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THE ATALIK GHAZEE,
WITH SKETCH OF
THE HISTORY OF KASHGHAR
since 1863

BY
CAPTAIN J. BIDDULPH,
19TH HUSSARS.



Calcutta:
PRINTED AT THE PRIVATE SECRETARY'S OFFICE PRESS,
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I have endeavoured to give in the following pages a concise account of occurrences in Eastern Turkestan during the last ten years. My object has been to show the circumstances under which the Chinese rule came to an end after a duration of over a century, and the rapid formation of an homogeneous kingdom under a single head. The accounts that have hitherto been published are few and meagre. During the stay in Kashghar of the recent Embassy under Sir Douglas Forsyth, I enjoyed opportunities of constant intercourse with men who had taken an active part in the scenes narrated, and a careful comparison of the statements of different individuals with one another, and with what had already been published, enabled me to arrive at a fair idea of the state of things.

The great difficulty I found was in fixing dates. I soon found that exact dates of day and month sometimes furnished were utterly unreliable, and only calculated to mislead. By reference, however, to well known occurrences, the dates of which are certain (such as the death of Alum Kul and taking of Tashkend), and comparing the accounts given of the different seasons at which events occurred, a very fair approximate knowledge was obtained. To an illiterate Asiatic leading a comparatively uneventful life one month is like another, and by the arrangement of the Mahomedan calendar the name of a month is not connected with any idea of season. But the Ramazan month of fast forms a yearly epoch in the memory of every man in Central Asia,

and the changes in the fruit seasons are remembered by all. A battle fought or a march undertaken during the Rama-zan impresses itself on the most ignorant, and events are constantly remembered among themselves as happening "when the mulberries were ripe," or "after the melons had been gathered," or "during the grape season."

By using these allusions, together with computations of time and distance, I believe a more generally accurate idea of the sequences of events has been arrived at than could be done by any attempt to fix exact dates.

I have purposely avoided entering into any description of the country or people, as it belongs more properly to a detailed account of the Embassy.

CALCUTTA; }
6th September 1874. }

J. B.



THE ATALIK GHAZEE.



The history of the country known under the various names of Little Bokhara, Eastern Turkestan, Chinese Turkestan, Nanlu, Alty-shahr, Yetti-shahr, and Kashgharia, is involved in so much obscurity that a brief account of its recent history, though necessarily very imperfect, may be found interesting.

The constant political disturbances that have gained for Central Asian States so evil a notoriety, together with the obstacles to Western civilization, offered by the great distances and difficult nature of the countries to be traversed, and the uncompromising fanaticism of the inhabitants, have necessarily contributed to make all historical records rare. These causes have operated more strongly in Kashghar than elsewhere, bounded as it is on three sides by stupendous mountain ranges, traversed with difficulty at all times, and forming an almost impassable barrier for part of the year, while the country itself for the last three hundred

years has been the constant scene of foreign invasions, revolutions, and massacres, alternating with internal wars caused by the never-ending struggles of religious factions.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the Chinese power, which had not then felt the contact of the West, was without a rival in Eastern and Central Asia, and the imperial edicts from Peking were obeyed without question from the Yellow Sea to the Pamir. Kashghar and Dzungaria together formed an outlying province of the great empire, while an ancient prophecy, that the end of the world would be precluded by the universal supremacy of China, caused a general panic among the Mussulman States to the westward. So great was this fear that the ruler of Badakhshan, in order to ingratiate himself, caused to be murdered the two Khojas of Kashghar who had fled to him for protection, and sent their heads to the Chinese officials in Kashghar,—an act which earned for him the curses of the whole Mahomedan world. The powerful Sultans of the Middle and Little Hordes proffered their allegiance and sent envoys to Peking; and in 1758 A. D. Adeena Bi, Khan of Khokund,

likewise tendered unwilling submission to the Mantchoo dynasty,—a proceeding in which he was followed by his successor Narbuta Bi.

Urged on by success and thirst for conquest, in 1762 the Chinese formed the design of despatching an army into Western Turkestan, and converting the nominal dependance of the country into an actual one. The assistance of all the Mussulman States was invoked by the threatened rulers—a common danger for once uniting them—and a league was formed, at the head of which was Ahmed Shah, Abdali, of Candahar, who brought a powerful contingent of warlike Affghans into the field. The sons of the murdered Khojas travelled from city to city, rousing the fanaticism of all true believers by a recital of their fathers' martyrdom, and a general "jehad" was preached against the hated infidels.

These preparations and an insurrection in Kashghar caused the Chinese to give up further ideas of conquest, and the only result of the Mahomedan combination was the devastation of Badakhshan by an Affghan army and the execution of its ruler, Sultan Shah, in revenge for his former treachery.

Khokund, freed from even the shadow of Chinese supremacy, became the home of the Khojas, the saintly claimants to the throne of Kashghar, whose factions and attempts to regain their rights have been so long the curse of that unhappy country. For over a century their memory was carefully kept alive; correspondence was maintained with the leading men in Kashghar; no opportunity was lost of fostering discontent; and during the whole time of the Chinese occupation scarcely a decade passed without witnessing insurrections, often undertaken without the slightest hopes of success, sometimes aided by Khokund arms, at other times relying on internal revolt, but always attended and suppressed with unsparing bloodshed.

Many of the risings were crushed almost at once, especially the earlier ones; but as time went on, the Chinese power grew weaker and weaker, so that on more than one occasion the principal cities fell into the hands of the rebels, and a regular re-conquest of the country had to be undertaken.

Besides many small local outbreaks from time to time, an unsuccessful rising was headed

by Ziaveddin Khoja in 1816. He was unable to gain possession of any important city, and was soon seized and put to death together with his two sons. In 1822 Jehangeer Khoja established himself among the nomad Kirghiz in the mountains, and engaged in constant raids into Kashghar territory: at first he met with little success, but a happy turn of fortune, by which he destroyed a body of Chinese troops which had been sent against him, attracted men to his standard; and in 1826 he found himself able to march on Kashghar, which fell into his hands. He also gained possession of Yarkund and Khoten, and with ordinary precautions might have established himself permanently. Neglecting to follow up his victories, he gave time to the Chinese to collect their forces, and was totally defeated near Aksu in the beginning of 1827, and shortly afterwards was betrayed by a treacherous Osbeg into the hands of the Chinese, by whom he was sent to Peking, and there executed. In 1830 Mahomed Yusuf, brother of Jehangeer Khoja, aided by the Khan of Khokund, invaded Kashghar with a mixed force of Andijanees* and Kashghar emigrants,

* NOTE.—The natives of Khokund are always spoken of as Andijanees in Turkestan.

and made himself master of Yarkund, Kashghar, and Khoten; but the Khokund troops being withdrawn on account of war threatening with Bokhara, Mahomed Yusuf was unable to maintain himself, so returned to Khokund without awaiting the Chinese attack. In 1847 the rising known as the insurrection of the seven Khojas took place, seven members of the Khoja family being at its head. Kashghar quickly fell into their hands, but they failed to take Yarkund, while their excesses and the preference shown for Andijanees in the distribution of posts disgusted the people, so that on the first advance of Chinese reinforcements from Kuldja, they were easily defeated, and had to fly. In 1857 Wulli Khan Khoja surprised the town of Kashghar with a small band, and, gaining an entrance by night, roused the inhabitants in the name of Buzurg Khan, the son of Jehangeer Khoja. Buzurg Khan was not present, but the spell of his name raised the city, of which Wulli Khan soon made himself master. He at once indulged in the wildest excesses, and the many stories told of his ferocious thirst for blood are almost incredible. He caused a pyramid of the skulls of his victims to be raised on the banks of the Kizzil; men,

women, and children were slaughtered daily, and even his highest officers were not safe from his caprice. The approach of a Chinese army from Ili was hailed with joy by the people of Kashghar, and the force besieging the fort, which still held out, dispersed, Wulli Khan with a few followers escaping to Darwaz. The vengeance exacted by the Chinese inflicted as great sufferings on the unhappy inhabitants as the excesses of Wulli Khan, and for several months Kashghar was the scene of barbarous executions.

After this the country remained quiet for four years. Events, however, were occurring to undermine the already rudely shaken power of the Chinese Empire, so that at the next touch of rebellion it collapsed entirely. An allied French and English force dictated a peace at Peking, and burnt the imperial palace. This, together with the Taiping rebellion, which had assumed proportions with which the Chinese Court was unable to cope, threatened to upset the dynasty and plunge the whole empire into anarchy. To avert such a catastrophe, the allied Commanders were obliged to lend the services of European officers to

their late enemies, to aid them in restoring internal tranquillity. In the southern and western provinces of China a Mahomedan rebellion broke out; while to complicate matters, the Emperor died unexpectedly, leaving the throne to his son, a boy of 6 years of age. When disorder, therefore, spread to the furthest extremity of the empire, encouraged by external influence, and backed up by the fanaticism of Central Asia, it is not to be wondered at that every vestige of Chinese power in Turkestan was utterly swept away.

