

THE AMIR YAKOUB KHAN AND EASTERN TURKISTAN IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

At a meeting of the Society on October 31, 1917, with Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich in the chair, the President, Colonel Sir Henry Trotter, read the following paper:

In the year 1873, forty-four years ago, whilst employed on Survey duties in Kattywar, in North-West India, I received a telegram from my Chief, Colonel Walker, R.E., Superintendent of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, informing me that the Indian Government was about to despatch a political mission to the Atalik Ghazi of Yarkand—would I like to accompany it as geographer? My first act was to send a reply in the affirmative, and my next proceeding was to get hold of an atlas to ascertain in what part of Asia Yarkand was to be found. I now know something more of the geography and history of Chinese Turkistan than I did then, or I would not have ventured to address you this evening, and, although I shall be dealing with somewhat ancient history, I hope it may not be unprofitable to attract your attention for a short hour from the troubles and anxieties attendant on the terrible war now raging in so many parts of the world.

The mission which left India in 1873 was under the able leadership of the late Sir Douglas Forsyth, a very distinguished Indian official, and was said by Sir Henry Rawlinson to have been one of the best equipped that ever left India.

It was composed of Colonel T. E. Gordon (afterwards General Sir Thomas Gordon) as second in command; Captain Chapman, R.A., as Secretary (afterwards General Sir E. F. Chapman); Dr. Bellew, C.S.I.; Captain John Biddulph, 19th Hussars (A.D.C. to the Viceroy); Dr. Stoliczka, of the Indian Geological Survey; myself, and a staff of native assistants, amongst whom were Resseldar M. Afzul Khan, of the 11th Bengal Lancers (afterwards native A.D.C. to the late King Edward); Nain Singh and Kishen Singh, the famous pundits and explorers. We had also as escort twenty picked men from the Frontier Corps of Guides.

I have no time to give details of our journey over the Himalaya and Karakorum mountains, through regions which have been fully described by later travellers. Our route lay from Murree in the Punjab via Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, to Leh, the capital of Ladakh, from which point the difficulties of the journey commenced. I give an extract from my official report, which will give some idea of the road from Leh to Yarkand:

“In addition to the crossing of six passes, the lowest of which is 17,600 feet above sea-level, and the highest 18,900, for a period of twenty-three days I was never at a lower level than 15,000 feet, and during that period the thermometer seldom rose as high as freezing-point (32° F.), whereas at night the minimum would vary from zero to 20° below zero. For a period of twelve days I was never at a lower level than 16,300 feet, while four consecutive camping grounds were all over 17,000. The highest elevation at which our tents were pitched was at Delhra Kompas Camp, 17,890 feet above sea-level—*i. e.*, more than 2,000 feet higher than the summit of Mont Blanc.

“Tankse is the last place on the road where supplies are procurable, and is by the shortest route 350 miles from Sanju, the first large village met with in Turkistan. For the whole of this distance supplies of grain, both for men and horses, had to be provided in advance, and at a great many halting places neither grass nor fire-wood were available.

“The great elevation and consequent bitter cold was much aggravated by frequent snow and a piercing wind blowing from morning to night; the long, dreary marches often caused us to arrive at our halting place long after dark; in many places ice beds blocked up the whole road, one of which extended three miles down the Karakash River—all combined to try severely both man and beast.”

In crossing some of the worst passes the loads had all to be transferred from horses or mules to yaks (mountain oxen), wonderfully sure-footed animals. I well recollect on one occasion, in a tight place, when the mule I was riding floundered about so badly I had to dismount, and tried going on foot—but the ice was so slippery—with a yawning precipice on one side of the narrow path, that I had to yield to advice, and mount a yak—after which the journey was comparatively pleasant. The sagacious animal would not only use his nose as a feeler, but would not plant his foot down until he had tested the ground either with his foot or his knee—and, as a rope through his nose was the only bridle, he was allowed to pick his own path.

In crossing the Sanju, our last pass, three ponies and eight mules lost their lives. The Yarkand envoy, Hadji Yakoub Bey, who was accompanying us, on his return from a mission to Constantinople, lost ten horses the same day.

But it is time to hurry on to Turkistan. The country, known at various times as Chinese Tartary, Kashgaria, Eastern Turkistan, Chinese Turkistan, Little Bokhara, and the Land of the Six Cities,

may be described as a vast plain, some 4,000 feet above the sea at its western extremity, and gradually sloping down as it stretches eastward. At Turfan, at its eastern extremity, the country actually lies below the level of the sea.

This plain is surrounded south, west, and north by ranges of the loftiest mountains in the world—to the south the Kuen Luen and the Karakorum range of the Himalayas—backed up by the vast tablelands of Tibet, some 17,000 or 18,000 feet above sea-level, where in places a traveller may journey hundreds of miles without meeting a human soul.

To the west the Pamir, or Kizal Yart range, with peaks up to 25,000 feet also acting as buttresses to high tablelands, peopled by nomad Kirghiz tribes. To the north lie the Tienshan, or Celestial mountains, of which one peak, the Tengri Nor, to the north of Aksu, rises to a height of 24,000 feet, in spite of which Turkistan is far more accessible from the north and north-west than from west or south.

