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REPORT  
OF  
A JOURNEY IN CHINESE TURKISTAN  
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**REPORT**  
OF  
**A JOURNEY IN CHINESE TURKISTAN**  
IN  
**1889-90.**

BY  
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WITH A ROUTE MAP.



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Chapter I—From India to the Taghdumbash.

ON my return from leave in October, 1888, I happened to hear that Major Cumberland was contemplating a trip to the Pamirs in search of *Ovis Poli*, and was anxious to find a companion. I at once wrote to him saying that should I be able to obtain leave I would like to accompany him. Before my letter reached he happened to come to Ferozepore and told me that one or two others had already asked him, but that none of them were sure whether they could manage it or not, but he would let me know very shortly. Before long I got a letter saying that the friends to whom he had previously promised the chance of taking advantage of his passport, which was for two, had all in their turn regretted inability to go, and it was now my turn to give a definite answer. Being successful in my application for leave I was able to give an answer in the affirmative, and on the 14th June, 1889, left Ferozepore by rail for Rawal Pindi. Arriving there next day I proceeded at once to Srinuggur, which I reached on the 17th. However, I need not have hurried as the first thing I was told on arrival was that the rivers in Raskam being in flood, it was no use going on, only to be stopped in some inhospitable barren spot. On the 22nd June we started for Leh, arriving there after rather a hot march on the 7th July. At Leh we found Mr. Dauvergne whose intention was to make the same trip as ourselves; he

was taking up a small marble tablet to place on the spot where poor Mr. Dalgleish had been murdered. Our original intention was to proceed as far as Aktagh by the ordinary Leh-Yarkand route, and then turn west by Raskam and Sarikol to the Taghdumbash, but before leaving Leh we were informed by Captain Ramsay, the British Joint Commissioner, that he had received orders not to allow us to proceed unless we previously signed a paper promising not to go through Raskam, as it was considered unsafe for Europeans. This we very reluctantly did, as it upset all our plans; and we were very unwilling to go all the way round by Yarkand; however, on consulting our caravanbashi, he said he thought we might go by a road on the north side of the Killian Pass. On the 27th July we left Leh and crossed the Karakorum on the 8th August. On that day we put up the tablet in memory of Dalgleish which Mr. Dauvergne had brought; the place where the murder took place is just below the crest of the Karakorum on the north side. On the 12th August we reached Shahidulla, and as we had a long journey before us it was considered advisable for the ponies' sakes to rest a few days and give them a chance of picking up. Thus far, though owing to the great altitudes and scarcity of forage between Charlung and Shahidulla our ponies had had a trying march, we had nothing to complain of as regards climate, the temperature varying from about 60° at 6 P. M. to 25° at 6 A. M.

2. At Shahidulla we were visited by Toordikul, Aksakal of the Shahidulla Kirghiz; he was loud in his denunciations of the incapacity of the Chinese, and said that having applied ineffectually to the Chinese for protection against the Kunjuts he had now applied to the British.

The Chinese had told him that if he wanted to be protected he must live inside the line of custom-houses. As the nearest custom-house is at Killian in the plains where there is no grazing, of course it was an absurdity to think for a moment that he could go there.

When I saw Toordikul on my road back in July 1890 he was in great tribulation. Captain Younghusband's mission

had raised his hopes of being allowed to become a British subject, but the Chinese had been attempting to bully him. Three times had he been sent for. On one occasion the Amban has asked him what money he had received : he said "Rs. 800 to repair the fort in order to protect the road." He was then ordered to pay it back, but he answered that if the road was a Chinese road then the Chinese should pay all expenses connected with it, and not only pay the Rs. 800 back but all the money the English had spent in Kunjut. The Amban then said : " get out, your business is finished." Immediately after he had left the Yaman a message came from the Amban to say that he was very pleased that a Chinese subject had got Rs. 800 from the English, and that he did not want the money repaid.

The Chinese have now told him to build a fort at the mouth of the Suget nullah, and to work the copper mines at Innish, three days' march down the river. He says that his position is untenable owing to the Chinese, and that if the British Government will take the valley under their protection he will cultivate it as far down as the Tograsu river, otherwise he will have to flee into British territory.

3. From Shahidulla we marched down the valley of the Karakash to the dilapidated old fort of Sanjhu Kurgan. The hills on each side of the valley are steep and barren, and the river has to be forded twice ; the Tograsu river has also to be forded. Neither of the rivers presents any great difficulty at this time of year, though earlier in the year ponies are often carried away. The Tograsu bears an especially bad name, as owing to the stones of the bottom being very large it is very hard for horses to keep their legs, and once down it is impossible for them to rise. Although there is much more water in the Karakash it is much rarer that horses are lost as the bed of the river is composed of much smaller stones. From Sanjhu Kurgan the road runs up the stony bed of the Killian stream, which has to be constantly crossed and recrossed. At the head of the stream the road turns off to the east over the Killian Pass, a stiff pull for laden ponies.

4. About half-way up the pass there is a small camping ground but no grass. At this camp we had our first taste

of cold. Although the thermometer only went down to 23° there was a biting wind, and I have often felt the cold less trying when the thermometer was below zero.

5. On descending the pass we camped at Khoten Bhai Kargill, about 2 miles below Shushkhum; here the fine soil of Turkistan commences, superseding the grit that is found to the south of the pass. Grass also is plentiful, and of excellent quality, the whole north side of the pass being a favourite grazing ground of the Wakkhies. At this place I saw in the possession of a shepherd a Burkot or golden eagle, a fine handsome bird, largely used for hunting all over Turkistan.

6. From here we continued along the road to Yarkand for six hours and then struck west up a narrow valley. About 2 miles up the valley, finding grass and abundance of berbery to serve as fuel, we camped.

We now found ourselves in a country of quite a different character, the enormous cliffs and barren rocky mountains, to which we had been accustomed almost ever since leaving Leh, giving place to mountains of a more rounded character covered with grass growing in tufts.

7. Continuing our way up the nullah, and passing Namlung Mazar, we came to Kusnech Loch, a camp of Wakkhies, who own immense numbers of sheep; they are a most interesting people of pure Aryan blood; they are very fair and decidedly European in appearance. The whole of this valley as far west almost as the Kugiar Aktagh road is studded with their yourts, and it would be impossible to find a more hospitable or pleasanter people to travel amongst.

8. After Kusnech Loch the next camp is Karatagh, about a six-hour march, though we took eight hours, our ponies being very much knocked up. In this march the Saragat Dawan is crossed, one of the numerous ridges that intersect this valley; by the aneroid it was 14,000 feet high; the ascent on the east side is bad in parts and on the west rather steep. Just before reaching Karatagh a very fine snowy peak is seen to the south.

9. The village of Karatagh consists of about half a dozen huts, where three valleys meet, and about three acres of cul-

tivation; it is the winter quarters of the Karatagh Kirghiz, of whom Yusuf Beg is the head; the elevation is 9,100. In the valleys about great quantities of the carraway and wild chicory grow.

10. Next day the Touslar Dawan was crossed; it is 600 feet higher than the Saragat but easier. After marching for eight hours we camped at Sultan Kalich Mazar, where grass was very plentiful.

The Mazar here, like most other Mazars, was a good guide to the sport to be obtained in the country, ibex and burhel horns being piled up on the Mazar.

At Touslar the people are not Wakkhies, but a camp of Turkis from Kargallick.

11. From Sultan Kalich Mazar we went to Dana Ostang on the banks of a tributary of the Kargallick river. It is a fairly large stream and well-wooded with birch and willow; there is also a considerable amount of scrub tamarisk jungle. This was an extremely short march, only about 4 miles, but as there was plenty of grass about we were glad to give our ponies the chance of having a good feed and rest.

12. Ivoulong, our next camp, took eight hours to reach, crossing the Toopa Dawan, 15,400 feet and a stiffish pull, but no rocks or stones. The name Toopa Dawan means earthen mountain; there is little or no grass on the east side, but a good deal on the west; there is also grass at the camping ground and boortsa (*Eurotia*).

13. From Ivoulong we crossed the Sannich Dawan, 16,000 feet, a long climb but easy on both sides, and descended into the Sannich valley which is cultivated, but shows a singular absence of trees. Hares and chickore are very plentiful in this valley, and I saw an ibex horn measuring 45 inches, a large one, but not to be compared with one I saw on the Taghdumbash, measuring 54 inches. The inhabitants are Turkis. Here we heard that a party of Russians were in camp close to Ak Masjid.

14. From the Sannich valley the best road to Ak Masjid runs over the Kichik Yul Pass, a stiff ascent and descent for laden ponies; by the aneroid the height was 15,500. From

the top of the pass the road runs down a narrow valley with steep hills each side. After marching for seven hours after leaving the Sannich valley we found ourselves obliged to halt as the water in the nullah ceased, and our guides told us that the next place with water was at Kugiar, 27 miles off.