Disorder this time did not arise in the first instance in Turkestan, nor was it the result of Khoja influence. The punishment inflicted for Wulli Khan's rebellion was too severe and too recent to be so readily forgotten. The rising that resulted in the overthrow of Chinese authority in Turkestan began in Dzungaria, and, though the authors of it failed to replace the power they overthrew in Kashghar, the establishment of Mahomedan rule there is entirely owing to them. A few words about them will not, therefore, be amiss.

Dzungaria may be said to lie between 79° and 89° W. Long., and between $42^{\circ} 30'$ and 48° N.

Lat., and occupies a great part of the tract of country which has been styled the *officina gentium*, and which since the days of Attila has sent forth devastating hordes to the most distant countries. Dzungaria is divided into three provinces, *viz.*, Ili or Kuldja, Kur Kara Usu, and Chuguchak or Tarbogotai. In the first half of the eighteenth century the population was a mixed one of Kalmaks, Kirghiz, and Buruts, with a reputation second to none in Asia for bravery and warlike qualities. Kashghar itself had become tributary to them, and the Khojas who ruled there held their power from the Galdan of Dzungaria, when he himself fell in 1756 under the increasing power of the Peking dynasty. It was the prestige accruing to the Chinese from their conquest of so warlike a people that caused the panic among the States to the West, already described. The Chinese conquest was signalled by a brutal massacre that almost depopulated the country. To remedy the consequences of their own cruelty, it was made the Botany Bay of China, criminals were transported, and military settlers were planted there. Their descendants, born of Chinese mothers, increased so rapidly that in 1862 they

are said to have numbered thirty millions, and spread over the western and south-western provinces of China, and existed in great numerical superiority, especially in the province of Han-su. These men were known as Toorganees: the origin of the name is uncertain. According to the Turks, it is derived from the Turkish noun of agency "turungan," from the verb "turmak," to sit or settle, from the original inhabitants of Dzungaria being descendants of soldiers who had followed Alexander and settled in countries conquered by him—a favourite tradition in many parts of Asia. According to the Chinese, it is derived from the Chinese word "tun-yen," meaning military colonists. The knowledge whether the name Toorganee was known before the Chinese conquest would settle the question. They were Mahomedans, and, though owning allegiance to the Emperor of China, acknowledged a religious head, whose residence was at Salar, in the Hochow district of the province of Shen-si. Though disliked by the Chinese, they had a great reputation as soldiers, and contributed a large quota to the Chinese garrisons in Turkestan. During the present reigning Manchur dynasty there have been frequent unsuccessful

revolts of the Toorganees. In addition to this race, a great number of Turks from the vicinity of Kashghar were transported to Ili in 1829 as a punishment for the rebellion of Jehangeer Khoja. These and their descendants became known as Taranchees, and outnumbered the Toorganees in Ili at the time of the expulsion of the Chinese.

In 1862 a rebellion broke out among the Mahomedans in Shen-si: its origin is unknown, but it quickly assumed a religious character, and extended to the provinces of Han-su, Szechuen, and Yunan. The revolt spread to Orumchee, which was pillaged and burnt, and a body of insurgents crossed the Thien-Shan into Turkestan, where the news of their approach quickly occasioned a rising of the Toorganee element in the Chinese garrisons. There were at this time about 14,000 Chinamen garrisoning the towns of Eastern Turkestan, mixed up with whom were a large proportion of Toorganees and a few Osbegs, who in every case joined their co-religionists. There was also a large Chinese population in the principal towns. It is stated, however, that the troops had fallen for some time into a lax state o

discipline, and the whole Chinese population was demoralized by the excessive use of opium, which may account for the feeble opposition offered to the rebellion. The history of the fall of all the garrisons is almost identical: the Governors shutting the gates and allowing themselves to be blockaded, till famine forced them to surrender, when they stoically met a self-inflicted death; but in no single instance do we find them making a vigorous effort to stem the torrent of revolt, or to adopt any combined plan of action.

As the wave of rebellion rolled westward, city after city fell into the hands of the insurgents, whose strength increased daily; emissaries were sent through the land preaching a religious war against the infidel, and the movement soon assumed a character calculated to enlist the sympathies of every Mahomedan in Central Asia.

After making good its footing in Orumchee, Turfan, and Kara-shahr, the rebellion reached Kucha in the beginning of 1863. It is said to have originated there in an eating-house quarrel between some Chinese and Toorganee soldiers.

The Toorganees having been attacked in the first instance, and the Chinese Governor not doing justice in the matter, they rose in the night, and with the aid of the townspeople made themselves masters of the place, and proclaimed as their chiefs Khatib Khan Khoja, Rashud-oo-deen Khoja, Istin Khoja, and Jumal-oo-deen Khoja. These must not be mistaken for members of the exiled family of White Mountain Khojas, but belonged to one of the numerous religious families in Central Asia that are held in veneration as descendants of the Prophet.

Aksu and Uch Turfan quickly fell into their hands, with the traitorous assistance of the Toorganee portion of their garrisons; each success being signalised by a massacre of the Chinese population, a few only escaping by consenting to adopt Mahomedanism. The Governors of Kashghar, Yarkund, and Khoten, roused at last to a sense of their approaching danger, only succeeded in precipitating matters by their ill-advised measures. At Kashghar, the Osbeg population was almost unarmed, and possessed little sympathy of race with the Toorganees; the atrocities committed by

Wulli Khan Khoja in 1858 were fresh in their recollection, and the Chinese might easily have held their own by disarming the Toorganee portion of the garrison, which amounted to about seven hundred men. Instead of this the design was formed of getting rid of them by wholesale massacre. They were invited to a feast, which they attended unsuspectingly, attributing it doubtless to the wish of the Chinese to conciliate them: in the midst of the entertainment volleys of musketry opened on them from all sides, and a few only escaped to tell the tale. The effect, however, was very different from what had been expected by the Chinese. The Toork population, who had little fellow-feeling with the Toorganees, had every sympathy with Mahomedans treacherously murdered by idolaters; the surrounding country rose at once to vengeance, and the Chinese found themselves subjected to a double siege in the town of Kashghar and the fort of Yengishahr, situated about four miles from the city. At the head of the movement was Sadik Beg, a Kirghiz Chief, who resided near Kashghar.

The wandering tribes of Kirghiz, who roam over the pastures in the mountains

by which Kashghar is hemmed in on three sides, have always played an important part in the history of the country. Without identifying themselves with the inhabitants of the cities, or even owning fixed allegiance to any power, but paying tribute, according to the pastures they occupy for the time being, either to Russia, to China, or to Khokund, often escaping payment altogether, and at other times paying tribute to two powers at the same time, they have always been ready to join in any political disturbance. Swooping down from the mountains like vultures, with rapine and plunder for their sole object, they were apparently indifferent to what cause they espouse, always regarded by the various claimants for dominion as at the best but doubtful friends, liable to become at any moment cruel enemies. On the present occasion they quickly gathered to the plunder of Kashghar at the summons of Sadik Beg; but the inhabitants of the city, knowing too well what they had to expect from Kirghiz friendship, remained neutral, while they secretly sent a deputation to Alum Kul, Regent of Khokund, claiming the assistance due to them as Mussulmans suffering from

infidel persecution, inviting at the same time Buzurg Khan Khoja to come and assert his hereditary rights to the rule of Kashghar.

Alum Kul, however, was not in a position to render the assistance asked for, being engaged in hostilities with Bokhara, while a more powerful neighbour in the shape of Russia was threatening his independence from the north. He was also in receipt of the subsidy that had been paid by the Court of Peking to Khokund, amounting to £3,400 yearly, on the understanding that he should prevent any of the Khoja family, who had adopted Andijan as their home, from fomenting disturbances in Kashghar. But this was an engagement which gave the rulers of Khokund little concern, and they openly encouraged every attempt of the Khojas to establish themselves. Buzurg Khan, however, prepared to assert his claim to the rule of Kashghar, but lingered for some time in Khokund, hoping to induce Alum Kul to assist his enterprise with a small force. Meanwhile the Kirghiz established in the villages round Kashghar contented themselves with plundering the surrounding country, and observing a

blockade of the town and fort, being quite unable to undertake operations necessary to overcome the defence afforded by a mud wall 30 feet high. The provisions of the garrison were at last exhausted, and they were reduced to the horrible shifts that inhabitants of beleaguered cities which resist to the last have experienced from time immemorial; but, knowing the merciless character of their foe, they still held out in expectation of the succour looked for, by one party from Andijan and by the other from Peking. A graphic account of their sufferings is given by Mr. Shaw, who received it from one of the survivors:—"First they ate their horses, then the dogs and cats, then their leather boots and straps, the saddles of their horses, and the strings of their bows. At last they would collect together in parties of five or six, who would go prowling about with ravenous eyes till they saw some one alone—some unfortunate comrade who still retained the flesh on his bones. They would drag him aside and kill him, afterwards dividing the flesh between them, and each carrying off his piece hidden under his robe. Thirty or forty men died of hunger every day." Not till starvation had deprived

the gateways of their defenders, did the Kirghiz effect an unresisted entrance, and began at once to exercise all the worst atrocities that have signalled the taking by storm of an obstinately defended town. The Chinese were put to death without mercy, with the exception of a few who managed to secrete themselves during the first savage fit of blood thirstiness, and who were afterwards allowed to purchase their lives by embracing Mahomedanism. The Toorkee population, who pleaded that they had acted under Chinese compulsion, suffered also at the hands of their barbarous conquerors; the richest of those who had held office under the Chinese were put to the torture to force them to give up their treasures; women and children were murdered, and the lives of many were saved only by surrendering all their possessions.