The rivers and streams from the melting snows and glaciers of these mountains are diverted on arrival in the plains into numerous irrigation canals, so that, instead of increasing in bulk as they advance into the plain, they slowly diminish in volume. Later on they all amalgamate and form the River Tarim, which ultimately flows into Lake Lob and its surrounding marshes, some 1,000 miles east of Kashgar. The lands irrigated by these waters may be likened to a horseshoe, with the toe pointing west. Outside it lie these mountain ranges, and inside is a sandy desert, covering in many places great ruined cities and buried remains of an earlier civilization.

In this belt of irrigated land representing the horseshoe lie the cities of Khotan, Yangi-Hissar, Yarkand, Kashgar, Aksu, Ush Turfan, Karashar, and Turfan, with populations varying from 20 to 50,000, all of which at the time of our visit were under the uncontested rule of the Amir Yakoub Khan, at that time better known as the Atalik Ghazi of Kashgar.

From Tashkurghan in the mountains, eleven days' journey to the west of Kashgar, to Turfan, on the extreme east, is a distance of over 1,000 miles as the crow flies. Beyond Turfan eastward lies the famous desert of Gobi, where Sir Francis Younghusband has recorded that he travelled for nearly 1,000 miles without seeing a house.

In spite of the enormous extent of territory, the whole population of Turkistan is estimated at only one and a half millions, probably not very much more than the population of the city of Peking.

The large towns are almost invariably double—*i.e.*, they consist of the old native city and the Yangi-shahr, or new city, built by the Chinese as a residence for the Governors, the officials, and the garrison; generally from two to five miles distant from the native city, and strongly fortified. The smaller towns and villages consist of

scattered hamlets and farm houses, surrounded by fields and orchards, where grain and fruits of excellent quality are found in abundance.

In the larger centres a most notable feature is the weekly market, when the outlying inhabitants bring in their country produce, laden on horses, mules and donkeys, and take away in exchange various manufactured goods—the produce of the large towns, and articles imported from Russia or India. Everyone rides, if possible, and I have literally often met beggars on horseback. In fact, begging is a regular profession, carried on in a family from father to son.

It is now time to deal with the ruler of this vast country, and to consider how it became possible for Yakoub Khan, a simple soldier of fortune, not even a native of the country, and once an obscure functionary of Khokand, to supplant the Chinese Government and become absolute and despotic ruler of a part of their territory extending 1,000 miles from west to east. To enable us to do so, it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the previous history of China.

In the first century of the Christian era, the Chinese warrior Panchao not only conquered Kashgar, but extended his victorious arms as far as the Caspian Sea, but in the seventh century the country was overrun by the Arabs from the west, who at one time, under their general, Kutaiba, penetrated as far as Kucha. In the tenth century Satuk Boghra Khan, a Tartar Prince of the Uighur Tribe, established himself as ruler of Eastern Turkistan, embraced Islamism, and forced his people to adopt that religion, which is that of the great bulk of the inhabitants of Turkistan at the present day. Boghra Khan is said to have reigned for ninety years, and his memory is greatly venerated in the country at the present day. Early in the thirteenth century the country fell under the rule of the famous Prester John.

Some few years later on, it was overrun and conquered by the renowned Mongol conqueror, Djenghiz Khan (who, like Attila, has been called The Scourge of God). He became supreme ruler of the greater part of Asia, and is said to have raised the work of destruction to the level of one of the Fine Arts—Kaiser Wilhelm appears to have adopted him as a model.

At this period the three great religions of the earth flourished side by side in Turkistan. The Christians represented by the Nestorians were rich and flourishing at Kashgar, while Yarkand was the seat of a Bishop. Djenghiz Khan and his followers were Buddhists, while the great bulk of the population was Mahomedan.

After the death of Djenghiz Khan and his son Chagatai, anarchy and confusion reigned, and the country fell under the dominion of the Chinese Emperor, Timour Khan. In the fourteenth century Turkistan was overrun and conquered by the second great Asiatic conqueror, Timur-Lang, or Tamerlane, after whose death (A.D. 1405) came endless confusion throughout Asia, and constant local wars and

changes of rulers, which it is needless to follow in detail. At one period in the sixteenth century a certain Sultan Said invaded the land of the Six Cities—from Dzungaria—overthrew the tyrant, King Abu-bakar, and pursued his victories into the Karakorum mountains, where, during an attempt at the conquest of Tibet, he died from the effect of the rarified atmosphere at a spot near the Karakorum Pass. His title, Daulet Bey, or Lord of the State, has been given to a well-known camping ground in this region—Daulet Bey Ulde (the Lord of the State died here)—and it is only two marches distant from the spot in those same elevated and desolate regions where my friend and colleague, Dr. Stoliczka, died from the same cause on our return journey to India.

For a hundred years, after Sultan Said's death, Kashgar was ruled by the Khoja Dynasty, which had for several centuries occupied a very prominent position in Central Asia—and of whom we shall hear more later on. One member of the family, Hazrat Afak—whose name is still greatly revered in the country—was at one period supreme ruler, but was ultimately conquered by the Kalmaks from Ili. This gave rise to a fresh invasion from China, then at the height of its power. She conquered both countries in 1760, and maintained her supremacy for 100 years—*i.e.*, until the rise to power of Yakoub Khan, the Atalik Ghazi.

