

IN THE HEART OF ASIA

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BY

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(INDIAN ARMY)

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER

PREFACE

THIS book is intended to form the record of several years spent in Central Asia, where, in my capacity as His Majesty's Consul-General and Political Resident in Chinese Turkistan, I had opportunities of studying various questions of political, economic, and commercial importance.

Central Asia is extending its horizon, and it may in the near future attain a prominence in the economic world to which its potentialities and great mineral resources so rightly entitle it. A wide field for ethnographical research is also opened up, for from it came the hordes that brought about the fall of Graeco-Persian civilisation, from the Mongolian steppes issued devastating hosts, whilst Central Asia was the base from which operated warring tribes and races that spread from the highlands of Asia to the rich and distant lands of Western Europe. Asiatic influence is still apparent in Europe; the greater part of Spain was formerly subject to Asiatic dominion, and it is established in Northern Africa amongst the Moors both by religion and civilisation.

Central Asia can be regarded as a cradle of the human race, although there is now only a slight evidence of the glory that followed in the wake of successive conquerors. Of progress, both material

and moral, there has been little, and it is only in the Far East that an advance towards the democratic ideals of the West has been made.

In so far as economic development is concerned, Central Asia and China will be a centre, and one that offers great scope. Vast areas await development; the Gobi Desert is a plateau capable of unlimited cultivation, and both here and elsewhere within the area in question communications will open up areas for development out of all proportion to their present status. With regard to China, she has been hampered by internal difficulties, and in a country that is mainly agricultural we have the essentials requisite to economic and agricultural prosperity.

In brief, therefore, Central Asia affords much material, from whatever aspect it is regarded, and presents problems of far-reaching interest and import.

In the preparation of this book I desire to record my sense of gratitude to Miss Ella Hepworth Dixon, the distinguished writer and critic, for much valuable help; and to Miss Estelle Watson for the skilled assistance she afforded me in the preparation of the map. I am also grateful to Dr. Eric Chipp for his untiring zeal and energy in reading through the proofs with me, and for much useful criticism and advice so readily accorded.

P. T. ETHERTON.

LONDON, *September 1, 1925.*

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THE opening of 1918 was significant for the developments inimical to Allied interests, not only in Europe but in Asia, where the safety of our empire in the East was threatened. From a military standpoint the definite secession of Russia had added to the fighting strength of the Central Powers by more than a million and a half, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was on the eve of completion, and the Bolshevik revolution had created a new set of ideas. These fanatics relied not upon the only feasible machinery for readjustment of international disputes, but upon a world-wide reconstruction which should emancipate every race and tribe and effect a total transformation of human nature. Self-determination was the watchword, a doctrine which if carried to its logical conclusion must result in anarchy and widespread enmity, jealousy, and chaos. The prospect in Russia was, from an Allied point of view, a gloomy one, for there was no immediate hope of converting the old Muscovite empire into a united and democratic nation. The conclusion of the Brest-

Litovsk Treaty with the Bolsheviks, in March 1918, placed the Germans in a favourable position for activities in Asia, since the treaty struck at the Russian fabric as a whole, jeopardised the welfare of Russia in Asia, and threatened to extend the war to the heart of the Asiatic continent. To appreciate fully the significance of this, it must be understood that Central Asia formed an integral and inseparable part of the Russian empire, and that at this moment Russia was engaged in consolidating her command in that region, the revolution coming at a critical stage in developments there. The lands she had annexed and colonised were links in the chain that was being forged to encircle the vast steppe lands and hasten Russian hegemony in Asia.

The Bolshevik revolution had a centrifugal effect, and in Central Asia there was considerable resentment at the moulding process instituted by the Soviet for the emancipation of the East. From Russian Turkistan, the quasi-independent states of Bokhara and Khiva, the Kirghiz, and the Bashkir country of the steppes, there was a reaction to the latent antagonistic feeling that exists between East and West, although on the other hand they had suffered from the war and economic chaos no less than by the monopoly created in the thickly populated centres, where spoliation and oppression had not ceased with the fall of Czarism, as had been confidently predicted. In Georgia, Armenia, and the more advanced of the Caucasian states, there was a strong nationalist tendency, and every possibility that Germany would, by taking advantage of the antipathy between Georgia and Armenia, open the road through the Caucasus to Central Asia.

It was also considered not improbable that a Turko-German army might materialise for a campaign against India through Afghanistan, a fantastic scheme that would have presented insuperable difficulties in the matter of supply and transport, co-ordination of conflicting interests of European and Asiatic, and the inherent jealousy and suspicion that such a movement would have aroused. German and Turkish agents were busy throughout the country lying between the Black Sea and the Indian frontier of Afghanistan, but so long as the late Amir Habibullah remained on the Afghan throne their activities were curtailed. It was not only in this respect that the Germans were interested in Central Asia and the East. Their system of propaganda and scale of operations were characterised by forethought and detailed preparation, and in furtherance of their designs on India they received in Berlin in 1915 some well-known Indian revolutionaries who were, *inter alia*, engaged in the Bureau organised for propaganda amongst, and corruption of, Indian prisoners of war.

Copies of an autograph letter addressed by the Kaiser and his Chancellor to the ruling princes and chiefs of India came into our hands and showed not only the amazing optimism of the Germans when they embarked upon the war, but the steps they had taken to set up a German Government there which was to have been inaugurated, if not by the presence of the Kaiser himself, by that of the Crown Prince.

To these complications must be added the Pan-Islamic propaganda and a campaign with 'Asia for the Asiatics' as the slogan. The movement to weld together Mohammedans was no new idea, and perhaps

undue importance was attached to it. Pan-Islamism is as old as the faith itself, though definite shape was only imparted during the reign of the late Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey. Now Germany was taking it up as a means to destroy British power. Before the war it was realised that the widespread organisation which she had grafted on to the original Turkish move in Pan-Islamism must have been in existence for some time, and the Germans posed as the friends of Islam and declared themselves in sympathy with Mohammedan ideals. Doubtless, too, they realised, as Napoleon had done more than a century before, that the power allied to Islam could dispose of an irresistible force in Asia. To my mind the Pan-Islamic movement was not fraught with danger, and the possibility of its becoming a serious menace impressed me very little. Moreover, the idea had such slight inward force and vitality, and the various elements were so divided by national and religious jealousy and intrigue, that there seemed to me no chance of an organisation on such ambitious and far-reaching lines. At the same time, I do not ignore the dynamic force of a movement based on a faith that appears to be sure of itself, least of all the fact that an Islamic policy is the pivot on which German penetration of Central Asia must turn. In relation to this was an important side issue demanding attention—the *rapprochement* between Hindus and Mohammedans in India from which the Germans hoped to derive considerable advantage, apparently ignoring the fact that fostering the Pan-Islamic cry would in the end drive the Hindus into the arms of the British Empire again.

Such in brief were the dangers confronting us in

the Asiatic theatre, and it was therefore essential that we should gain and maintain touch with the situation between the Caspian Sea and Chinese Turkistan. We were aware of the close connection established between Russian Turkistan, the Caucasus, and the states there which had disclosed their ambition for autonomy. There was a complete absence of all regular government in Central Asia ; the chains of Czardom had been broken, but instead of the dawn of an era of peace and prosperity that had been prophesied, it was merely confusion worse confounded. It was known, too, that a movement was afoot for the creation of a Mohammedan state to include Russian Turkistan and the Caucasus, a scheme that had already formed the subject of overtures to Afghanistan.

Mohammedan propaganda was largely in favour of the Allies, the moment was opportune for the exploitation of pro-autonomous sentiments, and in Central Asia there was a considerable body of opinion well disposed towards the Allied cause. The problem of tackling the situation was a delicate one ; it was inadvisable to send a British mission to Russian Turkistan whilst the successes of the Maximalists continued, as conditions were then favourable to the latter. They had taken Kokand in Russian Turkistan, a seat of Mohammedan learning, and were establishing themselves everywhere. Although it was not contemplated to afford effective military support to pro-Allied elements, a small British military organisation was essential from which the antennae could radiate for the acquisition of information, and to exploit whatever appeared favourable.

His Majesty's Government therefore decided to

despatch a special mission to Russian Turkistan, the three officers selected to be men of initiative and enterprise, and well qualified to deal with the difficulties and dangers arising from the peculiar and onerous nature of the task entrusted to them.

The mission was in charge of Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Bailey, C.I.E., whose travels in Tibet and Western China, and receipt of awards for geographical and exploratory research, are well known. Major L. V. S. Blacker was a Central Asian traveller and came from the Corps of Guides, a regiment famous along the Indian frontiers. He was an officer of ability and resource and well fitted for such an undertaking.

As for myself, I had considerable experience of Asiatic travel, having crossed Asia from India to Russia and Germany in 1909-10 through Kashmir, Gilgit, Hunza, the Pamirs, Chinese Turkistan, Mongolia, Russian Central Asia, Siberia, and Russia proper to Germany, by a route never previously traversed. I had also made a close study of political, economic, and commercial questions affecting Central Asia, and the subject generally possessed a peculiar fascination for me.

Lack of information as to what was going on in Central Asia hampered us at the outset in considering ways and means for successfully carrying out our task. The situation was indeed an extraordinary one. The special mission was designed to place the Government in touch with the Soviet and to investigate amongst other matters the cotton question and to keep *au courant* of the situation as it then was.

We were to penetrate to Tashkent, the centre

of Soviet fanaticism, from which the plans were to operate to bring these schemes into life and being, where a propaganda school was to be formed for the training of agitators who would go forth to India, Afghanistan, Chinese Turkistan, and all the countries of the Middle and Far East, to preach the gospel of Bolshevism and prepare the way for universal class warfare. They were to devote particular attention to India, for the Bolsheviks declared that success or failure was entirely dependent upon results achieved in that country. We were to investigate the situation on the spot, and examine questions affecting the safety and welfare of the British Empire. Such was our task, a formidable one in view of the dangers confronting us from such ruthless fanatics as the Bolsheviks. One false step, and the lives of the mission would not have been worth a moment's purchase.

We were also to initiate and put into effective operation a system of propaganda, a powerful weapon that eventually became so potent a factor during the war. The Communist element had seen the value of propaganda as far back as the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, when the Russian army and people became accessible to the disintegrating influence of its teaching. With the collapse of Russia and the outbreak of revolution the Bolsheviks improved their propaganda department, and from it issued material that in forceful argument surpassed even the Jesuitical utterances of the Germans.

After receiving initial instructions from the Government of India at Delhi, we proceeded to Rawal Pindi, whence a good motor road runs two hundred

miles to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, the starting-point for Central Asian expeditions.

After the first Punjab War in 1846, Kashmir, which had been taken by the Sikhs from the Pathans in 1819, became part of our possessions, and was assigned to the Maharaja of Jammu, a small native state of the Punjab, for services rendered to the British Government. With this award were included the adjacent small states of Ladakh, Baltistan, and Gilgit, the whole becoming the appanage in perpetuity of Jammu. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir is a Hindu, descended from the Dogras, but the majority of the inhabitants is Mohammedan.

The Vale of Kashmir, a popular resort of Europeans during the hot weather in India, lies upwards of five thousand feet above sea-level. Through it flows the river Jhelum, whilst several lakes and picturesque waterways contribute to its scenic attractions. Srinagar has been styled the Venice of Asia, and approach to it by one of the many waterways lends colour to that appellation, an illusion soon dispelled when one lands to view the bazaars and narrow streets of the City of the Sun, as the Hindus have grandiloquently christened the capital. The surrounding scenery is very fine: ranges of snow-capped mountains, stretches of rich pasturage, gardens and grassy lawns that extend to the water's edge, the general effect being especially beautiful in the evening, when the various shades of water, cloud, foliage, and the distant snows together form a picture of singular beauty.

The Chenar Bagh, or Garden of Plane Trees, is the best known of these Kashmir gardens and a favourite camping-ground during the summer, when its stately

trees, green grass, and broad stretch of river impart to it the aspect of an English park, the background being filled by a rocky peak, the Takht-i-Sulieman, whose summit is crowned by a temple, whither the pious Hindus gather for communion with their gods.

There is much of interest in the city, for the numerous waterways are crowded with boats towed by strings of coolies; fishermen are casting their nets; long, narrow boats pass up and down laden with merchandise, from which traders step to camp or houseboat bearing Kashmir shawls, articles of *papier mâché*, exquisitely carved woodwork, ornaments of silver and copper—in fact, every kind of manufactured goods from clothes and shoes to saddlery, cooking utensils, camping and shooting requisites.

Kashmir was recently accorded full administrative powers over its territory, prior to which it was in a transitional stage. These reforms, carried out under our auspices, have resulted in widespread benefit, more particularly with regard to revenue, which has brought enhanced prosperity. The local army was reorganised and the former ill-trained and badly equipped levies have been transformed into efficient and serviceable troops under British supervision.

Some days were occupied in completing our preparations and acquiring various articles for use on the journey and in Central Asia. It may be said that practically everything essential to an expedition to the lands beyond the Indian frontier can be procured in Srinagar, whether it be provisions, clothing of excellent and suitable pattern, yakdans or mule trunks for transport, leather-covered trunks sold in pairs, kiltas or leather-covered baskets of oval shape open

at one end and similar to Ali Baba's jars. Nearly all the best firms in India have branches in Srinagar and the usual requirements of an expedition can be readily supplied.

It was the middle of April 1918 when I left Srinagar, with the vanguard of 160 coolies, for the march to Gilgit, thirteen days to the north, the road traversing a region devoid of supplies, which have to be imported from Kashmir. Gilgit is a northern outpost of India and commands one of the routes to the Pamirs and Central Asia. A good strategical road was constructed by us in the early nineties of last century and has been continued to Baltit, capital of the mountain state of Hunza, four marches north of Gilgit. The road for some distance follows the Indus River, which flows through lofty defiles, and constant ascents and descents occur where it is unable to follow the river line but must perforce be carried along mountain and precipice. There are also two passes, the Tragbal and Burzil, to be crossed. The Tragbal is 11,500 feet in height and the summit is a long plateau on which the snow lies deep through the winter months and far into the summer. Frequent and violent winds sweep the crest line, and as many as two hundred and fifty transport animals with their drivers have perished in a single day when overwhelmed by a blizzard, for which the Tragbal has so sinister a reputation. The Burzil Pass lies at an altitude of 13,400 feet, and although presenting no difficulties during the summer, is practically closed from September till May. The formation of the pass is peculiar in that it is approached by a long depression or wind-scoop, which is joined, a mile from the summit, by a

similar depression from the south-east. It is through these depressions that a deadly wind sweeps without warning, and so constant was the loss of life in the old days that a high wooden tower was constructed at the confluence of the two depressions where the luckless traveller could find refuge from the fury of the elements. I crossed the Burzil during the night, a bright and starry one that promised a successful passage. We camped the night before in the valley below the pass, and by two o'clock in the morning the last coolie had left for the summit, when I set out to follow them. A long climb through heavy snow ensued, and four miles from the top a fierce wind sprang up, and I thought of the many bands of coolies and others who had so often been gathered in its deadly embrace. Fortunately it did not assume a serious aspect, and by the afternoon I was able to marshal the band in the valley on the far side. Having negotiated the Burzil Pass, the Astor Valley is traversed to Doyan, whence the road strikes a spur between the Indus and Astor Rivers, and follows the watershed at a height of upwards of ten thousand feet until it reaches a point known as the Hattu Pir, whence there is a six-thousand feet drop to Ramghat on the Indus. Apart from snow and ice-fields, the latter is the most trying portion of the road, for in the last five miles of the descent no water is found over this mass of rock, shingle and *débris* cast down from the slopes above. The view from the summit of the Hattu Pir discloses the gorge of the Astor River as a picture of savage grandeur and desolation, the predominant feature being the precipices shutting in the river far below, but whose roar, even at that great

distance, is distinctly audible. During the summer months the crossing is usually done at night, as rock and precipice become so heated that the atmosphere is like the breath of a furnace. At the foot of this Golgotha lies the post of Ramghat, formerly known as the Devil's Bridge, and a veritable Siberia in bygone days when the Kashmir Rajas despatched their prisoners thus far, put them across the river at the Devil's Bridge, and there left them to their fate, which meant starvation in the surrounding rocky desert and inhospitable ravines, or capture and death at the hands of wild mountain tribes who were ever on the watch for them.

The mission travelled in three detachments as far as Gilgit to lessen the strain on supplies and transport, proceeding from there as a complete unit. Sixty-five miles north of Gilgit we reached Baltit, the capital of Hunza, set in an amphitheatre of mountains with the peak of Rakapushi, over twenty-six thousand feet in height, dominating the valley. A few miles up a valley to the east lies Nagar, the capital of the small mountain state of that name.

Hunza and Nagar are divided by a river six hundred feet wide, flowing between high and inaccessible cliffs which can be traversed only at certain points. Prior to the British expedition of 1891 the rival states were constantly at war with each other, although they combined when threatened by foreign foes. These two small states, enclosed by mountains including some of the loftiest peaks in the world, exceeding twenty-four thousand feet in altitude, are peopled by races of identical stock, with a common language and professing the same form of the Mohammedan

religion. Hunza is the more important of the two in that it holds the passes leading to the Pamirs and the valley of the Yarkand River in Chinese Turkistan, an asset of which the Hunzas, or Kanjutis as they are known, took full advantage in their raids on caravans travelling between India and Turkistan. These trade routes traverse the valleys on the eastern side of the mountains encompassing Hunza, and so widespread was the terror inspired by looting and slave-raiding that roads were abandoned by merchants, tracts of country adjacent to Hunza became depopulated, and the state developed into a slave mart which was regularly patronised by the neighbouring countries of Badakhshan, Sarikol, and Turkistan.

The hereditary chief of Hunza, known as the Mir or Thum, had absolute authority over his subjects, whom he could dispose of as it suited him. He and his people claim descent from the army of Alexander the Great, and the Thum's self-appraisal was such that, in open durbar, it was customary for one minister to ask of another who was the greatest ruler on earth, and for the reply to be that it was undoubtedly the Thum of Hunza. It is sad to reflect that the all-powerful Thum fled to Chinese Turkistan after the British expedition at a speed incompatible with dignity and greatness. This chieftain, Safdar Ali, who had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, and two of his brothers, bore a reputation for cruelty and treachery in keeping with the manner by which he gained the throne. However, he was but following in his father's footsteps, for the latter had assured his own succession in the assassination of his parent by a method as crafty as it was original. A robe of honour was sent

to the Thum as a gift—a deadly one, for in it a man had died from confluent smallpox, to which the Thum soon fell a victim, and so his son reigned in his stead.

The Kanjutis are Mohammedans of the Maulai sect whose spiritual head is the Aga Khan, a well-known figure in European social and literary circles. Many Mohammedans on the Roof of the World and in Central Asia acknowledge the Aga Khan as their leader, and as I was in touch with them it will be of interest to give an account of this sect of Islam and its distinguished head. Mohammed, the founder of Islam, died without leaving a successor as the temporal and spiritual head of the faith, and for twenty-two years after his death Arabia was ruled by three successive Caliphs, Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, much favoured by Mohammed, assuming the Caliphate in 654. The Islamic faith then split into two factions, the Sunnis and Shias, the former claiming the right to nominate the Prophet's successor, whilst the Shias contended that the divine right of succession lay with Ali and his descendants. Arising thus the dispute assumed such proportions that the rival sects entertain undisguised antipathy to each other, the Shias rejecting the traditional law of succession and believing only in the dicta of the twelve Imams, or lineal descendants of Ali.

Now, the Aga Khan traces his descent back for forty-eight generations through the Fatimite Caliphs of Egypt to Ismail, the son of Jafir Sadiq, the sixth Imam, and so back to Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law. He is thus regarded as an hereditary Imam by a succession that is apostolic. The Aga Khan is not a

ruling prince of India, but the head of the Khojas, who were converted to Islam probably by a cleric of the sixth Imami sect, hence the reverence for him. They believe that each successive Imam from Ali to Ismail was the incarnation of the Divinity and that the succession is hereditary in the male line. This particular sect over which the Aga Khan presides is found in Bombay, Sind, Kutch, Kathiawar, and elsewhere in India, the majority of his Ismailian adherents hailing from Persia, Arabia, Afghanistan, Turkistan, East Africa, and parts of Central Africa. In 1840 the then Aga Khan, as the result of differences, left Persia for Afghanistan, where at Kabul he met the British forces and later assisted Napier in his conquest of Sind. For his services the British Government granted him a pension and the title of Highness, and in 1845 he moved to Bombay, where his headquarters were finally established. The present Aga Khan was born in 1877 and, like his father, has keen racing instincts. The Kanjutis, in common with all the Aga Khan's followers, send annual offerings and tribute to Bombay, where there is a regular organisation for the receipt and disposal of the money and material gifts.

Contrary to the tenets of strict Mohammedanism, the Kanjutis, and indeed all Maulais, indulge in wine, and quite a good brand is produced at Hinni that forms part of the Thum's cellar. Being relieved from the restraints of fasting and prayer, their religion is practically confined to obedience to the orders of their Pirs, or priests, and through them rendering tribute to their spiritual chief, the Aga Khan. There is an absence of fanaticism amongst the Maulais and they

are on good terms with other Moslems, although they doubt the divine character of the Quran, contending that it was given to the Angel Gabriel for transmission to Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, but that by mistake he handed it on to Mohammed. Their beliefs are refreshingly quaint and original. For instance, they hold that a man to remove potential causes of envy from his heart at the sight of his neighbour's wealth and affluence should blind himself, that he should weaken his hands to obviate the possibility of taking what belongs to another, and lame himself that he may not disobey the orders of his priestly elders. The strictly orthodox Moslem regards the pilgrimage to Mecca as the acme of religious devotion, but the only pilgrimage that the Maulai deems essential is that to his spiritual chief at Bombay. A Maulai, once he has departed this mortal life, is considered as dead, and fasting and prayers are unnecessary, although edible offerings are made and food is placed on trees for birds and animals.

The hereditary home of the Kanjut chiefs is an imposing castle overlooking the capital, Baltit, a semi-fortress that has been for more than a thousand years the stronghold of the brigand chiefs. It commands magnificent views down the valley and of Mt. Rakapushi, over twenty-six thousand feet in height. The structure is of sun-dried mud bricks, stones and massive timber, several storeys high, with quaint eaves of carved woodwork. A ladder and hole in the ceiling give access to the upper floors, and the approach to the castle itself from below is by a succession of winding passages and alley-ways made thus to baffle attack. Behind the castle is a ravine whose

sides are a precipice of immense height, from which condemned prisoners were thrown into the torrent below.

In the days before the British expedition, when the Thums of Hunza were all-powerful in the eyes of their subjects, magic and the supernatural held a strong place in their beliefs, and neighbouring tribes regarded Baltit as the home of sorcerers and magicians. To rouse the fury of the elements, to cause hurricanes and cyclones, to raise a snowstorm that should sweep all before it, the Thum had merely to repair to a specified stream and there cast an ox-hide into the waters. On the summit of the Thum's castle the magician's drum was suspended so that all might see it, and when the Thum embarked on a warlike expedition the fairies beat the drum as a sign that he would be successful.

The present Mir, as the ruling chieftain is also styled, is Mohammed Nazim Khan, half-brother of the exiled Safdar Ali, a ruler noteworthy as much for his loyalty and steadfastness as he is for his affability and charm of manner. On our arrival at Baltit we paid the customary state call and were received by the Chief and his ministers, surrounded by a bodyguard dressed in scarlet jackets, blue trousers, with the soft leather shoes made in Hunza, and armed with breech-loading rifles and carbines. This bodyguard gave me an opportunity of closely studying the Kanjut race, with their fair complexions, long curls hanging down below the ears, and bold, jovial type of feature. Clothed appropriately, they might pass as hardy Norsemen, or the rough and ready Highlanders of Bonnie Prince Charlie's day. As befits such dwellers amongst

the peaks and glaciers, the Kanjutis are unsurpassed as cragsmen.

The popular pastime is polo, which, it is interesting to note, was introduced into India about the time of William the Conqueror, eventually becoming the foremost game of the Moghul emperors. In Hunza it is played on original lines, the ground being usually an open terraced field, or one of the streets of the village, and roughly three hundred yards long by thirty yards wide. The goals are narrow and marked by stones, the ball is of wood, and the sides may number from six to twenty. One of the players dashes forward, throws the ball into the air, catching it a crack on the descent, and as it bounds along there is a rush of thundering hoofs. No rules restrict the game in fouls, off-side, or crossing; all is fair in the Hunza conception of polo, and at every goal the orchestra of flutes and tom-toms, forming an integral part of the performance, bursts into a din that drowns even the yells of the crowd. At the close of the game the defeated side dances, for this is in great favour amongst the Kanjutis, although differing from the European form, being a squirming motion that lacks the grace and rhythm of the West.

Here in these mountain fastnesses custom decrees that what was in vogue in the time of their forefathers shall continue. For nigh on fifteen centuries the Kanjutis have indulged in the same form of dancing, singing, and music, and could we revert to the days of the Norman Conquest we should see that change had not modified or altered their frolics. Broadly speaking, the Oriental orchestra is not to be commended, but in Hunza the musicians excel, and their war songs

and melodious chants, performed on kettle-drum, tom-tom, mandolines, and a quaint reed instrument resembling a clarionet, are full of spirit, and strike one as unusually impressive when, to the roll of drums and tom-toms and the plaintive cry of the clarionets, the Kanjutis join in a wild chorus reminiscent of raid and foray.

Architecture in Hunza is on one pattern ; the houses are built of mud, stones, and beams, those of the upper classes being constructed round a courtyard. The rooms are windowless, illumination coming from the door or a skylight. Beneath the latter is the hearth, and round the sides of the room is a raised platform for bedding and household articles. The smoke from the hearth escapes through the skylight, permeating the entire room, and blackening both walls and beams. In winter and during heavy falls of rain or snow the skylight is closed, and the only illumination is that afforded by a rushlight stuck in a small bowl filled with crude oil.

It is about ninety miles from Baltit to the Chinese frontier through the Upper Kanjut Valley, and once the capital is left the country assumes an exceptionally barren and rocky aspect. Lofty mountains rise on both sides of the river, forming walls of rock occasionally broken by gorges filled with silt and detritus cast down from above and forming broad symmetrical fans opening out from the gorges into the main valley. Such villages as one finds are situated on these fans, the only sign of life in an otherwise rocky wilderness. As we moved northwards to the Indo-Chinese frontier cultivation became more scanty, and the heights were characterised by great steepness and the number of

pinnacles surmounting them. During the summer, when the river is a rushing torrent from the melting snows, the track follows the line of mountain and precipice, over rough logs thrown across a chasm, or by a ladder placed against the cliff side and shored up with stones and boulders, and over these the hardy Kanjuti passes without a shudder. Centuries ago Hunza was traversed by early Chinese travellers who told of the crags and precipices that barred the way; the mountains were like walls of rock ten thousand feet in height, and on looking down sight became confused, footing was lost, and all was over. Nature has thus helped the Kanjutis to preserve their independence, and living within such narrow limits they have evolved separate communities, followed the same mode of life, and observed the same customs their forbears did hundreds of years before them. To such an extent is the Upper Kanjut Valley isolated that there are several ravines where horses and cattle can only pass in and out during two months of the year. The action of the sun's rays, the effects of snow coupled with the constant falling of rocks and masses of *débris*, block the narrow pathway along the cliff sides, and it is often swept away. It is tracks such as these that make the Kanjutis some of the finest cragsmen in the world; men with heavy loads will pass each other on these crazy structures, and they not infrequently carry sheep across on their shoulders.

Four days out from Baltit we crossed the Batur Glacier, a mass of ice thirty miles long that comes down the nullah to the west, and at the point where we crossed, about three miles in width. It is full of ridges and

furrows, indented here and there with crevasses, some black and brown in colour and others as clear as crystal.

Six marches from the Kanjut capital took us to Misgar, lying at an altitude of 10,200 feet, the highest inhabited village in the country. We had now left vegetation behind us, fruit trees do not exist here, but the people succeed in cultivating a small amount of barley for their immediate needs. The next march above Misgar is to Murkush, the junction of two nullahs, one leading to the Kilik and the other to the Mintaka Pass, both of which open on to the Pamirs or Roof of the World.

We were now at the head of the Kanjut Valley, and on the eve of passing from the realm of British jurisdiction to lands coming under the general designation of Central Asia. Ethnographically we were leaving tribes and races of Aryan origin for those of Mongolian and Turanian stock, and were about to forsake the confines of civilisation for the strange, albeit fascinating dominions of the Flowery Kingdom.

There are three passes leading to the Pamirs from the Kanjut Valley, the Kilik, Mintaka, and Gul Khwaja Uwin, the first-named being a plateau and the easiest in summer, for approach to it is gradual and it then presents no serious difficulties. The Mintaka is generally used in the winter; the ascent is steep and the snow does not, in consequence, lie so deep as on the Kilik. The Gul Khwaja Uwin has not been crossed for many years, the movements of the glaciers having rendered its passage impracticable.

We decided to cross by the Mintaka, camping just below the glacier, which completely fills the valley

beneath the pass, in readiness for the ordeal of the morrow. That night we heard sinister rumours of enemy agents who were apparently encompassing our destruction and only waiting for us to cross the frontier. Certain it was we were leaving the law and order and comparative safety of British territory to enter a region where the task of the mission would not only assume definite shape but demand the utmost care and circumspection for its successful accomplishment. In Russian territory, at any rate, we should be entirely committed, with practically no prospect of escape should matters go hard with us in our dealings with the fanatical heads of Bolshevik *régime* in Central Asia.

We set out the following morning, and after a strenuous climb reached the summit of the Mintaka, or Pass of a Thousand Ibex, its altitude being 15,430 feet. The top is a plateau about a quarter of a mile long and a couple of hundred yards wide, covered with snow and strewn with a mass of rocks and *débris* from the crags and cliffs that flank it. A cairn of stones marks the crest line of the Hindu Koosh and the frontier between India and China. Hard by the cairn we were received by a guard of honour of the Hunza levies, strapping irregulars forming part of the small post we maintained on the Chinese side, with which I shall deal later on. The occasion was unique in history, for it was probably the highest point on the earth's surface where a guard had assembled to do military honours, and as such I took a photograph of this remarkable event.

As I stood on the summit and surveyed the view unfolded to north and south, the contrast was unusually

striking. In the direction of India lay range upon range of mountains, and, comparatively near at hand, many of the peaks of the Hindu Koosh. We were at a point of geographical and political import marking the convergence of three empires, India, Russia, and China, as well as the Moslem state of Afghanistan. To the north lay the Pamirs, a region that attracted the attention of Europe some years ago by reason of the steady expansion of Russia and her activities along the frontiers of India. Beyond the Pamirs was Chinese Turkistan, the land of ancient Tartary, and the western dominions of an empire that for so long stood outside the comity of nations. We were looking down upon a region that in bygone days was peopled by races whose authority stretched across Asia and Europe and who had risen to lofty heights in enterprise, power, and wealth. All Asia seemed to be before us, from the plains lying between the Altai Mountains in the far north to the Hindu Koosh and the Karakoram forming the frontier of India, wherefrom had issued the founders of the Saxon race, and the Aryan tribes who had gone down to India. They have passed on with the march of time, and others have appeared, from the pure Caucasian of the Hindu Koosh to the tribes of Jatta and Goth, who in their turn were supplanted by those whose origin is traceable to the extreme north of Asia. In their wake followed Uighurs, Huns, and Mongols, until the advent of the Chinese, who have ever since remained in part possession of this cradle of the world. With these reflections we commenced the descent into the valley, where the chief Beg of the district, escorted by Chinese and Kirghiz soldiers on horses and yaks,

was in waiting to receive us. These irregular troops are the wardens of the marches along the frontier of the Roof of the World, and the yak cavalry are unique as the only troops in the world mounted on the genus ox.

Tea, dried apricots, raisins, and tiny cakes of flour fried in fat were served, and then, mounting yaks, we moved on down the valley to camp at Mintaka Aksai, the junction of the Karachukar and Mintaka Rivers of the Taghdumbash Pamir.

CHAPTER II

The Pamirs or Roof of the World—Russian activities—The Sarikolis—Queer marriage ceremonies—*Ovis poli*, the world's finest wild sheep—Life amongst the Kirghiz—Embarrassing politeness—Quaint social customs—Kirghiz senses of sight and smell—The game of baiga—The lot of the principal guest—Falconry on the Pamirs—An accomplished girl falconer—Wolves and their hunting tactics.

THE Pamirs, more familiarly known as the Roof of the World, are the westerly extension of the Tibetan mountain system, lying immediately beyond the Hindu Koosh and forming the northern boundary of India. They came into political prominence in 1892 when Russia, as the result of her movements in Central Asia, saw that their possession would enable her to overcome the difficulties of the Hindu Koosh by turning the eastern flank of that range and so securing a route to India *via* the passes from the Pamir region to Chitral, which state leads directly to Rawal Pindi and the Punjab. An exaggerated strategic value was placed on the Pamirs, for from a military point of view the region is one of little practical utility. Politically it is of importance, since whoever controls it has a political lever that constitutes a menace to the safety of Afghanistan and the northern borders of India.

There are eight Pamirs included in the area under discussion, one of which, the Wakhan, is in Afghan territory, another, the Taghdumbash, under Chinese dominion, and the remaining six were incorporated within the Russian sphere in 1892. The total area is

about twenty-three thousand square miles, the physical formation being a succession of leads or valleys of varying width and glacial formation, flanked by lofty peaks running up to a height of twenty thousand feet or more. These valleys are not uniform in character, but differ with the amount of detritus and moraine deposits thrown up in the course of glacial evolution. Along each valley is a river or stream flowing over a stony bed, broken by patches of peat and with a coarse grass growing on the banks and adjacent ground, the general aspect bearing strong resemblance to a Scottish moor, without, however, the added beauty of the heather. Here and there along the valleys are stretches of sand and gravel, some covered with the saline deposit so frequently met with in the plains. The general contour can best be appreciated from the passes : mountain masses divided by valleys of varying width linked by lateral defiles, the high peaks being unevenly distributed and mostly along the marginal ranges.

The popular conception of the Pamirs as a tableland is erroneous, for they are really elevated mountain valleys running east and west and separated by parallel ridges. The valleys or leads originate from the glacier beds formed in bygone ages, and the strata is generally that of granite, mica slate, and a metamorphic clay soil. There are several lakes, none of any great size, distributed over the Pamirs, enclosed by gravel mounds and moraine deposits from the glaciers. From a geographical standpoint the most curious of these is the Rang Kul Lake on the Russian Pamirs, six miles in length, which has neither inlet nor outlet and presumably derives its water supply from a subterranean inflow.

The characteristic feature of the Pamirs is the constant high wind coupled with the sudden and extreme variation in the temperature. The winds are remarkable for their abrasive power, and huge blocks of syenitic rock and granite have been worn flat and rounded into fantastic shapes by generations of fierce gales. Moreover, there is often a rise of as much as fifty-five degrees between the temperature at dawn and that at noon of the same day. The climatic drawbacks are such that the Russian garrisons of the Pamir posts found that fowls could not exist and that dogs bred only once in two or three years. They have also an adverse effect upon the population in that the women are unable to bear large families and children are frequently still-born in these icy regions.

Of the fauna the chief object of interest is the *Ovis poli*, or wild sheep, apparently first made known to Europe by the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who traversed the Roof of the World in the thirteenth century in his journey to the court of the Mongol emperor, Kublai Khan. The *Ovis poli* is the largest of the wild sheep, its long curved horns presenting a majestic appearance. The record pair of horns measures seventy-five inches along the curve and were presented by the Maharaja of Kashmir to the late Field-Marshal Earl Roberts. Geese, snipe, hill partridge, eagle, and lammergeier are met with. The latter is a large bird of prey widely distributed over Asia and differing from other vultures in that the head is fully feathered. Its spread of wing often exceeds nine feet, and it hovers at immense altitudes in the sky on the watch for carrion. It is interesting

to note that the sea-gull has also been observed on the Pamir lakes.

The initial occupation of the Pamirs by the Russians originated with their conquest of Central Asia in 1860, when they came down through Ferghana and engaged in exploratory enterprise, resulting in the best survey and geographical records extant. It was, however, with the advent of Colonel Yonoff, in 1891, that the political history of the Pamirs opened. Yonoff was in charge of a force known as the Hunting Detachment from its ostensible *rôle* of hunting wild sheep and other big game, an object less likely to attract attention to a region that might form the subject of dispute between Russia, China, and adjacent states. The Alichur Pamir was regarded as the border line between Afghan and Chinese territory, and on the arrival there of Yonoff, where the Chinese had erected a mud fort at Soma Tash as the outward and visible sign of Celestial occupancy, the Chinese were requested to withdraw, as Yonoff contended that it came within the jurisdiction of the Czar. They complied with the behest and Yonoff's detachment then returned to Ferghana. The Celestials, however, quietly retraced their steps once Yonoff was out of the way, rebuilt their fort, and resumed possession. The following year, 1892, the Afghans appeared and the Chinese again withdrew, the Afghans remaining in charge until Yonoff came south a month or two later. He had already directed the Chinese to withdraw from Aktash, on the Little Pamir, and Rang Kul, and now ordered the Afghans to evacuate Soma Tash. This the latter declined to do, and a fight ensued in which fifteen out of the seventeen Afghans were killed, in-

cluding their leader. The Russians then entered into definite possession, and by the treaty concluded with Great Britain in 1895 the greater portion of the Pamirs was allocated to Russia. The Chinese have never acquiesced in the terms of that agreement and still tacitly maintain their right to the area from which they were so summarily evicted more than thirty years ago.

The frontiers of India, Russia, China, and Afghanistan, as at present defined along, and adjacent to, the Pamirs, take the line of the watersheds, which are the clearest form of boundary, and when, as is the case here, possession is given up to the headwaters of each system, it constitutes a definite border line.

The strategic value of the Russian Pamirs, as well as the small state of Chitral on the British side, declined with the cessation of Russian activities in High Asia and the subsequent award of the Pamir Boundary Commission of 1895, which resulted in the establishment of a part of Afghan territory, Wakhan, between the two empires.

The Taghdumbash Pamir, the only one within the boundaries of the Celestial empire, is known generally as Sarikol, a name signifying Yellow Valley, from the many-coloured rocks of micaceous schist and granite. Sarikol is geographically interesting as the meeting-point of the four mountain systems of Central Asia, chief amongst which are the Hindu Koosh and the Himalayas, separating Chinese Turkistan and the Pamir region from India.

The people of Sarikol differ from the Kirghiz in that they are not nomadic but live in small villages and hamlets of mud-built houses along the valleys,

cultivating wheat and barley and living mainly on the produce of their cattle and fields.

The population comprises Sarikolis, Kirghiz, and a few Wakhi families from the neighbouring Afghan province of Wakhan, whence they migrated many years ago to escape the apparent distastefulness of Afghan government. There are about forty-five Wakhi families in Sarikol, the majority living in and around the small settlement of Dafdar, thirty miles south of the Chinese fort of Tashkurghan. I paid them several visits during tours on the Pamirs, when their chief, Alif Beg, received me hospitably and placed his mud-built residence at my disposal.

The Sarikoli population is estimated at about seven thousand, and in religion they are Shia Mohammedans and followers of the Aga Khan. As we meet on the Pamirs representatives of the rival sects of Mohammedanism, Sunnis and Shias, it is appropriate to comment here on the two factions. The omission of Mohammed to appoint a successor led to the division of his followers into two sacerdotal and political entities, the Sunnis and the Shias, a rivalry that acts as a cleavage in Islamic circles.

Mohammed had four sons by his first wife, Khadija, who all died, and no male children resulted from his union with fifteen other spouses, who, with one exception, were all widows, for whom the Prophet seemed to have a partiality. Of his four daughters, Fatima, the youngest, married her cousin Ali, chief of the illustrious family of Hashim and hereditary Prince of Mecca. Apparently Mohammed desired that Ali should succeed him, but no definite successor being named, Mohammed's son-in-law became the

head of the faith. The election was not, however, unanimous, and thus began the quarrel, already alluded to, which has come down through the centuries. The Shias have set up separate kingdoms, chief amongst which, and the stronghold of their faith, is Persia, whilst the Sunnis have spread over Turkey, India, Central Asia, and Northern Africa. The Sunnis derive their designation from the works on traditional law known as the Sunna, these being acknowledged by them as the authority concurrent with, and supplementary to, the Quran, compiled after the death of Mohammed. The Quran covers the entire teaching of Islam and its theology, and on it Mohammedans base the theory and practice of law and government. This has, of course, in the case of India and countries subject to British rule, undergone modification, and the legal system has been codified in order to meet the complicated questions arising between Hindus and Mohammedans, more particularly in commercial and criminal law. With us there are elaborate codes of evidence and procedure which have in India produced a lawyer caste noted for its forensic ability. In the less advanced and more patriarchal states of Central Asia the administration of the law is left largely to the mullahs, whose decisions are usually accepted without question.

The Sarikolis in the matter of prayer resemble the Sunnis, in that they pray with the hands crossed over the breast, whilst the Shias keep the arms at the sides.

Their marriage customs do not differ in general method of procedure from those obtaining among the Kirghiz. Payment is made in the form of cattle and

stock, and the actual ceremony is conducted in a curious fashion. Both bride and bridegroom are seated on a felt carpet in the presence of the mullah appointed to tie the nuptial knot. A roasted sheep rests on a dish by the carpet. The mullah then demands from each if they accept each other, and being assured on that essential point he carves two portions of the sheep, dips them into salt and places them into the mouths of bride and bridegroom, when the marriage contract is fulfilled. Feasting and games then ensue over a period of three days, when the newly married couple take up their residence and resume the usual tenor of their ways.

Wheat and barley are grown in Sarikol, the corn being threshed by the combined efforts of cattle and a large pole. The corn is placed on a hard mud-beaten floor, the pole is passed through the corn, and the cattle, harnessed to it, move in a circle treading out the ears, which are afterwards swept into the rough baskets made from osier and willow grown along the river banks in the lower valleys.

Taking the Pamirs as a whole, the Kirghiz form the leading element in the population and they represent a large and widely spread division of the Turkish race. In Russian territory they are known as the Kara-Kirghiz of the uplands, and the Kirghiz-Kasaks of the steppes, the former being the purest and best representatives of the race, and to them belongs the distinctive name of Kirghiz, a term, they tell us, traceable to a legendary chief named Kirghiz. There is another curious legend concerning the wanderings of forty Kirghiz girls who came upon a magic stream, into which they dipped a dainty finger, with the result

that all became pregnant and so gave birth to the race. The Kirghiz are Mohammedans of the Sunni order, albeit not very strict in the observance of the faith. The system of government is patriarchal, control of the different sections being vested in tribal elders who enjoy almost unlimited authority, and as the Kirghiz are easily influenced by their leaders and hold their authority in respect, I found it essential to gain the goodwill of the latter in my dealings with these people.

The Kirghiz are nomads whose main occupation is cattle raising, only a small proportion engaging in agriculture ; indeed, their life is dependent on cattle and particularly horse-breeding, hence their nomadic habits and the constant change of pasture.

On the Chinese Pamir the Kirghiz are exempt from taxation, but in lieu thereof they provide mounted patrols for frontier work and perform other light military duties in connection with watch along the border. Formerly the skins of wild animals were given as tribute to the Chinese governor of Tash-kurghan, but this is now in abeyance, for, with the exception of *Ovis poli*, which were not demanded as tribute, there are no furs of value obtainable.

Kirghiz dress is in keeping with the severity of the climate, long coats stuffed with cotton-wool, trousers of similar make tucked into leather knee-boots, and fur caps pulled down over the ears. With the top-boots is worn a leather slipper which is discarded on entering the ak-ui, or tent. The women dress similarly to the men, with the exception of the headgear, a large turban of cloth or muslin nine to twelve inches in height and of corresponding thickness, a top-heavy arrangement that would be viewed with disfavour by

the Western girl. However, there is no accounting for taste, even on the Roof of the World.

The men also wear embroidered skullcaps surmounted by sheepskin hoods with the wool inside, or a conical-shaped hat with two slits at the bottom to allow of the brim being turned up. Household and general work is done entirely by the women, the men being occupied in the care of horses and cattle. They are a sociable and hospitable race, and whenever met with the reception was cordial and everything they possessed was placed at our disposal.

The dwelling of the Kirghiz is the ak-ui, khirga, or felt tent, a semicircular construction on a lattice framework. These tents are from twelve to twenty-one feet in diameter, the walls being composed of lattice-work some four feet in height, from which wooden pieces are stretched out to a hoop forming the summit of the tent. The framework is covered with felts made from goats' and camels' hair, and an opening is left at the top for light and the emission of smoke, of which the tent is usually full.

The internal decoration in the tent of a wealthy Kirghiz is often carried out on artistic lines: the walls are hung with embroideries worked by the women, who are as clever with the needle as they are at rounding up cattle, whilst spread over the floor are carpets, pillows encased in multi-coloured chintz, and cloth of Chinese and Russian manufacture, with the skins of ibex, *Ovis poli*, and the big game met with on the Pamir uplands. Of furniture there is merely an occasional table on legs of a height of five or six inches, a few copper pots and pans, and some brass jugs used for the boiling of water and tea-making.

Along the trellis-work inside these felt tents are suspended basins, leather bottles for the kumis, guns, harness, and clothes. The Kirghiz themselves are not the only inhabitants of these movable homes, for during the winter the sheep and goats, or as many as can be accommodated, share the dwelling with its owners, so that the atmosphere at times is heavy and better imagined than described. In addition the chorus of bleats and cries must render a sojourn there a trying ordeal.

The Kirghiz diet is mainly milk and mutton, and they bake a form of bread, resembling a doughnut, from flour and mutton fat. At a feast the *pièce de résistance* is horseflesh, but it is a dish within reach only of the wealthy. The menu is simple, for it comprises boiled and roast mutton, with rice if any be available, milk, cheese made from yak and sheep's cream, and small pieces of mutton fried until burnt. Contrary to European custom, the dessert is served before the meat dishes, and consists of walnuts, pistachio nuts, dried apricots, and raisins. These are spread out on a brass dish and the guests partake of them as a form of appetiser for the more serious work to follow. The meats are served on dishes distributed amongst the guests in the proportion of one dish to twelve or fifteen people. Here, as in the days of the Pharisees and Philistines, fingers take the place of knives and forks, the meat is torn from bones by eager teeth, and it is the acme of Kirghiz politeness to select a choice morsel from the dish and put it into the mouth of a guest. Fortunately one's rank and position were sufficiently exalted to obviate such an attention. At the close a basin of water is handed round, from which

all cleanse their hands in the same way as did the Pharisees of Biblical renown.

The form of drink called kumis is prepared from mares' milk by shaking it in a leathern bottle and then leaving it to ferment. It has a great reputation as a tonic, an antidote in fever cases, and for the restoration of virility, the retarding of old age, the rendering of barren women fertile, and imparting to the worn and jaded the energy and vigour of youth, whilst, in the words of the showman, it confers other benefits too numerous to mention. It has a vinous subacid flavour, and the taste for it must be an acquired one, for I have sampled nothing like it during travels on five continents.

The chief beast of burden and for riding is the yak, a form of ox found only at these high altitudes, with long shaggy hair, curved horns, and capable of withstanding the intense cold and severe blizzards of these lofty regions. Though slow, the yak is extremely sure-footed and will climb glaciers and descend snow slopes with remarkable ease. In a region where trees and brushwood of any kind are non-existent the fuel question becomes acute, and this is solved by utilising yak and camel dung which, when dried and burnt, gives out considerable heat.