In the meantime nearly similar events had been taking place in Yarkund. On the first news of the outbreak at Kucha, the Amban or Chinese Governor had despatched messengers to that place to ascertain the truth; they were, however, intercepted and put to death at Aksu. The ever latent hopes of

successful rebellion had by this time risen so high that the Osbeg population wanted little encouragement to take the direction of affairs into their own hands. The Toorganees among the garrison, excited by the news of what was going on in other places, also began to show a mutinous spirit. The Amban could think of no better mode of averting the threatened attack than by temporising with the dangerous portion of the garrison. Sums of money were distributed among the Toorganee troops, who were called on to take a fresh oath of fidelity on the Koran; the Chinese in return swearing solemn oaths by their gods to observe friendship with the Toorganees—confessions of weakness such as have always proved fatal to rulers in Asia. The excitement increased daily, and reached its climax in July 1863, when a report spread that a Toorganee slave in the Amban's household had overheard orders being given to the Governor of the city Opee-dun-Wang to cause the Mahomedan quarters to be set on fire, and their chief men to be made prisoners, on a certain night. True or false, it was believed, and the Toorganee leaders felt that the time for action could no longer be delayed. It was necessary first, however,

to make sure of the friendship of the Toork population; accordingly sheep and bullocks were slaughtered, and several hundreds of the city people fed daily for three days by the Toorganees. The town of Yarkund was at that time the capital of Eastern Turkestan, having been made the seat of government by the Chinese, in preference to Kashghar, after Jehangeer Khoja's rebellion in 1825, most probably on account of its greater distance from Khokund. About four hundred yards from the eastern gate of the city is the fort, which had then two gates, within which was an inner redoubt, built against the main rampart, forming the residence of the Amban. On the third night the Chinese houses in the fort were set on fire, and as their terrified occupants rushed out, they were cut down. The gates were also seized and destroyed, their guards being overpowered and put to death. The garrison in the inner redoubt, to which the Toorganees had not gained access, sallied out in several detachments, but in the confusion suffered great loss. Numbers were, it is said, killed by their comrades, who were unable to distinguish friends from foes, as the Toorganees ordinarily wore the same dress as

Chinese soldiers, but on this occasion had taken the precaution to wear turbans instead of the usual Chinese hat. Early in the following morning the Mahomedans in the city rose and massacred all the Chinese population, and proclaimed a wealthy Syud, Abdul Rahman Sahibzada Sirhindee,* as king, while Nyaz Beg, a Yarkundee, who had been Ishkega, or Deputy Governor under the Chinese, was re-appointed to that office. Another horrible massacre now ensued. The Chinese garrisons being relieved every few years, none but the higher officials brought their wives with them, the soldiers all forming alliances with the women of the country: these all lived in a street extending between the fort and city, from gate to gate. The first impulse of the savage and fanatical mob was to murder these women who had dishonored Islam by giving themselves to idolaters, and in a short time not one remained alive. The writer of this was told by one of the actors that the street ran ankle-deep in blood, and that upwards of ten thousand women were put to death on the

* NOTE.—Descendant of a Syud who lived 200 years ago at Sirhind in the Punjab, where his shrine is still an object of public resort.

occasion. Maddened with blood and boiling over with fanaticism, without order and badly armed, the mob then surged into the fort in quest of plunder, Cashmerees, Hindostanees, and other foreign residents joining in. The Chinese who were shut up in the inner redoubt had not utterly lost heart, and, advancing along the main rampart, seized the gates, and at their leisure shot down every Mussulman within the walls (to the number of six hundred it is said), and made themselves masters of the entire fort. This severe lesson made their assailants more cautious, and they contented themselves with maintaining a strict blockade, knowing that starvation would give them the fort long before aid could arrive from Peking. The Chinese, on their part, being too few in number to man the wall properly, were unable to make sorties.

The combined Toorganees and Kucharees, after taking Aksu and Uch Turfan, had turned south and laid siege to the small fort of Maralbashi. While thus engaged, they received intelligence of what was passing in Yarkund, with invitations from their brethren there to come and assist. Raising the siege,

they left Maralbashi, and reached Yarkund about the middle of August, and at once claimed that the city should be given up to them. This demand was met by the taunt that, if they were masters of the country, they should prove it by first taking the fort. An assault was consequently made, and repelled with heavy loss to the assailants, who were obliged to content themselves with more regular methods. By the end of October the provisions of the besieged had become exhausted, and an attempt at negotiation was met by the demand that they should all embrace the Mahomedan religion as a first condition. The besiegers, too, had succeeded in demolishing part of the rampart by mining; but the breach was still defended with such obstinacy that they were unable to force an entrance. But the last hope had vanished: a mine, against whose effects there would be no guarding, was in preparation, so the Amban resolved to anticipate the fate which he could not avoid and rob the foe of a portion at least of their triumph. The explosion of the besiegers' mine was answered by a still louder explosion within the fort, in which all the principal officers and most of the garrison perished, leaving smoking ruins and

mangled corpses as the only trophies. The few survivors were allowed to purchase their lives by embracing Islam.

Meanwhile the Chinese had fared no better in Khoten, where the population, though less exposed from its retired position to the general contagion, had received with enthusiasm the news of what was going on in other parts of the country. The rebellion was headed by Habbiboola Khan, an old man of much reputed sanctity, who had just returned from a third pilgrimage to Mecca, which helped to increase his reputation. The Chinese here fell even an easier prey to their enemies than in Yarkund: a general rising of the people forced them to take refuge in the fort. When their provisions were exhausted, they tried to come to terms, and their lives were promised if they would become Mussulmans; they would not trust their enemies, and, setting fire to the buildings inside the fort, blew themselves up, most of them perishing in the explosion, and Habbiboola assumed the title of Khan Padshah with the state of an independent prince. The contending parties in Yarkund and Kashghar were too much occupied with one another to pay

attention to what was being done elsewhere, and Habbiboola was enabled to strengthen himself at leisure. Contenting himself with the lordship of the Khoten oasis, he sought to obtain a recognition of his independence from the Khan of Khokund and the British Government in India, to whom he sent envoys. It was on the return of the envoy from India in 1865 that Mr. Johnson, an officer of the Trigonometrical Survey, took the opportunity of visiting Khoten, where he met with a friendly reception. The spirit of adventure that led Mr. Johnson into a country so little known, during such troublous times, is worthy of praise. Mr. Johnson describes Habbiboola as a venerable old man of eighty years of age; but his few remaining years were not allowed to reach their natural limit, as they were cut short by the hand of one, who, in comparison with the different candidates for power, was as an eagle among meaner birds of prey.

The position of affairs in May 1864 was as follows:—Khoten was in the hands of Habbiboola Khan; the Kucharee Chiefs, Jamal-oo-deen Khoja and Rashud-oo-deen

Khoja, allied with the Toorganees, held the fort of Yarkund, maintaining a doubtful friendship with the townspeople, who looked up to Abdul Rahman and Nyaz Beg, who governed the city as their rulers. Aksu, Uch Turfan, and Kucha were also in the hands of the above-mentioned Khojas, while their allies, the Toorganees, held the country to the eastward with the towns of Turfan, Orumchee, and Manass. The Kirghiz, under Sadik Beg, were masters of the plundered city of Kashghar, while the fort, four miles off, was still in the hands of the Chinese, who held out against all attacks, hoping in vain for the succour that never came, surrounded by implacable foes in a country from which their dominion had been swept away, and with the prospect of their inevitable doom drawing nearer day by day. The small garrisons of Yengi Hissar and Maralbashi also held out, having been subjected to no serious attack.

The events occurring in Kashghar presented a favorable opportunity for advancement to all adventurous spirits in Central Asia, and one of the most adventurous was Mahomed Yacoob

Khan, who made his first appearance on the scene of action at this time, but it was not till later that men recognised the prominent position he was destined to assume. Being of Tajik extraction, any promise of greatness on his part was not likely to be readily endorsed by the haughty Osbegs, among whom the name of Tajik is almost as much a term of reproach as it is significant of a distinction of race.* Osbeg means literally "his own master," and it has been hitherto unknown in Asia for a Tajik to rule over an Osbeg population. There is a large Tajik population in Khokund, but they have generally failed to attain any high official position in the country, though ethnologically speaking they will bear favorable comparison with any race in Asia. Of Tajik birth, Mahomed Yacoob's father was Serkar or district officer of Piskut in Khokund. Mahomed Yacoob had distinguished himself by his bravery in several actions fought against the Russians by the Khokund forces, in which he was more than once wounded. He was at one time Governor of Ak Musjid, a small fortress on the right bank of the Jaxartes, but

* NOTE.—The Tajiks are of Aryan blood; the Osbegs being of Tartar descent.

was removed from that post shortly before its taking by the Russians in 1853. Stories have been told of traitorous dealings on the part of Mahomed Yacoob, who betrayed his trust for Russian gold; but the tale is not in keeping with his character, and the other version of the story is more probable, *viz.*, that he sold the privilege of fishing in certain places to Russian officers, which was taken advantage of for other purposes. Indeed so good was the spirit infused by him into the garrison that the Russians experienced greater resistance at the capture of it than at any other place in Central Asia. The Commander, Mahomed Wulli, was killed at the beginning of the siege, but the defence was obstinately continued, and it was not till most of the superior officers had fallen that the Russian storming parties could call themselves masters of "the first and last place where the Central Asiatics displayed real heroic self-sacrifice in their endeavours to repel the foreign invader."* Had the story of his treachery gained credence in Khokund, he would hardly have been made Shagawul or chief confidential secretary by the Khan of Khokund, Mulla Khan, in 1860. In the succeeding year he was made

* NOTE.—Vamberg's History of Bokhara.