For about twenty years prior to the departure of our mission the great Empire of China had been in a most disorganized state—the famous Taiping Rebellion, which had for its nominal objective the expulsion of the Manchu Dynasty from Peking, broke out in 1850, and was only finally quelled fourteen years later on by the exertions of my old brother officer “Chinese Gordon” (afterwards Gordon of Khartoum), at the head of the “Ever Victorious Army.” This rebellion originated near Canton, and at one time the whole of the valley of the Yangtse Kiang River from Hankow to the sea was in the hands of the rebels, who marched northwards to within 200 miles of Peking, having desolated the country wherever they passed, and murdered the Manchus wherever they could find them. Unable to advance further, the rebels had to retreat, and the movement finally collapsed in 1864 with the fall of Nankin—the last stronghold of the Taipings. The Chinese, as usual, took a bloody revenge.

But the early successes of the insurgents had encouraged rebellion elsewhere, notably amongst the Mahomedan population of Yunnan, then a rich and flourishing province, where in 1855 disturbances between the Panthay Moslems and the Chinese broke out in a quarrel about mining rights. The Chinese Governor ordered a general massacre of the Moslems, but this was forestalled by the Panthays, and a bloody war ensued, in which there were holocausts of victims on both sides, and the country was laid desolate. Suliman, a local

notable, was proclaimed Sultan, with his capital at Talifoo, and sent his son on a mission to England, and it was only in 1873 (the year in which our mission went to Kashgar) that the rebellion was quelled, and ended by a general massacre of the Panthays of Talifoo.

But yet another rebellion, which more nearly concerns Kashgaria, broke out in 1862 among the Tungani Moslems of Shensi and Kansuh, in Western China. It gradually spread westward. Oorumtsi, Turfan, and the neighbouring towns fell into rebel hands, as also nearly the whole of the Province of Dzungaria, or Ili, lying to the north of Turkistan, so that the Province of Turkistan was completely cut off from the rest of China.

The Moslem inhabitants of Turkistan saw another opportunity of a successful rising against Chinese authority, and they lost no time in taking advantage of it. The first town to rise was Yarkand, where the garrison consisted of about 6,000 Khitai or Chinese and a large force of Tunganis—compatriots of the rebels further east. The Chinese, mistrusting these latter, plotted to destroy them, but were forestalled, and the Tunganis, assisted by the townspeople, rose, and the 6,000 Chinese soldiers were put to the sword.

Similar risings took place at Khotan and Kashgar, where the Governors and Chinese officials and garrisons took refuge in their respective citadels, and maintained themselves there for a considerable period, but as no help could possibly arrive from China, and there appeared no alternative but to surrender or die of hunger—the former would as they knew involve a general massacre—so, preferring death to dishonour, it is recorded that the Chinese Governors of these towns, after making a lengthened but desperate resistance, surrounded by their wives and families, officials and chief officers, themselves fired the trains which communicated with their powder magazines, and all perished in the explosion.

In addition to the Tunganis and the local insurgents, which included nearly all the Moslem inhabitants of the country, aid was invoked from the Kirghiz, who inhabited the lower mountain ranges north, west, and south of Kashgar, under the leadership of a famous chieftain, Sadik Bey, who was also ambitious of supreme power. Terrible confusion ensued, and the different elements were all struggling for supremacy, but a new factor appeared on the scene. In 1864, about the time of the capture of Tashkend by the Russians, a certain Buzurg Khan Khoja, a descendant of the Khoja rulers, who had reigned on and off in Kashgar for many hundreds of years, on the invitation of Sadik Bey, came from Khokand to endeavour to regain the throne of his ancestors. It was by no means the first attempt of that family, who in the course of the preceding fifty years had made four or five incursions with a view to recovering their own, some of which had been attended with considerable success, but had invariably ended

in the recovery of the country by the Chinese. The last incursion was by Wali Khan in 1857, and, while besieging Kashgar, the unfortunate scientific traveller, Adolph Schlagentweit, fell into his hands, and was cruelly murdered.

But in 1866 the Chinese were cut off on account of the Tungani Rebellion, and the country itself was the scene of complete anarchy, so that the prospect of success was more hopeful. Buzurg Khan was at first accompanied by only about sixty followers from Khokand, but chief among them was a certain Yakoub Khan, a native of Piskent, near Tashkend, a tried soldier of good family, who had greatly distinguished himself in 1853 in the defence of Ak-Musjid against the Russians, and again in 1864 in the unsuccessful defence of Tashkend. Crowds of Khokandian refugees, gradually driven away by disorders at home, flocked to the standard of Buzurg Khan, and, by the skilful diplomacy, good generalship, and indomitable pluck of Yakoub Khan, the towns of Yarkand, Khótan, and Kashgar fell into his hands. Habibula, King of Khotan, was treacherously disposed of by murder. Buzurg Khan, who was as dissipated as he was incompetent, plotted against the life of the too masterful Yakoub, who, warned of the conspiracy, seized and imprisoned his nominal chief, and ultimately sent him back to Khokand, and himself assumed supreme power in the year 1867. After consolidating his rule in the three principal cities of Turkistan, he marched eastward, and in two separate expeditions captured the towns of Aksu, Turfan (July, 1870), and Urumtsi; these last two he took from the Tungani rebels. Yakoub was at first best known as the Atalik Ghazi (the tutor crescentader), a title conferred on him by the Amir of Bokhara, and in 1873, the year of our visit, he received from the Sultan of Turkey the title of Amir, and commenced to strike coins at Kashgar in the name of the Turkish Sultan.