15. After we had pitched our camp we paid a visit to the Russian party who were in camp about half a mile from us. We found them very comfortably encamped in yourts; their intention was to remain where they were for at least a month as their baggage animals, camels, had suffered very much; several had died, and the remainder would require some time to pick up.

On the hills about we could see the pencil cedar (*Juniperus excelsa*) and some pines were showing through the mist.

The officers we saw were Colonel Pieutsow, and Lieutenant Roberovski whose speciality is natural history; he is one of Prejvalsky's old companions, having accompanied that distinguished explorer in several of his expeditions. The geologist of the party is M. Bogdanovitch, but we did not see him.

The escort consisted of 25 Cossacks, nice looking boys, but excessively dirty. Their horses are mere ponies according to our ideas, but sturdy, hardy brutes, and if one regards the Cossacks as mounted infantry they could not be better mounted.

16. Up to this we had been marching nearly due west,

On the road I collected the following grasses:—

Phragmites, commonis, var, stenophylla.

Rottbcellia speciosa  
Syn. Vossia Speciosa.

Calamogrostis sp.

Stipa sp.

Elymius sp.

with a high range of mountain running parallel to our road on the north, while to the south the snowy peaks of the Himalayas appeared, but now having left the valley our course lay in a more northerly direction, and from Ak Masjid we followed the ordinary Kugiar-Aktagh road as far as the outskirts of Kugiar.

After leaving Ak Masjid the hills assume a more barren and sandy character, gradually diminishing in height till at Kugiar the great Central Asian plain is reached.

When we got into camp a Turki brought us a lot of the most delicious melons and grapes, which were thoroughly appreciated after our long thirsty march.

All over Turkistan we found the grapes and melons most excellent and absurdly cheap.

A few gazelles, or as they are called in Turki Jeran, are to be got about here.

17. From the Kugiar valley our road to the Tiznaf valley ran west over low barren sand-hills; the highest ridge is 10,000 feet; it was a long tiresome march; the sand was very heavy-going for the ponies; there is no water, and we had been going for nearly 11 hours before Oschlech, a village on the Tiznaf river, was reached. The valley is of an extremely rich alluvial character, far richer than anything we had seen since leaving Kashmir; it is about a mile broad, with high cliffs on each side. Apricots, melons, grapes, pumpkin, and walnuts are very abundant; a common tree is *Populus alba*; great crops of Indian-corn are raised. Villages, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, hardly exist, but the whole valley is studded with farmhouses, and a name is given to the part included in each bend of the river. The elevation of Oschlech by the barometer was 6,450.

18. From Oschlech another march over low sand-hills took us to Oyung, a village in a valley of much the same character as the Tiznaf, but smaller; there are only five of what are called villages in this valley as compared with 17 in the Tiznaf valley. The river also is smaller and entirely used up by irrigation canals.

We saw some ploughing going on; the plough is much the same as the Indian one, but the cattle are humpless; afterwards in the northern part of Turkistan I saw horses used, and occasionally a bullock and a horse yoked together.

Next day we marched up the valley for five hours to Thang-neasie, a very easy march through cultivation all the way; some of the crops were being cut. We got some apples here of very fair quality, the flesh has a reddish tinge like that in blood oranges; the same species of apple we afterwards found in nearly every part of Turkistan.

From Thangneasia the road enters a gorge, after which the valley becomes more stony and loses its rich character; oats and peas take the place of Indian-corn.

Just before reaching Mazar Urzi, the Askam Salgam nullah is passed, up which runs a road leading to Mamoukh in the Tiznaf valley, but said not to be as good as the road we had come. At Mazar Urzi three valleys meet, and towards the head of the southern one, high fir-clad hills appear; we met many donkeys coming from that direction laden with pine poles to be used in the making of a bazar at Kargallick.

19. From Mazar Urzi the road turns west, passing the Wakhie village of Dungiar; the Takhta Dawan (11,900) is crossed, a very easy pass covered with grass at the time we crossed it (September 9th) and well wooded.

The inhabitants of Dungiar own large quantities of sheep, and about the village there is a little cultivation.

On the top of the pass there was an encampment of Wakhie yourts and a ziarat.

After descending the Takhta Dawan the road enters an extremely narrow gorge with most enormous cliffs each side; nowhere have I seen cliffs to equal them. Rising straight up from each side of the narrow gorge they almost shut out the light and create a perpetual gloom. An artist wishing to illustrate Dante's inferno could not do better than put in some illustrations of this gorge.

20. Eghi Zarak Kurghan, the next camp, is a small fort and custom-house placed at the junction of three valleys.

The fort is rectangular, 49 yards by 64 yards; walls 12 feet high, made of mud and round stones plastered over; base 6 feet thick, top  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot thick, loop-holed for musketry; ditch 5 feet deep, 12 feet wide.

The inside is filled up with native houses; it is completely commanded on the east by hills 250 yards distant, and on the west by hills 100 yards distant.

There is no garrison, but several officials connected with the copper smelting which is carried on here have their quarters in the fort. These officials, although Muhammadans, wore pigtails, a custom they had learnt from their Chinese



masters. It was the first time I had ever seen a Muhammadan with a pigtail, and it astonished me, but afterwards I found that it was a common custom in Chinese Turkistan.

21. The small stream that flows past the fort contains small fish that take a fly readily, and are excellent eating.

22. There is a bridle path from here to Yarkand. The natives called it five days' journey, but I fancy laden ponies would take considerably longer as the first part of the road at least is certain to be very bad going, and the Turkis have very liberal ideas as to what constitutes a day's march.

23. From Egli Zarak Kurghan the road to Sarikol runs up a valley between rounded hills with a good deal of grass and some bold cliffs showing here and there. At the head of the valley the Arpatalla Dawan, 12,725, is crossed, and a valley with scattered patches of cultivation is followed down to Langar, a small village just below the junction of the Tung and Yarkand rivers. The village is situated at the mouth of a nullah in the middle of a patch of rich cultivation and half hidden by apricot and willow trees. The hills about are perfectly barren and very precipitous, the Yarkand river flowing in places between cliffs which rise sheer up from the water's edge, thus shutting out all communication along the banks of the river.

24. The ferry is about a mile above the village: no rafts are kept ready, but when wanted they are made by the villagers of a framework of willow or poplar poles, to which are lashed a number of inflated skins; a horse is used to tow the raft across the river; the way he is harnessed is very peculiar. A knot is made in his tail through which the loop of the rope which is tied to the raft is passed; then a stick being inserted in the loop the rope is pulled taut. A man strapped to a mussuck swims beside the horse and by splashing water keeps him straight.

How our things all got over safely has been a puzzle to me ever since. When the raft got into the full force of the current it swayed about in the most uncomfortable manner, threatening to turn over every minute. However, 'all well that ends well,' and right thankful were we when our baggage was all over—everything wet but nothing missing.

However, we had been all day about it and it was too late to go on to Tung that evening.

The river is of a dirty grey colour, evidently full of shale; later in the year it is fordable.

25. On the west bank of the river we were met by Ablasum, the Beg of Sarikol, who wanted to see our passports; he was accompanied by a lot of followers. Ablasum Beg is supposed to be imbecile, and is given to fits of uncontrollable passion, in which he is said to have killed several men.

We were warned not to let him handle our guns, or, if we did, to be careful not to let him have any cartridges, as he very likely would desire to try his skill on some of the on-lookers. Though he treated us with great civility and seemed mild and harmless enough, he is certainly of weak intellect, and I dare say the stories we heard about his fits of rage were true enough. Kasim Beg, his son, who lives at Tashkurghan, is the real ruler of the country. Tung village is situated in the south side of the Tung river; the valley near the village is very fertile; it is situated between enormous cliffs. It is impossible to say where the village begins and ends, as like many Turkistan villages it consists of a number of scattered farmhouses. The Beg's house is situated about 4 miles from the junction of the rivers and might be considered the centre of the village.

Cattle of poor quality and most excellent sheep are plentiful.

26. Of course we had to pay the Beg a visit; he received us in a square building, something like a small courtyard, the roof open in the centre and supported by pillars round the sides where the floor was raised. We were seated on a handsome Khoten carpet, and invited to partake of the inevitable dastarkhan, consisting of masses of boiled mutton, huge slabs of bread and wooden bowls filled with curds. After we had made a pretext of eating and expressed our satisfaction, the eatables were passed on to the servants who made a clean sweep of everything, and we took our leave after exchanging the usual polite and meaningless speeches.

27. From Tung the river runs almost due west up the stony bed of the Tung river; the ponies stagger and tumble

about amongst the rocks in the most heartrending manner; several of ours broke down, being quite unable to get along under their loads, and were brought into camp late at night. I should strongly advise any future travellers to hire yaks from Tung to the west side of the Kotli-i-Kandhar; in any case yaks are absolutely necessary for the pass.

There are scattered patches of cultivation here and there on the road, but in most places the valley is little better than a narrow gorge between high cliffs which open out near the head of the river.

