feared Turkmen and have already forbidden the slave trade, both in Khiva and in Bokhara, therefore significantly reducing the Turkmen forays in Persia.

Page 450: A Kurdish Quchan governor. Notes on differences between Kurds and Persians.

Page 457: Quchan is one of several colonies of warlike Kurds established by various Shahs to defend Persia from Turkmen raids, they are feared even by the Tekes.

News from Geok Tepe: The Russians keep progressing slowly and carefully, building strong forts to protect their lines of communication. Makdum Kuli khan, the son of the late Teke ruler, is designated as the new leader of the Akhal Tekes.

Page 463: By a curious coincidence the new chief of the Akhal Teke bears the same name as a celebrated Turkmen of the Gökkan tribe, one of their very few famous poets, who flourished in the middle of the eighteenth century. He devoted his life and his multiple talents to the unification of his race. He died ca. 1771, in despair for having been unable to put an end to their internecine quarrels.

Page 469-470: Russian agents suggest to Akhal Tekes to submit, and to join them in an attack of British India. The offer is dismissed by the Akhal Tekes. Considerations about the tactical importance, for the Russians, of not hurrying up their offensive.

Page 478: At « Meshed, second only to Istanbul in beauty»: Not quite so in O'Donovan's opinion. The city has lost much of its antique wealth and prestige.

Page 481: Russian products dominate the market for European manufactured goods in the Meshed bazaar.

## Vol. II

Page 1-13. Residence in Meshed (3 months):

Persian authorities try to stop the author from traveling to Teke territory.

Akhal-Tekes and Merv Tekes have free access to Meshed «selling their skins and carpets». Rare mention of carpet as commercial object. Obviously a rather seldom case.

Meshed is a good place for information on the war.

The Akhal Teke Turkmen are present South and West of Merv.

*(Note: There is no mention of any Teke Turkmen East of Meshed, near Sarakhs, where Salor Turkmen seem to have been welcomed back by the Persian. Tame and much impoverished Salor Turkmen that is. They had not recovered yet from the beating taken from the Persians in 1832.)*

Akhal Tekes were «still wilder than Merv Tekes».

An Akhal Teke envoy to Meshed informs the author that the Merv Tekes have sent only few volunteers to Geok tepe. Only 1/6 of the Akhal Tekes own a gun, acceptable powder quality is rare.

The Russian railroad keeps progressing towards the frontline.

*(Note: starting about 20 miles south of Krasnovodsk, it will play only a secondary role in the offensive on Geok tepe).*

Greed of the Akhal Tekes: Even as they already are exposed to the Russian offensive, they keep marauding the Persian- and Afghan territory, pillaging and taking slaves as usual.

Page 19: At Radcan: A nice, mainly Kurdish little town on the Persian border, good water, dyeing cotton and tanning leather.

Page 25; Marching along the upper Atterek, northwest bound into Kurdish territory.

Page 30-32: Muhammadabad in Derguez- (Dargaz-) province, south of Ashkabad. A Turkish tribe has been settled there by the Persians to protect their border. As is frequently the case, their Khan has made himself semi-independent. He has no fear of Turkmen. and raids them on a tit for tat basis.

Turkmen & Persians of higher class both affect very plain dress.

O' Donovan meets Colonel Steward disguised as Armenian merchant, initially without identifying him as English, while Steward is perfectly informed about O' Donovan.

Page 34-36: Somewhat less slave-hunting performed by Tekes, after the capture of Khiva and Bokhara by the Russians during the seventies and the subsequent closing of their slave markets.

*(Note: Turkmen did not in general need many slaves themselves, since they had no interest for large scale farming, thus man-hunt was only justified by ransom, sale to Khiva & Bokhara slave market or occasional exchanges for their own captured people).*

Sometimes Turkmen Khans present horses or carpets as compensation for their men's forays (these raids are called «alamans»).

Turkish-, Kurdish- & Turkmen Khans, on both side of the frontier, find the raids on Persians plebe profitable for themselves and their immediate followers.

*(Note: The poor guys, deprived of their cattle or enslaved, might have had a different opinion.)*

The Turkmen Khan's authority is far from absolute. «Ak-saghal» white beards, elders of experience, are usually the real collective rulers of Turkmen clans.

Page 38: Logical explanation of the unclear and shifting Persian borders.

Information about textiles. cloths, ...

*(Note: Unlike Kurds who preferred a turban, Persians, Turks and Turkmen wore huge hats, tiaras etc..of black or brown sheep wool. White wool was kept for rugs, horse bags, kilims, and for the felt used for the white yurts of the Turkmen elite).*

Page 57: Frontier provinces in the Northeast of Iran are settled by population of Turkish, Kurdish, Afghan or Turkmen origin, often cattle raiser, and by (fewer) Persians, mostly farmers which are fair game for Turkmen raiders.

The Turks are often descendent of former settlers of Bokhara and Khiva.

*(Note: The obvious reason for their forced settlement on the frontier is that these tribes are more warlike than Persians and do answer in kind to any Turkmen raid. The big inconvenient of this strategy is that under a weak Shah (as most of the Qajar were), these tribes make themselves semi-independent and even launch raids into Persia for their own benefit. As Marvin noted, any alliance of these clans with the Turkmen would have easily destroyed the Qajar dynasty.)*

Page 60: «Arrack is kept in goat skins, lined with pitch, as in Spain, which gives the liquor the peculiar odor of a strongly smelling he-goat, while its taste is highly suggestive of coal tar».

Page: 63: Ubiquitous mini-towers in Persian fields near Luftabad on the Tejen River: «... The able-bodied men go to the field, if at any distance from home, in parties of ten or twelve. On the first alarm of an inroad, the oxen are hurriedly driven under the walls of one of the fortified towers which dot the country at every two or three hundred yards, and the cultivators place themselves within the fort to protect their property by the fire of their muskets. The towers have loopholes around their tops, masked by projecting bartizans of wicker work plastered with clay..... The robbers have no time to stay, and the system of defense is therefore efficacious, in general, though of course the martial farmers are sometimes caught napping, and have to pay the penalty in more or less extensive losses of cattle....»

Page 67: From a near-by mountain the author watches the assault on Geok Tepe.

*(Note: also called Yengi Sheher, «new town», since the fortress was built only 3 years before, near the old and long deserted plain village of Geok Tepe, or «blue hill» due to its aspect at some hours of the day).*

Between 50 000 and 60 000 yurts inside the walls, nearly the entire Akhal Teke population.

Russian diversion from the Northeast, with heavy artillery shelling, while the southern gate is mined, blown-up and stormed by General Skobelev's infantry. Immediate flight of the Turkmen horsemen through the northern gate, followed by the civilian population, with Cossacks in hot pursuit. Heavy casualties, estimated by the Akhal Teke leader himself as being roughly 10 000 souls, (See Vol II page 206) and by the Russian commander at 20 000 souls: men, women and children. (See Marvin or Boulangier quoting Skobelev),

Page 84: «... There were about fifteen thousand women left in Yengi Sheher on the retreat of the army, and these the general threatened to abandon to the soldiery unless their male relatives should return at once and submit to the Czar. He also, I was informed, ordered the women to deliver up their gold and silver ornaments as a war contribution. The Turkoman women, however humble, all possess an immense quantity of such trinkets, and a Teke told me he had himself seen a pile of them heaped up on two carpets to a height considerably greater than that of an ordinary man. Whatever truth was in these statements and they were confirmed by several witnesses, everything indicated that Skobelev was determined to make thorough work of the conquest of the Akhal Tekes.....»

Page 68: «... On the fall of Geok Tepe, a council was held at Merv, which, by the way, is not a city at all, but rather a collection of Turkoman settlements, ...»

Pages 71-76: O'Donovan rides East to Ashkabad. The Persian city (ruined and fully deserted after its capture by the Akhal Tekes, seventy years before, thus around 1811) had no means of defense left, after the fall of the Geok tepe fortress. Ashkabad was immediately garrisoned by 5000 Russian regulars with guns. A strong position commanding the fertile and well irrigated part of the Akhal Teke territory and easily furnished in food from the near-by Persian Luftabad Valley and from Meshed.

Cossacks and Yomud cavalry (their fidelity assured by many of their leaders being held hostages) was close behind the author's party. Thus O'Donovan, to avoid being captured decides to ride to Merv, via Persian territory.

The Akhal Teke leader Makdum Kuli khan and his men retreat behind the Tejen swamps (*inland delta, quite unhealthy, in which the water of the Tejen River dissipates*), protected from any immediate Russian attack by the large waterless zone between Ashkabad and Tejen, The Tejen ( also called Heri rood since it flows through Herat ) comes down from Afghanistan.