This was the monarch to whom the Forsyth Mission was accredited in 1873.

In 1868 the adventurous travellers Shaw and Hayward—the former a Kangra merchant and tea-planter—had penetrated to Kashgar, and had been well received by the Atalik Ghazi. Hayward was subsequently murdered in Yassin, but Shaw returned to India, and his representations, and the somewhat exaggerated ideas about the possibility of an extensive trade between India and Turkistan, induced the Indian Government to despatch Mr. Forsyth on a complimentary mission to the Atalik, but with very precise instructions not to penetrate to the interior of the country unless perfect quiet prevailed throughout the kingdom. On his arrival at Yarkand, he learned that the Atalik was engaged in hostilities upon the eastern frontier, so he was compelled under his instructions to return to India without delay.

In 1872 the Atalik sent a very able official, Yakoub Bey Thora, to Constantinople on a mission to the Sultan of Turkey, and as he had

reported that perfect quiet reigned in the country, the Government of India decided to send Mr. Forsyth on a second visit, and it was arranged that Yakoub Bey, on his return from Turkey, should accompany the British Mission to Kashgar.

I have already alluded to some of the difficulties of our journey across the Himalayas to the plains of Turkistan, where we were received with the greatest kindness and hospitality, and where throughout our stay we were treated as honoured guests by the sovereign of the country. At every halting place we were entertained with the best the country could afford. At an entertainment given us by the Dadkhwah, or Governor of Yarkand, our dinner was brought in by 107 soldiers in orderly procession, gorgeously attired in silken garments. These large entertainments always commenced with dessert—*i.e.*, a profusion of varied and most delicious fruit, followed by dainty dishes of meat, game, and vegetables, prepared by excellent Chinese cooks, who had survived the general massacre. The last dish of all was always a bowl of first-rate soup. As this was absolutely the inverse order of our own form of banquets, we had to accustom ourselves to it as best we could. On State occasions, moreover, we had to adopt the posture of the country, and seat ourselves on the ground, with our knees bent, and our bodies resting on our heels.

We found these hospitable banquets, but on a smaller scale, prepared for us at almost every halting place on our road to Kashghar, but hospitality is a feature of the country. On one occasion, while wandering alone away from the road, I entered a peasant's hut, and found him eating his dinner of bread and melon, and nothing would satisfy him but my sitting down to join him at his frugal meal. I was in later years (in 1874, I think) reminded of these roadside entertainments while accompanying the late King George of Greece in his triumphant progress through the then recently annexed districts of Thessaly—when every day, and twice a day, we sat down to hospitable spreads provided by the King's new subjects, when *agneau à la Palikari* (sheep roasted whole) was the principal *pièce de résistance*, accompanied by other savoury dishes.

It was naturally part of my duties to jot down the names and position of villages on or adjacent to our line of march, and, although this story is against myself, I must relate it as a proof that a "little knowledge is a dangerous thing." I found it very curious one day that the same name "Bilmem" was given to me as that of no less than three villages, and, on investigation, I learned that, although my few words of Turkish enabled me to put the question as to the name of a village, my knowledge of that language was not then sufficient to know that "Bilmem" is the Turkish equivalent for "I don't know." It is stated that a Russian explorer similarly recorded the name of a range of mountains as "Allah-bilur," which, being interpreted, means "God knows."

One striking feature in Turkistan at the time of our visit was the security of life and property—a curious contrast to the preceding anarchy of centuries—a direct result of the firm but despotic rule of Yakoub Khan. In the plains it was said that if a man saw a bag of silver on one side of the road he would pass over to the opposite side so that he might not even be seen near it, and in the mountain districts inhabited by the Kirghiz nomads, formerly notorious thieves, I was told if you dropped your whip on the ground you would find it on the same spot if you went there a year afterwards.

The punishment of theft was the loss of a hand, and on one occasion at Kashgar an unfortunate individual came to Dr. Bellew's dispensary, and, after some natural hesitation, pulled his severed hand out of his pocket, and asked the Doctor to affix it in its proper place. Needless to say, he was unable to do so.

We reached our destination, Kashgar, on December 4, and, in accordance with the etiquette of the country, were taken the same day to pay our respects to the Atalik. It was a very formal and solemn proceeding—the Court etiquette was borrowed from Khokand, which, in its turn, had been derived from that of the Great Mogul. We passed through several courtyards, all lined with soldiers in their varied coloured garments, and at last came to the building occupied by the ruler of the country. Our envoy was first introduced alone, and, as he entered the presence chamber by one door, the Atalik entered the opposite end of the room, and bid him welcome. When they were seated, the other members of the Mission were introduced one by one, and took their places—sitting in the posture of the country before described—a terribly awkward position, in full dress and spurs. After an interchange of compliments (in Persian), the usual *Dastarkhwan* was brought in, after which we took our departure.