28. There were some slaves working in the fields; we were told they had been stolen from Gilgit, but were well treated and had no wish to return, having married and quietly settled down in the country of their compulsory adoption. On the east side of the Kotli-i-Kandhar, at an elevation of 12,000 feet, is the small Kirghiz encampment of Rahbut; grass is plentiful, but there is no wood; we hired our yaks from here to go over the pass. On the south some fine snowy peaks show up against the sky, but a bitterly cold wind rather damps one's enthusiasm for the picturesque. Great numbers of snow cock were calling all round and to be seen running about amongst the rocks; sometimes they would come sailing overhead, crossing from one side of the valley to the other.

29. The tracks of ibex were to be seen, and the cliffs about looked the perfect *beau ideal* of ibex ground.

30. From Rahbut a path runs over the Kotli-i-Kandhar till near the top it is easy-going, a gradual ascent, stony in parts, but nothing compared to parts of the road from Tung to Rahbut. We had begun to congratulate ourselves on the easiness of the pass, when on approaching the top we found as nasty a bit to get laden animals over as anyone could wish to see, thus proving the truth of the old adage that it does not do to holloa till out of the wood.

This bit of the road, though only 150 yards long, took us about three hours to cross; the ponies having almost to be carried over, all hands had to work their hardest, lifting the ponies when they fell, dragging them over bad bits by the

head, and holding tight on to their tails to keep them from going over the cliffs.

The elevation, about 17,000, added greatly to the exertion for man and beast, sometimes the ponies would lie down and simply refuse to get up, and would have to be lifted on to their legs only to go a few paces and plump down again.

From the west side of the summit a magnificent view is obtained of a snowy range on the other side of the valley; the two ranges seem to close in and meet on the south, thus forming a glorious amphitheatre of snowy peaks. One very conspicuous peak bears  $266^{\circ}$ .

The descent of the pass to the camping ground of Shaidan presents no particular difficulties, the path gradually winding its way down. At Shaidan grass and water are found, but no wood; however, the want of the latter is made up by a plentiful supply of boortsa (*Eurotia*).

31. From Shaidan we descended the valley of the Wachi river, a small stream that joins the Yarkand river at Baldir. As the valley opens out, cultivation is met with, but trees are scarce, and generally the cultivation is of a poor character.

32. There is a flimsy sort of fort in the valley, called Sharap Kurgan; it is about 50 yards square, made of stones, mud, and some sun-dried bricks, but is very much neglected. The appearance of the houses in this valley shows that the people live in considerable dread of their neighbours—the Kirghiz on the west and the Kunjuts on the south. Instead of the scattered farmhouses of the Tiznaf and other valleys the houses are crowded together and present more or less of a fortified appearance. Some little time ago the Chinese supplied the Sarikolies with 200 matchlocks to defend themselves with. About  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles above the fort is a striking looking Mazar situated on the top of a pyramid-like rock at the junction of three valleys, the westernmost of which leads to Marrian.

33. From this valley the Tashkurghan valley is reached by crossing the Ogriat Pass, 14,400, very easy, and descending to a place in the Taghdumbash valley, about 6 miles above Tashkurghan Fort.

## Chapter II.—The Taghdumbash and journey thence to Yarkand.

1. The valley of the Taghdumbash river extends from Tashkurghan to the Kunjerab Pass, with a branch on the west known as the Karachunkar valley, and a smaller on the east up which runs the road to Raskam. As far as the ruins of the old fort of Kurghan-i-Ujadbhai the average breadth is 3 to 4 miles, after that it gradually narrows; the Karachunkar branch is much narrower, probably being nowhere more than a mile wide, and generally much less. The aspect of the valley is bleak and dreary in the extreme, grass in patches along the river and boortsa scattered about the hills being almost the only vegetation, though higher up the valleys, near the head of the Karachunkar valley, for instance, the crisp grass of the Pamirs (*Stipa pennata*) is plentiful; it seems to be an extremely nourishing grass.

2. The only attempt at anything like cultivation above Tashkurghan consists of a few scattered patches of poor looking barley about Dubda and Khusghum. The inhabitants of the upper parts of the valley are Kirghiz living in yourts and changing their quarters according to the time of year; their wealth consists of large numbers of sheep, yaks, camels, and horses; in the lower part of the valley the inhabitants are Sarikolics. In the Karachunkar branch Kuch Muhammad Beg is the Aksakal of the Kirghiz, while in the Kunjerab branch Akal Jan holds sway. We found both of them very civil and willing to do all in their power to be of use, but Kuch Muhammad was said to be on too good terms with the Kunjuts to bear a good name amongst his other neighbours, but we heard rumours that he had fallen out with his old friends. These rumours were subsequently confirmed, and I heard in Kashgar that a raid had been made by the Kunjuts and he and all his tribe carried off into slavery.

3. The Kunjuts are a perfect scourge to all law-abiding people in their neighbourhood; no trust can be put on their

word; sometimes they profess themselves subjects of the Maharaja of Kashmir, and as such under British protection, and then immediately afterwards send delegates and tribute to the Chinese. But in the matter of tribute as a rule they take a good deal more than they give. I heard of two of them appearing in the Kargallick district and demanding tribute. The Beg wrote to the Amban of Kargallick asking whether he ought to seize the men and send them in as prisoners, or whether he ought to pay the money. The Amban answered: "Pay the money and don't let me hear anything about it." When Kuch Muhammad Beg was carried off, the Chinese wrote several letters demanding that the Kunjuts should set free all their prisoners, but their letters were simply treated with contempt. As far as I can see there is only one thing for us to do to insure quiet on that frontier and protect our trade route to Yarkand, and that is to inflict summary punishment on Safdar Ali Khan and his tribe the very first time they misbehave towards any British subjects. One great reason of their insolence is an absurd idea of their own strength and invulnerability; the sooner they are set right on that point the better for every one concerned.

4. We ascended the Taghdumbash valley for two days and then struck up the Karachunkar nullah on the west; just inside is the Kirghiz encampment of Chaddartash. From there in three days we reached the camping ground of Kukturruk just north of the Wakhies Jai Pass. After shooting there for some time, and not getting as many Ovis Poli as we would have liked to have got, we retraced our way down the valley to the junction and ascended the Kunjerab branch.

5. Mr. Dauvergne, however, left us at Kukturruk, his intention being to cross the pass and return *via* Gilgit and Chitral to Kashmir. Having made a fair bag of Ovis Poli on the Kunjerab, though we had to work very hard for it, as at this time of year with the very first streak of light they retreat to the highest peaks and remain there all day, we started down the valley *en route* for Yarkand.

6. On the road we went a few miles out of our way to visit Captain Grombcheffski and Dr. Conrad who were camped at Uluk Su.

Their intention was to go through Raskam to Ladakh, and thence through Chang Chemmo to the Polu road; however, we heard afterwards that they had tried to go from Shahidulla to Polu across the high tableland that intervenes, but all their ponies died, and after suffering great hardships and enduring intense cold, they had returned to Shahidulla. Captain Grombcheffski has proved himself an intrepid traveller, and struck me as being the *beau ideal* of a traveller. I regretted exceedingly that we were not able to be longer together.

7. Marching down the valley to Tashkurghan, a magnificent view of the Tagharma, or as the natives call it the Mustagh Owlia, is obtained. Tashkurghan, a mud fort, is situated on the left bank of the river which is broken up into several small streams running through a flat plain.

The fort is about 120 yards in length by 100 yards in breadth, but of a rather irregular shape; the walls in some places are much higher than in others, the east side on the high bank of the river being the lowest; on that side there is a covered way leading down to the river. On every side except the east the ground is much broken up, and would afford excellent cover right up to the walls; there is no ditch.

The entrance is at the north-east corner; the walls are about 12 feet thick at base, and kept in good order; inside it is filled up with native houses.

8. At Tashkurghan we had an opportunity of seeing the game of Ooghlak. It consists of throwing on the ground the body of a goat from which the head and legs have been severed; the players then endeavour to pick it up without dismounting; whoever is successful in picking it up gallops off, the rest follow and endeavour to take it from him. As a game it struck me as being much slower and tamer than polo.

9. At Tashkurghan we waited three days to allow Captain Younghusband to catch us up, and after one more day's halt, to talk over our experiences, we took the road to Yar-

kand *viá* the Chichlik Pass, and he turned south to the Kungjerab.