Page 75: Proof again that the author is perfectly informed about the difference between pile- and felt rugs: he systematically speaks of «felt-rug»

Page 77: At a former, now quasi deserted town on the way to Merv: «... The present inhabitants, who are nomad Turkomans that have been established there by the Persian authorities, have let the walls fall into decay, as the nomads have an objection to dwelling within enclosures, except by absolute necessity....»

Page 76: Full cooperation of «neutral» Persia with Skobelev, who, initially, decides to avoid crossing the waterless no-man's-land and instead to attack the Tejen swamps via Persian territory (*but later he drops the idea of an immediate attack*):

O'Donovan reaches the fortified frontier valley of Kelat, near the Akhal Teke positions in the Tejen area and contacts with their leader, who informs O'Donovan of his decision to leave the (unhealthy) Tejen marshes and to fall back on Merv.

Page 81: Mention of the Persian's reluctance for re-settling any abandoned town «...but, strange to say, they will on no account inhabit the deserted town, though its well-preserved ramparts afford every necessary pro-

tection, and it is admirably situated in the midst of the well-watered amphitheater of rich alluvial soil. This, however, is but in keeping with the general customs of the (Persian) people here who seem to have an ineradicable objection to inhabiting any abandoned place of the kind. They prefer to go to a vast amount of trouble in constructing an entirely new town, often quite close to the adjoining old one... »

*(Note: As far as the Turkmen are concerned they don't live in towns at all),*

Page 82-83: Kelat; frontier town in a naturally strongly fortified valley.

Kakha and Abivers are two other frontier villages of the area.

The Russians succeed in convincing many Akhal Tekes to return to their homes and to accept Russian rule.

Page 86-107: O'Donovan travels through a Persian area, where some Merv Teke Turkmen are doing seasonal farming, paying a fee to the Prince-Governor of Meshed.

Again, O'Donovan's usual remark about the desert soil, which is not siliceous sand, but marl with a high amount of clay. Thus fertile soil, whenever properly irrigated. Coherent with earlier remarks about the rivers carving deep canyons in the clay soil and with the existence, in a remote past, of a sea.

Crossing the Tejen River, which upper valley leads to Herat, Afghanistan.

*(Note: As all the British military travelers/spies noted, the Tejen- and Murgab Valleys offer avenues through Afghanistan for Russian troops, should the Tzar decide to attack British India. In 1882, this possibility was not to be excluded, since easy Russian victories over a handful of poorly organized- and armed Asian irregulars had created a dangerous sense of omnipotence in some St Petersburg circles, further increased by the recent problems of the troops of the British Raj in Afghanistan.)*

*(Note: As in most parts of this region, saxaoul, tamarisks (odjar) and camel thorn (Alhagi maurorum? saltwort?) are the main plants. Genii adapted to dry, marly and salty soil, with very deep roots, able to survive summer fires. **Their ashes are alkaline** and can find a use in rinsing dyed wool.*

*No real tree is growing in this area. One wonders were Merv Tekes or Caspian Yomuds could have seen the «firs» they are supposed to represent on some of their ensis and asmalyks for example, except of course in the Göklen hills (upper valley of the Giurgen River) or in the hills overlooking the upper valley of the Tejen/ Heri rood in Afghanistan).*

Page 93: At Dushakh (or Chardeh), down-river of Kelat, on the left bank of the Tejen in Persian territory. Here too, Merv Tekes come for seasonal work paying a tax to the Prince of Meshed. O'Donovan meets the traveling Persian commander of the Sarakhs garrison.

Page 108: At Dash Robot in Merv Teke territory about 20 miles from Merv. Very old, now deserted caravan-serai.

Page 113: At the first aoul of the many which form Merv: «...From a distance, a Turkoman village looks like an immense apiary. The dun-colored, cupola-shaped eves resemble so many large beehives. The group of houses towards which we directed our steps numbered some hundred and fifty. A few jujube, apple, and willow trees grew here and there around them, and some patches of vine and melon cultivation were to be seen... »

*(Note: Agriculture or rather «gardening» was a secondary activity for many Turkmen).*

Page 114: Merv, in which « city » the author will spend nearly 5 months.

At first, the Teke suspect him to be Russian spy.

*(Note: The river of Merv is the Murgab, flowing down from Afghanistan and disappearing, in the irrigation channels of the Merv oasis.)*

Meeting the former Tokme Serdar (chief military leader) of the defeated Akhal Tekes. An intellectual type of Turkmen with a rather clear view of the strategical situation, including the possibility of a Russian assault on India, via Afghanistan. A few days after this meeting the Tokme Serdar will surrender to the Russians and go to St Petersburg to meet the Tzar.

Page 120-121: Description of the countryside: «...On every side was an immense plain, here and there broken by extensive plantations of (small) trees, and hundreds of groups of bee-hive shaped huts or aladjaks, each group consisting of from fifty to two hundred dwellings. The villages were usually from one to two miles apart. The ground was everywhere well tilled, corn-fields and great melon-beds alternating... »

See as well page 146: «...Standing on the ramparts (of the Merv fortress), the eye ranges over a fair expanse of well-cultivated country. Corn of various kinds and melons, seemed the only produces, if I except the apples, jujubes, grapes, and apricots of the frequent enclosed plantations. Around the fortification, at distances varying from half a mile to three miles, is a broad belt of tree growth...»

«...In a few minutes the ground became higher, and vegetation more sparse. We were crossing a portion of the battle-field on which, some twenty-two years previously, the Persian expedition was defeated, thirty-two field guns being captured by the Turkomans...».

Even in summer, with nearly no current left, the Murgab is yellow-orange with suspended silt and clay.

*(Note: Thus probably a bit contaminated with iron salts.)*

Page 122: Again clear differentiation between a «felt mat covered by a Turkoman carpet». Page 134 «.a large felt rug...»

Page 125: «*living in the interior of a much patronized peep-show*».

*(Note: A peep-show ? In 1881! Those Brits are indeed full of surprises )*.

Page 126: Division of the Merv Teke Turkmen into two main clans: Toktamish residing East of the Murgab (led by Kouchid «Baba» khan) and Otamish living on the western side (led by Aman Niaz khan). Each clan is further subdivided into 12 smaller units, each led by a kethkoda. There is no such a thing as an omnipotent Teke ruler in Merv. The akh sakhals (white beards) have a strong collective influence.

Page 127: Silk ikat is all the rage among Teke men, probably imported from Bukhara or « fallen from the camel »:

*«.. Over his long, sash-girt robe of striped crimson silk was another, of similar material, variously and brilliantly tinted. The ground of ( Aman Niaz khan) robe was white, and it was so woven as to present a number of irregular patches, or rather splashes, of bright red, blue, yellow, and purple. At a distance he looked as if wrapped up in a large Union Jack. Some of his attendants were similarly attired, the colors varying to green, vermilion, and purple, according to the taste of the wearer. In this respect Aman Niaz and his followers were in distinct contrast to Kouchid Baba khan and his men, clad in very sombre garment....»*

Page 130: «*The Merv Turkoman are Moslems in very little more than name*»

*« . . . I was at first surprised to find that such religious tolerance existed in Merv, for I knew that in Muham-medabad (Note: ruled by a Kurdish khan) and other portions of the border Persian territory, especially at Meshed, Jews were not allowed the free practice of their religion, but were compelled to attend the mosque.... In my opinion, the superior religious toleration among the Turkomans is due far more to complete indifference in regard to such subjects than to any greater liberality of mind on their part.....In Merv, as a rule, but little heed is paid to anyone's religious belief, provided he be possessed of money....»*

*(Note: They drink Arak, smoke opium, are not always following the rules during the Ramadan etc..)*

*Only one of the Turkmen «towns» in which O'Donovan lived had anything like a mosque. At best an area was reserved for collective prayer and if desecrated by human- or animal «bowel activity», would simply be replaced by a new, cleaner area. Nowhere the author has noted the usage of specific carpets for prayers. The Turkmen makes his prayer wherever he happens to be, including on horse- or camel-back.)*

Page 130: «...It was only after sunset on the second day that Kadjar Khan, the «Ichthyar», (head of state) made his appearance....the intense democracy of the population, as well as other circumstances which became known to me afterwards, preventing the display of any of those external signs of respect usually shown to the chief magistrate of a State, however small it may be...»

Page 134: «...for at Merv the entire population, of both sexes and all ages and conditions, are privy to the important deliberations of the Council of State...».