The Atalik was about sixty years of age, somewhat above medium height—dark complexion, with a thick, black beard, good eyes, and a handsome, intelligent face. His manner was most solemn: his behaviour courteous. He was plainly dressed, with a spotless white turban, and a long, dark, fur-lined overcoat, round which was girded his sword belt, the only weapon he wore.

This was the first informal interview, and a few days later on came the official reception of the Mission, when letters from Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and from Lord Northbrook (Viceroy of India), were handed to the Amir in appropriate and valuable caskets, and the various presents from India were brought in and presented. In the interval between the two receptions the Atalik had assumed the new dignity of Amir and the title of Khan bestowed on him by the Sultan of Turkey. Henceforth he was to be known as the Amir Mohamed Yakoub Khan of Kashgar. Gold coins were struck, and prayers recited in the name of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Aziz Khan.

Negotiations were shortly commenced on the subject of the proposed commercial treaty, which resulted in its signature on February 2, 1874. It was mutually satisfactory to both countries; and preparations were made for our return home.

Towards the close of our stay in Kashgar, a very interesting incident occurred. The Governors of the different provinces began to arrive according to custom with the annual revenue and offerings from their provinces, which they present in person when circumstances permit. Niaz Bey, the Governor of Khotan, brought with him a caravan of 450 camels, laden with carpets, silks, cottons, felts, tents, metal dishes, and other local manufactures; two carts, each carrying about 1,800 lbs. of gold and silver, two cartloads of superior jade, 150 led horses and 500 donkeys laden with copper coin, to the value of about £4,000.

These contributions from the provinces formed a considerable portion of the Amir's revenue—which was chiefly dependent on the Ushar, or Tithes, taken on all agricultural produce, and on the Customs duties.

The Amir, in addition to being a most doughty warrior, had an extraordinary talent for organization and administration. He had a most efficient police, and crime was almost unknown, but everyone served him from fear rather than from love.

During our stay in the capital, in spite of the severe winter weather, our one wish was to be allowed to travel and explore the country, which was then almost unknown to Europeans. Our ambition was to go to Khotan, and to the semi-mythical Lake Lob on the east, and to the equally little known Pamirs on the west. Our easterly ambitions were never satisfied, and, although we obtained and availed ourselves of the Amir's permission to visit the Turgat Pass and Lake Chadir Kul, and the Russian frontier to the north, and also to the neighbourhood of Ush Turfan to the north-east of Kashgar, and to Maralbashi, which was visited by Captain Biddulph, we were never able to proceed further east. To the west we were more fortunate. We had hoped to return to India by the Pamirs, and through Afghanistan to Cabul, and, although we traversed the Pamirs, and descended the Oxus as far as Kila Panja, the capital of Wakhan, a small State tributary to Afghanistan, we were there met by a refusal on the part of Amir Sher Ali of permission to pass through his territories. The ostensible reason was given that he could not be responsible for our safety. Our party consisted of Colonel Gordon, Captain Biddulph, Dr. Stoliczka, and myself, and, as our instructions forbade us to proceed unless cordially invited by the Amir to his country, we had no alternative but to return to Yarkand, after a few days' very necessary rest, and once more traverse the Karakorum and Himalayan ranges to India. The journey from Kashgar to Kila Panja, taking twenty-two

days, mostly through snow, was extremely arduous; but, although the worst possible season of the year for travelling through these desolate regions, which separate the Turanian, or Turkish-speaking, population on the east from the Iranian, or Persian-speaking, people on the west, we were able to make important additions to our geographical knowledge of a country which was principally known to us by the scant but interesting details given us by early and medieval travellers, mainly brought to light by the researches of Sir Henry Yule and Sir Henry Rawlinson; the Chinese traveller, Hwen Sang, in the seventh century; the Venetian Marco Polo in the thirteenth century; the Jesuit Benedict Goez in the seventeenth; and, last of all, our countryman, Lieutenant Wood, of the Indian Navy, who, in 1838 explored up the Oxus to the Victoria Lake. About half-way to Kila Panja—*i.e.*, on our tenth day from Kashgar—we reached Sarikol, or Tashkurghan, after having travelled up and down over mountain ranges—often along the frozen beds of mountain streams, and through wild, narrow, and precipitous valleys. Tashkurghan was the most western outlying district of Turkistan—both under Chinese rule, as well as under the sway of Yakoub Khan. The original inhabitants of this district were of Iranian stock, and spoke Persian, as well as their own native dialect. Only a few score of them remained, as the greater number had been removed to Kashgar when Yakoub took possession of the country.

Two days from Tashkurghan we crossed the watershed between the River Oxus and the streams flowing eastward to the plains of Turkistan. We then entered the Little Pamir, and passing Lake Chakmak marched for several days down the Oxus Valley to Kila Panja, facing a bitter wind, the famous Bad-i-wakhan, or wind of Wakhan, which made this part of the journey almost more trying than anything we had hitherto experienced.