10. The road over the Chichlik consists of a rough stony ascent on the west side, a long level snowy stretch on the top, and then a gradual descent as far as the camp of Kugiar; the road is very bad, more especially the first march after the Chichlik Pass where it runs down the stony bed of the Tangitar defile. In Yakoob Beg's time a path was made over the water in the worst part of the defile by letting beams into the cliffs on each side, but under Chinese Government the only signs of where the path existed are the holes cut in the cliff in which the beams rested. In this defile there are a great number of hot springs. The worst part of the road is over when Nadramat Kurghan is reached; after that the nullah opens out a bit, and at Past Rabat there is a little cultivation. At Teksikerik and Kugiar—a camping ground not to be confounded with the town of Kugiar—the water is decidedly salt, and from the latter place to Yakir Ak Kurghan we had to do a  $13\frac{1}{2}$  hours' march, as there was no water at all on the road. The road was all down-hill and good going, or we would have been much longer on the road. The fort of Yakir Ak Kurghan is situated in the plains amidst cultivation and irrigation canals; it is rectangular, 100 paces by 100 paces, small bastions at corners, walls 9 feet thick, made of mud and kept in fair order; the ditch is about 30 feet broad at top, 12 feet deep, and 6 feet broad at bottom; it is commanded by the parapet. On each side of the entrance, which is on the south side, the walls are immensely thickened. On the high ground to the west, about 900 yards off, are situated two look-out towers. There are no troops, but it contains a custom-house. Copper smelting is carried on, the ore being brought from a place in the hills a day's march off.

11. From Yakir Ak Kurghan to Yarkand, which we reached on the 13th November, the road runs through a richly cultivated level country cut up by innumerable irrigation canals, which are bordered by rows of willow and poplar trees.



12. At Yarkand we rested till the 25th, being visited all day and every day by Turkis, Hindus, Cashmiris, Afghans, &c. Here, as in every town in Turkistan, any natives of India that might happen to be in the place, directly they hear of the arrival of an Englishman, hasten to pay their respects and ask if they might be of use. Travelling in Central Asia, it is very gratifying to hear the great respect that is entertained everywhere for the British rule in India, not only by British subjects, but Russian and Chinese subjects who have travelled in India are just as loud in their praises as the Hindus are.

13. The second day after our arrival at Yarkand we rode through both the old and new cities on our way to pay a visit to the Amban; it was market day, and the whole place was crowded with people, while on every side melons, peaches, and grapes were exhibited, and from the quantity of beef and mutton to be seen I judged the people to be great meat-eaters. A few pheasants also were to be seen hanging up in the shops.

14. The Amban received us with the usual ceremony of opening three doors, and we were supplied with weak tea of a decidedly aromatic flavour.

The childishness of the questions he asked rather astonished me, but at that time I was new to the Chinese and did not understand the marvellous armour-plating of ignorance and conceit in which a Chinaman lives. Subsequently I exhibited no surprise whatever on being asked by a mandarin if India was near Peking, or if England was a tributary province of China.

15. In Chinese territory one occasionally sees thieves going about with huge wooden collars on, or one foot stuck through an enormous lump of wood which is held together by iron hoops. I was told that such a thing as a culprit taking it off and bolting was unknown; probably the fact that should he do so and be recaptured the punishment would be death acts as a deterrent.

16. At Yarkand I was asked to doctor a man with a broken leg; the circumstances under which his leg was

broken are as follows :—The Chinese have a thing called the kanōch ; it consists of a piece of wood with some writing, and is considered emblematical of the law. This is paraded through the streets, and every one has to make obeisance to it, the men seated in their shops rising, and those on horseback dismounting. A party of Chinese soldiers armed with clubs accompany it, and strike anyone who may appear dilatory. The man who wanted to be doctored happened to be on horseback, talking to a friend, and did not see that the kanōch was approaching ; the first intimation he received was a blow from a club that broke his leg.

17. The Yangi Shahr of Yarkand is of the same pattern as all the other Chinese forts, with two gates, one on the east and one on the west ; it is joined to the old city on the east by a bazaar.

18. East of the city there is a large jheel in which fair snipe and duck shooting is to be got. Brahminy duck, which however are not worth shooting, are to be got in thousands.

### Chapter III.—Travels in search of Dad Muhammad.

1. From Yarkand Major Cumberland departed by the Maralbashi road to look for stags, while I, having received orders to endeavour to catch Dad Muhammad, started for Kashgar. I must say that at the time, considering that the murder had been committed eighteen months before, I thought it rather a wild-goose chase; but subsequent events showed that Captain Ramsay, with whom the idea had originated, knew well what he was about.

2. Just before leaving Yarkand I heard from Muhammad Yunnus, Aksakal of the Badakshis, that the murderer had been seen four days' march from Balkh. I at once despatched two men through Balkh to follow him up, and supplied them with a letter written in Persian and addressed to all the Amir's authorities, requesting that in the event of their requiring assistance they might receive it.

3. The story of the murder as related to me by an eye-witness is as follows:—Dalgleish with some Boti servants and a party of Andijanies\* started from Leh for Yarkand. Some few marches out they were joined by Dad Muhammad, a Kakar Pathan, who had been detained in Leh. They all travelled along peaceably together, and on the fifth day after he had joined them, *i.e.*, the 8th April 1888, they reached the north side of the Karakorum. Dalgleish was ahead of most of them, and when my informant reached the camp he found Dalgleish had trodden a firm place in the snow and pitched his tent. The Andijanies then pitched their tent, taking Dalgleish's advice as to a good place. Afterwards, when they were seated in their tent drinking tea, Dad Muhammad who had no tent of his own being amongst the number, they were joined by Dalgleish; they rose up and invited him to sit down and have some; he told them not to move, that he had already had his tea, but would sit down with them, and to show that there was no ill-feeling he would take a little piece of bread.

\* Russian Mussalman subjects from Ferghana.

The conversation then turned on Dad Muhammad's affairs. He was deeply in debt at the time, and Dalgleish advised him to try and earn a livelihood by doing caravan work between Shahidulla and Yarkand, and above all to live quietly and restrain his hospitality. Dad Muhammad said, "yes, but we have a proverb that no man ever ruined himself by kindness to others." Dalgleish said "yes, that is true, and kindness to others is remembered in the next world, but still I advise you to practise economy."

Shortly after this Dad Muhammad rose. Dalgleish asked him where he was going; he said, "I will be back directly" and went out. Immediately afterwards he lifted up the edge of the tent behind where Dalgleish was sitting, put in the muzzle of his gun, and fired. The bullet passed through the fleshy part of Dalgleish's right shoulder. As he was struck he staggered forward and uttered a cry, then rose and endeavoured to escape to his tent, but Dad Muhammad attacked him with a sword, cutting at him most savagely. Dalgleish caught the blade in his hands, but of course it was easily pulled through them. At last he received a blow on the back of his head, which brought him to the ground on his face; the murderer then continued hacking at him till all was still.

It is impossible to realize the cowardice and apathy of the Boties and Andijanians. Dalgleish's dog showed them an example, flying at the murderer and seizing him by the leg, but they had not the pluck to follow.

It makes one's blood boil to think of Dalgleish—a man more universally beloved never lived—being brutally hacked to death, his dog his only faithful friend, while a lot of men stood idly looking on.

4. The murderer continued his journey to Yarkand. While he was there, the Hindoo and other merchants endeavoured to have him arrested, news of the murder having reached Yarkand at the time; but the Chinese with their usual apathy refused to do anything. From there he went to Kashgar, resting there several days during which he appeared before a mandarin to answer a claim made against him by Mocheidin,

a Kashgarian; and although Mr. Petrovsky, the Russian Consul, repeatedly urged the Chinese to arrest him, they did nothing, and eventually he continued his route to Aksu.

At Aksu the Chinese were again urged to arrest him, but it was of no use; they utterly refused to do anything.

5. On my arrival at Kashgar I went to see Mr. Lutsch, the Acting Russian Consul, Mr. Petrovsky being away on leave. He kindly gave me all the information he had, but was unable to say where the murderer was likely to be, as rumours of his having been seen had come from almost every direction.

6. However, my Yarkand informant seemed very positive in his statement, so I decided to send two men through Russian territory to try and head off the murderer should he make north from Balkh. I supplied them with a letter written in French and English addressed to all Russian officers, and requesting that, in the event of their requiring assistance, they might be granted it. Having done this I started towards Aksu to make enquiries.

7. At Aksu the Mussulman or old town is situated 7 miles north of the Yangi Shahr or Chinese town; both lie low with a barren ridge between them.

The Yangi Shahr is of much the same pattern as all the other forts of Chinese Turkistan, and like the others it is kept in good repair, but its strategic importance is much diminished by being nearly surrounded by houses. About a mile to the south-east is a small detached fort.

8. In the serai where I put up I was much annoyed by Chinese who came swarming into my room, laughing and jabbering in the most insolent manner. I began by requesting them as politely as possible to leave; but my requests were only treated with derision, so I found it necessary to eject them rather roughly. After that they stood afar off, jabbering like so many monkeys, and making, I have no doubt, most uncomplimentary remarks about the "Foreign Devil;" but they did not come into my room again. When travelling in Chinese territory the great desideratum is to be

absolutely ignorant of the language; even a very little knowledge would be a dangerous thing for any one not possessing an absolutely angelic temper.