Page 138: Kibitka (russian), aladjak (kirgiz), ev or oy (turkmen): A detailed description:

*«...I will now describe in detail an aladjak and the method of its construction. It is also styled kibitka, and ev.. Ev is the real Turkoman name, and means a house. This typical nomadic dwelling is ordinarily about fifteen feet in diameter, and eleven or twelve feet to the culminating point of its domed roof. To a height of six feet its walls are vertical. These walls are composed of an open lattice-work of rods nearly an inch and a half in diameter, sloping at an angle of forty-five degrees with the horizon. They cross at intervals of eight inches. The entire height of the lattice-work is nearly six feet. At the point of junction the rods are pierced, and bound together with the dried intestines of sheep. When a village is being moved, the four pieces of lattice-work which complete the entire circle of the kibitka close up into a limited space, and can easily be packed upon the back of a single camel. When a house is being erected, the four component pieces of the lattice-work are expanded to their greatest extent, and placed in the form of a circular enclosure. They are bound firmly together by cords of plaited camel-hair thread. The dome-shaped roof is formed of a number of curved wooden rods, of about the same dimensions as those which compose the lateral lattice-work of the wall. One extremity of each is firmly lashed to the top of the lattice-work, the other being inserted into a cart-wheel-like construction some six feet in diameter, which constitutes the summit of the cupola.*

*When the lattice walls have been erected, the women - for the mounting and dismounting of these residences are invariably effected by women-, place the central cart-wheel-like piece upon the top of a pole, and hoist it to the necessary height in the middle of the enclosure. Three or four others simultaneously insert the extremity of the curved rods into the holes pierced in its circumference, lashing the lower ends as I have already described.*

*The result is a structure very similar to a gigantic parrot-cage. Outside the vertical lattice walls are suspended sheets of felt, of a breadth equal to their height. Outside this felt the walls are enclosed by a roll of reed matting. This latter consists of giant cane-like reeds, of about six feet in length, placed vertically side by side, and bound together by half-a-dozen parallel threads of interlacing camel hair.*

*This, in turn, is further secured by an exterior belt, passing round the entire structure, and connecting with the door-posts on either side.*

*The roof is covered with felt alone. The central aperture has a hood of the same material, which can be drawn over it and pulled back at pleasure by strings which hang near the door. In fine weather this aperture is always open, for, save the door, there is no other means whereby light and air can penetrate to the interior, or the smoke of the fire find an exit. An ev has no windows.... »*

Page 140: «...the furniture of an ev is very simple. The fire occupies its middle, immediately under the center opening of the dome. The half of the floor remote from the entrance is covered with a «ketché», or felt carpet, nearly an inch in thickness. On this are laid, Turkoman carpets, six or seven feet long by four to five in breadth, on which the inhabitants sit by day and sleep by night. A special bed is unknown to a Turkoman. The semi circle next the door is of bare earth, and on it chopping of wood, cooking and other rough domestic operations are conducted. Round the wall hang large flat camel bags six feet by four (!!), one side being entirely composed of the rich carpet work in which the Turkoman excel. Ordinarily, all the household goods are packed in these bags, for transit from place to place on the back of camels. When empty they form a picturesque tapestry....»

Page 141: «...Besides the primitive horizontal hand-mill....and the samovar, which is in almost hourly requisition, for the courtesies of Central Asia require that every stranger be presented with a cup of tea immediately upon his arrival, nothing more exists in the way of household furniture. Hung on one side are the saddle and other horse trappings of the master of the establishment, along with his saber and musket. The horses are tethered by the fetlock close by the door of the ev....»

« ....A «Toonik», lamb or goat skins, the neck kept open by crossed sticks, hangs under the roof and swings to and fro in the air draft produced by the fire. Turkomans were reluctant to explain their signification to a foreigner. Probably some pre-moslem worship remnant. Near the doorway is sewn a piece of linen or calico (Four or five square inches, forming a pocket for the reception of the bounties of wandering spirits: the «tarum»). A horseshoe is occasionally found nailed upon the threshold.... »

Page 142: Clothes: «... I next purchased a beurg, or embroidered skull- cap, a telpek (sheepskin hat), a keyuk (shirt), gushakli (sash), balak (wide white cotton trousers), and a pair of chokoi (broad-toed slippers, of red stamped Russian leather). Stockings are rarely worn, never with slippers. When long riding-boots are used, the feet and ankles are swathed in a band-like wrapping called dolok. In severe weather the enormous great-coat styled kusgun is worn. Sometimes this is replaced by a heavy mantle called a yapundja, of woven sheep's wool....»

Page 144: «... Whatever may be said about Turkomans, and, to tell the truth, there is not much good to be said about them, they have shown themselves well able to hold their own behind a breast-work....»

( Note: O'Donovan fully shares Alikhanoff's opinion. )

Page 143-151: Description of the rather outdated fortification being built by the Merv Teke.

(Note: started by Kouchid Khan shortly after the fall of Khiva to the Russians, interrupted, then started again after the fall of Geok tepe).

Seven or eight thousand men worked at it daily during O'Donvan's stay.

Page 152: Few buildings in Merv: «.... a collection of huts and buildings of earth, a mile distant from the northern angle. This settlement was a curious one in its way, being chiefly composed of several Jewish families, who had been settled there, as they themselves told me, from time immemorial. They seemed by far the busiest and most flourishing of the Merv communities which I had hitherto visited. Bales of merchandise lay in the vicinity of every house, awaiting transport to Bokhara or Meshed, and I could not help thinking how different the state of affairs in the oasis might be if each group of dwellings in the Merv district were equally a scene of commercial activity. In one respect the houses were very different to the majority of those scattered over the plain; for, instead of dwelling exclusively in aladjaks, as the Tekes for the most part do, tower-like buildings of unbaked brick, plastered over with fine yellow loam, had been constructed, giving the place a fortified appearance..... There were in it some Kurd families, who, years before, had been carried away from the Persian frontier, and had settled among the Tekes.

At this point, too, was the medressé, presided over by a Turkoman much renowned for his erudition, and named Khodja Nefess. His academy, a large and not unpicturesque edifice of loam, was surrounded by a grove of pomegranate, jujube, peach, and willow trees....»

Page 153: An «ustà adam», a Turkmen «universal artist» or «Jack-of-all-trades». Turkmen are not much technology-minded.

Page 159-164: The Teke clans of Merv and their political- and military structure:

Toktamish (East): Sub-clans: Vékil (Yasi Youssub, Kara, Kaksal bukeri, Ark Karadjé, Kalil) & Beg ( Amashé, Guné, Kowki, Zereng, Yegreh, Bitli). The Toktamish are the most numerous and the honorary senior tribe.

Otamish (West): Sub clans: Sitchmaz (Karatchmet, Pereng, Topaz, Hadji Sufi, Kou Sagur, Aladja Guz) & Bakabih (Miris, Sultan Aziz, Zakur, Burkoz, Geok, Ak Dasheyuk, Kara Dasheyuk).

Page 161: A Khan rules (relatively speaking) by hereditary right over each of the two clans. «Ketkhodas» administer each subdivision, occasionally acting as judges , they also appoint caddis, learned in the Koran, to support them in this function:

«...The twenty- four kethkodas presided over by the two khans, and assisted by a number of the Akh-Saghals, of the clans, men of position and experience, who are called by a sort of public opinion, constitute the «medjlis», or great council of the nation. This body is convoked to decide on grave questions of national policy, such as that of taking measures to resist the Russians at the time of my arrival....»

«...The kethkodas are usually wealthy in flocks, and indeed require to be so, as they receive no contributions from their clansmen...»

«...The title of khan is given as a matter of courtesy to many of the descendants of former khans who possess no power in the state....The kethkodas are not addressed by that title....The personal title of Serdar is also given to certain men who have shown considerable military skill in the field...». A brave warrior with no skill for commanding could get the title of bahadur... ».

«...In time of war every able-bodied man is called out for service, either in the field or on the fortifications, by the council. If the Khan was competent he would naturally command the national forces in virtue of his office, but should he be from age or other causes incapable of acting as general, a temporary military chief would be chosen by the council from the Serdars..... During the war between Russia and the Akhal Tekes, the hereditary Khan, Makdum Kuli, had nominal command of the forces, but the active operations outside the walls of Geok Tepe were conducted by Tokme Serdar, who possessed no hereditary rank, but was chosen general in virtue of his known military skill.....»

«...As the whole population is trained to arms there is no difficulty in raising a large force, but there are no officers except the fighting general or the kethkodas, and no gradations of military rank. This want of organization is fatal to the efficiency of the Merv forces in anything like a prolonged campaign, especially against European troops. The lack of officers is partly compensated by the individual training of the men in military exercises and the use of arms. The only thing like a standing army in Merv when I arrived there was a sort of police force of a thousand horsemen, under the command of two officers, styled the Yassaoul-bashis. To them was entrusted the execution of the orders of the council, and also the duty of providing escorts for the caravans coming to Merv from Bokhara and Meshed...»

«...Taxes and a public treasury were institutions unknown in Merv at the period of my visit. The traders in the bazaar used to assess themselves to pay for the needful repairs of the market-place and the roads and bridges...»