The manners and customs of the Kirghiz present many quaint features. Here, as elsewhere, a wedding is a great event. The bride is acquired by purchase at a figure commensurate with the wealth and status of the bridegroom: it may run into many hundreds of sheep, cattle, and horses. In the negotiations the Kirghiz are eminently practical, an essential preliminary being delivery of part of the purchase price, as

credit is discouraged and a cash basis insisted upon. In the case of an impecunious bridegroom the financial difficulties are partly overcome by a small initial payment, the balance being settled on the instalment system and by personal labour. Divorce is uncommon, and although by the tenets of Islam four wives are permitted, it is seldom that a Kirghiz can maintain more than one, for women are scarce and the where-withal to obtain them is a hard proposition on the Pamirs.

In funeral ceremonies the Western order of things is reversed and the occasion becomes one of hilarity and amusement, in which horse-races play a prominent part. The burial customs are peculiar in that they differ from orthodox Mohammedans by interring the deceased on a hill-top, the tomb being usually surmounted by a cupola with an encircling wall fashioned after a battlement. Various edible articles, together with money, are left on the tomb, thus appearing to be a rival of Shamanism, the religion of the Mongols. The Kirghiz still retain some of the rites of Shamanism, such as the occasional worship of fire, and the belief that the dead require sustenance and transport for their long journey to the next world. After interment a feast is given to all members of the sect to which the deceased belonged ; flat races on horseback are organised, for jumping is never practised, and prizes awarded to the successful competitors. The procedure is at variance with ours, but the Kirghiz argue that the dead are dispersing the riches accumulated in life and that they are not concerned with the passing on of wealth to those who follow them.

The method of computation amongst the Kirghiz

is simple and original and gives an interesting sidelight on the conception of accounts as evolved on the world's roof. For instance, a debtor will place before the creditor a stone representing the sum or quantity due, for it may be in sheep and cattle. The creditor then removes a stone from his own heap, for each has accumulated a tiny mound, and this continues until he who has any left is the one to whom the amount in dispute is due. Simple as this mode of calculation appears, it is that in vogue at the dawn of history in Europe, for calculation is derived from *calculus*, small stone, and with such primitive means our ancestors in the Stone Age tackled the problems of addition and subtraction.

They are wonderful people for news, and the hearing, and still more the retailing, of it has a great charm for them, and doubtless in the process of repetition it receives an additional flavour. A new arrival amongst them with any unusual information creates a sensation, and it is passed on from camp to camp with great rapidity. Here, if anywhere, one is in the unchanging East. More than six hundred years ago Marco Polo passed over the Pamirs on his journey to the court of the Mongol emperors, and his description of Kirghiz life is just as applicable now as it was in those far-off days, so little have these people altered.

Sport is popular amongst the Kirghiz, and none more so than the game of baiga, in which the carcass of a sheep or goat is the object of contention. The contestants, to the number of forty or fifty, all mounted on strong and agile ponies, form up into line and strive for possession of the carcass in a whirlwind

mêlée. One of them then dashes forward with it, well in front of the eager crowd, and, hurling the sheep to the ground, swings round in a wide circle to rejoin the others, who are now in full cry. It is a scene of the wildest confusion: a rider who may have gained possession of the carcass will have a dozen men hanging on to him, either by his own clothes or the saddlery and trappings of his horse. All is fair in a game of baiga: a man may beat his opponent's mount to force it out of the scrum, he may seize a player and by fair means or foul unhorse him, or compel him to yield up the trophy. Despite the dangers of this fast and furious game I have never seen an accident or any of the players thrown, which is certainly indicative of their powers of horsemanship. Indeed, it may be said that the Kirghiz is born in the saddle, and if a horse be not available he is equally at home astride the lumbering ox.

With the single exception of a cavalry charge in which I took part in the South African War, there is nothing to compare with a game of baiga for fun and fury of a high order. The din is terrific, the wild yells of the contestants mingling with the thunder of hoofs, and the jingling of stirrups and ornamental trappings, as they sweep past like a devastating host, in their endeavour to gain possession of the carcass and deposit it at the feet of the principal guest, a *rôle* I often filled during my tours amongst these riders of the Pamirs.

Dancing and music are popular amongst Kirghiz and Sarikolis alike, and the close of a game of baiga sees the entire party, players and spectators, adjourn to a chosen spot in the camp for a *dastarkhan*, the

Pamir equivalent of tea and cakes. Dancing then comes into its own to the music of an orchestra, consisting of a dulcimer, a native banjo, and a tom-tom or drum. This mode of concluding the day's sport is common to most of the races and tribes on and along the northern confines of India, the dancing being performed by the men only and carried out with all the form and ceremony appropriate to the occasion.

The Kirghiz are gifted with keen sense of sight, and can distinguish small objects at distances of four to five miles. When I could perceive but the merest outline they would go into details of men or women, cattle and tents, which I afterwards verified. As scouts they would be in the front rank, for they can tell by the presence of certain vegetation and grasses, and the shape they have assumed in growing, the direction to follow and the situation of encampments they may be in search of. It is asserted that a Kirghiz will take up dry grass and from the scent of it will determine his position and the necessity of changing or adhering to the initial direction.

Falconry is a form of sport indulged in by the wealthier classes, the quarry being mainly the chikor, or hill partridge, and hares, some of the latter giving the falcon a tough struggle, although they seem to have little difficulty in holding on, and are not infrequently carried some distance before the hare is finally brought to a standstill. When on one of my tours in the Bostan Terek valleys I met a young Kirghiz lady of sixteen, an adept at falconry, who was reputed to be the best exponent in the tribe. To see her mounted on a little rough-haired pony, with her

falcon, the size of the English goshawk, perched on her right wrist, both eagerly scanning the country in search of game, took one back to baronial days in England when knights and their ladies went forth to the chase as the Kirghiz do on the Pamir uplands to-day.

As regards big game sport is limited, for wolves have caused havoc amongst the *Ovis poli*. During the summer months, when the Kirghiz move to the higher ground where the pasturage is superior, the wolves subsist largely upon the sheep, and although dogs guard the flocks they are often outwitted by the wolves. The latter are constantly roaming the valleys and ever on the watch for an opportunity to levy toll. With the advent of winter, when the flocks move into cold-weather quarters, the wolves turn their attention to the *Ovis poli* and ibex. In this they display remarkable cunning, and work on a plan of campaign that is almost human in its detail and the manner in which it is carried out. A herd of *poli* is marked down and the wolves then proceed to encircle them. Deep snow and the converging movements necessitated make the task a long one, possibly the whole day, but when the cordon is finally drawn round the herd and all possible avenues of escape are closed, the wolves set up a prolonged howling with the object of inducing the herd to concentrate, when it will be easier for the hunters to get within closer touch by drawing in the cordon. The herd is then shouldered off to where the snow lies in drifts and is therefore difficult for the *poli* to get through. By this time they are more or less panic-stricken, and in their frantic endeavours to break away are heavily handicapped in the deep snow,

and become a comparatively easy prey for the wolves to pull down. During my several visits to the Pamirs I have encountered numbers of *poli* heads and horns lying along the valleys and shale slopes, silent witnesses of the devastation wrought by wolves and the hunting Kirghiz.

CHAPTER III

Through the Gez defile to the plains of Chinese Turkistan—Hazardous crossings—Kashgaria and its history—The Amir Yakub Mohammed Beg—An amazing career—Chinese reconquer Turkistan—A record march—Mysterious end of Yakub Beg—His harem of beautiful women—Some amusing anecdotes—Administration of Turkistan—The system of examination—Chinese colonial government—How to get rich quick—The priesthood—Municipal divisions—The powers of light and darkness in league against the public—The Commander-in-Chief and the military system—A resourceful doctor—An earthquake and a cat's remarkable instinct.

ON leaving the Roof of the World, the track enters the Gez defile, at the north-eastern end of the valley of Bulun Kul. At the latter place is a mud fort garrisoned by a mixed detachment of forty-six Chinese and Kirghiz soldiers. The number varies with the necessity of the moment, being temporarily increased in 1920 to 130 men, in deference to my representations to the Chinese authorities on the subject of Bolshevik movements, coupled with the activities of an Afghan mission then on the Sino-Afghan frontier. This was under the guidance of a renegade Indian, Mahendra Pertab, a dangerous revolutionary, who had been to Berlin and was naturally *persona grata* at Moscow. The story of this man's machinations with Afghanistan, the part he played in the great Bolshevik scheme for the 'emancipation' of the East and the undermining and destruction of British dominion in Asia, are fully dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

Below the fort of Bulun Kul the valley widens out,

and there is a large lake seven miles long by an average of two miles in width, shallow in places and resembling a huge marsh rather than a lake. At the north-eastern corner, and commanding the entrance to the Gez defile, is another Chinese fort now in ruins. It is finely situated upon a promontory jutting out from the lake, whilst above it is a vista of lofty peaks with a field of ice that completes a picture of alpine beauty.

The Gez River flows out of the lake and enters a deep narrow gorge, the track being strewn with rocks and stones in chaotic confusion. Occasionally it climbs high up the mountain side and along precipitous ledges, anon descending to the river bed, where it crosses a rushing torrent that swirls and tumbles like a millrace over boulders and jagged rocks. Here one must ford the river, a difficult and hazardous operation, lasting, with luck, only a few minutes, but which seems to be a lifetime. At points where the rush and volume of the water precludes all chance of fording, the Chinese have constructed bridges on a primitive cantilever principle, across which horses can only be led singly and with great care, for the crazy structures rock and sway in the most alarming manner. Another, and far more nerve-racking form of bridge, is that consisting of two trees thrown across the river, a foot or two above the water. On these brushwood is laid without any supporting spars or cross-pieces, nor is it secured in any way, but large flat stones are placed on top and the bridge is complete. Thus does a consular officer and political resident risk life and limb when on tour as a warden of the marches.

After sixty-five miles through these rocky canyons the track emerges on to the plains of Chinese

Turkistan, a new world that is in striking contrast to the wind-swept uplands of the Pamirs.

Chinese Turkistan is a land of oases, the arable parts being limited to the rivers and streams and a narrow belt running along the foot-hills of the mountain ranges. This belt is of no great width, but it marks the cultivable area, and is rendered fertile by the presence of rivers and streams brought to bear on the land by a system of irrigation worthy of explanation in detail. The rivers are taken at the point where they issue from the mountains and are then divided into main streams, these, in turn, being split into canals and minor channels at the different villages and hamlets, whence the water is diverted on to the land. It will thus be seen that irrigation is the mainstay in the economic life of the country and the water question the leading topic of interest.

Quite a large percentage of the cases that come up for hearing in the Consular and Mixed Courts originate from disputes over the water supply, and the surreptitious methods employed by cultivators and others to intercept the flow and secure a greater share than is their due. Throughout the spring and summer months the villager must be constantly on the watch, especially during the night, to prevent his supply of water being cut off by unscrupulous neighbours. These water feuds occasionally develop into open hostility between villages and hamlets, but with that patience and sagacity characteristic of their race the Chinese have, as far as possible, removed the cause of potential trouble by allotting certain days for the canals and waterways to supply specified areas.

From the Gez defile one rides for forty-two miles

across the plains to Kashgar, through a succession of orchards and cornfields, interspersed with little sandy stretches that have not yet been connected up with the main oasis.

The track gradually broadens into a rough road along which it is possible, though not comfortable, for country carts to travel. Anon it becomes a narrow lane flanked by tall trees of willow and poplar, usually in double lines, between which is a canal of running water. At intervals these canals cross the roadway by a bed that has solid earthen banks forming miniature water jumps for one's horse. Sometimes the canal is spanned by a bridge of rough-hewn planks, or trees and logs thrown transversely and covered with branches and earth. Farmhouses and dwellings, singly and in groups, dot the landscape: low-pitched structures of mud and beams, generally without windows and devoid of architectural beauty. I should remark that the one essential idea of house construction has been retained throughout China and Central Asia, and so the profession of architect is unknown. The same plan governing the construction of every house is followed with a constancy that gives it the aspect of a moral principle revealed from Heaven, and handed down through all the ages for the architectural guidance of the people.

Most of the houses have a courtyard and verandah embowered in trees, where in the warm weather the women sit and weave the rough but durable white cloth of Turkistan.

The landscape, such as I have endeavoured to describe, is typical of Central Asian travelling, consisting of alternate stretches of oasis and desert, for

the area in question may be characterised as a desert traversed by rivers, which afford the requisite incentive to vegetation and the creation of cultivated lands.

Geographically Chinese Turkistan may also be compared to an undulating plain of which the slope is gradual towards the east, the elevation averaging four thousand feet. It is enclosed on the north, west, and south by lofty mountains, and eastward of the oases deserts and sand-dunes shut in the province. Once beyond the rivers and settlements, only these sand-dunes are seen, with scanty vegetation and no sign of animal life. The Raskum Daria, which rises in the glaciers of the Karakoram Mountains to the north of India, becomes the Yarkand River on entering the plains of Turkistan, whence it follows an easterly course and, under the name of Tarim, flows on until lost in the extensive swamps and lagoons of the Lob Nor country south of Kuchar.

Viewed for the first time, the oases present a pleasing picture of foliage and prosperity, but the trees are of little value as timber and useful only for fuel and to give shade. They are principally willow, poplar, and elm, with mulberry, walnut, and a great variety of fruit trees for which Turkistan is celebrated. The houses dotting the landscape are widely scattered, except in the towns and villages, corn, cotton, and other fields lying between them and so giving the aspect of innumerable farmsteads.

Kashgaria comprises the most important oasis, and Kashgar itself is, from our point of view, the political hub, although commercially it is surpassed by Yarkand, the latter place being the trade emporium for India and adjacent countries. Before dealing with the

political aspect and importance of Kashgar I propose to give a brief history of it, with special reference to Yakub Beg, whose rise to power in Chinese Turkistan during the sixties of last century, and the influence he exerted upon the country, form one of the most romantic pages in Central Asian history.

Many wars and revolutions have disturbed the peace and prosperity of Central Asia, and with the Russian advance in 1860 determined opposition arose. At the same time a rising amongst the Mohammedans in Western China broke out, the infection of which rapidly spread to Kashgaria, where the population is ninety-four per cent. Mohammedan. The Chinese were overwhelmed and the Mohammedan star seemed in the ascendant, when internecine warfare ensued, and the resultant anarchy and chaos had a far-reaching effect upon the history of Kashgar. This brought about the advent of Yakub Beg, who was born in Kokand across the border in Russian Turkistan and had commenced life as a dancing boy. He might have continued as such, and perhaps have risen to the proprietorship of a dancing saloon, but for the marriage of his young and pretty sister with a rich and influential Kokandian. Yakub Beg, through the latter's influence, entered the service of Buzurg Khan, the Chief of Kokand, and, by dint of great energy and administrative capacity, rose to the command of the Khan's army. The Russian tentacles were then spreading over Central Asia and had already reached the borders of Kokand, that state being subdued after a brief but heroic resistance.

Prior to this Buzurg Khan had devoted attention to Kashgar, the revolution offering an opportunity to

extend his power and territory, and after some negotiation he was proclaimed King of Kashgar in 1865. Strong opposition confronted him from rival factions in Aksu, Yarkand, and Khotan, but they were overcome, and his supremacy was established in Kashgaria. In the meantime, while Buzurg Khan was engaged in a campaign to oust the Russians from his own state of Kokand, Yakub Beg, an opportunist and adventurer, gradually usurped the power and finally induced Buzurg Khan, who had given way to drink and every kind of debauchery, to proceed on a pilgrimage to Mecca, when he himself assumed full power and authority. This successful stroke led to his recognition by neighbouring states and to his appointment as Atalik Ghazi by the Amir of Bokhara in 1866, whilst he himself assumed the title of the Bedaulat, or Fortunate One, by which name he is still remembered in Turkistan.

In those stormy days we were apprehensive of Russian designs and of her steady advance in Central Asia and consolidation of power along the frontiers of Afghanistan. It was therefore decided to conclude an agreement with Yakub Beg, who, after a few years' campaigning, had brought all Southern Chinese Turkistan under his control. Moreover, he had acquired such a commanding position that the British Government determined to despatch a diplomatic and commercial mission to the new ruler whose activities had brought him into the arena of Asian politics and made him a power to be reckoned with along the northern frontier of India.

The embassy in question left India in 1873, being headed by Mr. Douglas Forsyth, who was subsequently

knighted for his services, and numbered amongst its members Surgeon - Captain Bellew, a consummate scholar in trans-frontier languages and lore.

The treaty agreed upon was never concluded, for Yakub Beg was compelled by the advance of the Chinese to hasten eastwards and meet the avenging force which had set out from Peking to recover the lost province. The march of this army across China to the reconquest of Turkistan affords a remarkable example of Chinese tenacity and patience, and is worthy of mention. General Tang was appointed to the command, a nondescript force was given him, and with this and a few general instructions he set out for the goal four thousand miles to the west.

As long as they were in a more or less inhabited area the army lived on the country, but once beyond the confines of comparative civilisation this was no longer possible, for no supply and transport service existed, and the commissariat needs could not be met by daily requisitions on the districts passed through. But General Tang was equal to the occasion. He collected and halted his scattered and roving army, marked out the ground around their camps into plots, the sword, gun, and lance were laid aside, and in their place were taken up the spade and plough. The ground was prepared, seeds of cereals and vegetables were sown, and in the fulness of time the crops were garnered, and with renewed supplies the army resumed its march ; the same procedure being adopted in the following year, until the goal was reached and Turkistan again brought under the Imperial sway.

With the fall of Yakub Beg the Chinese strengthened their hold upon the country, and having recognised

that the main feature in the rebellion had been the mobility of Yakub Beg's forces, they practically denuded the province of horses and deprived the people of their one great asset.

They also reversed their usual policy of vengeance and repression; the inhabitants were well treated, the rights to property and land respected, and a spirit of peace and contentment amongst the people was inaugurated. To their restraint at this period has been mainly due the peaceful and undisturbed possession which they have since enjoyed.

The exact circumstances of Yakub Beg's death, following on the final occupation of Kashgar by the Chinese, have never been accurately determined, nor could one of his daughters, who lived in Kashgar and whom I interrogated on the subject, throw any light upon it. Some curious stories are extant concerning his demise, one asserting that in a fit of temper he attacked one of his ministers, who cut him down with his sword. Another, and generally accepted version, is that when Yakub Beg saw that all was lost he filled two cups of identical pattern with tea, placed poison in one of them, and going into an adjoining room, called a servant and told him to bring one of the cups, which Yakub Beg emptied—and died. So ended the career of this remarkable man, and with it Chinese dominion became paramount in Turkistan.

When at the zenith of his power the Amir Yakub Beg maintained a large household, in addition to a harem of three hundred women of varied beauty and attractions, of whom four were always selected to accompany him on his tours. Like many Orientals he had a sense of humour, which was evi-

denced at the reception of the Forsyth Mission on its arrival from India. Included amongst the staff was a piper from a Highland regiment, who, arrayed in the full dress of those *corps d'élite*, gave a musical display at the audience, the sequel to which was a protest lodged by the Amir against the appearance of the Highlander in the royal presence without his trousers on.

This little incident calls to mind two quaint stories in connection with Yakub Beg's friend and neighbour, the late Amir of Afghanistan, who visited India whilst I was serving on the north-west frontier. They show that the Central Asian has a sense of humour and is not without the gift of repartee.

In the course of a drive round the cantonments and residential quarters of Peshawar, his host, the British Commissioner, remarked that here the ladies went unveiled and were not subject to the restrictions and seclusion which obtained in Mohammedan countries. 'Yes,' remarked the Amir, 'you keep your pretty women at home ; so do we.'

On another occasion he was entertained by a Highland regiment, and in accordance with custom the pipers passed round the dining-room in procession towards the end of the dinner, finally taking post in rear of the commanding officer and his distinguished guest, to the tune of a skirl that well-nigh blew the roof off. At the close of this ear-splitting ordeal the host commented on the love of music in Afghanistan, where there is a variety of bagpipe, and the pleasure the Amir must have felt on hearing the pipes again. 'Yes, indeed,' said the Afghan with a smile, 'but one would have been enough.'

It will now be of interest to deal in detail with the

system of Chinese colonial government, which throws many remarkably interesting sidelights on their conception of rule in remote parts of the empire.

Having re-established their authority the Chinese introduced a number of drastic changes in the administration and organisation of Turkistan. Instead of constituting it a military colony it was accorded the status of a province and styled the New Dominion, being placed under the Viceroy of Kansu, a province whose borders march with those of Turkistan. The direct administration was, however, effected by a Governor subordinate to Kansu with headquarters at Urumchi, fifty-four marches north-east of Kashgar.

The governmental machine as then constituted did not differ materially from that now obtaining; the grades only have undergone revision, as the outcome of the revolution in 1912.

In 1913 Chinese Turkistan was definitely constituted as a separate province, and its control was vested in a Governor who is nominally responsible to the Central Government in Peking. It is divided into six circuits, each presided over by an Intendant or Taoyin, who is the administrator thereof and supervises the customs and collection and transmission of revenue. The Taoyin is the important official from our point of view, for he is the pivot on which all business outside the territorial administration turns. Formerly the Intendants were appointed from Peking on the recommendation of the Viceroy of Kansu, but this prerogative is now exercised by the Governor. There are forty-seven districts in the province, each in charge of a magistrate, known locally as an Amban, and who resembles a collector or district officer in India.

The title represents but inadequately his numerous functions, which are educational, judicial, fiscal, and all that pertains to an executive. He is the one official who comes into direct contact with the people, and as the family was the unit of the Chinese nation under the Imperial *régime*, so may the district be considered the unit of the system in the present administration.

The districts are subdivided into areas each controlled by a Beg, known as a Ming Bashi, or head of one thousand households ; a Yuz Bashi, or head of one hundred households ; and an Oan Bashi, or head of ten households, each according to the size and importance of the particular area. To all intents and purposes these Beks control the country, many of them have a good knowledge of Chinese, and each official has one or more attached to his personal staff as interpreter and go-between in his dealings with the people. The officials do not learn the language, are unacquainted with the manners and customs of the Turkis, and consequently lack that sense of local touch and sympathy so essential to the successful government of Oriental races. The Beg, therefore, acquires an exceptionally strong position, and the success of an applicant for justice, or for favour of any kind, is dependent upon the amount of silver dust cast in the eyes of that official.

Public opinion plays an important part in the district magistrate's discharge of his duties, for if he ignores it by an excess of avarice it may react unfavourably upon him. To follow the line of least resistance three conditions must be observed, first of which is law and order, then the collection of taxes imposed

in his district, and lastly the preservation of a spirit of contentment during the process of tax-gathering. Provided questions do not arise out of his administration he is left alone and can exploit his district so long as the above conditions are not violated.

Formerly the higher ranks of the civil service were filled by competitive examination, this system forming a leading feature of Chinese policy. No part of the administration was so carefully organised, and the prize of a literary degree was at once a distinction and a passport to official appointment. The final tests for these degrees were held in Peking, the Emperor presiding in person at the Examination Board. The candidates comprised all those who had survived the eliminating process at the trials held in the various provincial centres. The examination halls were famous throughout China, for within those narrow cells the flower of Chinese literary talent grappled with abstruse problems and posers from the ancient classics, of which a profound knowledge down to the smallest detail was demanded. Each cell measured nine feet long by four feet wide and was of corresponding height, light and necessaries being admitted through a narrow grating in the wall. The candidate was thoroughly searched before entry to ensure that he possessed nothing that might assist him in the coming ordeal. He was then locked in and left there during the week or ten days required for the examination. The questions were such that many of the more highly strung went mad under the strain, for their arrival at the Supreme Examination Hall was the achievement of years of intense study, and now the slightest mistake in composition, or the least fault in

placing a character, would floor the candidate for all time, since he was debarred from ever presenting himself again.

A perusal of some of the examination papers shows the extent to which Confucius and his teachings have dominated Chinese thought and being throughout the ages. The rules of life and conduct enunciated by the sage affect directly and indirectly the well-being of all classes of the Chinese race ; history has no parallel to this teacher whose moral and material influence acts upon a quarter of the human race.

Whatever may have been the demerits of the examination system, it at least assured that an official should be a scholar in style and penmanship. Strange as it may seem, a Chinese official is far more influenced by the manner in which a case is presented than by the merits of the case itself, and an indifferently worded letter or despatch at once prejudices the recipient against the writer, so high is the standard of literary appraisal.

The revolution of 1912 and the transfer from a monarchical to a republican form of government brought in a lower class of men who secure their positions by purchase and by ingratiating themselves with the Governor at Urumchi. This has lowered the standard of general capability and integrity, and many of the precautions formerly in vogue to obviate malfeasance have been swept away. For instance, the term of office in one post was limited to three years, but there are several now serving in Turkistan who have been upwards of six years in their present posts. Further, no official could hold office in the

province of his birth. By such means it was sought to guard against local interests growing up to compete with duty, and especially against territorial attachment which might become the basis of disloyalty. Obviously the system had serious drawbacks, for it is the absence of local and territorial attachment that encourages some of the worst official abuses. Nor in such a short term of office is an official likely to interest himself in, still less to spend money on, local improvements in a place which may know him no more during his career.

A certain number of posts in the highest grades may still be filled from the literary ranks, but undoubtedly the chief factor in Turkistan is now one of money.

In Turkistan, more so than in any other part of China, official and political corruption are rife, due to the extent of territory and the relative difficulty of control, multiplied by the time during which the custom of fraud and peculation has been growing. These would in themselves yield a product adequate to account for the magnitude and methodisation of embezzlement. The root of the evil lies in the fact that officials are practically unpaid, their salaries being quite insufficient for even primary needs. They thus gain all they can for the least possible outlay, and leave their servants and dependents to work out a similar policy. From this simple beginning we can trace the whole system of fraud and peculation, assisted by the knowledge that many begin their careers in debt, having been obliged to pay for their billets with money borrowed at high interest; in addition, they must perforce make expensive presents in money and kind to their

superiors to avoid the risk of adverse report and dismissal.

There are various forms of corruption, and many stories could be told of the wiles and stratagems of civil and military officers for acquiring wealth. There is the case of a certain Amban who maintained a force of five hundred men on his books as the strength of the local garrison, and continued to draw pay, rations, and equipment for that number, whereas in reality he kept but forty-two. This state of affairs lasted for upwards of nine years, until he was discovered—possibly given away by some one dissatisfied with the division of the spoils—and sent for to offer explanations to the Governor. The interview must have been to their mutual satisfaction, since the wayward officer subsequently returned to his post. At another town in Turkistan the Amban had been directed to submit a report to Peking on the musketry training of the force under his command. He therefore paraded the men in the courtyard of his Yamen, or official residence, where the soldiery blazed off their ammunition, the while the general officer commanding sat down and smoked the pipe of peace, and incidentally drafted a musketry report, coupling it with an indent for further supplies of ammunition.

The administration in Turkistan possesses no system of accounts ; officials never render any, and there is no machinery for checking them which would not itself need in turn to be checked. The taxes are farmed and monopolies granted, all of which afford a stimulus to raise the largest possible surplus for the individual. No regard is paid to local improvements, or to objects tending to enhance the value of the district from an

agricultural and economic standpoint. If an official is interested in any undertaking, his sole object is to make it a paying thing for himself; his whole tenor and trend of mind would revolt at the idea of showing regard to the rights and interests of others. This is evidenced in the system of revenue and taxation, which affords many interesting sidelights on Chinese colonial rule. There are regulations fixing the amount of taxes leviable, but these have been so perverted by the methods of embezzlement that one cannot differentiate between the regular and the irregular tax, nor determine what part of the sum collected actually finds its way into the treasury. Then again, no accurate estimate of the incidence of taxation can be formed, for, in addition to the illegal exactions going on, the taxes fixed in one district may in practice differ from those in another, and those levied by one official in any given area may be quite different from the ones imposed by his successor. An example of this is given in the following scheme recently adopted by a local Amban. As a result of the increase in military preparedness which I had recommended in view of unrest along the frontier and Afghan-Bolshevik activities, a large amount of firewood was requisitioned for military purposes, the price of wood being then in British currency about fourpence per eighty pounds' weight. The Amban summoned the Begg and their subordinates, who were sent forth into the highways and byways to effect the required collection, with the result that the price of wood rose to elevenpence, and still not half the requisite amount had been brought in. The people then represented to him that the commandeering of further stocks of fuel must in-

evitably cause hardship to the district, whereupon the Amban displayed a fatherly benevolence, and announced that, as it was far from his intention to cause unnecessary suffering, he would take the balance of fuel outstanding in cash, at the then prevailing rate!

Although the shaking of the pagoda tree is not confined to any particular class, one is nevertheless amazed at the effrontery of those who practise it. Part of the revenue collected from the agricultural classes is taken in grain, and the tax-payer appears on specified dates at the Yamen with his quota of cereals, a fixed amount calculated on the area and productivity of the land. He will, however, be grievously disappointed if he thinks that by bringing this amount he is freed from further obligation. Ordinarily the Yamen scales give comparatively correct measure, but when it comes to an adjustment of the corn tax it is astonishing what an amount is required to induce them to obey the laws of gravity.

Intimately connected with the life of the people, and forming an integral part of the administration, is the position held by the heads of the priesthood. The religious orders have great influence and their counsel is always sought in important matters.

In all the large towns of Turkistan there are three Qazis and one Mufti. The Qazi corresponds to a judge and is usually appointed by the local authority on the recommendation of prominent residents. He exercises his office in a public place, such as the chief mosque or its vicinity, or possibly his own house, to which the public have free access when concerned in litigation. A Mufti is one who expounds the Mohammedan law, and assists the Qazis by supply-

ing them with fatwas, or decisions. He must be well versed in the Quran and Hadis, and in all the works on Mohammedan law, and speaking generally, he fills the *rôle* of legal adviser. Under the Chinese none of these offices is necessarily hereditary, although it is usual in Mohammedan countries for them to pass from father to son.

In addition to his magisterial duties the Qazi attends weddings and funerals, performing the requisite ceremonies in conjunction with the Imam, or priest. A Qazi also acts as a notary public and attests legal documents, payment being made by clients according to their status and the nature and extent of the transaction covered by the document. With such conservative people as the Turkis, it is not surprising that they are largely ruled in their private lives by the priesthood, and they prefer to have their cases settled in the Qazis' court in accordance with ancient custom rather than take them to the Yamen, where so much silver dust has to be scattered before the applicant can obtain a hearing.

With regard to the maintenance of law and order some curious customs exist peculiar to Chinese provincial government. As a general rule each city and town is surrounded by a wall with four gateways corresponding to the points of the compass. Within are four quarters subdivided into wards, each under a pashrab, a minor official similar to a thanadar, or sub-inspector of police, in India. The pashrab is assisted by chakardas, or police-sergeants, under whom are watchmen perambulating the streets at night. None of these individuals is paid by the State, but they are authorised to collect a small fixed sum from every

shopkeeper in their ward on the weekly bazaar day. All those who attend the bazaar from the outlying districts for the purposes of trade are subject to the same levy.

A ward numbers from fifty to eighty houses and has one watchman allotted to it ; each householder pays a small fixed sum monthly to the watchman, who in addition is entitled to a commission when a house or any immovable property is sold within his ward. In the bazaar and commercial quarters each shopkeeper pays an additional sum weekly to the watchman for the provision of oil for lighting purposes. Should there be any default in payment, or the sums due be in arrears, the police and watchmen have their own methods of bringing the delinquents to book, either by ignoring the house or shop, or, in an extreme case, when this has failed to achieve the desired result, by the simple arrangement of a burglary !

It will be seen that the police and watchmen are paid by the public, but they are also paid by the thieves and the gambling community, so that we have the phenomenon of the two powers of light and darkness in league against the public. It not infrequently happens that the police are themselves the receivers of stolen goods and play the leading part in the division of the spoils. I had a case a short time ago of theft from one of the British subjects, a shopkeeper in Yarkand, in which I followed up several clues without success. My intelligence service then intimated that it might be useful to examine the house of a certain policeman, which I decided, after the exercise of considerable care and circumspection, to have carried out ; and there the greater part of the stolen property was

discovered. This man had actually been selected by the local authorities to run down the criminals and secure the return of the stolen goods. He showed great zeal in this pursuit of himself, but, of course, made no headway.

The administration in Turkistan does not provide for the poor and indigent, but from this it must not be concluded that there are no poor and that the mendicant is unknown. On the contrary, throughout the province there are gangs of beggars who constitute an element in the population of towns and villages. Formerly the Chinese authorities allotted special quarters to them, but this no longer obtains, and they live anywhere in the city or town and on its outskirts. The mazars, or shrines, particularly that of the shrine of Hazrat Apak, the last of the mullah kings of Kashgar, who died in 1690, are favourite haunts. In Kashgar the begging fraternity differs from that of other places by reason of the importance of its domicile, for its leader possesses an estate near the city, and is regarded by his followers as their spiritual leader, periodical offerings being made to him.

As the begging class is one that might be a danger to the State, the Chinese, who are an eminently practical race, place it under the control of a headman appointed by the local magistrate. This man is held responsible for the good conduct of the ragged army committed to his charge, and enjoys considerable power in connection with his office. He reports periodically to the governing authority, and arranges with shopkeepers for the payment of a fixed sum monthly to his followers, thus saving merchants and traders from being pestered during business hours. Should there be any

refusal to pay the sum in question, the beggars soon bring the refractory one to a sense of his obligations. A dirty and dishevelled party will appear and demand alms. Their odoriferous presence scares away customers, potential buyers cannot get anywhere near the shop even if they wish, whilst traffic is held up and all business is at a standstill. If the shopkeeper still proves obdurate his resistance is countered by an increase in the number of importunates, who press their demands for charity until nothing can be heard above the din. Finally he is forced to capitulate and the beggars retire with flying colours.

Soon after calling on the civil officials I paid my first visit to the Titai, or Commander-in-Chief in Chinese Turkistan, whose headquarters were at Pokkalik, eighteen miles from Kashgar. It will therefore be of interest, before proceeding with the state call, to give an account of the military forces in Turkistan as controlled by this despotic chieftain, who came to a tragic end in the summer of 1924.

Ma Titai, who was 73 at the time of his death, was a Tungan, or Chinese Mohammedan, one of a race whose origin still lacks scientific determination. Born in Yunnan, the son of a farmer, he took part in various disturbances and upheavals common to the more turbulent portions of the Celestial Empire. He was in Turkistan when the Manchu dynasty was overthrown in 1911, and his forceful personality soon commended itself to Yang the Governor as a means to stamp out the rebellion which threatened the safety of that province.

In the revolt at Urumchi on the fall of the Monarchy wholesale arrests were made, heads were struck off

indiscriminately, and finally, by a succession of drastic measures, the rising was suppressed.

Outbreaks originating amongst the soldiers and members of secret societies, known locally as the 'Gamblers,' are of periodical occurrence, and just before I left Kashgar on leave the Governor had disposed of two prominent men whom he suspected of plotting against him. Both were invited to dinner at the Yamen. In the course of the meal the Governor left the room, and this being the pre-arranged signal for an attack on one of the suspects, he was cut down from behind with swords. The body was dragged out, and traces of the ghastly crime having been removed, the Governor returned, took his place at table, and the dinner was resumed. Shortly afterwards he again got up and went out; this time the remaining guest realised that he too was doomed, and although making a desperate resistance, was literally hacked to pieces by the expert swordsmen who had played the double *rôle* of waiters and executioners.

Just prior to this tragedy the President of China, Yuan Shi Kai, had deemed it advisable to replace Yang by appointing the Taoyin of Kashgar to the Governorship, but this did not meet with the approval of the 'Gamblers,' who early one morning invaded the Yamen, and entering the bedroom where the Taoyin was asleep with his wife, awoke both with 'Greetings, your Excellency,' and then despatched them with swords. Order was subsequently restored, one or two of the Chinese officials took refuge in the Consulate, but nothing further occurred and matters soon resumed their normal course.

In such an atmosphere of battle, murder, and

sudden death did one live in Kashgar during those stormy days from 1918 to 1922, a strenuous period of Central Asian history, and I often wondered, when returning from a visit or a dinner party, if my host and the leading guests would be alive on the morrow and pass safely through the cyclonic disturbances that continually menaced us.

Ma Titai, the Commander-in-Chief, arrived in Kashgar in 1917. It was widely known that he had been the main instrument in stamping out the rebellion, and so he was received with becoming awe. In accordance with recognised custom he set about amassing wealth for himself, and to this end engaged with great energy in the exploitation of the oil wells in the Kashgar district. Now, these deposits cover extensive areas, the oil and petrol being of proved quality. I have dealt in detail elsewhere with the oil and other mineral resources of Turkistan, for their development would open up a wide field for commercial enterprise. To assist the Titai in his ventures I secured him the services of an engineer, a Swede, who had formerly been employed in a somewhat similar capacity in Ferghana, but, a refugee from the Bolsheviks, had come to Yarkand. The Titai, soon after appointment as Commander-in-Chief, approached the Bolshevik representatives in Ferghana with a view to securing machinery, the means then at his disposal being primitive in the extreme and capable only of producing a very limited quantity of oil. The Bolsheviks were quite ready to supply the required plant and said they would have it personally escorted to Kashgar. The negotiations had been secretly conducted by the Titai, but all the same I was aware of them through my

agents, and therefore pointed out to him that the advantages to be gained were out of all proportion to the danger incurred in thus permitting free access to these dangerous fanatics to stir up strife and anarchy. The Titai agreed with me, and so the Bolsheviks were again checkmated.

As Commander-in-Chief the Titai exercised a despotic rule, occasionally turning his attention to civil matters, and interfering with the local magistrates and governors of districts. A short time since an unusual number of thefts in the Kashgar district caused him to round up all the suspects and known criminals. As a precautionary measure, to prevent their moving about freely and so getting into mischief, their ankles were slit, a knife being thrust through and the tendons cut. They were thus crippled for life and an effectual stop put to potential evil-doing, the warning also having its effect upon other malefactors.

The Titai's rule over his household was as drastic as that in the army. One morning a girl of fourteen, the maidservant of one of his wives, was brought to him on a complaint from her mistress that she had given some offence. The old tyrant settled the case without further inquiry by having half the poor girl's tongue cut off. Another day a small boy was caught stealing a jacket from the kitchen where he worked, and on this coming to the knowledge of the Titai, an order was given for the fingers of the boy's right hand to be cut off.

The Chinese military system as evidenced in Turkistan is of an antiquity that takes us back to the days before the standing armies of Europe. The weapons of the soldiery vary from blunderbusses and magazine

rifles of Russian manufacture to spears, lances, and battle-axes, the guns and rifles being usually in such an advanced state of neglect that the order to fire would doubtless require a few days' notice. A cheery warrior at headquarters assured me that he had forgotten the last occasion on which he had fired or cleaned his rifle, but he thought it would be all right as he had stuffed the barrel with rags!

The uniform is simplicity itself, for it consists merely of jacket and trousers, and by turning the former inside out it becomes civilian dress. There are no supply, administrative, or medical services, and with the army on the march it is a question of the survival of the fittest. Nothing is attempted in the way of tactical instruction, nor are the troops subject to training of any kind, beyond a few simple exercises in the handling of arms.

Military science is still in a primitive state in China, and the means to combat and destroy one's opponent are in proportion to the amount of hard cash that one side can offer the other. There are original examples of this in the present civil war, when one of the provincial aspirants to power issued a scale of payments to be made for surrenders to his side. The equivalent of ten thousand pounds was offered for his adversary, dead or alive, for a battalion a similar sum together with corresponding rank. A field gun or an aeroplane were appraised at four thousand pounds, and so on down to the simple soldier, who commanded a ten-pound note.

Most of the local army was employed in the task of tapping the oil wells, a novel mode of utilising the military forces of a state, but then there is no account-

ing for policy and procedure in Turkistan. This local army is ostensibly maintained for the provision of garrisons on and in the vicinity of the frontier, and the returns of the War Board in Peking would probably indicate the presence of considerable forces at the salient points; but the true relation between the actual and the paper strength of a Chinese unit is so indeterminate that it would be impossible to form a reliable estimate even with those returns available. For instance, I was assured that the garrison of Ulugchat, on the frontier of Russian Turkistan, five days from Kashgar, was up to a strength of 500 men, but I was only able to verify the presence of 140 as the actual garrison of that important post. The discrepancy was pointed out and the deficiency made up.

In order to cope with Bolshevik activity, and counter their determined and persistent attempts to gain a footing in Chinese Turkistan for their designs against India, I paid a flying visit to the Turgat Pass, ninety miles north of Kashgar, another route by which the Bolsheviks could enter Chinese territory. Here the Chinese had promised me that the garrison should be maintained at a minimum of 120, which I considered was the least they ought to have in view of all the circumstances, but only an under-officer and thirteen men were in evidence. The full number would, of course, be shown in the returns, and their pay and allowances duly drawn and devoted to charitable purposes. These instances, of which there were many, are indicative of the unremitting care and watchfulness required over the long land frontier, for the safety of India and the Indian borderland was

determined largely by what might eventuate through Central Asia and especially Chinese Turkistan.

There is a humorous side to the military administration, and I had an example of this on my visit to Pokkalik. As already stated, there is no medical service, neither are there limitations to those who aspire to become doctors, and any one may set up as a healer of all the ills to which the flesh is heir. A week or two prior to my visit I had discharged for inefficiency a groom who shortly afterwards went out to Pokkalik and set up as a medical man amongst the Titai's army. As I passed through the market-place at headquarters I noticed the erstwhile groom presiding over a stall well stocked with herbs and sundry medical potions. Quite a crowd of soldiers, civilians, and women was assembled at this, his consulting-room and dispensary, and before dealing out the medicines he examined the patient's wrist and tongue, which he had often seen my assistant-surgeon do when employed at the Consulate. Then he glanced through a book in his hand, and followed this up by a selection of medicines as if in accordance with what was laid down in the volume. I was curious to see that book, and had it brought to me by one of my orderlies, when it turned out to be a copy of one of Guy Boothby's novels that had formerly graced my library!

At the time of my visit the Titai was engaged in improving his headquarters at Pokkalik, and was residing a mile or so outside in a specially organised camp where he received me with much pomp and ceremony. I went out in my uniform of a staff officer with gold epaulettes and a well-mounted escort of

orderlies and attendants, some thirty in all. The Taoyin of Kashgar had placed a fine three-horse Russian carriage at my disposal with an expert driver, who threaded his way through the narrow bazaars and round corners with the speed and *éclat* essential to the occasion. Two miles from the Titai's camp I was met by his eldest son, the general officer commanding at Kashgar, and three of his highest officers, with a regiment of cavalry, and to the tune of jingling accoutrements, the blare of trumpets and bugles, and the accompaniment of dense clouds of dust, we swept on in magnificent array to the outskirts of the camp. Here were lines of cavalry through which we passed, the while trumpets and drums dinned forth discordantly, flags and banners were lowered, and swords flashed in the brilliant sunlight. At the far end an infantry guard of honour was drawn up where the Titai, dressed in a long robe of yellow silk, and wearing a grey slouch hat, received me cordially and conducted me beneath a large awning where a table was set in the centre with a chair on either side. The old chief then took the ceremonial tea from an attendant, placing the cups on the table with a reverence that would have done credit to a Cardinal at the High Altar. After the usual exchange of compliments I presented him with a beautiful roll of yellow silk, the Imperial colour under the old *régime*, and one much revered by the official classes, and the conversation then turned to generalities.

Although a Mohammedan he was no believer in temperance, and told me that he never consumed less than a large bottle of wine of his own concoction daily, the ingredients being taken from seventy-four different

herbs. He extolled its invigorating qualities, but, after sampling the beverage, I will say no more than that the taste for it must be an acquired one. He was much interested in forestry and had planted more than one hundred thousand trees in and around Pokkalik. The planting of trees, by the way, is regarded in China as a pious undertaking, and the more trees you plant the nearer your approach to Heaven. When I put in twelve hundred trees in the Consulate gardens and grounds the Taoyin was delighted, and evidently regarded me as one already in possession of the key to perpetual bliss.

On leaving the Titai's camp I was escorted back to Kashgar by a regiment of cavalry and a glittering staff of officers—all to the good of our prestige, an important point in the Orient and one to which constant attention must be paid.

Shortly after this visit a violent earthquake occurred in Kashgar and did considerable damage to the Titai's headquarters. It took place at five o'clock one afternoon, when I was lying down reading, a cat being asleep on my bed at the time. The first shock caused the pictures to shake and the furniture to rattle, upon which the cat leaped from the bed and in a single bound sprang through the open window, a remarkable instance of animal instinct. Needless to say I followed suit, and as I descended on to the verandah outside, a large building on the far side of the river collapsed with a crash amidst clouds of dust. Beyond a few cracks in the ceilings, the Consulate suffered no damage, but more than a hundred buildings in the city were laid low.

CHAPTER IV

The races and tribes of Chinese Turkistan—A Tungan (Chinese Mohammedan) renaissance—Islam and its introduction into Central Asia—Education amongst the Turkis—In the bazaars—Veiled ladies—Kashgar restaurants and tea-shops—Caste: the bane of India—Sport amongst the Turkis—Fine horsemanship—Music in Turkistan—Extraordinary appreciation of musical charm—Social life in Chinese Turkistan—Much-married ladies—A paradise for pretty girls—The fate of unfaithful belles—The Lob Nor country—Back to the dawn of history—A love chase.

HAVING given an historical sketch, I will deal briefly with the various tribes and races met with in Chinese Turkistan. Ethnographically the people are worthy of study, for they are of diverse elements; it is believed that Turkistan was originally inhabited by Aryan tribes, but that in the second century of the Christian era races of Mongolian origin appeared and either drove out the aborigines or mingled with them, and so formed the race now inhabiting Turkistan.

Traces are also found of the Arabs who invaded the country in the eighth century; indeed, right down through the ages we find that Turkistan, and Central Asia in general, is in a large measure the cradle of the human race. The Asiatic influence has been felt in Europe and particularly in Russia, where there is evidence of the Asiatic strain, whilst the major portion of Spain was at one time under Asian dominion, and it is represented in Africa by the religion and civilisation of the Moors. This cradle from which came

warring castes and creeds is now in a state of quiescence and apathy and no progress has been made towards the ideals of Western democracy, nor is there any indication of a definite move being initiated for political and economic power.

The leading elements in the population are Aryan and Mongol, the majority of the races being of Turkish origin, and they may be divided into two classes, the settled or urban people of the plains and the nomads of the hills and mountain tracts. In the former are included the Chinese, Tungans (Chinese Mohammedans), Turkis, or Sarts as they are styled by the Russians, Taranchis, Dulanis, Indians, and those from the border states of northern India. In the nomadic portion we have the Kirghiz, Kalmuks, Kazaks, Tajiks, and Mongols.

Although Turkistan is under Chinese dominion the Celestial element totals only six per cent. and is either official or commercial but seldom resident, Turkistan being regarded by the Chinese much in the same light as the Russians viewed Siberia—a land for the exile and outcast; and the fact that it was originally colonised by the criminal classes has placed it in an unfavourable light.

The people are mainly Turkis, a mixture of the original inhabitants of Central Asia, the Tajiks, with their Turanian conquerors, the Usbegs. The Turkis are engaged in agriculture and commerce, and are Mohammedans of the Sunni sect, many of them belonging to the Sufi order. Sart is the Russian name for the urban population, but it has no ethnographical significance.

I have already described the Kirghiz and will leave

a description of the Kalmuks and Kazaks to a later chapter dealing with these interesting tribes and their country.

The Tungans are Mohammedans and an important political element in Chinese Turkistan. With the appointment of the late Commander-in-Chief a Tungan renaissance was feared, but nothing has eventuated to cause apprehension in that respect.

The origin of the Tungans is still in doubt, even the term Tungan is undefined, and opinions differ as to whether they sprang from the Uighurs, who were settled in the adjacent provinces of Kansu and Shensi many centuries ago, or came from lands farther afield. Be that as it may, they assumed the Chinese dress, manners, and customs, but preserved the Islamic religion of which they have always been adherents, albeit not very strict ones. The Tungans form the bulk of the population around the towns of Karashahr, Turfan, and Urumchi in the north-east, the number being about twenty-six thousand, of which some four thousand five hundred are in the Kashgar district.