9. The information I received at Aksu about the murderer confirmed the story I had previously heard. It appeared that from Aksu he had doubled back by Ushturfan through the country inhabited by Kirghiz, between Russian and Chinese posts. However, just as I was leaving I heard of a man answering his description who lived in the jungles near Karashahr and only entered the town on market days to sell wood. Determined not to leave a stone unturned, I decided to continue my journey east. Having arrived at Kuchar, I sent a man on to see if it was the murderer, telling him to bring or send me word *viá* Shahyar, as I judged that if I pursued the main road any further the news of an Englishman's coming would spread and the murderer, if there, would decamp.

10. At Shahyar, a scattered kind of village with 4,000 to 5,000 houses in the district, there is a good deal of cultivation. I rested here two days and then started east through the jungles. The country consists of a seemingly endless plain, through which meander several rivers, dry at this season; it is covered with a tall feathery grass known to the natives as Kumosch (*Phragmites communis*); it is also well wooded, the commonest tree being *Populus euphratica*.

11. The inhabitants consist entirely of shepherds, living in huts scattered along the banks of the rivers. Some men own enormous numbers of sheep. I was told of one man who owned as many as ten thousand. There are a few cattle, humpless like all the cattle of Turkistan, and of very inferior quality.

12. In the jungles are found tigers, the so-called maral stag, a mere local variety of the Kashmir stag; in Turki they are called Bogha, the name maral only being applied to the female. Foxes (*Vulpes fluvescens*) and spotted wild cats (*Felis torquata*) are also to be found.

The gazelle (*Guttorosa*) does not seem to be so common as it is further west.

The wild camel, which has two small humps and is generally smaller than the tame one, is found on the borders of the great desert.

Fair pheasant shooting is to be got. The pheasant is almost identical with the English one; a kind of grey partridge (*Perdrix barbatus*) is also found about the borders of any little bit of cultivation; he is a noble bird, rising freely, quite unlike his Indian cousin.

13. The inhabitants of the Kuchar and Bugur districts take their flocks north to the mountain in summer, firing large patches of the grass before leaving; but the people of the Lob district remain down all the year round, though, I believe, those about Lobnor go to the hills to the south in summer.

The Lob people seem to be much less civilized than their neighbours; their houses are made of the Kumosh grass, and their principal food is fish, of which they catch great quantities in the rivers and lagoons. The Chinese never visit the country, but I heard that they intended to found a city there, that is to say, a place where taxes can be collected.

14. After crossing to the north of the Chian river, there is less grass, the country consisting mostly of dead and dying forests. Immense quantities of decaying timber lie about, which come in useful for camp fires.

The Yangi Darya, which is said to have existed for only ten years, flows through a marshy bed covered with long grass. I made repeated enquiries after leaving Shahyar as to the existence of the two lakes, Shari Kamisch and Raba Kul, which are marked in all maps, but could not find anyone who had ever heard of them.

15. From Bugur I returned to Kuchar. On the road a beautiful view of the Thian Shan is occasionally obtained; they well deserve their name of the celestial or heavenly mountains; the foot of the mountains being hid by a haze of much the same colour as the sky above, and the snowy peaks between showing out clear, they appear as if suspended in the air.

16. The Yangi Shahr of Kuchar, which is situated half a mile from the old city, is of the ordinary Chinese pattern, and has a small detached fort 100 yards by 100 yards, and without ditch, 100 yards distant from the wall on the north side.

Between the old town, which is also walled, and the Yangi Shahr there is a bazaar, and in almost every direction the town has grown outside the walls. Supplies of all sorts are plentiful and wonderfully cheap.

17. I heard that before the Tunganie insurrection the Chinese had sent an order to massacre all the Tunganies, but the letter fell into the hands of a Tunganie who showed it to his fellow clansmen; they straightway rose and killed all the Chinese.

18. While at Kuchar a man offered to show me a subterranean town, provided I would go there in the middle of the night, as he was frightened of getting into trouble with the Chinese if it was known that he had taken a European there; I readily agreed, and we started off in the dark.

The same man procured me a packet of old manuscripts written on birch bark that had been dug out of the foot of one of the curious old erections, of which several are to be found in the Kuchar district; there is also one on the north bank of the river at Kashgar.

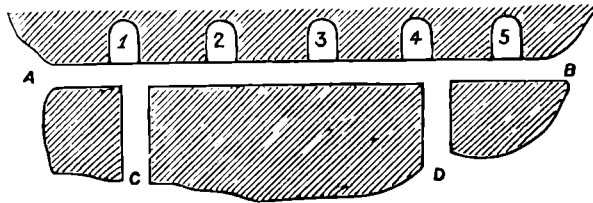
These erections are generally about 50 or 60 feet high and broad in proportion, resembling somewhat in shape a huge cottage loaf; they are solid, and it is difficult to conceive for what purpose they were erected; they are principally composed of sun-dried bricks, with layers of beams now crumbling away. Judging from the weather-beaten appearance they possess, and taking into consideration that in Turkistan the rainfall and snowfall are almost nominal, they must be very old indeed. The natives attribute them to King Afrasiab, a contemporary of Rustam's who ruled over a kingdom corresponding to the present Chinese Turkistan; but I found that they had a habit of attributing everything ancient to King Afrasiab. The subterranean ruins of Mingoi, to which my guide had promised to take me, are situated about 16 miles from Kuchar on the banks of the Shabiyar



river, and are said to be the remains of Afrasiab's capital; the town must have been of considerable extent, but has been considerably reduced by the action of the river.

On the cliffs on the left bank, high up in mid-air, may be seen the remains of the houses still hanging on to the face of the cliff.

One of the houses I entered was shaped as under



A, B represents a tunnel 60 yards long by 4 broad through a tongue-shaped hill; C and D are the entrances, the hill being almost perpendicular at A and B; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are cells, 6 feet by 6 feet, the walls have been plastered, and what appear to be the remains of geometrical patterns can be made out.

I was told that the remains of other similar towns may be seen in the district.

In Yakoob Beg's time a lot of gold was dug up.

19. Close to Mingoi is the village of Fyzabad, and from there to Charshamba bazaar the road runs down the side of a canal through a perpetual succession of farmhouses; it might be said that from Fyzabad to Charshamba it is simply one large village.

20. From Charshamba I returned to Shahyar, there to await news from the man I had sent to Karashahr. While there a native killed a tiger in a pitfall; I asked to see the skin, but was put off by continual evasions, the Beg being frightened that I might take it, in which case he would be severely punished by the Amban, who expected all rare skins to be given to him.

The absurd timidity of the Turkis encourages the Chinese in their exactions; the Chinese are a bad people to run away from. At Kuchar the natives were loud in their complaints

of the tyranny and incapacity of their masters. One subject on which they were particularly bitter was the compulsory unpaid work in the copper mines.

21. As a specimen of Chinese Government, I may mention that the owner of the serai at Kuchar, in which I put up, immediately after my departure was had up and flogged in a most unmerciful manner for not having reported my arrival, notwithstanding the fact that I had sent a message to the Amban by the Beg of the district to which the town in which the serai was situated belongs, to report my arrival and tell the Amban that owing to my intended departure early next morning, I would be unable to call on him, but should he desire it, would send my passport.

22. On the 6th March I crossed the river on the ice 12 miles south of Shahyar; it was rather risky work, as the ice was showing signs of breaking up, and a man and a bullock endeavouring to cross had been drowned two days previously; however, my caravan got safely over. The river is about 100 yards broad and apparently very deep. During the summer it is crossed in boats, of which there are several at different places. Along the banks of the river the country is of the same character as east of Shahyar—forest and tall grass intermingled, and shepherds' stations scattered about.

23. Some of the natives keep the Burkot or golden eagle for hunting; it is a fine bird and shows capital sport both with the gazelle and foxes; it does not dart off like a hawk, but flies comparatively slowly and takes some time to come up to the gazelle; the sportsmen have to ride as hard as their horses can carry them, as the eagle only settles on the gazelle's quarters, and knocks him over, and unless somebody is well up, and dismounting, seizes the gazelle, he gets away, as the eagle cannot hold him, and he is soon going as fast as ever, while the eagle once on the ground won't rise again. It is a sport that reminded me much of pigsticking; the country is much the same, and as in pigsticking spills are not at all uncommon.

24. A day's march south of the shepherds' station of Bashkeok are the remains of the ancient town of Shahr-i-

Khuttuk buried in the sand. Wild camels are to be found in the neighbourhood.

25. In the forests a great deal of damage is done by the shepherds, who cut down young trees in the most reckless way in order to feed their flocks on the leaves. Should ever Eastern Turkistan fall into the hands of a European power, the first thing to do would be the formation of a Forest Department. It would break the heart of a forest officer to see the thousands of straight growing young trees that have been ruthlessly sacrificed—trees that are the very life of the country, as forming a bulwark against the encroachments of the Gobi desert.