Page 160-161 «...distinction between the clans is kept with utmost formality...». Minute details in the dress are sufficient for all Turkomans for unfailingly identifying the sub-clan to which a man belongs, at first sight... ».

Despite 4 months of residence O'Donovan could never achieve the same result.

«...On asking once how the distinction was marked for to my eye there was nothing in the dress, like the Highland tartan colours, to distinguish the wearers a native pointed out that a peculiar way of knotting the sash and wearing the hat always indicated a member of the Sultan Aziz clan, a peculiar tie of the sword belt one of the Burkoz, and other minute points of dress the members of the other clans. My eye could never be sufficiently trained to tell a man's clan at first sight by the cock of his hat, or the tie of his sash; but my Turkoman friends never erred in the matter, which is a somewhat important one in their society.... »

Turkmen, other than Tekes, bordering the Merv territory:

Page 161: There are important settlements of Saryks up the Murgab river, mainly at Pendj-Deh, near or in Afghanistan. These Saryks are still on war terms with the Merv Tekes.

Page 197-198: Smaller groups of Saryks have settled closer to Merv at Yolatan and are on speaking terms with the Tekes

Some Salor families (less than 170 evs), live in the Merv oasis as second class citizens, but not as slaves.

Page 165: «...Even when other tribes were held in absolute subjection, as the Salors were by Merv, no tribute was exacted from them». See also page 200-202.

Page 361-362 O'Donovan gives more details about the Salors. «...The Salors of Merv, (less than 170 evs), enjoyed liberty within the oasis, but were kept in a state of subserviency by the Teke and were not allowed to move without authorization outside the oasis. They were the remnants of the old population, which together with the Saryk inhabited the oasis before the advent (around 1855) of the Teke. Many fled up the Murgab river with the Saryk and settled on the Afghan border, but most settled at Sarakhs...» (Northeastern border of Persia on the right bank of Tejen River. )

(Note: A Persian envoy visited Merv during O'Donovan's stay, with an offer from the prince-governor of Meshed. He tried, unwittingly, to convince the Merv Salors to move their evs to Sarakhs and to join their well established brethren. Most Merv Salor refused.

IMHO, this proves that:

- 1) A Salor independent tribe still existed in 1881 which had colonized the fertile area of Sarakhs on the right bank of the Tejen (The Persian «Sarakhs-city» being limited to a small border fort with a Persian garrison, whose commanding officer O'Donovan met on his way to Merv: see page 93, Vol II), and that
- 2) This Salor settlement was apparently behaving to the Shah's full satisfaction, since the Persian envoy wanted to get more of the same. The warlike Salors were probably supposed to protect the Persian frontier against Merv Tekes and Afghan- or northern Balouch raiders and to protect the commercial traffic between Meshed, Herat and Kandahar. It has been a constant Persian policy of using warlike tribes as border guards against Turkmen slave-hunters. A successful policy whenever the Shah was strong, featuring a limited sense of humor and an efficient army. It was a bloody failure whenever he was weak and incompetent (as was mostly the case of the Qajar Shahs).

O'Donovan mentions as well Ersari and Iliat (of the Mjaour and Ata clans) as living near the frontiers of Merv. (Note: He does not give any precision on their whereabouts, but the Ersari were evidently living East, on the banks of the Amu darya, they were the ones mentioned Vol. II pages 253, who frequently raided the eastern villages of the Merv oasis.)

Page 158-174: **The author elaborates on ethnology, sociology and history of the Turkmen:**

Page 168: Description of the strong defensive position of the former adobe fortress of the Saryks, Porsa kala., « ..which under the Saryks contained about 10 000-12 000 inhabitants.... » and was « ... more of a city than any of the (Merv) Teke settlements... ».

In later pages, O'Donovan observes that the Saryks made a more clever choice for the site of their fortress than the Tekes did for their own one, on which they were still actively working.

Page 168-174: **Highly interesting summary of recent (Turkmen ) history:**

«.....The present inhabitants of Merv are comparatively recent immigrants, and indeed the whole Turkoman population of these countries has been only a short time in its present seats..... I endeavored during my stay in Merv to collect all the information I could on the history of these nomads, which is naturally very obscure, owing to the unsettled nature of their lives. One tribe succeeds another easily among the nomads, and the population of a district is often completely changed in the course of a few years ; and as there is no written history of these movements, it is only by the utmost diligence in cross-examining the most intelligent natives, and then comparing their statements carefully, that anything like an accurate notion of them can be formed....»

« ....The name «Turkoman» is confined to the nomads, as distinct from the settled branches of the same race, who are styled Turks distinctively, in Central Asia. When used here the latter name is not to be confounded with the Osmanli Turks of Stamboul, who parted from the parent stock several hundred years ago, and have been since separated from their kinsmen in Central Asia by the interposition of Persia. During the reign of Nadir Shah, who was himself of pure Turkoman blood, the whole of Turkestan as far as Bokhara and Khiva acknowledged his sovereignty. The then Turkish population of Merv merely acknowledged his suzerainty by a tribute analogous to some of the old feudal tenures in Europe, I believe by the present of a nut or some fruit on stated occasions. On the death of Nadir, the Persian monarchy rapidly decayed. Afghanistan fell away, and the nomad Turkomans of Khiva poured into Persian Turkestan on the north-east, while Bokhara attacked it from another quarter. About a hundred and thirty years ago the Teke-, the Saryk- and the Salor Turkomans, commenced their invasion... »

(Note: around 1750)

« ... The Akhal Tekes then got possession of the territory which they still occupy... »

(Note: The many micro oases along the northern side of the Kopet Dag and its valleys)

« ..., though initially not with its exact present boundaries. In fact their war with Persia has been practically continuous since,....., and it is only about 70 years ago that Ashkabad was taken (and destroyed) by the Akhal Tekes... »

(Note: about 1810)

« ...Still, whatever variations the Persian boundaries may have undergone, the Akhal Tekes have remained pretty steadily in the territory they seized-on after Nadir Shah's death, and which has now passed under Russian sway with its inhabitants...»

«...Their brethren, the present (Teke) inhabitants of Merv, had a more checkered history. While the Akhal Tekes were establishing themselves along the northeastern slopes of the Kopet Dag mountains, the former settled around the great swamps in which the Tejen is lost. The abundance of water no doubt made this appear at first a most desirable territory, but the unhealthy nature of the soil proved a serious drawback... »

« ...Then there were severe droughts. The Tekes consequently determined to abandon their abodes by the Tejen swamps and **about the year 1833-1834** they moved (upriver) into the Persian territory at Sarakhs ... »

(Note: where they took the place of the Sarakh Salors, which had got bashed and temporarily dispersed in 1832 by a Persian army led by the crown prince )

« ... and the adjoining territory, nearly as far south as Sistan, for about twenty-one years, or until shortly after the accession of the present Shah of Persia...»

(Note: until about 1855)

«... While the Tekes were occupying the western part of Turkestan... »

(Note: actually the south-central part, the south-western part, the Caspian shore, being occupied by Yomud and Göklan Turkmen)

« ... other nomad tribes were pouring into the East of their settlements. These were the Ersaris, who settled and remained along the banks of the Oxus at and about Charjew,.. »

(Note: as well as up-river till about Kerki)

« ... and the Salors and Saryks, who pushed onto the Murgab.

« ... After their arrival there, thus at a time where the (future Merv-) Teke still occupied the Tejen delta), Merv itself was destroyed, and its Turkish inhabitants almost exterminated by the power of Bokhara. The Bokharan

conqueror, Shah Murad (*alias Begge Jan, alias Amir Masum*), captured the city of Merv, being the third historic city that had existed under the name, after a prolonged resistance, and utterly destroyed it. Seven hundred thousand persons are said to have perished during the siege and subsequent slaughter, and though the numbers are doubtless exaggerated somewhat, it is evident from the ruins that remain that a dense population must then have occupied the oasis, and have been utterly swept away.... »

« ...The Bokharans did not occupy the conquered country, and the Salor and Saryk Turkomans found no resistance there when they moved their aladjaks close to the ruins of Merv... »

« ...The fall of Merv took place nearly a century ago (Note: **1788**), and from that time until the advent of the present Shah to the throne of Persia, the Salors and Saryks remained in undisturbed possession of its territory. »

« ...About twenty-six years ago (Note: **1855**), however, a general movement took place among the Turkoman tribes. The Persians attacked the Turkoman (*Tekes*) possessors of Sarakhs, and after a vigorous campaign, compelled them to abandon their settlements.....»

« ...Seventy thousand houses are said to have been destroyed in this campaign....»

(Note: One has to assume that O'Donovan meant «yurts or evs» since he states repeatedly that the Merv Tekes never lived in houses, even when, as in the case of one of their Khans, they owned an orchard with a little tower in it, which platform was used as a stately picnic area for guests that the Khan wanted to impress. O'Donovan states that houses were much less comfortable than yurts).