In the early days of Bolshevism, when such strenuous efforts were exerted from Moscow to bring about revolution throughout Asia and foster the idea of Pan-Islamism, Asia for the Asiatics and India for the Indians, I kept a close watch on the Tungans as the aggressive and martial element in the country. In the neighbouring province of Kansu the Tungans numbered about three and a quarter millions and were under the leadership of Ma-an-Liang, who was responsible for the truce ending the rebellion against the Chinese in 1877. This truce was, however, valid

only during his lifetime, and as Ma-an-Liang died in 1919, and because of rivalry and ill-feeling between the Tungans and Chinese, one naturally expected a recrudescence of trouble, especially when linked with such powerful agitation as the Bolsheviks were bringing to bear. Ma-an-Liang had exercised a restraining influence over his followers, but it was by no means certain that his successor would be equally fortunate. Mohammedan strength and influence in Kansu had increased of late years, and they were now in possession of arms, ammunition, and funds, whilst the inculcation of Moslem principles amongst the Chinese population was proceeding apace. Moreover, a school for the spreading of Pan-Islamic ideals had been opened at Lanchow, the capital, and Chinese pupils attending the Moslem schools were granted free education and rewarded with gifts of clothing. Thus everything was done to favour the Tungan cause, but, as will be seen later, the moment was not opportune and the anticipated upheaval did not materialise.

Reverting to the Turkis, it cannot be said that they collectively show strict adherence to the Quran and its principles, although, on the other hand, they have considerable reverence for certain religious orders and a number of saints who are the object of festivals and other observances. Religious feeling in Chinese Turkistan does not play the cultural *rôle* which it did when Islam was first introduced as a rival to Buddhist influence and the local animistic religion. At that time, under the direction of Iranian culture, Islam meant the development of science and art, literature and architecture, but the theologians of to-day have eliminated from the faith all that is at variance with

conservatism and the Moslem written law—the Shariat. Although Islam first came into Turkistan during the tenth century, it was not until four hundred years later that it had spread amongst the masses, and we know that in the thirteenth century Christianity, especially Nestorian, was still a strong rival to the Mohammedan faith throughout Central Asia.

With regard to education, there is a general lack of secular instruction throughout the country. Even in more flourishing times the Turkis were never remarkable for intelligence. The various countries of Asia, such as Arabia, Persia, and India, have produced warriors, poets, and savants, and even from among the nomad Mongols great conquerors have arisen leaving undying fame, but nothing intellectual has emanated from Chinese Turkistan, on whose people is settled an ignorance and a want of everything ideal. The Kashgaris, and the people generally, show no tendency towards advancement and they rest content in their present condition, evincing no desire to improve it.

Existing educational facilities are only partially developed, and the majority of children do not attend school at all. Those whose parents possess the requisite means attend a maktab, the native school to be found in almost every street, and controlled by a mullah, or priest. It will thus be seen that the children come under religious influence and the sway of the priestly class from the outset, which explains the hold the latter have upon the people.

There are schools attached to most of the mosques, but with the exception of reading, writing, and mechanical teaching of the Quran, of which the pupils

are taught to recite whole passages by heart, practically nothing is learnt, and even the teachers are comparatively ignorant. The pupils sit on the ground, at desks made of logs roughly hewn into shape, and they sing whatever is set for study, in accordance with the theory that the mind absorbs knowledge through the ears rather than by the eyes. There is an interval at midday for a frugal meal of bread and fruit, after which the singing is resumed in the same shrill tone until the school closes at sunset.

A few years ago the Chinese took up the education question, and money was expended on the provision of schools with the idea of encouraging the study of Chinese methods. The syllabus was laid down on Celestial lines, but with such a conservative people the effort was foredoomed to failure, and the schools are now deserted, interest in them on the part of the Chinese officials who had the unwelcome task of booming the scheme having evaporated.

Foreign educational enterprise has hitherto made little or no impression on the country. Since the Chinese closed the Russian Consulate-General in Kashgar it has been confined to the Swedish missionary stations in Kashgar, Yangi Hissar, and Yarkand, each place having a school attended by boys and girls who are either orphans or of humble parentage.

In 1915, during the *régime* of my predecessor, Sir George Macartney, a school was opened in Kashgar under Turkish auspices, the headmaster being one Ahmed Kamal, with some Turks as his assistants. The motive force behind this educational scheme was, apparently, the encouragement of Pan-Islamic ideas and the recognition of the Sultan of Turkey as the

spiritual and temporal head of the Turanian races. The curriculum was based on the Turkish model: the children saluted the portrait of the Sultan on entering the school, paying a similar honour to that of Anwar Pasha, who was then in the Ottoman forefront.

Ahmed Kamal also opened a girls' school where reading, writing, sewing, and singing were taught, evidently recognising women's interest in social and political matters and realising that the young girls of to-day may be the electorate of to-morrow, even in conservative Turkistan.

With the entry of China into the war my predecessor, with that tact and ability which characterised all his actions throughout the long period of twenty-eight years during which he represented the British Government in Central Asia, induced the Chinese to close the schools, and the staff were interned at Urumchi, fifty-four marches north-east of Kashgar.

In Yarkand there are several colleges, if one may so style them, where the subjects embrace a comprehensive study of the Quran, Islamic law, a crude knowledge of medical art, and a superficial study of accounts. Each college or madrassah is endowed with lands set aside by pious Moslems, expenditure on upkeep being met by the levy of a nominal fee on students attending the college.

The people can be studied to advantage on Thursday, the Kashgar bazaar day and the event of the week. The main and subsidiary bazaars are then crowded with town and country folk, who come in from the surrounding districts laden with the produce of the field and loom and every kind of indigenous manu-

facture. All roads lead to the Kashgar bazaar and they are thronged from early dawn with a motley collection of men, women, and children, nearly all mounted on ponies or donkeys, and making for the area allotted to the sale of particular articles. A constant stream of people passes through the gateways into the city on business bent, a bright and animated crowd in which all classes of Turkis are represented, from the rich and affluent merchant to the importunate beggar who clamours for alms amidst the din of buying and selling. Moving amongst the mixed assembly are Kirghiz from the mountains, truculent Afghans from the border states, Kalmuk hunters, Chinese shopkeepers, Indian traders, and Hindu money-lenders, all intent upon turning the day to good account.

Bazaar day reveals the national costume in all its many colours, that worn by the men being a long coat, reaching to the knees, of bright-coloured cloth or chintz, fastened at the waist with a coloured handkerchief, and trousers of dark material secured by a girdle similar to the European sleeping-suit. These coats have long sleeves which in winter are pulled down over the hands, thus taking the place of gloves. Leather knee-boots, with a detachable slipper that is kicked off on entering a house, and a cloth or velvet cap edged with fur, the headgear common to both men and women, complete the Turki raiment. The feminine dress is somewhat similar, but the ladies of fashion have beautifully embroidered silk waistcoats over short coats, surmounted by a long outer coat, and over all a white muslin cloak reaching to the heels. Attached to that of the women is a

lattice-work veil, usually edged with gold embroidery, which hangs down over the face and gives the seclusion required by Moslem law, but it is often kept thrown back over the cap when the lady is not in view of the Ghiaour.

Jealousy of their women is not so pronounced as amongst the more fanatical Moslem races, where it can attain tragic extremes. I remember the case of a border tribesman who came unawares upon his young and pretty wife holding converse with a neighbour across the wall. Enraged at this, he hacked off the girl's head and threw it over the wall to the man, with the remark that he could now have her for good.

There is little real seclusion as the term is understood in India and other Moslem countries; the women do most of the bargaining, in some cases conduct the shops, and are much in evidence where the passing of coin is concerned. Indeed, they are as critical and exacting in the matter of purchase as their Western sisters.

Here and there in the narrow streets one sees the fortune-tellers, who for a couple of tengas (about one penny) deal out lifelong prosperity to their patrons, whilst the professional letter-writer is quite an institution. He sits cross-legged with pen and paper spread out upon his knees, clients gather round him and narrate the text of documents, petitions, and letters, and the scribe commits it all to writing. Education being at a low ebb in Turkistan, the professional amanuensis comes into his own on market day when the terms of a bargain have to be recorded and deeds of sale drawn up.

Pursuing our way through the bazaar we note

passages leading to open spaces such as a courtyard, with a mosque or rooms arranged along the four sides, the yard filled with a clamouring crowd of merchants, itinerant vendors, and laden camels and donkeys, all contributing to the general commotion.

Many of the bazaars and streets are covered in with reed matting, a welcome protection against the summer heat. Shopping is a comparatively easy matter, for the various trades and professions have their own location, the jewellers and silversmiths in one street, the potters in another, cloth, brocades, shoes and leather each in its own domain where time-honoured custom forbids encroachment.

Tea-shops, with a floor of beaten mud on which the patrons squat, provide refreshment ; the samovar sings merrily, and there is a tiny china teapot with a bowl for each customer. The vendor of meat dumplings and small cakes is there to supplement the tea ; he takes the coin in payment, uses his mouth as a purse, and deals out change therefrom to veiled ladies, solemn-eyed mullahs, and sundry other clients.

Hotels are unknown, but a lodging can be had in the inn, or serai, where camels, carts, horses, and men are cheek by jowl. A type of lodging-house is met with, but beyond a roof, the mud floor, and a fire there is little for the personal comfort of travellers. Owing to the theft of blankets, the proprietor of a Chinese inn of this description installed a large bedspread to cover the entire floor, which was lowered and raised night and morning by musical signal, the four corners being securely fastened to ground pegs.

The usual salutation is a low bow with the hands crossed over the lower part of the body, and on parting

this attitude, accompanied by the bow, is repeated with the grace common to the Turkis.

Turkistan is noteworthy for the absence of caste, which is such a millstone round the neck of the Indian people. Here you may adopt any means of livelihood, whether it be that of a potter, a grocer, or a butcher, and no one will look askance at you.

Caste is the leading feature of social organisation in India and the main obstacle to progress. It probably originated with the Aryan conquerors in the East, who created four castes: the Brahmins or priests, the Rajputs or warriors, the Vaisyas or cultivators and tillers of the soil, and the Sudras of aboriginal descent. These in time became divided into classes and subdivisions. The governing rules are rigid and inflexible: a member of one caste cannot marry into another, they cannot eat together, and to touch food prepared by an inferior is defilement. High-caste Hindus will throw away their food should even the shadow of an inferior pass over it, and they must have their own cooking space, which is regarded as sacred ground. A workman will not touch the tools of an inferior, and in every direction caste and custom govern the life of the Hindu, although the prejudices have to some extent been removed in the case of those who travel and come more in contact with Western civilisation. There is a saying in the East, relative to Christian converts, that the entry to that religion is marked by their getting drunk, marrying a widow, and eating beef, for the cow is ultra sacred to the Hindu.

Passing from the bazaar and the commercial pursuits of the people, it is interesting to contrast the mode of life and the food with that of Europe. The meat

market supplies beef and mutton, whilst horseflesh is considered a dainty and is retailed at a correspondingly high figure. A horse belonging to Mr. Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice had been condemned by him owing to chronic lameness, and great was the competition amongst the butchers to secure so well-fed an animal for their shop windows.

The principal articles of diet are mutton and rice, with onions both boiled and fried, potatoes, turnips, and spinach, and many forms of roast and boiled joints, soups, and pilau—a mixture of meat and rice flavoured with fried onions, leeks, and other vegetables, after a long march an appetising dish when well cooked. Tea is the staple beverage, served with sugar but without milk. Bread is in the shape of little circular rolls indented at the top. They are baked in ovens flush with the ground-level, the ovens, after heating, being cleared of the fire, and the loaves placed along the bottom and round the sides. The result is eminently satisfactory, since each roll receives equal treatment in the baking process. Only two meals are taken during the day, morning and evening, so the work of the household, the farm, and the shop goes on without the interruption common to European countries.

On market day the restaurants are well patronised by the country people, many of whom come in from long distances and bargain from dawn till sunset. A Kashgarian restaurant is a room fifteen to twenty feet square with a beaten mud floor raised a foot or more above the ground-level, and on it the diner sits cross-legged. He may have tiny meat dumplings, known as mantu, pastry cooked by steam, soups of

vermicelli, macaroni, and mutton, with stews created in curds and whey, doughnuts of fat and flour, salads of carrot, radish, and onion chopped fine, and mustard and cress served in the leaf.

Fruit of all kinds, melons, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, nectarines, pomegranates, plums, cherries, and mulberries, grow in profusion in Turkistan, and they grace the floor and tables at feasts which are popular during the summer months. These feasts usually take place in a garden outside the city, or along the banks of the rivers, where a cool atmosphere and the requisite shade are available. I have given an account of some of these feasts to which I was invited by the wealthy merchants of Kashgar on many different occasions, and it will be seen therefrom how they are conducted and the forms of amusement connected with them.

The inhabitants of Turkistan are a pleasure-loving people and they indulge in various forms of games. Kite-flying is popular amongst the young, whilst a form of pitch and toss, dear to the heart of the English 'Tommy,' is much in vogue and carried me back to South African war days when I too indulged occasionally in this harmless amusement. The most athletic exercise is, however, the game of ulagh, similar to the Kirghiz game of baiga, in which the carcass of a sheep or goat is the object of contention. The ground chosen is usually the village square or market-place, or the dried-up bed of a river, the players all mounted on ponies of varied strength and attainments, striving for possession of the carcass in a whirlwind *mêlée*. It is certainly a fine display of horsemanship and requires considerable skill to pick up the sheep under

such trying circumstances at full gallop when chased by a hundred horsemen, enveloped in clouds of dust, whose one aim and object is to gain possession of the carcase at all costs.

Dancing usually concludes an entertainment, men taking the leading part, for the women are debarred from such public exhibitions of their charm, although this does not apply to the Dulans, a tribe living along the banks of the Yarkand River in the south, of whom I have written in another chapter. The orchestra is supplied by professional musicians and singers, and the instruments employed are a dulcimer, mandoline, a small variety of harp, and a tom-tom. The tune is a repetition throughout and is mainly of a dull and plaintive character revealing little idea of music; indeed, there is no accounting for taste in that direction. I recall the visit of some Turkomans to St. Petersburg in pre-war days who witnessed a performance at the Imperial Opera House. At the fall of the curtain they unanimously agreed that the finest part of the entertainment had undoubtedly been the tuning up of the orchestral violins.

Theatres are unknown amongst the native population, but occasionally a Chinese touring company passes through, and it is instructive to watch the preparations for their display of dramatic art.

Amongst the Chinese theatricals play a prominent part in the lighter side of life; indeed, they may be regarded as the national pastime of the Celestials and are much patronised by the Turki population. The plays are mainly historical and deal with the works and sayings of sages who quitted this life two to four thousand years ago. These historical pieces are

viewed with awe and reverence, for they bring back the past, and anything with the stamp of age on it has first claim to consideration.

The scenery is of a rough-and-ready kind and much of it is left to the imagination. There are no dressing-rooms for actors or actresses, all changes of costume, the arranging and plaiting of the hair, and the painting and powdering of the complexion being carried out in the open, in full view of the crowd, who treat everything as a matter of course. Sometimes the performance is held in the courtyard of a temple in order to invest it with a halo of sanctity, but the selection of a site when that is not available shows originality. The courtyard of an inn may be chosen, or a point in the street where it is fairly wide, and here the company proceed to erect the stage and prepare for the show. Meanwhile, the street is littered with beams and posts, and pedestrians trip up over the coils of rope. Gaudy screens, property trees and foliage are placed in position, a few of these with some highly coloured views being all that is necessary. Soon the theatre assumes a size that impedes traffic, which has perforce to be diverted down side alley-ways. Foot passengers wishing to gain the other end of the thoroughfare must follow suit, or they may climb under the stage, bumping their heads at intervals. Nevertheless, an air of cheeriness prevails, and no one resents this appropriation of the public highway.

The plot is devoid of complexity and no mystery is presented to harass the intelligence of the audience ; action is direct, and the issues that contribute so largely to the interest of the Western play are here unknown. Despite the fact that a temple may be

the chosen site for the performance, it does not necessarily follow that the clerical profession is not drawn into the play, for in those depicting household disputes the disturbers are usually represented as priests.

Turkistan is one of the few Mohammedan countries where the system of temporary marriage prevails. Here one may marry and divorce with a frequency that is alarming. A follower of the Prophet will arrive in a town, and if desirous of finding a wife does so through the medium of a go-between. The marriage is then arranged and carried out by the mullah, or priest, and a divorce is prepared at the same time. A woman, after separation from this temporary husband, cannot contract a second marriage until after the expiration of one hundred days, but if matrimonially inclined and determined on the gain of dowries and all that goes with the wedding contract and ceremony, she circumvents that restriction in an original manner. She will, for instance, marry a man in one town, divorce him as the result of a dispute, and receive the customary document to the effect that she is free, the fee for this amounting to fourpence in British currency. At the close of the one hundred days she weds again, quarrels, and gathers in another letter of divorce, being now in possession of two such necessary instruments for the prosecution of her matrimonial ventures. She then moves to another town, and there marries on the strength of the first document of divorce, which shows her to be entitled to another husband. This procedure is repeated, as she always has ready a letter of divorce issued beyond the stipulated period of one hundred days. Indeed,

life in such circumstances is one long honeymoon, but to pursue it with success and to reap the benefits in the way of expensive presents and dowries, the girl must possess the form and figure and the soft and delicate skin of which the Persian poets spoke so eulogistically when dwelling on the charms of the women of Kashgar.

The penalty of unfaithfulness is as original as the system of marriage. The lady is seated upon a donkey facing its tail, her face is blackened, and she is then led through the bazaars exposed to the jeers of the crowd and the butt for missiles of all kinds, a crier preceding the donkey to proclaim the enormity of her crime.

It may be asked what are the general characteristics of the people and the impression conveyed from a commercial and industrial standpoint. They are not remarkable for energy or initiative, and their air and bearing are those of a race that has suffered varying degrees of fortune and vicissitude. They display a lack of enterprise and desire for moral, commercial, or political advancement, this trait in the Turki character being due to the many wars and revolutions that have raged in the country from the earliest times, leaving traces of much suffering and trial in the national character.

In commerce there is a want of ability, the instinct being always for the bargain rather than the actual trade. Many of the wealthy merchants are Indians, whilst others, of Russian origin, are mainly confined to the north of the province in and around the Ili Valley and Kulja.

It is remarkable to what extent the country enjoys

immunity from plague and pestilence, which might well be expected to account for a considerable proportion of the population, seeing that sanitary measures are non-existent. The most prevalent type of complaint, and one constantly met with in the Yarkand and Khotan districts, is goitre, an enlargement of the thyroid gland, thought by some to originate from hard or glacial water, though its exact origin still lacks scientific determination. The condition is painless, and so far has not shown itself amenable to medical treatment. It is much in evidence, but at Kashgar and farther north there is an almost total absence of it, possibly due to a difference in the water. A certain amount of malaria is prevalent in the cities and towns, due to the number of stagnant pools, to which at irregular intervals water is brought from the river by canals. Each of these must be a hotbed of mosquitoes and microbes, for they are never cleaned out and consequently are full of long-accumulated dirt and filth. Such pools are met with in all the cities and towns, the average dimensions being about twenty-four feet square and seven to eight feet deep. I once saw a woman shampooing her locks in one of them, children having a bathe, a horse being washed by its owner, and a water-carrier drawing water in leathern receptacles for the supply of the surrounding households.

In proximity to the Mongolian grasslands, and forming part of Chinese Turkistan, is the interesting country of Lob Nor, lying east of the Tian Shan and south of the road from Kashgar to Urumchi. I had already travelled along the fringe of it and now contemplated a further journey to the Lob Lake and

district, but unfortunately the political situation and constant uncertainty in Russian Turkistan and elsewhere forbade prolonged absence from my headquarters at Kashgar.

The Lob Nor region is interesting from a geographical standpoint, for it is the drainage of all Chinese Turkistan; there are marshes covering hundreds of square miles, the breeding-grounds of duck and geese and many specimens of migratory birds. It is the ancient Lob Nor mentioned by numerous Chinese and other travellers prior to the Christian era. On the same horizontal level throughout, it is continually undergoing hydrographical change owing to the winds and the sedimentary deposits of rivers flowing into the marshlands, which are the leading feature of this remarkable area. The combination of power, force, and frequency of these winds has resulted in repelling the water and drying up the lakes, the sand driven in from the deserts to the east filling up the depression thus created.

The Lob Nor country is open to geographical research as well as observation of the movement of the sand, which is ever pouring in from the east and overwhelming the land in its path. Here we have also the phenomenon of a line of dead forest far out in the desert, lost in a waste of sand-hills, the trees of which must formerly have stood on the shores of the lake and drawn nourishment therefrom. Next we encounter a belt of living forest, and then, clothing the banks of the lake or river, are the young fresh trees marking the line of a new forest. From this we may infer that by the action of the winds and the shifting sands, the rivers and lakes are constantly moving

westwards, following the water without which they cannot, of course, exist.

There is also material for ethnographical study, for the inhabitants of Lob Nor are a curious type, probably of Aryan descent, with a mixed physiognomy such that one may see a Mongolian cast of countenance as well as the pronounced type of European feature. In religion they are Mohammedan but with many Shamanistic rites, as, for example, the disposal of the dead, which they bury in canoes with the fishing nets and tackle of the deceased. Their occupation is almost exclusively confined to fishing, and they live in rough huts constructed from reeds and wattles.

I saw the principal manufacture of this remote spot in the heart of Asia, cloth prepared from sheep's wool or the fibre of a plant that grows along the banks of the rivers. Beyond this cloth industry, and the curing of skins of wild animals they hunt and trap, nothing emanates from the country. Their environment precludes knowledge of the outside world, and, as they say, it is not for them to be concerned with the problems of government, for their business is fishing and a constant struggle for existence amidst the marshes of the mysterious Lob country. As I contemplated them I often thought of the gulf lying between this primitive tribe with their simple ways and the advanced stage to which Europe and America have arrived. They recalled to my mind the primitive condition of man as it must have been during the early evolution of the Western races of to-day. Perhaps the tribesmen of Lob Nor have their reward in contentment and simple faith, for in their own way they are

philosophers and deeply religious after the manner of their kind.

They display a natural hospitality, and will offer the fish taken from the lake or river, with an *entrée* of wild ducks' eggs, and the young shoots of reeds deliciously cooked in fat, or stewed like lentils. In the autumn they gather the fallen reeds, boil them, and extract a dark, glutinous substance that makes passable sugar.

The marriage customs are in keeping with the primitive nature of the people: the purchase money and the dowry of the bride comprise bundles of fibre strings of sun-dried fish, and a proportion of wild duck and geese caught in the marshes.

A strange people indeed, for none know whence they came or what their history may contain. The system of local government is in accordance with their own customs, and Chinese interference is limited to placing them under the District Magistrate of Korla, near Urumchi, for purposes of administration.

Their beliefs are curious to a degree. A Lob Nor man will only take the oath upon his gun or bow and arrows, and should an accusation be lodged by one against another, the accuser must first kiss his bow, or gun if he possess one, and then aim at the breast of the accused, the result of this generally being to imply sufficient proof of innocence that the accusation is withdrawn. Another custom pertains amongst these dwellers in the rushes that is in vogue during the spring and early summer, for here, as elsewhere, with the advent of spring the young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. Half a dozen or more youths line up along the bank of the river

mounted on ponies, whilst the same number of girls take up position each in her own canoe, and at a given signal the race starts, the men on the river bank galloping like the wind, the girls paddling hard down stream to the goal. Whoever wins this unique race chooses a partner for the ensuing night, the selections being made in the order of arrival of the respective competitors at the winning post. Should consequences ensue from these unconventional unions a marriage results, and the couple presumably live happily ever afterwards.

CHAPTER V

The secret mission moves to Tashkent in Russian Turkistan—Fantastic rumours—I assume charge as Consul-General and Political Resident from Sir George Macartney, K.C.I.E.—Kashgar city—Ceremonial calls on Chinese officials—We introduce a motor cycle—Fright and widespread sensation—The Kashgar Commandant and his barbarity in the harem—Chinese prisons—The punishment of lost crimes—The Russian colony and Russo-Asiatic Bank—A Gargantuan repast—The older the egg the greater its edible value—A relic of former Chinese dominion over Asia—The Hunza envoys—The shrine of Hazrat Apak—Arrival of a Frenchman walking round the world—Bolsheviks again in evidence—The murder of the Czar—Tragic end of the Imperial family.

AFTER the arrival of the mission in Kashgar on June 7, 1918, considerable time and attention were devoted to preparations for the onward journey to Tashkent, where touch was to be gained with the Bolsheviks and a watch kept on enemy movements in Central Asia. It was decided that Colonel Bailey and Major Blacker should proceed thither whilst I took over charge from Sir George Macartney as Consul-General and Political Resident, he being due to proceed on leave pending retirement.

The mission left Kashgar on July 24, Major Blacker proceeding part of the way on the 'Triumph' motor cycle we had brought from India, to the astonishment of the natives, who collected in great crowds to watch the intrepid performer. The mission was given an excellent send-off, the Chinese and Russians escorting them outside the city in addition to providing a sumptuous lunch. It was arranged that Sir George

Macartney should join the mission in Tashkent, after making over charge to me, and there introduce it to the Bolsheviks and assist in the difficult and dangerous task of establishing it in this hotbed of fanaticism. The Secretary of the Russian Consulate-General, a pro-Ally and adherent of the Imperialist party in Russia, accompanied the mission to act as interpreter, as neither of its members could speak Russian and would not, therefore, have been in a position to surmount difficulties that might arise at the outset with the Russian border officials. This official accompanied the mission only to Andijan across the frontier, whence he returned to Kashgar, being apprehensive of danger which his presence in Tashkent might entail. Colonel Bailey and Major Blacker duly arrived at Tashkent, where they were joined ten days later by Sir George Macartney.

All sorts of rumours were afloat as to the composition, aim, and object of the mission, and it was even widely announced that a force of British-Indian troops, upwards of twelve thousand strong, was moving on Tashkent through the Pamirs and Ferghana with the object of seizing Russian Turkistan.

Colonel Bailey was handicapped from the first in this hazardous undertaking, for when received by the Bolshevik commissaries at Tashkent, he was asked to explain why a friendly mission should come to them from Kashgar whilst from the direction of Persia and Askabad in the west British troops should be attacking the Bolsheviks and taking possession of the country. It was indeed hard to reconcile these two lines of action, but Sir George countered it by stating that as German troops were on Russian territory our

presence there was dictated by strategical reasons arising out of the war against Germany.

The reception given was far from cordial, and when Sir George Macartney and Major Blacker left in September *en route* for India the position of Colonel Bailey was one of great uncertainty, but after many adventures and narrow escapes he finally reached India through Russian Turkistan and Persia, having given proof of ability and resource that place him in the forefront as an explorer and political officer.

After assuming office from Sir George Macartney I entered on the daily round and common task that fall to the lot of a Consular officer filling such a post in the storm centre of Asia. I was there in an entirely different situation to that of a Government representative in any other part of the world, and throughout the period from 1918 to 1922 the only available lever was the fact that the Chinese Government were glad to see a British official in Kashgar to counteract the ever-increasing Bolsheviki menace, a danger with which they were quite unable to cope single-handed. This menace hung like a cloud over Central Asia during those fateful years, threatening directly the safety of India and the Indian borderland to an extent of which it is not possible to convey any adequate conception. My task was an even more difficult one than that of my distinguished predecessor, who had with such tenacity and patience built up our prestige in the nineties of last century, when it seemed certain that the Russian dream of hegemony in Asia would be realised.

The Consular area committed to my charge was one of the largest in the world, comprising four hundred

and sixty thousand square miles, equal in area to that of France and Spain combined, over which were scattered British subjects in more or less insignificant numbers. The predominant questions to study and keep a close and constant watch over were of a political nature, and these assumed such importance to India and the Empire during the period in question that trade and commercial matters played but a minor part.

Amongst the turbulent elements were Bolsheviks and revolutionary scum who regarded Turkistan as a land flowing with milk and honey where their schemes for the emancipation of the East and the lust for loot and plunder might be satisfied. Besides these there were the gun-runners so much in evidence prior to and during the recent war with Afghanistan, whither it was a lucrative business smuggling arms and ammunition from Chinese Turkistan. Opium smugglers also played their part, the extent of the traffic being unknown in Europe where the League of Nations has now instituted steps for its suppression.

Quite apart from the Bolshevik aspect, there were divers intrigues, plots, and conspiracies amongst the mixed and alien assembly by which one was surrounded, necessitating the organisation of a secret service that should enable me to acquire early and accurate information and act thereon either directly or indirectly as circumstances demanded. The system evolved worked well and enabled me to keep in touch with almost every house and family of note in the country, and no move of importance could be made without its being known, thanks to the way in which the various agents carried out their hazardous task.

In the principal towns of the Consular area an

Aksakal, literally 'greybeard' in the Turki language, is appointed who acts as subordinate Consular agent under the orders of headquarters at Kashgar. These agents furnish periodical reports, safeguard the interests of British subjects, and keep the Consul-General in touch with the local situation. Attached to the Consulate-General itself were a Vice-Consul, chief clerk, assistant clerk and accountant, an assistant-surgeon, British wireless operators, the Chinese secretary, and numerous orderlies and attendants. There was also an escort of thirty men under an Indian officer relieved annually from India, which was withdrawn on my departure.

The Consulate was originally a small native house partly converted by Sir George Macartney into a habitable dwelling, but in 1913 a substantial building was erected containing about twenty rooms, the main structure being single-storeyed with a double-storeyed east wing. Surrounding the Consulate are gardens constructed in terraces, which I was able to improve considerably, enlarging the gardens by enclosing the lower part by a wall, erecting a pergola, and extending the terraces that commanded views to the north and west across the Kizil River to the Tian Shan Mountains. The Consulate stands above the river bank on loess cliffs and is undoubtedly the best site in Kashgar.

A singular charm greets the traveller on arrival at Kashgar with its atmosphere of old-worldness and tranquillity. A walk along the terraced gardens of the Consulate in the shade of towering poplars is a perfect morning exercise; the twitter of birds, the hum of bees busy amongst the flowers, the murmur of brooks coursing through the extensive

gardens, added to the view unfolded across the river, give a pleasing touch after the long journey from India or return from the many tours one is called upon to make in this distant post.

With the fall of eventide a change comes over the landscape. The range of hills to the north, ochre red during the daytime, assumes a softer hue as the setting sun sinks behind the mountain wall to the west, when the play and variety of colour are such as would arouse the admiration of a Turner. The shades of night close in with great rapidity, there being no twilight in this latitude, the brilliant colouring and opalescent light die away, and night supervenes, broken only by the distant sound of a tom-tom in the city, the cry of the watchmen as they pass on their rounds, or the faint murmur of the Kizil River as it flows onward to be lost in the vast marshes bordering the Tarim Desert.

Following my appointment came the ceremonial calls upon Chinese officials and the Russian Consular authorities, and as they throw interesting sidelights on observances in connection therewith I will narrate them in detail.

The Chinese official and commercial quarter is a separate entity and enclosed by a solidly built mud wall about twenty feet in height and wide enough at the top to admit of two carriages being driven abreast. One can obtain the best view of the city from this wall, and as the one at Kashgar has a circumference of several miles and is above the dust and din of the city, it would be admirable for walking. I once suggested to my friend the Kashgar Commandant that I should appreciate a quiet walk there if he would be good

enough to send me the key of the doorway nearest the Consulate that gave access to the top. But I had forgotten the penalty of being great. When the Vice-Consul and I, accompanied by two orderlies, arrived at the wall we found the Commandant with his staff, standard-bearers, and an escort, thirty-five persons in all, waiting to receive and accompany us in our walk. Needless to say, I avoided the wall after that.

The Yamen, or official residence of the Taoyin of Kashgar, is situated within the city, and thither I proceeded arrayed in full dress with the aiguillettes of a staff officer and escorted by numerous attendants and orderlies resplendent in scarlet and gold. We rode through the bazaars and into the outer courtyard of the Yamen, at the entrance to which was a minstrel's gallery where a Turkistan orchestra discoursed weird music from flutes, tambourines, and drums.

A Yamen is like the houses of the Greeks and Romans, single-storeyed and constructed round courtyards open to the skies. The entrance to these inner courts is by a large gateway painted in red, the colour symbolic of good fortune in China. These gates are usually solid pieces of wood folding together and having a handle only on the inner side. Beyond are others slightly raised above the ground-level on a small stage or platform with an altar at one side, each gate opening into a separate courtyard from which radiate smaller courts with quaint moon-shaped arches. The doorkeepers and general servants occupy the quarters near the first gate, the guest-rooms and offices are within the first or second courtyard, then the private apart-

ments of the official, and beyond, or at the side, are the ladies' and family rooms.

Now, the gateways are all-important, for the opening of them is in direct proportion to the rank and status of the visitor. For an ordinary caller the first only is opened, the remainder being passed by a passage at the side. To the casual visitor it is no easy matter to secure admittance to the Yamen. To me, of course, no difficulties or excuses were ever presented, but I often reflected upon the obstacles to be overcome and the amount of time, patience, and largesse to be expended by an applicant for favour of any kind before he can pass the barriers into the presence of the great, and the words of the Chinese proverb recurred to me, 'To interview the Devil is easy; the difficulty lies in getting past the small devils.'

However, in my case as a foreign representative, the full number was always opened. On this, as on subsequent occasions, a salute from cannon in the Yamen was fired, the great gates were flung open, and, preceded by an attendant holding my visiting-card aloft, a sheet of red paper measuring nine by five inches, we passed on through the others to the farthest courtyard, where a guard of honour was drawn up, at the head of which stood the Taoyin waiting to receive me.

Chu Taoyin was a man of about sixty-three years, tall and possessed of an affable manner. He was a great conversationalist, and throughout my stay in Kashgar I passed many pleasant hours in his company. He worked with me loyally and well during four difficult years, and I shall ever look back with

gratitude for the manner in which he seconded me in many harassing and trying moments.

In pursuance of my recommendation to His Majesty's Government I had the pleasure in the spring of 1920 of investing him with the Companionship of the Order of the Indian Empire, the Governor of the province receiving the Knight Commandership. Owing to the distance of the provincial capital, fifty-four marches from Kashgar, I was unable to invest the Governor in person, but wrote hoping that I might later on have the pleasure of visiting him at his headquarters. In his reply he expressed, in the picturesque Chinese style, the delight the visit would afford him, adding that 'I stand on tip-toe peering into the blue and wondering when you will set out. Gladly shall I go out to meet and welcome you; we will forgather on the verandah and raise the wine cup, and then will I pour out all that is in my heart.'

On the occasion of my visit to the Taoyin he was accompanied by his secretary, Mr. Tao, who had been educated in Shanghai and spoke English, and at this and many subsequent visits and interviews he acted as interpreter. After the customary greetings the Taoyin conducted me to the great hall, where the ceremonial tea was served. This is brought on a tray in small bowls with square saucers placed on top, the reverse of European style. Chu took one of the bowls and placed it reverently on the table by my side, I reciprocating, and these essential courtesies being performed we discoursed on various topics. The ceremonial tea is only drunk just before departure, and is the signal that the visit is at an end. There is then considerable commotion as attendants take

post, guards of honour fall in with a clatter of arms, and gunners make ready to fire the salute on departure.

The host accompanies his guest to the outer courtyard where the horses are in waiting, and after shaking hands, the guest taking the host's hand in both his own, the cavalcade moves off.

Whilst on the subject of calling, it is well to note that when travelling in Chinese territory the ordinary rules of courtesy as propounded by the Celestial should be observed. The failure to do so is mainly responsible for our often being characterised as ignorant barbarians. For instance, when passing through a town the first duty is to send one's card to the local official ; the latter may follow one of several lines of action. He may, in sending his own card, wish you a pleasant onward journey, which being interpreted means that he deems a visit from either side unnecessary ; or he may call upon you, or send an invitation to dinner, in which case courtesy demands that you return the call or accept the invitation, and in any case a dinner with an educated Chinese and a discussion over walnuts and wine adds to knowledge and experience.

After the interchange of courtesies the conversation usually turns on travel and general topics, and I always found the Chinese interested in the West, although sometimes sceptical as to details. I remember calling on a new City Magistrate at Kashgar a short time since, and *inter alia* spoke of the lofty buildings to be seen in New York running to a height of forty storeys, this being as high as I thought it well to go with this incredulous old gentleman. His imagination was unable to conceive such a building, and as we were

moving down to the great gateway after the visit he kept muttering to himself, 'Forty storeys high, forty storeys high : I wonder if he is telling the truth.'

Leaving the Taoyin I called on the Hsei Tai, Officer Commanding at Kashgar, and eldest son of Ma Titai, the Commander-in-Chief in Turkistan. He was twenty-seven years of age and had inherited all the cruelty and rapacity of his father. He received me with military display, the rolling of drums and the blare of bugles and trumpets, the band making an heroic attempt to play a march whilst I inspected the guard of honour. Here the same ceremonies were gone through, Mr. Tao again kindly acting as interpreter. The young G.O.C. had four wives, in addition to several concubines of the Turkistan race. He ruled his household with a severity becoming the son of his father, and the following is indicative of the extent to which that rule could go. Returning one afternoon from a visit he was informed that three of the young girls of his harem had been out for an unauthorised walk. They were therefore taken into the garden and beaten, their hands were then tied behind their backs at the wrists, after which they were suspended by the latter from a tree and left there throughout the night. In the morning when cut down, two were dead, but the third was still alive and, I believe, afterwards recovered, although hopelessly crippled with the arms wrenched completely out of joint at the shoulders. Shortly after my visit I had reason to complain in a polite note to this official of an unprovoked assault by one of his men on a Consular orderly. Retribution was swift and exacting, for within an hour or two a Chinese

cart rumbled into the Consulate and pulled up near the tennis court where I was playing singles. From the cart was lifted a soldier with the back part of both his thighs red raw and bleeding over a space as large as a dinner plate. This was the individual who had attacked my man, and the General Officer Commanding had sent him round so that I might see he was not remiss in the administration of justice. Of course, I had no desire that action should be so drastic, but then the Oriental has comparatively little sense of proportion.

The Hsei Tai was greatly taken with the motor cycle we had brought from India, and as the state of the roads dictated safety first I sold it to him. He rapidly became an expert scorcher, and his passage through the bazaar, preceded by relays of perspiring horsemen, was a progress characterised by runaway carts and horses and the stampeding of donkeys and cattle to the tune of the exhaust. Grey-bearded mullahs, sedate merchants, and veiled ladies were shot unceremoniously into shops, scattering the trays and benches of goods, whilst the streets were pandemonium personified long after the motor cyclist had passed on his way.

Once or twice a week he went out to the headquarters of his father the Commander-in-Chief, eighteen miles from Kashgar, a cavalry escort being considered essential to his rank and dignity. On the first occasion the escort was soon left far behind, so I suggested that the difficulty be solved by having relays at every few miles; this plan was adopted, and as soon as he hove in sight the relay got under weigh.

Next in order of precedence came the Shen-Kuan,

or City Magistrate, the official who comes into direct contact with the people and has wide executive powers. He was a Chinese of the more orthodox type, but pleasant and amenable where official business was concerned. His rule was popular in the district and much regret was expressed on his transfer to another post. In the chapter dealing with provincial administration I mentioned the rule that no official can have under his orders any relation or even connection, yet the successor of the City Magistrate was the brother of the Governor of Turkistan, whose subsequent removal came about in rather a curious way. I had occasion to draw the Governor's attention to the prevalence of opium smoking and the spread of the traffic in Turkistan, incidentally remarking that when Chinese officials were themselves addicted to the drug it was difficult to eradicate the evil. My intelligence service revealed to me three shops within two hundred yards of the City Magistrate's Yamen where the drug was more or less openly prepared, in addition to which the Governor's brother was a heavy smoker. When the ruler of the province requested me to name any one in support of my allegation against the official classes, I felt bound to suggest that he cast a glance in the direction of his brother. This was done with full conviction, and the truth of my statement was borne out in his prompt removal, much to the Taoyin's joy, who laughingly congratulated me on a straightforward statement, being at the same time much relieved at the change, as he naturally disliked having the Governor's brother under his orders.

The City Magistrate's Yamen contains the prison, where I visited the cells and dungeons, being thus

afforded an insight into the gaols of Chinese Turkistan, where realism can be studied with effect. The prisoners are lodged in dark rooms with only a small opening, some eighteen inches square, for light and ventilation. The floor was reeking with the dirt and filth of years, and as I groped my way in the semi-darkness I stumbled over a prostrate form and found that it was a man chained to a stake in the ground. Striking a match I beheld a creature dirty and begrimed beyond description, in the last stages of degradation, confined in a hole where one would not in common decency house a mongrel dog. Other prisoners were chained together to a board secured by stakes in the floor of this Black Hole. No tendance of any kind is given the prisoners, the State having a distinctly limited interest in the welfare of those committed to gaol. The date of trial in the courts is vague; an appeal is of little avail, for in all cases the Chinese courts move slowly, obstacles are cast in the way of justice, and the path thereto is beset with difficulties. The law of Habeas Corpus is unknown and a man may be in gaol indefinitely awaiting trial. Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that with the frequent change of officials he may be in gaol for so long a period that no record of his crime can be traced; the why and the wherefore have been forgotten, only the man himself is extant, still undergoing the punishment of his long-forgotten crime.

Some of the punishments in vogue are ingenious and cruel and are awarded according to the nature of the crime. For serious offences which we might term manslaughter the criminal may be placed in a cage with his head through an opening at the top.

He stands on layers of bricks which are just high enough to support him without strain on the head. These are gradually removed, one every day, until his toes barely touch the ground, and he is thus left to die by slow strangulation. To enforce a confession the man will be made to kneel on thinly spread maize, a painful performance which is not readily apparent. Recourse is not always had to these methods for exacting a confession of crime. The Chinese magistrate is often a man of resource and brings other means to bear to attain the desired end. One of these showed his detective acumen in a robbery case that came up for trial at his court. Four men were involved in the affair, but the evidence was conflicting and the case was adjourned until the morrow. When the court reassembled, the magistrate took out the four accused to a temple near by, closed the doors and then made them kneel down by the wall, which he had previously had covered with lampblack. The place was now in darkness, and he directed them to put their hands upon the wall and pray, adding that whoever had committed the crime would have a black mark on his forehead. The simple and ignorant Turki amongst the four who was really the culprit became alarmed and quietly endeavoured to efface the mark that he imagined must be on his forehead, with the result that when the doors were reopened and the light poured in, the thief was revealed in all his blackness.

The Chinese magistrate is accorded considerable latitude in eliciting the truth from plaintiff, defendant, or witness. Contrary to Western practice, an oath is not administered, for the Chinese argue that if a man

is going to lie, an oath will not create the truth. The preliminary procedure involves examination of all parties to the case, and by cross-examination and the study of each person to determine the truthful side, but should this prove abortive there are various ways of extorting a so-called confession, and in the case of crimes of murder and manslaughter great pressure is brought to bear with that object.

The Chinese are an eminently practical race and their views on the prison system are refreshing. Whereas with us the gaol is large and comfortable, replete with modern conveniences and constituting a formidable item in the national exchequer, they argue that the criminal has outraged society and that it is a public crime to maintain him in comparative ease and luxury. This accounts for the State not providing him with food, except in the case where he has no friends or relatives, when the barest subsistence is granted. Moreover, the calculating Celestial contends that in order to fulfil its object the prison must be so repulsive as to inspire the requisite dread, otherwise there would be a rush of applicants for such comforts as could not be obtained in their own homes.

There is in Kashgar a Russian colony, and my first official visit to the Consulate-General revealed a different atmosphere to that of pre-war days, when I was a frequent visitor at the hospitable Russian headquarters during my stay in Kashgar. The acting Consul-General in 1918 was Mr. Uspenski, who spoke English and with whom I established cordial relations during his period of office; he had declined service with the Soviet and still maintained his Consulate as an Imperial one.

The Russians have never been *persona grata* with the Chinese, and the latter were now seeking an opportunity to recover what they had been compelled to cede to Russia in the past. Prior to the war it was an accepted probability of political development that Chinese Turkistan would pass into Muscovite hands ; in fact, with the occupation of the Pamirs in 1892 it was feared that on reaching the Ak Su Valley, on the Russian Pamirs, they would extend eastwards to Tibet, and with a footing on three sides of Chinese Turkistan absorb the whole of that province.

The policy of penetration was furthered by the Russo-Asiatic Bank, branches of which were established at Kashgar, Urumchi, and Ili in the interests of trade. The bank was semi-official and its control was vested largely in the Foreign Office at Petrograd. It gave facilities to merchants, and Russian goods were exhibited at the different branches, whilst traders were allowed extended credit.

The bank also financed the construction of a cart road from Kashgar to Naryn on the Russo-Chinese frontier, Russian customs stations being set up in connection with it.

The advent of the Soviet brought a cessation of this activity and Russian influence fell commercially as well as politically in Turkistan.

The Russians were aided in their aggressive policy by Consul-General Petrovski, who presided over the Russian Consulate for some years prior to 1907. He was a man who brooked no interference with his plans, and to all intents and purposes was the virtual ruler of Kashgar for several years.

With the fall of the Czar in March 1917 there was

a reaction in Kashgaria and it had a far-reaching effect on the Mohammedan population, who had hitherto regarded Russia as omnipotent. There was a feeling abroad that Mohammedans were free once again, and they regarded the Bolsheviks as the champions of political liberty, but they did not labour long under that delusion. Events moved apace, and the massacres at Kokand, of which I have spoken elsewhere, soon showed the natives what might be expected at Bolshevik hands.

The Swedish Mission was a congenial element in Kashgar, and a visit to their hospitable headquarters was always a pleasant relaxation. An affable and well-read community, they did much good in a quiet way amongst the Turkis, and their skilled medical assistance and dispensary were ever at the disposal of the people. I was glad to assist them whenever possible in their dealings with the Chinese, who are favourably disposed towards foreign missions so long as they do not infringe their sovereign rights, or give rise to political and diplomatic controversy.

The Swedish Mission has branches in Yangi Hissar and Yarkand, and I shall always remember the consistent hospitality extended to me by the missionaries when on tour in those districts.

Following on my ceremonial calls came a number of invitations to dinner, the principal one being a banquet given in my honour by the Taoyin of Kashgar, to which all the leading Chinese officials, the Russian Consul-General and staff, and some members of the Swedish Mission were invited. It was served in a pavilion in the Yamen gardens, taking place at two o'clock in the afternoon and lasting until six in the

evening, not a long entertainment in view of others I have attended that opened at ten in the morning and lasted until the shades of night closed in. The table was decorated with flowers from the Taoyin's gardens, and spread over it were numerous small dishes containing fresh and dried fruits, sliced ham, hard-boiled eggs, morsels of chicken, pistachio nuts, melon seeds, and sundry other tit-bits. Prior to the dinner, fruit, nuts, tea, and wines were served, and then we took our places at table for the banquet itself. At variance with European practice, the Chinese host sits immediately opposite his principal guest, the others being arranged down the table in order of precedence. The leading dish was a good soup, followed by sharks' fins served in thick sauce, and, contrary to what might be expected, decidedly tasty. Then came wild duck and cabbage, pigeons' eggs stewed with mushrooms, fried fish of various kinds, sea slugs from the waters around Japan and Vladivostock in the Far East, pork crackling, chicken with ham, ducks'-egg soup, stags' tendons, bamboo roots, the shoots of the young bamboo, stewed lotus, fried liver of chicken, eggs many years old and preserved in chalk—the older the egg the greater its edible value—fermented eggs, seaweed, sweetened duck, strips of chicken boned and fried in oil, various kinds of mutton boiled, roast, parboiled, and fried, and other dishes peculiar to a Chinese banquet of distinction.