Much of the country we passed through, both on the outward and return journeys, was new to geography, but since our visit the Pamirs have been visited and fully described by numerous travellers, sportsmen, and officials, so that I shall not inflict on you any further account of the country. Suffice it to say that we varied our road back by passing through the Great Pamir, by the Victoria Lake, and I had the good fortune to shoot an *Ovis Poli*, so-called after the famous Italian traveller. I well recollect the day. It was during a very tedious and long march of thirty-seven miles, mostly through snow. I had been watching with some interest the motions of the dead body of one of our guides from Wakhan, which had been perched up on horseback, supported on each side by one of his comrades, when my attention was suddenly called to the presence of some wild sheep about 200 yards up the hillside. My rifle was handy, and in a few seconds one of them came rolling down. It was the first *Ovis Poli* ever shot

by a European sportsman, but it was, unfortunately, a very poor specimen (and is not the one represented in the picture).

I will not weary you with details of our return journey to Yarkand, and our second passage of the Himalayas back to India, the hardships of which, as before narrated, closed the promising career of our highly esteemed colleague, Dr. Stoliczka.

But it is time to return to the fortunes of the Amir Yakoub, whom we left in March, 1874, in the plenitude of his power. Two years later I was travelling in China, and learned from Sir Brooke Robertson, our Consul at Canton, that the Chinese were marching armies for the recovery of Eastern Turkistan, but that their progress was slow, as, on account of the shortness of provisions, they had to halt their armies, sow corn, wait till it was harvested, when they would again advance.

Before describing the Chinese reconquest of the country I should like to say a few words as to the relations between Russia and Kashgar during the rule of the Atalik. When the latter first consolidated his power the Russians were rapidly extending their own frontier in the Khanates of Western Asia, and gave him but little thought, and, in order not to offend the Chinese, abstained for several years, much to Yakoub's annoyance, from any official recognition of his position. Yakoub behaved throughout with much firmness and dignity, but as his power increased, and also his renown in the world of Islam—as a staunch and valiant Moslem—the Russians found themselves forced to give way, and in 1872, the year before our arrival in the country, an official mission was despatched under General Kaulbars to negotiate a Commercial Treaty, which was easily effected, as the Atalik was only too pleased to have his ambition gratified, and receive an accredited Envoy from the Czar. Notwithstanding these apparently friendly relations, disputes arose between the two countries, and the Russians, both in 1873 and 1875, made extensive preparations for the invasion of the country, probably with the view of replacing Yakoub by a nominee of their own, who would be more subservient to Russia; but most fortunately for the Amir he was saved from invasion in 1873 by the Russian campaign against Khiva, and again in 1875 by the outbreak of a general insurrection in Khokand, the greater part of which country had been annexed by Russia. There is no doubt that the Russians were intensely annoyed at the dignities and honours conferred on the Atalik in 1873 by the Sultan of Turkey and of the Amir's recognition of the latter as paramount power.

But Russian anxieties on this question were speedily put an end to by the appearance of Chinese armies destined for the reconquest of their lost provinces.

It appears that these were first put in motion in 1874 after the

suppression of the Panthay Rebellion, but at least two winters had elapsed in the difficult passage through the desert before they reached the eastern frontiers of Turkistan, and it was only late in the autumn of 1876 that they captured Oorumtsi, and lay siege to Manas, and took a bloody revenge for the massacres of their countrymen fourteen years previously.

After the capture of Manas the Chinese Army made a long halt, giving time to the Amir to concentrate at Turfan, under his personal command, about 20,000 troops, in addition to 10,000 Tunganis of doubtful loyalty. These were opposed by about 60,000 Chinese, much better armed and equipped.

In March, 1877, a decisive battle took place in the neighbourhood of Turfan. The Amir was defeated, and after a second fight at Karashahr, retired to Kurla, where he expired on May 1. The cause of his death still remains unknown—some attribute it to natural causes, some to poison, others to assassination by Hakim Khan, a reputed son of Buzurg Khan Khoja. His second son carried his father's body back to Kashgar, and on arrival there was murdered in cold blood before his father's corpse by his elder brother, Begkuli Bey, who was jealous of his brother's renown as a soldier. General anarchy followed. Separate governments were established at Khotan and Yarkand. Begkuli Bey found himself opposed by our old acquaintance, the Kirghiz Chief, Sadik Bey, and, after defeating him, went eastward to attack other rivals, among whom was Hakim Bey above mentioned, and, as a consequence of this internecine strife, the country was depopulated, and the Chinese slowly and steadily advanced, and at last, late in 1877, successfully occupied Kashgar. All that resisted were mercilessly put to death, but in many important districts, including Yarkand and Khotan, timely surrender was made, and the inhabitants were comparatively well treated, and escaped condign punishment. Begkuli Bey, after a stubborn but futile resistance, fled to Russia.

Since 1877 the Land of the Six Cities has remained in quiet occupation by the Chinese. In 1881 the province of Kuldja, which had been for ten years occupied by the Russians, was retroceded to China, and Kashgaria and Dzungaria were formed into one province under the name of Sin Kiang, with headquarters at Kuldja, thus reverting to the arrangement existing prior to the Moslem Rebellion.