Governor of Kuramma fort, and the intrigues that brought about Mulla Khan's death forced him to take refuge in Bokhara, whence he did not return till the beginning of 1864.

Buzurg Khan, as we have seen, lingered some time in Khokund after getting the invitation of the people of Kashghar, hoping to induce Alum Kul to furnish him with a small force. Finding this hopeless, he started at last with only seventy men to seek his fortunes, accompanied by Mahomed Yacoob as his Kushbegi or Wuzeer, whose ability and determined character seemed especially to adapt him for a desperate undertaking. The small force that accompanied them made their chance of success, among so many stronger competitors, seem a small one, but the influence of Buzurg Khan's name was alone worth an army. Surrounded by the halo which enthusiastic loyalty always attaches to princes in exile, he commanded the devotion of his future subjects as the son of the brave Jehangeer Khoja, whose daring attempt to assert his rights, resulting in his martyrdom at Peking, was still fresh in the memory of many. His coming was the more opportune

that the Kirghiz excesses had risen to such a pitch that the inhabitants had expelled Sadik Beg from the city, and closed the gates, while they awaited the coming of the prince of their choice. He entered Kashghar in July 1864, and was received with enthusiasm, Sadik Beg being one of the first to tender allegiance. There had also arrived in Kashghar a short time before this a Chief named Hamrah Khan, brother of Surrah Beg, Meer of Kolab, who had come with a small force to join in the crescentade, just as the barons of Europe in the thirteenth century gathered to the crusades at the promptings of ambition and religious enthusiasm. He also placed himself under the leadership of Buzurg Khan, and the fort of Yengi Shahr was closely blockaded. Before many days, however, difficulties arose with Sadik Beg, who, as Chief of the Kirghiz, was a formidable and doubtless discontented rival. In an action fought near Kashghar he was defeated and forced to take refuge in the hills. The leading spirit in Buzurg Khan's army was Mahomed Yacoob, for Buzurg Khan proved himself to be only a worthless debauchee, whose vicious excesses alienated the hearts of the people, while the

energetic Kushbegi organized the army, seeing to every detail and exposing himself freely wherever danger was to be found. Yengi Shahr, however, was not destined to fall for some time; the besiegers had no guns or material necessary for a proper prosecution of the siege, and the Chinese garrison, profiting by former experience, had laid in a large stock of provisions during the first months, when the Kirghiz were more intent on the city than the fort. Mahomed Yacoob, therefore, leaving the army with Buzurg Khan to observe the blockade, advanced on Yarkund, and entered the city secretly, accompanied by five hundred men.

At that time Khatib Khan Khoja, the Kucharee Chief, occupied the city with a small force; but his rule had become so oppressive to the Yarkundees that they were more inclined to assist the Kushbegi than join in opposing him. The fort was held by a Toorganee garrison which remained entirely neutral. On the following day the rival claimants for the city drew out their forces to decide the question by arms outside the walls. The Kucharee Chief was entirely defeated, and fell a prisoner into

the hands of the victorious Kushbegi, who took up his residence in the palace lately occupied by his rival. News of the reverse quickly reached the Kucharee army, which was still occupied in the siege of Maralbashi. Abandoning the siege, they advanced by forced marches to Yarkund. Mahomed Yacoob drew up his small force outside the town to oppose them, but was soon overpowered by superior numbers and forced back into the city. Fighting continued all day at the gate, which was obstinately defended. Numbers, however, prevailed, and the Toorganees in the fort showed a disposition to take him in rear; so towards evening the Kushbegi drew off the small remnant of his force through the city, and, issuing from an opposite gate, escaped to Yengi Hissar with scarcely two hundred men.

From the beginning of the rebellion the small Chinese garrison of six hundred men in Yengi Hissar had remained shut up in the fort there free from attack, the townspeople wanting arms and leaders. The Kushbegi, nothing daunted by his recent reverse, at once roused the townspeople and commenced operations. Buzurg Khan with reinforcements

arrived from Kashghar, and the siege was vigorously prosecuted by mining. Encouraging messages were also received from Kho-kund, Alum Kul being much elated at his temporary success in repulsing the Russians under Chernaieff from Chemkend; and a present of sixty heads was sent to Buzurg Khan in token of his triumph. In the middle of the siege a fresh complication threatened. Intelligence was received of the arrival of an army from Badakhshan at Sirikol. Hamrah Khan, the Kolab Chieftain, after learning the state of affairs on his first arrival in the country, had conceived the idea of aiming at the chief power for himself, and had solicited assistance from Jehandar Shah, Meer of Badakhshan, who dispatched a mixed force of a thousand Badakhshees and Wakhees under the command of Meer Futteh Ali Shah of Wakhan across the Alichur Pamir. Uncertain of the reception they might meet with, and doubtless not wishing to support the claim of Hamrah Khan against the Khoja, they halted some time in Sirikol, while Buzurg Khan sent them urgent messages to come and join him. While Futteh Ali Shah was still hesitating, an event occurred to help him out of his difficulty. In

the beginning of May 1865 Yengi Hissar was taken, Hamrah Khan fell during the assault, and the Badakhshan contingent soon afterwards marched to Kashghar to join in the siege of the fort.

This was the first tangible success that had crowned Buzurg Khan's efforts, and messengers bearing presents of Chinese spoil were dispatched to Khokund to announce the glad tidings to Alum Kul. Before they could reach that Chief, he had fallen in action against the Russians at Nyaz Beg.

Scarcely had Yengi Hissar fallen, when Sadik Beg, the Kirghiz Chief, made another attempt to gain possession of the city of Kashghar. In this he was defeated, and after some negotiation submitted and joined the force engaged in prosecuting the siege of the fort.

The combined Kucharee and Toorganee leaders, however, discerning a powerful rival in Buzurg Khan, and becoming alive to their own danger, should he succeed in making good his footing in Kashghar, resolved to bring him to account while occupied with the siege, and, accordingly, advanced on Yengi Shahr in great

force from Maralbashi in the middle of August. The Kushbegi was prepared for them, and met them on the banks of the Khanarik river, where an obstinately contested action was fought, Buzurg Khan's force being vastly inferior in numbers and equipment. Victory remained in doubt for several hours, and it was only by the most undaunted personal bravery that the Kushbegi, who received two severe wounds, succeeded in securing the victory. Seven hundred prisoners fell into his hands, and it is related that during his return to camp he fainted, when his followers became aware of his wounds for the first time.

The siege of Yengi Shahr (Kashghar) was resumed, and the last days of the garrison were drawing to a close. The science of attacking fortifications is little understood by Asiatics, and, notwithstanding the sufferings of the besieged, all attempts to effect an entrance were unsuccessful. Famine at last did its horrible work, and their privations reached the limit of Chinese endurance. Two thousand, it is said, had died of starvation, when the remainder, setting fire to the magazine, blew themselves up in the end of September 1865.

Scarcely had this success been achieved, when aid was received from an unexpected quarter. Within a few days of the fall of Yengi Shahr, news was received that an army had crossed the mountains from Khokund, and had arrived at Mingyol. In the beginning of the year, Alum Kul, Regent of Khokund, had found himself exposed to a double invasion by Russia and Bokhara. In May 1865 Alum Kul fell in action against the Russians, who took Tashkend a month later. During the intervening time dissensions arose between the army and the townspeople, and shortly before the final assault, the former, headed by a Punjabee named Nubbee Bux, on whom the chief command had devolved, Mahomed Yonas, who had succeeded the Kushbegi in the office of Shagawul, and a Chief distinguished as the Kette Tora,* withdrew from the town and marched to the city of Khokund. This had meanwhile fallen into the hands of the Ameer of Bokhara, who had installed for the third time Khodayar Khan as ruler of the Khanate. His worthlessness and tyrannical

* NOTE.—Supposed to have been a son of Mahomed Ali Khan, former Khan of Khokund.

disposition were too well known to the above Chiefs, who doubtless also did not care to remain in a country whose independence had fallen under the wing of the Russian eagle, but, preferring to take service with Mahomed Yacoob, the news of whose deeds had reached them, made their way over the mountains with four thousand men fully armed and equipped. While halted at Mingyol, awaiting friendly invitations from the Kushbegi, the Kipchaks and Kirghiz among them, amounting to fifteen hundred, started a proposal for proclaiming Beg Mahomed, a Kipchak Chief, ruler of Kashghar. To this the others would not consent, and, leaving them by night, joined Mahomed Yacoob in Kashghar, the Kipchaks and Kirghiz being obliged to come in and tender submission a few days later. This was the turning point of the Kushbegi's fortunes; hitherto his very successes had procured him enemies; his personal influence already equalled that of Buzurg Khan, who feared his growing power, while Sadik Beg looked upon him as the only obstacle to his own rise. The arrival of the Andijanees at once made Mahomed Yacoob master of the situation.