Towards the end of the dinner a game of guessing is often indulged in. A player will thrust out his clenched hand to another, who must call out the number of fingers that will be exposed, the estimate having to be made at the moment when the challenger is

unclenching his hand. Whoever loses must quaff a glass of wine, and as the game proceeds and the wine flows with an ever-increasing current, excitement and enthusiasm reach a high pitch. Other strange tricks are played at these banquets, one of them being to hand round a lighted match stuck in the box, and the guest in whose hand the match goes out must quaff more wine, the result being often highly exciting. The end of the repast is marked by the serving of rice in bowls, after which the guests disperse.

There are some dishes in China proper that might well appal the European. Such, for example, are the dried rats esteemed a delicacy and commanding a ready sale amongst those afflicted with baldness, for the consumption of these rodents is considered a sure antidote for the falling of the hair. Dogs and cats, preferably black, are in demand, more particularly as a preventive for diseases arising from excessive heat. A former emperor of China, who was a noted epicure, handed down to posterity, amongst other recipes, one for the preparation of hashed dog, but the price of the superior quality of both dogs and cats places them only within reach of the wealthy. I understand that at a certain banquet given in China proper some years ago the *pièce de résistance* was a number of newly born white mice, served alive, to be dipped in treacle and swallowed like a prairie oyster, but in Chinese Turkistan I was mercifully spared such an ordeal.

Just subsequent to my assumption of office an event of interest occurred, the survival of a custom formerly obtaining when Chinese dominion extended across Asia. This was the arrival from Hunza of

envoys bearing the annual tribute to the Chinese, to which vestige of sovereignty over a once great empire they still cling with extraordinary tenacity. In the opening chapter I have said that Hunza was incorporated within the British Empire after the Hunza-Nagar expedition of 1891, when the reigning Mir fled to Chinese Turkistan, where he was interned, first at Urumchi for about fifteen years, and later at Kuchar, some twenty marches north-east of Kashgar, where I met him during my trans-Asiatic expedition in 1909. He was then gaining a precarious livelihood by making wine, an occupation he was still following when I recently came on leave.

Prior to the expedition of 1891 the Kanjutis had been the terror of races living along their frontiers and notably across the border in Chinese Turkistan, where their constant raids had depopulated wide stretches of country and rendered the peaceful passing of caravans impracticable. Although the Chinese were regarded by the Kanjutis as the most powerful empire in the world, they were unable to restrain their raiding activities. However, an annual tribute in gold dust was exacted, a nominal payment as the outward and visible sign of Chinese domination, and certain land was granted near Yarkand which I visited during my various tours to that city. This land was in return for services rendered by the Kanjutis to the Chinese during the rebellion in Turkistan in 1847. It is now occupied by the son of the deposed Mir and those who followed him into exile. The Chinese further allowed the Mir of Hunza to exercise certain authority over the grazing-grounds on the Taghdumbash Pamir, in the south-west corner of Turkistan, a concession they

have, since the inclusion of Hunza within our own boundaries, endeavoured to dispute. The position on the Chinese Pamirs is therefore anomalous, inasmuch as the Chinese exercise authority in a district over which we claim jurisdiction, since we now look upon Kanjutis as British subjects.

In pursuance of his rights the Mir of Hunza levies annual tribute from the Kirghiz and Sarikoli herdsmen on the Pamirs, but as the payment is a merely nominal one consisting of yaks' tails, goats' - hair rope, and felts, and the grazing is far in excess of this levy, the people do not resent the collection, as I pointed out to them the *quid pro quo* they were receiving.

The tribute in gold dust brought from Hunza to the Chinese authorities in Kashgar was until 1911 the subject of an annual memorial in the famous *Peking Gazette*. The tribute is received by the Taoyin of Kashgar on behalf of the Chinese Government, and the envoys are lodged at the expense of the latter, returning to India after a week or two laden with presents exceeding the value of the gold dust they have brought.

The British Government have not deemed it desirable to revise the relations of Hunza with China nor to carry out a demarcation of the border which along the northern range of the Karakoram still awaits determination. Rectification of frontiers is always distasteful to the Chinese, especially in remote parts of their empire of which they have imperfect geographical knowledge.

At the end of September 1918 Sir George Macartney and Major Blacker arrived at Irkishtam, on the Russo-Chinese frontier, five marches west of Kashgar, having

come from Tashkent where they had left Colonel Bailey, as already explained. From Irkishtam they moved on to Tashmalik, forty-two miles west of Kashgar, on the route to the Pamirs and India, and there I joined them one evening and heard the story of their adventures. I accompanied them as far as Bulun Kul on the Taghdumbash Pamir, two marches farther on, whence I returned to Kashgar.

At Tashkurghan they had news of *soi-disant* German and Turkish agents who were reputed to have crossed the frontier into Chinese territory and to be making for Yarkand. The number of these agents and their followers was given as two hundred, but when I received the news I felt at the time it was the usual Sarikoli exaggeration, especially in view of the reports regarding the arrival of the original mission in Kashgar, when our numbers ran into many thousands and we were credited with cavalry, artillery, giant birds that vomited shot and shell, and every kind of warlike appliance. However, Major Blacker wisely set off in pursuit, in the course of which he crossed sixteen passes, none of which was less than fifteen thousand feet in height, and finally ran down the party, consisting of nine Afghan subjects intent on opium smuggling, in a serai in Yarkand. In his pursuit of the supposed enemy I kept in touch through agents sent out to work in conjunction with him, one of my despatch riders performing the feat of covering one hundred and sixty-nine miles in forty-four hours, travelling by a mountain road and crossing two difficult passes.

On my return to Kashgar from this short tour I paid a visit to the shrine of Hazrat Apak, the tomb

of the mullah king of Kashgar who died in 1693, and the most renowned Mohammedan building in Chinese Turkistan. It is situated two miles north of the city and presents interesting historical features. During the sixteenth century the Khojas, followers of the Jagatai Khans of Samarkand, were in power in Chinese Turkistan. Their chief was one Makhdum Khan, upon whom the reigning king of Kashgar had conferred titles, whilst his sons received posts in the government. The loyalty of these Khojas was short-lived, and two factions arose which, it is interesting to note, exist to this day. The rival parties were known as the White and Black Mountaineers, and their influence on the subsequent history of the country was profound. The term White Mountaineers derives its origin from a range of hills near Artush, eighteen miles north of Kashgar, the Black Mountaineers having their headquarters at Khan Arik, twenty-four miles east of the city. The aim of the two factions was identical, and they were open to intrigue between the spiritual aspirants for power and the several chiefs ruling the land. At length the White Mountaineers assumed the leadership, and their chief, Hidayat Ullah, known as Hazrat Apak, came to be regarded more in the light of a second Prophet than a mere chieftain. His aim was control of the country with assumption of full power and authority, but being defeated by the Black Mountaineers he fled to Kashmir, whence he made his way to Lhasa to invoke the aid of the Dalai Lama, through whose influence he was appointed Governor of Yarkand in 1678.

At his death Khoja Hazrat Apak was buried in what

was a handsome mausoleum faced with blue and white glazed tiles and shaded by many stately poplars. Prior to the reconquest of Chinese Turkistan in 1876 the shrine had a college and monastery for the accommodation of religious devotees, but they stand now in a state of disrepair.

At the gateway leading to the shrine I was received by the Mutawali Bashi, or Head Custodian, with the sheikhs subordinate to him, and escorted by these divines passed along a well-shaded lane to the large gardens, and thence to the guest-house where tea, fruit, and an appetising collation were served. A tour of the shrine was then begun, and I was invited to inspect the interior of the mosque where rest the remains of the famous saint, having first doffed my boots, which pleased the attendant priests and the crowd that had assembled on our arrival. Flags and pennons reduced to tatters by the hand of Time hang over the tombs, and hard by them is a palanquin, or sedan chair, that formerly carried a great-grandson of the saint from Kashgar to Peking, whence he returned with a Chinese wife.

The inner walls surrounding the shrine are decorated with the horns of ibex, *Ovis poli*, and other wild sheep and goats, votive offerings from pilgrims and mighty hunters who have come from afar to worship at the tomb of the saint.

The roadway leading to Hazrat Apak is flanked by cemeteries, with many of the tombs vaulted and domed and open towards the east. Here are colonies of beggars, veritable dwellers amongst the tombs, who clamour for alms in every degree of note from stentorian to falsetto,

I visited informally one or two of the Chinese temples in Kashgar, but they are devoid of architectural merit, for every building whether of a religious or lay character is built on a stereotyped plan, and there is no veneration for ancient buildings as in Europe, even though they be invested with the halo of sanctity. The Chinese hold three religions, or one might say observe the tenets of three sects, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, the first-named representing the paramount religion of China. It has its origin in the worship of a deity who can be traced back more than two thousand years before the Christian era. The Chinese in Turkistan profess the Confucian faith with an admixture of the other two, and amongst officials of the educated classes the teachings and writings of the sage are a constant study, and at certain festivals during the year services are held in the temples in honour of Confucius. In some respects the creeds have lost their original distinctive features, and the decay that has for so long been going on has tended to merge the three into one, and, in so far as the mass of the Chinese is concerned, they may be treated as the foundations of a common faith. There is here little or no religion, the temples are mostly in ruins, the idols in them exposed to the weather, and individuals seem to follow the dictates of their own corrupt and depraved instincts.

In October 1918 Monsieur Martin, a French traveller, arrived in Kashgar, having left Paris in 1911 with a party who intended to walk round the world. One by one they fell out until only Martin and his wife were left, and they continued the walk until Urumchi was reached in 1914. It was then that

war was declared, and the call went forth for all Frenchmen to report for service, but Martin did not obey the summons. Later, after his wife had been suffocated in a geyser bath in Urumchi, he took to the road again and came to Kashgar, where he stayed in the Russian colony, gaining a precarious living by showing some pictures of Paris on one of the early biograph models. After remaining a few months in Kashgar he disappeared one day, and I heard had made his way west into Russian Turkistan and the land of the Bolsheviks. I never ascertained what happened to him there, or if he ever lived to recount the adventures he must have passed through in the overland journey and his acquaintance with the Reds.

With the refugees coming in from Siberia at this period was one from whom I obtained an account of the last days of the Czar and his family. After the assumption of power by the Bolsheviks the Imperial prisoners were removed to Ekaterinburg in Siberia, where they occupied a small four-roomed house, in striking contrast to the splendours of the Winter Palace and the Kremlin. Anxiety had been shown in Europe for their safety, but there was little, if any, hope of escape in the direction of Central Asia and none in that of Europe. For instance, to have reached Kashgar meant a march of more than fifteen hundred miles across steppes and mountain ranges, with risk of betrayal and death at every stage. Neither time nor opportunity was afforded by which they could be rescued from their perilous position, and the continued advance of the anti-Bolshevik forces from Siberia towards Moscow and Petrograd alarmed the

Bolsheviks, who feared their prisoners might escape and the monarchy be restored. The Romanoffs must therefore be wiped out, and the task was confided to their gaoler, a Jew named Yurovski. It was late at night when the Imperial party were awakened and directed to prepare instantly for a change of quarters. Hurriedly they dressed, and when ready were conducted by their guards down into a basement room, the little Czarewitch having to be carried there, for he was unable to walk. In the basement was a number of armed men headed by Yurovski, and their sinister mien and the weapons they carried must have convinced the party that treachery was intended. By the light of a lantern Yurovski commenced the recital of the orders, the significance of which presently appeared. The ruffians armed with rifle, bayonet, and revolver were not there as a guard of honour. They were the instruments destined to consummate the plan for the extermination of the House of Romanoff. The orders having been read, fire was opened on the victims and all were shot down, those who still showed signs of life being despatched with bayonets. The bodies were then taken out into the forest and burnt, and thus ended the final act in the tragedy of the Emperor Nicholas II., Czar of all the Russias, sole arbiter of the fate of millions, whose empire stretched from the shores of the Yellow Sea to the German frontier and from the borders of India to the Arctic Ocean.

CHAPTER VI

Bolshevik designs on Asia and particularly India—My counter-propaganda—Japanese officers in Chinese Turkistan—Afghanistan and Afghan subjects—I visit Yarkand, the capital of ancient Tartary—Money-lenders in Central Asia—Modern Shylocks—How to circumvent the injunctions of the Quran—Arrival at Yarkand — A great reception — Original return of military strength—How 'a doctor diagnoses in Chinese Turkistan—The Indo-Turkistan trade route —The Russian trade route —The traffic in opium—Land classification up to date—Sand-hills and buried cities—The Dolans—Embarrassing hospitality.

THE summer of 1918 saw the Bolsheviks making great preparations for riot and revolution throughout Asia, and I realised what an organised force for disorder there was in Russian Turkistan aiming solely at class warfare and the destruction of British power in India and the East. To prevent the Central Powers and the Bolsheviks increasing their supply of munitions from Chinese sources I had secured prohibition against the export of cotton cloth, and now formulated a scheme with the Chinese having the double object of safeguarding Kashgaria from the Bolshevik menace and preventing the influx of undesirables from Russian territory. It was no light task to arrange this with so lethargic a nation and such a vast land frontier, but I was successful in improvising passport restrictions and a search of all persons crossing the frontier, so that we were enabled to keep a comparatively close watch on attempts made to penetrate the barrier.

I also organised a news sheet containing the latest information from Europe of a general and military nature coming in every night by the wireless receiving set established in the Consulate. This was issued thrice weekly and translated into Persian, Turki, and Hindustani, copies being also sent to the Russian Consulate and members of that colony. The effect was beneficial in every way and the truth was spread abroad, although not always received with the credulity it deserved, but it undoubtedly did much good and acted as valuable propaganda in the cause of law and order.

On my recommendation the Taoyin instituted an arms register in Kashgar under which every one had to declare the number of arms and amount of ammunition he possessed, with severe penalties for infringement of this law. Several suspects were put under arrest and we cleared out a number of undesirables whose presence was deemed likely to foment disorder, although we could not charge them with definite crimes. Such drastic measures were demanded by the circumstances, since a fire once started might spread, and none could foretell where it would end or what consequences might follow in its wake unless taken in time. In all these measures I was ably supported by the Taoyin, who appreciated the dangers confronting us and realised that the measures recommended were in the interests of the Chinese no less than in those of India and the British Empire.

Just prior to my arrival in Kashgar from India it had been decided by His Majesty's Government to appoint a Vice-Consul in Kashgar to assist in routine

work and devote special attention to Chinese matters. The British Minister at Peking accordingly selected Mr. N. Fitzmaurice for this important duty, and he left Peking for Kashgar in June 1918, travelling across China by rail, boat, and road, arriving at his destination on February 8, 1919.

In the spring of the year in question the Chinese were much perturbed at the arrival in Turkistan of twelve Japanese officers sent by the Japanese General Staff and stationed in groups at various important points from Kashgar to Urumchi, Kulja, and the Altai district in the north of the province. They came ostensibly to study commercial conditions, but devoted much of their time to political research and investigations into the Pan-Asiatic movement. They did not favour the Mensheviks—the anti-Bolshevik element in Central Asia—and it was curious that their agents were men antagonistic to the Allied cause. Several embarrassing but groundless statements were made by them in the north, notably at Kulja, where they declared we were acquiring Tibet, a sore point with the Chinese, who still believe that the land of the Lamas will have to renounce its independence and come again under Celestial sway. However, when the Chinese realised that we had declined the opportunity offered to us in 1919 of taking over Russian Turkistan, which we could have had for the asking as the result of our campaign in north-east Persia and of the ardently expressed desire of the Turkomans themselves that we should assume ownership, they discounted the acquisitive tactics attributed to us.

These officers remained about two years in Chinese Turkistan, but the information gained was largely

negative, for the Chinese had issued secret instructions to the local authorities that their attitude towards the Japanese was to be a passive one.

Early in May I visited Yarkand, the emporium of Indo-Central Asian trade and once the capital of ancient Tartary. Although the political situation in Russian Turkistan and the menace hanging over Chinese territory as the outcome of Bolshevik propaganda and action gave rise to grave anxiety, it was essential to carry out this tour, ostensibly with the object of transacting routine business but really to combat the critical position that had arisen through the outbreak of war with Afghanistan.

I had planned an extensive tour to include practically the whole of the Consular area, one that would have occupied seven or eight months and placed me in direct personal touch with the vital centres of Turkistan, but in view of the political situation in those critical days it was considered by the Government of India and at home to be inadvisable to leave headquarters for so lengthy a period.

There were then in Yarkand a number of persons from Afghan territory whose status *vis-à-vis* ourselves had never been placed upon a definite footing. Their attitude, dictated entirely by personal motives, was equivocal and had constantly placed my predecessor and me in an invidious position. Under the China and Korea Order in Council of 1904 the British Government, by reason of their treaty engagements with the late Amir of Afghanistan, were under an obligation to give assistance to Afghan subjects in China when sought, and it was further agreed that Afghan subjects in China should be treated as British

protected persons and entitled to the consideration implied by that decision.

News spreads swiftly in the East, and it was reported in Yarkand and along the Indian borderland that the Afghan forces had moved down on India, driven back the opposing British army, and occupied Peshawar preparatory to a more extended campaign. The effect of this canard in such a credulous country as Turkistan, and the use to which the Bolsheviks would put the story, may well be imagined.

We had many enemies in Turkistan and notably in Yarkand, the centre of Afghan intrigue. This to a certain extent I countered by insisting on the expulsion from Turkistan of two notorious Afghan agitators who had originally been removed on the representations of Sir George Macartney but had crept in again, being harboured by the District Magistrate in Yarkand.

The District Magistrate, or Governor of the Yarkand district, Liu Jen Tan, an astute official about thirty-six years of age, who had been about six years in his present post, was hostile to British interests, and his policy was one of consistent opposition which was enhanced by the unfortunate Afghan situation, for, seeing in these people a political lever ready to hand, he showed them extreme partiality and stultified attempts on our part to preserve a cordial and peaceful atmosphere. Moreover, he had married a sister of the Governor-General's wife, a circumstance of which he took full advantage, exploiting the feminine influence and corresponding direct with the head of the province. In view of the studied hostility of this official, Sir George Macartney had made repeated

efforts to secure his removal, more particularly during 1916 when the German agent Hentig was for a time in Yarkand and working against us.

I left for Yarkand on May 9, the Taoyin of Kashgar and all the Chinese officials accompanying me three miles outside the city, the General Officer Commanding providing a cavalry escort and one or two Chinese officers being attached to my staff for the tour.

The first day I travelled to Yangi Hissar, fifty-one miles from Kashgar, the road to which lies across the level plain and through frequent villages where shade is afforded by long lines of poplars. The day was beautifully clear, with fine views of the Alai Mountains to the south-west, whilst to the west extended the Tian Shan Mountains separating Ferghana and the rest of Russian Turkistan from Kashgaria. Yangi Hissar is the headquarters of a district presided over by a Shen-Kuan, or District Magistrate, and the population in and around it is chiefly agricultural. The Chinese city is on a plain half a mile to the north of the Turki town and surrounded by the customary turreted wall and deep moat devoid of water. Generally speaking, the Yangi Hissar district is an arid desert with extensive stretches of saline deposits and reed-covered marshes, the soil impregnated with salt which leaves a white coating; indeed, on the southern edge of the district this saline deposit renders the ground so soft that cattle and horses have difficulty in traversing it when off the beaten track.

Yangi Hissar is of paramount interest by reason of its association with the final struggle between the rival faiths of the Buddha and Mohammed, for it was at Ordam Padshah, thirty-four miles to the west, that Ali Arslan

Khan, the Mohammedan champion, fell with many of his best and bravest in the battle that sealed the fate of Buddhism. I have in a subsequent chapter narrated my journey to this Mecca in Central Asia, being one of only five Europeans who have visited the sacred spot.

I was met outside Yangi Hissar by the District Magistrate, the General Officer Commanding, and numerous other Chinese officials, with a large escort of cavalry. To reach the reception pavilion we rode through the lines of a cavalry guard of honour to the blare of trumpets and crash of antiquated cannon brought out for the occasion. After the greetings and ceremonial tea we mounted again and passed on to the city, the cavalcade being nearly a quarter of a mile in length with a corresponding amount of dust, which is always in evidence in Turkistan. I camped in a large garden placed at my disposal, declining the pressing invitation of the District Magistrate to be lodged within his Yamen. I, however, dined with him that night, the dinner taking place in an ante-room having windows of lattice-work covered with red and white paper. A rough tin stove with pipes running across the room radiated heat, the repast being punctuated by frequent and vigorous expectoration and clearing of the throat on the part of the host, followed at the close of the dinner by hiccups and loud belching, this being in accordance with the rules governing appreciation of a good dinner.

An excellent soup was served on this occasion and one obviously to the liking of the head waiter, who, indifferent to conventionality, removed the tureen

after serving us and swallowed the remains before his assistants could anticipate him.

These dinners afford a quaint study in human nature. A military officer of high rank was dining with me at the Consulate one night, and on taking his place at table gave his richly bedecked and furred hat to an attendant. The latter was encumbered with a carbine and sword, so cast around for a peg on which to hang his master's headgear, but not perceiving anything suitable promptly put it on his own head, and there it remained until the General left.

At another of my dinner parties an official, nervous and ill at ease, made heroic efforts to eat his soup with a knife, until I suggested through the medium of his neighbour that he might find a spoon more suited to the task.

At distances ranging from three to fifteen miles around Yangi Hissar traces occur of castellated cities and ancient fortifications, mostly buried beneath the shifting sands, although there is constant evidence of their existence in the bits of pottery, glass, coins, and ware that are often picked up. The materials composing these buildings are sun-dried bricks, and matting made locally was used in the foundations, a practice still in vogue. The dry nature of the Kashgarian climate is brought into strong relief by the fact that sheets of this matting are sometimes found beneath the walls of these ancient cities and fortifications in a wonderful state of preservation, although we know that the ruins date back nearly a thousand years.

There are coal mines a few miles from the city worked on primitive lines and the monopoly of the

Commander-in-Chief, who exploited them through his subordinate at Yangi Hissar. The coal is of good burning quality and an example of the mineral wealth lying untapped in the country.

Yangi Hissar is the happy hunting-ground of Hindu money-lenders hailing from Shikarpur in northern India, whose rapacity in usurious transactions would surpass the evils of the Shakesperian exponent—Shylock. Some years ago the Russians expelled the Hindu money-lenders from Russian Turkistan, where they had established themselves, to the encouragement of thrift and the enhancement of Muscovite reputation. There were always innumerable complaints against these harpies, largely due to the inhabitants allowing themselves to get into their clutches. My predecessor regarded the presence of these money-lenders as detrimental to our prestige, whilst another eminent authority gave it as his considered opinion that throughout Central Asia they were looked upon as a pest, that both the Russians and Chinese had been compelled to take action to check the growing evil, and he doubted the wisdom of according them any support beyond protection from mob violence. On a subsequent visit to Yangi Hissar I dealt with no less than 584 money-lending cases in a period of twelve days, sufficient indication of the strenuousness of court work in that city.

Amongst Mohammedans usury is not countenanced ; the Quran makes no distinction when the borrower is not a Mohammedan and forbids the latter taking interest from any person or on any account. The rise of commerce and trade demands have, however, modified these injunctions to such an extent that

the custom of taking interest as between Moham-medans is recognised by Indian courts of law.

Even with the faithful there are ways deep and devious for circumventing the injunctions of the Quran. The mullahs condone usury on the principle that to lend to those in need is a pious act for which recompense is due. To realise this reward the lender will purchase something from the borrower, a rug, coat, or household article, to be taken back after the loan has expired at a figure covering both principal and interest.

From Yangi Hissar the road to Yarkand leads across sand-covered plains for thirty miles to Kizil, near which village are some iron mines, the lime in the ore acting as a fusion that makes the smelting operations peculiarly simple and amenable to the primitive means available to the workmen.

Beyond Kizil there is a twenty-five mile stretch across a gravel and sand desert to Ak Robat, broken only by two mud-built rest-houses, or langars, at one of which I halted for rest and refreshment before entering the city of Yarkand, which we could see in the distance.

The people of Turkistan are decidedly hospitable, and at every village and halting-place the dasturkhan is served—trays with fresh and dried fruit, bread, soup, pilau, finely cut carrots in syrup, a cream made from the blending of powdered sugar and white of eggs, and roasts of divers kinds. The dasturkhan increases in proportion to the size of the place offering it until within the cities it reaches the acme of richness and plenitude.

The road is marked at intervals of two and a half

miles by the Chinese equivalent in milestones, known as potai, structures of mud and bricks about twelve feet in height and ten feet square at the base. These monuments extend to Peking, four thousand miles to the east, and although many are now crumbled away it was the custom to place four smaller potais near the larger one when in the vicinity of an inn, thus notifying the weary traveller that he might count upon rest and refreshment and be correspondingly thankful.

At Ak Robot I was met by the Assistant British Aksakal and a number of followers mounted on good Yarkand and Badakhshan horses, and escorted to the river, four miles outside the city, where a camp had been erected and four hundred and fifty Indian and Afghan subjects were assembled under the guidance of the Chief Aksakal. They made a gallant show, the majority having come on horseback, and some in Chinese and native carts with jingling bells and much ornamentation. After I had addressed the assembly and partaken of refreshments provided on a lavish scale, we moved off, the company having been reinforced by other arrivals, so that the procession ran into many hundreds of mounted men and carts. Farther on, a halt was called to greet the Russian Aksakal and a large following who had prepared a tent and tables of food for my delectation.

Two miles from the city lines of cavalry were drawn up with drums, pipes, and trumpets, and many flags and banners. Through this martial array I rode to the far end where, dismounting, I was greeted by Liu Jen Tan and his officers arrayed in Chinese dress but with small slouch hats of the

Tyrolean pattern. Liu conducted me to a raised dais, on the outer flanks of which the various state officials were posted in order of rank, and introduced the members of his staff, the host and I then seating ourselves at a small table for the ceremonial tea. Socially Liu was above reproach, and it was only when it came to state affairs that he showed his implacable nature. Amongst the company that morning was the General Commanding at Yarkand, a Chinese Mohammedan who had been forty-two years in Turkistan and spoke fluent Turki, so that conversation with him was direct and not through the medium of an interpreter. I am not sure whether this representative of the military service was the one who gave an original return of the strength of an outlying post, or whether it was a subordinate of his command. At all events, the number was given as sixteen, made up of two genuine soldiers, four servants, the Commandant, his wife, and eight children.

Commercially Yarkand is the important point in Chinese Turkistan and was once the capital of ancient Tartary and a royal residence of the Afrasiab dynasty. It was on the caravan route from China to Afghanistan, Persia, and Turkey, but it gradually fell in importance, and with the Russian advance in Asia Kashgar became the strategical point, from its proximity to the Russian railway and to the frontier of Russia in Asia.

Yarkand is the best-cultivated area, possessing numbers of small farmsteads scattered about in clusters amongst the fields and gardens for which the Yarkand district is noted.

The streets and bazaars are even more crooked and irregular than at Kashgar, and there are numerous

passages opening therefrom to small squares and courtyards with trees and tanks. These latter, fed irregularly from stagnant streams, provide the water supply of the city as well as the washing places for men, women, animals, and clothes.

Despite the insanitary conditions there is little disease and an absence of plague and other visitations known in India and elsewhere in the East. This is as well, for medical skill to combat serious illness is non-existent and the Kashgarian doctor has little scope for his activity, especially where the women are concerned. Amongst these conservative people, encompassed by the Moslem rules governing seclusion of women, a doctor's diagnosis of his feminine patient is no easy task and must necessarily be open to considerable doubt. A small ivory or metal figure of a woman is passed through the curtain; the lady then hands the figure back indicating the spot where she feels the pain, and the physician diagnoses accordingly, a delightfully simple method provided he prescribes the correct medicine.

The population of Yarkand is estimated at roughly sixty thousand, being mainly Turki with Tartar and Chinese elements brought in at the time of Yakub Beg. In addition there are diverse foreign elements such as Andijanians, Badakhshians, Chitralis, Baltis, Kashmiris, Hindus, and men from the Swat and Bajaur districts of the north-west frontier province of India engaged in the opium trade.

The main trade route to India, with which country Chinese Turkistan has most of its commercial dealings, is from Yarkand to Leh in Ladakh, and it involves the crossing of seven of the highest passes in the world,

taking one, at the summit of the Karakoram Pass, the frontier line between India and Turkistan, to a height of 18,300 feet. From Leh there is a road to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, a distance of eighteen marches, thence an excellent motor way for two hundred miles to railhead at Rawal Pindi.

It is twenty-five days' march from Yarkand to Leh, a commercial route that ranks as the highest in the world. Trade is naturally carried on at great disadvantage owing to the physical obstacles, and during the open months the track is strewn with the carcasses of baggage ponies fallen by the wayside. This is due to the high altitude, the desolate country traversed, and the absence of sufficient pasturage, for it is necessary to travel fifteen marches without grazing of any sort.

Leh, the capital of Ladakh, has from time immemorial been the link between the commerce of Central Asia and India, and when Russian activity threatened to endanger the ancient connection, it was feared the trade might cease with the extension of the Caspian railway to Andijan in Russian Turkistan, thirteen days' march from Kashgar, whence there is direct rail communication with Europe and the Near and Far East. This was an obvious advantage over the long and arduous journey from India.

Owing to the relative position of Andijan, Yarkand, Khotan, and Kashgar, the opening of the railway, and improvements in communication from Russian territory, did have commercial effects. The Russians took the lead in trade, but this has been stultified by the *débâcle* in Russia and the anarchy and chaos that have descended upon that country. The diffi-

culties of the trade route to India are exploited by horse and caravan dealers, and I often had cases before me of this nature. For instance, a trader would take an advance of contract money for the conveyance of goods, which sum would be converted into rupees at the rate of four to five tengas per rupee, a very low rate, it being agreed that the amount should be repaid in Ladakh where it is recast to represent rupees. It sometimes happened that the contractor was unable to discharge the debt there, so on return to Yarkand he was mulcted in a sum that had now been converted into tengas at eight to the rupee. Thus a debt of four hundred rupees might become double that sum in two and a half months, but, if still unable to pay, the process was repeated and at the close of the season might be as much as four times the original sum.

The day after my arrival the District Magistrate gave a dinner to which all the Chinese officials received invitations. I had already paid the official call and now had an opportunity of studying Liu and his surroundings more closely. His Yamen was the best-kept and most up-to-date that I had seen in Turkistan, with a large open hall and side-rooms containing furniture of Russian manufacture. The dinner was served in semi-European style with champagne and wines brought from Peking and Shanghai, seven months' journey by road under the most favourable conditions. The conversation was conducted in Turki and Chinese by the acting interpreter, the erstwhile incumbent having been relieved of his post as a receiver of stolen goods, the chief of the Yarkand police being in league with him and furnishing infor-

mation as to the best and most likely sources for a lucrative find.

Whilst in Yarkand I gave dinners in honour of the Governor and others, as well as a reception and dinner to the British and Afghan subjects, Begg, Qazis, and representatives of the legal, priestly, and lay professions, several hundred in all, which the Governor and civil and military officials also attended. Incidentally I imparted the latest information respecting the Anglo-Afghan war, giving details of the aeroplane operations and dealing with this delicate matter so that my audience might draw their own conclusions as to which side would emerge the stronger and more united. During my ten days' stay I dealt with many intricate political problems, tried a number of criminal and other cases, and had a quantity of opium seized and burnt in public.

Regarding the opium traffic, it flourishes practically unchecked in Chinese Turkistan and is not interfered with across the frontier in Russian territory, as the Bolsheviks find it a means of augmenting revenue of which they stand in such desperate need. So lucrative is the trade that it is estimated to yield a profit of £165 per pony load after deducting cost of preparation, transport to the market, and all incidental expenses. It was one of my many duties to combat this trade, and with the cordial co-operation of the Chinese we may succeed in stamping it out. China and opium have always been closely associated, and the matter was a difficult one to handle for the reason that India had been a great producing-ground and up to the late war had exported vast quantities of the drug to China. By 1917 China was comparatively

freed from the opium blight, and, *inter alia*, the Indian Government had, by its cessation of the opium export trade, lost an annual revenue of four million pounds; but the new state of affairs was short-lived. Many of the provinces in China were quasi-independent, ruled by Tuchuns, or military governors, who found a profitable source of income in the cultivation of the poppy by which they could pay and support their troops.

The persons engaged in the traffic are mostly Afghans, but British subjects are occasionally involved in it. The opium is imported through Wakhan, in the north-west of Afghanistan, over the Russian Pamirs, whence entry to Chinese territory is effected by unfrequented routes, as the Chinese do not consistently maintain posts at all points of ingress from Russian Turkistan. Kirghiz supply guides and transport when required, and so well organised is the system that the loads are passed through and brought to the distributing centres at Yarkand and Yangi Hissar, where they are taken over by the promoters of the trade. As some of the Chinese officials are themselves interested in the trade they do not display an active interest in its suppression.

Semirechia, a province of Russian Turkistan, whose border is coterminous with China, is one of the best opium-growing grounds, and the profit per pony is slightly higher than that accruing from the Afghan article, as the distance to be traversed is less. Latterly, owing to repeated pressure brought to bear on the Chinese Government in Peking, steps have been taken by the local authorities to check the traffic, prior to which an average of 12,500 persons were engaged in

the opium trade with Semirechia. There was recently a scarcity of clothing in Russian Turkistan, and therefore an increased demand for cloth of any kind. Rubles were not accepted in payment and the Bolsheviks therefore encouraged the cultivation of opium, which was the only thing they did not annex for local consumption. The Bolsheviks originally objected to land being taken for poppy cultivation, as they required it for the production of foodstuffs. However, on its being represented that opium could be smuggled with comparative impunity into Chinese Turkistan in exchange for silver, the objections evaporated. In 1920 the price of Bolshevik rubles in Aksu, fifteen days' march to the east, was fifty per cent. in excess of that obtaining in Kashgar, so much of the Soviet paper money was despatched to Aksu and thence across the frontier for opium. These notes, which are practically valueless elsewhere, commanded a price over the border, and the desire of the Chinese that they should return to the land of their origin overcame any scruples the Celestial authorities may have had to their being exchanged for opium.

During my stay in Yarkand I visited and inspected the land granted to the Mirs of Hunza in 1847, of which mention has already been made. Muzaffar Ali, the son of the deposed Mir Safdar Ali, with his family and a few recalcitrant followers, is living there and appears to be doing well, despite his periodical complaints and protestations of poverty. These exiles, and a number of British and Chinese subjects in and around Yarkand, are followers of the Aga Khan, the spiritual head of the Maulais.

Whilst in Yarkand a case resembling the rise of

the Mahdi in the Soudan occurred ten marches away at Khotan, the land of silk and the centre for the buried cities of Turkistan. A Mohammedan named Rahman set himself up as the King of Khotan, the outcome of a dream in which he pictured himself head of the state with the entire country at his back. He threw himself heart and soul into this new mission in life, gathered followers around him, and proclaimed the coming of the Mahdi. The movement threatened to spread. Rahman defied authority, but the Chinese were equal to the occasion. They are never adepts at obtaining information, nor at keeping themselves in touch with what may be going on around them, but utilising the information I was able to supply they acted with commendable promptitude, and a week later Rahman's reign came to a definite end in his execution.

With the exception of Ili in the far north, Yarkand is the most fertile part of Chinese Turkistan and the soil there yields a substantial revenue. The land system here as elsewhere is governed by the same principles, so that a description of it covers the province generally in that connection. The method of land tenure has resulted in a number of small landholders tenanted in fee simple a few acres, rather than in landlords possessing a monopoly of the soil. There are no restrictions on the sale and transfer of land where the transaction does not involve dealings with a foreign subject.

The bulk of the revenue is derived from the land tax, and the assessment is still carried out in accordance with the classification made some forty-five years ago. This followed shortly after the fall of Yakub Beg and the land was classified as first, second,

or third grade, the assessors being indulgent and the measuring chains more or less elastic according to the amount of silver dust cast in the eyes of the surveyors. The rate of land taxation is a fixed amount in cash together with a quota of grain, the amount in British currency working out in 1922 at approximately twelve shillings per acre.

The Chinese are sensitive where the possession of land is involved, and the local authority often shows lamentable ignorance of the extent and area of state property, and of what is going on in its midst. I had a striking example of this in Kashgar where a Chinese was arrested for being in possession of government land and selling the produce therefrom. He had acquired the ground ten years before when it was under the city walls extending along a road constructed in that direction. This highway had been subsequently diverted in order to meet traffic difficulties and the old road became part of the moat under the battlemented walls. In the spring of 1921 the landholder took the opportunity of a favourable sale and presented himself at the Yamen with the title-deeds. This was the first intimation the local authority had that there was any cultivated land in the moat, and led to the discovery that the produce had been disposed of to the Swedish Mission. The District Magistrate became seriously alarmed for his own safety, so declared the deeds to be false, and the unfortunate man was indicted for being in possession of government land although, when he took it over, it was not actually state property. However, be that as it may, the matter was closed by the man being taken out and shot.

The telegraph service does not extend to Yarkand, and telegrams when despatched to Urumchi or Peking are sent to Maralbashi, on the main Kashgar-Urumchi road, three marches to the north-east. A good deal of speculation was going on in ruble notes about this time, and even the telegraph masters indulged in the gamble, the one at Kashgar receiving a telegram for delivery to the Russo-Asiatic bank which he held up for some days as it advised the purchase of ruble notes in view of a forthcoming rise. He bought as many as funds would permit, then obtained more cash by pawning the notes already in hand. The vagaries of the money market, however, caused a sudden slump in Russian currency, and the telegraph master was then dunned for the money due on ruble notes purchased; but the fact of his holding up the wire was overlooked, as the local authorities considered he had been sufficiently punished in the failure of his investment.

A few miles south of Yarkand is the Tarim River, which rises in the glaciers of the Karakoram Mountains to the south-west. It is there known as the Raskum Daria, then the Yarkand Daria until it skirts the edge of the Takla Makan desert, when it becomes the Tarim River. It waters the country between the Karakoram range and Yarkand and Aksu to the north-east, having a course of about a thousand miles, finally flowing into the marshes of the Lob Nor country, being at this stage much reduced in volume by evaporation. The general character of the country through which the river flows is an accumulation of drift sand, the only habitable portions being those along its banks. This desert region bears

indication of cities that have been overwhelmed by the shifting sands, some of the dunes reaching a height of one hundred and eighty feet. Their formation originates with the strong winds prevailing during the spring and summer months and continuing for several days in succession. When the wind subsides the sand is left in a series of layers which increase in depth and height as time goes on. The process of formation is gradual, so that the inhabitants can watch the growth and abandon their settlements when it is evident that the dunes will shortly engulf them. In the vicinity of the river these sands possess a greater degree of consistency than those out in the desert, due to more humidity and to suction from the river itself. The winds invariably blow in the one direction, south and south-east, the waves of sand are constantly on the move, and it would appear from local statements and scientific deduction that in course of time parts, at any rate, of the buried cities should reappear in a more or less perfect condition as when first overwhelmed. The problem opens up an interesting field for research as to the extent of movement of the sands.

The sand-dunes vary in height from ten to thirty feet, but in the desert country between Yarkand and Aksu are often as high as eighty and one hundred feet. The contour is the same, successive rows one behind the other, resembling ripples on a sandy beach, only on a larger scale.

In Chinese Turkistan the deserts are more pronounced, and it is there that have originated the weird and ghostly stories, the tales of fairies and gnomes peculiar to the superstitious Asiatic. Certainly one

cannot marvel at the legends, for this sea of sand has a dismal and depressing effect ; it betrays no sign of human, animal, or vegetable life, there is no sound of bird or beast, nothing to relieve the sepulchral silence. Well may the ancient Chinese writers have characterised it as the abode of demons and evil spirits.

The inhabitants along the river banks between Yarkand, Maralbashi, and Aksu are the Dolans, a poor and illiterate tribe of herdsmen, trappers, and collectors of fuel and desert salt for the local markets. They profess a form of Mohammedanism and are reputed to be descendants of prisoners brought from Trans-Oxiana in the eleventh century by Harun Boghra Khan and forcibly settled in their present domain. The Dolans live in small reed-built huts, some placed slightly below the ground-level, and their culinary and other appliances are of the simplest description.

The Dolan women have practically unlimited liberty, are not veiled, and are free from the restrictions imposed on women of orthodox Moslems. Some curious customs are said to exist throwing quaint sidelights on hospitality as it is known amongst the Dolans. A visitor arriving in their villages of reed, wattle, and mud-brick huts has his host's rooms placed at his disposal as well as the wife or the pretty daughter, should there be one, the lady's slippers being left outside the room, and until they are removed within it is a sign that none should enter. The women are good dancers and they figure prominently at the feasts and merry-making in the Dolan country.

On leaving Yarkand I was escorted out of the city with the same elaborate ceremonies as had attended

my arrival, and three days later was back in Kashgar where the pressure of state business was acute.

A few weeks later I carried out a tour to the Pamirs, when the Kirghiz, who came into my camp from all the surrounding valleys, organised great festivities and I gave prizes for horse and yak races and initiated them into the mysteries of the sack race, three-legged race, and other Western sports. Whilst on this tour I crossed the Kara Tash Pass (Black Stone), 16,450 feet, an interesting event in that my predecessor had been the famous Cossack General, Korniloff, who figured so prominently in the first Russian revolution of 1917. I also ascended the Ak Berdi Pass, 15,600 feet, at the head of the Bulun Kul Valley and the frontier line between the Chinese and Russian Pamirs. This had not been crossed since Lord Dunmore's passage of it in his journey from Russian territory to Kashgar in 1892.

CHAPTER VII

Bokhara and the Bolshevik net—Dreadful dungeons—The Allied War Cabinet and the cotton of Russian Turkistan—Mohammedan opposition to Bolsheviks—A Bolshevik holocaust—Prisoners of war—Red Army and its ideas of discipline—The Soviet and their Capital Levy—How they dealt with defaulters—Their policy with unemployed—A counter-revolution—A fearful retribution—Bolshevik propaganda and Indian revolutionaries—Anglo-Afghan War—An Afghan mission to Russian Turkistan—Bolshevik move against Bokhara—The wealth of the Bokharan Amirs—The Amir sends a mission to me—His wonderful offer—His flight to Afghanistan.

THE Bolsheviks were now making strenuous efforts to bring about world revolution, not only in Russian and Chinese Turkistan but throughout the Asiatic continent. They had already absorbed the Khanate of Khiva, immortalised by Burnaby's *Ride to Khiva* in 1873, and were engaged in secret negotiations with the revolutionary party in Bokhara, known as the Young Bokharan Party, whom they had won over by specious promises.

To facilitate a clear grasp of the situation leading to events not hitherto made public, I will give a brief history of Bokhara up to the period when I had direct relations with the Amir after his flight from the country, following the Bolshevik raid and occupation in September 1920.

Bokhara is regarded as the first city of Mohammedan Asia ; its history goes back centuries before the Christian era and it is considered the ecclesiastical and educational centre of Islam. It has been successively

attacked and occupied by all the conquerors of ancient and modern times, from Alexander the Great to Jenghiz Khan and Timurlane the Mongol leaders, and has been enriched and despoiled by them in turn. Timurlane was the most amazing conqueror the world has ever seen, for he sacked Moscow one summer and was at the gates of Delhi the next ; he dethroned no less than twenty-seven kings and even harnessed kings to his chariot. Perhaps, then, the Bokharan proverb was justified which tells us that ' Elsewhere light descends upon the earth, but from Bokhara it ascends.' Its piety and learning were on the same plane as the beauty of its silks, carpets, and brocades, and the manufactures of India, China, and Europe were marketed in its streets.

Such was Bokhara when the Russians, in pursuance of their campaign of Central Asian conquest, occupied it in 1868. Prior to the Russian advent the system of government was patriarchal, and it practically remained so, for the Russians interfered as little as possible with the internal affairs of this pivot of the Mohammedan world. The population was approximately two millions, over whom the Amir's authority was absolute, and he was assisted in his administration by seven ministers. The Royal Palace and headquarters were within the city in a quarter known as the Ark, dating from the twelfth century.

We had ourselves been in direct relation with Bokhara, for during the reign of Nasrullah Khan, who succeeded to the throne in 1826, we despatched representatives to Bokhara in the persons of Burne and, later, Captains Stuart and Connolly. Nasrullah Khan was probably the most vicious savage who has ever

darkened an Eastern throne, and his entry to power was marked by the execution of his three brothers and twenty-eight other relatives to obviate possible interference with his reign.

For the accommodation of his political prisoners he had two dungeons constructed, the first of which was several feet below the ground-level and about forty feet square, entrance to it being by way of a trap-door. Beneath this, farther down in the bowels of the earth, was a second dungeon some twenty feet square, plunged in perpetual darkness, into which prisoners were lowered by means of ropes. This contained rats, small snakes, ticks, and other vermin which, when the dungeon was empty, were fed on raw meat to keep them in condition.

Under Nasrullah's government the Bokharan borders were extended, and this, coupled with Russian activities in Central Asia, caused the British Government to feel some apprehension for the safety of India and adjacent states; and so Connolly and Stuart were sent to Bokhara in 1840, where they were treacherously seized and thrown into the dungeons by the Amir. There they remained on and off until the disaster to our arms in Afghanistan in 1842 sealed their fate, and they were taken out and beheaded, after refusing to embrace Islam as the price of their release. No retribution was ever exacted by us for this foul crime.

Russia, although quiescent at this time, was consolidating her position, and resuming the advance in 1868, subdued the Khanate of Khiva. The reigning Amir of Bokhara, seeing the fate that had overtaken his neighbour, and realising the hopelessness of resistance, voluntarily came under Russian jurisdiction.

The strength and prestige of Russia were then at a high level, but, nevertheless, she forbore any open hostility to Bokharan customs and institutions which might have roused against her Turkey and the neighbouring fanatical states of Afghanistan, Persia, and Eastern Turkistan. A Russian resident was appointed with headquarters outside Bokhara, and the state was allowed almost complete immunity from interference, subject only to nominal supervision by the Czar's representative.

I now come to the collapse of monarchical rule in Russia and the rise of the Kerenski Government from the ruins thereof, giving place in turn to the Bolsheviks in October 1917. With the fall of the Imperial *régime* the Amir became apprehensive for his own safety, since the disaster to autocratic rule in Russia might well lead to a bid for independence on the part of his people, who had, to my knowledge, already been approached by the Bolsheviks. In an endeavour to preserve his throne and state inviolate, the Amir carried out certain reforms, notably with regard to taxes and administration generally, both of which had long been regarded with disfavour by the people. He also commenced a cleaning-out process by deporting the revolutionary elements, the leading section of which was the Young Bokharan Party secretly formed some time previously, but compelled by force of circumstance to remain quiescent, and only in 1918 did it assume definite and aggressive shape. The first attempt to overthrow Bokharan rule was a clumsy effort on the part of the Bolsheviks, who despatched a force to Bokhara under Kolisof, an incompetent and illiterate leader of the usual Bolshevik

type. On arrival he presented the Amir with an ultimatum demanding the grant of a constitution to the people and appointment of members of the Young Bokharan Party to carry it into effect. The ultimatum was limited to twenty-four hours, but in the meantime the people had attacked the Russians, and this spread to a general onslaught, Kolisof escaping with only a part of his force.

The Bolshevik Government in Tashkent was then in no position to assume hostilities against Bokhara, for they were confronted by the British in north-east Persia, and were meeting with strong opposition from insurgent bands in Semirechia and Ferghana, with all of whom I was in touch.

I had at this time another problem to deal with, a question that dictated German policy regarding Turkistan, in which the Central Powers were then taking an unusual interest, and that was the stocks of cotton lying there which they were anxious to secure for the replenishment of munition supplies.

Prior to the war, Russia had devoted close attention to the production of cotton, for it is an article much in demand in Russia, besides which it was given every encouragement with the idea of supplanting the American article and making it a national and self-dependent industry. Of the total area of over five million acres open to cultivation in Russian Turkistan at the outbreak of war, nearly two millions were devoted to cotton.