«... The dispossessed (Teke) tribe in turn attacked their kindred tribe, the Saryks (Note: *and the Merv Salors*), and after several combats drove them out of Merv to positions further south on the Murgab, which they still occupy, at Yolatan and Pendj-Deh, higher up the river...»

« ...The Tekes were not left long in undisputed possession of the Merv oasis. The Persians, flushed with the success of their campaign against the Turkomans of Sarakhs, believed that they could easily follow them to their new abodes, and bring Merv itself again under their sway. The Saryks, who had been expelled from their settlements by the Tekes, made common cause with the Persians and three years after the Teke occupation of Merv, the present Shah attempted the conquest of the oasis. But the fortune of war had changed. The Tekes defended their new settlement with a vigor which appalled the Persians,.... after three months harassing warfare.... the allied armies advanced close to Merv, but only to be totally routed in a pitched battle...».

(Note: The Merv Teke brilliantly used the oasis canals to disperse the Shah's army and to destroy it, unit-by-unit. The Persians tried to seek refuge in the former Saryk fortress, Porsa kala, but ended up either killed or enslaved. De Blocqueville, a French officer enlisted in the Persian army, was made prisoner and wrote an interesting book about his captivity in Merv. He dates the battle to **1860**.)

«...The **Salors**, whose settlements lie between the Saryks (Note: of Yolatan) and Merv, have submitted absolutely to the latter, and are treated by the Khans as subjects

(Note: *These Salors live in the Otamish part of the oasis*).

« ... During my stay, a Persian envoy endeavored to persuade them, by promises of pay and protection, to migrate to Sarakhs in a body, but this attempted movement was summarily put a stop to, by the orders of the Merv Khans.... »

« ...These Salors, however, are but a small part of the Salor tribe, which is scattered all over Turkestan. Some of them are found among the Saryks close to Herat ... »

(Note: *Between Yolatan and Pendj-deh or further up the Murgab river*),

« ... and a still larger number among the Ersari ... »

(Note: *On the banks of the Amu darya*)

(Note: O'Donovan forgets to mention here the rather large settlement at Sarakhs having accepted the Shah's alliance. See the attempt by the Persian envoy mentioned a few pages earlier).

«...The Salors in Merv only number seven hundred families, and are associated with the Otamish tribe of Tekes....»

(Note: O'Donovan's own estimates of Merv Salors fluctuate between 700 and 170 families. The lowest figure, used several times in the book is perhaps the right one, the only higher figure perhaps a slip of the pen.)

«...The **Saryks** of Pendj-deh still continue inveterate in their hostility to the present inhabitants of Merv, but they are unable to gratify their feelings in any more effectual way than by plundering raids, which the Merv Tekes are not slow in reciprocating. Those of the Saryks who inhabit the districts nearest to Merv, which are irrigated by the canals from the Bent-i-Yolatun (the Yolatan dam) have partially given up their enmity towards their neighbors...»

«... During the latter portion of my stay at Merv an attempt was made by the Saryks (from Pendj-deh) to enter into some kind of union with the Tekes for the purpose of better resisting the Russian advance, but I am unaware whether any practical result followed....»

«...(The **Ersari**) depend rather on Bokhara, and frequently cross the desert to raid on the Merv Tekes. In numbers they are by no means equal to the latter. A well-informed Turkoman, who had been much among them, estimated their numbers at seventy thousand...».

Page 167: «...In justice to the people of Merv it must not be forgotten that raids, even among members of the same tribe, are not, or were not until lately, looked upon in the light of robbery. It is not supposed they are altogether legitimate, but still, if they are executed with ability, admiration for the smartness' displayed quite

overpowers any moral reprobation that may be felt for the act. In other matters the Tekes are not altogether devoid of notions of honesty. Petty stealing is very rare among the grown men, and even wild marauders will readily bow to the decision of a Cadi on a legal question of their rights. The instinctive feeling of the necessity of some sort of law is very marked among these nomads, though in certain points of conduct they do not see the need of its application, as in this matter of raiding on their neighbors' flocks....»

Page 177: Visit to Porsa kala (**kala means fortress**) which was the old Saryk stronghold, prior to the coming of the Tekes.

Page 178: «...special carpets of small sizes were immediately laid for Baba Khan (**Khan of the Tokhtamish Tekes of Merv**) and myself close to the lattice....», «...the carpets were laid as remote from door as possible, that being the position of honor in an Eastern dwelling...» The ev was comfortably carpeted, and the walls were hung round with embroidered camel bags....»

Page 184-193. Dam («Bent») and Merv irrigation system described in many details. The irrigation covers about 50X10 miles.

Page 192: Kizil Qum (red desert) where the Murgab finally disappears. Iron-containing clay.

Page 194: «....The western canal, the Alasha, divides into two at a distance of three or four miles from its origin, one branch going in a north-westerly, the other in a south-westerly direction. The latter is known as the Sukdi Yap, and along its banks dwell about a hundred and fifty **Salor** families, remnants of those Turcomans who, together with the Saruks, occupied the oasis before the coming of the Tekes.....»

Page 195: Porsa kala, the former Saryk stronghold: **Saryks** were more gregarious and did not have the fear or hate for enclosed places of the Tekes. Perhaps due to a close contact with Bokhara from whose immediate neighborhood they came, which may have influenced the Saryks.

Page 196: «....While dwelling among the latter (the Tekes), I saw no approach to anything like a permanent place of residence. Their houses are aladjaks, which can be shifted at half an hour's notice. The idea of a definite centre seems foreign to a Teke mind....».

Page 196: «...I was talking one day to an old chief, a kethkoda, by name Dowlet Nazar Beg. His age could not be far from seventy. He had seen the Teke nation shift from the Tejen to Sarakhs, from Sarakhs to Merv....»

Page 197-198: The most northerly Saryks were based in 1880 two or three days up the river Murgab.

(Note: Thus around Yolatan which is said by Steward to be at two large days of Merv). These were on speaking terms with the Teke.)

The larger Saryk group resided at Pendj-deh, up-river, near the confluence of the Murgab and the Khusk river. (Note: At that time Afghanistan territory. The Russians conquered Pendj-Deh in 1885, one year after Merv). This Saryk tribe is still (27 years after having been driven out of Merv) rather hostile to the Tekes.)

Porsa kala was strategically better positioned than the current Teke stronghold, since it defended well the main dam of the Merv oasis, while the new fortress of the Teke is built 20 miles down river.

Page 200-202: There are several minority Turkmen groups, in Merv oasis itself : the Agur Bashe («The Sore Heads»), the Salors and the Mjaours (a sub-tribe of the Ersari). They are the remnants of the first Turkmen tribes which occupied the oasis after the death of Nadir Shah, they are treated as «mihmans» (guests) and «doghans» (friends) of the Teke and living the same pastoral life.

(Note: Contrary to romantic err... «interpretations» of O'Donovan's text by some rug experts, there is now here any mention of Salors or any other Turkmen being enslaved by the Tekes. In fact he clearly states that while the Salors can't leave the oasis without consent of the Khans, they are otherwise as free, tax-free and armed as the Tekes themselves. His map shows that the Merv Salors had the use of a well irrigated- and fertile part of the Otamish territory and had therefore no reason to be any poorer than the Tekes. Most Salors families chose not to follow the advice of a Persian envoy and refused to leave Merv and join the Salors of Sarakhs. They also fought the Persians alongside with the Tekes in 1860).

Page 206: The former leader of the Akhal Teke pays a visit to O'Donovan: Makdum Kuli Khan, is now living in Merv, with his remaining followers, on the territory of his half brother, a Merv Teke kethkoda. He has already been deserted by most of his men, who have accepted the Russian conditions and went back to their Kopet dagh settlements (and to their wives which they had precipitously left behind in their flight from the battleground). Makdum Kuli Khan is trying to keep a following of 3000 people.

(Note: Marvin states that he did accept the Russian offer two years later and Lessar writes that part of his people, extremely destitute «one camel was enough to carry all their possession», flew back to Akhal only months after the storming of Geok tepe).

Page 219: Change of leadership at Merv: The leaders of the two main clans taking back the power from their puppet Khan. Merv is hesitating about the future policy. Despite O'Donovan's denials the Khans & the Merv

people assumed, or wanted to believe, that he was a British agent and that he had the power of offering them British protection.