An advance on Yarkund was now determined on, but the army was first diminished by the withdrawal of the Badakhshan contingent, which returned home taking with it the body of Hamrah Khan. To counterbalance this loss, arms were placed in the hands of the seven hundred prisoners taken in the battle of Khanarik. On arriving at Yengi Hissar a plot was discovered among them, which was promptly nipped in the bud, the ringleaders put to death, and the rest disarmed and carried on as prisoners with the army which encamped near Yarkund. A night attack was made by the garrison, which was at first successful, a panic seized the Kushbegi's men, and, before they could be rallied, the prisoners were released and added to the number of their enemies. A second and more dangerous plot, too, threatened the fortunes of the Kushbegi. Buzurg Khan and Sadik Beg, secretly withdrawing the Kirghiz from the army, returned to Kashghar, where they took possession of the fort. The indignant Kushbegi hurried after them with a small body of men by forced marches, leaving the greater part of his army to follow. Arrived at Kashghar, the rebels issued from the fort,

and attacked his small force, which they defeated, and drove him across the river Kizzil. The main body of Andijanees, arriving a few days later, was attacked in like manner; but on this occasion the Kirghiz were driven back into the fort, which was again besieged. Provisions being soon exhausted, the garrison evacuated the fort by night and fled away to Khokund. Some made good their escape, only to meet with a cruel death at the hands of Khodayar Khan; Buzurg Khan was taken by the Kushbegi, with several of the principal men with him. Sadik Beg and Wulli Khan Khoja, whose ferocious atrocities in 1857 bathed Kashghar in blood, were put to death; Buzurg Khan was kept in confinement for three years, when he was released on promising to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. On reaching the Punjab, however, he made his way through Cabul to Bokhara, where he now resides.

A third advance on Yarkund was now determined on; but to cut the communication with Kucha, from whence reinforcements had lately been sent, Mahomed Yacoob first advanced on Maralbashi, which was still held

by a Chinese garrison, and took the fort by damming up the river Kizzil and diverting its waters against the rampart. Then, turning southwards to Yarkund, he encamped at Chinibagh, five miles south of the city. A second night attack was planned by the Kucharees and Toorganees, but the Yarkundees had become impatient of their rule, and notice was sent to the Kushbegi by Nyaz Beg, the Ishkega. When the attack was made, the Kashghar force feigned flight, and the assailants spread through the camp, plundering. As soon as the disorder was at its highest, the Osbegs fell on them and put them to flight: attempting to take refuge in the city, they found the gates closed on them, and numbers were put to the sword or taken prisoners. The siege of the fort was then pressed vigorously, and after some desultory fighting the garrison surrendered. The Kucharees were dismissed with presents to their homes after promising allegiance, but the Toorganees were sent as prisoners to Kashghar. The different treatments pursued towards his prisoners would lead one to suppose that Mahomed Yacoob had already traced in his own mind the policy he afterwards

followed. The proofs he has given of his reluctance to shed blood unnecessarily cannot fail to strike all who study his career.

The year 1866 was spent by the Atalik in consolidating his power in the provinces he had gained, and establishing a firm system of government. In this he was largely helped by the number of men who had held prominent positions in Khokund, and who had joined him from personal motives of friendship, dislike of Khodayar Khan, or love of adventure; for the natives of the country, at all times an apathetic race, showed little enthusiasm at their change of rulers. Pecuniary troubles, too, pressed heavily on the new sovereign, which were met with difficulty by a large loan from the principal merchants.

Being master of the important cities of Kashghar, Yarkund, and Yengi Hissar, the Kushbegi turned his eyes on Khoten, the wealthiest province of Eastern Turkestan, with its rich jade mines and gold fields. Habiboola Khan had neglected no opportunity of strengthening himself during his brief reign, and had attracted to his service many Affghans and Hindostanees, whose reputation as soldiers

ranks high among the Osbegs. At the same time he sedulously strove to enter into friendly relations with Mahomed Yacoob, who, however, was little likely to brook a rival so near him. Towards the end of 1864 the Toorganees in Habbiboola's garrison, headed by one Ishan Zakaria, formed a plan of taking Khoten for themselves; but their plot being discovered, they fled to Yarkund, and in December a Toorganee army crossed the arm of the Gobi desert that separates the two provinces, with the intention of taking Khoten. Habbiboola was prepared for them, and inflicted a severe defeat on them at Pialma, with the loss of all their guns. He had the misfortune, however, to lose his eldest son, Abdul Rahman, who fell a victim to his own rashness in the moment of victory.

Though personally popular with the people of Khoten, the Khan Padshah was too old to support the weight of the onerous duties that he had assumed, and his eldest surviving son, Sudroo Khan, a young man, twenty years of age, was devoid of ability. Mahomed Ali Khan, a Pathan, holding an important command, entered into traitorous correspondence,

and Nizam-oo-deen Khoja, Habbiboola's nephew, who commanded the army, was made a prisoner while at Kashghar on a complimentary mission to the Kushbegi, who by forced marches arrived with his army at Guma, within forty miles of Khoten, before Habbiboola was aware of his having left Kashghar. On the first day of the Ramazan, 9th January 1867, news reached Khoten of the advance of Mahomed Yacoob's force, and the Khoten army, some six thousand strong, at once marched out to Zawur, a small fort, where it took up a position, on the same night. The Kashghar force had by this time reached Pialma, and the two armies remained within a few miles of each other for five days, while Sudroo Khan went backwards and forwards between the two camps. In answer to Habbiboola's demand for an explanation of this apparently hostile advance, Mahomed Yacoob protested that he was on his way to Aksu to fight the Toorganees, and that, before he proceeded to the war, he desired to receive a blessing from Habbiboola, whose great age and sanctity made the Kushbegi regard him as a father. Habbiboola, still suspicious, refused to trust himself in the Kashghar camp till Mahomed

Yacoob swore on the Koran that he should come and go in safety. The Khoten army was then withdrawn from Zawur, which was immediately occupied by the Kashghar force, fifty or sixty of Habbiboola's principal officers being detained on the pretence of receiving robes of honor from the Kushbegi, who encamped the following day close to the town of Khoten. Habbiboola, confiding in the oath that had been sworn to him, was made a prisoner immediately on setting foot in Mahomed Yacoob's camp, and together with his young son, Mahsum Khan, hurried off to Yarkund. Three days afterwards Sudroo Khan, who had been made a prisoner at the same time as his father, was discovered attempting to open communication with his adherents in the city; and the Kushbegi, pretending that the act absolved him from his oath, caused him to be put to death, with forty of the principal Khoten men. The Khoten army meanwhile, deprived of its Chiefs for several days, had plundered the treasury and dispersed, so that but a feeble opposition was offered to the Kushbegi when he occupied the town and fort. Every demonstration was crushed with unrelenting severity, several

hundreds of the townspeople being shot outside the walls. A few days later a small force of armed peasants and soldiers, having collected at Karakash, advanced on Khoten, but was easily defeated.

Habbiboola's Hindostanee officers, who had only been a few months in the country, were brought by the treacherous Mahomed Ali Khan before the Kushbegi, who desired to take them into his service. On being told to salute, a rather laughable occurrence took place. These men had served in our Indian army, and had always saluted Habbiboola with their swords in the English fashion. Mahomed Ali Khan, wishing, perhaps, to get them into disgrace, told them in Hindostanee to salute in the same way as they had been accustomed to salute the Khan Padshah, on which they all drew their swords. The Kushbegi, thinking he was going to be attacked, sprang to his feet and ran out of the room, calling for his guards. Luckily the first man that came in was the Punjabee Jemadar, who succeeded in explaining matters satisfactorily to the Kushbegi, who returned and took them into his service.

The unfortunate Habbiboola, who meanwhile had been kept a close prisoner in

Yarkund, was brought out at the time of public prayers on the Eed and beheaded, after seeing his own son, Mahsum Khan, put to death before his eyes. It is said that he asked to be put to death before his son, but the request was refused by the Shagawul Mahomed Yonas. The bodies remained exposed for three days, when a Hindoo Byraghee begged them and buried them. It is a custom in Kashghar for people to beg the bodies of criminals for burial, by which act they are supposed to take the sins of the dead man on their own heads, and perform a virtuous action.