In 1918 vast stocks of cotton were lying in Central Asia; the Bolsheviks were bitterly hostile to the Allies, and especially ourselves, and they would have gone to any length to bring about the fall of Great

Britain. The fate of those stocks of cotton was a matter of moment to the Allied War Cabinet, and I consequently received orders from the Home Government to report as to the possibility of securing and transporting the entire stock to Kashgar. It was a colossal undertaking, and I mention it as showing the magnitude of the problems confronting the War Cabinet amidst all the questions in which they were involved at that time. I well remember the telegram conveying the salient points of this problem ; it would have required 750,000 baggage animals to move the cotton which I estimated, after consultation with all the best local authorities, was then lying in Russian Turkistan, and the cost of the transport would have totalled twenty-two million rupees. It might have been advisable to preface the communication with a note that it should be opened in a cool place and with restoratives at hand !

After receiving my report His Majesty's Government decided that the magnitude of the task was such as to preclude all possibility of its being carried through within such a period as to admit of its exerting direct influence on the course of the war, and the project was therefore abandoned.

To return to Ferghana, where Argash Bai, Mohammed Emin, and Sher Mohammed were the three leading chieftains, and the ones who originated the movement for freedom and autonomy and were the leading participants in the struggle. They were bitterly opposed to Bolshevism and saw that the Soviet had no intention of carrying out their original lavish promises. They knew there was no chance of obtaining a voice in the control of affairs, and although

the Mohammedans totalled ninety-one per cent. of the population, only two of the nine seats of a subordinate nature in the Turkistan Executive Committee were allotted to them. A meeting was then convened at Kokand, one of the chief towns in Ferghana, ten days' march from Kashgar, to protest against the usurpation of power by the Bolsheviks and to demand the grant of autonomy to Turkistan. These steps were seized upon by the Bolsheviks as a pretext for further repression. Moreover, Moscow became greatly alarmed at the national movement in Turkistan, and Tashkent was directed to deal with the situation.

It should be borne in mind that the Bolshevik ideas on the subject of Turkistan are definite and clearly cut. It is in the first place a granary and supply ground for Russia, but its paramount importance, from the Bolshevik point of view, is that it constitutes the best and most convenient ground for propaganda and intrigue against Britain in Asia. Tashkent lies in the centre of those Mohammedan countries which it is desired to contaminate, and Turkistan is the last part of the Russian dominions that the Bolsheviks would give up, for they themselves declare that if overthrown in Europe they will retire to Turkistan and there pursue the campaign for world revolution.

With more vigour and thoroughness than ever characterised the Czarist *régime* the Bolsheviks have carried on a policy of complete Russification. The railways, public services, and all that pertains to the executive, are entirely run by Russians, whilst large numbers of peasants have been imported and settled on land forcibly taken from the Kirghiz. The result

has been to create a feeling of bitter hostility and racial hatred quite unknown in the old Czarist days, when I travelled through Turkistan and found a general air of peace and contentment.

To cope with the Mohammedan meeting at Kokand, attended by many thousands of the faithful, the Bolsheviks sent down a number of troops organised from the prisoners of war interned in Siberia : Czechs, Magyars, and Austrians. Kokand was laid waste with a ruthlessness that would have surprised a Mongol conqueror of the middle ages, and more than fourteen thousand of the people were massacred. The mosques and shrines were desecrated and defamed, the fine library of Mohammedan literature was burnt, and a blockade was instituted by which the remaining inhabitants were debarred from receiving grain from adjacent provinces, their own supplies having already been commandeered. Over nine hundred thousand people are said to have perished from this famine. Many refugees came over into Chinese territory, and I induced the Chinese to accord them sanctuary and provide them with food. No famine relief whatever was afforded by the Bolsheviks to the native population, except where they definitely registered themselves—against their conscience and convictions—as members of the Communist Party. If these figures had been quoted by circles hostile to the Soviet one might throw doubt upon their impartiality, but they were actually given by the *Pravda*, the official organ of the Central Government at Moscow.

Following upon the massacres at Kokand, a rising against the Bolsheviks took place at Tashkent in January 1919 with which I shall presently deal. At

this time Kolisof, who had led the force to Bokhara and barely escaped with his life, was Chief Commissary for War. Kolisof had been a greaser on the railway, and Damgatski a skilled labourer, and these two practically formed the Government of Turkistan. The Red Army was mainly composed of the prisoners of war already referred to, and, although originally numbering 106,000, they had by typhus, scurvy, and various diseases brought about by the treatment they received, been reduced to 38,000. The German section, numbering 1800, was in charge of Lieutenant Zimmermann, and was the best disciplined and least inclined to Bolshevism of all the war prisoner element. Zimmermann, who had his men well in hand, contemplated breaking through to Europe *via* Trans-Caspia and Asia Minor, but our movements in Trans-Caspia prevented this.

The prisoners of war presented a curious aspect to the situation; they were there by force of circumstances and not by design, and in the main were friendly to the Allies, the majority being Czechs and Slovaks who hoped that with our aid a Czecho-Slovakian nation would be created. These prisoners were subsequently utilised as the nucleus against the Bolsheviks in Siberia, as well as to cover their own retirement on Vladivostock and prevent the munition supplies at the Far Eastern port from reaching Soviet hands.

The Russian element in the Red Army acted much as it felt inclined, but owing to the heavy drains for the various fronts in Russia proper it was in a minority, and the Bolsheviks were largely dependent on the prisoners of war to fight their battles in Turkistan.

This Russian element would hold frequent conferences as to whether they should attack or retire; leaders were elected and deposed almost in the same breath, and preposterous demands of money, food, and vodka were made before the troops would march. Even then they often declined to continue unless fresh demands were met.

Discipline was at a discount, battalions appearing on parade or not as it suited them, and commanding officers were set up and deposed according to the whim of the rank and file. The shops were, of course, nationalised, the people having to form up in rows and await their turn to buy at these state stores; and being closed for long periods during the day, those who came in from the surrounding districts had to wait until it suited the government storekeeper to open again. The quality of the goods was so indifferent, due to the lack of competition—the world's leading factor for eliminating the costly and the less useful—that they would not have secured any sale in a European shop of the humblest description, and often perishable articles such as fruit and vegetables were unfit for consumption, although sold at the fixed rates as sound and marketable.

With everything nationalised and prices fixed the sources of supply in outlying districts faded away, as the people found it did not pay them to cart articles in to the markets at the then prevailing rates.

Marriages could be solemnised for the sum of seven rubles, and the bridal pair received a permit entitling them to purchase four bottles of wine, unprocurable from the Soviet stores without a pass.

To meet financial needs the Bolsheviki raised

money by forced contributions, house to house raids, and the wholesale confiscation of goods and chattels. To enforce this capital levy they had many ways of instilling fear into the wretched people who were thus plundered. If pleading inability to comply with the demands, they were collected in a body and taken to the requisitioning headquarters, one or two of their number being then removed a short distance out of sight. Presently a shot would ring out, the remainder of the delinquents interpreting this as an execution, with the result that they paid up, or gave all they possessed in the world to satisfy the levy. This forced contribution led to the grossest abuses. An official of the Soviet would call at a house and, producing an authority, demand the surrender of carpets, chairs, etc., required for the entertainment of some official, or for one of the many missions coming and going from Afghanistan and Trans-Caspia. Needless to say, none of the things was ever returned.

The general atmosphere of anarchy and chaos, and the economic stagnation prevailing, were responsible for large numbers of Russian unemployed. The Bolsheviki dealt with these by rounding them up and compelling them to work at any and every job requiring attention: a state of affairs that might not commend itself to the British Labour Party, who are so lamentably ignorant of what goes on in Russia, where all labour has since 1918, and still is, conscripted.

Amongst other fatuities practised was the prohibition of private teaching of any sort, since that pandered to the bourgeois sentiment and was contrary to true Communism. Children's Soviets were formed at the

schools, the children electing and deposing their teachers as the spirit moved them.

In January 1919 the counter-revolutionary party, known as the Mensheviks, or White Guards, organised the rising against the Bolsheviks in Tashkent, headed by Ossipov, a former Commissary for War who had been dismissed. The scheme, if well planned and organised under capable leadership and direction, might have had far-reaching results, for the Bolshevik hold on Tashkent in particular, and Turkistan in general, was precarious. The situation was fraught with grave danger for them; the whole fabric of Bolshevism had been shaken to its foundations by the campaigns of Denikin, Korniloff, and Koltchak, and the strenuous opposition throughout Ferghana and Semirechia.

The fort at Tashkent is the salient point in the city, and this the revolutionaries endeavoured to seize, and with a view to clearing the field of the Bolshevik executive, Ossipov telephoned a bogus message to their headquarters, in response to which eight commissaries came over without suspecting anything and were promptly shot. The railwaymen, the strongest element, had agreed to join in; but a hitch occurred, and their support failing to materialise, the rising fizzled out. The Bolsheviks exacted a terrible retribution, and one that was in consonance with their traditions. They arrested indiscriminately every one of the bourgeoisie, and all those who could not prove absolutely their adherence from the beginning to Communist principles, and shot them without trial. Whole streets had every house raided at night, and boys and men from fifteen to sixty-five

were taken out, lined up in ranks, stripped of their clothes, and shot in turn. One man boasted that he had shot 758 with his own hand, and several women were shot without trial in the concluding stage of this ghastly tragedy.

The counter-revolutionary party had approached me for financial assistance, requesting the sum of two million rubles to carry the plans into effect and get the new order of things going ; but for the reasons already given, I could not see my way to recommend the grant.

The Bolsheviks at this stage developed a wide system of propaganda, of which the main feature was its anti-British tone. Some of it was also quasi-Islamic in character, revealing them in the light of champions of the oppressed peoples of the East. To give the requisite colour to this illusion they sent a number of Indians from Moscow to Tashkent headed by Barkatullah, a renegade who had been appointed Foreign Secretary of the Provisional Government of India. After expulsion from India as a dangerous anarchist this man had been received in Berlin, where plans for the new Indian Government were formulated with Mahendra Prasad as the President. I have dealt with the latter's history, and his secret negotiations with Afghanistan, in another chapter.

The Bolsheviks now devoted themselves with unabated energy to the task of destroying British power, with special reference to India, for they declared that the success of the whole scheme must stand or fall by the success achieved there and on the borderland, and that this was the only way to ensure a revolution

in Great Britain. By a general conflagration in the East the British could be burnt out of India and the world revolution would then go on unchecked. At the same time there was method in their madness, for they appreciated the dangers involved in an Asiatic flare, and realised that only by continually directing its force against the British could they prevent its turning and burning themselves.

Barkat Ullah was commissioned to write a pamphlet in which he endeavoured to show that Communism went hand in hand with the Islamic faith, and that the Bolsheviks were the allies of Islam, whilst we were depicted as exploiters of the East of the most bloodthirsty type. Copies of this pamphlet, translated into the vernacular, were distributed throughout Turkistan and adjacent countries, and it certainly bid fair to have far-reaching results, emanating as it did from a Mohammedan of some standing and education. It was no easy task to combat so formidable a document, but I subsequently countered it by publishing broadcast in Hindustani, Persian, and Turki a proclamation by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, the foremost prelate of Islam and second only to the Caliph himself. In this he declared that the doctrines of Bolshevism were totally at variance with the tenets of Islam, and enjoined all true believers to abjure such teachings as inimical to their faith and precepts. It was a splendid antidote, but it did not increase my popularity with the Bolsheviks, who now published a proclamation which they scattered throughout Turkistan, that Great Britain and her representative stood between them and their dream of universal freedom from capitalism and every form of oppression, and that it was essential

to 'put to death the bloodthirsty British Consul at Kashgar.'

Amongst the interesting libels circulated concerning ourselves was one to the effect that we had summoned the Turks to surrender in Medina, and when they refused we had bombarded and destroyed the tomb of the Prophet. Moreover, we had ravaged and laid in ruins the Holy Places, had violated the women, and cast the Quran amongst swine.

It was always a difficult matter to rouse the Chinese to an adequate sense of the menace, for their apathy, and the desire to get rich quick and leave the country, made them indifferent to the future. However, as the result of our combined efforts we were able to seize a large amount of propaganda; but it required unceasing care and watchfulness, for there is a lack of public spirit and patriotism in China, the Celestial character not lending itself to protracted exertion of this nature. A certain number of Bolshevik agents did get through, but with the intelligence service at my disposal, to the creation of which I had devoted much time and attention, they were rounded up and either incarcerated or deported. The old Commander-in-Chief partook of my enthusiasm and suggested that he should mobilise his army, and that together we should declare war to the knife against the Bolsheviks.

Several organisations sprang up under Soviet auspices at sundry points in Chinese territory; no sooner was one smashed than another appeared elsewhere, so widespread was the virus of Bolshevism and their desire to get at India through the comparatively easy route of Kashgaria. Their leading

agent at this period was Mirza Jan, a renegade who became an active supporter of the Bolsheviks for ulterior reasons of his own. I had this man's house under observation, but the Chinese declined to act on mere suspicion, as he was a Russian subject, and I therefore approached my friend and colleague, Mr. Uspenski, the Russian Consul-General, who was an Imperialist and still in charge of Russian interests, although he possessed but scanty powers. In fact, he was practically discredited by the Chinese, who were never friendly to Russia in view of all that had happened in the East, and were only seeking an opportunity to recover what they had been compelled to cede to Russia in the past. Uspenski raised no objections, so I organised a night raid on Mirza Jan's house, which was situated in the Andijani, or Russian native merchants' quarter of the Kashgar bazaar. My men drew a cordon round the house, but when they entered it the bird had flown, evidently warned by counter-spies, although he had left papers and sufficient evidence to convict him of Bolshevik sympathies and collusion with headquarters at Tashkent. Mirza Jan got safely across the frontier, eighty miles distant, and was later given a post in the Propaganda Department at Tashkent. A few weeks prior to the raid this man had actually applied personally to me for a billet as writer or clerk in my Consulate offices.

Stirring events were crowding on, and in the early spring of 1919 the Afghans made their unprovoked and scandalous attack upon our north-west frontier, the ensuing campaign being damaging to our prestige. The huge force of 300,000 men massed on and near the frontier was unable to achieve anything, nor did

we exact the retribution to which we were so justly entitled. Amanullah, third son of the late Amir Habibullah who had been stabbed to death whilst asleep in his camp at Jellalabad two months before, usurped the throne in the orthodox Oriental fashion by seizing his two elder brothers and placing them within four walls. In matters affecting accession to the throne his father and grandfather had cleared the ground of possible claimants and obstruction to undisturbed rule, so that the course was comparatively easy when Amanullah assumed office. He was endowed with all the arrogance of his race and imbued with a conceit born of the belief that he was the chosen head of the 'God-granted' Government of Afghanistan.

Amanullah had for some time been coquetting with the Bolsheviki; he saw in them a means to free himself from the restriction under which the foreign relations of Afghanistan were controlled by the British Government, and even dreamed of assuming the Caliphate and posing as the Head of the Islamic faith. My information clearly proved that the Bolsheviki had promised him assistance in men, money, and *matériel*; but in the meantime the situation in Russia and Siberia had changed for the worse. The Bolsheviki had all their work cut out to hold their own against the advance of Koltchak's forces, the successful operations of Denikin and Wrangel, and the partial destruction of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway to Turkistan, by which they were deprived of means of transport to the Afghan theatre.

Concurrently with the opening of the Afghan War, Mohammed Wali Khan, the Afghan envoy to

the Bolsheviks, arrived in Tashkent, and was received as Consul in Russian Turkistan. The Bolsheviks utilised this man and his agency to further the system of propaganda; indeed, with his arrival the anti-British campaign started in earnest. Stories of Afghan victories were circulated, whilst it was stated that we had passed a Bill in India under which Mohammedans were forbidden to pray in their mosques, or Hindus in their temples, and that the Supreme Caliph was a prisoner in British hands, that India was in a state of revolution and the Indians had appealed to Afghanistan to save them, with the result that the Afghans had taken up their cause and occupied northern India.

These calumnies had a direct effect upon Chinese Turkistan, and particularly upon the Afghan subjects in the Consular district, notably in Yarkand. As previously mentioned, original instructions had been to afford the latter protection, and to register them as 'British-protected subjects' in accordance with the tacit understanding arrived at with the late Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan, under which mutually advantageous arrangements were concluded that were of commercial benefit to the subjects of both parties and especially to Afghans beyond the Indian frontiers.

Many of these Afghans were engaged in sundry nefarious callings, such as opium smuggling, this trade flourishing practically unchecked in Chinese Turkistan, and not being interfered with in the province of Semirechia across the frontier in Russian territory. Gun-running was another profitable calling, and although the gun-runners had to disgorge a percentage of their gains to the Chinese officials through

whose districts they operated, they nevertheless made substantial profits ; for the trade was with Afghanistan and the turbulent tribes along the north-west frontier of India, the arms and ammunition commanding a ready and lucrative figure. No light hand was needed in dealing with these desperadoes, the gun-runners looking upon me as a sworn enemy ; and doubtless I deserved all the opprobrium they have brought down upon my head, for during the time when we were involved in war with the Afghans I devoted much of my time to the suppression of the trade.

Under the existing, but ill-defined, arrangement the handling of these Afghans became one of extreme delicacy. The majority had not registered as British-protected subjects, and were therefore not technically entitled to consideration at my hands. The obligation implied in the original instructions frequently left me in an embarrassing situation, for an Afghan, when his interests or liberty were involved as the result of his own action, invariably went to the Chinese to crave their protection, but if he fell foul of Celestial authority the order was reversed and he promptly came to seek the aid of the British Consul-General. Thus was the status of Afghan subjects constantly being raised in the judicial centres of the province. It also involved the question of extra-territoriality in China, by which our subjects could only be dealt with by the British Consular authorities, the Chinese having no jurisdiction over them. As China is the only country in the world where this privilege exists, a few remarks upon it will be appropriate.

The principle of extra-territoriality was first recognised by the Chinese in 1689 in the treaty concluded

with Russia ; it was reiterated in two subsequent treaties, and British subjects definitely acquired the right under the General Regulations for British Trade promulgated in 1843.

In the Anglo-Chinese agreement of 1902 it was stipulated that China, desiring to reform her judicial system and bring it into line with that of Western nations, should receive assistance from Great Britain to that end, who, when satisfied that the state of Chinese law and the arrangements for its application warranted her in so doing, should surrender her extra-territorial rights. The Chinese raised the question at the recent Washington Conference, and they aim at the abolition of these rights ; but, judging from conditions pertaining in Chinese Turkistan, the claim is quite unjustified. They have not made anything of the opportunities afforded them ; of progress there has been none, and the task of government is not undertaken with the idea of promoting the public welfare, but for the sake of self-enrichment.

At the close of the Afghan War, and the conclusion of a treaty devoid of compensating advantage to ourselves, or any punishment for our outraged dignity, we were left in a parlous condition as regards prestige in Central Asia. Immense difficulty was experienced by myself and my colleague, Mr. Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice, in counteracting the violent Bolshevik propaganda which ensued as the outcome of this campaign and its unfortunate ending. The only moral or material advantage that we gained was the cancelling of the sum of £120,000 paid annually by the Government of India as a subsidy to the Amir.

Meanwhile, events in Ferghana had been moving

apace. The three anti-Bolshevik elements were headed respectively by Mohammed Emin, Sher Mohammed, and Argash Bai ; but jealousies were rife, there was no connection between the various bands, ammunition was running low, and the feeling that no outside help was forthcoming had a depressing effect upon the insurgents as a whole.

Later in the year General Mukhanoff, who had commanded the 6th Corps in the Russian army on the German front, and was formerly Military Attaché at Athens, formed a provisional Government in Ferghana conjointly with Mohammed Emin, and his son came to Kashgar to stimulate interest in it. I saw much of this capable lad of nineteen, and often wondered what became of him after his return to Ferghana. The provisional Government never materialised owing to the jealousy amongst the native element, coupled with the lack of finance and other essentials to carry it through. Soon after this the rivalry amongst the chieftains culminated in the tragic end of Mohammed Emin. He had been invited by Sher Mohammed to a banquet, in the course of which he was seized and forthwith beheaded, an example not only of the treachery underlying mutual dealings amongst Central Asians but of the improbability of success in any combination requiring a public spirit and subordination of self-interest to the common welfare.

The Government of India at this period were much concerned at the possibilities of Pan-Islamism, or a confederation of the Mohammedan races, assuming definite shape. This arose with the nationalist movement in Asia and the idea fostered by Turkey that

she and the races in affinity to her must assert themselves ; but the movement, although taken up by the Bolsheviks as a means to further their designs, is merely platonic, and the probability of its becoming a serious menace is remote. Moreover, a confederation of Mohammedan states, divided as they are nationally and by religion, is unlikely of fulfilment, and the fear of an Asiatic flood is not really justified after a careful analysis.

The Bolsheviks were now working hard to undermine Bokhara ; matters there had been quiescent since the first Bolshevik descent in 1918, but as time passed on and signs became more ominous, the Amir realised that the end could not be long delayed. The story of all that happened in Bokhara, both before and after the final Bolshevik occupation, was narrated to me by the Amir's minister who headed the mission with which I shall presently deal, and is the only account of what took place during those fateful days. I knew that the Young Bokharan Party were preparing for a *coup*, and to that end were being liberally financed by the Bolsheviks. The latter had no intention of open participation, as any direct attack on Bokhara would give their claim as emancipators of the East an entirely false aspect. It was therefore arranged that the Young Bokharan Party should strike the first blow and that the Bolsheviks should come in to assist them on a request for aid against their autocratic ruler.

The Amir with his ill-equipped forces recognised that he could not stem the tide, nor exert any sternly repressive measures without precipitating a crisis and forcing the Bolshevik hand. He therefore made secret

preparations in view of the potential crash, and tentative arrangements to save the vast amount of treasure lying in the vaults of his palace, a fortune that had been amassed by himself and his predecessors. He was one of the wealthiest men in Asia, such riches as take one back to the days of the Arabian Nights, whilst the collection of jewels and precious stones was worthy of the oldest Mohammedan state. The present Amir, Sayid Mir Alim Khan, had been a general in the Russian Army and an aide-de-camp to the Czar Nicholas II., and with that prodigality characteristic of the Orient he had, at the Czar's coronation, presented him, amongst other costly gifts, with a silk tent containing seventeen rooms. One wonders what has become of the presents and offerings made to the Czar of all the Russias by various chiefs and khans from Tibet to the Volga and Bokhara to the Arctic snows.

To secure the safety of his wealth, totalling thirty-five million pounds sterling in gold and silver coins and ingots, he offered to confide it to our care, and requested us to take charge of it pending the dawn of brighter days and a return to normal conditions. He would relieve us of all responsibility during transport of the treasure, and would be satisfied with a receipt for the sum in question. It was a remarkable offer, and one that demonstrated how high our credit stood even in remote Bokhara. In view of all the circumstances and the isolated nature of Bokhara, surrounded as the state was by warring elements, quite apart from political reasons, we were unable to take custody of the treasure. Certainly, so far as Kashgar was concerned, I could not have accommodated so large an amount in my treasury without

special arrangements, and, moreover, the difficulties of getting it there would have been insuperable. So the wealth of the Bokharan Amirs remained in its vaults, ultimately becoming the prey of the Bolsheviks, who with such an immense sum at hand wherewith to carry on their propaganda, and incidentally to enrich themselves, were determined to leave no stone unturned to secure it.

Matters were rapidly coming to a head in August 1920, and on the 29th of that month the Young Bokharan Party, assisted by the Bolsheviks—who had moved close to the border with that object—opened the ball by attacking the inner city. It was dawn when the assault was delivered and the aeroplanes circled over the city, and it was so well planned that the Amir only escaped by the merest good luck. He left the palace disguised as a carter and actually passed through the city gates whilst the insurgents were searching the palace for him. His family also managed to get safely away and were sent to one of his country houses about eighteen miles north-east of Bokhara.

The chief officers of state, the army such as it was, and many of the population, remained faithful and gathered round his banner at Hissar, one hundred and twenty miles south-east of Bokhara, whither he proceeded after the flight from the capital. This force totalled 2500 men, but was unprovided with machine guns or artillery of any kind, was poorly equipped in every way, and unable to withstand attack from an organised body such as the Bolsheviks could then put in the field.

From Hissar the Amir despatched a mission to

Kashgar headed by one of the ministers who had escaped with him, conveying letters to the King-Emperor, the Viceroy of India, and myself. In them the Amir recounted his overthrow by the Bolsheviks and subsequent plight, and begged that his state, which he placed unconditionally at our disposal, might be incorporated within the British Empire.

Such a course may have been dictated by a desire to recover what he had lost and to secure the only effective aid to pull the chestnuts from the fire ; but, be that as it may, it was a tribute to British integrity and power. There could, of course, be no question of further extension of territory on our part ; further, it had some time since been decided to discontinue assistance hitherto granted to various bodies and anti-Bolshevik organisations, and the obvious corollary to that decision was not to engage in fresh commitments.

At the request of the British Government I endeavoured to assist the Amir to escape to Kashgar ; but before my agents could establish touch and open a possible way through the numerous predatory bands, he had crossed the frontier into Afghanistan, whence he made his way to Kabul.

CHAPTER VIII

Northern Chinese Turkistan—The Heavenly Mountains—A sportsman's paradise—I secure some record trophies—History of Ili—The Russian occupation—The Kalmuks—An immortal trek—Quaint marriage and burial customs—The Tungans—Arrival of Bolsheviks in Ili—A favourable field for propaganda—Asiatic mercenaries—Russian refugee officers and their civil occupations—Chinese treatment of agitators—Bolsheviks and the King-Emperor George V.—The situation in Siberia—Admiral Koltchak—General Annenkoff, a daring adventurer—How the Chinese laid him by the heels—Japanese and I protest to our respective Governments—The Cossack General Dutoff—Bolshevik plot for his destruction—His tragic end.

I WILL now deal with the northern part of Chinese Turkistan, the Ili Valley, Kulja, and the Kobdo district of western Mongolia, an important section of Central Asia and the most vital to the Chinese. The Ili Valley, with Kulja its capital, has always been regarded as the granary of western China, and the base of operations for any force operating towards Kashgaria in the south and Russia in the west. It has in the past loomed prominently on the political stage of Central Asia, and in the closing years of last century was a bone of contention between China and Russia, when war was narrowly averted. Moreover, since the advent of the Bolsheviks the Ili Valley has received consistent attention from the promoters of world revolution.

The area in question is the most fertile portion of western China, and comprises all that part of Chinese Turkistan lying in and north of the Tian Shan, or

Celestial Mountains as they are known to the Chinese, being so designated from the beauty of their scenery, the verdant undergrowth, and the rich pasturage. The range is the central mountain system of Asia, separating the Tarim basin in the south from that of the Issik Kul and Ili in the north, and begins on the confines of the Gobi Desert running due west into Russian Turkistan, where it merges into the plains around Tashkent and Samarkand. The Tian Shan is made up of a number of parallel chains which, as they advance westward, open out fanwise, the connection being maintained between the numerous ranges by plateaux. In the south and south-east it links up with the mountain country to the east of Bokhara, whilst it also joins with the Tibetan and Indian ranges on the Pamirs.

The Tian Shan is noteworthy for its glaciers, of which there are upwards of seven thousand five hundred, yet, despite this plethora of ice and snow fields, the only river of importance to which it gives rise is the Ili. The latter is only referred to under that name after the junction of two headstreams, the Tekkes and Kunges, the former rising in the main range of the Tian Shan east of Lake Issik Kul and the latter in the Boro Khoro range to the north. After uniting they form the Ili, which flows on past Kulja, the capital, and empties its waters into Lake Balkash, one of the largest of the Central Asian lakes.

The Tian Shan Mountains are the border line between Southern Chinese Turkistan and the Ili Valley and Western Mongolia. The southern slopes are almost bare of vegetation, but on the northern side are vast forests of pine, with wooded dells and

glens carpeted with flowers of every hue. The flora are indeed extensive, for here one meets with hawthorn, woodbine, rose, briar, larch, fir, and birch, with grassy lawns and river banks carpeted with rich turf and flowers. Viewed from the northern side the Tian Shan presents a vista of peaks and crags, of pine-clad slopes comparable to the mountains on the west coast of Scotland, and there are few regions that can rival the varied beauty of the Heavenly Mountains. This great range looks down upon the Ili Valley, where for centuries before, and subsequent to, the Christian era many races strove for mastery; it has witnessed the onward sweep of Huns and Mongols, of Uighurs and Chinese, and is now the happy hunting-ground of nomad Kalmuk and Kazak, a land of unlimited pasture, with facilities for agriculture and development of a trade in cattle and sheep.

To the hunter the Tian Shan is of paramount interest and no area can surpass it for the game to be found there, ibex, wild sheep, roe-deer, Asiatic wapiti, and the brown and black bear, that severally roam the rock-bound corries, grassy slopes, and pine-clad ravines of this fascinating range.

On a previous visit to the Tian Shan some years ago I secured several fine specimens whilst shooting in this sportsman's paradise: a fourteen and a twelve-pointer wapiti, four ibex ranging from 55 inches to 51½ inches, some Siberian roe-deer, and wild sheep or *Ovis karelini*.

From an ethnographical aspect, and the diversity of its population, Ili has been characterised as the half-way house or meeting-point between the Turanian races of the West and the Mongol elements of the East.

Mention has already been made of the Kalmuks, who are the principal tribe in the Tian Shan and part of the Mongol race which was all-powerful in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

From days long before the Christian era Ili has been the arena wherein the battles of rival races and conflicting creeds have been fought, where Moslem and Buddhist, where wave upon wave of warring tribes have passed on in turn, each to enjoy for a brief period the sweets of victory, and then in the fulness of time to vanish from the stage and leave nothing but a name. Here in this valley we can learn more of the world's history than is obtainable from any books; it was governed by Scythian kings, from Persia came conquerors, and from distant Macedonia emerged other invaders. Two centuries before Christ the occupants of the valley were driven out by the Huns, to stem whose irresistible advance the Chinese had constructed the Great Wall, a monument to Celestial tenacity and patience. After the Huns came the Uighurs, who were Turks by race but Nestorian Christians in religion. A long line of invaders followed, amongst which stand out pre-eminently the Mongols under Jenghiz Khan, Jagatai, and Timurlane. They ruled over an empire that stretched from the shores of the Sea of Japan to the German frontier, and from the Arctic Ocean in the far north to India and Mesopotamia in the south, and are an outstanding example in military history of the value and uses of mounted infantry. Indeed the Mongol conquests were mainly due to their remarkable mobility.

Time passed on and Ili became the camping-ground

of three of the principal Mongol tribes, the Choros, Hoshot, and Torgut, who formed an alliance known as the Oirat, or confederacy. The Oirat were renowned for their martial deeds; they defeated the Chinese, took the Celestial Emperor prisoner, and advanced to the gates of Peking, but fortune saved China. Dissension had arisen in the Mongol host, the chief minister had killed the Khan in a quarrel and he himself then fell by an assassin's hand. The Mongols turned back, and with that step came the decline of the Oirat.

The Chinese now had time to recover, and with the advent of the Emperor Kwen Lung a new era was inaugurated. He conquered and depopulated the Ili Valley and the country to the north, restocking it by the importation of military colonists, criminal and other classes from China, with a contingent of agriculturists from Kashgaria. Other tribes came in, attracted by the fertility and productiveness of Ili, and in 1771, partly at the invitation of the Emperor of China, and to escape the tyranny and oppression to which they were subjected under the Czar, took place the migration of the Kalmuks from the Volga in Russia to the promised land of Ili. History has no parallel to this march of a nation across Europe and Asia, a journey of three thousand miles, occupying a period of eight months, and accomplished mostly during the winter months. Intermittent warfare and revolution continued until 1862, when the great Mohammedan rebellion against the Chinese broke out in the adjacent provinces of Kansu and Shensi. The revolutionary wave spread to Ili, where the entire population defied authority and in the fighting more than 130,000 Chinese were massacred. Ili was laid

waste and the principal towns and settlements destroyed. For several years disorder and anarchy continued; Yakub Beg was busy in Kashgaria consolidating his position, whilst the Chinese were slowly maturing their plans for the recovery of the lost ground. Russia, too, was keenly watching the situation, and, apprehensive that the trouble might extend to her own dominions, she determined to occupy Kulja and the Ili Valley, with a view to restoration of law and order which the Chinese had been unable to establish. The country in general was in a parlous condition, and finance—the wherewithal by which nations regulate their affairs—was wanting. The treasury was exhausted, the troops had not been paid for more than two years, and the allowances to the military colonists were several years in arrears. Moreover, far from paying these dues the Chinese desired to levy taxes on the people, and officials were devoting their time and energy to the accumulation of wealth at the expense of the inhabitants. In addition to this the local Government indulged in a form of speculation which throws still another sidelight on their conception of colonial rule. The principal coin in circulation was the yarmak, and this was now given a fictitious value by the simple process of producing a larger coin which, although only equalling fifteen small yarmaks, was declared to be the equivalent of one hundred. This led to wholesale activity in counterfeit coin, for the manufacture of moulds was an easy proposition, and it only remained to melt down the yarmaks and issue them at the higher value as declared by the Government. The mob then stormed the Governor's Yamen and extracted a promise

that the coins should be taken at their real value after the expiration of one month, but during that period of grace the counterfeiters worked at high pressure and flooded the market with spurious coin, so that not only was widespread ruin brought about but trade and commerce practically ceased.

The Russian occupation of Ili took place in 1871, the Czar's Government assuring the Chinese that the province would be restored to them as soon as they were in a position to satisfactorily occupy and administer it. They were then fully occupied by the campaign against Yakub Beg and the insurgent provinces contiguous to Kashgar, whilst being geographically at great disadvantage in their separation from the west by the formidable desert of Gobi. Having asserted her authority in the disputed areas the Chinese reclaimed the gage, but difficulties were raised by Russia and war between the two countries was narrowly averted. The first mission to St. Petersburg to arrange details and secure the evacuation having proved abortive, a second was despatched under the famous Marquis Tseng, one of the astutest Chinese statesmen of the modern school. The Chinese had declined to accede to the Russian demands, especially in the surrender of territory, for they were as fully conservative in that regard as the Russians were acquisitive. Experience in Central Asia proves how loth the Russians are to yield what they have once acquired, and I can imagine no more difficult diplomatic task than inducing the Chinese to surrender what they regard as their own. The Marquis Tseng had, therefore, the onerous duty of concluding a settlement that would be in consonance with national

pride and sentiment and at the same time satisfy, partially at any rate, the Russian claims. This difficult matter he successfully accomplished, and by the Treaty of St. Petersburg of February 1881 secured the rendition of nearly all the territory in dispute, together with the command of the Tian Shan passes, the strategical importance of which the Chinese were fully cognisant. In addition China agreed to pay a sum of nine million rubles to cover the cost of occupation.

I have already referred to Ili as the western granary of China and to the covetous glances cast in that direction by Russia. During a prolonged tour through Ili I noticed the numerous signs of former Russian occupation and the predominance of Russian subjects. The attractions of this broad and fertile valley include great mineral wealth in the shape of gold, silver, coal, copper, and galena, lying open to development and offering a rich and ready return when stable government is established and the Bolshevik blight removed from Russia.

Having dealt with the physical features I will now supplement this by a description of the four principal races inhabiting the Ili Valley. Of these the Kalmuks and Kazaks are nomadic, the Tungans and Taranchis being the settled population who are agriculturists, merchants, and traders.

I have said that the Kalmuks migrated to Ili from the districts of the Volga in European Russia where they had become dissatisfied with Russian rule. It is difficult to realise the magnitude of this celebrated journey, immortalised by De Quincey in his *Flight of a Tartar Tribe*, involving the advance of an entire

nation, half a million strong, across Asia, especially in these days of frontiers and closely defined limits that would place such a move beyond all possibility of performance.

The Kalmuks set out from the Volga in the winter of 1771, and after marching and fighting their way steadily through for eight months they reached the Ili country and were allowed to settle on the pasture lands there found. At first no taxes were imposed on the new arrivals, but later an annual levy of horses and cattle was made, and they now provide the mounted pickets along the frontier. The Kalmuks are Buddhist by religion, and they wear their hair in short pigtails. Their habitations are similar to the felt tents of the Kirghiz, and the general mode of life is similar to that race. As hunters they excel, and in the innermost recesses of the Heavenly Mountains, and amidst the ravines and grassy lawns, there is ample opportunity to indulge the hunting instinct and to pass days in the chase which the Arab proverb tells us are not counted in the span of life.

The manners and customs of the Kalmuks are in many respects remarkable, more particularly in regard to the disposal of the dead. Instead of burial in the orthodox manner the body is put out on a knoll or low hill in the vicinity of the camp, and there left to the tender mercies of dogs and birds of prey. Should the remains not be disposed of within a few days the deceased is considered to have led a wicked and wayward life, since even the dogs are shocked and refuse to touch the body. The sequel to this discovery is the chastisement of the members of the deceased's family with the idea of saving them from a similar

fate ; the sins of the father visited on the children indeed.

The Kalmuks retain customs and beliefs whose origin may be sought far back in the mists of antiquity. In this exposure of the dead they resemble the Parsees, those descendants of Persian fire-worshippers who sought asylum in India, where they have developed into an industrious community. The Parsee reverence for the sun and fire is such that cremation is abhorred, and so they lay their dead on the summit of those high towers known to all who visit Bombay as the Towers of Silence.

Weddings all the world over are occasions for hilarity and expense. But the conservative Kalmuks treasure the romantic theory of the bride being carried off from her father's tent, and they cling to tradition in the unwritten code which permits of the young lady in question, when pressed by a superfluity of admirers, adroitly confiding herself to the care of the one she favours most.

These weddings are a great event, especially when the belle of the encampment is the prize. At other times she is a sooty Cinderella, but on her wedding day she is arrayed like a dainty princess with a long coloured coat fastened by a sash at the waist and a hat shaped like an inverted saucer having stand-up edges with gold, black, yellow, and red tassels dangling from it. Top-boots and a handsome riding-whip complete her adornment and she is ready for the meet. In this primitive game, which might well be termed a Love Chase, the bride, with her whip and mounted on a fiery mustang, gives the lead in a breakneck race to the young men who aspire to her hand. To

ward off the undesirable lovers she uses her heavy whip with force and accuracy, and a well-directed slash across the eyes may put an unwelcome suitor out of action. 'Tis indeed no game for a man of nervous tendencies.

Like the Kirghiz the Kalmuks drink copiously and often of kumis, the fermented mares' milk, from leathern bottles in exactly the same way as the Jewish patriarchs, or their nomadic forbears, did centuries before them. They devote scant attention to washing, but withal are a fascinating race and appeal strongly to one for their love of sport and their hunting and racing instincts.

The Kazaks are a tribe of Turkish origin with a strong Mongol element, met with in the northern parts of Central Asia. Their origin is uncertain, but ethnographical authorities affirm that they came into Asia from the west before the Christian era, following up their conquest by permanent settlement. In general they are the counterpart of the Kirghiz, of which group they are considered a branch, a nomadic and patriarchal people, and in religion Sunni Mohammedans. Their main occupation is sheep and cattle breeding, and they are therefore constantly on the move for fresh pastures.

A detailed description of the Tungans, or Chinese Mohammedans, is germane to this chapter inasmuch as they are numerous in the north-western parts of the Chinese empire. Moreover, the Tungans have exerted considerable influence in the past and may yet become a danger in the future. During 1919 there was some anxiety displayed as to an alleged movement towards a Tungan renaissance, but it failed to

materialise, probably owing to lack of initiative and leadership, for it is invariably the director and controlling genius who makes or mars a move, and in this case none was at hand to fashion a weapon that might carve out a new nation from material ready to hand.

In Northern Turkistan the Tungans are not isolated but are in touch with the Mohammedan centres of Asia ; in fact, with their settlement in Ili the Islamic chain across Asia was completed. The Tungans are a Central Asian race whose origin still awaits scientific determination, but it appears that in the eighth century several thousand Mohammedans hailing from Turkistan and the country bordering on Trans-Caspia were of assistance to the Chinese in quelling rebellion, and as a reward were permitted to settle in Chinese territory. Other races of Mohammedan origin followed them at different periods, and remained in China, return to their old homes being impracticable owing to the atmosphere of war and revolution engendered by rival creeds and conflicting tribes and interests that stood between them and the land of their birth. In the thirteenth century the Mongol conqueror, Jenghiz Khan, had destroyed the seats of Mohammedan learning and literature, and China proper was then the only refuge for Islam in Central Asia. A greatly increased influx consequently resulted with an enhancement of Islamic thought and independence.

As a race the Tungans are superior to the Chinese, they possess greater virility and are of considerable martial worth.

After the general massacre and depopulation of Ili by the Chinese in 1756 the Taranchis, amongst others,

were brought in from Southern Turkistan, their name being derived from the word *taran*, signifying millet. The importation of these people is a remarkable example of autocratic power in those days, and how entire tribes and races were shifted from one corner of the empire to another in this system of colonisation. It was, indeed, nationalisation of the individual carried to extremes. On its arrival each family received grants of land, in return for which they paid an annual tax in grain amounting to about forty-five shillings in our currency. They also furnished grain and horses for military purposes when required, but beyond this were at liberty, and the only Chinese influence that obtained amongst them was that their women went unveiled and enjoyed greater freedom than is usual with Mohammedans.

With regard to ways and communications to and from Ili there is a fine post road from Tashkent through Russian territory to the Russo-Chinese frontier forty miles from Kulja, whilst good roads run from the north-west through Semipalatinsk, Kulja being within twelve days' journey by road and rail from London. The approaches from Kashgar are difficult and lengthy, the main route lying north of Aksu across the Muzart Pass, a total journey from Kashgar of twenty-five days.

The resources of Ili, both mineral and agricultural, are considerable. The soil is fertile, varying from black earth and loam to sand with gypsum, marl, and clay, and with industry and care it could be rendered extremely productive. Gold, silver, iron, copper, and coal of excellent quality are found, the latter within sixteen miles of Kulja. Platinum is

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reputed to exist in the Altai Mountains to the north, and from what I saw of the country generally it should rank as the richest portion of the Asiatic dominions of China.

Ili is controlled locally by a Taoyin assisted by district magistrates and subordinate officials on the same principle as at Kashgar. During my visit to this part of Turkistan in 1909-1910 it was in charge of a military governor who was to all intents and purposes independent of the Governor-General and had the right to correspond direct with Peking. Since the revolution in 1911 it has reverted to Urumchi and is in charge of a military commandant who is responsible for the armed forces but has no civil jurisdiction. This official works independently of Kashgaria, and although the Titai or Commander-in-Chief at Kashgar has nominal authority over the army in Turkistan, the title is a misnomer in that it does not include the garrisons north of the Tian Shan. Some years ago the Chinese imported a number of Japanese military instructors for the training of the troops in Ili on modern lines, and under their guidance a fair standard of efficiency was attained. Interest, however, evaporated, partly due to lack of funds and the more pressing calls for grants in other parts of the empire, as well as to the jealousy created by the presence of these instructors, who were in a measure usurping what was the task of the local military officers. At the same time the latter, from ignorance and inefficiency, were quite incompetent to themselves initiate and carry through the work of reorganisation. With the departure of the Japanese the troops fell back into their old and

evil ways, efficiency was lost, and the army in Ili became a negligible quantity. In common with other parts of the Celestial empire no accurate estimate can be made of the strength of the Ili forces, seeing how indeterminate the actual and the paper strength of Chinese garrisons are, and the difficulty of basing any calculation even with the latest returns as submitted to the War Ministry in Peking. Regarding Ili, I was informed that the strength in 1920 stood at ten thousand men of all arms, but the very careful and accurate observations made by Mr. Vice-Consul Fitzmaurice during his tour through the country in the summer of 1921 could only yield a total of seventeen hundred.

From the above general sketch of Ili it will be seen that here was a territory that presented favourable opportunities for the replenishment of Bolshevik commercial, economic, and industrial needs. Further, it opened a field for propaganda amongst the tribes and races to be found in this ethnographical wonderland, where the Bolshevik gospel might be spread abroad with every chance of success such as would, perhaps, make up in a measure for the rebuffs received in Kashgaria.

Soon after the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in November 1917, and establishment of the Soviet *régime* in Turkistan, they encountered further dangers in the operations of Koltchak, Denikin, and Wrangel, which threatened their very existence. Moreover, there was widespread discontent amongst the native population in the Russian provinces of Ferghana, Semirechia, and Semirechensk, whose borders march with those of Ili. The Soviet had issued a proclamation, at

which they were adepts, emphasising the right of the people to self-determination and assuring them that not only would independence be granted but that there would be no military occupation of Turkistan. Possibly the Moscow Soviet were sincere in their assertions ; be that as it may, they reckoned without the local representatives at Tashkent, who had no intention of fulfilling any such promises. The Mohammedan element in Russian Turkistan amounts to ninety-one per cent. of the population, yet only two seats were accorded them, and those of a minor character, the executive posts being entirely in Russian hands. This led to the dastardly massacres at Kokand with which I have already dealt, and to the despatch from Moscow of a special commission charged with the task of restoring order out of chaos, and confidence from treachery and deceit. The commission was under the orders of Broido, and after investigation they reported that the Bolshevik principles of nationalisation had been used as a cloak for wholesale robbery and massacre of the people. With all these problems pressing on them they had little time to devote to Ili, and so it was the summer of 1920 before the first Bolshevik mission appeared and took up its quarters at Kulja, despite the feeble protests of the Chinese. The mission was political and presided over by Limerev, a peasant invested with the title of political agent. Limerev remained only two or three months in Ili, being then superseded by Borchak, a Jew and a man of rabid Bolshevik tendencies.

In due course Borchak was replaced by Kolikoff, formerly a Consul in Afghanistan and a man of anti-Semitic tendencies. To keep the latter in check, the

Soviet attached to the mission a Jew named Epstein, ostensibly as secretary but really to act as a spy on Kolikoff during his tenure of the appointment.

The staff were well paid, the list totalling more than thirty officials, and salaries were even paid to the wives of the latter. Some of these women displayed valuable jewellery and necklaces, doubtless the result of looting in the Czar's palaces and elsewhere.

I have commented upon the action of Russia in the past regarding Ili and the partiality she has shown for that fertile area. This preference was shared by the Bolsheviki, and Borchak lost no time in fomenting trouble in the hope of creating a pretext for the occupation of Ili. Koltchak had been driven eastwards through Siberia, his army had scattered and large numbers of them came south into Russian Turkistan still wearing the British uniforms with which we had supplied them. Amongst the prominent leaders serving with Koltchak, and now seeking asylum from the avenging Bolsheviki, were Dutoff and Annenkoff, with whom I shall deal later.

Dutoff was the acknowledged head of the Orenburg Cossacks, a landowner in the Cossack country, and a man whose personality appealed to the Cossack element. Annenkoff was an opportunist and an adventurer, but withal a brave leader, and it afforded me much satisfaction to do what little I could to ameliorate his lot when interned later at Urumchi.

Both these officers crossed into Chinese territory at Kulja in the spring of 1920 with a number of Chinese soldiers and followers. These men had originally been employed as labourers behind advanced trenches of the old Russian line on the German and Austrian

fronts, and with the Czarist collapse they had but two alternatives, either to take service with the Bolsheviks or regain their own country, two thousand miles away, under trying and harassing conditions. The majority chose service with the Bolsheviks, with unlimited opportunities for loot, murder, and rapine, and to these mercenaries good pay was always forthcoming as executioners and the cleaners of the Augean stables in various parts of Russia. The pay was, of course, the ruling element, for there is ever a lack of it in the Chinese service; it has perforce to filter through many channels and only reaches the soldier in an attenuated form.