26. The story of the formation of the desert, as told by the natives, is that formerly where the desert now stands was a kingdom, in which were situated four hundred and fifteen towns and villages, but that four hundred years ago a great sandstorm came from the east. It only lasted twenty-four hours, but during that time the whole country was buried, and has remained a desert ever since. Superstition meanwhile has been at work, and it is believed that all sorts of nameless horrors would happen to any one bold enough to endeavour to pierce the mystery that hangs over the country, while stories are told of houses with golden gates and untold buried wealth.

27. Pursuing the way along the bank of the river and crossing the bed of the Khoten river dry at this season of the year (March) the ferry of Khoten Khema is reached.

The river here varies in breadth, something under a 100 yards being the average, depth 12 feet, current 2·6 miles per hour. There are two roughly-made boats—one carries eight ponies, the other one pony.

28. From Khoten Khema to the village of Matan, near which there are some buried ruins, the country is of a much poorer character than that south of the river, the jungle being mere scrub and little or no grass.

29. The Aksu river is crossed here by a ferry, at which there are two boats, each capable of taking six ponies; the width and current are much the same as the Yarkand river, but the depth is only about half. After crossing the river

a well-cultivated country is reached, stretching as far as 6 miles west of Awat, and intersected by numerous canals.

30. From Awat I followed the course of the Kashgar river as far as the main road from Kashgar. The country is mostly forest, very little grazing, and almost entirely uninhabited; there is a road to the south of the river to Pitchiksindi, but I was advised not to go by it as there is no water. At the small village of Duchune there are the remains of one of the serais of the old Chinese road to Peking.

Continuing along the bank of the river, I reached the main road at Yaka Kuduk and thence by Maralbashi returned to Kashgar.

31. At Maralbashi there is a rectangular fort of which each side measures 500 paces; it is situated at the west end of the bazaar; the walls are very high, about 28 feet, and faced with brick; at the corners there are bastions surmounted by small towers. Like all the other Chinese forts, it is immensely strengthened round the gates, and the outer gate is not in the prolongation of the inner one.

32. On the 1st April I reached Kashgar. Signs of spring were to be seen on every side, and after the long winter, during which the thermometer even in the plains had been as low as  $10\frac{1}{2}$  degrees below zero and the minimum average had been zero in January and  $6^{\circ}$  in February, the change was very welcome.

At Kashgar the Russians told me that they had never had the thermometer below zero.

33. The city, or Kounia Shahr, of Kashgar is surrounded by a mud wall about 10 to 20 feet thick, 24 feet high, and crowned with two small loopholed walls, one on the inside and one on the outside, and has flanking towers.

There is cover right up to the walls on almost every side, the cover on the north being the best. There are three gates, one on the north, one on the south, and one on the east. On the north-west part of the walls of the ancient city are still standing, and on that side against the *enceinte* is a small barrack occupied by a detachment of Chinese soldiers. On the site of the ancient city the Chinese soldiers have

gardens. The Chinese army shines in gardening, and produces most excellent vegetables.

34. At Kashgar a monument has recently been put up by Mr. Petrovsky on the spot where Schlagentweit was murdered. The story goes that Schlagentweit was brought from Yarkand to Kashgar by Wallie Khan's soldiers. When brought in front of Wallie Khan he was questioned as to why he had come and where he was going; he answered that he was going to Khokand with presents to the Khan. Wallie Khan then ordered him to give up the presents, which he refused to do, saying that he would only give them up to the Khan of Khokand for whom they were intended. Upon this Wallie Khan ordered him to be executed. I heard several other stories of Wallie Khan's brutalities; he appears to have been a perfect fiend, even in comparison with other Central Asian potentates.

35. The Yangi Shahr of Kashgar is much the best and strongest fortress in Turkistan; it is of an irregular shape, with flanking towers at intervals; the wall is about 26 feet high, 60 feet thick at base, and 20 at top, where there is a wall 6 feet high, loopholed for musketry; the ditch, which was dry when I saw it, is about 30 feet wide, 20 deep, an easy slope down to the bottom both sides; on the inside there is a wall 6 feet high on the edge of the ditch. The garrison consists of about two thousand men, which furnish a detachment for the small fort on the north of the Kounia Shahr; it is a very insufficient garrison for such a large fort, the circumference being about 4,000 yards.

At the gates, of which there are three—one on the north, one on the south, and one on the east—the walls are immensely thickened, and as in all other forts I have seen in Turkistan there are two gates, the outer not being in the prolongation of the inner, and the guards stationed between. Over each gate there is a Chinese pagoda-like erection with bells at the corners.

The doors are of wood, clamped with iron, and 6 inches thick.

The interior is crowded with houses, and contains the residence of the Zoung Toung, or local Commander-in-Chief.

On the road to the city, about half mile distant, there is a small detached fort occupied by one hundred and twenty Sart soldiers, and 150 yards south-east is another small detached fort occupied by Tungani soldiers. There were several hundreds of them, but lately the Government has sent a large number to Maralbashi, the policy being to gradually send them all east.

The only open side is the west. Round the outside of the north gate and close up to it there are buildings and enclosures loopholed for musketry. Close to the east gate there are native buildings, and some enclosures 300 yards from the south gate. The forts in Turkistan are of very considerable strength and well kept up, but in all cases there is excellent cover to be got right up to the walls.

36. While in Kashgar I got a letter from one of the two men I had despatched through Russian territory, announcing the capture of Dad Muhammad. By a lucky chance they had found him in Samarkand; went to the Russian Governor and presented the letter I had given them, requesting that in the event of their discovering the murderer they might receive assistance in apprehending him; the necessary assistance was promptly supplied, and the prisoner was lodged in jail, there to await extradition. I at once wrote to our ambassador at St. Petersburg, stating all the particulars of the capture, and requesting that arrangements might be made to hand the prisoner over to me either in Batoum or Kashgar, at the same time recommending Kashgar, as marching the prisoner through a country in which he and his deeds were so well known would have had a most beneficial effect.

37. While awaiting an answer, I received the following letter from M. Lutsch, Acting Russian Consul at Kashgar:—

*Kashgar, 1-13 Juin 1890.*

Mon cher Monsieur,

Il y a quelque temps vous m'aviez appris que vous vous étiez adressé à l'Ambassade de la Grande-Bretagne à St. Pétersbourg pour l'extradi-

tion du meurtrier de feu Mr. A. Dalgleish. Je viens de recevoir la nouvelle que le did meurtrier est décédé dans la prison de Samarcande, où il s'est pendu.

Vous faisant part de cette nouvelle, je vous prie Monsieur de bien vouloir agréer, &c., &c., &c.

A Mr. H. BOWER,

(Signé) J. LUTSCH.

*Lieutenant du 17 Regiment  
du Bengal.*

Amongst Pathans suicide is very rare, and his having resorted to it was a fortunate thing in some ways for Russia, as handing him over to me would, to the uneducated Central Asians, have appeared like knocking under to England and would have made them extremely unpopular with many Mahomedans, and above all with the Afghans. There was nothing now for me to do but to start home again, which I did at once, reaching Leh on the 20th July and Simla the 16th August.





## Chapter IV.—Turkistan generally.

The country of Turkistan consists of a high plateau at an elevation of about 4,000 feet, enclosed on the south by the Himalayas and Kuen Luen, on the west by the Pamir, culminating in the Tagharma or Mustagh Owlia Peak (25,360), and on the north by the Thian Shan. In these mountains numerous rivers rise, but none of their waters reach the sea; the larger ones combine to form Lobnor, and the smaller ones lose themselves partly in irrigation canals and partly in the great stretch of desert which occupies the centre of the country.

2. The towns mostly situated near the foot of the hills are placed in the midst of patches of very rich cultivation, the oasis of Kashgar, for instance, being simply a huge garden.

3. The principal crops are Indian-corn, barley, wheat, rice, and lucerne grass; the latter crop on good ground yields five cuttings in the year.

4. The Turkis own large numbers of horses, small sturdy animals, well able to do long journeys. They are well fed on dry lucerne grass, a most nourishing food, maize and chopped straw; the great mass of them are never groomed, at the end of a journey being simply allowed to roll; some few riding ponies are clothed at night, but the ordinary ponies, such as those used in the arabas (country carts), never have anything on even in the coldest nights, when the thermometer is several degrees below zero.

5. The Chinese own the best horses in the country, their cavalry being mounted on most serviceable animals; a bit small and slow for our idea of troopers; more the style of horse on which the Cossacks are mounted; hardiness and ability to perform long journeys being their great merit. The Chinese are good horse-masters and fair horsemen.

6. Should we ever wish to raise a corps of mounted riflemen, Turkistan would be the country to procure remounts for them in. The Chinese also own many excellent mules

which are raised in the east about Turfan and in that neighbourhood; they sell for much higher prices than the horses, and some are of a class that would do excellently well for mountain batteries.