The time had now come when Mahomed Yacoob might justly assume the title of an independent ruler; but he preferred to keep up the pretence of being a tributary Prince, while exercising despotic and irresponsible functions. His private life was austere, and the precepts of the Koran were strictly enforced wherever his rule was acknowledged,—a proceeding not much to the liking of the people of Eastern Turkestan, the laxity of whose practices as to wine drinking, &c., had been encouraged by a century of Chinese rule. Pretending to keep up the fiction of being tributary to his Native State of

Khokund, he aspired to the character of a religious leader, and with assumed humility took to himself the title of "Atalik Ghazee." Atalik, which means literally "guardian," is used as a title for one of the highest officials at the Court of Bokhara. Ghazee is the term used to signify a warrior who devotes his life to Islam. It has been stated that the title was conferred by the Ameer of Bokhara, but the statement does not rest on a trustworthy foundation. It appears more probable that Mahomed Yacoob assumed the title himself, and gave out that it had been conferred on him by the Ameer of Bokhara, whose position as a spiritual chief of Islam in Eastern Asia the Atalik seems anxious to rival. Unwilling, however, even to appear to acknowledge allegiance to Khodayar Khan, he issued coinage in the name of his dead patron, Mulla Khan, purporting to come from the Khokund mint. Coining in the name of a dead man, whom it is desired to honor, is not uncommon in Central Asia. The present Ameer of Bokhara, Mozuffer-oo-deen, who succeeded his father in 1860, now coins in the name of his grandfather, Hyder Khan, who died in 1826.

Yacoob Khan was not the man to remain content with a half success. The important towns of Aksu, Uch Turfan, and Kucha had previously always formed part of the ruler of Kashghar's territories; and as long as they remained separate, he could not consider himself fairly established. The Kucharees, taken prisoners at Yarkund, had been dismissed with presents to their homes, after promising allegiance; but the promise was not acted up to, and their Chief, Khatib Khan Khoja, proclaimed himself independent in the above-mentioned cities. In the spring of 1867 the Atalik took the field and advanced from Maralbashi on Aksu, which was abandoned after a slight skirmish. Pressing on to Kucha, he was met by the Kucha army a day's march from the town, and a well fought action ensued. The Kashghar army was at first unable to make any impression on the Kucharee position,—a well chosen one among low hills, which delayed the advance of the Atalik's artillery, an arm in which the Kucharees were deficient. As soon, however, as the guns were brought into action, the Kucharee force broke and fled with the loss of four thousand killed and prisoners, and the fort and town surrendered

without a siege. Khatib Khan, Istin, Rashud-oo-deen, and Jumal-oo-deen Khojas, and several others, were put to death. Isa Khoja, a Kucharee Chief, was installed as Governor, and, after taking possession of the towns Bugoor and Kogola beyond Kucha, the Atalik returned to Aksu, where Hakim Khan Tora was made Governor. From Aksu a force was sent to occupy Uch Turfan, which submitted without a struggle. Uch Turfan is celebrated as the first town in Eastern Turkestan that embraced Islam nearly three hundred years before Mahomedanism became the dominant religion of the country. It was also the scene of a cruel massacre by the Chinese in 1765. About this time the Atalik lost his second son, Khooda Kuli Beg, and the manner of his death has caused the imputation to be cast on Yacoob Khan of having ordered the execution of his own son.

The young man violated the sanctity of his father's harem, and was found there by the Atalik. The mehrams or palace attendants were summoned and ordered to inflict a severe beating, which, considering the severity of the Mahomedan law on this point, cannot

be called an undue punishment. A chance blow, however, caused a rupture of the spleen, and the young man died on the spot.

From Aksu complimentary envoys were dispatched to the Toorganee Chiefs in Kohna Turfan and Orumchee, and it is worthy of notice that the further extension of his dominions to the eastward apparently never formed part of Yacoob Khan's plans, but was forced on him by the aggression of the Toorganees themselves.

In August 1867 some Russian officers, under Colonel Poltoratsky, crossed the Toorgut Bela Pass without invitation, and attempted to reach Kashghar by forced marches, but were met by officials at Usten Artush, twenty-two miles from the city, and forced to return. Later in the year two Russian merchants with a caravan from Almaty reached Kashghar, but their goods were taken from them and paid for by the Atalik at unremunerative prices, and themselves sent back with a caution not to enter the country again. Yacoob Khan was not prepared to open his newly acquired dominions to European criticism, but was wise enough to avoid the mistake so often made

in Asia of ill-treating the subjects of a powerful neighbour, and thereby furnishing a just pretext for ill will and possible hostilities.

The year 1868 was spent by the Atalik in Kashghar in perfecting the administration of government, but he had many difficulties to contend with, not the least of which was a scarcity of money, which threatened to produce serious consequences. One of the principal men who had left Khokund to seek his fortunes under Yacoob Beg was Mirza Ahmed, who had been the Governor of Tashkend at the time of its being taken by the Russians, and who now held a high command in the Atalik's army. While returning from Aksu, the men suffered greatly from want, and Mirza Ahmed undertook to represent their demands for pay to the Atalik.* The representation, frequently repeated, was not attended to, till Mirza Ahmed identified himself with the men under him, and resolved that, should one last attempt prove unsuccessful, he would return to Khokund. In this he

* NOTE.—There exists no fixed rate of pay in the Kashghar army, each man's pay being fixed according to his qualifications.

was joined by the Kette Tora before mentioned, Khair Mahomed, a soldier of fortune from Bareilly in India, holding the rank of Pansud-bashi, a Yuz-bashi of inferior rank, and four hundred men. Admittance to the Atalik's presence was refused, and the body of malcontents at once took the road for Andijan. The Atalik being informed of it mounted his horse, and with his gun slung on his shoulder, after the fashion of all Andijanee gentlemen, galloped after the fugitives, attended only by a few guards. Overtaking them eight miles from Kashghar, he strove to recall them to their duty, but Mirza Ahmed, who made himself spokesman of the party, rejected all offers. At last on the Atalik offering to swear on the Koran that he would neither eat nor drink till their just demands were settled, the Mirza insultingly answered: "Yes, on the same Koran, I suppose, on which you swore to Habbiboola." The Atalik being exasperated, levelled his gun, and shot the speaker through the shoulder, and he fell from his horse. His fall cowed the mutineers, who returned at once to Kashghar, and the leaders were placed in confinement.

The end of the year brought an extension of territory. The elevated valley of Sirikol, inhabited by a Tajik race, had owned allegiance to the Court of Peking. Surrounded by lofty mountains, and reached with difficulty by a succession of high passes, it was too poor a country to yield any tribute, and its position alone made it of importance, being the thoroughfare along which all trade between Eastern Turkestan and Badakhshan is forced to travel; while at its fort of Tashkurgan or Varsheedi converge the roads over the Great and Little Pamir, and others to Kunjoot, Yassin, and Chitral. The unfortunate inhabitants were constantly exposed to the slaving expeditions of the Kirghiz of the Pamir, and marauders from Shignan, Wakhan, and Kunjoot, who made the valley a favourite object of their raids; the Chinese selfishly neglecting to defend them, or supply them with arms to defend themselves, merely granting them a small yearly subsidy of less than £250 to keep the road open for merchandise. When the Chinese power in Yarkund and Kashghar fell, the Sirikolees, taking no part in passing events, remained peaceably in their valley under their Chief Bawash Beg. In

1865 Bawash Beg died, and was succeeded by his second son, Alif Beg, his eldest son, Abul Assam Beg, being a young man of weak intellect and with a defect in his speech. The Atalik, however, had no intention of leaving in other hands one of the most important gates of his kingdom, and accordingly summoned Abul Assam Beg to Uch Turfan to do homage. The Sirikolee Chief came; but on his appearance, the Atalik, learning his mistake, set him on one side, and summoned Alif Beg from Tashkurgan. Alif Beg, fearing treachery, refused to come, and in December 1868 a small force was dispatched to occupy the valley. Alif Beg, incapable of offering any resistance, fled across the Pamir to Wakhan, where he still finds asylum, and the whole of the inhabitants, numbering about three thousand five hundred souls, were deported to Kashghar. After a three years' residence there in extreme poverty, they were allowed to return to Sirikol, and, in spite of the hardships they have undergone and losses they have suffered, have already recognised the advantage of being subject to a strong Government, under which they can till their fields without fear of slave-stealing neighbours. Abul Assam is now employed in

the Atalik's service. Mahomed Arif Beg, half-brother to the Atalik, was made Governor of Tashkurgan, but after three years was removed for misconduct and oppression.

Meanwhile affairs in Kashghar had been watched with increasing curiosity by the Russian authorities in Asia. It was with no little surprise that they saw order so quickly emerging from the anarchy that had so lately filled the country. Two attempts to reach Kashghar and ascertain the state of affairs had failed, as above related. It could be scarcely pleasing to them to see a strong Mahomedan Government growing up in place of the weak but peaceable Chinese rule, more especially as the favorable treaties concluded with the Court of Peking had been rendered void by the course of events.*

It was now determined to send an officer for the purpose of opening communication

* NOTE.—By protocols and treaties (Chuguchak, 1854, Peking 1860 and 1862) Russia had been permitted to establish factories in Chuguchak, Kuldja, and Kashghar. The Toorganee rising had prevented the fulfilment of the two latter, while the factory at Chuguchak had been burnt down by an enraged populace, the merchandize stored there destroyed, and the Consul forced to fly to Omsk.

and ascertaining the state of affairs in Kashghar. Accordingly, in October 1868, Captain Reinthal, staff officer of the Russian Artillery, was dispatched by the Governor of Turkestan from Almaty, a letter having been previously sent to announce his coming. The Atalik had been hitherto too much occupied with internal affairs to pay attention to his frontiers; but as he could not well refuse to receive the visit, and wished to create a good impression of his defences on his visitor, he proceeded in person to the Terek Pass, the one by which Captain Reinthal was to arrive, and in a surprisingly short time threw up forts completely commanding the defile, personally superintending the work, and setting an example of energy by laboring at times with his own hands and compelling his attendants to give assistance. Captain Reinthal was met at the frontier, and conducted to the fort of Kashghar without entering the city, and there detained. At the end of a few days, after an interview with the Atalik, he was dismissed without injury, but being given to understand that his visit was unwelcome. One cannot refuse a tribute of admiration to Captain Reinthal's

personal courage in placing himself in the power of a man who possessed the reputation of being a reckless adventurer and blood-thirsty tyrant, bearing no good will to the Russian power, against which he had fought several times without success.