During 1920 Borchak was busy with the help of these men, using them to undermine the loyalty of the local troops. As a result of this sinister campaign two mutinies did materialise, but the Chinese suppressed them with commendable skill and promptitude, after which only one or two insignificant risings broke out. General Dutoff offered the services of his men, several hundred of whom were with him, to the Chinese for the suppression of the risings, but it was found unnecessary to utilise them. The offer, however, had another and far-reaching effect, for in thus showing antagonism to the Soviet Dutoff incurred the bitter hatred of Borchak and the Bolshevik Government across the border.

At this time there were about sixty thousand refugees from Russian territory in Ili, of whom sixteen hundred were Cossacks. Many of the Russian officers were worthy of admiration for the manner in which they turned the sword into the ploughshare and earned a living at trades to which they were

formerly unaccustomed. The second in command of the Orenburg Cossacks became a baker and produced uncommonly good loaves, a colonel of artillery opened a blacksmith's forge, whilst a colonel of infantry embarked on the synthetic sugar trade. But that was not all, for the officer commanding the famous Semirechenski Cossacks descended to the level of a sausage-maker, another became a barber, and three others opened a Russian restaurant.

The Chinese were remarkably tolerant of all the numerous and, in some cases, discordant elements that poured into Ili, and their forbearance at this time did much to mitigate the difficulties of a situation for which they were totally unprepared. Propagandists were everywhere active, and the Chinese soon became alive to the dangers of a conflagration and realised that drastic action was called for. This they originated by the execution of eight propagandists, which had the effect of instilling dread into the rest of the agitators. In conjunction with this propaganda news was circulated amongst Chinese and natives alike, served in approved Bolshevik style. Ireland was a separate and thriving republic, completely severed from Great Britain, and Japan and the United States were at war. The Bolsheviks had established their authority throughout Europe, the King of England was a staunch proletariat and servant of Communism, whilst others who were weighed in the Soviet balance and found wanting had been dealt with.

There was no lack of funds to carry on the propaganda campaign and further the Soviet cause in Ili. Prior to the war the upkeep of the Russian Consulate at Kulja totalled about thirty thousand rubles, but

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under the Bolshevik *régime* the expenses of the political mission in Kulja amounted to three hundred thousand taels per annum, this, at the current rate of exchange, representing twelve thousand pounds sterling. Even allowing for depreciation, this sum was largely in excess of requirement. There was much gold coin in circulation, many British sovereigns and Bokharan coins, all forming part of the loot extracted at various times. Jewellery was also in evidence, and the wife of a Bolshevik official was resplendent in a diamond necklace which seemed strangely out of harmony with Bolshevik principles. In order to supplement finances, and ensure the uninterrupted course of propaganda and intrigue, the opium trade was turned to good account, for the supply did not equal the demand and higher prices were therefore obtainable.

This traffic, despite the proclamations against the cultivation of the poppy, continues, and those who issue the manifestoes of denial can lay no claim to virtue or official purity. In some provinces of China the poppy is the main crop, although it is not grown in Turkistan.

In order to present a clear picture of subsequent events in Chinese Turkistan I must revert to the situation in Russia and Siberia in 1918, since it had direct influence on my own area. The Versailles Council had decided, *inter alia*, that a diversion in Siberia would relieve the pressure on the Western Front and might perhaps restore the situation in Russia. There were many obstacles to the fulfilment of that scheme, not the least of which was the jealousy amongst certain of the Allies, and Japanese suspicion of America.

At this time there were several local Governments in Siberia, but at Omsk, in October 1918, all were amalgamated under a Central Administration with Admiral Koltchak as the Supreme Governor of all Russia. The Allies approved the choice of Koltchak owing to his reputation as a naval commander and his general popularity amongst the sailors and the people ; when the Black Sea Fleet mutinied and went over to the Reds, most of the officers who were unable to escape were shot by the mutineers, but Koltchak was treated with respect and rowed ashore.

Of necessity the new Government was compelled to admit many reactionary elements who, though anti-Bolshevik, were violent in their methods and introduced a reign of terror into Koltchak's *régime*. On its formation the new cabinet issued a loan of one hundred million rubles at five per cent., and the day following placed a large amount of paper money in circulation, an obvious sign of weakness. Another and greater error was then committed : Koltchak forbade political discussion at a meeting of delegates, and this was the prelude to discontent. Moreover, he was not officially recognised by the Allies, his military plans were spoilt by a lack of strength as much as by want of Allied support at the initial stage, and when retreat set in, and confidence was lost in this All Russian Government, the army became demoralised and disorder was widespread.

I think the cause of Koltchak's failure is traceable to the men chosen for minor commands. Rinov, for instance, hanged workmen to get rid of Bolshevism and shot all who failed to answer the call to arms in the Ural forces. Semenoff was no better, and later

acted independently in Eastern Siberia, where he was reputed to be in the pay of the Japanese.

Possibly Koltchak might have created a new and formidable army under British auspices had not the War Council in Versailles decided to appoint a French General to command the Allied and Russian forces working with Koltchak. Fearing the loss of valuable time by the delay entailed in this decision, Koltchak created an army on his own initiative, and when General Janin arrived he declined to place it under a foreign officer, as, quite apart from personal objections, he considered it detrimental to Russian prestige, especially when viewed from the local standpoint. Be that as it may, matters did not progress favourably, and after a brief period of success the tide rolled back and Koltchak was compelled to retreat to Irkutsk in Eastern Siberia, where he was handed over to the Bolsheviki, tried and condemned with his chief minister at two o'clock in the morning, and shot three hours later.

I do not propose to comment further on the reasons for the Koltchak failure, as they are largely bound up with the psychology of the Russian race and the difficulty of reconciling the many conflicting interests.

After the Koltchak *débâcle* refugees poured into Ili, individually and collectively, amongst the semi-organised bands being General Annenkoff, whose force totalled about eleven hundred men with two armoured cars and some field and machine guns. Annenkoff stayed in and around Kulja until the spring of 1920, when he moved on to the more congenial climate of Urumchi, 430 miles to the east, the

Chinese offering no resistance and not daring to obstruct the passage of this adventurer.

On arrival at Urumchi he camped outside the city, but beyond some slight indiscriminate requisitioning by his mixed force of Russians and Hun-Huz, the Manchurian brigands who established so doughty a reputation as railway raiders during the Russo-Japanese War, his force abstained from any overt acts of robbery and violence. Annenkoff impressed me as being a buccaneer of the old Spanish Main type, a man who brooked no interference with his designs and rode rough-shod over all opposition. When he moved north from Urumchi to Gucheng the Chinese closed the city gates against his arrival, hoping that in the circumstances he would depart in peace. They little knew General Annenkoff and his method of dealing with difficulties. Finding the gates bolted and barred, and no means of gaining access to the city within except by the process of climbing the lofty walls, a proceeding incompatible with dignity and safety, he promptly proceeded to blow in the offending gateways with his field artillery, quite a simple proceeding and one not without effect on the Celestial guardians.

Despite his drastic methods I admired Annenkoff for his bold and frank nature, and for the fact that he was just and considerate to the poor, whom he did not allow his officers and men to oppress by loot and requisition.

The Chinese, unable to enforce the withdrawal of Annenkoff, bowed to the inevitable, whilst at the same time seeking an opportunity to lay him by the heels. The chance came in 1921 when, lulled into a sense of

false security, and the stage being set, he was invited by the Governor to visit Urumchi. More than a year of uncertain living had doubtless made Annenkoff sigh for the fleshpots of Egypt, and a week-end at Urumchi with well-cooked Chinese food, backed up by good wine and cigars, must have appealed strongly to the Russian. So, accompanied by three of his officers, he set out for the capital full of that confidence and trust which are so often misplaced when dealing with Orientals. Through the great gates of the city they rode to the Governor's Yamen, where they were received in the Hall of Audience. Here happened one of those deeds of treachery by which the Eastern attains his end when fair means are denied him. Sinister movements of attendants and soldiers following upon their arrival convinced them that treachery was intended and that they were in imminent danger. There was little time, however, for reflection, and almost before they had realised the situation Annenkoff and his staff were seized, bound hand and foot, and thrown into the Yamen prison, where they remained without food for three days, the General being further subjected to the indignity of being chained.

The Japanese officers then in Urumchi lodged a protest with their Government against the scandalous treatment of Annenkoff, whilst I reported the matter to the British Minister in Peking for such action as he might deem advisable.

An outstanding personality amongst the Russian refugees who had entered Ili after Koltchak's retreat was the celebrated General Dutoff already referred to, chief of the Orenburg Cossacks and himself a large landowner in Cossack territory. Dutoff's authority

with the Cossack element of the Russian people was such that had he lived he would have exercised a far-reaching influence over the destinies of Russia in Asia. He was an able man, with a firm sense of justice and equity, and the Cossacks hailed with delight his appointment to a high command in the Koltchak forces. Indeed, their attitude towards him was one of respect and admiration, and they responded wholeheartedly to his leadership. On the other hand, the Bolsheviki regarded Dutoff as one of their most dangerous enemies, and so a net was cast to gather him into its fold.

When the Cossack chief entered Chinese territory he was interned in Ili, a house being assigned to him just outside Kulja, his men, to the number of about sixteen hundred, being furnished with quarters by the Chinese in and around the town. Dutoff lived alone in his house, but was guarded as far as possible by his faithful Cossacks, three of whom acted as his servants.

I have already referred to Borchak, the head of the Bolsheviki political agency in Ili, who had engineered two unsuccessful mutinies amongst the Chinese troops and now proceeded to encompass the removal of Dutoff. The Bolsheviki were fully aware that the Cossacks, under his leadership, might again take the field, and the situation in that direction was full of potential danger. So, as in the case of an Oriental monarch whose first instinct on succeeding to the throne is to dispose of all those with ambitions towards the purple, the Bolsheviki cast around and discovered a likely tool in the person of one Chaneshev, who was commanding the Soviet garrison and post at Djarkent,

forty miles away on the Russian side of the frontier. This man was under a cloud and was seeking a return to favour, the means to that end being immaterial. Most Russians are religious, and Dutoff was no exception to the general rule, so touch was established with him through an agent disguised as a priest, who played his part so well that Dutoff was completely taken in. The pseudo-priest played a double *rôle* in that he ingratiated himself with Dutoff and picked up what information he could as to the future intentions of the Cossack party.

One day a dinner was given in the Russian colony to General Dutoff, its object being to effect a reconciliation with another Russian General with whom he had long been on bad terms. This was effected, and at the close of the dinner Dutoff returned to his quarters, where a servant informed him that a man, introduced by the priest, desired an interview on important business. The General, taken momentarily off his guard, ordered him to be shown in, so the man and a companion entered. It was none other than Chaneshev, the aspirant for return to Bolshevik favour, and remarking that he had a letter for the General, he put his hand in the inner pocket of his coat as if to draw out the missive, but, instead, produced a revolver and shot Dutoff through the body. Apparently there were only two Cossacks in the house at the time, one of whom rushed at the assassin, but fell with a bullet through the head, whilst Chaneshev's companion had a desperate struggle with the second Cossack, who came to the rescue. He too was placed *hors de combat*, and the murderers then escaped into the courtyard, where they mounted horses in waiting and headed straight

for the Russian frontier, forty miles away, which they passed before the hue and cry could head them off.

So died General Dutoff, perhaps the best, certainly the most popular of the Cossack chiefs, and with him the hopes of a great Cossack revival in Siberia and Asiatic Russia.

CHAPTER IX

Mongolia—The desert of Gobi—The Altai : a land of gold—The rise of the Mongols—Lamaism and its disastrous effects—Life amongst the Mongols—The medical profession—Payment by results—Prison methods—A living coffin—Russian and Japanese designs in Mongolia—The Soviet arrives—Its exhortations to the Mongols—Chinese policy in Western Mongolia—Pay long overdue—A deputation and its action—The Russian General Semenov and his aspirations towards the Mongol throne—Chinese views on the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement—Chinese mission to Kabul—Assassinations on the Chinese Pamirs.

WESTERN Mongolia comes within the Consular jurisdiction of Kashgar, and as I was constantly in touch with it, many interesting sidelights were afforded me during my long acquaintance with that fascinating but little-known country.

That portion with which I am concerned in this chapter forms an integral part of Central Asia, although the area of the country as a whole almost equals that of China proper. Its frontiers are marked by the mountainous walls of Tibet, Siberia, and Manchuria, its north-western limits being defined by the Altai and adjacent ranges springing therefrom. The greater part of Mongolia is covered by the desert of Gobi or Shamo, stretching across Asia and once an inland sea. It is a plateau of an average height of four thousand feet, broken here and there by slight depressions which give the land an undulating appearance. It is not, however, exclusively desert, for there are tracts of grass land offering opportunities for extensive sheep and cattle breeding. Trees are almost

unknown in the Gobi, only a few dwarf specimens that are objects of adoration to the Mongols. The flora comprise grass, thorns, and patches of scrub, in a soil varying from fine gravel and sand to coarse loam. Water in the Gobi is found only at wells or occasional small lakes, and is alkali in taste, but the impregnation is so slight as to be almost imperceptible. The eastern side of the desert offers a field for agriculture ; water can be found within fifteen to twenty-five feet of the surface, and generally speaking, far from being arid, it approximates more to the Canadian prairies and the Siberian plains, which have been characterised as the wheat-producing areas of the future.

Stretching along the northern and western sides of the Gobi Desert are the Altai Mountains, that part of the range within Russian territory having been the private property of the late Czar. The term Altai signifies gold, and it is one of the richest and most fertile regions of Asia, with great mineral resources. Timber is abundant in forests of pine, larch, birch, and spruce, and in summer Northern Mongolia is a paradise of grass and flowers, the valleys are gardens of variegated hues, and the woods and dells resplendent with colour.

The rise of the Mongols, their creation of an empire that stretched from the Sea of Japan to the shores of the Adriatic, and their subsequent decline, form one of the most romantic chapters in history. Successive races had swept over Asia until the advent of the Uighurs under their chieftain Satuk Boghra Khan, who had introduced the Mohammedan faith into Chinese Turkistan in the tenth century. It was, however, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that

Mongolia rose to its greatest height and came near to dominating the Old World. Jenghiz Khan, and his successor Kublai Khan, to whose court Marco Polo paid a visit, created the largest empire the world has ever seen, for not only did they subdue Asia from the Arctic snows in the north to the plains of India in the far south, but advanced in Europe to the gates of Venice, and only the death of their leader stayed the triumphal progress.

About the middle of the fourteenth century, contemporary with the reign of Edward III., the Chinese cast off the Mongol yoke, and preserved their independence for upwards of a hundred years, until the Mongols again defeated them, captured the Emperor, and were in a fair way to re-establishing their erstwhile authority but for internal dissension and jealousies, of which the Chinese took full advantage.

In the heyday of their existence the Mongols were Mohammedans, and had they remained so, might still have retained a place in the comity of Eastern nations, to which their virility and exploits so rightly entitled them. The final touch to their decadence was given with the introduction of Lamaism, a religion that spells ruin and moral degradation wherever it appears. It was introduced from Tibet after the death of the Mongol conqueror Kublai Khan in 1295, prior to which the Mongols had been liberal in religious thought. Lamaism is a branch of Buddhism founded by Buddha, who was looked upon as the incarnation of the divine essence, and his teachings resulted in the spreading of a faith totalling more adherents than any other, and in the days of its inception contained much that was pure and noble. Then followed

in Tibet the creation of a hierarchy in the person of a Dalai Lama, The Sea of Wisdom, whose judgment in all things is supreme. The second in the Lama hierarchy is the Tashi Lama, who recently fled to China, the Hutuktu of Mongolia completing the triumvirate. None of these pontifical lamas dies ; he merely discards the mortal envelope and is rejuvenated, his spirit appearing in the person of an infant, and thus he is reborn into the world to continue his earthly existence. The selection in Mongolia is confined to a number of infants whose names are written on scrolls and deposited in a golden urn, from which the slips are taken as in a lottery, and the child thus drawn is adopted as the reincarnation of the deity.

In accordance with the tenets of Lamaism one or more sons in each family are dedicated to the priestly calling, amongst which celibacy is enjoined, so that the birth-rate is correspondingly low. The religion is opposed to war or death, the prolongation of life, on the contrary, being a virtuous act. There is no education amongst the lamas ; they lead a life of indolence and ease, with no incentive to work when practically all that is requisite can be had for the asking, whilst in addition they extort a considerable amount by preying on the superstitious fears of the laymen.

For over four hundred years Mongolia has been under the spell of Lamaism, its progress has been arrested, and a great nation has degenerated from the sapping of its virility and self-respect. About forty-five per cent. of the men are lamas ; it may be even more, and the number is on the increase, for

the lama is supported by his lay brethren and is exempted from all government or military service. The Chinese Government foster Lamaism as the best means to restrict the population and so avert the possible resuscitation of the Mongol race.

The Mongol dress, a study for an artist, is a long and ample dressing-gown of varied colour fastened at the waist by a sash. Beneath are shirts and coverings consistent with the period of the year. For headgear these riders of the plains have a hat resembling a saucer with the edges turned up, the centre rising to a cone-shaped crown of red, yellow, or whatever colour appeals most to the wearer. For the feet he has leather boots reaching to the knees, always two or three sizes too large, for as the winter advances, successive layers of felt socks are added. Stuck in his girdle are the long pipe, without which a Mongol never moves, flint and metal to supply the want of matches, and the riding-whip.

With the women a description is a more difficult matter, for the skirt is of brocade or cloth, the blouse of similar material, with Elizabethan ruffs upon the shoulders. But the hair and its careful dressing is the feminine forte amongst the Mongols. It is plaited on a flat framework curved outwards like the horns of a sheep, these terminating in a silver plaque covered with beads and ornaments. The hat is the same saucer-shaped bowl as with the men, but having more in the way of gold and jewelled ornament. This is not all, however, for she has earrings of turquoise and other precious stones procurable in this land of minerals, and strings of beadwork and necklaces adorn her neck and shoulders. The boots

are, of course, far too large for her tiny feet, but then she has to legislate for extremes of temperature, and, moreover, they are receptacles for her pipe and tobacco, her riding-whip, and the brick tea from which the fragrant leaf can be extracted as required when on the move. Even the drinking-bowls find a safe, albeit odoriferous, resting-place there.

The habitation of the Mongol is the felt tent of the Kirghiz, the Kazak, and the Kalmuk, the type of dwelling in use amongst all the nomad tribes of Central Asia, the most practical and giving the greatest amount of space. The difficulties of house-moving are reduced to a minimum, for the family range themselves round the tent, and lifting the structure bodily transport it to fresh ground, except in the case where the move is a long one, when it is dismantled and packed on yak or camel back.

The Mongols have always been renowned as horsemen, and in the heyday of their fame the Imperial despatch riders covered four hundred miles in relays during the twenty-four hours, and fruit picked in the capital in the morning would be on the Emperor's table in the early evening of the next day, a journey of ten ordinary marches. Their wonderful powers of endurance admit of their spending days in the saddle, and when on camel back they will sleep just as soundly as on the ground. As I have said, they are at their best on horseback; in fact, one rarely sees them otherwise, for they never walk except under the sternest necessity. The one great failing is fondness for the flowing bowl. A Mongol will get drunk on anything, and I was once complimented as a great and sporting man because I had presented a bottle of cherry brandy to a Mongol

chieftain on which he got gloriously drunk. There is no accounting for taste even on the Mongolian steppes.

The Mongol larder is easily supplied, for it consists of mutton, milk, cream, and a form of cheese made from goats' milk. They drink kumis prepared in skin bottles, and a visitor to their camps is expected to imbibe long and copiously, custom demanding that there shall be no heel-taps. They are passionately fond of a drink and a smoke, and those whose supply of kumis is exhausted will find a pretext for presenting themselves at their neighbour's tent on phantom business, or to inquire anxiously about their health and welfare. Fortunately the opium habit is not common amongst them, but every one smokes tobacco, women as well as men—even the children enjoy a pipe—and one of the first duties on dismounting at the Mongol home is to offer a well-filled pipe and a drink of kumis from a leathern bottle.

Like the Kalmuks, the Mongols expose their dead to birds and beasts of prey, which has given rise to the Chinese saying that the raven is the Mongol's coffin. In Eastern Mongolia the corpse is sometimes placed on a cart and driven at full speed across the plain; the jolting dislodges the body from the vehicle, but the driver presses on with renewed energy, never daring to look back, for that would bring upon him the evil spirits, and only when he is certain that the burden is no longer with him does he rein in and offer a prayer to the hierarchy.

Amongst the lamas the medical profession is popular, since it affords an opportunity of acquiring wealth and status amongst the people. Their knowledge

is founded on superstition and witchcraft, by means of which diseases are treated, drugs and medicines receiving only secondary consideration. It is a curious fact, however, that the Mongol does to some extent believe in medicine, and the more objectionable and nauseous it is the readier he will swallow it. There are quaint observances respecting doctor and patient ; one is that the medico takes up his residence at the patient's tent and remains there, doing himself well and partaking of the best, until the sick person is either cured or passes beyond mortal ken. Payment of the debt incurred is usually by results, a method of liquidating that might appeal to the Western mind. In keeping with the basic principles of their religion the Mongols have strange ideas touching the origin of complaints from which they may be suffering. They will declare with all sincerity that the deity is angry with them and has visited them with a fever, or a cold, or whatever it may be, because they have inadvertently cut a stick from the stunted trees surrounding a monastery, or in digging a hole in the ground have destroyed life in the shape of worms and insects.

The prison system and mode of punishment in vogue in Mongolian towns is similar to the feudal system of Europe during the Middle Ages, when such ingenuity was displayed in the invention of punishments. Here offenders are treated in an original manner. They are placed in an oblong box measuring about five feet by two and two feet in depth, the counterpart of a coffin, and there chained and manacled are left to pass weeks, some of them months, and not infrequently years, according to the extent of the crime. They

can neither stand up nor lie down, but must perforce assume a semi-crouching posture, with the result that their limbs become shrunken and useless, and after a time they are nothing but shrivelled wrecks from the constant agonising position to which they are subjected. They are taken out for a few minutes daily and food is passed to them through a small hole in the side of the box, and for covering at night a thin worn blanket is given, this being exchanged in the winter for a sheepskin coat, totally inadequate as bedclothes, especially when the thermometer drops to twenty degrees below zero. Indeed, how a prisoner survives the torture of this coffin, the disgusting food, and the unspeakable filth, is beyond me.

It will be observed that the popular conception of Mongolia as a desert is not justified in actuality ; on the contrary, it has great commercial and agricultural possibilities, and this part of the Chinese empire is assuming increasing importance, especially to Japan and America, who are already in the field. For the latter country the Far East and Mongolia represent one of the great undeveloped areas of the Old World where American capital would find a logical investment.

Russia had always taken a special interest in Mongolia, and with the fall of the Manchu dynasty in China and subsequent revolution she thought the moment opportune to create a buffer state between herself and China as well as to secure commercial advantages. Russia therefore supported the Mongols in their resistance to the Chinese, supplying arms, ammunition, and military instructors. This was followed by the recognition of the independence of

Outer Mongolia lying beyond the Great Wall, and the appointment of a Russian Minister to the Mongolian capital at Urga. The Chinese tacitly agreed to the autonomy thus won, not being in a position to combat it, harassed as they were by domestic difficulties and unable to cope with foreign and political embarrassments. With the collapse of Russia and the advent of Bolshevism the tide turned, for the Mongols had been dependent upon Russia for *matériel* and money, especially the latter, the ruling factor in most disputes. The Chinese despatched a force to Urga, which the ill-trained and numerically weak Mongol army was unable to resist, and Mongolia was compelled to relinquish her newly found independence and resume her place under Celestial rule.

The Mongols have shown a consistent regard for the Russians, as distinct from the Bolshevik rabble, whose pre-war policy of peaceful penetration met with no opposition; the people look to Russia as their friend, a feeling shared by the Tibetans during the British expedition to Lhasa in 1904, when the Dalai Lama fled to Mongolia to seek Russian protection. They are opposed to inclusion in the Chinese commonwealth, although under the Manchu *régime* they enjoyed much liberty of thought and action, and colonisation and the purchase of land in Mongolia by Chinese was forbidden. On the fall of the monarchy in China this policy was reversed, and encroachment on, and colonisation in, Mongol territory began in earnest. The schemes for exploitation were state-aided, and the greater part of Mongolian wealth that formerly passed to Siberia and Russia was now deflected to China.

Just before the conclusion of the war, Japan despatched a number of officers to Mongolia and Western China with, *inter alia*, a view to pushing Japanese trade there and acquiring what will eventually prove to be a lucrative market. The foundations have been laid, and the future will reveal the steps taken for Japanese commercial hegemony in the Far East and Mongolia.

So far as we are concerned, I think the centre for our commercial and mining activities should be the Altai, and that part of the Chinese empire lying north of Ili and the Tian Shan Mountains, and south from Tomsk and Novo Nicholaievsk on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

The Russians have shown commendable energy in opening up Mongolia, as they did in the development of Siberia, although much time has elapsed in the process and corruption was rife in the construction of ways and communications to an extent that affected the political and economic future of leading cities. In 1911 the extension of the railway from Barnaul in Siberia to the Mongolian frontier was contemplated with a view to still further opening the rich Altai districts, where Russia has pursued a policy of commercial penetration. It would have been a great opportunity for the engineers and others to extract illicit commissions, for in Russia and China the iron road progresses in proportion to the amount of silver dust placed in the path of the constructors. North of the Altai in Siberia lies the city of Tomsk, with its seat of government, its university, and the banner of Yermak, the Siberian pioneer, in its cathedral. When the Siberian Railway was under

construction the engineers suggested the sum of one hundred thousand rubles (ten thousand pounds) as the fee for running the line through the city—and cheap at the price, they said. But Tomsk was obdurate, and argued that its status was such that the railway must pass there. To relent would have placed the engineers in a false position, for other towns and cities of Siberia would have begun to make excuses, so the approaches to Tomsk became so difficult and dangerous that the line had to be carried to a point forty-eight miles to the south, and the great city sank to third place in the commercial centres of Siberia.

With the restoration of law and order in Russia we may hope for sound and rational development in Mongolia, where opportunities are at hand for mining, commercial, and agricultural enterprise.

Soon after the coming of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia the Soviet devoted attention to Mongolia, and despatched to that country propagandists who endeavoured to recall to the people the days of their forefathers, and their former might. Only from the triumph of anarchic revolution could universal peace and prosperity be gained, they said, and not by the steady progress of democracy that favours government in the interest, and subject to the control of, all the governed. Here again effective grease for the wheel was money, and of this plenty was forthcoming. With that indispensable commodity the Bolsheviks have brought foreign propaganda to a fine art, and attracted all the revolutionary elements to Moscow, whither they proceed in the hope of successfully touching the almoners of Zinovieff and others. But the Mongols remained deaf to Bolshevik exhortations ; probably

the tenets of Lamaism and its opposition to any form of progress and advancement, least of all that engendered by a revolution, were responsible for this attitude. My own counter-propaganda may not have been without effect, for from it the Mongols saw that all was not well with the Soviet and the doctrine of Communism, and if the atrocities in Russia had been exaggerated, the state of destitution, misery, and suffering was not, whilst it was evident to them that a redistribution of this world's goods by the Bolshevik oligarchy could only end in the goods taking wing and vanishing for all time.

With the more educated Mongols the propaganda might have some effect were it conducted on sane and ethical lines, for the memory of the Mongol conquerors is still fresh, and the legend tells us that Jenghiz Khan, the first of the Mongol Napoleons, lies buried on the summit of the sacred mountain overlooking the capital at Urga, a point to which access is denied lest the famous warrior be disturbed in a sleep that shall end in a second coming to renew his former conquests.

It is surprising that Soviet activity and intrigue did not bear fruit, for the Chinese had allowed a spirit of discontent to permeate the garrisons of the Altai and North-western Mongolia. The troops had not been paid for many months, the conditions of service and the food supply were unsatisfactory, as they usually are under Chinese auspices, and although I urged immediate attention to these vital questions as the best antidote to Soviet machinations, the lethargy characterising Celestial action was too pronounced to be shaken off in a hurry. In addition to

the prevalent discontent, a development occurred which threatened to prove the climax to an already complicated situation. In 1919 the Chinese appointed a Resident Commissioner for the Altai, with headquarters at Shara Sume, on the southern slopes of that range, a semi-fortified settlement formed some years ago to enable the Peking Government to consolidate its hold upon this valuable part of the empire, and which I had visited during my trans-Asiatic expedition in 1910, being the first Englishman to do so. Now, the initial act of a Chinese official on appointment, at any rate in the far west, is to apply the 'get rich quick' principle and ensure the rapid acquisition of wealth against the day of retirement. It has been shown that there is no check on the individual rapacity of officials so long as they keep order within their districts and preserve a peaceful atmosphere. I once met an official who had been discharged for gross malfeasance, but was successful in returning to office by the passing of a sum equivalent to about six thousand pounds in our currency. The Resident Commissioner, instead of devoting himself to the restitution of rights to which the soldiers were entitled, and the provision of a modicum, at any rate, of their long-overdue pay, inaugurated his *régime* by imposing a tax on practically every article of consumption and daily use, in addition to which he circulated depreciated bank-notes at their full face value. At this murmurs arose, but a proclamation was issued that any attempt to refuse acceptance of the notes would be met with the death penalty. Merchants and traders had no alternative but to double their prices, and the cost of living went

up to such an extent that the garrison could not afford at the most more than one slight meal per day. The soldiery convened a meeting, and a deputation proceeded to lay its grievances before the Commissioner, who threatened to shoot the ringleaders if all did not instantly disperse. The deputation accordingly retired, held a consultation, and then proceeded to the office of the Accountant-General and promptly shot that official. Their murderous instincts being now aroused, they went on to the Commissioner's quarters, where the first person met with was the private secretary, who was too late to escape the shower of bullets that riddled him. The Commissioner, terrified at the commotion, and unable to leave the building without running the gauntlet of a host of soldiery clamouring for blood, took refuge under a bed, remaining there in safety until the situation had ameliorated, but by then the mutineers had assumed charge and appointed one of their number as Resident Commissioner.

Despite their decadence, and the lethargy that has come over them, the Mongols showed commendable discrimination in turning a deaf ear to Bolshevik preaching and incitement. I knew they wished to assert their independence and create a monarchy, and in this the Russian General, Semenoff, might have played a part. In a previous chapter I spoke of Semenoff in Eastern Siberia, and his refusal to accept the All Russian Government under Koltchak. Koltchak's *régime* lasted fourteen months, one of the reasons for his decline and fall being the opposition and intrigues encountered along the Russo-Mongolian frontier, of which the life and mainstay was Semenoff,

backed up by outside capital. Although leader of the anti-Koltchak party, he was hostile to the Bolsheviks, his idea being to form a separate state in Siberia, for which he had considerable support. I knew also that he had ambitions towards the purple in Mongolia, and might have been welcomed by the Mongols as their ruling chief, for he was of Mongol origin, his mother having been a Mongol lady of rank, whilst he spoke the language fluently and was in close touch and sympathy with their ideas and thought. It therefore seemed the logical outcome of his movements and activities in that country that he should be chosen as its temporal head, whilst leaving the Hutuktu as the Living Buddha and spiritual chief of the church and state. Events, however, decreed otherwise. Koltchak and his government disappeared as factors in the situation, his army ceased to exist, and nothing remained to oppose the advance of the Reds to the Pacific coast of Siberia.

In October 1920 my Russian colleague, Consul-General Uspenski, left Kashgar *en route* to Peking, for Russian influence had vanished and the Chinese, who had for years sought to recover what they had been compelled to cede to Russia in the past, seized the opportunity presented by the fall of the Northern Colossus, and closed all Russian Consulates in China, requesting the Consuls to move on. The Kashgar Consulate-General was taken over, and a notice in Chinese at the main gateway announced that the reign of the Russian had ended and the successors of the Son of Heaven had, in the fulness of time, come into their own.

A warm friendship always existed between Mr.

Uspenski and myself; we worked in the closest co-operation and cordiality, and to his ever-ready and unobtrusive assistance I owe much of the success that attended my efforts to fight the insidious disease of Bolshevism. He was, of course, the head of the Russian colony, and I missed his cheery manner and *bonhomie*. We dined together once or twice a week, and I was constantly a guest with other Russians, the fact that I could speak their language adding to the enjoyment of entertaining, and being entertained by, these jovial people. They were great card players, and one evening at six o'clock I rode over to the Russian headquarters to see Mr. Uspenski on business and found him engaged in a rubber, so, not wishing to disturb the gathering, I said I would call again in the morning, which I did at half-past ten, to find the four still at their game, having played through the whole night. However, with my appearance they decided that they had had enough, and so an adjournment was made to business and bed.

The arrival of winter meant a short respite from trials and troubles emanating from Russian territory, and matters assumed a somnolent aspect under the grip of ice and snow, and from the passes being closed to Chinese Turkistan, but with the breaking of spring new life came over the land and the old sinister influences were reborn.

When the Trade Agreement was concluded between His Majesty's Government and the Moscow Soviet in March 1921, the Chinese displayed great interest in it and closely watched the outcome. They were aware that the Bolsheviks were far more anxious to expend their available gold on propaganda than on

commerce ; they did not believe that trade was possible with the Soviet, and although they have always recognised that the recovery of Russia is impracticable apart from sound commercial penetration, they saw that any trade agreement would be inoperative, as they discovered to their cost in Ili.

No one disputes that trade with Russia is eminently desirable, but with such fanatics business is out of the question. The offers of concessions by the Soviet are so entangled by conditions due to Communist policy, and the complete absence of any system of justice, that with the best will in the world it is impossible to open commerce on such lines. The Communist rules restrict the liberty not only of the employers but of the workers, and the Soviet Council of Trade Unions, by placing the interests of the workers in the hands of rabid members of the Soviet party, perpetuates the strangle-hold not only on industry and commerce, but on the whole working population of Russia. The obstacle to trade in Central Asia, as elsewhere, is the influence of the Extraordinary Commission ; the latter is accuser, judge, jury, and executioner, with absolute powers of life and death. In addition to its plenary authority it has developed a system of espionage throughout Russia and Asia, and its interference and dark shadow are constant. Foreigners who aspire to business in any form in Soviet Russia would be under the menace of this terrorist body, with scant redress should they incur its displeasure.

Unfortunately I was not made aware that the Trade Agreement was pending, and therefore had no opportunity of preparing the way for a cessation of the

counter-propaganda work I had been directed to carry out, and which, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, would be discontinued on the latter becoming operative. I was consequently placed in an invidious position, for on the agreement being ratified, the Bolsheviks broadcasted a statement that they had concluded a treaty with the leader of the Allies, in addition to seven other Governments—whose names were not, however, vouchsafed,—adding that the conclusion of a treaty with the foremost European Power must show that my news bulletins and counter-propaganda were devoid of foundation in fact.

In order to preserve continuity in narration I will now revert to Mahendra Pertab, who in May 1921 again appeared on the frontier to seek admission to Chinese Turkistan, bearing letters from the Amir of Afghanistan to the Chinese Governor at Urumchi and the Central Government at Peking. He had followed the same route as in the previous year, camping at Shingan near Tashkurghan, quite regardless of the protests of the Chinese at the violation of their territory by this armed party of forty-six men. The intention was to convey the letters in person to the addressees, but fate and circumstances were against them, and once more they were held off.

The letter from the Amir to the Governor was interesting in that it announced the conclusion of a treaty between the British and Afghans, and that the Afghan ruler desired to enter into a similar agreement with China—to open commercial and political relations, and to establish reciprocal representation at Kabul

and Peking. Immediately after his arrival at Shingan the Indian revolutionary addressed a letter to me in which he affirmed that I was, apparently, the sole obstacle to his forward passage, that he could not believe that such was really the case, and that it must be the work of some 'firy (*sic*) imagination.' The missive concluded with a request that I would remove the obstacles to his progress, a desire with which I felt quite unable to comply, and there the matter ended.

After consultation with the Taoyin we decided that the letters for Urumchi and Peking must be handed over to the local Amban for transmission, and to this course Mahendra was compelled to submit, as he had evidently received instructions not to precipitate a crisis or act in any way detrimental to the future good relations which it was hoped to create between China and Afghanistan. The result of this second mission was to open the way for a Chinese delegation to proceed to Kabul, the despatch of which was decided upon in order to gauge the extent and object of Afghan moves.

The Chinese had also been watching the development of the Anglo-Afghan question, and the rise of Afghanistan as an independent Moslem power with dreams and aspirations towards hegemony in Central Asia. They were not favourably impressed with the way in which India had emerged from the struggle, and the prolonged period of ten months during which the British mission was kept waiting at Kabul, without arriving at satisfactory agreement, lent colour to the Chinese belief that the Afghans were paramount and in a position to dictate rather than accept terms. On

these false premises they based their attitude towards the Moslem state, and early in 1922 information came to me that a secret mission was about to start for Kabul, that it was to be financed through the Taoyin of Kashgar, the names of those comprising the mission being furnished me by my agent.

I was dining with the Taoyin one night, and in the course of conversation remarked that there was talk of a Chinese mission to the Afghan capital. He denied the report, so I knew that it must be a true bill, and in that conviction was merely following the great Bismarck, who once said that he never believed anything until it was officially denied. Even the nomad Mongols have a saying that 'A state can be ruled by truth as effectually as a hare can be caught by an ox cart.'

The mission left early in the spring of 1922, and with it I succeeded in sending an agent, who was engaged as a servant to the party. He subsequently returned to Kashgar with the mission, although I was then on leave in Europe and unable to hear all he had to tell. I had consistently opposed the entry of the Afghan missions under Mahendra Pertab, since they had but one object—the stirring up of strife and disaffection under Bolshevik auspices, with all their attendant dangers to India and the Indian borderland.

When the Chinese mission reached Kabul it was lodged in a special house placed at its disposal by the Amir and was duly received in audience. The Amir appeared exasperated at the rebuffs accorded to his several missions under the pseudo-Raja, and asked for an explanation as to why they had been refused entry to Chinese Turkistan. The mission then accepted

the situation as they found it, and the terms of a political and commercial agreement were provisionally drawn up, subject to approval and ratification by the Chinese Government. In the meantime, however, an Afghan Consul was appointed to Yarkand, and he arrived in that city in October 1922 with the returning Chinese mission.

The appointment of this official and the consequent creation of an Afghan Consulate at Yarkand assists the Bolshevik scheme to establish a base for propaganda and intrigue in Turkistan, whence they can plot against India in more favourable circumstances than from their original base at Tashkent. The crux of the Soviet problem lies in India, and they admit that they must stand or fall by success in that country. Despite assertions to the contrary, the Bolsheviks are still able to organise an effective propaganda and to play upon the feelings of the more advanced and fanatical of Asiatics in the promise of liberation from the European yoke. Whether their efforts in Chinese Turkistan, now that they have at last secured a footing there through their Afghan collaborators, will tend towards fruition remains to be seen, but the problem certainly offers an opportunity for interesting counter-activity.

Soon after the departure of this mission much excitement was caused on the Chinese Pamirs by the murder at Tashkurghan of the Chinese Governor and the Military Commandant of that region. The crime had no political significance, being the act of a dissatisfied soldier who was duly tried and condemned to death by a Chinese court. In accordance with the sentence, the murderer was taken out, placed in a net, and slung

up to a tree, when the execution squad opened fire. The man must have possessed amazing vitality, for with eleven bullets through him he was still alive, and the officer commanding had to give the *coup de grâce* with his revolver.

CHAPTER X

Turkistan under the Bolsheviks—The Government and its riff-raff composition—The Pan-Islamic menace—Kirghiz revolt—Wholesale abduction of Russian women—The 'Emancipation of the East'—Propaganda schools—India the crux of the problem—The rise of Afghanistan and our war with that state—Bolshevik missions to Kashgar—The Ferghana Provisional Government—A Moslem Triple Alliance—Mahendra Pertab, an Indian revolutionary, heads an Afghan mission to Kashgar—I checkmate it—Sidelights as a relief to the political situation—A faked army—The Commander-in-Chief and his end—A Consul-General on tour.

AFTER the conclusion of the war with Afghanistan and the signing of the treaty of peace with that state in August 1919, the political *status quo* as affecting Central Asia underwent a marked change, so, to give a clear grasp of the position, I must briefly review the circumstances leading up to the new conditions. The appalling massacres by the Bolsheviks in Kokand, and the subsequent blockade and repressive measures, by which they barred all grain and foodstuffs from reaching the doomed areas, had caused the death by starvation of more than nine hundred thousand people, Kirghiz and others, but all Mohammedans; and to such an extent was their policy of studied murder and extermination carried that economically, industrially, and commercially Russian Turkistan was put back fifty years. Under the Imperial *régime* the officials in the main possessed ability and competence, the majority of them working sympathetically in the

interests of Russian and native alike, but they had been replaced by men totally unfitted in every way for any post requiring integrity and administrative acumen, much less to rule a land of diverse races and presenting such intricate problems as Turkistan. The Governor of Turkistan was a non-commissioned officer of the old army, who, as the result of his rise to power, acquired a large fortune and a degree of affluence strangely out of harmony with Communist ideals. The Commissary of Foreign Affairs had been a clerk and draughtsman, and was given the portfolio of Foreign Secretary by virtue of his topographical knowledge of the country, and the fact that he, at any rate, knew a map when confronted with one. Another Commissary had been a railway porter, whilst others were from the ranks of labourers, cab-drivers, and peasants. They formed an extraordinary collection of riff-raff and adventurers who had profited by the chaos of the revolution to take power into their own hands by murdering those of the Czarist *régime* and any with pretensions to government. The main plank in their Eastern programme was to create a ring round British influence and interests, and by injecting the poison into adjacent states cause it to spread like gangrene until it should secure in its grip India—the crux of the problem. To place themselves in a favourable light, and demonstrate their sympathy with Islam, and Asiatic races in general, a meeting was convened in September 1920 at Baku on the Caspian Sea, known as the Congress of Eastern Peoples, a gathering that proved a failure, as none of the nations concerned showed a desire to be emancipated under Soviet auspices.

The situation at the opening of 1920 was one of extraordinary complexity. Up to the armistice Germany had anticipated far-reaching results from a move in Central Asia, a game in which Turkey was to be the principal pawn. Separating the Turkish dominions from the British centre in the East were Persia and Afghanistan, peopled by races of Turkish origin and of the Islamic faith. Here was material ready to hand for a Pan-Islamic crusade. The Committee of Union and Progress, formed in Constantinople, had already suggested a triple alliance of Persia, Turkey, and Afghanistan, the fundamental principle of which was independence for all Mohammedan countries. It was hoped to include a fourth element in this confederation by a newly formed state evolved from the Bashkirs and Kirghiz of Russian Central Asia, who collectively numbered upwards of six millions and, racially at any rate, dominated the steppe country lying between Russia proper and her Asiatic dominions. Now, it must be explained that the Kirghiz had long-standing grievances originating from the Russian colonisation policy, by which they had been ousted from the land and pushed farther and farther back, as had happened to the North American Indians in the early days of American expansion. This culminated in 1916 with the calling up of the Kirghiz by Imperial rescript for service behind the lines, they having hitherto been exempt from military duty. An attempt to enforce the order resulted in a Kirghiz rising, and more than nine thousand Russian colonists and farmers were massacred. Appalled at their own action, and realising that swift and relentless retribution must inevitably follow,

large numbers crossed into Chinese territory, taking with them several hundred Russian women and girls whom my colleague, the Russian Consul-General, endeavoured to trace, but less than a dozen were recovered, and what became of the remainder we never heard. Probably they were taken far away into the heart of Asia, on the confines of the Tarim Desert, and there sold as slaves, to end their days amongst tribes over whom hangs a veil that still awaits exploratory enterprise to lift.

The Kirghiz, therefore, lay open to Germanic influence, whilst Turko-German agents were passing in and out of Persia and Afghanistan, various renegade Indians were being received at Berlin, and enemy agents swarmed throughout Central Asia. With the end of the war and the consequent passing of Germany, the Bolsheviks made a bid for the heritage left by the Central Powers, directing special attention to the two countries, to wit Chinese Turkistan and Afghanistan, whose frontiers marched with those of India.

Tashkent was obviously the most suitable centre; it was the capital of Russian Central Asia, one of the largest cities in the empire, an ancient seat of Moslem learning and culture, and redolent of the erstwhile glories of the East. A special department for Asiatic propaganda was set up, and schools were established at Tashkent, details of which I believe have not hitherto been published.

The scheme was known as the Emancipation of the East, and was launched with a great flourish of trumpets, but the races and tribes of Asia were singularly inappreciative of the plan evolved for their welfare, and evinced no desire to be emanci-

pated by this particular means. For a year or two after their rise to power the Bolsheviki were financially well equipped, and they devoted much money, time, and energy to the furtherance of the Asiatic programme. The Tashkent school was staffed by Russians and natives, assisted by a motley collection of Indians whom the Bolsheviki had collected when all the scum and riff-raff poured into Russia from the four corners of the earth to partake in the revolution. The pupils were mostly drawn from Turkistan, the Caucasus, and the Central Asian states, and they underwent a preliminary course in the principles of Bolshevism and the benefits to be derived therefrom, great stress being laid upon the part Great Britain had always played in the oppression and degradation of the human race, and the necessity of aiming at her as the root cause of the existing world system.

The syllabus also embraced economic and social problems, and as pupils became efficient they were drafted out and despatched to destinations in various countries of Central Asia and the Middle East. However, the objects of the school, from which so much had been anticipated, did not materialise, and so far as Chinese Turkistan was concerned, the seed fell on stony ground. This was mainly due to the vigilance maintained by the Chinese, who, with the sagacity of their race, regarded the influx of these trained agitators as a cancer that might eat into and destroy their sovereign rights, of which they are ever jealous, although in the past often compelled by force of circumstances to relinquish them.

In conjunction with the school the Bolsheviki ran a propaganda train, equipped with literature and

lantern views, depicting the horrors of British rule in India, and the extent to which our yoke was pressing on all Oriental peoples. Trained agitators with a fluent grasp of the vernacular discoursed much false and irrelevant material to the native audiences of Kirghiz, Turkoman, Sart, and Bashkir, who came in crowds to view the train with its sleeping-cars and restaurant, where the staff emulated the Pashas of history in their conception of physical and material luxury and environment.

There now followed in sequence the assassination, in February 1919, of the Amir Habibullah in his tent at Jellalabad, and the accession of Amanullah, third son of the murdered Amir. His advent was heralded by a proclamation to the effect that a free and independent Afghanistan would be created immune from all foreign interference. Coincident with this bombastic announcement, direct relations were opened with the Moscow Soviet, and Kabul became the meeting-place for Bolsheviki from Russia and renegade Hindus and Mohammedans from India, to a degree that far surpassed Turko-German activities in that city. Amanullah's proclamation was in contravention of the inherent conditions under which we had established the reigning dynasty on the Afghan throne. After the war of 1878-80, when we had set up Abdur Rahman, the present ruler's grandfather, the following conditions were stated by us: (1) the internal affairs of Afghanistan not to be interfered with; (2) the control of foreign relations to be in our hands; (3) that we should assist Afghanistan in the event of outside aggression.

A grant of money in the nature of a personal allow-

ance was also made to the Amir, which his successor subsequently had converted into a hereditary subsidy, and fixed at eighteen lakhs per annum, equivalent to £120,000.

In May 1919 came the unprovoked attack upon India, and the treaty that ended this campaign withdrew the subsidy, as well as the slight privilege of importing arms and ammunition through India, and defined the steps to be taken for the demarcation of a small length of border line then in dispute. This indecisive termination of a wanton and studied aggression had far-reaching effects on the people of Central Asia, to which Afghan versions of the war and its results, broadcasted throughout the vital areas, gave a strong leavening. Damaging reports were circulated that we had been compelled to sue for peace, an indemnity had been exacted, and the Punjab had been freely entered and harassed by the Afghan forces. It will be admitted that the unfortunate conclusion of the campaign certainly lent colour to these statements.