( *Note: I suspect that they were quite right: Too many small indices seem to indicate it:*

- *he had too much money at his disposal, (liberally distributing golden watches),*
- *the Russian military was hostile and adamantly refused to let him join the army as war correspondent ,*
- *the Persian authorities tried to stop him from moving to Merv,*
- *he knew the mission of at least one British spy,*
- *his strong interest for- and high competence in military, strategic and economical issues was surely unusual for a mere newspaper envoy,*
- *his lines of communications were perfectly organized, allowing him even to get newspapers and fresh news in Merv during his whole stay,*
- *he spoke local idioms like djagatai, some Persian and Turkish (as well as French),*
- *his daredevil willingness to put his life at risk was way out of proportion with the task of informing the readers of his newspaper.)*

Page 233-235: Useful wild plants of the Merv oasis: wild sweet carrots, bulbs of «lala gul» (a large wild turnips), vegetables, such as carrots, turnips, are never cultivated among the Turkmen.

Gardening is frequent: melon and water melon (and their dried seeds), grapes are popular. Clearly, gul means flower: Other example page 261 «gul djemal», the beautiful flower.

Page 241: The Hoopoo, a bird held in great esteem by the Turkmen as being the principal servant («nauker») of King Solomon «Suleiman ibn Daoud» and a very good counsellor.

*(Note: Local hoopoes are crested birds. Wing and tail are banded, black and white. Could it be the «kush» bird woven on ensis?).*

Page 233- 254: On the way to the ruins of three successive antique Merv cities (the last one destroyed by the Emir of Bokhara in **1788**, the first one by the Arabs in the **7th century AC**), all situated East of the Teke settlement, on the territory of the Vekil sub-tribe.

The usual loamy desert extends North and East of the ruins of the three antique Merv cities.

Ersari clans were living within raiding distance from the East of the Merv oasis. These Ersari were obviously coming from the banks of the Amu darya. Which shows that many Ersari were still typical Turkmen nomads, certainly not only settled farmers.

*«...While we were endeavoring to rest, one of our companions took his station as sentinel upon the tomb of the (ruined) little mosque, and kept a sharp look-out for the possible approach of Ersari robbers, who make the ruins of Merv a trysting-place when they organize an alaman, or raid, upon any of the Vekil villages....»*

Page 255-257: Example of questionable amusement of Turkmen elite, who enjoy frightening their own village people by letting them believe that they are an Ersari raiding party, causing general panic and also taking the risk of being shot at. Surprisingly no harm was done except scarring the villagers.

See as well page 307: *«...In this country, when setting out on a pleasure trip of twenty miles or so, the traveler arms himself like a freebooter on desperate enterprise intent, for when one moves about in the Merv oasis, he never knows what adventure may befall him before the end of the day. As our troop of a dozen cavaliers rode out over the rickety bridge spanning the Murgab, we might be taken for a party of Kalthaman (raiders) setting out upon some predatory expedition....»*

*(Note: O'Donovan often describes the places he visits while staying in Merv. He rarely mentions anything like a large farm with extensive fields. Apparently, each middle/upper-class Teke family takes care of an orchard (melon and water melons being the main plants cultivated), of a grove with fruit trees and wines, or a small but reasonably well tilled field. Nothing to compare, though, with the Khivans' paradisiac farms, owned by Uzbek gentlemen, but tilled by Persian slaves).*

Page 261-262: Description of unmarried girls' and matrons' head dresses of various Turkmen tribes.

*(Note: The ladies carried their whole jewel attire **all the time.**)*

Page 273-274: *«...a large felt carpet...», «...the large carpet of honor laid at one extremity of the great felt mats placed for the accommodation of the councillors....»*

Page 281-283: The author being considered England's envoy by the Teke (despite his denegations) is elected head of a triumvirate assisted by the hereditary Khans of the Tokhtamish & Otamish clans.(!!). Obviously as a ploy to deter a Russian attack and obtain British support.

Page 283: *«...and Aman Niaz presented me with a robe similar to the singular one which he himself usually wore, in which all the colors of the rainbow, and especially vermilion, yellow, and purple, were splashed in irregular dashes... »*

*(Note: the colors of the silken tunics and mantles conform with what is known about the dyes at their disposal. Ikat («irregular dashes of color») being much in use for garments.*

*Purple being very frequent and likely to be cochineal but unlikely to have been dyed in Merv (due to lack of soft-water), but rather in Bukhara, while vermilion was probably Rubbia or perhaps also Lac.)*

« ...With it was a «beurg», or skull-cap, such as the Tekes invariably wear under their great sheepskin shakos. It was of cloth, finely embroidered with silk, in yellow and pale purple, with a little admixture of green. Makdurn Kuli Khan had on a previous occasion given me another similar cap, and I was able to compare the different patterns of each, which, like the Scottish plaids, distinguish the Merv and Akhal Tekes from each other. The Merv skull-cap was covered with ornaments in the form of small Saint Andrew's crosses, grouped in rows, while that bearing the Akhal Teke pattern was decorated with rows of upright ordinary crosses. This is the only difference I have ever been able to distinguish in the colors or patterns of the dresses worn by the two nations...»

Page 300: «....Owez bey, a Kurd by birth, had been carried off by the Tekes during a raid in his infancy, and, subsequently marrying among them, had become naturalized. He appeared to be tolerably well-off for a Turkoman, and devoted himself almost entirely to agricultural and commercial pursuits...He said that some years previously, while engaged in a raid against the Kelat-i-Nadri territory, he had carried off a cavalry officer of some note....»

(Note: Thus, while he devoted himself to agriculture, he was still behaving as a nomad.)

(Note: Several cases are mentioned of former slaves captured in raids who eventually obtained their naturalization as Merv « citizens ». Perhaps these lucky fellows were sunni (which, unless I err, were not supposed to be enslaved).

Page 302: Turkmen musical instruments: «dilli tweeduk» a treble clarinet, «karga tweeduk» a bass clarinet, both having one large and six smaller holes for the fingers, and «dutar» a lute with hemispherical body and two silk strings.

page 305: Triumvir O'Donovan's yurt, is now planted at the «10 Downing Street» of Merv :

«...Around were the recumbent camels, which had not yet commenced their daily groaning chorus.

The women, early risers at Merv, were dusting the carpets. A flock of sheep was bleating on its way to pasture....»

Page 304-310: Visiting the personal estate of Aman Diaz Khan, head of the Otamish Tekes:

« ...The oasis is perhaps richest at the south-east. We passed through a succession of well cultivated fields, in which the castor-oil plant alternated with expanses of vineyard, and groves of apricots and peaches formed an almost unbroken line along our route... ».

(Note: castor oil is extracted from *Ricinus communis*. What on earth were the Turkmen making with that?)

« ...There were large fields, too, where a plant from which the «kundji yagh», the oil used alike for cooking and illuminating purposes, is produced. It grows to a height of four or five feet ; its square stems, opposite leaves, and lipped corolla indicate it to be of the labiate family....»

«....It was near mid-day when we drew near Aman Niaz Khan's country residence, as I suppose I must call it, in contradistinction to his home (yurt) at Kouchid Khan Kala. Some twenty acres of ground, copiously watered by branches of the Alasha canal, were enclosed by a tall mud wall. One-half of this was under clover, which here grows to a very great height ; the remainder was devoted to «arpa» (barley) and melon; while around the house, and enclosing the vineyards, were pretty extensive groves of apricot and peach. The Khan's house, situated in the centre of a small grove, was an oblong structure of unbaked brick, plastered over with fine yellow loam, and still exhibiting some attempts at decoration about the entry and windows. It was two stories in height, flat roofed, and about fifty feet by twenty long and wide, and fifteen in height. The Khan told me that he seldom inhabited this, as he preferred living in an ev ; moreover, he used it as a storehouse for corn and fruit ....»

«...Though it was early in June, the grapes were rapidly approaching maturity. They were of a dark red variety, and very small, a fact probably attributable to the density with which they were allowed to grow, for in most instances the clusters were so compact that the grapes were forced at their sides into a hexagonal form by mutual pressure. I pointed this out to the Khan, and he said it was true enough, but that nobody could take the trouble to arrange them in any other way....»

(Note: « So Turkmen are settled farmers» uuh?)

Page 306: Turkmen love and tenderness for all kind of animals. Contrasting with their occasional ferocity towards human beings.

Page 311: Leather case for the china tea-bowl which every Turkmen carries even when riding.

Page 321-332: The Merv bazaar: Not a closed, vaulted one like in Persia or Bokhara, but in open air, with only small mud walls delimiting booths, shaded with reed- or felt mats or square cotton umbrellas.

Most merchants are Merv Tekes, with the occasional Bokharan or Khivan. Persians merchants are even more seldom, for fear of the Turkmen raiders. 6000-8000 people visit the market, which is held twice a week

(Note:Strictly male only).

Another market is held twice a week in the Northeast of the oasis. Products found on the market:

Kaourga (bearded wheat for the best bread), arpa (barley), jowâne (sort of millet or white maize used to feed horses and poorest people), shali (a kind of oats) and rice which is expensive and less important (imported from Bokhara or Meshed), and two kind of oils: Zeitun yagh (olive oil) imported from Bokhara & Khiva, and kundji, used for food and lighting.

