

V.

Of the Salt Lakes of Asia.

IN the country of the Usian Tartars, so called because they inhabit the banks of the river Us, there are, M. Pallas remarks, lakes, the waters of which were formerly fresh, and are now salt. He makes the same remark concerning a lake near Miacs.

One of the lakes most famous for the quantity of salt extracted from it, is that near the banks of the river Ise, called *Soratschya*. The salt of it, in general, is bitter, and employed by the physicians as a good purgative. Two ounces of this salt make a very strong dose. Near Kurteneisch, the shoals are covered with a bitter salt, which rises, like a field of snow, to the height of two inches. The lake Korjackof furnishes annually three hundred thousand cubic feet of salt*. Lake Jennu likewise furnishes a great quantity.

In the voyages performed under the auspices of the Academy of Petersburg, mention is made of the salt lake of Jamuscha in Siberia. This lake, which is nearly round, is only about nine leagues in circumference. Its margins are co-

* The cubic foot weighs thirty-five pounds each of sixteen ounces.

vered with salt, and the bottom is clothed with crystals of salt. The water is extremely salt; and, when the sun shines, it appears reddish like the sky in a fine morning. The salt is as white as snow, and forms itself into cubic crystals. The quantity of it is so immense, that a number of vessels may, in a short time, be loaded with it; and, after it has been removed, it is again replaced in five or six days. It is sufficient to remark, that it supplies the provinces of Tobolski and Jeniseik, and that this lake could supply fifty provinces of similar extent. The commerce of this, as well as of all other salt, is reserved in the hands of the crown. This salt is exceedingly good. It surpasses all others in whiteness, and none is more proper for curing meat. In the south of Asia, there are likewise salt lakes, one near the Euphrates, and another in the neighbourhood of Barra. There are others, it is said, near Haleh, and at Larneca in the Island of Cyprus. This last borders upon the sea. The salt valley of Barra, being at no great distance from the Euphrates, might be worked, if its waters were made to run into this river, and if the earth was good: But at present this earth yields a good salt for the kitchen, and even in such quantity that the Bengal vessels, when returning in ballast, take in loadings of this salt*.

* Descript. de l'Arabie, par M. Niebuhr, p. 2.