Hardly had Captain Reinthal left Kashghar when it was reached by another European, this time from the south. While the Atalik was superintending the construction of the Terek forts, a letter was brought to him from an Englishman, who had crossed the Karakorum, and was now halted at the frontier, awaiting permission to enter the country. This was Mr. Shaw, a Kangra tea-planter, who, impelled by a spirit of enterprise and a desire to open up the Central Asian market to Indian tea, had undertaken the hazardous journey by himself, and without the knowledge of the Indian Government. Mr. Shaw has already told his story in simple language; it is, therefore, sufficient to say that he was well received and kindly treated, and, after a residence of over six months in the country, he was dismissed with valuable presents and expressions of good will both towards himself and the

British Government. Mr. Shaw thus by his enterprise "opened the door of friendship" (to use the Atalik's own words) between the two countries, while the good impression caused by his tact and skill raised the desire on both sides for further intercourse. A month after Mr. Shaw's arrival in Kashghar, Mr. Hayward, another Englishman, arrived. Travelling in the employ of the Geographical Society, he had formed the plan of visiting Kashghar independently of Mr. Shaw, and was dismissed in honor and safety at the same time, though the two were not allowed to meet till within a few weeks of leaving the country.

In July 1869 a collision occurred on the frontier between some Kashghar soldiers and a Russian foraging party which might have led to serious consequences. The Atalik, with his customary energy, hurried to the frontier, and in a few days had collected, it is said, twelve thousand men; the Russian troops also made a demonstration prepared to resist attack; but both sides remaining on the defensive, no further hostilities ensued, and the matter was soon arranged by the Atalik sending his son to

explain the misunderstanding and beheading the commandant of his outpost, who had disobeyed orders and been to blame in the matter. An Envoy, Mirza Shadee by name, was dispatched to St. Petersburg, and, on his return from there in the latter part of the year, was sent to Calcutta. At his invitation the Indian Government dispatched Mr. Forsyth, Mr. Shaw (who, since his return from Turkestan, had accepted service under the Indian Government), and Dr. Henderson, on a mission to Kashghar in June 1870. On arrival at Yarkund, however, it was found that the Atalik was away in the extreme east, hostilities having broken out unexpectedly with the Toorganees, and the mission, therefore, returned to India after a brief stay.

Early in the month of March news had arrived in Kashghar that a Toorganee force from the east had attacked and taken Kucha, and was threatening Aksu. Reinforcements were at once ordered to assemble at Maral-bashi, each town furnishing its contingent according to custom, and in a few days the Atalik placed himself at their head. News was received at the same time that Hakim Khan

Tora, the Governor of Aksu, while advancing towards Kucha, had suffered defeat, with the loss of two guns, at the hands of the Toorganees, who had since retired from Kucha after plundering it and devastating the surrounding country. Advancing by regular marches, the army reached Kohna Turfan with little opposition. At Kucha, Isa Khoja was deposed from the Governorship, and beheaded for complicity with the Toorganees, to whom he had yielded the place without resistance, and Tokhta Beg, another Kucharee, was installed in his place. At Kara Shahr the Kalmaks, under their Queen, met the Atalik with presents signifying submission, and a Kalmak contingent joined his force. The town of Turfan fell after a few days' fighting; but the fort, which, as in other places in Turkestan, had been built by the Chinese separate from the town, offered a stubborn resistance. Twice a Toorganee force under their Chief Daood Khalifa advanced from Orumchee to the relief of their beleaguered brethren, and twice suffered defeat, losing much booty and several guns on the second occasion. In one of these engagements Khair Mahomed, the Rohilcund Pathan, whose degradation and

imprisonment had rankled in his mind, rode out in front of the Atalik, and drawing his sword brandished it with insulting gestures at his master, and then galloped off to the ranks of the enemy. The Toorganees received him with acclamation, and at once gave him an important command; and a night sortie, which he headed, shortly afterwards inflicted considerable loss on the Kashghar forces. Attempting a repetition of the attack, however, he met his death; the Toorganees advanced at night along a narrow causeway, on which were planted three guns loaded with grape. One discharge from each gun was sufficient to drive them back with great slaughter, and among the bodies that were found on the road next morning was that of Khair Mahomed.

It was now the very hottest season of the year, when a relieving force advanced for the third time from Orumchee: this time led by Ghazee Hakim Beg. After a hard fought action, victory remained with the Atalik, a great number of prisoners falling into his hands, and the garrison in the fort were left finally to their own resources. Negotiation was attempted, but broken off, and, in spite of frequent bombardment, the Toorganees stoutly held the

place, till starvation began to thin their ranks, when they submitted, towards the end of November. In the following month, during the fast of Ramazan, the Atalik advanced on Orumchee. The Toorganees were by this time thoroughly disheartened, and, after attempting a night attack, which failed, they were completely and decisively defeated in a general action, and Orumchee fell in the middle of January 1871. Daood Khalifa was re-installed as Governor to hold the place for the Atalik, who returned to Aksu, leaving Hakim Khan Tora with four guns and three thousand men to garrison the fort.

Meanwhile a slight disturbance had occurred at Khoten, which was, however, nipped in the bud by the energy of Nyaz Beg. In the month of June 1870 a plot had been formed by the Kerawul Bashi (commandant of the fort) in concert with some of the city people to seize the fort, and a scheme was planned to commence the rising by burning down the gates at night. Nyaz Beg, receiving information of the plan, seized the ringleaders while engaged in placing faggots, and executed them.

While returning from Orumchee, the Atalik was guilty of an act of treachery, which, as far

as we know, was entirely unprovoked and incapable of justification. He was again met at Kara Shahr by the Queen of the Kalmaks, with acknowledgments of fealty and allegiance, which, however, he disregarded, and, seizing her, proceeded on his way to Aksu, leaving her a close prisoner in Kara Shahr. The justly incensed Kalmaks quickly assembled under the Queen's brother, and invested the place, which soon surrendered, the garrison purchasing their own safety by giving up the Queen. There is no known reason for this treacherous act towards his allies ; the only imaginable one being that Yacoob Khan saw some possible advantage to himself in it, and (the Kalmaks being Buddhists) acted on the principle laid down by the Prophet that no faith need be kept with idolaters.

From Aksu the Atalik dispatched Ahrar Khan Tora as Envoy to Calcutta, with complimentary messages expressing regret that he had not been able to meet the British Envoy in the preceding year.

In the beginning of 1872 news was received of further troubles at Orumchee. In the end of December the Toorganees had risen, with

Daood Khalifa at their head, and besieged the Kashghar garrison in the fort. Contingents from Khoten, Yarkund, Yengi Hissar, Kashghar, and Maralbashi were at once summoned to rendezvous at Aksu, and in the end of February Beg Kuli Beg, the Atalik's eldest son, at the head of three thousand men, left for Orumchee. Meanwhile Hakim Khan Tora, after holding his own for nearly two months, had been reduced to great straits, both for food and ammunition. Seizing a favorable opportunity, a vigorous sortie was made, the guns being loaded, it is said, with copper coin, on account of the exhaustion of ammunition; the Toorganees were utterly routed, and Daood Khalifa fled to Manass, where he found friends among the Kara Kitais.

Meanwhile Kashghar was fast increasing in wealth and prosperity. The sharp distinctions of nationality found in Europe are not known in Central Asia, where the people mostly sprung from the same stock, and, speaking the same language, transfer themselves with little difficulty from one province to another—men, women, and children abandoning their homes by hundreds, according as they are attracted

or repelled by alternations of good and bad government, or to follow the footsteps in exile of a beloved, though unfortunate, prince. The frequent ebb and flow of population that goes on in these countries from the above causes is a curious phenomenon. As soon as it became known in Khokund that Mahomed Yacoob had made himself master of Kashghar, and was establishing a government under which life and property were secure, men of all ranks made their way across the mountains, and sought a home in his dominions. Men who had held high offices under former rulers of Khokund came early, either mistrusting the rule of Khodayar Khan, or impatient of Russian domination, and found employment under the Atalik, who received them with gladness. Merchants closed their business in Andijan, and established themselves in Kashghar and Yarkund, nearer to the rich markets of Hindostan, and above all delighted to find themselves in a country where property is secure, and duties levied year by year at a uniform rate. Abd-ool-Rahman, a Kipchak Chief of great influence, came with his whole tribe, numbering a thousand tents, and settled on the fertile pastures of the Kizzilyart Plain. The Great

and Little Pamirs, belonging to the Meer of Wakhan, were deserted by the Kirghiz, who settled themselves by Sanju and Kilian on the northern slopes of the Kuen-Luen, not a single tent remaining on either Pamir. The immigration is still going on from Khokund at the rate of two or three hundred souls yearly in spite of Khodayar Khan's efforts to prevent it. These are facts that speak for themselves, and require no comment.