Another factor that did not lighten my task at this time was the refusal of the Chinese to sign the Versailles Treaty, the basic reason of which was the strong objection they took to the clause under which Japan assumed all the rights, title, and privileges relative to the province of Shantung. Japan argued that her sacrifice of life and property in the capture of Kiaochao from Germany entitled her to compensation, but the Chinese countered this by advancing the argument that neither Great Britain nor Belgium had received any material reward for their own sacrifices in France, and that, therefore, the

Japanese contention fell to the ground. This refusal was interpreted in Turkistan, no less than in China proper, as a censure on the Allies, of which Great Britain was the leader, and it required much time, tact, and patience to bring the disgruntled Celestial into line for the combating of the Bolshevik-Turko-Afghan menace.

In pursuance of their determination to secure a footing in Southern Chinese Turkistan, the Bolsheviks despatched their first mission to Kashgar, which arrived on the frontier, ninety miles to the north, late in 1919, in the guise of a commercial delegation under the leadership of one Shestra. I had ascertained that a Hungarian prisoner of war was serving with the latter as secretary, and was in his confidence. I therefore arranged with the Taoyin that Shestra should be held on the frontier, and that the Hungarian should be summoned to Kashgar to state the objects of the mission. This all worked out as planned, and I had two long conversations with him. In pre-war days he was a book-keeper and commercial traveller, and had been captured by the Russians on the Galician front and exiled to Turkistan, whither the Russians transferred most of their war prisoners. Shestra's representative was obviously impressed with all he saw at my Consulate, and the solidarity existing between me and the Chinese, and he returned to the frontier bearing the letter drafted by the Taoyin and myself, intimating that, pending formal recognition of the Bolsheviks, a mission could not be received. With this Shestra had perforce to regain Tashkent, where I heard he was afterwards thrown into prison for his failure to get to Kashgar.

The barbarous and repressive measures adopted by the Bolsheviks had caused all Ferghana to be up in arms against them under the leadership of Sher Mohammed, Mohammed Emin, and Argash Bai, all of whom were at variance on social, sectarian, and economic grounds. Internal dissension and bitter jealousy were rife; the personal equation and desire for power dominated individuals.

The insurgents held the country and all the districts in the vicinity of the larger towns, only the latter being retained by the Soviet. From the discordant elements composing the Ferghana opposition an effort was made to create a Ferghana Provisional Government, with Mohammed Emin, General Mukhanoff, and Captain Monstroff as the executive heads. Its existence, however, was a transitory one, the bedrock of successful resistance—finance—being conspicuous by its absence, attempts to tap the British Government not meeting with any support from me, for the movement, based as it was on a foundation of jealousy, and unstable both politically and militarily, was foredoomed to failure.

Nothing daunted, the Bolsheviks sent another mission under Popoff, Consul-designate for Kashgar, which arrived on the frontier at Irkishtam in the summer of 1920. On my urgent representations the Chinese had increased their garrison at that post to three hundred men, although they themselves gave the total at over five hundred, the pay of these men being doubtless devoted to charitable purposes.

Popoff's mission fared no better than the one preceding it; indeed, to be a Bolshevik envoy entrusted with the task of opening the road to India through

Chinese Turkistan was apparently no sinecure, he being a victim of Soviet justice to a greater extent than Shestra, for he was afterwards shot in Tashkent.

The hammering at the door now became continuous, and yet another mission appeared at Irkishtam in September, having successfully run the gauntlet of the insurgent bands who had been in wait for it. There were now two envoys, Tigar and Pechatnikoff, the latter a peddler of small lamps prior to the coming of the Soviet. This mission was better armed and equipped than the previous ones, and far more truculent and persistent, and as such it demanded corresponding treatment. I therefore advised the Taoyin to proceed in person to the frontier, interview the mission, and gauge its scope and activities. To this he agreed, and the move is noteworthy as being the first occasion for more than twenty years on which a Chinese official in Turkistan had stirred from his headquarters to undertake a tour. I was in constant touch with the Taoyin throughout this period, and was cognisant of the demands put forward by the Bolsheviki, which the Taoyin successfully countered, although it taxed his skill and resource to the utmost, and kept him absent from Kashgar for more than two months.

Various subterfuges were adopted to secure admission to Chinese Turkistan, as well as recognition of the Soviet by the Celestial authorities. For instance, the Taoyin of Kashgar received a telegram from the Commissary for Foreign Affairs in Tashkent, by the line constructed in pre-war days from Kashgar to Andijan on the Russian Central Asian Railway, stating that Chinese subjects there requested the

appointment of a Consul to safeguard their interests. I told the Taoyin that it was an obvious trap to secure recognition of the Soviet, which such an appointment would imply, and he adopted the suggestion to refer the Bolsheviki to the Central Government in Peking.

On another occasion they suggested that the Chinese should send troops into Russian territory to arrest marauders who, it was said, had lifted cattle in Kashgaria, but the Taoyin was not to be caught by so palpable a scheme for retaliatory measures should the frontier have been thus violated.

Coincident with these missions was the arrival of another from Kabul, then a *rendezvous* for recalcitrant spirits. It traversed the Russian Pamirs, crossed the frontier and came down to Shingan, eighteen miles within Chinese territory, whence it requested permission from the District Magistrate at Tashkurghan, in Sarikol, to proceed to Yarkand and Kashgar, *en route* to Peking, charged with a mission from the Amir of Afghanistan to the Chinese Government.

The advent of this mission necessitates a discussion of the Afghan question as affecting Central Asia, for the assassination of the Amir, and the accession of Amanullah, brought Afghanistan into the arena of Central Asian politics, and was the turning-point in our relations with that state. Amanullah was imbued with the idea that Afghanistan has a great destiny to perform in Asia, whilst there was also the question of the Caliphate, towards which he had leanings, hoping that if the fall of Turkey should eventuate, he might don the mantle of the spiritual and temporal

head of Islam. All this tended to enhance the idea of his own importance, which is only the logical outcome of his personal standard of appraisal. His attitude was in favour of Turks and Bolsheviks, and there can be no doubt that the guns taken by us during the campaign had been presented by the Soviet, in addition to which I knew that sums of money were passing to Kabul from foreign sources to replace the subsidy we were cancelling. Extensive propaganda had been carried out in India, and the attitude of the revolutionary element there led the Afghans to believe that they might expect support in a move against us.

In his impetuous action against India the young Amir was instigated and supported by enemy, and particularly Bolshevik, influence; the latter really pushed on the Afghans to test the strength of what was in front, and to ascertain the feasibility of a descent upon India. Personally, these schemes never caused me serious alarm, for the Red forces were not trained or adapted for the particular form of warfare involved, nor were they sufficiently equipped in supply and transport services to afford the faintest hope of success against the highly trained and well-equipped units of the Indian army. But if the military aspect of the situation gave rise to no anxiety, it raised a problem of deep political import. The forfeiture of the subsidy will not materially affect Afghanistan, since in case of necessity she can always appeal to Russia; indeed, the Amir Abdur Rahman, when he applied for our grant to be fixed on a permanent basis, left us in no doubt as to the course he would adopt in the event of refusal. It is doubtful, however, if the

Russians would pay over a large sum of money without a *quid pro quo* and a controlling interest in the disbursement.

Our exclusion from Afghan territory, and the ban placed upon travellers who desired to enter that country, were so complete that we knew practically nothing of what was going on, either at the capital or in the state generally. We had to rely upon hearsay evidence and what could be gathered from native agents—never very reliable, as long experience has shown me. Occupied with matters of world-wide import and magnitude, and handicapped by our lack of information as to what was happening behind the land gateway into India, there was ground for apprehension that the Afghans, and frontier tribes in proximity to them, might rally for an anti-British movement. To that end the Bolsheviks in their propaganda held out the riches of India as the attractive bait, anticipating that all would join in any advance across the frontier which offered sufficient inducement in the way of spoil and plunder.

Besides the mutual overtures of Bolshevik and Afghan in Kabul, the Amir turned his attention to Pan-Islamism, as the champion of all true believers and upholder of Moslem integrity and independence. With that thoroughness characteristic of an Oriental monarch, on accession to the throne he had disposed of all those with aspirations towards the purple, amongst them his uncle Nasrullah, who had visited England in 1895, and was chief of the army and spiritual head of the state, a man who in his capacity of chief Imam exercised a wide influence, for any who had followed him in prayers at the mosque could

only act in defiance of his commands at the risk of being branded as an infidel and faced with excommunication from the faith.

I have already alluded to the project of a triple alliance of Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan, as propounded by the Turkish party, but this afforded little scope for an ambitious ruler like Amanullah, who would have been assigned second fiddle in the proposed orchestra. The chiefs of Bokhara, Khiva, and the insurgent leader in Ferghana, Sher Mohammed, were therefore approached with a proposal to create a Central Asian confederacy, each to be autonomous and with the complete machinery of government, civil and military, fiscal, judicial, and penal, the controlling centre to be at Kabul. This marks an important era in Central Asian history, for it was the initial step towards a union of Mohammedan states, and the first tangible move there on the field of Pan-Islamism. The scheme was not favourably received by Bokhara and Khiva, possibly because, being so much under the Bolshevik heel, and practically absorbed in the Soviet, they saw no possibility of taking it up, although I think the basic reason was the politically independent factors dividing the various Moslem sects.

Ferghana politely turned down the proposition, for Sher Mohammed was averse to committing himself to any scheme evolved in Afghanistan, of whom he seemed very suspicious.

It may be asked what are the potentialities of this combine should it eventuate. Personally I do not think we need take it seriously, for the factors to which I have alluded are sure to assert themselves ;

the Central Asian peoples are largely under the influence of the mullahs, and religious feeling does not play the part it originally did. The mullahs and imams of the present day have eliminated all that is at variance with conservatism and the Moslem written law—the Shariat—and are running counter to the progressive ideas emanating from Kabul and Constantinople. We have seen that Pan-Islamism was taken up by the Bolsheviki as a means to further their designs on the East, but to my mind the movement is, at the moment at any rate, merely platonic, has little inward vitality, and does not impress me as a potential menace of the near future.

Concurrently with the growth of civilisation and spread of educational facilities, the grip of the priestly class may gradually relax, and their authority would then vary in proportion to the credulity of the people.

Democracy, too, plays no insignificant part, and concerted action between tribes and races can only arise from religious fanaticism or motives of self-interest. The former is not pronounced, so that there remains the ruling factor of material benefit, something to lose or something to gain, and the moment this is apparent, a powerful antidote comes into operation that is opposed to the influence of the agitator.

So far as Ferghana is concerned, this was not the first occasion on which overtures of a Pan-Islamic nature had been made, since emissaries from Turkey had visited the camps of Sher Mohammed and Mohammed Emin to sound them as to the possibility of their joining a league of Moslem states, Enver Pasha playing a conspicuous part in these

pourparlers. I heard on good authority that Enver aimed at being the Napoleon of Central Asia, a saviour who should come and deliver the people from the hands of the Philistines, in the person of the Bolsheviki ; that he contemplated the formation of a great Moslem state as a buffer against Russia in Asia, and would lay the foundation stone of an Asia for the Asiatics. But Enver has passed away, and with him his projects have presumably gone by the board.

Such in brief was the position of affairs in Central Asia, developments in which would be inimical to our interests and precipitate a crisis in and adjacent to our Indian empire.

The head of the mission that now desired to enter Chinese Turkistan was Mahendra Pertab, a renegade from India, wanted by the Indian Government, and a man of dangerous revolutionary tendencies, who had been received at Berlin, and afterwards taken up as a useful tool by the Bolsheviki at Moscow. He gave himself the brevet rank of Raja, to which he was not properly entitled, being merely the son of a landowner, some of whom are, however, by their employés and adherents, accorded that distinction.

Mahendra, Barkatullah, and a few other irresponsible and unbalanced Indians had decided amongst themselves that the British Raj must come to an end, and in anticipation of that eventuality they formed a Provisional Government of India, with Mahendra as President and Barkatullah as the Foreign Secretary. The response was singularly disappointing, and as India became unhealthy for them, they migrated to the more congenial zones of Moscow and Berlin. From the Soviet capital, Barkatullah was sent to

Tashkent, whilst Mahendra wandered off to Kabul, where his having been accredited to Moscow, and his assumption of phantom rank, gained for him a certain status in the eyes of the Amir Amanullah. This led to his appointment to conduct the mission now seeking admittance to Chinese Turkistan, where it could have worked mischief amongst the Afghan and trans-border population, and preached the doctrine of red revolution. Mahendra was accompanied by an Afghan sirdar, with an escort and followers, numbering forty-six men in all. The Indian Government had previously offered a large reward for Mahendra's apprehension, which, on my application, was renewed, so that I was able to put a definite proposal to the local authorities, through whose instrumentality an arrest would have to be effected. The hollowness of the Chinese position was now revealed in regard to their military strength along the frontier, and the measures adopted to safeguard its integrity. Shingan, an important outpost at the foot of the Neza Tash Pass on the direct route from the Russian Pamirs to Chinese territory, had a garrison of eighteen men, whilst Tashkurghan, the headquarters of the district, held only thirty-six. The presence of this Afghan force on her soil had therefore to be tolerated, since it could not be prohibited, although the Afghans probably realised that were they to advance in defiance of the Chinese, they would be held up sooner or later. In the circumstances I suggested that the Taoyin should request the mission to withdraw from Chinese territory and hand over the letters for the Chinese Government for transmission through himself and the Governor. To this, after some demur, they

agreed, although Mahendra actually came into Tashkurghan, twenty-two miles from where the mission was camped, remaining there one night, and having the effrontery to call upon the British Aksakal, the Consular subordinate, who was so taken aback at the coolness of this adventurer that action seems to have failed him, and so the would-be President of the Republic of India escaped from the net that had been spread.

The rejection of these several missions from Kabul and Tashkent, all acting under Bolshevik auspices, was anathema to the Soviet, and they broadcasted a notice, published in Turki and Russian, that Kashgar must be taken from the Chinese, and the British Consul and his officers put to death, effusions and threats to which I had long been accustomed.

Life in Turkistan in those exciting days did not pursue an even tenor, yet during this time of missions and intrigue there came some amusing incidents to lessen the strain and create a humorous side. Kashgar at this moment was in the throes of a local scandal, for the City Magistrate, on whom devolved the task of collecting supplies for the increased forces advocated, had in the discharge of this duty amassed in a remarkably short time the sum of ten thousand taels, approximately £2500, and his disinclination to share the loot with another was nearly the cause of his undoing. However, being equal to the occasion, he promptly despatched a cash present of half the amount to the Governor at Urumchi, and all was well.

Simultaneously with the performance of the City Magistrate, a new General Officer Commanding appeared in Kashgar, and whilst taking over the warlike

stores, one of his staff officers, smoking with a placid nonchalance, threw a lighted match into a receptacle containing gunpowder. The result was that the staff officer and two soldiers went up, and others might have met a similar fate had not the quality of the powder been on a par with the ignorance of the officer.

The presence of this brigadier was unwelcome to the Commander-in-Chief, who preferred to have his son in that lucrative billet, so that business should be run on strictly family lines, and for the benefit of the paternal exchequer.

Prior to this appointment, an inspection of the forces in Kashgar had been carried out by an officer deputed from the War Board in Peking. I met him on several occasions, and he dined with me one evening.

This arrival from the central seat of government warned the Titai that his bogus army would be exposed to the glaring light of day, but, being a man of resource, and knowing that an inspector can be induced to imitate Nelson and his famous 'blind eye,' if sufficient inducement be forthcoming, he despatched his myrmidons into the highways and byways to gather in recruits and swell the total, so that it might bear some resemblance to the paper figure. The supply of uniform was a simple matter, for it comprised merely a jacket of coarse cloth, with the Chinese characters sewn thereon to indicate the wearer's martial calling, and trousers of similar material, a stock of both articles being kept ready for eventualities; and as for boots, the newly made warrior would wear his civilian footgear. The Kirghiz from the valleys and foot-hills fringing the Kashgar oasis yielded a goodly supply of cavalry, who came

equipped with horse and saddlery, and with the addition of the jacket and trousers and an old carbine they were transformed into the mounted branch; and so the army assumed proportions that must have impressed the representative from Peking with the power and might of Celestial military force on the outskirts of empire.

With the inspecting officer's departure expansion gave way to shrinkage, matters resumed their normal aspect, the army in an attenuated form laid aside the sword and musket, and was once more labouring at the oil wells under the guidance of its chief, who supervised it, clothed in a dressing-gown and wearing a large panama hat.

The Commander-in-Chief was obviously relieved at the passing of the inspection ordeal, for soon afterwards he came to call, and invited me to a banquet which he was anxious to give in my honour at his headquarters, all the leading officials in Kashgar being bidden to the feast.

The palace of the Titai, whither we repaired on the great day, was of but recent construction, and in monotonous conformity to the one architectural model prevalent throughout China, a style born of a lack of imagination and the conservatism of the race. The main structure was entirely of wood, supported by enormous pillars and comprising three storeys. The one street of the settlement led to the gateway, through which we passed into a courtyard, where a guard of honour received me with a blare of trumpets and a roll of drums. At the farther end was a raised hall, in front of which the Titai greeted me with excessive cordiality, declaring that I was his brother

and together we could accomplish anything. I was then conducted to the first floor of the private suite, a large apartment with views across the plains to Kashgar in one direction, and to the snow-capped peaks of the Pamirs in the other. Here the ceremonial tea was served, the old warrior also producing wine of his own concoction, of which mention has already been made, and to preserve inviolate the atmosphere of cordiality and brotherhood I partook of the nauseous liquid, meanwhile reflecting on the trials that beset the representative of British might and power in the fulfilment of his duties. The tea having been disposed of, we took our places at the festive board. Etiquette in China demands that the guest of honour shall be seated facing his host, the honour extending to right and left of the former according to respective rank. The dinner was similar to those I have described elsewhere, with the addition of special Tungan dishes, as well as an entire sheep roasted whole and served in a sitting posture on a salver. This the host attacked, serving me with long strips from the neck and back, after which it was turned over to the less high and mighty for disposal. It is the acme of politeness at a Chinese banquet for the host and others to select dainty morsels from their own plates and deposit them on that of the principal guest. As I had the honour of fulfilling that *rôle*, I was bombarded with tit-bits from bald and toothless old men, opium-sodden magistrates, and convivial warriors, in a manner that may have been gratifying to them, but not at all conducive to my internal well-being. The Titai was indefatigable in this respect, and not only

contributed from his own plate, but toured the table to poach from others for my benefit.

At the conclusion of the banquet we adjourned to inspect the stables, containing sixty-eight horses of various breeds, thence to the oil refinery, erected under the guidance of a Swedish engineer. I was much impressed with the amount and quality of the oil and petrol extracted by these primitive means, which would compare favourably with the Western product, and I was convinced that here was an industry lending itself to expansion, for the oil deposits only await development on scientific lines—but of this more anon.

The old Titai had various ways for the filling of his coffers, and all sources of income were duly tapped, not even the Kashgar branch of a Chinese bank escaping his attention. The merchants and bankers of China have by their energy and integrity created a high standard of commercial morality, and rarely is a defaulter in trade or finance met with. Thrift and perspicacity have gained them a position of respect, whilst their hold on the purse-strings assures consideration at the hands of government officials who may find it convenient to draw upon their supply of coin and notes. This the Titai found occasion to do, although his initial demands were limited to a trifling four thousand taels, and when after the lapse of much time no credit payment had been made, nor any proposal submitted as to when and how the debt should be liquidated, the bank manager craved audience of the great man, and hinted that a small sum on account might not be out of place. But his avaricious soul rebelled at

the idea of parting, at any rate in full, and so a compromise was arranged for two thousand two hundred taels in settlement. However, when the bank manager left Kashgar more than a year after this interview, not a tael had been paid, nor was there any prospect of bringing the old debtor to book. It is not all beer and skittles running a bank in Chinese Turkistan.

As this was the last occasion on which I dined with the Titai, I will narrate the concluding phase of his reign in Turkistan, culminating with his execution in the summer of 1924.

As time went on, General Ma assumed a commanding position and acquired such power and authority that there was no check on his rapacity. His cruelty and oppression threatened to plunge the country into a state of rebellion, and the Chinese authorities, both in Peking and Urumchi, at last realised that my reports concerning him were not without foundation. Vast sums of money were being extorted from the inhabitants, the jade mines were worked by forced labour, and gangs of people were transported there to hew out the beautiful green mineral. Resistance to the orders of the tyrant was dealt with in a variety of ways. Some were strung up by the heels, others were placed in a cage, with a hole through the top for the head; bricks were put beneath the victim's feet, one being removed each morning, until finally his toes barely touched the ground, and there he was left to die by a process of strangulation. Ma found a market for his supplies of oil, coal, and other commodities by compelling merchants to purchase from him at rates fixed by himself, whilst any who defaulted

had their business capacity largely curtailed by original methods of punishment.

His interference in civil matters was constant, and it even extended to the arrest and detention of a British-Indian subject, in defiance of our extra-territorial privileges. For this he was compelled to come to my Consulate and apologise, a course of action that restored the situation and created a profound impression throughout the country.

With Chinese subjects his high-handedness knew no bounds. Wang, the clerk in charge of the post office in the Kashgar New City, fell foul of his son, the local Commandant, the two apparently being rival aspirants for a lady. So Wang was arrested as a revolutionary and shot without trial, despite the fact that the Governor had telegraphed for him to be handed over to the Taoyin.

Like all despots, Ma was hated, yet none dared take the initiative that would rid them of this human vampire. One day, however, a soldier did essay the task, firing at the General as he stood in the courtyard. The bullet missed by inches, but the dauntless old chief never flinched, and himself assisted in rounding up the man. I was told a dreadful retribution followed: the would-be assassin was lashed down to a bench, his feet were then cut off, and day by day further toll was taken from the living flesh until death ended the process.

By the end of 1923 Ma's attitude, and the discontent brought about by his tyrannical methods, caused the Provincial Government serious alarm, and when it became clear that he was intriguing for the overthrow of the Governor-General, and even had

ambitions towards the Presidency, it was determined to take action. The Chinese are slow to move, but once aroused they act with commendable promptitude. An order was therefore despatched to the General, directing him to resign and proceed to Urumchi to offer explanations of his conduct. This being contumaciously rejected, a secret concentration was prepared to bring the recalcitrant to book. It was initiated at Aksu, about fifteen marches east of Kashgar, and the Governor-General, with that sagacity and prescience inherent in the Chinese, entrusted the command to a man who had accounts to settle with Ma, whilst the second-in-command of the striking force was also one who had suffered severely at his hands. There are two roads from Aksu to Kashgar: one the main route from Peking, the other through the hills, and along which it is only possible for men and horses to travel. A section of the striking force took the former, marching with much ostentation along the great highway; the second, and more mobile detachment, moved through the hills, and with that strategical and tactical skill a Chinese general not infrequently displays, arrived under the walls of the city at nightfall on May 31, General Ma being ignorant of the presence of this resolute body. They took cover in the moat by the main gateway of the city, and in the adjacent buildings, and there awaited daylight to rush the stronghold. At last, as was customary, the boom of a gun announced that dawn had come, and the great gates were opened for all to pass in and out. Eagerly the government troops rose, and, bursting through the archways, swarmed into the courtyard of the

tyrant's palace. He heard the din and scuffle, and knew that the crucial moment had arrived, but met it with the courage which he, at any rate, possessed. Flinging open his bedroom window, which commanded a view of the courtyard, he opened fire on the invaders with his automatic revolver, killing an officer and wounding one or two men. Undismayed, however, the building was stormed, and led by the commander, they poured up the stairways and burst in the door of Ma's bedroom. The dauntless old man met the onrush, but, wounded in the right arm, his revolver dropped, and he was overpowered, bound hand and foot, and trussed up, as so many of his victims had been before him.

A chosen body of men then set out for the Yamen of the General's son, where his surrender was demanded, the summons being answered by a fusillade that killed several of the government troops. The leader of this detachment was he who also had old scores to pay off, and followed eagerly by his men, he rushed the building, and in a hand-to-hand fight killed the brigadier with several of his followers.

The remainder of the day was spent in rounding up Ma's soldiery, short shrift being accorded those who did not at once surrender.

The day after the dramatic *coup*, the despot was taken out and shot at the great gateway of the city, and his body was then lashed to a framework, so that all might see justice had been meted out. There it remained for upwards of two days, whilst Chinese and Turkoman alike came to view and revile it, for such had been the tyrant's rule that every man's hand was against him.

Just after my last dinner with the Titai I paid another visit to Yangi Hissar, the happy hunting-ground of the Hindu money-lenders, and dealt with no less than five hundred cases, some of which showed the Eastern usurer, as evidenced in the Shikarpuri Hindu, in an unusually glaring light. In one case, a cultivator had borrowed six taels eighteen months before; thirty-two taels had already been repaid, and twenty-two were still demanded. Working this out at the rate of interest admissible in a Chinese court, I found the amount paid to the money-lender to be far in excess of his due, so that a sum of taels was owing by him to the borrower, which at the same rate of interest totalled a considerable amount, and with that Shylock duly parted, to the gratification of the debtor and the enhancement of British prestige. At the same time I warned this and similar applicants struggling in the harpy's net that they would receive no further consideration in the event of again being caught.

A great deal of business on these tours is transacted in the open, or the courtyard of a house may be placed at the disposal of the Consul-General, and there gathers an audience that for appearance and solemnity bears a Biblical aspect. The Consul-General takes his seat at a table, and the court and audience dispose themselves round him in a semi-circle, cross-legged on the ground. The court then opens, and the voices of plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses graduate in tone and vehemence in direct proportion to the magnitude of the case and the temperament of the parties. The question up for settlement may be one in which the accused has

been let out on bail pending the arrival of the court, but has absconded, with the result that the bailees must either produce the felon or be mulcted in the loss of their money. Notwithstanding the fact that they have been let down, their leanings are towards the delinquent, who is regarded as a clever performer. Had he been captured in his second effort, sympathy would be alienated from him, and he would have been condemned as a bungler and given over to the law. On the other hand, there is the financial side, and neither the Indian nor the Turki likes to part. All sorts of arguments are advanced, and many are the subterfuges adopted, to show cause why the sum should not be forfeited. The bailees are all talking at once after the manner of the Oriental litigant, but the court selects one to present the case, and it is then that sidelights on Eastern character appear. Grief and indignation at the conduct of their relative, pathetic emotion, an air of resignation, interspersed with false humility,—all are unavailing to affect the British representative in the summing-up and the separation of the wheat from the chaff. Still loth to relinquish all hope, an effort is made to secure a reduction in the amount at stake, in which the remaining bailees, in defiance of court etiquette, join, for the pain of parting is intolerable and peradventure the worst may be avoided, but the matter is too flagrant to admit of any such leniency, and so the verdict is given and the crowd murmurs ‘Allah Akbar.’

CHAPTER XI

Life as a Consular officer—A mysterious murder case—A clumsy scheme to baffle inquiry—A fortunate discovery—A dramatic confession—Justice accomplished—Opium smugglers—The trade in Turkistan—A profitable calling—My counter-moves and burning of confiscated opium—The wiles and stratagems of the smuggler—Gun-running—A pseudo carpet dealer—The trans-border tribesman—His mentality and good points—More Turko-German machinations—A Moslem-Buddhist combine.

IN Kashgar the mills of God, though they grind slowly, are just as apt as in more civilised places to grind exceeding small. In this remote corner of Cathay it is no more possible for two Indian subjects of the British Raj to be foully murdered and to go unavenged than it is for a Briton to be done away with in Clapham. Indeed, the odds on justice being done are greater in Central Asia. On the plains of Chinese Turkistan every post is a landmark ; a solitary horse at evening at once arouses suspicion, and through the bazaars of Turkistan there flows a stream of gossip and conjecture which resembles a river stealing through a continent.

Yet, as a perusal of this book will have indicated, there is a counter-influence in this transparent land, making detection of crime difficult. For instance, a Celestial magistrate in whose district a murder occurs has a black mark scored against him by the Provincial Government, and is consequently regarded with disfavour. What wonder there is shuffling, subterfuge, and a strong disinclination to follow up clues ?

This simple fact alone often accounted for much of my difficulty in unravelling intricate cases, and particularly in tracing a crime that for fourteen months lay wrapped in mystery, and then was only revealed by one of those fortunate circumstances which, insignificant in themselves, often lead to startling discoveries.

I well remember being met at the Consulate gates one dark winter's afternoon by a number of Indian traders and others with a complaint that two of their fellow-merchants, who had set out from Kashgar two weeks before on the five days' journey to Yarkand, had never arrived, nor was any trace forthcoming of their having passed through Yangi Hissar, fifty-one miles from Kashgar. I thought it possible they might have tarried *en route*, and the fact that they had not been observed in Yangi Hissar did not necessarily mean that they had not traversed that city. However, I at once sent round to the Taoyin of Kashgar, detailing the story and requesting him to institute stringent inquiries. The two merchants had hired a mapa, a two-wheeled cart having curious iron tyres studded with huge hobnails, drawn by one horse and driven by a Kashgari. Yet the merchants, driver, horse and cart had vanished into thin air. Turkistan had literally swallowed them up, and although the secret service which I had created was put into operation, it was two months before I had even a clue, the second phase in this strange drama. A solitary horse, without bridle or saddlery, was found wandering in the plains at evening, ten miles outside Yangi Hissar. Some peasants, concluding that it might have broken away from passing travellers,

took charge of the animal, and to facilitate its identity they tethered it during the hours of daylight in an adjacent village street on the main road to Yangi Hissar. As no claimant was forthcoming within the next few days, the horse was taken to the Yamen, and from there the news gravitated to Kashgar, where, on arrival, it was identified by the driver's wife. All sorts of theories were advanced to account for its discovery, but the generally accepted belief was that the party had changed horses *en route*, and that it had broken away and galloped off into the desert. This, however, did not appeal to me, bearing in mind that a horse in Turkistan is a valuable asset, especially to a humble cartman, and I knew the owner would be sure to follow up the animal or take such steps as would lead to its prompt recapture. Now, the cart driver did not bear any too good a reputation; he had but recently returned from Russian Turkistan, and through my intelligence service I learned that he had been mixed up with a gang of bandits on the Bolshevik side of the frontier. Could it be that the driver and the Indian merchants had destroyed the cart and disappeared for reasons of their own? But, in so far as the Hindus were concerned, I could trace no motive for such a step. I followed the clue of the wandering horse on the hypothesis that they had crossed into Russian territory. Then, too, there was the reputation of the driver and his association with the Soviet, and although four years had passed since the Armistice the Bolsheviks were as active as ever.

Then one afternoon, when personally casting around on another clue, I came upon the wheel tracks of a

mysterious cart that had passed into the desert on the route of the missing Indians, but this led to nothing definite. More theories were advanced. Had both the driver and his two passengers been killed, and their bodies, together with horse and cart, thrown into the marshes existing at certain points on the road from Kashgar to Yarkand?

It was possible the driver might have murdered the two merchants, changed horses, and then abandoned the cart near the Russian border, where the mountainous nature of the country precludes any travelling other than on horseback or on foot. The secret service tentacles were out in all directions; time passed on, and two months had elapsed without my being able to lift the veil shrouding the journey of the two men.

The third phase now appeared. The Governor of Yangi Hissar reported that the body of a man had been found twelve miles from his city on the Yarkand road, that it had been left exactly as discovered, and a military guard posted to prevent its removal. This news was conveyed to me by the Kashgar Taoyin in person, and I intimated that I would myself visit the spot, and asked Dr. Raquette of the Swedish Mission to accompany me. So the next day we set out, arriving at Yangi Hissar that evening. Both the civil and military Governors, accompanied by the leading officials, met me outside the city with the customary escort and a salute from ancient cannon. That night I dined with the Governor to discuss plans for the morrow, the meal taking place in the Yamen.

It was decided that we should visit the place where the body was lying the following morning, and at

nine o'clock the courtyard and approaches to my house were filled with a gathering of soldiers, standard-bearers, grooms, and lackeys. Russian carriages were provided for the occasion, and preceded by out-riders and a clattering escort of cavalry, mounted on rough but wiry Mongolian ponies, we rattled forth to the scene of action. The road lay across the plains to the fifth potai, this being a Chinese milestone equivalent to two and a half miles. The ground here was soft and covered with a saline deposit common to the deserts of Turkistan. The body was lying eight hundred yards from the road, and a rough matting screen had been placed round it. It was a dried-up skeleton, but there was just sufficient skin left on the ears to reveal the fact that the lobes were not pierced for earrings, and I knew that both the Hindus in question wore such ornaments. I mentioned it to the Governor, who looked a trifle disconcerted, but otherwise betrayed no sign of emotion or annoyance. It was also apparent that the skeleton was that of a man who had died seven or eight months previously, and the merchants had disappeared but two months before. Our own opinion was that it had been exhumed from some cemetery and put in the position where we saw it to throw us off the scent, but if so, it was a clumsy scheme, the details of which had not been thought out with the care requisite to baffle one with a knowledge of the Orient and its customs.

As time passed on, the Chinese were hoping that the affair would be relegated to the limbo of the past, but I was determined to unravel the mystery if it were humanly possible. In my despatches to the

Celestial authorities in Turkistan I pointed out the absurdity of a cart with its driver and passengers being able to disappear from the highway without some clue being forthcoming. The Governor-General was compelled to admit the force of the argument, and its effect was to galvanise the local Yamens into activity.

Fourteen months passed during which further excitements cropped up. Bolshevik plots regarding Afghanistan and the Indian border states, opium smugglers, and gun-runners had to be dealt with, strange thefts and other cases demanded my attention, but still the quest of the murderers never ceased.

At last, one cold February morning, just after dawn had broken, I was awakened by my Consular subordinate from Yangi Hissar, who had arrived during the night with news of the vanished Indian subjects. It was the work of an hour or so to acquaint the Taoyin and secure his presence at the Consulate, where we sipped tea and discussed the fresh clues and plans for further action. It appeared a man had been arrested in the bazaar at Yangi Hissar selling old iron that seemed not unlike the tyre of a mapa; that he had made certain damaging statements, and was part owner of a lonely inn on the Kashgar-Yarkand road. Was I nearing a solution of the mystery? The Taoyin and I decided to go forth together and investigate; no time was lost, orders were issued, and with an escort of three hundred soldiers, each more strange than the other, we passed through the bazaars and out by the southern gate of the city bound for the inn, twenty-one miles away. It was a weird party that clattered along the road: the Taoyin in a Russian carriage muffled in furs;

myself with the Vice-Consul on horseback, with our orderlies in their long khaki coats, brown belts, and tall white fur caps; the Chinese cavalry arrayed in divers garments, with hats of varied make and style. Some wore caps resembling an inverted saucer, others those of conical shape, some turbans and fur bonnets, and still more had to be content with a cloth wrapped round head and ears as protection against the bitter wind. One warrior stood out above the rest with an Indian solar topee, of which he seemed inordinately proud, for did it not place him in a class by himself? All were mounted on spirited Mongolian ponies, diversely accoutred with spears, carbines, muskets, and swords, and curvetting in dense clouds of dust. They were a motley crew, but proud to escort the Taoyin and the representative of the British Raj. The rendezvous was a rough building of wattles and mud surrounded by a mud wall, the whole covering an area of about thirty-five yards square. This was the inn, and here we were to realise how strange are the workings of fate. At a distance of six hundred yards was a similar collection of huts, in one of which breakfast had been prepared by order of the Taoyin—a collation of Chinese food and wine with, somewhat mysteriously, a bottle of champagne,—and over the wine and the ‘wittles,’ as Sam Weller would have it, we reviewed the information to hand. One of my agents had seen a man selling bits of scrap iron in the iron-smiths’ bazaar that bore strange resemblance to the tyre of a mapa. At any rate it was enough to apprehend the man, and so a Beg was called, the arrest effected, and explanations demanded.

Taken thus unawares, the man's replies were halting and aroused suspicion, and when it came out that he lived at a lonely inn hard by the river bank, twenty-one miles out from Kashgar on the Yarkand road, the plot thickened. To this solitary dwelling the Taoyin and I had now repaired, and there were gathered the vendor of scrap iron, with his brother and their two parents. The arrested man was married to a young and pretty Turkoman girl, whose nervous and uneasy manner impressed me as having secrets to divulge if approached with care and circumspection. The Taoyin knew no Turki, and I at once determined to draw the girl aside and examine her in quite a casual way. Whether she acted from a desire to be on the safe side, seeing that all was apparently up, I shall never know, but a few pointed questions produced damning evidence of an atrocious crime. 'Go and dig in the granary in the left-hand corner,' she said at last, after many hesitations. We proceeded to examine this room, on the walls of which were strange dark stains resembling blood. My orderlies dug vigorously, the Turkoman girl looking on, but betraying little sign of what must have been passing through her mind as various objects were unearthed—cooking-pots and brass dishes, without which no Hindu can travel, since he may not eat from polluted vessels. 'What else?' I demanded. 'It were well to tell me all.' After a long pause, for doubtless she conjured up visions of the Chinese executioner, and the consequences that discoveries already made must bring in their wake, she said in a low, soft tone, 'Go into the next room and dig on the left-hand side near the wall.' Here the spades revealed

bloodstained clothes, a pitiful collection of dead men's garments. Meanwhile the Taoyin stood by, dignified but inarticulate, since he could neither speak nor comprehend the language. We now turned to the arrested man and his brother, confronting them with what had been unearthed, and asked them what they had to say. Then, realising the game was up, like many another criminal before them, they made a dramatic confession. It was a bitter winter night more than a year ago, with snow falling heavily, when a mapa with its driver and the two Hindu merchants drew up at the door of the inn. They craved shelter from the fury of the elements, and, moreover, the roads were becoming impassable. So they entered the portals of this sinister hostelry, and as their baggage was lifted from the cart an ominous jingle denoted hard coin. Now, the innkeepers were poor and desperately hard up, returns had been indifferent, and they were pressed by creditors. 'Verily,' they said, 'Allah hath delivered them into our hands'; so whilst the Hindus and the driver prepared a meal and spread their blankets, a consultation was held, and it was decided to kill them during the night. At last, when all was still, and the weary travellers were wrapped in slumber, the murderers crept in, and with a club resembling a wooden hammer they dealt such blows as split the skulls of their victims like walnut shells. To spare the driver, although a fellow Moslem, was impossible, for it would mean the sword of Damocles for the remainder of their lives. He was a bigger and more powerful man than the two Hindus, but the club did its work, and all three bodies were then dragged out for burial in

the courtyard, part of this being walled off and used as a pen for sheep and cattle. 'Go into the far courtyard and dig in the near corner on the left,' they concluded. There we dug, and seven feet below the surface the tragedy was revealed, with the discovery of the missing men.

Throughout the night the murderers had laboured long and strenuously to remove traces of the deed, splitting up the cart into firewood, storing it away beyond the reach of prying eyes, and disposing of baggage and effects. Dawn came with the work still unfinished, for the horse had yet to be dealt with, and so the following night it was taken out twenty miles into the desert and there turned loose. Thus might the crime have ended but for that chance meeting in the bazaar and the discoveries that were to come out in the fulness of time.

At the trial the prisoners were condemned to the extreme penalty, the execution being carried out on the scene of the crime. As is customary, they were taken out in a cart, and whilst walking to the point fixed, were shot in the back by the executioner. The bodies were then placed in the pit that had contained their victims, and at my request the inn, out-houses, and walls were levelled to the ground, and a notice posted on a board so that all might take warning and appreciate that justice had been done.

In addition to these dramatic murder cases I also had to deal with a less tragic aspect of life and work in the heart of Asia, afforded by the operations of opium smugglers and gun-runners, whose activities called for resolute action.

The opium traffic has always been prominent in

China, and efforts have been made by the Celestial Government to suppress an evil that has long retarded moral and material progress. Under the Manchu *régime*, which collapsed with the revolution of 1912, steps were taken for the suppression of the opium traffic, the anti-opium policy being in part responsible for the monarchical downfall, since it caused widespread discontent amongst a nation addicted to the drug. In 1907 an understanding was arrived at between India and China, restricting the import of Indian opium to ten per cent. for a period of three years, the Chinese to reduce production of the native article in the same proportion. In 1911, by agreement between Great Britain and China the export of Indian opium to China and the production of the drug in China itself were to cease by 1917. Cultivation and export of opium from India to China had for many years been a source of revenue to the Indian Government, the war between Great Britain and China in 1842 being mainly, though not entirely, attributable to this traffic. The agreement of 1911 further provided that Indian opium should not be taken into any Chinese province which could prove that the production of native opium had ceased. This was one of the steps taken by the Chinese to eradicate the evil, and the trade was well within control when the war broke out in Europe and stultified the action from which so much had been anticipated. The revolution in China, with its resultant internecine warfare and the struggle amongst the various provincial governors for wealth and power, had initiated the undoing, for the production of opium afforded the rival leaders a ready income

and the wherewithal to meet pressing civil and military needs.

With a strong demand for a prohibited article the means to meet it are not difficult to create, especially in a land where dominion and authority are but shadowy and corruption is rife. My own position regarding the opium traffic was, in common with other matters of political import, ill-defined and equivocal, and in the absence of instructions I had to steer a middle course. Moreover, the situation was anomalous from the fact that practically all the foreign opium imported into China originated in India, although the bulk of it was consumed in the coast provinces. Nevertheless the Chinese consistently alleged that Turkistan was as much infected with the Indian product as elsewhere. In 1912 an endeavour was made to justify complete prohibition against Indian opium, on the ground that the penal code, which had recently been evolved, embodied provisions for the suppression and prohibition of the opium traffic, and they considered themselves entitled to act accordingly, but the ensuing negotiations failed to establish a case for this step. The Indian Government subsequently announced their decision to ban the export of opium to China, but the Chinese, though grateful for this action, were dubious as to its effect, inasmuch as no restriction was placed on the sale of the drug to markets whence it could be passed into China. This was the basic principle on which they pivoted all their arguments in Turkistan whenever a case of opium smuggling came up for disposal in which Indian subjects were involved.

To the credit of the Provincial Government, there is

no planting of the poppy in Chinese Turkistan, for the prepared article is mostly imported from Afghanistan and Russian Turkistan, in both of which countries its cultivation and production render it a lucrative trade. Incidentally I was able to furnish the Opium Commission of the League of Nations with certain data regarding the trade in Central Asia which had not previously been made public.

Despite official pronouncements from Peking and Urumchi, every one knew that opium smuggling flourished in Turkistan; with frequent official cognisance and the difficulties of supervision along the vast land frontier, with its innumerable ravines and passes leading to Russian and Afghan territory, there was but scant prospect of dealing successfully with it unless all the parties involved took sincere and drastic action.

From inquiries I had instituted, it appeared that the districts of Jizim, Chayar, Shahr-i-Buzurg, Herat, and Jellalabad in Afghanistan were the principal areas of production. The mode of importation from Afghanistan is through the Russian Pamirs to the frontier of Chinese Turkistan, whence entry is effected by unfrequented routes, for, as I have already indicated, the Chinese watch along the border is not consistent and can often be evaded.

There was also a route through the Wakhan province of Afghanistan over the Wakhijrui Pass to Tashkurghan in Chinese territory, but the smugglers were shy of utilising it owing to the presence of a small detachment of British levies at Payik, on the Chinese side of the pass in question. This force had been placed there, on the recommendation of

Sir George Macartney, as an observation post in view of the activities of Turko-German agents on the Pamirs, and to apprehend, in conjunction with the Celestial military authorities, any suspected persons. In 1921 the presence of this detachment was, in my opinion, no longer desirable, its *raison d'être* had disappeared, and the Chinese, since the Washington Conference of 1921, were constantly objecting to the presence of foreign troops, particularly at points in remote parts of their empire of which they possessed imperfect geographical knowledge. The Government of India, therefore, withdrew it, and the opium smugglers were then able to include this route within their itinerary. Quite apart from the above considerations weighing with me in the withdrawal, a curious incident arose that throws an interesting sidelight on matters military and civil as seen in China. The Payik post was an Anglo-Chinese one, and passing caravans and travellers could only be held up and searched by the British and Chinese Commandants acting in conjunction. When, therefore, the Chinese officer withdrew his detachment to Ujadbai, several miles down the valley, the presence of my detachment was rendered illusory, and so their return to India was decided upon, for to have moved it to Ujadbai would have strengthened the Chinese conviction that we have designs on their territory and sovereign rights. The real object in this move of the Chinese Commandant was quite apparent to me, since the income derived from the passing of the opium smugglers was far in excess of what he could make in a less fortunate post.

The profits accruing from the trade are such that they represent a handsome return to those engaged in it, but in the well-advanced provinces of China proper it has been suppressed despite its recrudescence elsewhere. Many public-spirited governors have forbidden the cultivation and are successfully grappling with an evil that saps the life and energy of those addicted to it.

Opium is openly sold in the provincial capital at Urumchi, whilst at Kashgar I pointed out fourteen shops to the local authorities, three of which were successfully raided, in one of the latter a Chinaman being caught red-handed stringing and preparing the drug for sale.

The derivation of income gives rise to many interesting manœuvres on the part of states and organisations whose financial straits are acute, and herein the Bolsheviki showed originality as well as their customary unscrupulousness. From the moment that they assumed power the productive capacity of the land diminished in an alarming manner, and throughout Russian Turkistan erstwhile prosperity gave place to penury and famine. Revenue sagged in proportion, so they cast about for means to provide the wherewithal, and on learning that opium could be smuggled with impunity into Chinese Turkistan in exchange for good silver, they withdrew the objections previously advanced, and cancelled the regulation, in so far as opium was concerned, under which all articles were annexed for local consumption only.

The province of Semirechia in Russian Turkistan, with Tokmak and the area around the Kara Lake, is the principal opium-growing centre, its importation into Chinese Turkistan being effected by way of

Kulja, the Ili Valley, and points adjacent thereto, the profit per pony load being higher than that on the Afghan article, as the distance to be traversed is less. There is a constant stream of Tungans (Chinese Mohammedans) and others passing through from Russian to Chinese Turkistan in the north, and in 1922 approximately three thousand people left Urumchi and the Kulja districts for Semirechia to engage in the planting and preparation of opium, in addition to those from the districts farther north in Turkistan.

In 1919 there was certainly a diminution, due to pressure brought to bear from Kashgar and Peking. The Chinese central and provincial authorities display activity in the issue of periodical proclamations for its suppression, but there is no organised and whole-hearted attempt to cope with it in the west.

In Kashgaria and Southern Turkistan I was able to exert effective action, and on many occasions had the satisfaction of countering the wiles and stratagems of the smugglers to run their cargoes through to the Kashgarian markets. The opium seized was usually burnt either at the Consulate or in front of the Yamen, in the presence of the District Magistrate and a representative from the British Consulate. Many such public burnings took place, on one occasion nineteen thousand rupees, equivalent to about £1300, worth of the drug being so dealt with at my Consulate in a single morning. All sorts of subterfuges were adopted to ensure the onward passage of the contraband from the frontier, for there the real danger commenced: often it was cleverly concealed in sacks of barley brought down from the foot-hills for sale in the grain markets; innocent-looking bundles of

carpets, rolled neatly and slung across baggage ponies, would have the drug concealed within their depths; whilst sedate old greybeards whom one associated only with the mosque and the prayer carpet would journey with it tucked away beneath the floor-boards of their cart. Beautiful maidens would be engaged by the smugglers to recline in the mapas, or travelling carts peculiar to Chinese roads, and impart to them an atmosphere of innocence and virtue which was enhanced by the quality and length of the veils they wore to hide their charms from the gaze of the vulgar; moreover, in consonance with the tenets of Moslem etiquette, none would dare violate the sanctity of the veil. Yet such subterfuges oft-times failed to hoodwink the British Consulate, for the camouflage was too apparent to be real.