Oil from Zigur, adjî (plants unknown to the author) & indow (sort of colza) are used only for lighting.

Fruits: Outstanding melons (kaoun, eaten fresh or dried) and water melons (kaliouns), kedou (large- and small bottle gourd).

Small purple- and large yellow muscated grapes (uzum). Eaten fresh or used to make bad wine and worse arrack (distilled by local Jews). « ... *Turkomans make a large consumption of both, notwithstanding Moslem rules... ».*

Peach ( large sheptali and small delicious shanik). Apricot (errik). Jujube (igde). Walnuts (khoz, imported from Persia). Poor and woody apples («. *the climate is too hot.. »).*

White & salted cheese (penir) or dried cheese (sismah). Yaghourt or gattuk. Bread.

Flesh is mainly goat (getchi) and mutton (kouyun). Meat of beef, camel, wild ass (colon), antelope (geran), fowls, pheasants (karagul) are more seldom. The merchants keep living goats or sheep in their booth, killing them according to demand.

Fish is rare and always imported dried. No fish of the Murgab is ever eaten being deemed unsafe.

Bokharan merchants sell cloth: coarse silk, cotton, woven camel hair. They also sell tobacco, green tea and Russian sugar, highly appreciated by the few Turkmen who can afford it.

Meshed traders deal in finer textiles, like Russian printed calico and in Chinese tea bowls (much in favor with Turkmen), tea pots, water pipes (ubiquitous, though very basic).

Merv merchants, apart from food, sell wooden spoons and dishes, clothes, sheepskin hats and overcoats, knives and arms, a perfumed and red-colored Russian leather is also a frequent item. Tamarisk (odjar) for fire wood and charcoal.

*(Note: the macho Turkmen wore their boots of Russian leather with the red color inside. To do it otherwise would have been effeminate)*

The few Jews left in the city sell nearly everything, especially medicine & arak.

Page 332: Horses on sale in the bazaar, but only of medium-low quality, «*..the really excellent animals are kept for their owners' own use, or else purchased by someone who has had an opportunity of testing or witnessing their prowess....».*

Asses & camels are sold at the periphery of the bazaar.

Page 333: «*... There are not, generally, more than half a dozen horses exposed for sale on any given day; but the numerous frequenters of the bazaar, almost all of whom are mounted, are ready to part with their horses should an adequate price be offered...»*

*(Note: It is interesting to note that, (as in Teheran, Meshed and Asterabad before), the author does not mention any rug- or felt merchant in the bazaar. Nor does he mention any merchant of dyes, of indigo-dyed wool, of alum or alkaline ashes. This hardly can be an oversight, as his highly detailed description of the bazaar could prove.*

*It rather means that carpets were indeed mainly home-made, in reasonably wealthy families able to afford the dyes and the indigo- or cochineal-dyed silk or wool, and mainly kept in the family, as dowry, used as very valuable exceptional gifts or sold to other well-to-do Turkmen, outside the local commercial channel.*

*It is mentioned (page 352) that some Teke rugs find their way to Meshed and Bokhara, were they fetch much higher prices than Persian- and Amu darya-made ones.)*

*Carpets, like horses, were still very expensive items and sales were probably rather occasional.*

*They were not yet a bazaar item.*

*One can reasonably suppose that the huge Russian booty of rugs following the conquests of Khiva (especially after the brutal raid on Yomud tribes), of Geok tepe (which was followed by thorough pillage), and perhaps the earlier conquest of Bokhara (where some pillage took place too) were initially the main providers of Turkmen rugs to the Russian- (and therefore to the European-) markets.*

*The surrender of Merv (without significant fighting) as well as the control of Yolatan, Pendj-deh, the right bank of Tejen River and Sarakhs, probably contributed much less rugs.*

*It is possible that truly commercial carpet production and marketing only started after the conquest, say after 1885 in Transcaspia. Except near Bokhara and Tashkent, where a large, settled, ethnically mixed and comparatively wealthy population including already a large Russian colony, offered a permanent market for such luxury goods.*

*Bdw, in none of the visitor's reports preceding the Russian conquest was there (to my knowledge), any proof of the frequent claim that the Turkmen (Ersari or others) were the main producers of these commercial «Bokhara»- or «Beshir»-rugs. Tzareva, who does not mention her sources, stated that several non-Turkmen populations of the Bokhara kingdom, including people who lived in the area long before the arrival of the Ersari, Saryk and Salor Turkmen, shared common economical and political interest. She thinks it possible that the making of carpets also went along these common lines . Moshkova mentions a list of rug-weaving ethnic groups, which presence in the middle Amu darya area predates the arrival of the Ersari by many centuries , including the Olam which Moskova, pages 269-270, identifies with the Alains (a risky thousand year jump imho), also mentioned as a sub-tribe of the Ersari (?) by Azadi ).*

*(Note: The evident lack of technical sophistication of the Turkmen, (except for digging wells, building dams, spinning & weaving, making gun powder and forging Persian coins) makes it quite likely that they were not too choosy about the quality of alum or water they used for dyeing. The red clayish soil and the very muddy rivers of their domain make it probable that iron contamination of water, leading to dullish shades with many natural dyes, was quite frequent. O'Donovan also signals that Russian cast-iron vessels were frequently used by Turkmen., especially Yomuds'. These pots were obviously much cheaper than the tinned copper pots still manufactured in Persia. Rusty dyeing pots were therefore also a probable occurrence. Again contributing to dullish madder reds.)*

Page 338-343: Description of typical Turkmen haute cuisine:

«...With the exception of some of the well-to-do classes, the Turkomans live but poorly. Their diet is ordinarily of the most frugal kind...»

« ...The morning meal generally consists of fresh-baked griddled bread, hot from the oven, and weak green tea. At midday there is another meal, usually of bread and gattuk, supplemented, perhaps, with fresh or indurated salty cheese... »

*(Note: gattuk is the Teke name of the thick coagulated sour sheep milk called Yaghourt by the western Yomud Turkmen).*

« ...During the great heats many dine on bread, with melons, grapes, or other fruits. The principal meal of the day occurs after sundown...»

«...In a Khan's ev, during at least four days in the week, the piece de resistance consists of mutton broth and bread. The bread and broth dish is termed tchorba, and the melted sheep tail kouyun. These two dishes constitute the «bel ideal» of the diet of the Turkoman, if I except the rice- or corn pilaf, with which meat and dried prunes are boiled...»

*(Note: rice was too expensive for most people in Merv) .*

«...The whey of camel's milk fermented, which is called dewé, a kind of koumiss, is very refreshing in hot weather. When fresh, it is slightly effervescent, and is drunk in enormous quantities...»

*(Note: «Koumiss», is made with mare's milk and is not typical of a Turkmen's diet. It is rather a specialty of Mongol, Khazak or Kirgiz tribes).*

«...The poorer classes seldom or never indulge in pilaf or sheep's-tail fat. Instead, they make large use of an article called chapati. In the preparation of this, some edible oil is placed in an iron pot, and heated to a high temperature. Sheets of dough, a foot or eighteen inches in diameter, and rolled to the thinness of paper, are, one by one, placed in the oil for two or three minutes...»

«...There is one preparation of meat which the Turkomans carry with them when they go far afield for any purpose. It is called sumsa. A thin, circular cake of dough, a foot in diameter, is covered with meat finely minced, and highly flavored with spices and garlic, a little sugar occasionally is added. The cake of dough is then doubled over, and the edges are united. The whole is placed in an oven and baked for half an hour. This kind of mince pie is one of the most palatable dishes to be found among the Turkomans...»

«...Strange to say, though game abounds, very few indeed ever go in search of it, the Turkomans preferring to sit at home and munch their dry bread, to taking the trouble and making the exertion necessary to procure it. Neither do they much care for it...»

«...Even among the more opulent there are few luxuries indeed: Opium, tobacco, tea, and arrack, with occasionally a little hashish (Cannabis Indica), snuff, and gougenasse (Note: a natural gum preparation), are the only extra indulgences of the Turkomans. With the exception of water-pipe smoking and gougenasse chewing, in the great majority of instances these are not habitual...»

*(Note: Contrary to a highly creative blogger's claim, O'Donovan never hints at Teke ladies, all clad in yellow kaftans, smoking marijuana in little tents. Too bad really, since it destroys the funny image we all had conjured up.)*

Page 347: «...Then the carpet which hung curtain-wise before it was trust aside...» (Second mention of an ensue after tome 1 page 225).