China has since then passed through troublous times, but without losing her hold on Turkistan. In 1877-78 there was a terrible famine in the provinces of Shensi and Shantung, when twelve or thirteen millions of the population are said to have perished. In 1882 there was a quarrel with France over Annam, and the Chinese Fleet was subsequently destroyed at Foochow. In 1894 came war with Japan over Corea, ending in disaster, and the cession of Liantung and the

island of Formosa; but, under pressure from Russia, Germany, and France, Japan had to yield her conquest on the mainland, and Russia and France obtained important concessions. In 1897 Germany seized part of the province of Shantung as compensation for the murder of two German missionaries, and in the following year Weihai-Wei was occupied by the British, and a general scramble took place between the European Powers for railway concessions.

In 1898 came the great reform movement, followed in 1900 by the Boxer Rebellion, and the murder of missionaries, and of the German Minister in Peking. This was followed by the capture of Peking by the allied forces of the European Powers, and the rescue of the gallant defenders of the Foreign Legations, with the late Sir Claude MacDonald at their head. In 1904 came the British invasion of Tibet, and the occupation of Lhasa, and trouble between Russia and China about Manchuria—in more recent years revolutions and counter-revolutions, on which it is unnecessary to enlarge.

What the final outcome will be no one can foretell, but it seems probable that the present world war may result in China being able to work out its own salvation, and recover some of its territorial losses of recent years, more free from interference by foreign countries. On the other hand, unless Russia rallies, and forms a strong and capable government—which we all earnestly wish for, both for our own sake and that of Russia—it is by no means improbable that revolution and anarchy will break out among the Moslem countries of Central and Western Asia, and of the western provinces of China, with results that it is impossible to contemplate without horror.

Colonel A. C. YATE said that, though he had never been to Kashgar, he had tried to acquire some little knowledge of the country, and rose in response to a request from Sir Henry Trotter that he would take part in the discussion. He wished to draw attention to the way in which members of the Society, and others connected with it, had been connected with Kashgar. He would not mention Sir Thomas Holdich because he would speak for himself, and the lecturer had already mentioned the late Sir Thomas Gordon, whose memoir had been written for their Journal by Sir Mortimer Durand. Another member of the Forsyth Mission, who had made his mark both as traveller and Oriental linguist, was Dr. Bellew. He accompanied Sir Harry Lumsden on his mission to Kandahar in 1857, and also joined Sir Frederick Goldsmid's mission to Sistan, whence he found his way to Baghdad, and so back to India. He was also well known in Cabul at the time of our last Afghan campaign. Of Sir Francis Younghusband they might recall his journey from Peking across the Gobi desert and his perilous passage of the Mustagh Pass, and his rencontre on the Pamirs with Colonel Grombchevsky, who on the part of Russia carried out a decidedly active policy in and around

Turkistan, as Dr. Morrison has also recorded. Reference had been made in the lecture to Sir George Macartney, the British representative at Kashgar, who had lectured a year or two back before the Society, and who was no doubt at Kashgar at the present moment. Sir George was temporarily relieved there at an earlier stage of the war (1915) by Sir Percy Sykes, another of their members, whom his sister, Miss Ella Sykes, accompanied. She, on her return, lectured to the Society (February, 1916) on "Seven Months in High Asia." He could hardly refrain from making some reference also to the travels of Dr. Morrison, at present in Peking, together with Sir Richard Dane, another Englishman in the service of the Chinese Government. How they found life in Peking during these troublous days was but little, if at all, known. Dr. Morrison, whom he had met in Peking in 1898, the period of the Port Arthur crisis, travelled right across Central Asia from Peking, through Kashgar to Andijan, the terminus of the Trans-Caspian Railway, and wrote a series of very interesting letters on his experiences, which appeared in *The Times* of 1910. Railway developments in that part of Asia, a subject by no means overlooked by Dr. Morrison, had been discussed before them by Mr. Bury, who described his journey down the Siberian to the Trans-Caspian Railway. For a good many years now the Russians had projected a connection between the two railway systems. Vierny or Vernoe promised to become an important junction. The subject was treated, if he remembered rightly, by Lord Bryce, when a guest at their annual dinner three or four years ago, with the knowledge and lucidity for which he was distinguished. The first man he recollected meeting who had been to Kashgar was the well-known Captain Deasy. He remembered very well his receiving the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, and being one of the principal guests at the annual dinner that year, now nearly twenty years ago. It was not always that a man called upon to make a speech made a thoroughly good one; but Captain Deasy seemed to have the natural gift, and his speech was excellent. By that time Deasy had retired from the Army, and subsequently seemed rather to disappear from the world in which they were interested. But he saw from "Who's Who" that some years ago Deasy created a record by driving his 14 h.p. Martini car from Caux to Rochers de Naye "on the ballast of the cogwheel mountain railway." Those who remembered something of the gradient (about 1 in $4\frac{1}{2}$) of that railway and the precipices which it skirted would realize that to drive up that track required a most uncommon nerve.