One of the objects that has of late years influenced the policy of Russia in Asia has been the establishment of direct commercial intercourse with China. Seeing that, if they longer delayed to take a part in the direction of affairs, they might find the road closed to them, the Russians annexed the province of Ili, and established a strong garrison at Kuldja in September 1871.

Unwilling, as they were, to recognize the new government that had sprung up, the time had arrived when it was necessary to acknowledge the Atalik as an independent Prince, who could no longer be ignored; and accordingly, after some preliminary negotiations, a Russian Embassy, headed by

Colonel Baron Von Kaulbars, arrived at Kashghar in September 1872 for the purpose of effecting a commercial treaty. The Embassy was courteously received, and, after a brief stay, took its departure, Baron Von Kaulbars congratulating the Atalik on being the first Asiatic Prince who had effected a treaty with Russia without the compulsion of previous defeat in the field. As, however, the Atalik had been threatened with war, should he refuse to conclude the treaty, the Baron's compliment must be considered as a tribute to his prudence, rather than to his friendship.

Meanwhile the Atalik's arms had been successful under his son, who was able to announce in July that order reigned in Turfan and Orumchee, and that he was about to follow up his successes by marching on Dabanchee, where Daood Khalifa still offered resistance. Of the fighting that ensued, we have but scanty details. The Toorganees, weakened by former defeats, failed to roll back the tide of victory, and Daood Khalifa's death put an end to the war; the town of Manass submitting in September to the young Prince, who himself received four severe wounds in various

engagements. The troops remained in occupation of the country till the end of last year, when they were withdrawn, the government of the province being entrusted to a Toorganee Chief, named Gunjoo Akhoond, from whom no engagement, except friendship, was exacted. The Atalik's reasons for thus abandoning his conquest were dictated by prudence. The population is a turbulent one, and likely to give trouble, the distance from his capital is great, and above all his retention of Orumchee and Manass could not fail to compromise him sooner or later with Russia, whose direct trade route with China was thus obstructed.

Although Mahomed Yacoob had hitherto reigned under the fiction of being tributary to Khokund, his coins being stamped as from the Khokund treasury, and bearing the superscription of his dead patron, Mulla Khan, he had steadily refused to acknowledge his dependance by the payment of even nominal tribute. He now resolved to place himself under a more powerful patron. Early in December 1872 he dispatched his sister's son, Syud Yacoob Khan Tora, to Calcutta and Constantinople, from whence he returned in the end of last year,

bringing with him a British Embassy, headed by Mr. Forsyth, in compliance with the Atalik's desire to make a commercial treaty with the British Government, similar to that completed the previous year with Russia. It is worthy of remark that every step taken by Russia to bring about closer relations with Kashghar has been followed by a corresponding step on the part of the Atalik in the direction of the English. The Embassy has returned to India after a stay of eight months in Kashghar, during which its members were treated as honored guests.

The results of Syud Yacoob's visit to Constantinople were of even greater importance. Acknowledging the Atalik's submission to the Sultan as the Caliph to whom is due the allegiance of all devout Mussulmans, he formally placed Kashghar under his protection. At the festival of the Eed Kurban, 28th January 1874, the Atalik publicly announced the Sultan's protectorate of Kashghar, and assumed the title of Ameer, as conferred on him by that sovereign. The Sultan's name was ordered to be used for the future in the "Kutbah," or prayer for the reigning sovereign at all the

mosques, and coin was issued stamped with the name of Abdul Aziz, purporting to be issued from the mint of "the protected State of Kashghar." The importance of this step is evident enough.

His acts have shown Mahomed Yacoob to be no ordinary man. The means by which a man raises himself to power in troublous times in an Asiatic country should not be criticised so much as the use he makes of it when attained. Born of undistinguished parents and a despised race, he has moulded passing events to his will, and made himself master of a kingdom of great extent, displaying daring, energy, firmness, and sagacity in the highest degree. In a few years he has formed a system of government such as is seldom seen now-a-days in a purely Asiatic State: the laws are strictly administered; corruption among officials severely punished on detection; slavery forbidden by law; trade encouraged; crime repressed; life and property secure; and the general prosperity of the country advancing at a rapid rate. Simple in his private life, his courage is proverbial, while he firmly maintains public order, and the

observance of the precepts of his religion, and is in every way fitted to establish great influence over the Mahomedans of Central Asia.* Jealously keeping the details of administration in his own hands, he selects without partiality the ablest men he can find as his agents, not hesitating, as has been shown, to remove his own brother from an important command, in which he did not give satisfaction; the two most populous and important provinces in the kingdom, *viz.*, Yarkund and Khoten, are governed, one by a man who was employed as a clerk under him at the Court of Khokund, the other by a Yarkundee, who formerly held office under Chinese rule; while the two most trusted officers in his army, with the exception of his own son, are a Badakhsee and a Punjabee. This centralization of authority is at present an unmixed benefit, giving cohesion and vitality to the fragments out of which he has formed a kingdom.

In his foreign relations he has been equally successful. Taking advantage of the Mahomedan custom which sanctions a plurality of wives, he has, by means of matrimonial

* NOTE.—See Lerch on Russian Turkestan.

alliances, entered into close relations with neighbouring States. Instead of following the exclusive policy hitherto in vogue among Central Asian States, he has also entered into friendly relations with the two great European Powers between which he finds himself situated. His envoys have visited Constantinople, St. Petersburg, and Calcutta, and have taken back favorable impressions of Western civilization, and, while showing every intention of making his own frontiers respected, he has curbed the lawlessness of the tributary nomads inhabiting the mountains to the west, north, and south, and forced them to respect the frontiers of his neighbours. The influence of his name extends already far beyond the frontiers of Kashghar, and Mahomed Yacoob may yet be destined to play an important part in Central Asian events.

Unfortunately the stability of the State of Kashghar depends at present on the life of Mahomed Yacoob. He is 53 years old, and younger for his age than most Asiatics; but should any thing happen to him during the next year or two, anarchy would certainly ensue. As long as he lives, it is certain that nothing but

dire necessity will force him either into close alliance or open hostility with Russia. His son, who is not wanting in courage and energy, there is reason to believe, does not possess his father's shrewdness, nor has he passed through the same vicissitudes in his rise to greatness, or had the same personal experience of the power of European arms. Should he succeed to the Ameership without having to fight for it, which is highly improbable, in the case of the sudden death of the Atalik within the next few years, he would in all likelihood be involved before long, by some false move on his part, in hostilities with Russia. But there is another danger which threatens Mahomed Yacoob more immediately, and is likely to affect indirectly our interests in India. The Chinese Government has as yet made no attempt to re-conquer its rebellious province, but shows no disposition to relinquish its claim. A Chinese Governor of Yarkund has been appointed, though, as was somewhat naively stated in a Chinese paper lately, he has not visited his seat of government for several years. The Court of Peking moves slowly, but can put in motion tremendous forces. The apparently prostrate empire is

again showing signs of life. The Panthay rebellion has been stamped out with merciless severity, Yunan is said to be thoroughly pacified, and, as far as can be judged, the imperial forces are slowly, but surely, overcoming their rebellious subjects, and reducing to submission the revolted provinces. Reports of the advance on Kashghar of a Chinese army have been rife for the last three or four years, but are now repeated in so circumstantial a form that it is probable the long expected advance is really about to be made.

As far as is known, however, the Chinese force has still a large intervening tract to cross, and a certain amount of opposition from the robber tribes that have formed themselves in those parts during the last ten years, to overcome, before it can cross the frontier of Mahomed Yacoob. That, however, can be a matter of no great importance or delay; and should the Chinese force be armed, as is reported, with the best European arms, and be commanded, as is highly probable, by French or American adventurers, the opposition that Mahomed Yacoob can offer will be little more than nominal.

The Power that has most to gain by a Chinese advance on Kashghar is Russia, which is so situated as to be able to make terms with either party.

It has long been a desire of the Russian Government to have a settlement at Sirikol. Steps had been taken towards this object in a treaty made at Peking in 1862, and the agreement only required signature when the rebellion I have described prevented its fulfilment. In 1872, when Baron Von Kaulbars concluded his treaty with the Atalik, he demanded permission to explore Sirikol, which, however, was not granted. A Chinese advance on Kashghar now gives the Governor of Russian Turkestan a favorable opportunity of attaining his object. Situated on the flank of such an advance, he can either refuse to permit the re-conquest of Kashghar, unless the unfulfilled treaty is revived, or offer active help to Mahomed Yacoob, stipulating for leave to make a settlement at Sirikol in return for his assistance.

The boon will not be a very unpalatable one to grant under the circumstances, as there is direct and easy communication from Osh in

Khokund to Sirikol, along the Kizzilyart and Tagharma plains, which would obviate the necessity of Russian officials constantly passing and re-passing through Kashghar, where their presence would be equally disliked by Chinese and Osbegs.

The case is one that deserves earnest consideration.