Page 348-350: «...Eating seems to be the main object of a Turkoman's life, and, provided he has an adequate supply of the better class of nutriment, such as I have described, he will remain inactive and indolent. He will not even go upon a chappow or alaman, those species of raids which for the younger members of the community have the double advantage of mingling pleasure and profit. At the bottom the Turkoman is not fond of fighting; he would much rather supply his wants by some other means, though he decidedly prefers raiding, with all its concomitant risks, to anything like steady labour in the fields or other industrial pursuit...»

«...The everyday life of a wealthy Turkoman is a very indolent one. He rises a little before dawn, which he can well afford to do, inasmuch as he spends the best part of the middle of the day in siesta, and retires to bed at an early hour in the evening. Having washed, and lighted his water-pipe, he sits smoking, awaiting the production of the hot fresh bread which the female members of the household are preparing, and then, having made his breakfast, and smoked again for half-an-hour, he talks with the people who drop in to arrange his ordinary matters of business, whether in connection with his flocks and herds, or his traffic with Meshed. The rest of the day is spent in the idlest possible fashion...»

Page 351: « ... It often happens that a Turkoman's sons are so numerous that he cannot find occupation for them all upon the grounds which he cultivates, or in looking after his cattle while grazing. In cases like this, some of them either hire themselves as camel drivers to and from Bokhara and Meshed, or else work at wages of two krans a day on the farms of some of the richer Turkomans, particularly at harvest and irrigation times. Should anyone feel so disposed, he has always plenty of unoccupied ground from which to choose a site for the planting of crops on his own account. But as a younger son of this description can rarely raise the necessary funds for the seed, and at the same time support himself while engaged in the preliminary labors of cultivation and until his crops have ripened, such as these are few indeed. It is only when a Turkoman marries, which he seldom does until he has accumulated or received from his parents some small capital, that he ever sets up as an agriculturist on his own account. He then purchases a house, a second-hand one, costing from seventy- five to a hundred krans, and settles somewhere in the neighborhood of one of the secondary irrigation streams branching from the Novur- or Alasha canal, accordingly as he belongs to the Toktamish or Otamish, and proceeds to dig a minor watercourse for the irrigation of the land the cultivation of which he undertakes, which must be within the particular district inhabited by the clan or subdivision of which he is a member. Some, especially those inhabiting the western border of the oasis, the Sitchmaz, for instance, occupy themselves in collecting the tamarisk trunks which are to be procured in abundance in the neighborhood of Dash Robot. These are sold, sometimes in their natural state, and sometimes burned into charcoal, both on account of the convenience of carrying it in this form, and of its inherent value....»

Page 352: «...The female members of the family are mainly occupied in household duties. They do all the cooking and fetching of water and the daughters for whom there is no other occupation occupy themselves in the manufacture of embroidered skull caps, carpets, shirts, saddle bags and socks of variegated tints for the better classes...».

« ...The women manufacture their own garment from outsourced cloth....»

«...when a Turkoman is blessed with a large number of daughters, he contrives to realize a considerable sum per annum by the felt and other carpets which they make. In this case an ev is set apart as a workshop and three or four girls are usually occupied upon each carpet, sometimes for a couple of months...»

( Note: If this information is accurate (3-4 weavers working on 1 carpet for 2 months), carpets of 6 m<sup>2</sup> or more could be produced in these family workshops).

«...Each girl generally manufactures two extra fine carpets to form part of her own dowry when she marries. when this has been done, she devotes herself to producing goods from the market at Meshed and Bokhara where the Turkoman carpets fetch much higher prices than those manufactured in Khorassan (Meshed) or beyond the Oxus (Amu Darya). Sometimes these carpets are made partly of silk, brought from Bokhara. «... They are generally twice the size of the ordinary ones (made from sheep wool, camel hair and some cotton) and are almost entirely of silk. They fetch enormous prices. I have known as much as 50£ given for one measuring eight feet square... »

(Note: The average cost of a spouse was around 40£ and about 20£ for a good horse).

(Note: So some Teke rugs were indeed made for sale after all. Their absence from the bazaar is perhaps due to « private sales » to wealthy Persian or Uzbek elite only. The high prices they fetch makes it anyway unlikely that ordinary people would buy them.)

(Note: the huge and extremely expensive Teke silk rugs mentioned here by O'Donovan are a puzzling information. I am not aware of any such extant piece. Is anybody? BdW O'Donovan is not the only occidental visitor claiming to have seen them.)

Page 361-363: The Salors of Merv, (about 170 families, enjoyed liberty within the oasis, but were kept in a state of subserviency by the Teke and were not allowed to move freely outside the oasis. They were the remnants of the old population, which together with the Saryks lived in the oasis before the advent (about 30 years before) of the Teke. Many fled up the Murgab river with the Saryks and settled on the Afghan border, but most settled at Sarakhs (Northeastern border of Persia) were they still remain..

(Note: Moshkova (page 179) claims, that the Sarakhs Salors kept weaving rugs, while the other Salor settlements on the Murgab and the Amu darya did not (She does not identify her sources).

«...He (the Persian envoy) counseled them (the Merv Salors) to retire to Sarakhs, where their companions were, assuring them of a hearty welcome and immunity against Russian aggression.....however, the great bulk showed no signs of going....». Those few who did try to move to Sarakhs were stopped by the 'yassaouls' (Merv police force) «...some small fines were inflicted, and there the affair ended...».

The mejili of the ruling tribe decided that there was no previous formal interdiction for their emigration and therefore no reason for any punishment.... »

Page 372-... Visit of the northern part of the oasis: Untanned raw hides are exported North to Russia, which in return send Russian tanned leather. Brownish natural color on one side, red on the other. Rather peculiar perfume. Tekes' boots show the natural color outside and the red one inside (It is too effeminate to wear it outside, according to Teke's machos).

«...Owez's brother, who superintended the cultivation of the ground at Har, was, for a Turkoman, very well to do from a worldly point of view. To his profession of agriculture he added the trade of a «sapook iista» (boot maker)....».

Page 373...: Saryk chiefs from up-river went visiting to discuss again union with Tekes and a possible alliance against the Afghan Ayub Khan

*(Note: Ayub Khan was one of the Afghan contenders to leadership and among the most hostile to England).*

Saryks have a much more civilized aspect than Tekes.

*(Note: A similar opinion was expressed (tome I) about the better organized Yomud, compared with the Akhal Tekes).*

The Akhal Tekes, closely followed in this distinction by the Merv Tekes, were apparently the brutes among the Turkmen.

Page 376: Other example of the Teke peculiar sense of humor:

*«... Aman Niaz (Khan of the Otamish Tekes) had sent to Meshed for a large consignment of tea and sugar, and for some rolls of cloth wherewith to have garments manufactured for his family. Some of the «ogri» (robbers) of Merv got news of the expedition, and, gathering together a considerable troop of the worst marauders of the place, waylaid the Khan's goods a little outside Sarakhs, scattering the little caravan to the winds, and carrying off the booty. The rage of Aman Niaz was ludicrous to witness. He would have considered it a capital joke if his own men had despoiled some other person's convoy, but was beside himself with wrath at the idea of the property of the Otamish Khan being seized by those of his own nation.*

*He waited until his yassaouls could saddle their horses, and then sallied forth to wreak vengeance on the evil-doers. He remained away two whole days, and in the end succeeded in recovering nearly all the stolen articles. He also brought in half- a-dozen prisoners, who, however, were let off without any punishment, as they pleaded that they were quite unaware that what they had seized belonged to so high and mighty an individual as the Khan.....»*

Page 379: Visiting a leading Jewish Merv trader. The author mentions the great variety of merchandise stored in his host's houses, but rugs (for sale) are (again) conspicuously missing.

Page 391: Sari-gul = dandelion *(Is there any similarity between the known sari gun motif and dandelion leaves?)*

Page 405: *«...he brought me a pair of hand-woven saddle bags of crimson and white carpet stuff (pile)...»*

page 412: *« White ev»*: A brand new yurt, not yet blackened inside by smoke, built for a wealthy newly-wedded pair. Ordinary just-married people rather buy second-hand yurts, thus «black evs».

Page 415: O'Donovan mentions the Turkmen's peculiar way of looking at and interpreting a textile- or rug motif *«...forgetting what I may call the positive design, the intervals between the objects delineated striking the eye more than the objects themselves...."»*

Page 418: *«...Historical migration of the Tekes from the Akhal Teke region to Tejen, then to Sarakhs and from Sarakhs to Merv...»* mentioned again.

Page 435: Presents to departing O'Donovan: he is given: *«... two genuine Turkoman carpets of the finest style of workmanship».*

*(Note: The author received a total of eight carpets, given by the two hereditary Khans of the Otamish and Tokhtamish and by some other Teke leaders. This highlights again the high importance and the high value of rugs for the Tekes, since it would have been a loss of face for the Khans not to offer presents of much higher value than the lavish ones given by the author. (Foreign Office money?)*