Marco Polo tells us that, visiting Merv and Samarkand, he found the inhabitants Christian, but proceeding onward to Yarkand, Kashgar, and Khotan, he found them Moslem. The Nestorian Christianity of those days was dead, but naturally under Russian rule and influence

that of the Eastern Church had come in. Mahomedanism was very strong throughout Turkistan. He recalled that, after the annexation of Upper Burma, when a small British column, of which he was Intelligence Officer, moved up from Mandalay to the frontiers of Yunnan, they met numbers of Panthay mule drivers. "Panthay" is the Burmese name for the Moslem of Yunnan and perhaps other parts of China. The Taiping is also spoken of as the Panthay Rebellion. The Panthay muleteers trained their mules to march one by one in single file along the mountain paths, and Panthay mule-droves seemed to work to perfection in such country. Indian transport mules were chained nose to tail in batches of three, and on more than one occasion he saw the tail mule fall over the "khud" or back down a steep slope and pull over or back the other two. He could not but note the superior training of the Panthay mules. His old regiment, the 129th Duke of Connaught's Own Baluchis, took some part in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion, though this was long before his day. Still, photographs commemorating that period (1864) had come into his possession, and during the twenty-six years which he spent in the 1st and 2nd (now 127th and 129th) Baluchis, the trophies from China adorned, with those from other campaigns, the walls of the Baluch Brigade Mess at Karachi. Army reorganization had broken up that mess, but had only added laurels to the brows of the Brigade; for the 129th Baluchis had not only been the first Indian regiment to enter the trenches in France against the Germans, but also the first Indian corps to a sepoy of which the Victoria Cross had been awarded. General Sir James Willcocks, who commanded the Indian Army Corps, has suggested that the motto "Primus in Europâ" be given to the 129th, just as "Primus in Indis" was assigned a century and a half ago to the 39th (now Dorset) Regiment. Chinese Gordon might almost have suggested "Primus in Sinis."

The CHAIRMAN (Sir Thomas Holdich) said that Sir Henry Trotter had given them an exceedingly useful *résumé* of the history of a little-known part of Eastern Turkistan. Such a concise account of what had occurred in those regions was very much wanted. But their President had been a little too modest. He did not say that the results of his first geographical efforts in that part of the world showed us how exceedingly ignorant we were of everything which existed beyond the Himalayas at that time. In fact, our ignorance then was something almost pathetic. He remembered very well hearing two distinguished Generals talking to each other about regions beyond the Himalayas, and one was suggesting some interference with Afghanistan. The other replied, "What will our friend the Swat of Yarkand say to that?" Though he was young at the time, he knew that there was no potentate in Asia called the Swat (laugh-

ter), and that Yarkand and Afghanistan had no sort of connection with each other. But at that time they did not know where the Oxus started, or even where it ran. It was Colonel Trotter's preliminary work with his native surveyors which first started fuller explorations and surveys. Now we had not only got a very fair idea of the geography of that part of Central Asia, but had actually connected the geodesic triangulation of India with the triangulation of Russia across the Himalayas. The work Sir Henry accomplished on that occasion was considered so excellent that he received the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for it.

To him the great interest of those regions was more or less historical. The Pamirs were flanked on three sides by countries which were the home of Buddhism. It was to him a curious fact that although Buddhism arose in India it flourished very much more in Central Asia than it ever did in India. They were no doubt familiar with the results in main outline of Sir Aurel Stein's late explorations. He had found that in the early centuries of our era not only was the desert extending east from Kashgar sprinkled more or less with flourishing towns, but that almost every town held some Buddhist shrine which was an object of pilgrimage. Extending right across the desert were hospitable caravansaries where pilgrims could stay and get relays of post-horses. This was before the sand waves enveloped these regions. Sir Henry had mentioned Lake Lob Nor, which undoubtedly was the basis of all the prosperity of that great region. It was a remarkable instance in the world's geography of the dependence of a huge tract of territory on a shifting lake which has not entirely disappeared even now, but has greatly changed its position.

It was through that region that early Chinese pilgrims sought the way to India. We had the story of the travels and sufferings of these extraordinary people, and by following the lines of route they had taken we had traced their places of pilgrimage, and had been able to follow with some understanding the pathetic accounts of their troubles. Huge dragons were said to sit on the mountain tops and throw down on them avalanches of gravel and stone, and they saw great and evil portents in the sky. Then followed in these delightful records naïve expressions of wonder at the beauty and richness of the Indian plains. What was said in relation to geographical facts had been shown by the scientific investigations of our own day to be substantially true. The pilgrim tales of the shrines they visited, which for a very long time were regarded as probably apocryphal, had turned out to be substantially correct. The shrines are there, but they are under the land.

SIR HENRY TROTTER, in responding to a vote of thanks moved from

the chair, said he wished to take the opportunity to refer to the loss they were sustaining by the retirement of Miss Hughes, who had been their secretary—a most admirable secretary, from the very inception of the Society—and was now about to be married. In their name he wished to thank her, and to say how deeply indebted they were to her. The members of the Council would back him up in saying how deeply sensible they were of the very valuable and useful work she had done. They all joined in wishing her a most happy future.