7. Donkeys swarm everywhere, and are much used for light caravan work, also carrying wood, grass, &c., into the cities on market days; they are also used for carrying water, two wooden cylinders connected by a stick over the back being slung each side.

8. The cattle, which differ from those of India in being humpless, are of poor quality. No care being taken of them, they have to eke out an existence as best they can on what they can pick up about the stables. Under these circumstances one ceases to wonder at the poor condition they seem invariably to be in.

9. On the northern slopes of the Himalayas, to the west on the Pamirs, on the southern slopes of the Thien Shan, and in the jungles from Maralbashi to Lobnor immense herds of sheep are raised; they are of excellent quality and good size; they have fat tails, but not the huge unwieldy tail of the Afghan doomba. Large quantities of wool are exported, some of it going as far as Marseilles.

10. I believe that there is a considerable amount of mineral wealth in the country; smelting is carried on in many places.

An analysis of a piece of copper as smelted gave—

Insoluble matter	.	.	.	.	0·25	per cent.
Copper	.	.	.	.	97·17	„
Lead	.	.	.	.	0·35	„

and traces of other metals.

11. Gold is found about Khoten, and I have no doubt but that gold mining on scientific principles would give good results in many other places.

12. The Yamboos or silver ingots used in commerce contain a considerable percentage of gold.

13. There is a good deal of jade in the country which is much valued by the Chinese, being used for making cups, mouthpieces for pipes, &c.; most of it comes from about the Karakash river; there is also, according to Grombcheffski, a good deal in Raskam.

14. In the north, about Aksu, coal is found, and iron smelting is carried on at Kizil. Silk is exported especially from Khoten, but it is said to be inferior to the Andijanie silk. The great luxury of Turkistan is the fruit; grapes, melons, peaches, nectarines, apples, pears, and mulberries are found everywhere in great profusion and of excellent quality; cherries are also to be got, but they are scarce and of poor quality.

15. The Turkis live comfortably as a rule, being well clothed and fed; they are great meat-eaters, all the towns being crowded with butchers' shops, in which beef and mutton are displayed; horse-flesh is also eaten. They do not eat the tough, tasteless *chuppatti* that the natives of India love, but make most excellent leavened rolls of fine white flour that would well grace an English breakfast table.

16. They also dress well. The central market place at Kashgar on the occasion of the Eed festival presented the most wonderful kaleidoscope of colours I ever saw; Turkmen, women, and children were dressed out in most gorgeous colours, while intermingled with them were Chinese, Afghans, Andijanies, and all the miscellaneous crowd that go to make up the population of a Central Asian town. A feature of Kashgar is the great number of Kalanders or religious beggars; they are to be seen everywhere demanding charity rather than asking it.

17. As for soldier-like qualities I have met no tribe in Central Asia that could bear comparison for a minute with our Punjab peasantry. Many tribes, such as the Andijanies, for instance, are handsome, well-made men, and on first seeing them one is inclined to think they would make magnificent soldiers, but a very little knowledge of their character is sufficient to show that they are as cowardly a race as any on the face of the earth: so it is with the great mass of the Central Asian inhabitants, some of them only differing in wanting the good looks. As for the Kirghiz, a Yarkundian told me that they were only good at eating meat and sleeping, and certainly their constitutions seem wonderfully adapted to shine in those two accomplishments. I have known a Kirghiz, whom

I had taken out shooting with me, lie down and cry after going a few miles, and I had to take my gun from him and go on alone. Those who have shot in the Punjab know how the meanest coolie out of a village will trudge along the whole day with a gun and a bag of cartridges on his back. The fright the Kirghiz live in of their neighbours, the Kunjuts, themselves only a cowardly band of robbers who bolt on being offered the slightest resistance, shows what sort of men they are.

The difference between the Russian conquests or annexations in Central Asia and our battles in the Punjab serves well to illustrate the difference between the races.

18. Lawlessness and brigandage exist, and have always existed, and many people think that what is only a proof of bad government is a proof of fighting qualities, while nothing could be further from the truth, as a Russian officer remarked to me : " Brigands are never brave." The Tunganies, a sort of Mussulman Chinamen living in the east, may be a little better than the rest, and of the Mongols I have seen so little that I cannot feel myself qualified to give an opinion ; though fighting against us in 1860 they appear to have been the only men in the Chinese army who showed any pluck.

## Chapter V.—Chinese occupation of Turkistan.

1. A considerable amount of misapprehension exists as to the occupation of Turkistan by the Chinese after the crumbling away of Yakoob Beg's power. Nothing could be more absurd than the accounts given by some writers of a highly-disciplined, well-armed, and enormous army manœuvring on the principles of Möltke and Manteuffel, overthrowing by a brilliant and masterful campaign a military power and conquering the country

2. I have seen the Chinese soldiers drilling. The same sort of thing—arms, dresses, and all complete—may be witnessed in any Christmas pantomime. The truth of the matter is that Yakoob Beg, a ruler possessing considerable talents, managed to make a great many enemies in the country; his yoke sat heavy and men began to murmur and say that the Chinese rule, bad as it was, was better than his. Then the Chinese were invited to come back again and after a considerable delay they advanced slowly. Yakoob Beg, with an army who at best were only half-hearted in his cause, while the great mass of the people were perfectly apathetic, advanced to meet them. There was some desultory fighting, in which the Turkis proved their worthlessness as soldiers.

3. One day two messengers, a Kashgarian and an Andjanie, brought Yakoob Beg a letter from the Chinese, in which they asked him why he resisted when his own people were against him and were inviting the Chinese back, and as a proof they enclosed the signatures of two hundred and seventy-two Turkis of position who had written to them. Yakoob Beg then flew into a passion, killed one of the messengers, wounded the Munshi who had read the letter, and then immediately took poison and died.

The above account was related to me by an old Yoozbashi who was in attendance on Yakoob Beg at the time, and after making continued enquiries, I am obliged to believe that it is the true one, though a variation in it, that may probably be true, is that after having the letter read he prepared two cups—one containing poison, the other tea—placed them on

a window sill, and calling to a boy who was his servant, desired him to pass one of the cups, determined with an Oriental's true belief in fate to drink whichever was presented. The boy gave him the poison, and he drank it.

4. Other stories, such as that he was poisoned by Niaz Hakim Beg of Khoten, or by one of his Chinese wives, I believe to be pure fabrications.

5. After Yakoob Beg's death his army fled in all directions, and the Chinese quietly occupied the country. Never was there an army of a more absurd description than the Chinese, a lot of miserable, opium-sodden ragamuffins, unclothed, badly fed, with but few arms, about two old-fashioned muzzle-loaders and a pike to ten men appears to have been the average, though they were well off in the way of flags.

6. The army that took Kashgar consisted of two hundred to three hundred men; gradually, and by driblets, the rest followed.

7. Yarkand fell to five hundred men almost entirely unarmed, and as at Kashgar no opposition was offered. After occupying Kashgar the Chinese exhumed Yakoob Beg's body and burnt it; the place where he was buried is pointed out at the Hazrat Apak,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the city.

8. As for Berdan rifles, for the possession of which some writers have given the Chinese army credit, I believe some of the officers had them, but of many Chinese soldiers who had been in the invading army, I only found one who had any knowledge of such rifles. He is my authority for saying that some of the officers had them.

As for clothes and equipment, their only way of keeping warm during the cold nights was by crowding, an art in which a Chinaman eminently excels.

9. Of late years there has been a great talk of a Chinese alliance, a theory having been started that there are only three powers in Asia—Russia, England, and China—and that a coalition of any two can coerce the third. Nothing could be more fallacious, the value of a Chinese alliance in a war between England and Russia being absolutely *nil* so far as Turkistan is concerned.

10. The Chinese after being expelled from Turkistan, which had become one of their own provinces, only advanced again after twelve years had elapsed, and when assured that no serious opposition would be offered. What could possibly be the value of an alliance with a people of that sort in a war that would be, as Lord Wolseley anticipates all future wars will be, a matter of a few weeks or months at the utmost.

11. Of late years the wild ideas propagated by some writers as to the fabulous strength of China have grown into a perfect disease. One continually sees articles in newspapers and magazines extolling their qualities as soldiers and attributing to them a remarkable advance in the art of war; these writers evidently think that Europe is standing still. That China is advancing I grant, but Europe is advancing ten times faster, and the more the art of war advances the greater will be the distance the Chinese will be left behind.

Had the Chinese possessed soldierlike qualities they might have resisted us in 1842. At that time the difference of arms was not so very great, but at the present moment it would be a very different matter, and a small well-equipped European force, with a General at their head who meant business, could march from one end of China to the other.

That I am not alone in my opinion of the Chinese will be best shown by a few quotations from travellers, well acquainted with the matter on which they write, not mere theorists who, ignorant of the matter, allow their imaginations to run away with them, and who consider that numbers make a nation formidable without considering the moral attributes of the units that make up those numbers.