My information was occasionally derived from those dissatisfied with the division of the spoils; this was ever a fruitful source of trouble, and the resultant squabble invariably led to one of the party turning King's evidence. There were regular receivers of opium, as there are receivers of stolen goods in Europe and elsewhere, the majority of whom I had marked down, but the venue constantly changed in order to throw us off the scent, and it was impracticable to raid any of the caravanserais within the city walls after dark, the most likely time for a haul, since the gates were closed at nightfall, and all who requested admittance after that hour must explain their motives and destination to the satisfaction of the gatekeepers, who were usually in league with the smugglers.

I had many humorous instances of strife amongst

the opium fraternity, one such originating from the attempt of a gang of thieves to annex the mal (merchandise), as it was referred to locally. A valuable quantity had been safely landed in Kashgar and deposited in a caravanserai, where it was secreted beneath the stable floor. This caravanserai adjoined the Swedish Mission, the gateway of which the thieves scaled, and, by cutting a hole in the wall, gained admittance to the stable. They were evidently in touch with the smugglers' movements, for at the time the stable, though locked, was unguarded, and the entire consignment was successfully removed. Later in the night, when the contraband gang crept in by various approaches, like jackals moving down on a kill in the jungle, they found themselves forestalled; the prospect of wealth and affluence vanished into thin air, rage and disappointment took the place of pleasurable anticipation, and with that mutual suspicion characterising the evildoer they fell to bitter recrimination and so to desperate warfare, the while the thieves were doubtless discussing the disposition of their bag.

A case that was singularly lacking in the dictum of honour amongst thieves occurred at Yangi Hissar, where an Indian subject, a Hindu money-lender who conducted the business of lending cash to the impecunious at the usual extortionate rate, sold some opium to a Chinese, who departed with it to his home at Faizabad four marches away. There to his chagrin he found the wily Hindu had palmed off a spurious article on him, so he returned to Yangi Hissar to exact retribution with a knife. The Hindu was similarly armed, and both received rather serious wounds.

I tried the case in collaboration with the Governor of Yangi Hissar, who was anxious to settle the matter privately, for a clerk in his office was involved in the affair, and unpleasant disclosures would necessarily have to be made. All three were suitably punished, and the Hindu was deported as an undesirable character.

With the opening of the Afghan War in 1919, and the activity of the border tribes along the north-west frontier of India, the traffic in arms became an attractive proposition; and once beyond the Consular jurisdiction of Kashgar and across the Russo-Chinese frontier, the problem of piloting the consignments through to their destination presented no serious difficulty. As far as Celestial interest and apathy permitted, I had the frontier closely watched, but in a region where the line of demarcation follows the crest of lofty mountains, broken by small valleys and ravines, the task of heading off the parties who essayed to run the blockade was by no means an easy one.

The men engaged in the trade were mostly from the Swat Valley and Bajaur, territory to the north of Peshawar incorporated within the British Empire in 1897. The *modus operandi* was for these men to get in touch with certain Chinese in charge of the arsenals of the larger towns and cities. Chinese garrisons possess a fictitious value; the true and paper strengths, although ostensibly balancing each other, are in reality so indefinite as to be valueless for the purpose of ascertaining the actual total. A garrison is, however, capable of almost unlimited expansion when called upon to undergo inspection, and to meet such an eventuality, stocks of arms and ammuni-

tion, together with supplies of the simple uniform worn in the Celestial army, are kept in readiness. Turkistan is remote, and only at rare intervals is it subjected to overhaul by the central authority.

The gun-runner, having ascertained the approximate total in the arsenal, then proceeds to bargain for the weapons required, the purchase price being in proportion to the number of persons whose reticence in the transaction it will be essential to secure. This settled, the arms have to be removed from the arsenal—an expensive item, for guards, gatekeepers, and sundry varlets may divine what is being taken out, and blackmail must then be satisfied or all is lost. The arms are taken to a caravanserai, where the owner is in league with the gun-runner; there were two or three of these places in the Kashgar New City, seven miles from my Consulate, which I had shadowed, and from them the arms were despatched to Yangi Hissar, and sometimes to Yarkand, as various merchandise. When suspicion had been allayed they were passed on through the hills to the Sino-Afghan frontier, whence progress was subject only to a *douceur* to the Hakim of Wakhan for a safe and open passage.

To avoid contact with British law they invariably posed as Afghan subjects, so that, from the equivocal position in which I was placed with regard to these people, drastic action was denied me. One of the worst offenders in this gun-running business was, however, a Bajauri, who, to his credit, scorned to be other than a British subject. He was in touch with the best sources in the arms traffic, and was on intimate terms with the storekeepers and arsenal chiefs. This man had various disguises for smuggling

arms and ammunition to Afghanistan. Bundles of lucerne, ostensibly as fodder for his horses, would pass through the bazaars in broad daylight, carried on pony and donkey back: inoffensive enough at first sight, but closer inspection revealing a more warlike aspect. The lucerne was taken to his serai, whence later would issue loads of chintz and cloth goods from Manchester brought from India by the trade route of the Himalayas and the Karakoram, these going to Sarikol on the Pamirs for sale amongst the Sarikolis and Kirghiz. Those rolls of chintz and cloth from the Lancashire mills concealed rifles and cartridges extracted from a Chinese armoury after prolonged negotiation and haggling, and represented a large turnover to our wily friend should he succeed in running the consignment through to Afghan territory.

Several of the pseudo-caravans of merchandise were intercepted, the arms confiscated, and punishment meted out to the smugglers, but this was often slight and perfunctory, owing to officials and subordinates being themselves involved in the deal, and offenders could not be adequately dealt with, for an inquiry would implicate the former to such an extent as to cause a scandal even in Turkistan.

I finally laid the leading gun-runner by the heels in rather a singular way. Information came to me that he had purchased a quantity of numdahs and cheap carpets from Khotan, intending to offer them for sale in Afghanistan and the Pamirs. The cost of these floorcloths, and the expense entailed in forwarding them to their destination, would be out of all proportion to the potential return; in fact, the

venture could only result in financial loss, and it was apparent that some more subtle scheme was in process of evolution. The carpets were shadowed from Khotan to Kashgar New City; this in itself was suspicious, for a more direct route—indeed, the only one from Khotan—lay through Yarkand or the country to the south. Some days later the caravan was ready to set out for Sarikol, when I had the serai placed under close observation and one of the bundles brought for my inspection, feeling sure that the owner would be glad to dispose of some of them at a lucrative figure; yet he seemed strangely reluctant to part with the load, and only did so under the sternest compulsion. I have seldom seen a man so visibly nonplussed. ‘It appears somewhat heavy for such small and flimsy carpets,’ quoth I to the pale and uneasy trader; ‘peradventure they are of silk, or of heavier and finer material than I had imagined.’ And then, on removing the thongs that bound them, a choice selection of magazine rifles was opened to us, and guilt was fastened swift and sure upon the Bajauri. Withal, his courage and sang-froid never forsook him, and despite the enormity of his crime, I admired the man for his cheery, sporting mien under trying circumstances. He admitted his guilt, seemed to inwardly deplore the run of bad luck, but accepted the situation in the spirit that appeals so strongly to the British people. In the ensuing inquiry much sordid and unpleasant detail came to light, revealing the corruption in vogue amongst all classes of the administration. The man declared that the arms were intended only for sale to the insurgents of Ferghana, who were in arms against the Bolsheviks,

a statement I was inclined to believe. As to punishment, the Chinese dealt with their own offenders, whilst I deported the Bajauri, and he was debarred from again entering Chinese territory, being also under supervision by the Indian authorities on return to his home.

Despite the trouble and annoyance caused by these firebrands, one cannot but admire their inherent qualities of dignity and pride ; they have set ideas as to right and wrong, and bearing that in mind, we have to establish a standard applicable to their race and beliefs, but at variance with that in Europe. With us rules are clearly defined : to kill is a crime meeting with the extreme penalty ; with them, on the contrary, it is not necessarily an offence, and to rob successfully is a distinction. In handling these men the personal equation looms largely in the problem, coupled with a knowledge and appreciation of their language, manners, and customs, respect for which will go farther than anything to win their regard. As with all Orientals, leniency is interpreted as a sign of weakness, and whether Afghan or Turkoman, Chinese or Mongol, the procedure is identical, and the secret in dealing with them lies in a firm grasp of the working of the Oriental mind with its strange mentality. Savage and intractable they may seem, yet withal amenable to treatment, and ready to pursue the path of righteousness if manœuvred by a just but resolute hand, backed by the conviction that their complaints will receive a sympathetic hearing free from bias and partiality.

In November 1921 Captain Aga Samad Shah, an officer of the Indian Army, and a cousin of the Aga

Khan, arrived in Kashgar on a special mission as the result of my representations to the Government of India concerning certain matters in Russian and Chinese territory. Samad Shah stayed a month with me at the Consulate, and was a great favourite with the Chinese. He spoke English to perfection, had a wide knowledge of literature and of the world in general, and his cordial co-operation in dealing with the sinister influence of Bolshevism was of much value to me.

As the outcome of Turko-German machinations, coupled with the awakening spirit of nationalism that sprang up in Turkey, the spectre of Pan-Islamism appeared and caused unnecessary anxiety in India. There were visions of deadly strife between the Cross and the Crescent, and I devoted much time, energy, and patience to investigating the possibilities of this movement, which, after long and careful study on the spot, has never impressed me as a force as yet to be seriously reckoned with.

In 1921 I was further directed to inquire into and report with all urgency on a reputed *rapprochement* of Moslems and Buddhists with a view to action against India. The King of the Hedjaz was declared to have a representative at Urga, a centre of Lamaism and residence of the Hutuktu of Mongolia, Living Buddha, who was to co-ordinate the task of cementing the alliance, the most formidable that had yet been produced upon the world's stage, a work that was to result in the indissoluble union of the rival religions of Buddhism and Islam. Further, a chain of stations had already been established across Asia from Karakoram, the capital of the Mongol empire in the heyday

of its power and prosperity, to Samarkand in Russian Turkistan, the last resting-place of Timur, the most renowned of the Mongol leaders, who came near to dominating the greater part of Europe and Asia. No less a person than General Kuropatkin, former Governor-General of Russian Central Asia and Commander-in-Chief of the army in Manchuria during the war with Japan, was connected with the movement—perhaps in spirit, for it could not have been in the flesh, since he had died in Moscow several months before. Taking the story as imparted to me from London and India, it might have been viewed with alarm and dismay, but a slight analysis softened the picture into less ominous tints. Quite apart from the fact that a combination between these rival faiths was unthinkable, even were it within the field of practical politics, the time required for such a mental metamorphosis and to attain a footing of equality would exceed a generation, for, as with the individual, who has to pursue certain lines and pass through various stages before he attains the object he has in view, so with a nation, and to a greater degree with a combination having so ambitious a programme as the alliance in question. Both sides would have to enter a world of new ideas, to cast off inherent beliefs and convictions, and to revolutionise their mode of life and thought and being, which has taken centuries to evolve.

Moreover, Mohammedans and Buddhists regard one another with ill-disguised hostility, an attitude that has always characterised the relation between these two great opposing religions. It is true, a certain amount of satisfaction was evinced at the Japanese

victory over the Russians in 1905, but that was due to the antipathy created by the Russians, who had ridden rough-shod over Chinese and Mohammedan alike in their expansion in Central Asia and the Far East. Encouraged by this display of goodwill, the Japanese endeavoured, both secretly and officially, to gain touch with Constantinople in the hope of stimulating reciprocal action against Russia, but the overtures failed to materialise. Since then efforts have been made by sundry emissaries from the Yildiz, who, equipped with funds and gifted with a ready tongue and facile pen, have sounded Mohammedans in Central Asia and the Far East, and essayed to arouse them to win over converts from the Buddhist ranks.

By some it was thought that the *rapprochement* between China and the Moslem races in her empire presaged a religious combination. Certain it is that the Flowery Kingdom has ever been regarded by Asiatic races as one of great political, commercial, and artistic import, and Moslem priests and traders who formerly visited China carried back reports of its wonders despite its idolatrous character. This sympathy is, however, due to the religious tolerance shown by the Chinese when their sovereign rights are not affected, or it does not clash with the fundamental principles of their policy.

In pursuance of my instructions on this question I made exhaustive inquiries, the result of which was to confirm the view, previously expressed, as to the fallacy of the reputed combination, and that India had nothing to fear from that direction.

Whilst on one of my numerous tours in the Yangi

Hissar and Yarkand districts, I decided to visit the shrine of Ordam Padshah, the scene of the final struggle between the rival religions of Mohammed and Buddha for supremacy in Central Asia. This celebrated place of pilgrimage, regarded by Mohammedans as a second Mecca, lies thirty-four miles east of Yangi Hissar, and the visit to it was one of remarkable interest, for only four white men had preceded me in the journey since the days when it acquired the pious fame with which it has been invested for nearly a thousand years. In fact, it was just prior to the landing of William the Conqueror on our shores that the armies of the contending faiths met in mortal combat that ended in the overthrow of Buddhism there.

The approach to Ordam Padshah is through a sterile waste of sand-dunes and extensive stretches of saline soil, so highly impregnated with salt that it gives the ground the appearance of being covered with hoar frost, and is so soft and yielding that horses and cattle cannot traverse it when off the beaten track.

I was accompanied by Mr. Tao, the genial secretary of the Foreign Affairs Bureau at Kashgar, and the chief Beg of the district, as well as a following detailed by the Chinese authorities, compatible with their idea of dignity and consideration which they displayed in all the arrangements for my tours. I had been to Yangi Hissar to dispose of a couple of hundred cases, dealing with them in the course of seven or eight days, usually dining quietly in the evening with the Governor of the city, either at his Yamen or at my headquarters in the Swedish Mission, placed at

my disposal by the missionaries, a pleasant relaxation from the sordid scenes and histories revealed during the day.

For the first few miles the road traverses the Yangi Hissar oasis by groves of poplar trees and scattered farmsteads to a small village where the cultivated area merges with the desert. Here I was received by the local Beg, who had prepared a dasturkhan in the large verandah of his house—fruit, nuts, boiled and roast mutton, chicken, meat dumplings, doughnuts, cakes of all descriptions, and a pilau, the quality and method of preparation of which have been described elsewhere.

On leaving the oasis, the country to the east is a sea of sand in a series of lines averaging fifteen to thirty feet in height, these dunes covering the land as far as the eye can reach. I have already dwelt on the marvel of these sands, and it is here that one has striking evidence of their advance. Settlements have been engulfed by a gradual process of encroachment. At first the walls of the houses have kept them off; then, gradually overcome, the courtyards have been invaded, until with the successive storms, which rage with great violence in this area, the sands have risen over the roofs and completed the work of destruction.

At nightfall we reached a clearing in the wilderness of sand, a tiny oasis of reeds and tamarisk, where a few mud-built huts, with a guest-house on more pretentious lines, relieved the general monotony. Here resides one of the priestly custodians, whose task it is to supervise the stream of pilgrims, provide grain and sustenance for man and beast, and ensure

observance of law and order. The guest-house had been overhauled and the settlement had undergone a cleansing in anticipation of my visit, and a cordial welcome was extended. In the evening I had a long conversation with the custodian and his assistants, and was much interested in some hunting eagles they possessed, magnificent birds of the golden eagle type.

Falconry, as I have already stated, is a favourite form of sport in Turkistan, and one to which I devoted much of my spare time, and it may not be out of place to give an account here of a day with hunting eagles, and the methods of training falcons generally in Turkistan. The eagles are trained to bring down wild boar, gazelle, foxes, and hares, and their education to that end is effected on different lines to that obtaining with falcons.

The hawks are taken when quite young, and by a system of training at night and prolonged deprivation of sleep are rendered docile and amenable to treatment. Being kept in darkness, stroked at first with a feather, and handled only by lamplight, further reduces their power of resistance, the process extending over two to four weeks according to the hawk's individual temperament. Great care is taken to avoid any distraction or shock to the nerves that may cause undue fright; the hood is removed from the eyes only by night; and when the hawk feeds well and contentedly from the hand, it is taken out and trained to a lure, having by this time become accustomed to the human voice, to artificial feeding, and returning to the wrist after seizing artificial bait.

Although a passive form of sport, a day with the hunting eagle has its thrilling side when in pursuit of gazelle or pig. The party proceeds on horseback to the reed and tamarisk jungles, wherein the game find cover that is supplemented by the maze of hillocks and sand-dunes, early morning or late afternoon being the best times, as they lie up during the heat of the day.

As soon as the quarry is sighted we dismount and continue the chase on foot, taking advantage of cover and following the contour of the ground, creeping silently through the heavy growth of reed and kamish, and anon passing round the flank of a giant dune that may be a hundred or more feet in width and thirty feet high at the crest line. When within two hundred yards we seek the shelter of such a sand-hill, peering cautiously above the sky-line, and raising the eagle just sufficiently to give it a view of the quarry. It is no light weight, this splendid specimen of the genus aquila, as it perches on the right forearm, glancing intently with its piercing eyes, keenness personified. The moment has arrived, the eagle sways slightly backwards and forwards, straining, as it were, at the leash, and so with a forward movement of the arm we release the bird and it sets out on its flight, keeping close to the ground and moving without apparent effort, but with a speed that justifies its claim to being one of the fastest fliers in the world. The gazelle has spotted the enemy, and is off like the wind, but the eagle gets into its stride, conforms to every movement of the prey, and gradually lessens the distance between hunter and hunted. Then, with a final spurt, it is above the quarry, and drops

lightly on its back, to dig razor-like talons into the neck, at the same time flapping its wings to hamper and blind the gazelle and so bring it to the ground, the collapse usually eventuating within a hundred yards from the eagle's descent. The latter by an offer of raw meat, which is in readiness, can then be drawn from the game and handled with the customary ease. Should the gazelle have had too long a start and so evade its pursuer, or, in an extreme case, succeed in shaking it off, the eagle flies slowly away to a hillock or the top of a sand-dune and there alights, refusing to be flown again, as if conscious of a loss of dignity in the quarry thus eluding it.

In the jungles and swamps along the Tarim River, between Aksu and Maralbashi, eagles are occasionally used for the pursuit of wild boar, but with such formidable game their efforts are supplemented by beaters armed with club and musket, who, when the eagle trips up the boar or brings it to a partial standstill, despatch it with their primitive weapons.

The following morning I set out on the final stage that was to take me to a landmark in Buddhist and Mohammedan history, passing over innumerable sand-dunes, ever up and down, the height often exceeding thirty feet, the steepest side facing westwards, and thus proving the prevalence of easterly winds, which during the spring months are frequently of several days' duration.

It was early in the afternoon when we came in sight of Ordam Padshah, or 'My King's Palace,' of which little now remains, since the site has been buried for nigh on a thousand years beneath the

shifting sands. The struggle for mastery that has immortalised Ordam Padshah was between Ali Arslan Khan, the Moslem champion, and Bokta Rashid, the leader of the Buddhist faith, who thought to establish it throughout all Asia. But Ali Arslan did not die in vain, for victory was won and thenceforth Islam became the ruling religion in Central Asia.

On arrival at the shrine I was received by the chief Sheikh and his *entourage*, and accommodated in the guest-house with its windows of quaint lattice-work and southern aspect across the waste of sands. A repast of roast and boiled mutton, roast chicken, salads, pilau, and an assortment of fruit and cakes had been prepared with that hospitality characteristic of Turkistan, and I was accorded every attention by the custodians, whose attitude I mentally contrasted with what would be adopted on a similar pilgrimage to Mecca, where it would be highly dangerous for any non-Moslem to appear.

The permanent staff consists of the chief Sheikh, two assistants, and about fifteen subordinates, all of whom are maintained from the voluntary contributions of pilgrims.

There are only about fourteen houses at Ordam Padshah for the accommodation of these permanent residents, and they form the one street of the place, whilst on every side a wilderness of sand threatens the existence of the settlement. With the exception of the mosque, a small mud-built structure with a balcony supported on pillars facing east, the principal religious building is that for the reception of offerings brought by the pilgrims, these comprising horses, cattle and sheep, embroidered cloths, carpets, brocades, fruits,

precious stones, jade, and articles of foreign as well as indigenous manufacture.

There are five bowls set apart for these votive offerings ; the largest is of bronze and measures nearly six feet across at the top and five feet in depth, and is reputed to have been cast in the days of Ali Arslan himself. The second is of copper, measuring about four feet in diameter. This was presented to the shrine by the Amir Yakub Beg, who made three pilgrimages to Ordam Padshah, and caused endowments to be made in its favour. All gifts of an inanimate nature are placed in these vessels, the overflow being accommodated in the three smaller ones.

During the pilgrim season all five are used for cooking purposes on feast days, the universal pilau, mutton with rice and various vegetables and spices, being prepared therein for the host of devotees, and great is the competition to secure a morsel from the sacred bowls.

A little to the north-west of the settlement is the spot where the Mohammedan leader and his champions fell. The place is crowned by the most curious religious monument extant, for it is a sheaf of sticks and poles, more than one hundred feet in circumference at the base, and towering to a height of upwards of fifty feet. Each pilgrim contributes a stick to the sacred pile, many of them with little pennons attached, the wealthier often depositing poles and beams of comparatively large size which have been brought from afar. Standing by that strange and lofty sheaf, I endeavoured to realise the magnitude of the contest, when the forces of Buddhism encountered those of Islam in the final scene of a struggle

that had lasted for thirty years. I pictured the advance of the Buddhist host under the leadership of Bokta Rashid as they set out from Khotan, at that time the centre of Buddhism in Central Asia, and the arrival in the neighbourhood of Ordam Padshah, where they took post to engage the army of the Islamic champion. The fight was a desperate one, for the stake at issue was religious mastery, an incentive that inspired the rival armies with a fanaticism seldom equalled in all the many holy wars that have figured in history.

When viewed from the adjacent sand-hills, Ordam Padshah presents a desolate aspect, a dreary prospect of desert and dunes, giving the impression of continuous lines of waves for ever passing onwards and gradually engulfing all that lies in their path. Yet the shrine of the Moslem martyr has hitherto evaded destruction by the shifting sands, and as I contemplated this Mecca in the heart of Asia the words of the Sheikh came back to me: 'The sand has not touched the resting-place of the holy martyr; it has passed on its course, giving peace to the sacred spot, and if God wills, it shall do so to all eternity.'

CHAPTER XII

Chinese Turkistan and its mineral resources—Primitive methods of development—Oil and petrol—The green jade of Khotan—A future for cotton—The silk industry of Khotan—The wool of Turfan and its demand for Kashmir shawls—Foreign capital and its introduction—Japanese and American enterprise—Taxation in Turkistan—The political situation in Central Asia—Relative positions of Russia and China—The regeneration of Russia—A religious revival—Chinese antipathy to Bolshevism—The future of China—Balance of power in Central Asia and the Far East.

CHINESE TURKISTAN contains a great variety of minerals, only a few of which have been even partially developed, and the store of treasure is of much potential wealth. The presence of these resources was the incentive that induced the Chinese to retain their hold upon this distant but wealthy frontier province. Yet they have not essayed to develop the natural riches nor to exploit those minerals which are essential to modern metallurgical and chemical industries, and for which a market would be available were they to be worked on a scientific basis. The opening out of the various deposits would not only furnish products for extensive export, but could be widely utilised in the country itself.

The deterrent to mineral development is traceable to beliefs and prejudices born of the cult of ancestor worship: a doctrine of wind and water deified in the dragon-winged monster Feng Sui, the guardian of hidden treasures, who annihilates all offending him. Some years ago it was proposed to develop

the rich coalfields in the province of Shensi, but the priesthood deprecated such action, for, they said, the area in question was the home of the mighty dragon, who, if his slumbers were disturbed, would assuredly issue forth and spread fire, death, and pestilence through the land. So the dragon slept on and the coalfields remained untapped.

Before reviewing the question of exploitation, investment of foreign capital, and acquisition of concessions, I propose briefly to detail the various resources, both mineral and agricultural, for they offer a new and interesting field to European and American enterprise, and it will be seen that much latent wealth awaits scientific development.

Such methods of exploitation as are in vogue amongst the people of Turkistan are on a par with the primitive ideas of development, although from the crude efforts exerted an estimate can be formed of the potential output of minerals and products.

Gold is found in the Altai in the north, one of the principal mountain ranges of Asia, stretching along the northern side of the Gobi Desert and running far into Siberia. Gold is also found in Kashgaria at Khotan, Sorghal, Keria, and Cherchen, but at present the production is a monopoly of the district official, who only allows the natives to work the mines on a percentage basis. Platinum is reputed to exist in the Altai, which are easy of access in normal times by the railway to Bisk and Barnaul, and a post road, constructed by the Russians in pre-war days, takes one within that area.

Silver is much in evidence at Khotan and Kosharab, and in the early days of the Chinese occupation the

silver mines at the latter place gave employment to large numbers of emigrants and colonists from China proper.

In the vicinity of Turfan, Kuchar, and Aksu there are extensive deposits of copper, which also provided occupation and support to many thousands of families who were attracted to Turkistan.

With regard to iron, the mines at Kizil near Yarkand had a reputation, and from them came material for the manufacture of domestic utensils in use throughout the country. Extensive iron-beds are also indicated at Yangi Hissar, and in the Ili Valley and Kulja in the north.

The richest coal-beds in the province are those of the Ili Valley and near Urumchi, and from them the inhabitants obtain their fuel. The mining methods are crude and cumbersome, and adequate machinery is required to develop these beds of anthracite, whilst similar mines await development near Aksu, Kuchar, and Yangi Hissar, the latter place providing the coal used in my Consulate.

Petrol is a product that will exercise decisive influence in the future with the steady increase of motor transport and mechanical movement in the air, on land, and under the water. In this respect Chinese Turkistan has oil fields, as yet unsurveyed, in the foot-hills of the Tian Shan Mountains north of Kuchar, as well as in the vicinity of Yarkand, and at Kanjugan, forty miles west of Kashgar. The latter give the best results, the oil and petrol being of proved quality. In 1918, with the assistance of a Swedish engineer, they were partially exploited by the late Commander-in-Chief, the results, even with the primitive means

at his disposal, attaining a standard almost equal to the best oil and petrol of Europe or America. These wells cover a large area, and are situated ten days' march from the terminus of the Russian Central Asian railway at Andijan.

Of ozokerit, or mineral wax, there are large deposits near Kuchar, and in 1921 I sent samples and a detailed report thereon to the Geological Survey of India. From my own observations I estimate the beds to cover an area of forty-five square miles, but not having been thoroughly prospected, they may exceed that total.

Alum and sal-ammoniac are in evidence at Kuchar and in the region north of Aksu—the Khan Khura range of hills—and, together with the zinc and sulphur, they furnished material for the successful working of industrial pursuits and supplied the requirements of iron merchants, tanners, and other indigenous industries. It was in sal-ammoniac that Turkistan paid tribute to Peking in the eighteenth century.

Other resources not demanding detailed mention are marble, gypsum, emery, lead, and salt; the latter is a valuable industry of the province of Szechuan in South-western China, and from the saline deposits of Chinese Turkistan there seems no apparent reason why the salt industry should not be similarly developed.

One of the most attractive resources of Chinese Turkistan from an artistic standpoint is jade, of which there are quantities near Khotan. In medieval days the green jade of Khotan was renowned for its quality, and jade ornaments therefrom were in use through-

out eastern Europe. The mines were not worked to any extent in recent years, until the advent of the late Commander-in-Chief, who compelled the inhabitants to exploit them for his benefit. When the tyrant was finally overthrown, as already narrated, considerable quantities of the handsome green stone were found at his headquarters. The mines are situated in difficult ground of the Karaghan Hills near Khotan, but beyond that, and the severe cold of the winter months, no serious physical obstacles are presented.

In addition to the production of charas, known as bhang in India, a preparation of hemp smoked for its narcotic and intoxicating qualities, tobacco of poor quality, leather, copper ware, pottery, and paper are produced.

The cotton and cotton-wool industry offer a favourable field for commercial enterprise. The annual export of cotton to India is negligible, some twenty tons, but the production could be practically unlimited with the area open to cultivation and the facilities for extension of the irrigation system. In this connection it is well to note that Russian Turkistan in pre-war days was a cotton-growing centre of the first magnitude, the Russian Government having encouraged cultivation in order to supply one of the greatest demands in Russia, and to supplant the American article. It was the chief element in the economic policy there, but excess production led to food shortage, so that grain and other commodities had to be imported from Russia proper. The extension of the railway eliminated this drawback, and with the establishment of stable government cotton

cultivation must be the leading industry of Central Asia. The cotton areas extend throughout Ferghana, and in pre-war days Turkistan stood second only to America, the annual crop being greater than that grown in India or Egypt. Vast stretches can be reclaimed after irrigation, much capital having been expended before the war in cotton works and irrigation plans. A further asset is the cotton-seed oil, which can be utilised, *inter alia*, as camel food, for it forms practically the main sustenance of those animals, possessing more nourishment for its bulk than any other foodstuff.

Prominence must be given to the silk industry of Khotan, which is capable of expansion. Prior to the revolution in Russia, with the resultant cessation of trade between Chinese and Russian territory, the annual production of cocoons in Khotan exceeded twelve hundred tons. Now the production has fallen to some five hundred tons wet (*cocon frais*), giving an approximate yield of nearly two hundred tons of dried cocoons (*cocon sec*), this amount producing forty tons of spun silk. Of this, two-thirds are exported to India, the remainder being disposed of locally. The silk is of three kinds, each coarse and irregular, and is not spun all through, *i.e.* not spun with a given number of threads. The mode of spinning and the implements in use are primitive, and the finished article consequently compares unfavourably with Kashmir silk, but a high-grade quality could easily be secured if machinery were installed. The silk leaves the basins faultless and in regular threads, but the cost of production is at present high, owing to

the long and extra work required with inadequate implements.

Chinese Turkistan, from Turfan and Urumchi to the grasslands of the Gobi, has a wool surplus of quality; indeed, that from Turfan is reputed the finest, and from it the renowned Kashmir shawls were made. The opening up of the wool trade presents certain difficulties. A centre would have to be established at Urumchi or Gucheng, whence the wool could be taken by camels to Kuai Hua Cheng, and across the Gobi Desert to rail-head at Paotienfu on the main Peking line.

Agriculture is, of course, the most important and widely spread industry, and that on which the inhabitants depend for their existence, as there are no imports of foodstuffs from neighbouring states.

I have not dealt with the import and export trade of Chinese Turkistan with India and adjacent countries, since it is a subject fully treated in official reports on trade and commerce. It is also unnecessary to reiterate the long list of articles, contained in those reports, that will be in demand in Central Asia when conditions assume a normal aspect, especially in Russian Turkistan, where the population is more advanced and has attained a higher standard of civilisation and culture.

The obstacle to mineral and economic development has been the disinclination of the Chinese to admit foreign capital and exploratory enterprise, arising from the deep-rooted conviction that this entails alien influence and domination, with which most concessions have been accompanied in the past. Whilst admitting that the introduction of foreign

capital is highly desirable, they anticipate that with it will arise diplomatic difficulties and dangers. It is unlikely that development could take place other than under European supervision and control, as investors would be lacking for a purely Chinese syndicate, despite the fact that under the agreement concluded between Great Britain and China in 1902, British subjects investing in, and a party to, Chinese ventures shall be under the same obligations as the Chinese participants, and entitled to the same privileges. There are, of course, large sums of British capital invested in sugar and rubber companies in the Straits Settlements and Malaya owned and controlled by Chinese, but conditions there are widely different from those obtaining in an isolated province such as Turkistan.

The question of extra-territoriality, under which British subjects are amenable to British law only, and cannot be dealt with by a Chinese court, enters largely into the problem, and, as I have shown in a previous chapter, we are not at present justified in relinquishing that right. The restrictions placed on the activities of foreigners is perhaps the corollary to the rights they enjoy from extra-territoriality. These limitations are incompatible with the development of the country, but, generally speaking, the Chinese are hostile only to those schemes that appear to be prompted by ulterior motives ; anything in the nature of a sound and legitimate business proposition receives approval. An exploratory syndicate would have to be controlled from the West, for Celestial business methods are in a class by themselves, and although admirable in their way, and quite above reproach,

are not easy of mastery by the Europeans. For example, industries in China are either on a basis of single proprietary rights or a system of partnership, and only in rare instances is there anything in the way of a joint stock company. This is due to the fact that China is in the initial stage of industrial life, the development of modern enterprises still lying before her.

With regard to the trade outlook in Turkistan and Central Asia generally, the activity displayed by Japan and America is noteworthy. Japan has always evinced great interest in China, and has now turned her attention to Chinese Turkistan, by the despatch of agents to inquire into and report on commercial as well as political possibilities.

The future of Japan is largely dependent on her retention of the Chinese market as at present existing, and its expansion in her favour. Japan is unsuited for agriculture, and with an ever-increasing population she must seek her future in industrial development. To that end she is now engaged in transition from an agricultural to an industrial state.

In China proper steps to develop Japanese trade had already been taken by the formation of banking institutions to finance trade and so prove a medium for Japanese commerce. In Mongolia the Japanese are also active with a view to the acquisition of Russian rights there, and the abrogation of certain privileges accruing to the Russians under the Protocol of September 1912, concluded between Russia and Mongolia, and those emanating from the Russo-Chinese Treaty of 1913. Before Japanese trade can gain a monopoly in Chinese Turkistan, the

quality of goods supplied must undergo improvement. The articles are passable at the outset, but once the market is considered as captured, there is a deterioration in the standard, and as Turkistan and the western provinces develop, and competition increases, the demand will grow for goods of superior quality.

The United States are also showing commercial activity in Central Asia, and it was mainly with a view to potential trade that an American Consul was appointed to Tashkent in 1918, when it was anticipated that with a return to normal conditions a trade boom would result.

Closely connected with trade and commercial enterprise is the subject of taxation, which is now an acute one in Chinese Turkistan. Immunity therefrom was claimed by Russian subjects under the Russo-Chinese Treaty of 1881, whereby Russia secured privileges on the evacuation of Ili, dealt with in a previous chapter. Legal opinion contends that this immunity was framed to cover only such produce as was exported across the frontier. However, the Russians claimed complete freedom from taxation for their internal trade in Chinese Turkistan, the same also applying to British subjects in virtue of the most-favoured-nation clauses in the Anglo-Chinese treaties. This continued until 1917, when the Russian collapse afforded the Chinese the opportunity long sought to terminate privileges they regarded as unjustifiable, and to press for payment by British subjects of taxes on local trade to which Chinese subjects are liable.

Just prior to my departure from Kashgar, the

Chinese Government definitely cancelled the Russian privileges, an act that would by implication involve a similar withdrawal of those enjoyed by the Indo-Chinese trade. Personally I see no objection to this, more particularly in view of the China Customs Treaty recently concluded at Washington, which recognises the principle of uniformity in the rates of customs duties levied at all the land and maritime frontiers of China. Immunity from taxation has no legal foundation, but is based on the analogy of foreign rights in the treaty ports, although in correspondence with me the Chinese authorities have implied its existence.

The present system is so corrupt, and open to such abuse, that the levy of customs duties should be placed under the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, which has exercised remarkable efficiency at the treaty ports in China. This was organised and administered under European control, and has since been extended to all ports open to foreign trade in China.

So much for resources, trade, and commerce. We will now turn to a consideration of the relative positions of Russia and China, and the probable outlook for the future. In dealing with this question, it will be asked what are the possibilities of restoring peace and order in Russia, with resultant effect throughout the world, and how it is that an insignificant minority, composed mostly of men of alien and sinister origin, have dominated Russia for the past eight years.

The majority of the Russian people are ignorant, haunted with the memories and consequences of serfdom, wearied with war and the tyranny of the

Bolsheviks, and a race largely without political opinion or sign of national unity. For centuries they have been suppressed by successive rulers, and are therefore accustomed to terrorism, although the methods employed by the Czars through the police, the army, and the bureaucracy are surpassed in every detail by the Bolshevik *régime*. In pre-war days the different governments stayed the normal course of life in Russia, which provided material for propaganda and aroused the resentment of the people, which was reflected in the action of the navy and army.

Russia has given much to science, literature, music, and the drama, but there is little capacity for politics, although the Zemstvos, or local councils, formed in 1864, worked on an electoral basis and achieved satisfactory results. Under the Soviet matters have gone from bad to infinitely worse; there is an army of officials to control the country, money has been wasted, and there has been no renewal in a productive capacity.

With the local councils, the co-operative societies, and the creation of the Duma, the Russian people had scope for self-government, but these have been suppressed by the Soviet. In the new government of Russia the restoration of these institutions will exercise a decided influence in the future control of the country.

Touching the question of rule by a minority, this is the logical outcome of the law governing rule by a Junta, for history proves that revolutions and reigns of terror are the result of action on the part of comparatively small but determined fanatics. As a race,

the Russians are docile and obedient, and lack the energy and will power to extricate themselves from difficulties ; this drawback has been accentuated by eight years of tyranny, during which literally millions have been done to death, until the spirit of the people has been broken, and its resuscitation can only be achieved by the advent of a leader capable of putting into practice a sound and constitutional programme. At the present moment none is available, nor can Russia produce such a man from amongst the refugees abroad.

The Bolsheviks maintain power solely by force and terrorism, and, although posing as a democratic government, the people have no voice in the conduct of affairs. The Extraordinary Commission, now known as the State Political Department, is the propelling force in the system of government by which opposition is ruthlessly overcome. This terrorist body, with plenary powers, has swept away every vestige of liberty, freedom of thought and speech, and moral and material welfare. It is an axiom that every nation has the government it deserves, and the want of will power, energy, and determination on the part of the Russian people may have merited the present rule. The Soviet demagoguery has never hesitated where its life and interests were concerned ; it has been noteworthy for its strength and fanaticism, has brooked no opposition, and when its adversaries could not be won over by soft words or specious promises they were simply shot, and there the matter terminated.

How long the Bolshevik oligarchy will last is an open question, but apparently the end cannot be long

delayed, for the Soviet is nearing the limit of its resources; the predatory existence it has enjoyed from the stolen and confiscated wealth of church and state, house and cottage, is in jeopardy, whilst the basic principle of all sound government—finance—is lacking, and bankruptcy is imminent unless some confiding nation can be induced to make it an advance for a new lease of life, with little or no hope of repayment.

A return to normal conditions must come from Russia herself, and herein lies the difficulty, for by repression and terrorism the Bolsheviki retain power; the placing of the future form of government to the popular vote would mean that these human vultures must go by the board.

Moreover, from personal knowledge of the Russian race, language, and literature, the motive force must have its origin in a religious revival, for religion has always played a leading part, and its renewal will be the turning-point in the life of Russia. The Bolsheviki, recognising this concrete fact, have strained every nerve to kill it, broadcasting the statement that religion is the narcotic of the people. They have closed the churches, confiscated church property, and, incidentally, executed over twelve hundred clerics, this being the official Soviet figure. In their persecution of the Church, a policy that has roused the mute exasperation of the country, they argue that Christianity is incompatible with Communism, and as such ought to be exterminated as a dangerous counter-revolutionary factor. At the same time the Bolsheviki realise that they cannot entirely eradicate it, but may succeed in sowing discord in the Church, and so

obviate the rise of a formidable and united body of religious opinion. Everything is being done to kill religion among the rising generation in Russia; nevertheless, with the fall of the existing system, the Church will come into her own and assert herself as the impelling force towards regeneration and the creation of constitutional rule that shall again place Russia within the comity of great and progressive nations.

On the other hand, this studied persecution has been a blessing in disguise to the Russian people, for the Church, although quiescent, is really stronger than in pre-revolution days, as is evidenced by the crowds attending religious meetings whenever the opportunity offers, and the respect shown to the persecuted Patriarchs. This feeling is in contrast to that of Europe, where religious fervour has in the past been fostered and encouraged when in danger; in Russia, on the contrary, the Church has always had the support of the masses, and, to a large extent, owes its existence to them.

The spiritual power of the Church will be a dominant factor in the regeneration of Russia and her rise out of the welter and chaos of the Soviet nightmare. To create the essentials in the new body politic, the Church will need to be carefully reorganised—not a formidable task, for it will have the backing of the entire Russian people. The strengthening of the Church and its release from the existing tyranny will create a national sentiment, and with strong government on sane and progressive lines there will be an economic recovery from the inflow of foreign capital for the reconstruction of industries and the develop-

ment of the great natural resources with which the Russian empire is so widely endowed.

Let us now envisage the future of China and her possible rise as a factor in the Far Eastern question. At present she is torn with internecine warfare, and more than twenty provincial and military governors have been striving for power and loot, levying taxation in their respective areas and ignoring any central authority.

The Great War brought far-reaching changes, and the Chinese when they joined the Allies did so in a spirit of optimism, hoping that victory might enable them to recover what they had been compelled to concede to various Powers in the past; but these hopes were dispelled by the Treaty of Versailles, under which the Japanese assumed all the rights, title, and interest in the province of Shantung hitherto held by Germany. This led to the Chinese refusal to sign the treaty in question and increased the antipathy towards Japan.

The reason for the present unrest in China and the anti-foreign attitude is easy to locate. It is quite evident that the crisis is not due to conditions of labour in the mills and factories under foreign control, but to political intrigue and Soviet influence, which have long aimed at bringing China into that world revolution so ardently desired by the Bolsheviki. There is, of course, room for improvement in the mills and factories, but conditions there are far superior to anything obtaining in those under Chinese control. The outbreak at the Japanese mill was undoubtedly due to Bolshevik agitation, and the evidence that has accumulated proves the insidious propaganda emanating from Moscow.

With regard to the situation and the question of foreign action in China, beyond the adequate protection of European interests in the treaty ports and wherever they are in jeopardy, it is obviously inadvisable to interfere with the political development and evolution now going on.

It might be supposed that, with the internal disruption, Bolshevism would find favour ; on the contrary, its progress is negligible, for its principles interfere with private trade, which is vital to the Chinese, whilst they strike at private liberty, a leading feature in the social life of the nation. Moreover, although it may not develop, there is a feeling in favour of a restoration of the monarchy, since a republican form of government is not suited to the Celestial temperament. To create a republican spirit there must be certain essentials on which to build up the fabric. These are wanting, and until they arise there can be only one form of rule, and that an oligarchic one. In my dealings with the Chinese I have observed the consistent respect shown for the Emperor as the temporal and spiritual head of the nation, for under the monarchy the family was the unit of the nation, and the Emperor was the father of all. With a republic there must necessarily be a change of leader, and this in itself invests the head of the nation with a transitory power, and one without prestige, whilst it lacks the main feature of Imperialism, as the term is understood in China, that of concentrating authority and focussing the loyalty of the people.

Whether China will ever assume a place as a dominant power is a moot point, for she fails in the main essentials to strength and self-assertion. The ethics

of Confucianism, on which the whole life and being of the Chinese have been based for centuries, are anti-militarist ; the people are pacifist by training and instinct, they have no aspirations towards martial greatness, and in any dispute, irrespective of the issues at stake, mediation is at once the strong point with them.

I have spoken of the corruption prevalent throughout China ; indeed, it is estimated that the amounts illegally amassed by the various provincial combatant leaders in the last seven or eight years would be more than sufficient to discharge the monetary obligations of China under her national debt. In population and potential strength China is the first in the world, and her natural, industrial, and economic resources are such that she could be the richest country, and her national debt would be small when compared with the revenue she could produce.

For the regeneration of China the difficulty lies in breaking up the numerous military bodies, and in bringing the provinces under one government, which must be a stable and progressive one. Foreign aggression should cease, the forces of obstruction must be removed, industrial development must be pursued with an increase in the purchasing power of the people. Education is a great point in China ; it exercises remarkable influence on public questions, and will play no inconsiderable part in the reformation of a country where there has ever been respect for learning.

Efforts are being made to advance on sound and rational lines, and the recent visit to this country of a mission composed of officials who have the interests

of their country at heart, will enable the Chinese to gain further touch with European thought and sympathy.

In conclusion, one can say that there is hope of redemption and the creation of a strong and united China, should those controlling her destinies possess the requisite power and personality to form a government commanding the respect of the people, for the Chinese, as a whole, are not partial to strikes and industrial disturbance and do not favour Soviet ideas. With the establishment of a sound constitutional rule they will take the road leading to peace and prosperity.

China and Russia are the two principal landholders in Central Asia and the East; each has a vast population, and natural resources, as yet undeveloped, that will render them self-contained and independent of the rest of the world. Their political, commercial, and economic possibilities must influence the balance of power in Asia, and will affect indirectly, perhaps directly, the fate of Europe. Then may the words of Napoleon, uttered in 1805, come true: 'It is in Asia that the destinies of Europe will one day be decided.'

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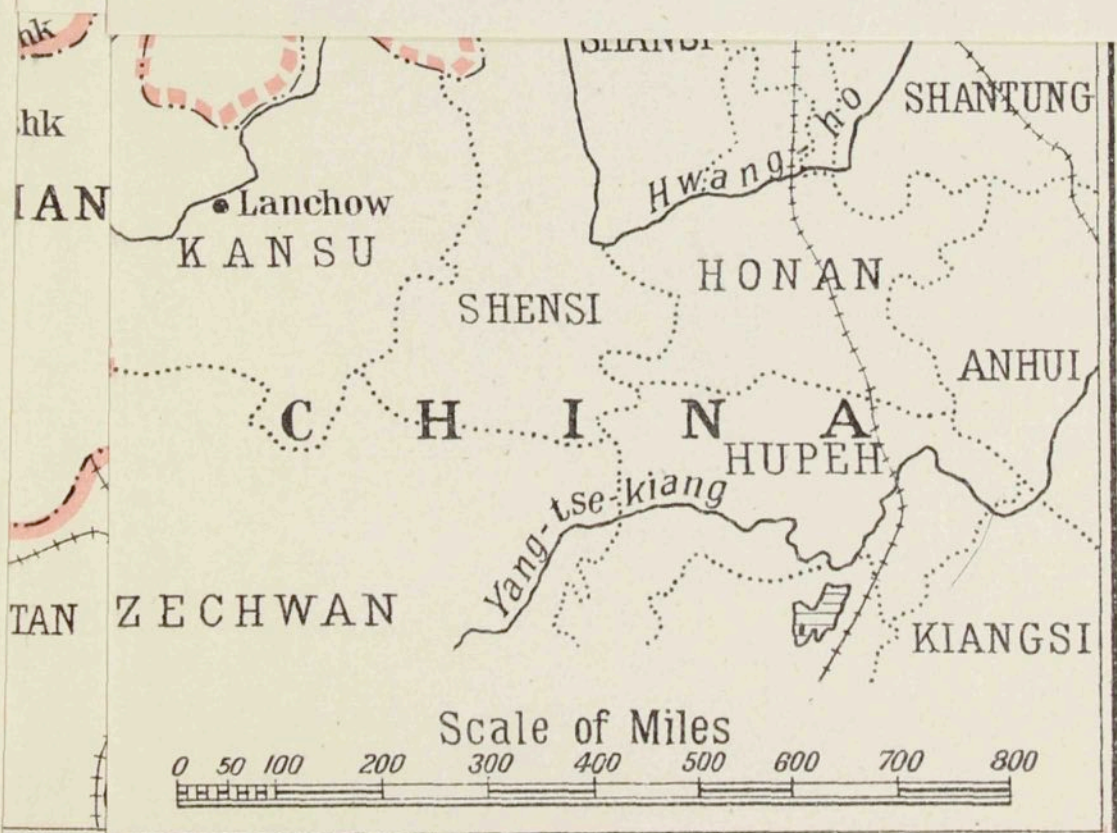
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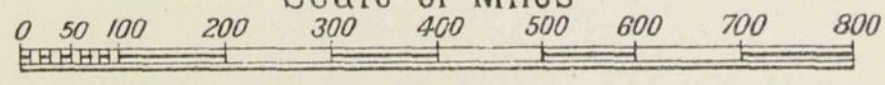
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Scale of Miles





041
800
250

