

of all kinds, and a countless variety of forest trees, are among the productions of these districts; which, with the exception of the Russian colony in the steppe of Astrakhan, are the only parts of the coast possessing a settled population; but such is the deadly nature of the climate, that all who are able leave the towns in the beginning of summer, and retire to the mountains, where the atmosphere is of course more salubrious. The deserts are occupied by the wandering Kalucks, Kirghis, and Turkomans, who preserve unaltered the roving and predatory habits of their earliest ancestors. (Pallas, i. 92, 115, &c.; Frazer's Trav. on the S. Bank of Casp., 11, 15, &c.; Conolly's Narrative, i. 35-49, 146, &c.; Burnes, ii. 100-127, &c.)

The waters of this sea are less salt than those of the ocean, and considerably less so near the mouths of rivers than at a distance from the shore. The waters of Lake Aral are even drinkable (Burnes, ii. 189); but all have a bitter taste, ascribed by some to the great quantities of naphtha with which the soil abounds, but by others to the presence of glauber salts, among the substances held in solution. The fish are principally salmon, sturgeons, and sterlets; a kind of herring is also found, and there are likewise porpoises and seals. It has been already said, that the same inhabitants are found in the waters of the Caspian, Aral, and Black Seas. The fisheries employ many vessels annually, and the shores abound in aquatic fowl, storks, herons, bitterns, spoonbills, red geese, red ducks, &c. (Gmelin, iii. 238-257; Pallas, i. pass.; Tooke, i. 238, &c.)

It is somewhat remarkable that, though situated on the confines of Europe, this sea should have remained nearly unknown, except by name, till the beginning of the last century. It is scarcely less remarkable that the oldest observer, Herodotus, described it truly as an ocean by itself, communicating with no other and of such size that a swift-oared boat would traverse its length in fifteen days, its greatest breadth in eight days. (Clio, 203.) These proportions are accurate according to the best modern observations, and at 50 m. per day for the swift boat's progress, would give the actual measurement. After this clear account, it is startling to find the Caspian transformed by Strabo into a gulf of the Northern Ocean, and otherwise distorted, according to a theory which must be regarded as purely fanciful. (Geog., xi. 507.) Ptolemy restored the Caspian to its lake-like form: he had some knowledge of the Wolga, which he calls Rha; but he gives the greatest length of the sea from E. to W., and makes it a vast deal too large. (v. 2, vi. 9, 13, &c.) It is to be remarked, that Herodotus does not state in what direction lay the greatest length; but it may be very readily deduced, from his descriptions of the surrounding countries, that he meant it to be understood as stretching N. and S. The authority of Ptolemy remained paramount and unquestioned for many centuries; and the first modern account of the Caspian, at all consistent with the truth, is due to Anthony Jenkinson, an Englishman, who, in 1558, traversed its waters, and gave an account of its dimensions and bearings, agreeing in all its main points with the more brief description of Herodotus. (Hakluyt's Voy., i. 326-329.) Jenkinson's voyage did not, however, gain much attention; and in 1719 a regular survey was commenced, by command of Peter the Great. Vanverden's map, the result of that survey, and which was partly constructed by the emperor himself, is still, and justly, held in high estimation. The voyages of Hanway had for their object the establishment of a trade (in English hands) be-

tween Russia and Persia. The failure of that object was owing to the ambition of a Mr. Elton, who, attaching himself to the Persian court, gave such offence to that of Russia, that the latter eventually prohibited the English commerce on the Caspian. (Hanway, ii. 279, *et pass.*) A mass of valuable information was, however, collected, during these transactions, by Hanway himself, Elton, Woodroffe, and others. The more modern travellers, Gmelin, Georgi, Pallas, Englehardt, Parrot, Forster, Frazer, Conolly, Burnes, Monteith, Fuss, Sabler, and Sawitch, have added immeasurably to that information; but much still remains to be done; and as the Russian government seems fully alive to the importance of accurate knowledge on geographical subjects, and as their power or influence is nearly established on all parts of this sea, it may be reasonably hoped that every year will make W. Europe better acquainted with this very remarkable region.

The largest class of vessels that navigate the Caspian, are called by the Russians *schuys*, and belong wholly to Astrakhan and Bakú; their burden varies from 90 to 100, and sometimes 150 tons. They are not built on any scientific principle, and are constructed of the worst materials—that is, of the timber of the barks that bring corn down the Wolga to Astrakhan. There are supposed to be in all about 100 sail of these vessels. A second class of vessels, called *razhivets*, employed on the Caspian, carry from 70 to 140 tons, and sail better than the *schuys*, and there are great numbers of small craft employed in the rivers, in the fisheries, and as lighters to the *schuys*. But steamboats will, no doubt, in the end supersede most of these vessels; they have already, indeed, been introduced, not only upon the rivers, but upon the Caspian itself. The trade of the sea is entirely in the hands of Russia; and, whatever objections may, on other grounds, be made to her conquests in this quarter, it is certain that, by introducing European arts and sciences, and comparative good order and security, into countries formerly immersed in barbarism, she has materially improved their condition, and accelerated their progress to a more advanced state.

The Caspian Sea, *Κασπία Θάλασσα* (Herod. Clio, 203), is the oldest name of this water. It was derived from the Caspi, a people who inhabited its banks; as the more modern term Hyrcanian Sea, *Θάλασσα Ὑρκανία* (Strabo, xi. 507), was similarly derived from the more important Hyrcanii, a principal branch of the great Persian family. In the present day it is called *Moré Gwulenskoï*, by the Russians; *Kulsum*, by the Persians; *Bahr Kurzum*, by the Arabs; *Kulzum Denghis*, by the Turks; and *Akdinghis*, by the Tartars. (Tooke, i. 232.)

CASSANO, a town of Southern Italy, prov. Cosenza, cap. cant., in the concave recess of a steep mountain, round an insulated rock, on which are the ruins of an ancient castle, 7 m. ESE. Castrovillari, and 10 m. from the Gulf of Tarantum. Pop. 8,125 in 1862. The town is well built; is the residence of a bishop; has a cathedral, four convents, a seminary, and a workshop. The inhabitants are industrious, and manufacture maceroni, stamped leathers, and table-linen. Cotton and silk are also grown, spun, and woven; and the environs are productive of excellent timber, fruits, and corn.

CASSAY, KATHEE', or MUNNEEPOOR, a country of India beyond the Ganges, between lat. 24° and 26° N., and long. 93° and 95° E.; having N. Assam and the Birman empire; S. a hill country, inhabited by independent Khyens (see BIRMAN), Kookies (see CACHAN), and W.