

himself. Then he oppresses his people with taxes, and spends the money on his own pleasures rather than in improving the country.

ASIATIC RUSSIA.

659. In addition to its vast territories in Europe, the Russian Empire comprises more than a third of Asia. The Asiatic possessions are *Siberia*, *Turkestan*, and *Trans-Caucasia*.

660. *Siberia* is situated on the north of the Altai Mountains, and extends entirely across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. It is a cold, cheerless country. The soil is cultivated a little in the south, yielding barley and vegetables. Large forests of spruce and fir abound in foxes, ermines, otters, and other animals which have valuable fur; the rivers are full of fish; and the mountains yield gold and precious stones.

661. The Czar of Russia uses *Siberia* as a place of exile for criminals and those whom he suspects of plotting against his government.

662. The reindeer is a very useful animal in this country. Some of the natives own large herds, and they subsist chiefly on the milk and flesh.

663. The principal towns are *Omsk*, *Tomsk*, *Tobolsk*, and *Irkutsk*.

Kiachta is noted as the place through which Russia carries on trade with China, exchanging fur, leather, and woollens, for tea, silk, and porcelain.

664. *Russian Turkestan* is a large country on the east of the Caspian Sea and extending southerly nearly to Afghanistan. Here are vast treeless plains called *steppes*, inhabited by wandering, half-civilized people, whose wealth consists in horses, camels, sheep, and goats. *Tashkend*, *Khiva*, and *Khokan* are the principal cities.

665. *Trans-Caucasia* is a small country on the south of the Caucasus Mountains. It produces grapes, peaches, and other fruits. The men are

noted for their fine form, the women for their beauty.

666. *Tiflis*, the capital, manufactures carpets, shawls, and silks.

ASIATIC TURKEY.

667. Asiatic Turkey forms a part of the Ottoman Empire, of which Constantinople in Europe is the capital. It extends from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and thence southerly, including the east coast of the Red Sea. Some of the more important portions of Asiatic Turkey are *Asia Minor*, *Armenia*, *Syria*, and *Palestine*. These countries have an interesting history, extending back to the earliest ages, and they contain the ruins of many ancient cities.

668. The climate is warm except on the mountains. In some parts of the country there are extensive sandy deserts, on which rain seldom falls.

669. The products are grain, cotton, tobacco, poppies, the olive, fig, and other fruits. Agriculture is carried on in a very rude way. The care of sheep and goats is a leading pursuit; and the shepherds wander over the country in search of pasture and plunder.

670. The majority of the inhabitants are Mohammedans. The men are clad in loose, flowing robes, and wear turbans on their heads. When the women appear on the street, they wear long, thick veils over the face.

671. *Asia Minor* is the large peninsula between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. It is a highland country with some beautiful valleys in the west. *Smyrna*, the largest city, exports dried fruit and opium. The site of the ancient city of Ephesus is near Smyrna.

672. *Armenia* is a mountainous country on the south-east of the Black Sea. One of the high peaks is called *Ararat*, and is supposed to be the mountain on which Noah's ark rested.