To start with I shall quote the celebrated Russian traveller Prejevalsky, a close intelligent observer, who had great experience of the Chinese. He says :

12. "The demoralised and degraded state of the soldiery defies all description." Again: "But where crime is so widespread it seems rather to be aggravated than diminished by severity, and year by year the Chinese soldiers become more demoralised. But the picture we have drawn of the

defenders of the Celestial Empire is still incomplete. The most striking trait in their character is cowardice, innate in all Chinese and not considered a disgrace: far from this, the discretion of the soldier who runs away is sometimes highly praised. The tactics of warfare consist in frightening the enemy, never in hazarding a resolute attack. The order of battle is a semicircle threatening the front and flanks; simultaneously the troops open fire at a distance ten times further than the range of their guns, utter fearful cries after every round, and altogether behave in a childish way, which would of course produce no effect on superior troops. A bold well-armed enemy might march into any part of the middle kingdom with perfect confidence of the result. He need not trouble himself about the number of his opponents; one wolf will put to flight a thousand sheep, and every European soldier is a wolf in comparison with Chinese soldiers."

13. In another place Prejevalsky says: "For many a long day to come China cannot hope to create an army at all similar to those of European States. She lacks the proper material: she lacks the life-giving spirit. Let Europeans supply the Chinese with any number of arms they please; let them exert themselves ever so energetically to train the Chinese soldiers; let them even supply leaders—the Chinese army will nevertheless, even under the most favourable conditions, never be more than an artificially created, mechanically united, unstable organism. Subject it but once to the serious trial of war, speedy dissolution will overtake such an army, which could never hope for victory over an enemy animated with any real spirit."

Mr. Ney Elias, in his pamphlet on "Recent Travels in External China," says:

14. "Drill can be learned in a given time by the soldiers of any nation and by any number of them, but soldierlike qualities cannot; the officers can be taught all the technical branches of military duty, but no teaching will inspire them with qualities required of organizers or leaders of men."



15. Mr. Carey says: "The Chinese have no military strength in Turkistan that could for a moment resist the advance of European troops. To an unprofessional eye there seemed to be good raw material among the soldiery, but the men are undisciplined and poorly armed, while the officers are utterly inefficient and often addicted to opium."

16. Captain F. E. Younghusband thinks that "were the Turki inhabitants otherwise than the quietest and most submissive people in the world, the Chinese would be incapable of keeping order in the country, while in any case they are quite unable to resist an invasion." On the subject of the Chinese equipping themselves in European fashion, Captain Younghusband's opinion is also worth hearing: "One hears constantly of their purchasing large numbers of Krupp guns, breech-loading rifles of all sorts, gunboats, and even large heavily armed ironclads; and of their building large arsenals and forts; and of their employing European officers to instruct and drill their troops, and one might be led to suppose, as the Chinese themselves do, that they have become a powerful military nation. But this is not the case, as unfortunately for them these inventions of modern warfare do not, as the Chinese half suppose, act as a patent charm or talisman, making the country proof against invasion, and they are rendered almost valueless from the corruption and want of discipline which prevail, while as long as the military profession is held in such contempt it will be impossible to get good officers for the army."

17. Mr. J. G. Scott's opinion of the Chinese army is much the same as I have written. He says: "The Chinese army is little better than a rabble, and is hardly less a subject for jest now than it was in the old days when the warriors carried shields with hideous goblins painted on them, and beat gongs and yelled in order to scare the enemy, just as the old Annamese soldiery put on horrible masks, fiery beards, fantastic head-dresses, and theatrical uniforms." Chinese Gordon and his ever victorious army are continually quoted as showing that the Chinese are not deficient in military qualities; but after all what does it prove, simply that Chinese under an able

European leader are superior to Chinese under their own leaders. Gordon's army did all they were required to do, but to have put them against European troops would have been putting sheep against wolves.

18. Suppose China allied with Russia, in what way could China possibly inflict injury on England? The idea of the Chinese army in Turkistan—a nation possessing any military qualifications whatever could never have originated anything so utterly bad—invading India is too absurd to be entertained for a moment; and as to the Chinese being reinforced by a better army from China, should such exist, considering the distance and the dilatory character of the Chinese I should be surprised to see it carried out under three years, the time it took them to advance before; besides their best troops would be required for coast defence. The only way they could be of use to Russia would be by furnishing supplies to an army destined to operate against India, *viâ* the Baroghil or Karakorum, though the last route is not one that it is probable an invading army would take. At the same time it must not be forgotten that several thousand laden ponies come down that road every year, and in the event of a war with our northern rival, some Cossacks would almost to a certainty be sent that road to make a diversion in favour of the real army acting elsewhere.

19. Should China be allied with England, it would be of great assistance to Russia as furnishing an excuse to make the Chinese provide them with supplies, and the Chinese would be much more prompt in supplying an enemy under fear of punishment than in supplying an ally who did not wish to punish. Another way in which a Chinese alliance would be disadvantageous to England is that the Russians would promptly seize Kuldja and possibly Turkistan as well; for these purposes a very small force indeed would be required. Having occupied Kuldja they would not care to relinquish it, and in making peace it would be very awkward for England to be hampered by a Chinese alliance. What the future of Chinese Turkistan may be it is difficult to say. A large proportion of the natives hate and despise their

rulers and complain much of the taxes and corruption that exist. A Chinese official who does not take bribes being very rare; indeed I only heard of one, the Amban of Yarkand, and the number of times I was told of his honesty showed that my informants considered it a very startling piece of information indeed.

20. The Chinese do absolutely nothing for the country, whereas Yakub Beg, tyrant though he may have been, built bridges and schools all over the country; he also constructed with great difficulty through a morass an excellent road from Kashgar city to the Yangi Shahr.

21. The only thing in the way of aiding communication that can possibly be put to the credit of the Chinese is the keeping open of the Mozart Pass, but they have a very strong personal interest in it, grain being very much cheaper in Aksu than in Kuldja, where there is a large Chinese garrison. The pass is kept open by thirty men relieved monthly, who are inhabitants of the village or scattered hamlets of Dewanchi; they receive no pay, but in consideration of their labour pay no taxes. That the Turkis have ability or force of character enough to govern themselves I do not for a moment believe; they are a quiet people, excellent agriculturists, but of a timid, vacillating nature, not at all the stuff out of which soldiers or rulers are made.

22. The Chinese Government is merely a collection of tax-gatherers, doing almost nothing for the country, and above all has the great fault of being anything but civilizing or elevating in its effects. Still it has some great advantages. Were it not for the Chinese presence, the country would break up into a number of petty states and return to anarchy and the bloodshed for which Central Asia has been so celebrated.

For us they are inoffensive neighbours, their only fault being their discouragement of trade with India, principally shown by their forbidding the import of Indian tea and continually making difficulties about granting passports to merchants.

It would not suit any European power to annex the country at present, always excepting Kuldja, and as it is,

it serves the useful purpose of being a sort of neutral ground between Russian and British territory. At present I do not think the next few years will see any change in the Government.

23. A frontier that ought to be settled without loss of time is that on the Pamirs, where Russian, Afghan, British, and Chinese territory meet. As regards the last three certainly no one knows where their frontiers are; these things are easiest settled in times of international quiet. To postpone a settlement till obliged to act cannot be a wise policy, and it should not be forgotten that prevention is better than cure.

24. Before concluding, I have only to urge the advantages of establishing a Consul at Yarkand and making a treaty putting the roads to India on the same footing as treaty ports, and our goods on the same footing as Russian goods. At present the Indian traders, our fellow subjects of Greater Britain, are exposed to all sorts of exactions. Lately all the tea they possessed was seized and burnt. Now the importation of tea by British subjects is altogether prohibited, Russian subjects being allowed to import tea from India for exportation to Russian territory. The total closing of the road to India is also threatened, and I strongly suspect that it would have been closed this year had it not been for the presence of Major Cumberland and myself. Under these circumstances, it is a wonder that our trade is as flourishing as it is, and it shows what it might become if allowed to compete on anything like equal terms with Russian trade. Our subjects are made to pay duty on entering and leaving every town, whereas the Russian subjects are allowed to travel where they like without paying any duty; this gives them an overwhelming advantage in the markets of Aksu, Kuchar, and other towns in the East, as English goods by the time they reach those towns have paid duty five or six times.

I do not believe the Chinese would be averse to having a British Agent at Yarkand, as it would counterbalance to a great extent the power of the Russian Consul at Kashgar. The Russianising of Central Asia is proceeding fast, and the mere presence of a British officer at Yarkand would deal it a serious blow. Another thing, is it politic that all Central

Asia should see British subjects neglected and bullied while Russian subjects have their interests well looked after, and the Chinese dare not practise exactions on them? Should a British officer be established in Yarkand, it would be a good plan to make arrangements with the Amir whereby the Afghan subjects in Turkistan should be in the same position towards that officer as British subjects. The Afghans would like it, and I think it would be politic.

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